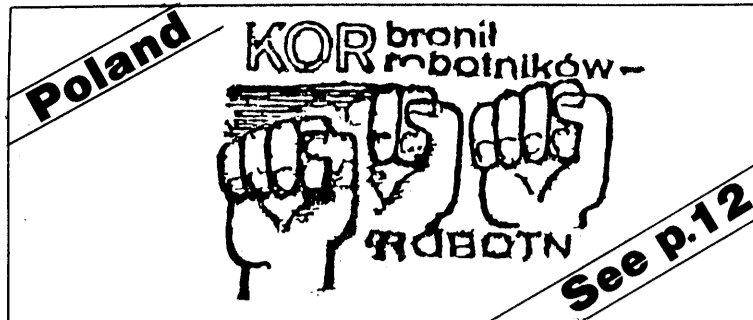
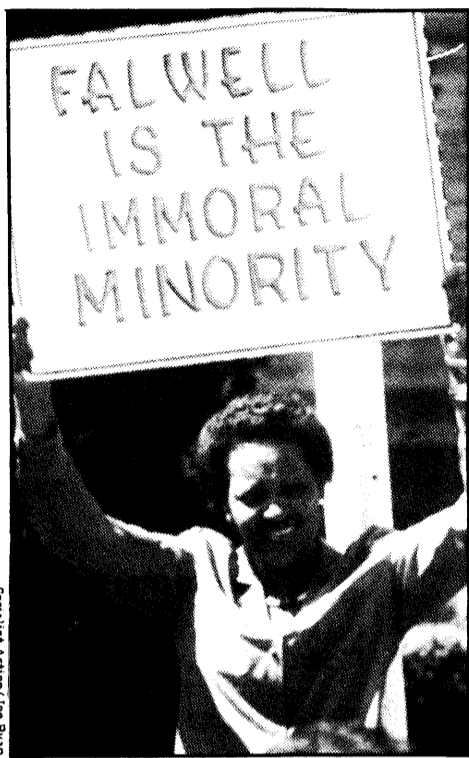


A Socialist ACTION



SEPTEMBER 1985 VOL. 3, No. 9 50 CENTS



Fall protests, conference planned

By CARL FINAMORE

Local peace, jobs, and justice coalitions should be encouraged by the large anti-apartheid actions that took place last month, drawing at least 20,000 in New York City, over 5000 in Washington D.C., and thousands more in Atlanta, Detroit, Boston, and San Francisco.

The Aug. 13 march and rally in midtown Manhattan was endorsed by some 35 area trade unions. David Livingston, a vice president of the United Auto Workers Local 65, spoke to the primarily Black demonstrators of the need for mass action.

"Many important people have spoken out and been arrested," Livingston said. "It is up to us, the less important people, to say apartheid must be destroyed."

Other major anti-apartheid activities

"Students can make the fall actions large and effective."

will be held in several cities across the country on Oct. 11, National Anti-Apartheid Protest Day. Local Oct. 11 coalitions, like the one in Cleveland, have shown the real potential for involving the trade-union movement in the fight against apartheid.

A central demand of the October actions is that the political prisoners in South Africa be immediately released. Oct. 11 is the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners.

The opening of the fall campus semester should boost the organizing momentum for these actions. The student movement, with its clear policy of condemnation of apartheid and U.S.

(continued on page 3)

Miners, students rock S. African apartheid

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

A year-long reign of terror, which began when South African police attacked protesters in Sharpeville and other Black communities on Sept. 3, 1984, has failed to smother resistance to the white minority-ruled system.

House-to-house searches, mass arrests, and assassinations of anti-apartheid activists have only fueled the struggle. Boycotts, strikes, and demonstrations have spread to virtually every part of the country.

As we go to press, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called a strike that could shake the economic framework of the apartheid regime. NUM General Secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said that about half of the union's 150,000 members would walk out on Sept. 1.

Gold accounts for almost 50 percent of South Africa's foreign earnings and 14 percent of its gross domestic product. The NUM argues that the low wages paid to Blacks have enabled the mine owners to make record profits despite a drop in the world gold market.

Black mineworkers earn one-fifth of the wages of whites. The Black workers are asking for a 22-percent wage hike and other "political" concessions.

Ramaphosa claimed that a partial victory had already been won during negotiations in August. He said that the



NUM extracted wage concessions from several of the mine owners, breaking through the united front that the employers had previously presented.

"We pushed them against the wall," Ramaphosa said.

The union stressed that if the author-

ities should attempt to break the strike against mine owners who have held out, "the entire membership of the union in all mines will take solidarity action."

Meanwhile, the government has outlawed the Congress of South African

(continued on page 15)

Wheeling-Pitt strikers stand firm against steel bosses, courts

By MARIE WEIGAND

CLEVELAND—Minutes after Federal Judge Warren W. Bentz ruled that Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation could take advantage of the bankruptcy laws to unilaterally void its contract with the United Steelworkers of Amer-

ica (USWA), a pamphlet entitled "Modified Wage and Benefit Programs Effective July 21, 1985" was mailed to the 8500 steelworkers who work in Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

This document states: "We [the company] reserve the right to alter, amend,

interpret and change any conditions listed herein... This document is not intended to be construed as a labor contract or any agreement and is only intended to communicate terms and conditions of wages now in effect."

Wheeling-Pittsburgh steelworkers, who had already given the company over \$15,000 each in concessions the last three years, reacted angrily to the company's latest robbery attempt. Over 5500 workers attended local union meetings, where they unanimously voted not to continue working under these conditions.

Company officials boasted that any strike would be short-lived and easily broken. Ads were run in local newspapers assuring any Wheeling-Pittsburgh steelworker, including laid-off workers, of a job if they'd come in to work. In the depressed Mon Valley, with its thousands of laid-off steelworkers, a similar offer was made to steelworkers from other companies.

The company has also tried to coerce the workers back to work. Health benefits were cancelled the day the workers walked out. The company missed a payment to the pension fund and is threat-

(continued on page 8)

The unions and the fight against concessions today



A discussion with:

- John Tirpak, vice pres., USWA Local 1223
- Tom Laney, president, UAW Local 879
- Ed Ott, vice pres., OCAW Local 8-149
- Darrell Becker, president, IUMSWA Local 61



See FORUM section pp. 9-12

Women in struggle: Cuba, Nairobi. See pp. 4-5

Fight back!



Calif. NOW conference defends abortion rights

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Abortion rights was the major concern of the 345 women meeting at a state convention of the National Organization for Women held Aug. 16-18 in Long Beach, Calif. The theme of this convention was "Continuing to Make the Difference."

Two important resolutions were passed on the issue of abortion rights: the first on clinic harassment, and the other on two anti-choice initiatives sponsored by right-wing, pro-life forces slated for the 1986 California ballot.

The resolution on clinic harassment included a proposal to launch a petitioning drive to demand that State Attorney-General John Van de Kamp take immediate action to pre-

vent clinic bombings, arson, and harassment—something he has ignored until now.

The resolution in opposition to the pro-choice ballot initiatives declared California in a state of emergency concerning all aspects of women's reproductive freedom. It mandated California NOW chapters to make women's reproductive rights a high visibility and priority issue through education, demonstrations, advertisement, and local media.

This resolution comes in the context of the national NOW call for simultaneous Reproductive Rights Marches on the West Coast and in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1986. It has not yet been decided whether the West Coast march will be in San Francisco or Los Angeles.

At NOW conventions it is

the workshops which set action proposals for the coming period. At this conference only two resolutions were allowed from each workshop. All of the resolutions, though, were important and reflected the needs and interests of women.

The resolutions included a broad spectrum of issues: no U.S. intervention in Central America; a call to support anti-apartheid actions planned for Oct. 11 and 12; pay-equity; accessibility for disabled women at NOW meetings; AIDS and its relationship to women; coerced workfare of AFDC recipients; organizing peace committees within local NOW chapters; and discrimination against gay and lesbian families.

Only four of the resolutions came up at the Sunday plenary session due to the time limit of

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one hour for discussion. The call to support the anti-apartheid actions in October, for instance, was passed at the plenary session. All the other resolutions were referred to the new incoming State NOW Board for consideration at its next two-day board meeting.

What came across most at

this convention was that women are ready for action on all of the issues they are faced with every day. The resolutions coming from the workshops have set an excellent path for the new state officers to follow. If acted upon, they could lead women to a higher stage in their quest for full equality. ■

Over 20,000 striking car haulers, members of Teamsters, beat back a major takeaway demand by the automotive transport industry bosses. [See story on page 7.]

In the debtor countries south of the border, tumultuous events are simmering and threatening to boil over.

The imperialist bankers are between a rock and a hard place: Either provoke revolutionary explosions in the debtor nations with insistence on payment, or risk the unpaid debts precipitating a breakdown in the U.S. imperialist financial structure... and world monetary chaos. [See story on pp. 16 and 17.]

In another part of the globe, the Black coal miners' union of South Africa is preparing an industrywide political strike in support of the massive people's struggle against apartheid. [See stories pp. 1 and 15.]

In still another sector of the world, Solidarnosc is down but not, by any means, out.

The lessons of Solidarnosc's rise and temporary suppression are being digested in preparation for the next surge forward that will end only when workers' democracy is established in the workers' states currently in the grip of Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorships. [See story on pp. 12 and 13.]

These four events, among others, are inspiring confirmation of Socialist Action's optimistic perspective for world socialist revolution.

We have been told that *Socialist*

Subscribe today: You deserve the best!



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A second, but no less important, sector of new subscribers we are targeting

Fund drive gift

We'd like to announce the receipt of a gift of \$2000 for the fund drive. This donation has been made in the name of the late Tom Kerry and in memory of his many contributions to the socialist cause. Kerry was a supporter of the opposition in the Socialist Workers Party, which was later bureaucratically expelled for defending the historic program and traditions of the SWP.

The maker of this gift, a member of Socialist Action, prefers to remain anonymous.—The editors

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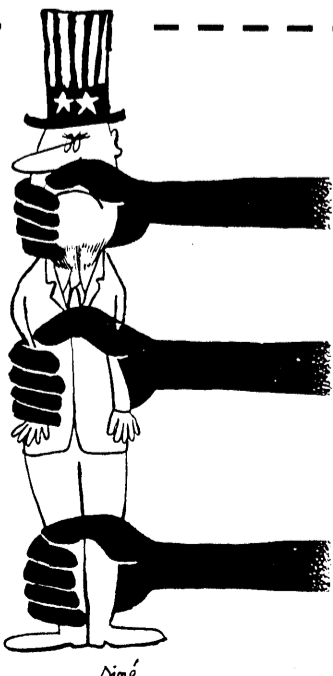
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Socialist ACTION

is on college campuses. We are projecting a \$2 for six-months subscription rate for these potential readers.

A new activism and interest in socialist ideas showed itself during the last term. Students were a significant layer—if not the single largest component—of the anti-intervention and anti-apartheid actions last spring and summer. Activity and interest among students will grow. We urge supporters of *Socialist Action* to get out on campus close to the opening of the fall term to introduce students to revolutionary-socialist ideas.

While we are not setting any goal for expansion of individual sales of *Socialist Action*, we are certain to see a rise in single-copy sales as a byproduct of the subscription campaign. Supporters who already have standing bundle orders should consider increasing them at least for the duration of the campaign.

\$10,000 Publications Expansion Fund

Since we were formed in late 1983, we have managed to produce a regular monthly newspaper of 16 to 20 pages. We have also published six issues of the *Socialist Action Information Bulletin*.

But this publications program, we realize, is very insufficient. We feel a great need to expand our publishing efforts to increase the number of pages per issue, produce regular theoretical supplements to the paper (until we are in a position to produce our own theoretical magazine), and—even more important—to produce timely and inexpensive pamphlets on the big political issues of the day.

We therefore need to expand our typesetting and technical equipment to permit us to make this important step forward.

Our goal is to raise the \$10,000 Press and Publications Expansion Fund over a 12-week period, also beginning on Sept. 9. We have already begun the process of consulting with our supporters and feel confident that the goal is a realistic one. Advance pledges and contributions have already been received amounting to nearly \$6000.

Major new struggles promising to bring our goal of a world socialist order free from capitalist war, racism, sexism, unemployment, and inflation are already on the horizon. Our Press and Publications Expansion Campaign and Fund needs your help to more effectively spread the revolutionary-socialist message. Send your check, pledges, and bundle orders now!—The Editors ■

New AIDS funding called inadequate

By CAROLE SELIGMAN and LISA SLIFER

News that the federal government has promised additional funds for the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) crisis is not being seen as a victory by activists working against AIDS.

"We oppose taking money from existing health programs. We want new funds," said Paul Boneberg, coordinator of the Mobilization Against AIDS, a national organization based in San Francisco which campaigns for massive federal funding to fight AIDS. This national health emergency has already claimed 12,000 victims and killed over 6000.

The government announced that the additional funding would come from existing programs such as health services to Indians. If the funds for this crisis need to come from existing programs, "it should be the military," said Boneberg.

The Reagan administration's promise of an additional \$43 million in AIDS funding is, according to Boneberg, "completely inadequate to meet the needs for research, education for prevention, or services" to AIDS victims. Mobilization Against AIDS calls for the government to adopt a "moon-launch mentality" to deal with the crisis. [See July 1985, *Socialist Action*.]

Boneberg told *Socialist Action* that the reason behind the sudden turnaround by the government—they had previously proposed cutting AIDS funding—was the threat by Rep. Henry A. Waxman's House of Representative's health sub-committee to

subpoena government documents.

Boneberg said that these documents show that administration officials have privately acknowledged the seriousness of the AIDS crisis and have stated the need for new funding amounting to \$140 to \$150 million.

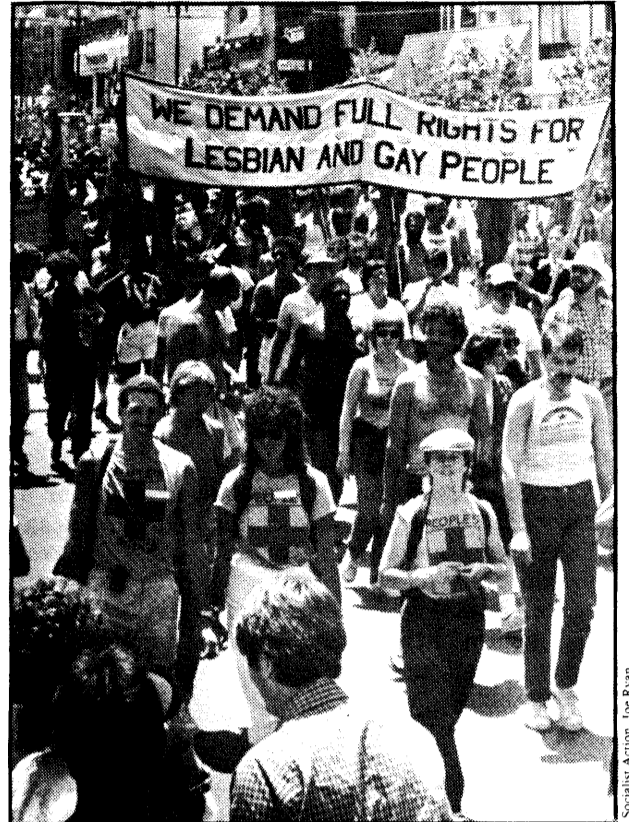
The additional funds resulted from an effort to keep these documents away from public scrutiny, Boneberg said. Such scrutiny would aid the fight to make the government provide the proper response to the crisis and expose its inaction.

"Responding to health crises and epidemics is the business of government," Diego Lopez, clinical director of the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York City, told *Socialist Action*. GMHC is an organization which, given the lack of sufficient official response to the AIDS crisis, offers comprehensive services to AIDS victims.

"If the gay community had not acted as the conscience of the nation [in providing services to AIDS victims] many more atrocities would have happened," Lopez said.

Randy Chelsey of Shanti Project, an organization which helps AIDS victims in San Francisco yet receives no federal funds, described for *Socialist Action* the full range of services provided solely by volunteers at the project. These include cooking, cleaning, transportation, laundry, counseling—sometimes 60 hours a week of volunteer work.

The Mobilization Against AIDS has called for nationally coordinated actions in cities across the



Socialist Action, Joe Ryan

country this Sept. 30, the end of fiscal year 1985. Called "A Day of National Accounting on AIDS," the action will consist of political demonstrations in several cities as well as a delegation of people with AIDS who will go to Washington to attempt to meet with President Reagan and other government leaders to demand an adequate national response to the AIDS crisis.

For more information about the Sept. 30 Day of Accounting contact Mobilization Against AIDS, 335 Noe St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Tel. (415) 431-4660.

...Fall protests

(continued from page 1)

ties with it, can make the movement effective by making it massive.

The Oct. 11 actions reveal that there are more opportunities for fall mass actions in support of the four themes originally raised by the large April 20 spring demonstrations than many thought possible. These demands are: U.S. out of Central America and the Caribbean; no U.S. support to South African apartheid; jobs and justice, not war; and freeze and reverse the nuclear arms race.

On Labor Day, for example, the San Francisco Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice joined with the San Francisco Central Labor Council, Teamsters Joint Council, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, S.F.

Food Bank, and S.F. Council of Churches in endorsing a free concert and rally in Golden Gate Park.

Another example of the potential for broadly sponsored fall activities is the San Francisco Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice conference planned for Nov. 2, 1985. This conference will present panel and workshop discussions featuring prominent figures who will address the four themes of the coalition in addition to announcing plans for the next mass mobilization in April 1986.

Among those who have already agreed to participate at the conference are the following: Naomi Tutu-Seavers, daughter of South Africa's Bishop Desmond Tutu; Jack Henning, secretary treasurer of the California AFL-CIO; James Herman, international president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU); Keith John-

son, president, International Woodworkers of America; David Dyson from the National Labor Committee for Human Rights and Democracy in El Salvador; Edgardo Garcia, leader of

Nicaragua's trade-union federation, Coordinadora Sindical Nicaraguense (CSN); and Mario Obledo, past national president of the League of United Latin American Citizens.

Letter from S.F. Coalition

The following is the endorser letter for the Nov. 2 antiwar conference organized by the San Francisco Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

August 23, 1985

Dear Friend,

These are troubled times. In our own country the rights of working people are under constant attack. In South Africa the Black majority faces brutal repression and the denial of the most elementary human rights. New billions are spent on nuclear weapons while U.S. intervention in Central America mounts each day. The rich become richer while the poor are devastated and social programs are gutted.

We are confident however, that growing numbers, yes, even a majority, are repelled by this state of affairs.

On April 20, 1985, 50,000 people marched with the Spring Mobilization in San Francisco for peace, jobs and justice. Tens of thousands more marched throughout the nation.

The demonstration was marked by the active support and participation of broad forces in the Bay Area: organized labor; the peace and religious communities; the Black, Latino and Asian communities; gay and lesbian groups; students; the disabled, and seniors all joined the effort.

The march was formally supported by all seven Bay Area Central Labor Councils as well by scores of state and local union bodies. The nuclear freeze movement was also prominent among those who led in opening the way for the broad participation of important parts of the U.S. population. The issues we addressed on April 20 remain. The Spring Mobilization provided a momentum on which we can and must build.

In this regard we support the following plan of action and request your endorsement and participation.

First, we are committed to continue to focus our work on the four political demands of the April protest. These were:

- Jobs and Justice, Not War;
- No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean;
- No U.S. Support to South African Apartheid;
- Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race.

Second, we will sponsor a major Bay Area conference on Nov. 2, 1985, at San Francisco State University with nationally prominent trade unionists, religious leaders, scientists and community leaders who will address the need for building a majority movement in support of our aims.

The conference will serve both an educational purpose and issue a call for another large Bay Area mobilization in April 1986.

We urge your early support for our fall and spring efforts and look forward to your collaboration.

Sincerely,

Al Lannon, President, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 6; Rev. Cecil Williams, Glide Church; Sala Burton, member of U.S. Congress; Mario Obledo, Past President, League of United Latin American Citizens; Sister Judy Cannon, Sisters of Mercy; Walter Johnson, Secretary Treasurer, San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO; Charlene Tschirhart, Executive Director, San Francisco Nuclear Freeze Campaign; Rev. Howard Gloyd, Northern California Chair, Rainbow Coalition; Julianne Malveaux, Co-Chair, San Francisco Anti-Apartheid Coalition; Ron Dellums, member, U.S. Congress; James Herman, International President, ILWU; Professor Carlos Munoz Jr., Faculty for Human Rights in El Salvador and Central America; Wilson Riles Jr., Oakland City Council; Harry Britt, San Francisco Board of Supervisors; Lyle Wing, Co-Chair, National Exec. Committee, Nuclear Freeze Campaign; Barbara Boxer, member, U.S. Congress; Pat Norman, National Association of Lesbian and Gay Democratic Clubs; Vivian Hallinan, Project National Interest; Pedro Noguera, President, Associated Students, UC Berkeley; Margaret Butz, Deputy Director, SEIU 790.

For further information write the Mobilization, which is located at the ILWU offices at 255 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA, 94102, or call (415) 621-7326.

Labor-sponsored concert/rally



Socialist Action/Joe Ryan

Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO), addressing a Labor Day concert/rally in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

The event, which drew over 20,000 people, was endorsed by all the major unions in the Bay Area and by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice. A number of rock bands—including members of Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe and the Fish, Dr. Hook and Buddy Miles—donated their services to the event. Several top labor and community figures spoke on the four themes of the Mobilization.

Latin American women meet in Cuba, discuss their political struggles

Three hundred Latin American women from 27 countries and diverse backgrounds attended a week-long conference June 3-7 in Havana. Entitled "The Current Situation of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean," the conference was called by the Women's Continental Front Against Intervention (WCFAI).

Karen Wald, a North American correspondent in Cuba for the International News Service, attended the conference and spoke to WCFAI Coordinator Comandante Doris Tijerino of Nicaragua and Magaly Pineda, a delegate from the Dominican Republic.

Wald's interview with Pineda follows this brief summary of the conference, which is based on Wald's report. Major excerpts from the interview with Tijerino will be published in the October issue of *Socialist Action*.

The first workshop, "Economic situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean," which focused on the Latin American debt, attracted the most women. Fidel Castro and Cuban Women's Federation President Vilma Espin both attended the workshop daily.

Delegates described the situations in their own countries resulting from the foreign debt and the subsequent high interest rates, inflation, and unemployment. They focused on the effects of the economic crisis on women in rural areas and urban slums.

Ilda Uriza, a recently re-elected deputy in the Peruvian legislature, echoed the majority of delegates when she stated: "The debt is not payable: either we pay it with the lives of the vast majority of Peruvians, or we take a stand and say this debt will not be paid." Uriza is a member of the ruling APRA party.

Several women claimed the imperialist countries are the real debtors, since "their development was financed at the expense of Third World people's exploitation, hunger and misery."

The second workshop, "Integration of women in the political reality of the continent and their own countries," discussed the issue of "women in emergency situations." This includes women facing the U.S. wars in Central America and others living under dictatorships and suffering as prisoners or refugees.

Reagan's economic blockade of Nicaragua was condemned as a glaring violation of international law and a severe hardship on women already confronted by military attacks.

At the third workshop, "Multiplicity of forms of struggle," revolutionaries, illiterate campesinas, the wives and daughters of mineworkers, guerrilla fighters, artists, and the wives of government officials met and discussed their particular struggles.

The workshop on "Women in art and culture," besides covering discrimination against women, also pointed out the effects of imperialism and colonialism in shaping and suppressing their native cultures.

A delegate from Puerto Rico cited her people's use of Spanish as a method of resistance to the dominant culture of the United States.

The conference ended with reports from the four workshops and a final statement was adopted. A short quote from their resolution illustrates the insight and solidarity the delegates gained through the conference:

"Aware of our strength and that the problems of women are the problems of their peoples, that the crisis is a double burden because of the inequality and discrimination which for centuries have affected generations of women, we are agreed in that the struggle against the discrimination of women and for full equality is an inseparable part of the struggle against dependency and underdevelopment."

—SUZANNE FORSYTH



country is the source of employment for a large sector of the population; liberalizing the investments of the capitalists; and deepening the penetration of international capital—the multinational corporations—into our country.

Concretely, for the Dominican people, this economic crisis has manifested itself in the following way: The price of basic food staples—bread, milk, rice—has skyrocketed. Medicine is no longer accessible. One of the agreements with the IMF was to devalue the peso. The price of medicine, like other imported items, has almost tripled, while our salaries have remained the same.

Ours is a rich country agriculturally, yet we have to import flour to make bread. We have to import rice and most other foods. Our national industry is weak. We have to import raw materials. Although we produce detergent and sanitary napkins, for example, we still have to buy these from abroad.

This is how the renegotiation of the debt accentuates the crisis situation in which we have lived for many decades. But when I say "we" I mean especially the women—particularly the poor women from the urban and rural areas.

Wald: How does the crisis affect women in particular?

Pineda: First of all, the real wage in the Dominican Republic has severely declined. The minimum salary in 1984—and things have gotten much worse since then—was 175 pesos, or \$65 per month. Yet the basic food basket for a family cost 357 pesos.

Public funding for education and health have been virtually eliminated. In the Dominican hospitals two women give birth in the same bed and are asked to go home three hours after delivery. If you need to be operated on, you have to take your own anaesthesia, blood, and syringe.

The Dominican doctors went out on strike recently to demand more funds for public hospitals and higher salaries.

Even though this strike affected the emergency services for some time, the strike was supported by the people because the people know that going to a hospital is no better than staying at home to die.

To help make ends meet, children are forced to shine shoes, sell newspapers, wash car windows at traffic lights, sell fruits—even steal. This means they can't go to school.

Housewives in the shantytowns must do the family work in the worst possible conditions; sometimes without any available water. They have to cook with charcoal. There are no price controls. Women must walk miles from grocery store to grocery store in search of the best prices because the store owners have no scruples and often hoard the produce to jack up prices.

The burden on women is immense. Approximately 40 percent of Dominican households are headed by women. Women must take jobs washing and ironing clothes, selling ice cream, reselling fruits and vegetables in their neighborhoods, sewing dresses. If they have jobs, they are the poorest paid.

In addition, young girls—often 11, 12 or 13 years old—are prostituting themselves. Prostitution as a strategy for sheer survival has increased dramatically.

The high rates of unemployment—and the fact that women have little access to jobs—have also put a lot of pressure on women to migrate; not only from the countryside to the cities, but to the United States and other countries as well. In New York alone, there are 500,000 Dominicans.

Women in particular feel compelled to leave the country, often without a visa, which is increasingly difficult to obtain. Today countries that in the past had opened their doors to foreign workers, who provided dirt cheap labor in jobs their own citizens wouldn't do, are now closing their doors shut.

They are no longer interested in the immigrant workers. Now the multinational corporations come to fetch the cheap labor in our own countries, installing their sweatshops, which they close and move about at their whim. So now the quotas on visas have been greatly reduced.

Dominican women try to travel abroad, hoping to earn some money. They go to Spain, Germany, Greece, or Saudi Arabia, where they become prostitutes. Our women can be found on the streets of all the major European cities and in the oil regions of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

There was recently the case of 28 prostitutes who asphyxiated to death, trying to escape in the cargo compartment of a ship traveling from the isle of St. Martha to St. Kitts.

I personally spoke to a prostitute in Rotterdam, Holland. I asked her what she did with her money. She told me she sent it home to Santo Domingo to help raise her three children. She said she supported them by "enslaving her body."

Magaly Pineda on women, debt crisis

The following are excerpts from an interview conducted by Karen Wald with Magaly Pineda in Havana in June 1985. Pineda is a women's rights activist in the Dominican Republic.

In April 1984, the newly announced IMF austerity measures provoked the generalized outrage of the Dominican people. A near insurrectional situation developed. After three days, the uprising was ruthlessly put down, leaving 160 dead, 500 injured, and 3000 detained by the security forces.

The translation and abridgment of the interview are by *Socialist Action*.

Karen Wald: How does the immense Latin American foreign debt affect the people of the Dominican Republic?

Magaly Pineda: As in many countries of Latin America, we have become very familiar with the problem of the debt because it has affected our households in the form of an economic crisis.

In 1982, my country's debt was already \$3 billion. It is estimated that during the 1985-1990 period we will have to devote nearly 100 percent of our export earnings just to pay the interest on the foreign debt.

Our current social-democratic government began to negotiate payments on the debt with the International Monetary Fund. As in other countries in

Latin America, this meant applying the now familiar IMF austerity package, which places the burden of the debt on the shoulders of the popular sectors and the impoverished majority.

It does this by cutting public services; cutting public spending, which in my



Peasant women demonstrate in the Dominican Republic.

Over 13,000 women representing an array of political and cultural backgrounds met at Nairobi University, Kenya, on July 10-19, for the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Forum '85 organized around the themes of equality, development, and peace.

The NGO meeting began five days before the United Nations Women's Decade Conference, which was also held in Nairobi.

The following interview with Zakiya Somburu, a member of the National Black Women's Health Project who recently returned from the NGO conference, was conducted by Suzanne Forsyth on Aug. 16, 1985.

Socialist Action: Could you give us your assessment of the NGO Forum '85?

Zakiya Somburu: I think overall the objectives of the conference and my expectations were undeniably met, in terms of the tremendous amount of education, and political and cultural exchange which occurred on a global scale.

There were nearly 75 forums scheduled daily, if not more, and 400 impromptu, non-scheduled forums occurred throughout the conference.

I consider some of the highlights to be the workshops that focused on women and peace, the Palestinian issue, apartheid and Southern African women's issues, hunger and famine relief, and a whole range of workshops which dealt specifically with maternal and child healthcare and female circumcision.

My major expectation—and I think that of many of the conferees—was to establish those crucial linkages with

"Many rural women spend most of their day for survival."

women in the international arena that are critical to our continued growth and development on a global scale.

I established personal linkages with women in varying national liberation struggles throughout the world. There are mechanisms now for continued support and dialogue.

My organization, the National Black Women's Health Project, was able to meet with about 50 Kenyan women to establish a National Black Women's Health Project in Kenya. I also recruited several members to the U.S. organization.

Many African women have never met African-American women and for the first time that dialogue occurred. There are a lot of stereotypes we've had of each other as African-American women versus African women. Many stereotypes were broken down and there was a greater appreciation and sensitivity of each other's concerns.

Many participants, including myself, made grave personal and financial sacrifices to get there, which attests to the extremely heightened political development and overall awareness of women worldwide.

The seriousness and intensity of preparatory work which preceded Nairobi was also illustrative of international women's overall progressive development.

I participated in one of the major preparatory conferences. It took place at Morgan State University in July of 1984 and was sponsored by the African-American Women's Political Caucus. That was a conference to formulate the African-American woman's perspective at the NGO Forum '85.

So the tone of the conference was very serious. You could see that, worldwide, women are playing a vital, viable role and have been in the forefront of national and international development.

There was a strong sense of internationalism at this conference—that concerns we face here in the United States are concerns of women worldwide. In that sense it was a reaffirmation of what I had been involved in politically for the past decade.

S.A.: Were there many women of color from the United States?

Somburu: There was a significant representation of African-American women. Preceding conferences did not have high attendance of African-American or African women.

Many sisters, of course, could not garner the necessary financial support to get to Nairobi so there were thou-

an industrialized country that has the where-with-all to provide comprehensive prenatal care but does not consider it a priority. As recently as 1979 the Black rate of infant mortality was 91 percent higher than the national rate for whites, with 29 percent for Blacks and 11 percent for whites.

Female circumcision was covered in one of the workshops I attended on traditional child and maternal health. It was clearly denounced. There is an organized African movement against female circumcision, or mutilation of the clitoris and other female genitalia.

The African women directly affected—women of Ethiopia, the Sudan, and



States. It is known to cause intrauterine cancer and other serious side effects. It's outright genocide.

It's also common for police to invade communities and whip children, shoot, and interrogate people. To hear that first hand from women involved in the struggle has an tremendous impact on you.

What we can do in the United States is to continue our anti-apartheid work and intensify it. Divestiture is key to the struggle. The "constructive engagement" policy was strongly denounced and it was stated that our struggles are the same, we are fighting the same insane, oppressive system.

There was a strong condemnation of Israel's support to South Africa and a strong support of the Palestinian struggle. Some of the Palestinian women in the forefront of their struggle were not allowed out of Israel to come to the conference.

S.A.: Was there discussion of the United States as an obstacle to women's progress globally?

Somburu: There was a clear condemnation of U.S. foreign and domestic policy. In fact, some women were offended by such strong condemnations. I myself was very pleased to hear them. Women are clearly understanding the role of imperialism.

U.S. policy toward Nicaragua was denounced. The plundering that has gone on for hundreds of years in the Caribbean was denounced. It was suggested that the foreign debts of the Third World countries be stricken from the record.

I had a chance to go to Southern, Western and Eastern Kenya to see what imperialism has done. Being in the belly of the beast we understand that there is an underdeveloped nation within the nation here. A lot of the problems I saw in Kenya are reminiscent of the rural U.S. South.

The peace seminar I participated in represented a broad range of countries, from the Soviet Union to Sudan, Japan, Barbados. The sense of the meeting was that militarization connects with every single issue of human concern. Our primary duty, it was stated, was to be involved in the peace issue.

S.A.: Are any follow-up conferences scheduled?

Somburu: The proposal is to have the next conference in New Delhi, India, in five years. A Beyond-Nairobi follow up gathering is also scheduled in Kansas City, Mo., for Nov. 22-24. For information call: Carmen Welgudovotau in Bethesda, Md., at (301) 365-0339. ■

Report back from Nairobi Forum '85



sands of women worldwide who were left on the homefront unable to participate, but who still had a definite interest in the conference and saw the importance of trying to mobilize to get to it.

A substantial number of African women were participants in the conference, including rural women. Rural women comprise over three-fourths of the women in developing countries.

The plight of rural women really came to bear in this conference. I myself had a chance to live in a rural community with no electricity, no running water, no communications systems.

Many rural women spend most of their day for survival, fetching water three to five miles daily. It is a toiling of day and night for them and their families. Many women are beasts of burden.

In spite of all of that, women are organizing against it. The Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization is the largest women's organization in Kenya with a membership of over 300,000.

They are trying to overcome such severe problems as infant mortality, at a rate of 216 per thousand, and maternal deaths, at 40 percent. With comprehensive prenatal care, education, and better nutrition for the pregnant women, these obstacles could be overcome.

This is similar to the United States,

Arabic countries—are seeking the support of other women. They have mapped out an excellent program in terms of education and organizing women against the practice.

S.A.: Was there discussion of South African apartheid and did it promote greater international support for the Black majority?

Somburu: There were several forums which dealt with the issue of apartheid in South Africa with representatives from the ANC and SWAPO. A lot of grim stories were shared. Women are forced to leave their own children for weeks, months at a time, to work. Often they come back to their families and discover that their children have died of starvation.

One thing that came through was the strong oppression of South African women. They are considered superfluous, appendages—especially if they are pregnant. There is a lot of forced sterilization.

In addition to carrying passbooks, women must also carry a "family planning" certificate, which means that every three months they must have a shot of Depo Provera.

This contraceptive is banned in the Western countries, including the United

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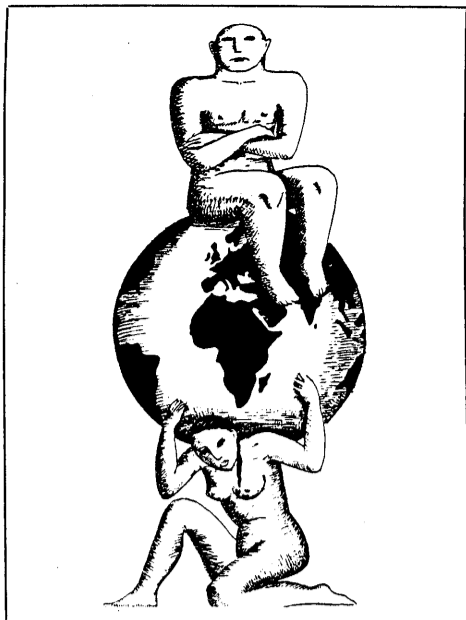
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Pornography debate rages: Is censorship the answer?



By SUZANNE FORSYTH

Pornography is once again causing debate in the women's movement. Much of the current debate is centered around the Minneapolis Ordinance written by Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, a law which defines pornography as sex discrimination and therefore a violation of every woman's civil rights.

Pornography is as old as woman-hating, and woman-hating is very old. At least as old as ancient Greece, where pornography was painted on men's drinking cups.

For the purposes of this article pornography shall be defined specifically as the sexually graphic depiction of violence against women.

This definition is most accurate because the word "pornography" has its roots in the Greek words *porn*, meaning the lowest whore, the slave prostitute, and *graph*, meaning the depiction of.

McKinnon and Dworkin claim pornography "subordinates women through sex," and "promotes environmental terrorism and private abuse of women and girls and, to a lesser extent,

"Pornography is as old as woman-hating."

men and boys and transsexuals... Pornography promotes rape, pain, humiliation and inferiority as experiences that are sexually pleasing to all women because we are women." Their description is accurate.

Pornography is not harmless. It is a tool through which the media defines our sexuality, a sexuality that is dirty, violent, degrading, and painful. A sexuality in which male dominance and female subordination are inherent. A sexuality in which women are denied the status of human beings; we are pieces of meat, commodities, instruments for men's pleasure—whores.

Considering "Deep Throat" is the largest grossing film ever, we can dismiss the myth that pornography is only enjoyed by a few "perverts."

In a society where one out of three women will be raped within her lifetime, and where one out of four girls will be sexually abused by a family member by the age of 16, pornography, which

advocates sexual abuse, must be taken seriously.

McKinnon and Dworkin claim their law will "empower people and call into question the legal immunity of the exploiters for the first time." But is giving the courts the right to decide these cases "empowering" women?

The judicial system, not women, will be empowered by the law; judges, not feminists, will decide for us.

Male protection is never a substitute for the power to protect ourselves and control our own lives. If we continue to allow men to "protect" us we are at their mercy. Male "protectors" don't make feminist decisions.

The patriarchal state has always been an opponent of women's freedom. How can we be so quick to forget the people who've asked us time and again if we enjoyed being raped? Who right now want to take away our right to control our own bodies? Who have failed time after time to convict our batterers and rapists because they were our husbands and lovers? Who convict the prostitute but never the john?

Presenting the state with even greater power over our sexuality would be an act of insanity for the women's movement. "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." (Audre Lorde)

It's easy to imagine how this ordinance may be manipulated and abused. Part of the ordinance stipulates that material must meet one of nine conditions, e.g. women being presented as "whores by nature." Many religious right-wingers believe any woman who enjoys sex is a whore.

What would these reactionaries think of lesbian erotica?

Right-wing groups have jumped to support anti-pornography ordinances. They can and will use them against us as feminists, gays, and lesbians. A Suffolk County, N.Y., anti-pornography ordinance was worded to include sodomy—an attack on gays.

In Canada, the Ontario Censorship Board banned "Not A Love Story," the feminist film about pornography, in the name of protecting women!

In Indianapolis, Beulah Coughenour, a STOP ERA activist, coordinated McKinnon's effort's with those of Moral Majority minister Greg Dixon.

Hiding the pictures

Another troubling aspect of anti-pornography legislation is that while it purports to empower women, it does nothing to aid women working in pornography or as prostitutes.

Legislation pushing pornography even further underground will most likely result in increased danger to pornographic "actresses," exotic dancers, and prostitutes.

These women are already subject to abuse from clients, pimps, and the police with very little recourse. *In These Times*, Aug. 20, reported that female teenage prostitutes are raped an average of once a month. Adding to their invisibility and powerlessness is no solution.

Many times pornographic images of

women being raped, battered, and/or killed are records of actual events. The crimes are never reported. The pimp criminals are never brought to justice as they should be, because in our society it isn't rape if the woman is a "whore."

Will hiding the pictures—and the women with them—end the violence?

It is ridiculous to think that removing the pornographic eyesores which remind us of our own vulnerability to sexual violence will end that vulnerability or help women working in the pornography industry.

It is hypocritical. It is not feminist.

Pornography advocates rape, but is not to be equated with rape, a difference many anti-pornography activists tend to blur. That distinction is an essential problem with the Minneapolis

the hands of their parents and learn that violence is the easiest way to end conflict and assert power. At the same time children also learn passive acceptance of authority.

By assuming that male violence against women is distinct from other forms of violence we ignore the fact that through racial and/or class privilege women often act to maintain the system themselves.

Violence with many forms

An example of how sexual violence is connected to other forms of violence is the myth of the Black rapist (of white women) used as the rationale to terrorize Black communities and, its flipside, the sexual exploitation of Black women by their white employers and other



Ordinance. We cannot fool ourselves into believing that ending the threats will end the violence.

Pornography is primary to the ideology of woman-hatred. It is *not* the root cause of our oppression. And to end violence against women we must sever the root.

Capitalism and ideology

Teaching woman-hate is just another divide and conquer tactic of the ruling class.

Some people suggest that a great deal of privilege comes with male dominance and it is in men's interest to oppress women. But for most working people how much privilege comes with buying into the system?

Because capitalism is based on an uneven distribution of wealth, where workers do not own or control what they produce, the system must be maintained by coercive authority. This is experienced in our daily lives in our relationships of boss to worker, cop to citizen, landlord to renter, teacher to student, and parent to child.

As workers most people experience domination from their boss, supervisor etc., and the subsequent feeling of powerlessness. Yet, men are fed the exact opposite expectation by the media and cultural ideology.

It is no coincidence that instead of changing the power structure of the workplace men are taught to expect their share of dominance in the private sphere, the home. Capitalist ideology uses the family to give men a stake in the present system, a place where all men regardless of their social status are promised a live-in domestic and sexual servant and children to control.

Men are taught that to cause pain is masculine and to express pain is feminine. When they batter or otherwise dominate their families they can experience what they have been taught is masculinity. Women are the targets because there is no fear of punishment or retribution—as opposed to the consequences of attacking an employer or the police.

Children are victims of violence at

white men justified through the sickening myth of the Black "she devil" or "tempress."

How about "queer bashing," the violent retribution gays must fear for their nonconformity to compulsory heterosexuality?

Almost as common on television as sexual violence is racial violence. The most common T.V. image of Black men is as criminals being shot by white cops, for Black women it is being beaten by pimps.

The classic media image of the Native American is being slaughtered by the white cavalry.

The only way to end violence against women is to end the necessity for violence in society. This will never occur in a racist, patriarchal capitalist system.

"Feminist" separatism, while it pretends to be the most radical philosophy is actually reactionary. By assuming that men are inherently violent and abusive and women inherently their passive victims, separatists reinforce these cultural stereotypes.

It is non-revolutionary because it encourages a belief in a static "human nature" that is determined by sexual identity, with no capability of change.

Right now our right to abortion is under violent attack by the same forces Dworkin and McKinnon would unite with to pass their legislation. And they say they want to end violence against women!

Women must once again organize and get out in the streets to demand and affirm our equality. Our demands must reach and mobilize women who were ignored or alienated by the '70s movement. We must act again as a vital and viable political force, because no one—not the courts, not the police, not the legislature, not even a female vice president—is going to hold our oppressors accountable but us.

Women need real power, the kind that only comes through united struggle for our concrete economic and social needs. Spending a lot of time in court suing pornographers isn't going to further anyone's revolution.



By MARK HARRIS

They call it baseball, but its name is profit

There is a new national pastime sweeping the land. It's called making money the old-fashioned way. Remember when businesses could gouge their employees, untrammelled by such nuisances as collective bargaining, a minimum wage, and the right to strike?

Now, thanks to that lover of nostalgia in the White House, employers everywhere are getting a little heady over the prospects for a return to the "good old days" of a union-free America.

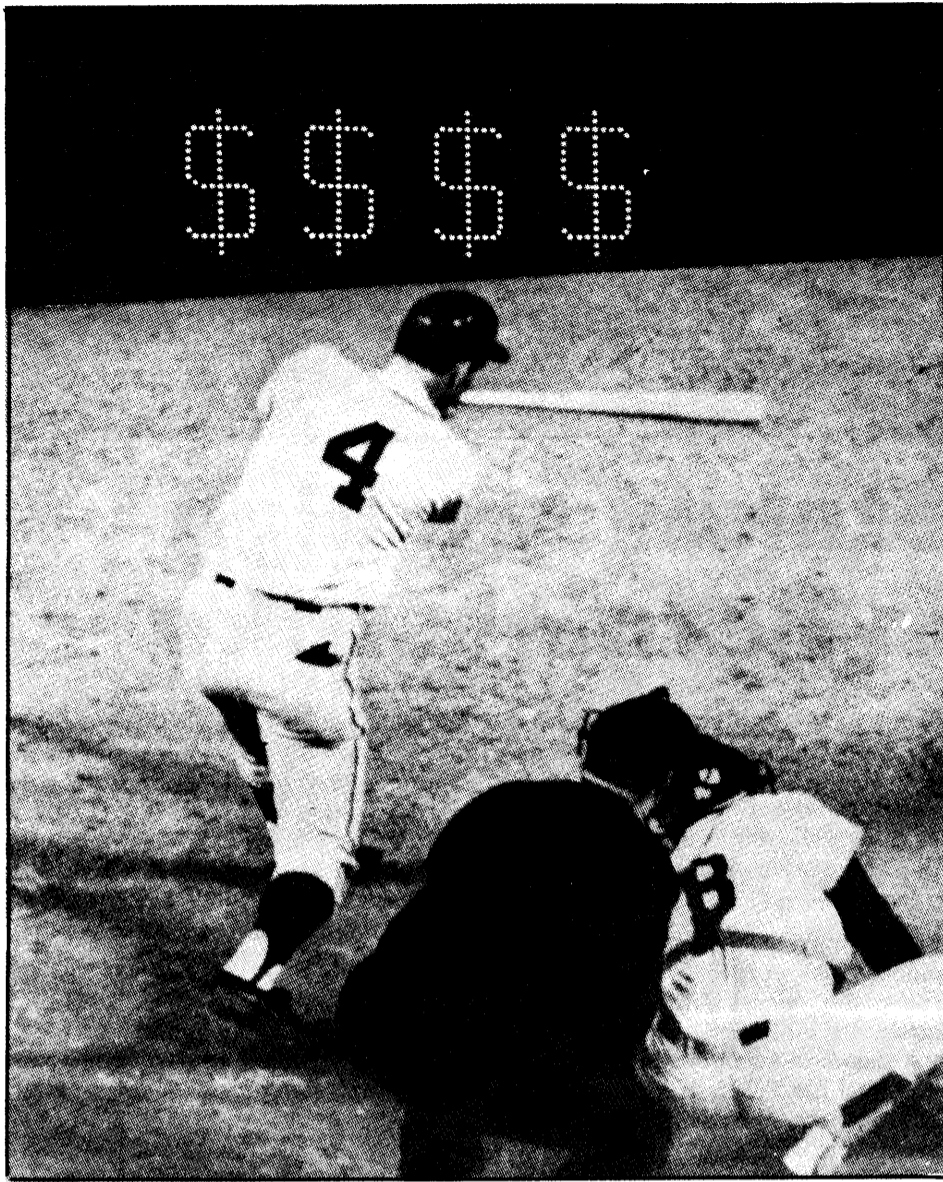
Things have gone so far that even professional baseball is not immune to the antilabor offensive. That's why it's good to see that baseball players proved during their brief strike this August that they know how to play hardball off the field as well as on.

For ballplayers the "good old days" meant working under a system that even *Business Week* described as "reminiscent of peonage." Until the mid-'70s players had little alternative but to play with the same club unless traded or released by the owner. This translated into rather modest salaries in a career that lasts four or five years on an average.

In 1973 players won the right to submit salary disputes to an independent arbitrator. Then, in 1975, a court ruling threw out the "reserve clause" that tied a player to one team as long as the owner wished. Forcing owners to compete for the top players translated into upwardly-mobile salaries, from an average of \$44,000 in 1975 to more than \$360,000 today.

The recent strike was another episode in the ongoing test of strength between the owners and the players. The owners claimed they can't keep up with the high salaries. The players countered that creative bookkeeping has hidden the actual profits made by most teams. The players also point out that since 1976 attendance has climbed almost 50 percent, and revenues have more than tripled.

For the most part the players came out on top. They defeated an attempt to put a ceiling on salaries and won an increase in the minimum wage. The union did concede that a player will have to play three years, instead of the current two, before being eligible for



arbitration during a salary dispute. Both sides also compromised on the share of TV revenues going into the players' pension fund.

Poor old George

Some people have trouble sympathizing with professionals who earn \$363,000 a year to chase a ball around a

field. One of those people is George Steinbrenner, owner of the New York Yankees.

Posturing as a friend of the fans, Steinbrenner said he could understand the frustration of the fans who see players making \$363,000 a year and want to know how much more they want? A better question might be to ask Stein-

brenner, who is also the chief executive officer of the American Shipbuilding Co., how much *he* earns and how much more he wants?

But an even better question for Steinbrenner: Why doesn't he try to recruit scabs next time the players go on strike? After all, there are only about 650 members in the union. Certainly he and the other owners would have no trouble filling the ballparks with scabs eager for their shot at glory.

Let's hope they give it a try next time around. It could only remind everyone why the players earn what they do, and offer some comic relief at the same time.

Let's face facts. They call it baseball but the name of the game is profit. If the owners had their way, younger players would probably find themselves enrolled in one of those Summer-Jobs-for-Youth programs, earning minimum wage.

Perhaps we'll even see the advent of a new concept in professional baseball—the no-frills team. The beer vendor could double as a relief pitcher. The star hitter might find himself belting out not only home runs but the National Anthem before the game. Fans would have to throw back foul balls hit into the stands since the pitcher had to pay for them. Everyone on the team would be a manager. Fans, too, would be management consultants.

Since 1976, 16 of the 26 clubs have been sold—10 since 1980—often for record-breaking prices. The high turnover in club ownership reveals more than the obvious fact that a few people are making a tidy sum from baseball.

It reflects a trend away from the baseball mogul of old, whose principal business was the ball club, to a new kind of corporate owner, who sees a baseball team as a convenient tax write-off or a useful vehicle for promoting other products such as TV programming or beer.

As with everything else, even our leisure time is ruled by the sign of the dollar. Why should baseball, which really belongs to the public, be owned by TV stations and breweries and financial moguls who don't hesitate to pack up and move if they think they can turn a healthier profit elsewhere? ■

Carhaulers beat back bosses' two-tier offer



By AL LUNFORD

NEW YORK—Carhaul Teamsters have shown not only the willingness but the ability and self-organization to fight the employers effectively, despite the role of the Teamster bureaucracy.

The industry, which is quite profitable, was demanding big concessions and the union negotiators tried to sell a concessionary pact. The July issue of *Teamster* quoted Teamster Vice-President Shea, who said that it was the "best contract we could possibly get. . . . It may be the single best contract in the entire International."

President Jackie Presser strongly praised the deal in a letter to carhaulers. Officials tried to sell it on the West Coast on the basis that the West did not get hit as bad as the East. The vote was structured so that everyone voted on other divisions' conditions: Owner operators, clerical, driveaway, mechanics, and yard employees—none got a separate vote.

Despite all of this, in a tremendous show of solidarity, the contract was voted down by 81 percent, the first time the membership managed to overcome the undemocratic rule requiring a two-thirds no vote to reject an employer's "final last offer" recommended by the officials. This shows how out of touch the bureaucracy is with the membership.

In the aftermath of the vote, the employers forced a strike by refusing to bargain in good faith. They demanded even more takeaways after the 81 percent no vote. Dealers had been stockpiling American cars for months as the contract was extended, until finally on July 26, 22,000 carhaulers struck.

As a result, as of Aug. 1, the dealers still had an average of 55 days' inventory, the highest level in years. Nevertheless, it was soon apparent that the

carhaulers were winning this strike despite the opposition of top officials, who hoped a weakly organized strike would backfire on the militants.

One of Presser's associates, Wendell Quillen, even ordered his Local 957 to scab during the strike. In its time-honored tradition, the officials would have to lose at the bargaining table what the membership was winning on the picket line.

Much improved settlement

On Aug. 15 a new proposed settlement was announced. Whatever its shortcomings, it was a big advance over the previous "best contract," proving the rank and file right. Major giveaways in the earlier pact—such as the automatic half-rate or 59 percent for brokers, loss of transfer rights, two-tier for drivers, and smaller wage increases for Western Conference workers—were dropped.

However, some concessions remain, such as allowing back-hauls from terminals with layoffs (which would cost jobs during a downturn), the cost-of-living clause remains gutted, and hourly employees still face a two-tier.

As a result, the largest carhaul Local 299 in Detroit and the rank-and-file Carhaulers Coordinating Committee of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) are calling for another no vote.

While the latest offer makes significant improvements, another no vote is needed to halt all concessions and to win back what was lost in the 1982 concessionary contract. While the carhaulers were ordered back to work before the new ballot, in case of a second no vote they will still be in a strong position to strike with the new car models being shipped.

In any case, the strike and no vote showed the changing mood and tremendous unity in the ranks. The members organized themselves to stop

attempted dealer pickups. They reached out to auto workers, held solidarity rallies, and sent flying squads to beef up the picketing at key areas.

New leaders emerged, and a national rank-and-file network, TDU's Carhaulers Coordinating Committee, won authority. These are big gains for the future as well. Whatever the upcoming vote, to be completed by Sept. 12, the membership will be in a much better position to enforce the contract.

Further tasks ahead

Beyond the current rank-and-file campaign for another no vote are other tasks posed by this fight. A serious organizing drive is needed aimed at the growing nonunion, driveaway, heavy-truck delivery sector.

Carhaulers can join other Teamsters in the runup to the May 1986 I.B.T. Convention to campaign for: establishing rank-and-file bargaining councils, abolishing the two-third rule on contracts in favor of the principle of majority rule, and putting the union on record against two-tier contracts.

Carhaulers also need to focus on winning job security. For a start, the practice of working 70 hours during eight days while others are on layoff should be stopped. Together we can bring the day when no one hauls anything if there's even one on layoff. ■



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

By MIKE ZUKOWSKI

AUSTIN, Minn.—By a vote of 1261 to 96, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 here rejected the George A. Hormel Company's "final" contract offer last Aug. 14 and decided to go out on strike.

The overwhelming opposition of the membership to Hormel's concession drive resounded through the city at a demonstration a few days later as striking workers chanted, "They say give-back, we say fightback!"

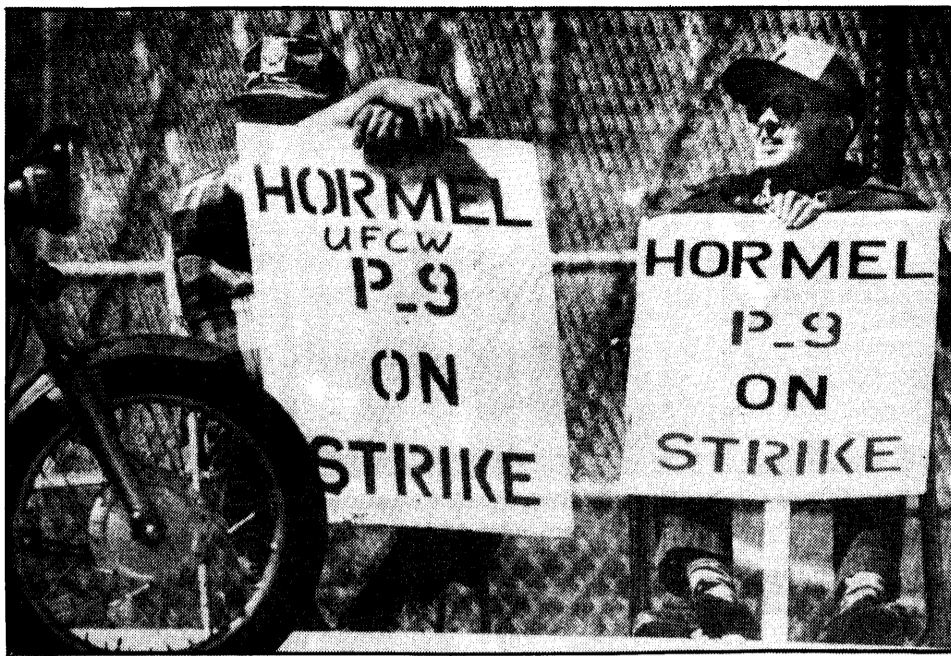
Local P-9 rejected a contract which would have set pay scales back to pre-1978 levels. Only last October, Hormel, the country's ninth largest meatpacker, slashed P-9 members' wages from \$10.69 to \$8.25 per hour.

On Aug. 21, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reported that Hormel's 1985 third quarter earnings were \$9.5 million, an 83-percent increase over the previous year's level. In 1984, Hormel had already reported the second highest earnings in its 93-year history. *Business Week* recently called the company the "envy of the industry because of its consistent profitability."

Hormel wanted to do more than lower wages paid to P-9 members, however. Their "final" offer would have robbed the union of crucial rights to audit work schedules for contract applicability and correctness. That and other provisions would have weakened the local's say over day-to-day conditions, with the eventual goal of wiping out the union altogether.

Union leaders point to the high injury rate at the plant, a heavily automated facility built in 1982, and proposed contract provisions, which would have allowed management to place workers on jobs regardless of seniority, as other major reasons for rejecting Hormel's demands.

Local P-9 has been campaigning for



Stakes are high in Hormel strike

10 months to win support from the public in anticipation of an unavoidable strike. Hormel has consistently responded with threats to move their corporate offices out of Austin because of its "poor labor climate."

Media smears, chain link fences

Since early last winter, when P-9 launched its "corporate campaign" to expose the mighty financial interests represented on Hormel's board of directors, the news media has often tried to imply that the P-9 leaders are wild-eyed hotheads who lack the support of the membership.

The media has focused on the open split between P-9 and the UFCW Inter-

national which has resisted P-9's bold moves since the local pulled out of the national bargaining framework for the Hormel chain last year. But the overwhelming vote of confidence for the local's course of action shown by the contract-rejection vote has forced the media to backtrack on some of their earlier attempts to undermine P-9's campaign.

Hormel Vice President Charles Nyberg responded to the strike vote with the threat that "the company definitely is not caving in."

Company officials have been quoted as saying that Hormel will consider hiring temporary or permanent replace-

ments for the striking workers in two weeks.

Hormel has erected a chain link fence topped with barbed wire around its corporate offices and is employing ostentatious "security" measures on the property.

The corporate giant's attempts to prejudice the public against the local took a sinister turn just six days after the strike vote. Company officials announced plans to move their families out of town for their "protection" and have charged an individual with making a death threat against Hormel Chairman Richard Knowlton.

More credible to anyone familiar with the open and public nature of the union's campaign for a just settlement are P-9 members' reports of threats and tire slashings they have experienced.

The best answer to Hormel's violence-baiting tactics is contained in the activity of P-9 members themselves, who have traveled statewide and to neighboring Iowa and Illinois speaking to farmers' meetings, to other UFCW locals, to meetings of railworkers, steelworkers, autoworkers, explaining their cause and soliciting support.

Plans are underway to use the first two weeks of the strike to reach thousands of Minnesotans at shopping centers and through door-to-door canvassing with the facts of P-9's cause. The local and the United Support Committee are organizing hundreds of strikers and spouses to carry out this aspect of P-9's fight to begin to turn the tide against concessions among organized labor.

Local P-9 members understand exactly the stakes involved in this fight both for themselves as individuals and for every union worker in this country. P-9's fight is interrupting the seemingly endless stream of concession agreements since the Chrysler concession contract in 1980.

... Wheeling

(continued from page 1)

ening not to make future payments. Corporate spokespeople claim an extended strike will force the company to permanently close the mills.

Workers reject attacks

The workers have not given in to this pressure. Despite its early threats, the company has not attempted to start up any of the struck steel mills. Mass picket lines successfully stopped company attempts to move steel in Martins Ferry, Ohio, and Follansbee, W. Va.

As one steelworker explained to a District 28 support rally, "We're doing this for ourselves and our fathers who gave us this union and our children who we're going to pass this union on to."

Steelworkers say they're not really on strike—they've been locked out by the company. They're ready, willing, and able to return to work immediately under the terms of the agreement that was in effect prior to Bentz's ruling.

However, the conditions imposed in the company's "Modified Wage and Benefits Program" are tantamount to slave labor, with the union totally broken. No guarantees of seniority protec-

tion, grievance procedure, or working conditions remain.

Wages, which were already considerably less than at other basic steel mills, were further slashed. While the lowest paid worker would suffer a \$3-per-hour direct pay cut, most workers would suffer a \$4-per-hour wage cut, and some better paid workers would lose \$55 a day.

Vacation time and holidays would be reduced. The health insurance plan would be gutted with workers being forced to pay large deductibles and co-insurance penalties in the name of cost efficiency.

A trial run

The union was negotiating a possible new concessions package before Wheeling-Pittsburgh filed for protection under the federal bankruptcy laws. USWA attorneys are appealing Judge Bentz's ruling, arguing that the company failed to meet the necessary legal criterion to cancel its agreement with the union.

Since these conditions constitute a lockout, workers have applied for unemployment compensation. The company has gone back to Judge Bentz, requesting that he order the states of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio

not to pay unemployment compensation benefits.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers prepared a leaflet explaining the issues of the walkout, including what the real wage offer is, to answer the company's lies and to help show other workers the importance of their struggle. They've leafleted grocery stores, churches, and community meetings, winning growing support.

Local merchants have donated food to the strike headquarters. Many small businesses are offering discounts to Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers. Other area trade unions have pledged their full support. Even local politicians have felt pressured to voice support for the strikers.

Most basic steelworkers recognize that Wheeling-Pittsburgh is a trial run for next year's basic steel negotiations. At joint union-industry meetings, all the steel companies have indicated their plans to demand further concessions.

As LTV Steel Corporation continues to post large quarterly losses, rumors persist that it will also file bankruptcy. U.S. Steel Corporation, which doesn't even claim to be losing money, has stated its intention to force through the same wages and working conditions Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers have.

Solidarity grows

Busloads of steelworkers from other areas have joined Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers on their picket lines to express their support for the strike.

On July 31, District 28 sponsored a mass solidarity rally at the Steelworkers Hall in Cleveland. Marty Hughes, president of the Cleveland AFL-CIO and an international vice president of the Communication Workers of America, pledged the full support of the Cleveland Federation of Labor.

In explaining the importance of this fight, UAW Region 2 Director Warren Davis said, "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was only the right of the elite in this country. Working people never had these rights until we orga-

nized the trade unions. No politicians ever gave us anything. We forced politicians to pass laws respecting workers' rights. No one gave it to us."

Davis ended his remarks by addressing the Wheeling-Pittsburgh strikers in the crowd, "You're fighting the fight for all organized labor. You're sending a message to corporate America that we're madder than hell and that we aren't going to take it anymore. You're giving spirit and heart to the rest of the American trade union movement and we all owe you a debt of gratitude for that."

District 28 director Frank Valenta explained that this rally and a similar rally at the USWA Local 1375 Hall in Warren the next day were launching a district campaign to Save Our Steelworkers.

Support must be expanded

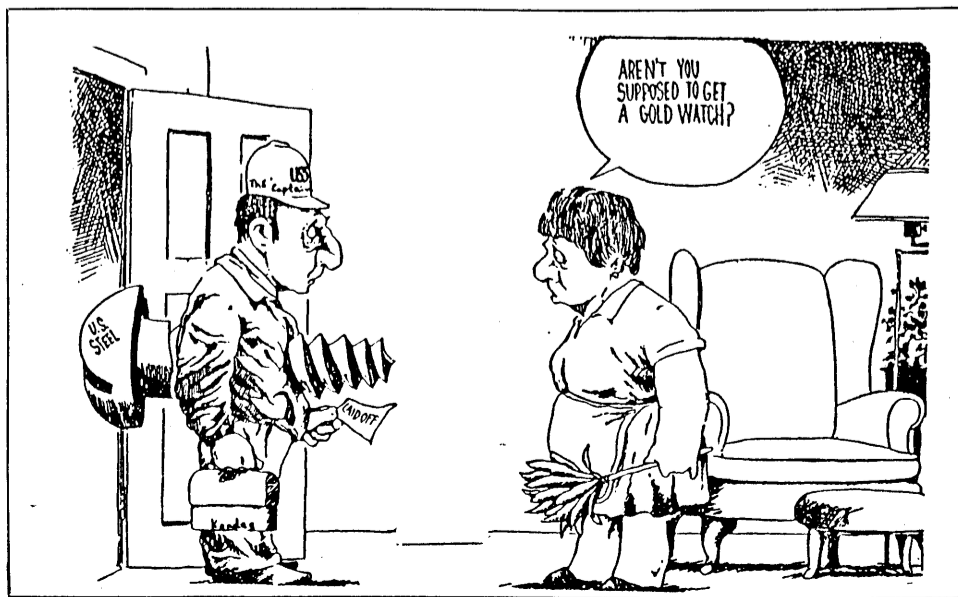
Every working steelworker in District 28 is being asked to donate \$1 per day to the Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers for the duration of the strike. In addition to these donations, local unions have contributed money, and successful plant gate collections have been held.

Two hundred local union officers from District 28 and District 30 (Cincinnati) who were attending an educational seminar at Linden Hall in Dawson, Pa., went to one of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh picket lines. As they got off the buses, singing "Solidarity Forever," they presented the money they'd collected. These 200 local officers donated over \$1500.

The Wheeling-Pittsburgh strikers have expressed their determination to stay out "until hell freezes over if necessary."

They're unanimous in their opinion that they won't allow the steel barons' union-busting attempts to succeed.

The initial support from other steelworkers must be expanded. Such solidarity is essential to force Wheeling-Pittsburgh to retreat and to help turn around the bosses' offensive against the wages and working conditions of the U.S. workers.





Socialist Action Forum

This month's issue of *FORUM* is devoted to a discussion on the ruling-class attacks on the unions and the perspectives for labor's fight against concessions.

We have invited leaders in the trade-union movement to express their views on this important topic. Our goal in this *FORUM* section is to promote a wide-ranging discussion on all subjects of interest to those active in the labor, antiwar, Black, women's, and other social movements.

In this issue of *FORUM* we are presenting the views of four participants at the planning meeting of the National Rank and File Against Concessions, which took place Aug. 10 in Gary, Ind. [See story on page 10.] They are the following:

1) John Tirpak, vice president of United Steelworkers of America Local 1223 in Yorkville, Ohio; (2) Tom Laney, president of United Auto Workers Local 879 in St. Paul, Minn.; (3) Ed Ott, vice president of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union Local 8-149 in New York; and (4) Darrell Becker, president of Shipbuilders Local 61 in Pittsburgh, Pa.—The Editors

Tom Laney:

'Concessions are killing labor'

The following is an interview with Tom Laney, president of United Auto Workers Local 879 in St. Paul, Minn. The interview was conducted by Alan Benjamin on Aug. 14, 1985.

Socialist Action: How do you assess the employer attacks today, particularly as they affect auto workers?

Tom Laney: The most dangerous thing that we face today are these quality-work-life programs that are being organized and institutionalized at General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler.

These are so-called partnership situations which have led to the type of bargaining done on the Saturn agreement.

The Saturn agreement means the elimination of seniority systems; the elimination of lines of demarcation in the skilled trades, classification systems, and production areas; the elimination of shop-floor representation—of any real kind of grievance procedure.

The Saturn agreement is similar to the NUMMI [New United Motors Manufacturing Inc.—the General Motors-Toyota Joint Venture] agreement in Fremont, Calif. We're appraised that the Alpha agreement at Ford will be patterned after Saturn.

Roger Smith [the chairman of General Motors] has already gone on record saying that the Saturn agreement is just the beginning—that the object is to Saturnize the entire industry.

S.A.: What do you think can be done to respond to this fundamental challenge to the labor movement?

Laney: Well, there's a fight going on now, involving the steelworkers in Wheeling and the packinghouse workers in Austin, Minn. I think if those fights were won, this would generate a lot of local union activities. I think it would mobilize a lot of membership feeling—galvanize people who are tired of all these concessions, tired of the way this leadership has been bargaining.

There's a group now called National Rank and File Against Concessions that I think has some promise. I'm sure the international will say this is a form of dual-unionism, but I think what it really

is an effort to organize people in the ranks for a return to a more traditional style of bargaining.

S.A.: Could you tell us more about the Hormel fight in Austin. Have you been involved in organizing support for the workers there?

Laney: Well, they are going to strike tonight at midnight. They've been fighting for a return to the \$10.69 wage they were earning before last October, when the company slashed wages by 23 percent. The union then hired Ray Rogers and the "corporate campaign" people.

I think that Rogers has brought a lot of good organizational skills to that local union. At the same time, the local has a real good executive board, and Guyette [Jim Guyette is president of Local P-9 of the United Food and Com-

(continued on page 12)

John Tirpak:

'We're striking for our community'

The following is an interview with John Tirpak, vice-president of United Steelworkers of America Local 1223, which represents workers currently on strike at the Wheeling-Pittsburgh works in Yorkville, Ohio.

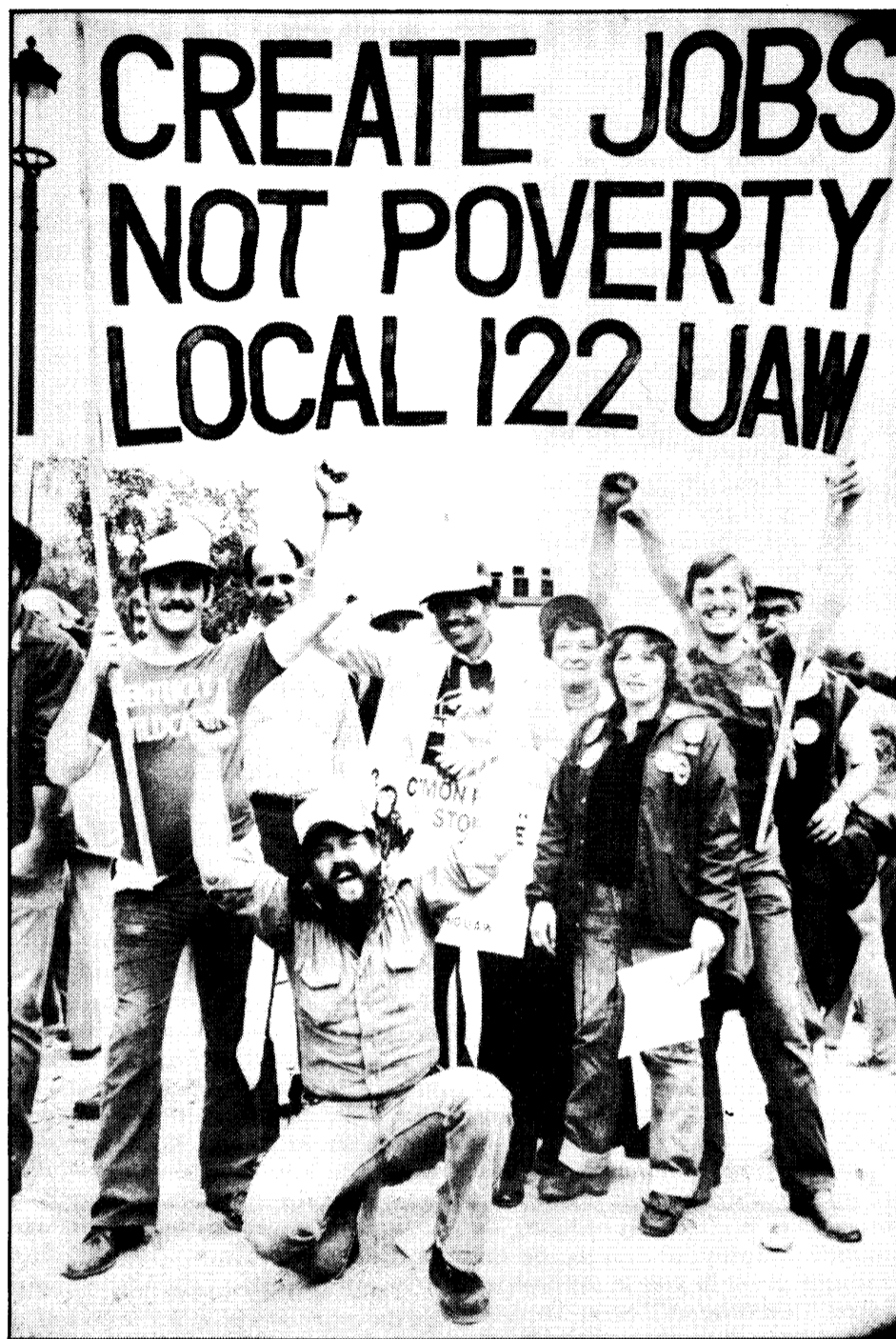
The interview was conducted by Shirley Pasholk at the Aug. 10 anti-concessions meeting in Gary, Ind. Tirpak was one of the speakers at this meeting.

Socialist Action: Could you go into some of the issues involved in the Wheeling-Pittsburgh strike?

John Tirpak: Well, first and foremost is the monetary issue. There's an approximately 32-percent pay cut. Aside from that, following the abrogation of the contract by a federal bankruptcy court judge on July 17, we have several non-monetary issues.

These concern the company's desire to unilaterally install their own grievance procedure, the extremely ambiguous language regarding seniority, and contracting out. Then there's a clause in the cover letter of the proposal—it's not even a contract—which gives the company a unilateral right to interpret, change, or modify any part of that proposal on a whim.

S.A.: This isn't the first time you've been asked to make concessions. You've taken concessions several times before



Barbara Weinberg/Solidarity

to happen in my opinion.

S.A.: When you spoke to the conference today, you talked about some of the gains that were given up a long time ago, like the right to strike in between contracts. Could you explain what you think this has done to us?

Tirpak: I explained that in my view, at one point in time—eons ago—no-strike contracts were probably mutually beneficial in that they provided people with some measure of security, knowing that there would be no work stoppage for the next two or three years.

But I believe that the no-strike clauses have outlived their usefulness. I also think more responsibility for controlling some of the wrongs that are inflicted on people should be taken at the local level.

S.A.: What type of support for your strike have you gotten from the community and from other trade unions in the area?

Tirpak: Community support has been outstanding in the Wheeling-Pittsburgh area. I've been talking to some of the people who were on the picket lines in 1959 [the last strike in basic steel was 26 years ago—The Editors] and according to them, it's night and day as far as community support goes.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh, you know, hasn't done the community any service because along with abrogating the contract and the bankruptcy claim, they have failed to pay taxes in the communities in which they do business, eroding the tax base and causing a lot of mayhem for these communities.

Take Yorkville, for example. Seventy-five percent of Yorkville's operating income comes from the taxes of Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel's large plant. The

(continued on page 11)



Ed Ott:

'We have to be blatantly political'

The following is an interview with Ed Ott, vice president of the New York area Local 8-149, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. The interview was conducted by Alan Benjamin on Aug. 15, 1985.

Socialist Action: How do you view the employers' current concessions offensive and what will be needed to fight back and win?

Ed Ott: I characterize concessions as a symptom of an overall disease. They are a small part of a general, across-the-board attack by large sections of capital against organized sectors of the labor movement.

There's the call for redoing work rules and many of the contractual protections that workers have won, for example. There are also all kinds of demands for out-and-out rollback of wages, two-tier wage systems, employee-participation schemes, stock-option plans, etc.

So how do we fight concessions?

I don't think we can isolate out the concessions fight because what is really happening is that basic power relationships are changing. Capital clearly has the upper hand at this point. In many instances they seem to be totally intolerant of even weak labor organizations. So they're out to destroy the organizations.

Their need to accumulate capital at the expense of workers has resulted in a strategy that is effectively reducing the standard of living of workers. So this attack has got to be seen in the broadest context. Otherwise we'll never develop a strategy that will be of an offensive nature.

My major problem in the short term with the no-concessions demand is that it is totally defensive. It doesn't have any appeal to those sections of workers who were once organized but are now either out of union jobs or unemployed. It doesn't have any appeal to the poor, and it doesn't have any appeal to those who work but who've never been organized.

What's going to save the unions is a general political thrust that labor is a part of. The revitalization of the trade-union movement and the question of independent politics are two sides of the same coin. I don't see one happening without the other.

You're not going to rebuild the trade-union movement in a shop-by-shop, local-by-local struggle. We have to develop an overall strategy for a class of

people who are under attack.

S.A.: Many union activists would argue that you first need a generalized fightback on the economic level before the question of independent politics can be posed as an action proposal.

Ott: I think that local unions and individuals will fight concessions as they are presented. They will fight two-tier where they have the ability to do so—although most unions at this point seem to be accepting one of several variations of two-tier wage systems.

But the problem with just fighting concessions in the short term is that there'll be no tomorrow.

It's been clear in case after case that the employers' strategy of concessions, once it's got a toehold in a particular industry, spreads throughout it and then it spreads to other industries.

The thing that we have to understand is that it wouldn't have been possible to launch an economic attack against organized workers if the unions themselves had not been so isolated. I mean isolated within the context of the general working class, and isolated as a political institution within the general society.

Concessions and two-tier are symptomatic weaknesses of a general rot inside organized labor. We've had a labor movement that had a policy of cooperation with capital in the whole post-World War II period. But now that the capitalists have decided that they don't want to cooperate, we have a labor movement that is unable or unwilling—or both—to fight back.

Those who say we can only fight first on the economic issues are really talking about unions at a time when they had some real power and were primarily organizations of economic defense.

I think what we've seen in the last period—particularly in the last two years—is that unions are not able to carry out their traditional role as a means of economic defense for workers. What do we say to workers when the issue is plant shutdowns?



What we need at this point is a broad discussion and a broad program in an attempt to revitalize the labor movement. Unionists are going to have to broaden out their conception of the labor movement.

We're going to have to become blatantly political—because without that we are not going to appeal to other sectors of society, gain some allies, pick up some real political strength, and begin to move forward.

If we fight what's going on now on a union-by-union basis, we'll never develop the organic ties to other sectors of society who are also under the heel.

S.A.: One of the principal roadblocks for working people has been the labor officialdom's strategy of reliance on the Democratic Party. How do you see the labor movement breaking out of the Democratic Party straitjacket?

Ott: At this point, for labor people—particularly for those who describe themselves as left or progressive—to say that they want to put energy into the Democratic Party and "reform" it is a fatal mistake.

It is wrong, I think, to place any faith in a political party that is really adopting the notion of a "convergence of ideas" within the framework of U.S. capital.

If you think about it, after the Mondale defeat, substantial portions of the Democratic Party leadership have

decided to step to the right. They want to attempt to play politics within a set agenda that has already been laid out by the Republican Party and large portions of U.S. capital.

I think that a break with the Democratic Party is possible. I think that at this point we have to develop a network of our own—what we like to call independent political clubs—that can work toward independent political action. By we, I mean the people of the Workers Policy Project with whom I work.

I believe that in any Congressional district where we can get local unions and community organizations together and commit 500 people to the building of a new organization, a new type of politics, we should even begin to consider running candidates for local office.

I think it's time for the labor movement to take the short-term losses and cut its ties to the Democratic Party. I think it's possible to do this. It's the only way we're going to capture the imagination of people and, quite frankly, I think it's going to be the only way that we, as a labor movement, are going to be able to build strong organic ties to community, women's, and minority organizations. I don't believe they're going to find justice in the Democratic Party either. They too are going to be getting out.

Conference planned against concessions

By CARRIE HEWITT

GARY, Ind.—Plans for building a National Conference Against Conces-

sions to be held this fall in the Midwest got underway as nearly 175 trade unionists from across the country gathered here for an organizing meeting on Aug. 10.

Participants in the planning meeting voted overwhelmingly to authorize an interim steering committee to select a specific date and place for the national conference. Eleven regional representatives were elected to sit on the steering committee.

The purpose of the national conference will be to bring together trade unionists in each industry and from each region of the country to discuss the growing battle against concessions and to take steps to end the destructive pattern of leaving local unions on their own to fight against concessions.

Encouraged by the large turnout at the planning meeting, Tonny Algood, executive secretary of Local 18, Shipbuilders union, and one of the initial supporters of the national conference, opened the meeting by stating that "in order to be successful, we have to grab

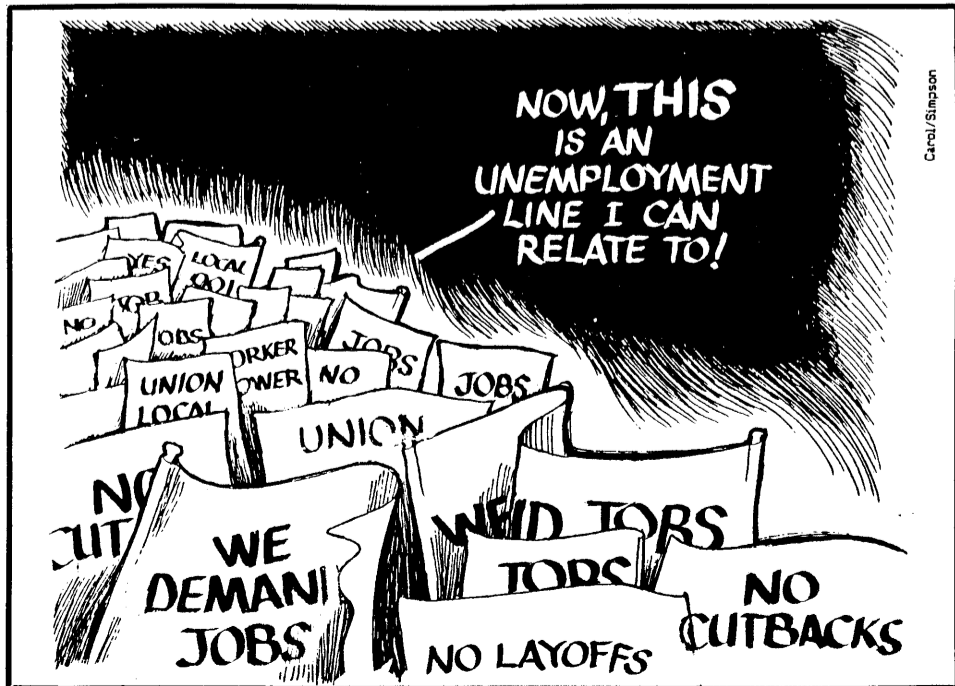
on to the common bond that binds us together...the fight against concessions."

The critical need for opening a concrete discussion on how the labor movement can effectively organize to fight concessions was further underscored in keynote speeches by representatives from unions currently involved in anti-concessions struggles against the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation and against the Hormel Company in Austin, Minn.

At the Gary planning meeting, union officials including David Arian, president of Local 13, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union; Darrell Becker, president of Local 61, Shipbuilders union, Pete Kelly, president of Local 160, United Auto Workers union; and Tom Laney, president of Local 879, United Auto Workers union, joined in supporting the call for the national conference.

In the coming weeks, the interim steering committee elected at the planning meeting will be putting together a specific agenda for the conference and will announce plans for fundraising.

Contributions and requests for further information should be sent to the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions, c/o UAW #879, 2191 Ford Parkway, St. Paul, MN 55116.



Darrell Becker: 'No union can win the fight alone'

The following is an interview with Darrell Becker, president of Shipbuilders Local 61 (IUMSWA), which represents striking workers at the Dravo Corp. in Pittsburgh, Pa. Becker was also one of the signers of the call for the anti-concession meeting held in Gary, Ind., on Aug. 10.

The interview was conducted in Pittsburgh by Shirley Pasholk on Aug. 17.

Socialist Action: Could you describe the struggle that you are currently involved in?

Darrell Becker: It started back in September of 1982. The corporation that I work for, the Dravo Corp., which is involved in barge and towboat building on the upper Ohio river, threw us a concessionary package in the middle of our contract. The understanding was that if we took a 55-cent-an-hour cut, we would get enough work to last us two to two-and-a-half years.

That split the union right down the middle. The existing president and many of the people in office pushed for the concessions, and the workers voted about three to two to accept it. But after we'd accepted the concessions, we found out that there was no work.

The workers were mad and they decided they wanted a change. We tried to get two or three different people to run against the existing president. Nobody would, so I was forced to run by the rank-and-file members of the union.

Once I announced I was a candidate for president, the company laid off my entire department. Since I was shop steward, that was the only way they could eliminate me, knowing full well that the bylaws of our constitution said you have to be actively employed to run for office.

We went to the national convention in October and tried to get the national union to see that the company was trying to manipulate a union election because of the concessions issue. They didn't want to hear it. They said the law had been in existence for a long time—there was no need to change it now.

We came back from the convention and the six or seven officers who were eliminated through different activities all ran on a sticker campaign, which is illegal. I beat the existing president three to one, although it didn't matter. It started a lengthy process of appeals between the anti-concessions people and the national union, and eventually led to another election that was held in July of 1983.

When the new election was held in July of '83, I won by acclamation. The week after I became president we opened negotiations with Dravo Corp. Ultimately, that led to a demand for a 38-percent wage and benefits cut on the part of the company. Naturally we refused, and that started a lengthy strike, lasting from September of 1983 until April of 1984, when the company announced a temporary shutdown.

We had a clause in our contract

which said that people would not be eligible for severance pay if they were laid off longer than six months. The company waited six months and one week and then announced the temporary shutdown. The national union cut off strike benefits. They said you can't strike a plant that's not operating.

So, in the process of all these struggles—to force the national union to help the locals struggle against the multinational conglomerate—much of the time was spent fighting the national union instead of fighting the true enemy—the company.

At Dravo Corp., we are still on strike. But two years later, there are very few people still struggling.

S.A.: You said that the company's concessionary agreement split the local down the middle. How do the workers feel now about concessions?

Becker: When the vote came up for a strike in September of 1983, it was almost unanimous against the concessions.

The workers knew then that concessions were not the answer. The company had recently put a \$300,000 spa on the

"It's like reorganizing the unions again."

top floor at corporate headquarters. They were making long range incentive plans for the corporate directors. They took the profits they made from the shipyard and used them to invest in several other industries.

In the Pittsburgh area, we see a move away from the heavy industries and into high-tech, service, nonunion, minimum-wage jobs. Dravo Corp. is just following the same policy that U.S. Steel, J and L, and others in the area are following.

It's an obvious attempt to blackmail the workers for concessions, pit worker against worker, and ultimately take advantage of the atmosphere to break the unions.

S.A.: What do you see being done to stop this chain of concessions?

Becker: More and more unions are being forced into searching for mutual allies outside the spectrum of the International union. We witnessed one example of this at the planning meeting we just had in Gary, Ind.

Workers in all walks of life—meat-



Socialist Action/May Gong

packers, shipbuilders, steelworkers—are beginning to see that concessions are not the answer. And it's about time people started allying themselves with others who feel the same way to develop some strength and power. The only way to combat concessions is to go to the heart of the issue and confront the company and the lending institutions.

The international unions' response is no response. It's conscious. They will allow the workers to fight their fight alone. There is no union that can beat a multinational conglomerate on its own. When you go on strike the company has the ability to move the work from state to state. The workers don't have that ability.

Many corporations are now trying to prove to people that you're better off to keep your mouth shut and accept the concessions. There is no response from the national unions to this either. So, you're seeing unions destroyed, with non-union plants opening up, and workers who are now getting \$6.50 to \$7 an hour.

S.A.: Why have the unions lost their muscle?

Becker: We are isolated and divided. If all the workers got together, we could beat a Dravo Corp. or a U.S. Steel.

The union labor force is down below 17 percent of the country and we are losing three percent a year. Why? Nobody wants to belong to a union because they see no benefit to it.

The unions have lost their focus. National unions are running the unions much like a corporation or bank—strictly by money.

When workers need the union most, when they're out of work, that's when the union has no response to them at all. We have to change this type of thinking.

Here at our local we have a wives' action committee and our own food bank. The people in our union see the union as an institution that's going to help them, and that's what a union is supposed to be.

Our national union's answer to a dwindling membership, which dropped

from 26,000 in 1980 to below 17,000 today, was to increase the per-capita tax in each of the locals. That's taxation without representation. They've forgotten how to organize.

They're rather self-serving individuals who are more concerned about self-preservation and wielding the power that will keep them in office than they are about helping the workers. I don't think they care what the wage structure is for the workers as long as the dues keep coming in. So that's got to change.

And how we change that is by eliminating these people. If they don't want to leave, they don't want to fight for the workers, we've got to push them out, from the bottom up. And I think you're seeing a lot of that now.

S.A.: Do you see hopeful signs of this rebirth of the union movement?

Becker: Every day. Unions have been beat up bad over concessions. There've been many unions that have lost and are now defunct. But most of the ones that are left have seen their membership dwindle so low that they actually have no choice but to fight.

What we're seeing that's an odd phenomenon is that now some of the staff men and lower level International people who were originally rather quiet on the issue of concessions are now beginning to bark as loud as some of the workers.

So, yes, I see a lot of positive signs. It's not going to happen over night, but we have to have the strength to carry through, and I think we will.

S.A.: You mentioned the meeting last week in Gary to plan an anti-concessions conference. What do you think is going to come of these plans?

Becker: That's going to be a true test. We have our regional planning session on Aug. 31, which will be a springboard for a much larger convention to be held in November.

I will be disappointed if we don't see 10 times the amount of people at that convention than we saw at the planning session. It's like reorganizing the unions all over again.

... John Tirpak

(continued from page 9)

company has failed to pay its taxes and consequently city services and city employees—including the police and fire departments—have been severely hurt.

So it's everybody's fight, not just the

steelworkers'. The communities are being starved in their own way.

S.A.: What's the mood of the Wheeling-Pitt steelworkers?

Tirpak: I think that the majority of the rank and file of Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel will not return for less than they walked out for. The average wage and benefit package altogether was somewhere in the area of \$21.40, and I

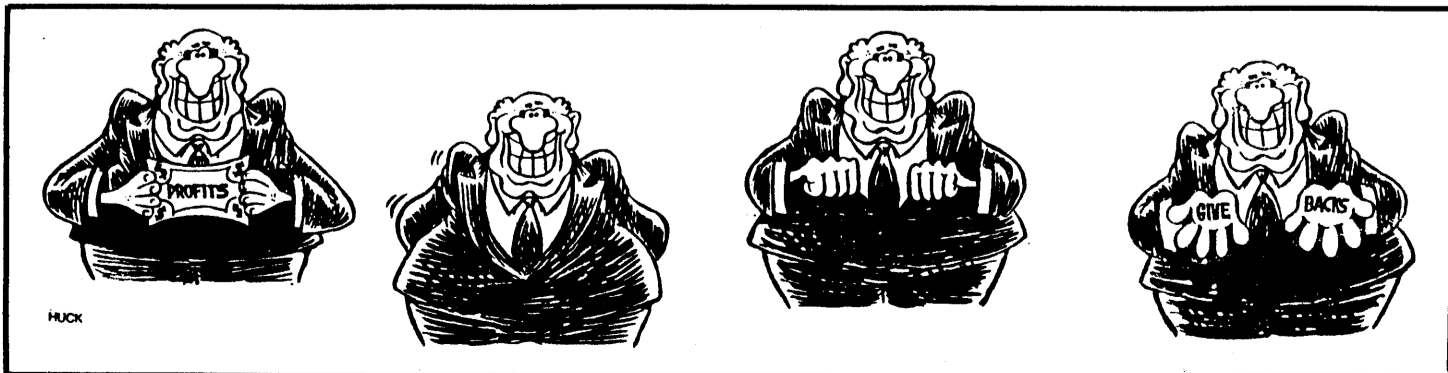
believe that the rank and file will hold out for the \$21.40.

I would say that the people of Wheeling-Pittsburgh—the rank-and-file, the people on the picket lines, and the leadership of the locals—all realize the consequences of not faring well in this matter.

We consider it a last ditch effort to preserve the middle class in the Mon and Ohio Valleys, two areas where it's fast becoming the land of the rich and the poor, and no in-between. Also, we are fighting to preserve standards throughout the industry and other industries that will surely fall like dominoes if we buckle.

S.A.: I've heard a lot of talk that you're not just fighting for yourselves and your own lives, but you're also fighting to save the union.

Tirpak: That's correct. The Wheeling-Pittsburgh situation is the P/CO of basic steel.



Solidarnosc—dress rehearsal for the coming political revolution

By CARL FINAMORE

Aug. 31, 1985, was the fifth anniversary of a massive strike wave in Poland that led to the signing of the historic Gdansk Agreements. Solidarnosc was formed—a 10-million strong, working-class, social movement rising up to challenge the decaying foundation of bureaucratic rule in Poland.

Still, the conservative and undemocratic leadership which Solidarnosc fought against retains dictatorial control of the economic and political institutions. Its policies are enforced through military and police repression whenever modest economic concessions are insufficient to quell the unrest.

The misrulers have a 40-year record of injustice and mismanagement which has drastically limited Poland's poten-

"The bureaucracy grew along with the misery of the workers."

tial since capitalism was overthrown after World War II. The policies and attitude of the regime have remained unchanged from that time.

With the country's resources being drained by this privileged bureaucracy, the mass of working people have never fully enjoyed the benefits of the nationalized industry, the monopoly of foreign trade, and the planned economy.

The Polish government sponsors inequality in the distribution of goods and services to satisfy its own narrow desires against the needs of the working class as a whole. And the Stalinist bureaucratic machine, misnamed the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), defends its privileged status by refusing to concede the slightest bit of democratic control to the millions of working people.

Despite the formal lifting of martial law in early 1983, the regime has continued to force the working class to absorb the dire consequences of a severely mismanaged economy. The 1982 average real income in Poland was as low as it was in 1946 with 30 percent of the population living below the poverty line.

And it's getting worse. Since the beginning of this year, prices for basic family commodities such as flour, rice, and cheese have risen by 30 to 40 percent. Fuel and energy supply prices have been boosted by 22 to 30 percent.

These unpopular and unnecessary austerity measures are drastically lowering the workers' standard of living in order to pay off the \$25 billion debt owed to 15 capitalist governments and 501 Western capitalist banks. More and more, the government has had to resort to military and police force to push through its economic "reforms."

Thus, barely 13 months after a general amnesty had released 652 political prisoners—many of them held without charges or trial—the regime has begun another campaign of repression. There are almost 200 political prisoners back in jail today, most of them the same ones who had been previously amnestied.

These include top Solidarnosc leaders like Adam Michnik, Wladyslaw Frasniki, and Bogdan Lis, who were recently sentenced to several years in prison for "inciting public unrest." They were arrested while meeting with Lech Walesa to discuss a response to the 1985 price increases.

Who is responsible for the crisis?

Typically, PUWP officials have blamed the workers and Solidarnosc for the serious economic problems confronting Poland. Aside from being

nothing more than a self-serving coverup designed to shift responsibility for the economic crisis away from the bureaucracy and onto the workers, the explanation is factually incorrect.

First, it must be recognized that the crisis occurred well before Solidarnosc came into existence. By 1979, the economy had virtually bottomed out. Poland's net growth in that year declined; the first time this had occurred in the postwar period.

And in 1980, when Solidarnosc was formed, lost production time due to strikes represented only 2.1 percent of all lost production time. In 1981, the last year of Solidarnosc's legality, strikes accounted for less than .2 percent of the lost time.

More than twice this amount of lost time was caused by material shortages induced by poor management and planning. Substituting bureaucratic planning for democratic control by working people, the national plan was often influenced by the conflicting biases of the various sections of the apparatus.

Different sections of the bureaucracy would compete in seeing who could spend the most from the massive infusion of loans beginning in 1976. This

caused severe damage to the economy as a whole.

For example, the Nowa Huta Lenin Works outside of Cracow grew into the world's largest facility as a result of a major investment effort in the 1970s. But major parts of the plant had to be shut down one to two days a week because of lack of electricity.

The expansion of the energy supply controlled by one sector of the bureaucracy had not kept pace with the frenetic industrial growth plans of another.

In another case, \$1 billion was spent on Massey-Ferguson designed tractors before it was realized that Polish farm equipment did not fit the tractor. Unable to export due to the world capitalist economic downturn of the 1970s and because the managers failed to obtain the proper export license, the plant produced 500 tractors a year instead of its original plan for 75,000.

A similar deal with RCA to build 600,000 TV sets in 1981 produced only 50,000 sets because of the scarcity of parts supplied by other sectors of the economy.

Other numerous examples of half completed factories lying idle because of faulty investment conceptions and decisions could be detailed. Bureaucratic mismanagement is responsible for the crisis, not the working class organizing to resist these abuses.

Polish history explains revolt

World War II began in 1939 with the Nazi invasion of Poland from the west. Remarkably, the Nazi attack had the tacit agreement of Stalin. In exchange, the Stalin-Hitler Pact permitted Stalin to recover land in Eastern Poland which had been forced from the young Soviet Republic in the 1921 Treaty of Riga.

Stalin's complicity with the Nazi plunder in Poland was accompanied by the dissolution of the historic Polish Communist Party. As in Spain earlier, militants who disagreed were executed. (After Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, in 1943, Stalin disbanded the whole Communist International in deference to his new allies, the British and American imperialists.)

Thus, the enormous prestige won by the Soviet Union's Red Army because



of its role in liberating Poland was partially offset by Stalin's reactionary and chauvinistic policies. These memories and the subsequent role of the Soviet Union in supporting the anti-working class policies of the PUWP account for the mass suspicion and hostility of the Polish people toward the Soviet leadership.

Role of the Catholic Church

Historically, millions of Poles have had deep illusions regarding the role of the Catholic Church. This is partially a result of the Church's opposition to foreign invaders since the 14th Century when a Polish king was first converted to Catholicism.

Unlike other European countries, the Church was not patronized by the dominant ruling sectors because most were Protestant invaders intent on taking the Church's riches for themselves.

A similar "nationalist" oppositionist stance was adopted by the Church against the Nazis during World War II. Over 3000 priests were killed in the war, many for heroic acts.

Most importantly, the Church is the only Polish institution outside of direct Stalinist control. It enjoys relative freedom to hold meetings and assemblies and has thereby attracted many of the politicized opponents of the regime. And finally, the Church skillfully utilizes its overseas ties to provide scarce

(continued on page 13)



Stamps of Solidarnosc leaders printed on underground presses.

... Tom Laney

(continued from page 9)

mercials Workers union] has done a great job. It's been a combination that has pulled that local union together.

After almost a year, they are still getting over 90 percent membership support for the union down there. I think that gives a lie to those people—to those labor bureaucrats—who say that the rank and file will no longer stand by these leaderships and that they don't want to fight.

I'm not saying that the "corporate campaign" strategy is perfect or anything like that. But I think that Rogers and Guyette complement each other. It's great for that local union.

And I think if they can win the fight, this could be pivotal for the entire labor movement. They are getting a lot of national publicity now. If they could win, that would be evidence to other local union people that they can stand up in a more traditional way for their rights.

S.A.: What is the mood among the ranks in your area?

Laney: In the past it was automatic to get a better shelf of benefits and cost of living. Things kept going up each bargaining period. But this isn't true any more.

I think people have become frustrated. They aren't quite sure what to

do about the concessions that are being handed down. Because of a long period of divorcement of the leadership from the rank and file, many members had the notion that things would always be taken care of. They didn't see the need to get involved in their local unions or in the labor movement.

What we're wrestling with up here is trying to convey to our membership that the labor movement is dying and will be killed by all these anti-union people, by all this concession bargaining, and that unless they get active and become a force in their local unions—a force like people in P-9—their own working conditions will be drastically affected.

S.A.: Some people said that the planning meeting in Gary, Ind., was somewhat narrower than they had hoped or expected.

Laney: I guess sort of everyone had the same feeling that it was pretty narrow. But there was also the feeling that you can't move a whole lot of people on an issue outside of concessions. Some people got up and spoke about the need for labor party formations, a general strike, and this kind of thing. But most people got up and said you can't move people on any of these other issues.

S.A.: So you think that the fight at this stage must be limited to the single issue of concessions?

Laney: That's right. We can then move on from there. As we move along people will be receptive to a lot of other

ideas. A woman got up at the planning meeting and asked that the meeting include something on the unemployed. I really agreed with her. I think this should have been on the agenda.

But I think that people who begin to understand what concessions are doing to us will see the need for organizing the unemployed and moving on to other issues.

S.A.: Many union activists feel that limiting the fight to concessions is too defensive and won't really find a responsive chord among the ranks and among labor's allies in the community?

Laney: I think that that it is premature to talk about a broader program for the rank-and-file movement. Speaking as a representative from my local, we don't have hundreds of people in line waiting to throw out the Democratic Party.

I know you can move people against concessions because in 1982 our local union was one of seven out of the 95 bargaining units that turned down concessions. This was in the face of a lot of pressures from the international union and all sorts of other problems in the local.

But I'm not sure the membership is ready to move on any other issue. I would probably agree with most other things, but these aren't issues that can mobilize the ranks today. That's true in my local and probably in most other places.

(continued from page 12)

consumer items to an appreciative population.

It is obvious that the Church derives much, if not most, of its influence from certain material economic and political needs it provides, and not from its spiritual or ideological services. As a result, the Church's influence is far more tenuous than most observers realize.

And, it should not be forgotten, the Catholic Church's opposition to the Stalinist dictatorship is pro-capitalist, while that of Solidarnosc is anti-capitalist as well as anti-bureaucratic.

The mass of Solidarnosc often disregarded the Church's admonitions to conciliate with the regime during the 1970, 1976, and 1980 strike waves. At one point, Walesa was even compelled to publicly advise the Church to confine itself to religious matters and leave the temporal world to Solidarnosc.

Mismanagement and repression

The whole period from 1948 to 1956 was marked by slow growth and repression. In 1956, 50 workers were killed in the Poznan food riots. In a particularly desperate move by the leadership, Wladyslaw Gomulka became premier and head of the PUP. He had previously spent a few years in prison shortly after Stalin had him removed from office in 1948.

His reputation in the partisan movement and as a victim of one of Stalin's purges gained him a big following. He

"Solidarnosc is anti-capitalist as well as anti-bureaucratic."

became a genuine national hero in Poland after he began opening up the jails and easing up on the censorship laws.

But none of his reforms challenged the basic power of the entrenched bureaucracy, and these reactionary forces began to reassert themselves. Favoritism, cronism, and special privileges for the apparatus ultimately required the reimposition of stern civil and political laws.

Nothing was solved by Gomulka. The bureaucracy grew along with the misery of the workers.

The 1970 demonstrations in Gdansk and elsewhere against price increases led to Gomulka's downfall after 200 had been killed. He was replaced by Edward Gierek.

Gierek criticized the "peasant mentality" of Gomulka which had led to the rather slow growth of 1.5 percent a year. He ridiculed the fact that the state had accumulated a surplus, which he said should have been invested in Polish industry. He blamed the poor economic plan for the crisis.

Gierek made incredible promises in an attempt to demobilize the growing and powerful workers' movement. For example, he assured every Pole they would have a home by 1985. Like most of his promises, this one failed miserably.

Only a couple of years ago, 235,000 newly-weds remained on waiting lists for apartments. With half the population under 30 years of age, housing remains in a deep crisis.

But Gierek did produce substantial wage increases of 40 percent during the 1970-75 period, compared with only 17 percent during the previous decade. However, his expansion plans did not rely on workers' democratic control in order to expand the economy. Instead, he relied on the capitalist banks, a policy which backfired at great cost to the Polish people.

Plan for rapid industrialization

The plan was to achieve rapid industrialization by using foreign credits to produce export commodities. The income from these exports would be

used to pay back the loans and develop Poland's economy.

But the saturated capitalist world markets drastically reduced export potential. And neither could these excess export products be absorbed domestically because the purchasing power of the working class was being slashed to pay the heavy debt obligations.

The effects of the world capitalist recession of the 1970s compounded the bureaucratic planning errors described earlier. Demonstrating an amazing lack of foresight for those who claim to be Marxist, the Polish bureaucrats did not anticipate the 1970s' world capitalist recession.

Thus, Poland's aggressive campaign to build its export trade never materialized. But, true to form, the capitalist banks were still demanding their excessive interest payments.

By 1981, the total export earnings were consumed by the usurious interest on loans paid to capitalist banks and governments. The pressure to manufacture export products to pay the \$25 billion debt had also created huge imbalances in the non-export sector, where little investment was made. This further crippled the economy.

The non-export domestic consumption industries like transportation and electricity were therefore not able to supply the export-oriented industries with enough spare parts or power. The whole economic plan began to break down.

Gierek tried to reverse the losses by doubling prices paid by Polish workers and peasants in 1976, but he had to retreat because of massive protests. Walesa was fired from the Gdansk shipyards during this period. He did not return until he climbed over the shipyard fence while the strike, which ended in the historic victory for Solidarnosc, was already in progress in August 1980.

The economic downslide accelerated in 1976. The regime stopped further investment and even halted many projects in progress. In addition, imports were drastically reduced by 50 percent from 1976 to 1981, causing severe shortages for the average Pole. Huge waiting lines for basic necessities grew.

Cutting imports has meant increased poverty for the working people. From 1978 to 1983 consumption of meat dropped 18 percent, eggs 10 percent, and rice 14 percent. Imports from countries demanding hard currency (capitalist countries) have dropped 50 percent since 1976, while the debt to capitalist banks and governments remains at \$25 billion.

A movement, not a party

The most important demand raised in the 1980 strike wave was for recognition of Solidarnosc as a union independent of the government and the PUP. Through the Gomulka and Gierek experience, the workers had learned that the bureaucracy was incapable of self-reform and therefore unable to solve the



Anna Walentynowicz rallies dock workers in historic 1980 strike in Gdansk.

political and economic problems of the bureaucratically deformed workers' state.

Solidarnosc began organizing on a geographic basis, not submitting to government demands that it organize separate and isolated units confined to each individual enterprise. This form of organization permitted Solidarnosc to address broader social and political concerns beyond the immediate factory conditions.

Solidarnosc was much more than a union, it was a social movement. As in any broad movement, its members expressed a variety of views. On the negative side, many Polish activists obviously do not understand the real role of the Catholic Church, capitalist countries like the United States, and leaders like Ronald Reagan.

The Stalinist rulers are mainly responsible for this miseducation. Their caricature of "socialist" and "communist" leadership has grossly distorted these principles in the minds of many Polish workers.

Therefore, Solidarnosc should not be judged solely by the incorrect statements of some of its disoriented or mistaken members or leaders. It should not be judged with the same precision as if

it were a revolutionary party with a definite program.

Though it retained its trade union form, Solidarnosc was developing toward a democratic form of working class political rule—the ultimate expression of which would be a Paris Commune or Soviet-type workers' council government.

As the struggle recovers and begins to rethink the past and consider the future, many different ideological currents will develop. A revolutionary-Marxist current is participating in the struggles and regularly publishes and distributes its magazine, Polish Inprekor.

Certainly the overwhelming majority of Solidarnosc members and leaders have shown no desire to return Poland to the landlords and capitalists.

Workers' democracy

Though driven underground, Solidarnosc supporters are still able to publicize their views. An efficient and amazingly effective printing network has kept 500 to 800 publications in circulation to millions of Poles. These include factory newsletters, periodicals, and even books.

Solidarnosc's program calls for the democratic election of workers councils to manage the economy. It calls for management to be directly responsible to the working class. The workers would decide through their elected deputies the division of income, preparation of economic plans, the monitoring of the plan, the supervision of management, and the hiring and recall of the workplace director.

This full-scale transformation of Polish society is actually a revolution. One that would replace the dictatorship of the bureaucrats with the democratic control by the working class.

Solidarnosc began this fight. It has been interrupted but not ended. The conditions remain ripe for the Polish working people to renew their claim to be the masters of their own destiny.

Solidarnosc's experience thus far will prove to be the dress rehearsal of the coming workers' political revolution that will be joined by the workers of Eastern Europe. This political revolution will ultimately mesh with the unfolding world socialist revolution in the neo-colonies and the imperialist centers themselves.

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Interview with Iranian ex-soldier: 'Khomeini fears overthrow if Iran-Iraq war ends'

Ebraheem is a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war. He was drafted into the Iranian Army, captured by the Iraqi forces, and held captive for more than a year before being released.

He is from the city of Mashad, near the borders of the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. This interview was arranged through a group of Iranians in the San Francisco Bay Area who are active in the support of Iranian refugees and against the role of U.S. intervention in the Iran-Iraq war. The interview was conducted in August 1985 by Don Mahoney and Mark Harris.

Socialist Action: When were you drafted into the Iranian Army?

Ebraheem: I was drafted in 1982. In Iran, all men must register and serve in the army for two years when they reach age 18. The government came after me three times before I registered. By that time I was 20.

S.A.: What happened after you were drafted?

Ebraheem: I spent three months in training close to Zahedan (south of Mashad). After that, I went to the front. I was at the front for almost 11 months. I was part of a search group that was responsible for locating and identifying mine fields.

One night, while on a search, another soldier and I got ahead of the rest of the group. Suddenly there was a flare over us and we realized that we were surrounded. At this point we decided to hide our weapons, and gave ourselves up as refugees.

S.A.: Why did you want to turn yourself in as a refugee, and not as a prisoner of war?

Ebraheem: Iraq has a radio station which has a lot of propaganda oriented toward Iranians. They made great promises to Iranians who flee Iran and take refuge in Iraq. We were also led to believe that Iranian POW's live in terrible conditions.

S.A.: How long were you held captive, and did Iraq fulfill its promises?

Ebraheem: For 13 months. At first refugees are treated well in the hope that they will denounce the Khomeini regime and talk about how good it is in Iraq. But after that they neglect you and the conditions get bad. Three hundred people might be crowded into a room the

size of an apartment. There was no space to sleep.

Since we were refugees, several of us tried to talk to the Red Cross about our conditions, but Iraq wouldn't let us. We even tried to escape, but we were caught. Some of the people caught were killed, including the soldier who was with me when we were first captured.

The Red Cross was somehow alerted to our plight after this, and they came to see our camp. We told them that the Iraqis had told us that since we were refugees, we had the right to go to another country. After some time, they finally secured our release.

S.A.: Do the Iraqis torture prisoners?

Ebraheem: It is very common among the prisoners of war. They would whip them on the back sometimes 70 or 80 times a day. Although I was classified a refugee, for one month I was beaten 60 times a day. They also burned the back of my hands with cigarettes.

S.A.: Let's go back to Iran. Is there much of a difference between the regular Iranian Army and the volunteer units such as the Pasdaran and Baseej?

Ebraheem: The Pasdaran are the Revolutionary Guards. The minimum age for the Pasdaran is 19 and they receive three months training. The Baseej is the volunteer army. The minimum age for the Baseej is 14, and they only receive 15 days training.

Both of these units do most of the fighting in the war. They are the ones who sacrifice their lives and get killed.

The army is made up of draftees and professional officers. They provide the planning and the support for the volunteer units.

S.A.: Why do people volunteer for the Pasdaran and Baseej?

Ebraheem: In Iran there is close to 50 percent unemployment. People join the Pasdaran not necessarily because they like the regime but because they need the money and they get special privileges. The same is true with the Baseej. Some of these people come from the unemployed. But most are from the lumpen elements.

S.A.: What about the reports of poison gas being used by Iraq?

Ebraheem: In the fighting over Majnun Island, I know that Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran, killing

many people. The chemical weapons they used go through the skin, so there is no protection. Iran doesn't have the facilities to treat people exposed to poison gas, so they have to send them to Europe.

S.A.: Is there much opposition to the war in Iran?

Ebraheem: There is opposition, but no organized opposition. I think maybe 50 percent to 70 percent of the people don't like the war, especially since Iraq

started bombing civilian targets. And the hardships of war, rationing food, etc., are of course unpopular. It's really affecting people's lives.

It seems like everything is on hold because of the terror in Iran and, of course, because of the war. Everything that is bad in Iran, from food shortages and unemployment to the repression, is blamed on the war. The government says, "Wait till the war is over." If Khomeini ends the war, then he will have to deliver on his promises.

Even in the army there is a lot of dissatisfaction with the prolongation of the war. Many within the army actually believe that the army could win the war if they could do the fighting. Instead the fighting is done by the Pasdaran and the Baseej.

S.A.: Why is there such a division between the army and the Pasdaran and Baseej?

Ebraheem: The government wants to give credit for any victories to the "heroes" of the revolution, the Pasdaran and Baseej. These are volunteer groups that support Khomeini.

S.A.: Is there much fighting in Kurdistan? What is left of the Kurdish struggle?

Ebraheem: The fighting has been going on since the revolution. All of the fighting against the Kurds is being done by the Baseej and the Pasdaran. Since the Baseej are so young and only get 15 days training, there was a lot of confusion. Many of the Baseej didn't even know who they were fighting. Now most of the fighting is done by the Pasdaran. They go in and destroy the villages and families of those who are fighting.

There are several groups fighting in Kurdistan: the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Kumeleh, and the Mojahedeen.

S.A.: Why do you think the Khomeini government wants to continue the war? Are they using the war to divert attention and stifle criticism toward their failure to carry out social and economic policies that can develop the country?

Ebraheem: Yes, I think that is true. They know that if the war ends, a lot of opposition to the regime will appear, and the Islamic Republic Party might be overthrown. ■

A war against the people

By MINA NEJAD

In February 1979, the people of Iran overthrew the widely despised Shah. The insurrection which toppled the Shah had been preceded by massive mobilizations and strikes by Iranian workers.

Nine months later, Iranian students captured the American Embassy in Teheran. During the next several months, massive mobilizations against imperialism occurred in Iran. Takeovers and attempted takeovers of embassies took place around the world. Although Khomeini tried to demobilize the workers after the revolution, he was only partly successful.

In September 1980, Iraq's Saddam Hussein began to fear the spread of revolution across his border. Using the pretext of a border dispute, he ordered an invasion of Iran.

The United States was hardly opposed to this scheme. Although they were not a supporter of Hussein—who at that time was getting arms from the Soviet Union and was a foe of Israel—the destabilization of the region caused by the war would be to the imperialists' advantage. And the longer the war lasted, the harder it would be to advance the Iranian Revolution.

The people of Iran realized that the war was an attack on their revolution and mobilized against the invasion. They had no intention of allowing imperialist domination of their country again.

However, by July 1982, the situation had changed. Iran had launched a counter-attack with the goal of overthrowing Saddam Hussein and exacting huge war reparations from Iraq. Iraq refused to discuss any peace proposals from Iraq.

This counterattack by Iran signaled a new stage in the war. The war was no longer a defense of the Iranian Revolution. Instead, it was becoming a war which both sides were afraid to end.

For the last three years, the war has been at a stalemate. And the longer it has lasted, the more barbaric it has become. Iran uses human waves of young boys against Iraqi artillery and minefields. Iraq uses poison gas. Both sides have resorted to widespread use of bombing civilian targets. The number of casualties on both sides is staggering.

Both governments gambled on the war and cracked down on internal dissension. Both sides increased their attacks against the Kurdish people fighting within both Iran and Iraq for their own freedom. Both sides turned toward imperialism for increased military aid. Taxes were increased, food became more scarce. Inflation increased while wages began to decrease.

As a result, neither side can afford to end the war until its own regime is stabilized. Yet the economic and political crises caused by the war make this stabilization of the regimes even more difficult. The only options facing the regimes is increased aid from imperialism and increased repression against their own people.

Workers and peasants of Iran and Iraq have nothing to gain by continuing this war. The only victory for them is the overthrow of both Saddam Hussein and the Islamic Republic Party of Iran—not through a foreign army—but through the hands of their own workers and peasants. ■

... South Africa struggles

(continued from page 1)

Students in an attempt to stop a "national week of protest" initiated by the Black organization.

The student protest was called to back demands for the withdrawal of troops from Black townships, an end to the state of emergency in effect since July 20, and the release of jailed students.

On Aug. 28 police tear-gassed protestors at the predominantly white University of Cape Town as students unfurled portraits of imprisoned African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela. The students responded by pelting the police with stones.

The students held a rally at the university when it became clear that the police would not allow them to join a planned march to Pollsmoor prison to demand Mandela's release. Police also attacked a group of 1500 students and several priests at the Hewitt Teacher Training College and another group of demonstrators at the University of the Western Cape—which is set aside for mixed-race students.

On Aug. 29, according to local teachers, police fired indiscriminately at high school students returning from a protest march in Manenberg, a suburb for people of mixed races near Capetown. Dozens were killed or wounded in the Capetown area during the bloodiest police riots in more than five months.

Police earlier arrested close to 1000 children—some as young as six—in a crackdown on school boycotts in the Soweto area. Armored personnel carriers descended on schoolyards to beat and round up children who had violated the state of emergency by "loitering."

Trade unions challenge racist state

Anti-apartheid protest has entered a new phase as Black trade unions—spearheaded by the mineworkers—increasingly join student and community groups as the backbone of the movement.

According to Ramaphosa, union leaders have begun to confront the government politically in response to mounting pressure from the rank and file.

The growing confidence felt by Black workers is in large part a result of their increased power within South African industry, which served as a high-profit oasis for foreign investment during the early 1970s. Despite high unemployment during the current economic crisis in South Africa, Black trade unions have tripled in membership since they were legalized four years ago.

Black automobile and rubber workers helped to organize an on-going boycott that has cut purchases from white-owned businesses in the Eastern Cape region by close to 30 percent. The mineworkers participated in extending the boycott to communities in the Transvaal in order to protest the state of emergency.

Next month the mineworkers plan to meet with other Black trade unions in order to consolidate a strong, nonracial federation that would represent up to 500,000 Black and white workers.

The apartheid government is particu-

larly vulnerable to a strike of the mineworkers at this time as it tries to weather its worst economic crisis in 50 years and an unprecedented flight of capital out of the country.

Economic crisis batters regime

Last year, capitalists—alarmed by their diminished ability to rake in superprofits—withdrew about \$2.1 billion from South Africa for less risky investments abroad. Foreign banks cut their loans to the country by 11.3 percent. The mineworkers' strike will further shackle the government's ability to obtain international credit.

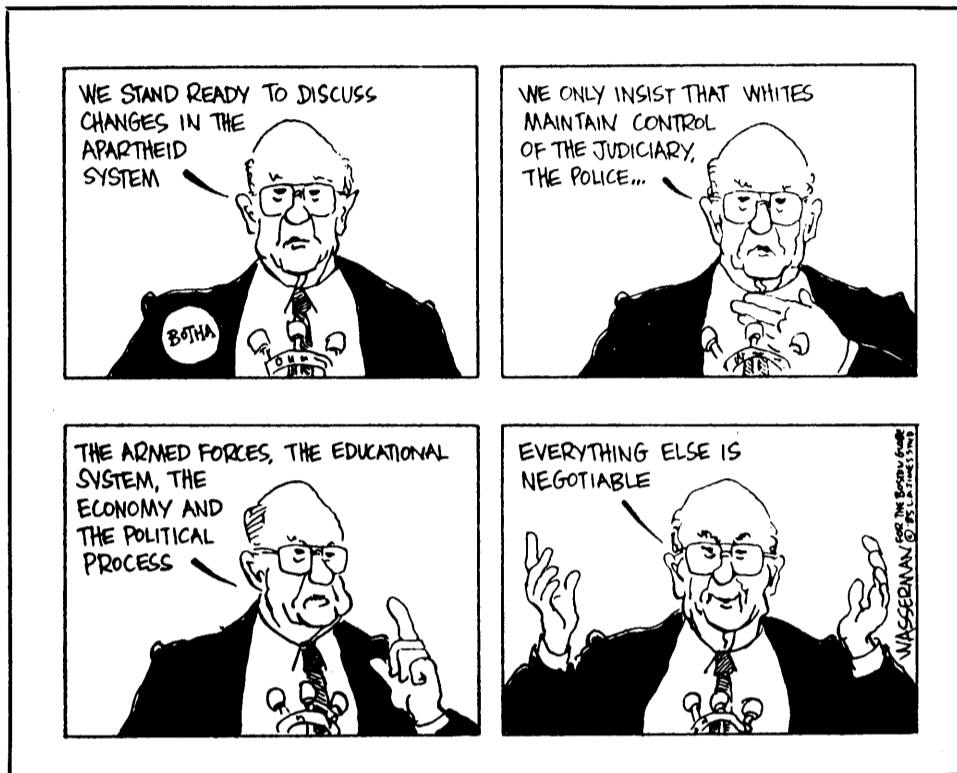
"U.S. firms can't escape the general level of unrest," a U.S. specialist on South African labor affairs told *Busi-*

ness Week. More than 350 U.S. corporations operate in South Africa, but over 30 have withdrawn from the country since 1980. Others—such as Ford Motor Co. and Coca Cola—have cut their operations sharply.

The slogan "Black majority rule" must cause U.S. business executives,

"Anti-apartheid protest enters a new phase."

who hope to retain their profits based on cheap Black labor, to shiver in their boots. Furthermore, they are undoubtedly aware that some mass-based anti-



38 activists face trial in S. Africa

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Several top leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) are on trial for their lives in South Africa. At least 38 trade-union and community activists face charges of treason in the biggest court battle since African National Congress head Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in 1964.

The trial opened for 16 defendants in Pietermaritzburg, Natal province, on Aug. 6, a few days after defense attorney Victoria Mxenge was assassinated by a clandestine death squad. The activists were charged with hundreds of "treasonous" acts, including giving speeches critical of the apartheid system, distributing pamphlets, and singing freedom songs.

It is expected that the judge will begin hearing evidence this month. Twenty-two other UDF leaders will be tried on similar charges in Transvaal province in October.

The United Democratic Front, which claims 2 million members in some 600 affiliates, is the largest and best-publicized anti-apartheid organization. Its platform embraces the charter adopted by the African National Congress in 1961 that attempts to unite all races in a common drive for freedom.

The National Forum, another mass-based coalition, is more concerned with a direct attack on the capitalist system. Its principal constituent is the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), which is rooted in the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s.

The South African government has tried to foment suspicion and rivalry between the two groups. Police blamed the June 1985 murder of four UDF leaders near Port Elizabeth on AZAPO members. Both groups, however, have rejected the suggestion.

Coalitions born out of struggle

Both the United Democratic Front and the National Forum were born two years ago during preparations for the successful boycott of elections for segregated Coloured and Asian chambers of Parliament. Two days before the election, police arrested 150 activists, including members of both groups.

Six members of the UDF had to seek refuge in the British consulate. They and other UDF leaders arrested at the time are among the 38 facing charges for treason.

The huge mobilizations against the elections and the mass organizations that developed out of them took the government by surprise. At one point, an angry crowd forced Louis Le Grange, the Minister of Law and Order, to turn back his armored convoy.

apartheid forces—notably the National Forum and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO)—have pointed out that capitalism itself must be replaced.

U.S. suggests compromise

The Reagan administration has tried to head off a larger explosion—just in case—by opting for the idea of "discussions" between the apartheid government and moderate Black leaders that could lead to some form of "power-sharing."

In fact, White House officials felt it necessary to echo several quisling Black leaders who criticized South African President P.W. Botha when he failed to include power-sharing among "promised" changes in a policy-making speech before the Natal Provincial Congress of the National Party on Aug. 15.

Botha has given priority, instead, to shoring up his own stature among an increasingly anxious core of racist whites. "Reform does not come overnight," he told a meeting of National Party youth on Aug. 23. "We shall not be stampeded into a situation of panic."

For their part, Black moderates such as Bishop Desmond Tutu and other church leaders have found it impossible to attempt to negotiate with the Botha regime and still maintain their credibility with the Black masses. Tutu observed, "I am the marginal man between two forces [reaction and revolution—M.S.] and possibly I will be crushed."

Time is running out for the strategy of moderation, which would ultimately sidetrack the rebellion in South Africa. But the United States is prepared to back the apartheid rulers to the end rather than hand over power to a radicalized Black majority.

As a showdown looms in South Africa, a series of massive actions by anti-apartheid foes in the United States to block any U.S. imperialist intervention becomes ever more crucial. ■

Early this year, Le Grange took the opportunity to exclaim to Parliament that South Africa is "moving into a potentially revolutionary situation."

A conspiracy?

And revolution, in the eyes of the ruling class, is the result of conspiracy rather than mass discontent and justifies severe repression.

Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and others were likewise charged with membership in a "countrywide conspiracy" to overthrow the state during their trial for treason that lasted from 1957 to 1961. After being found not guilty, they were rearrested in 1963 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

International pressure on the apartheid government helped to save them from the death penalty. Once again, the international labor movement and friends of civil liberties must mobilize in defense of the accused. ■

... F.L.O.C.

(continued from page 20)

available, they should be made available to the poor in this country."

"You're going to win"

UFW President Cesar Chavez was the keynote speaker. He declared, "Your struggle is our struggle. Your struggle is a just struggle. You're going to win very soon."

Chavez detailed the important gain in wages, benefits, and working conditions the UFW has achieved. He explained that it took over four years of striking and boycotting to achieve the union recognition that had made these gains possible.

When the convention adjourned, Toledo area trade union members joined with convention participants in a spirited march, expressing their determination to continue the pressure on Campbell's Soup Co. ■

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Fidel Castro & the Latin American debt

By ALAN BENJAMIN

In the last eight weeks, the Cuban government has organized five international gatherings in Havana on the critical issue of the Latin American debt to the imperialist banks and lending agencies.

The latest and most sizable gathering, held from July 30 to Aug. 3, was the Meeting on the Foreign Debt of Latin America and the Caribbean. This continental meeting brought together more than 1300 delegates from 31 countries.

Among the delegates were more than 100 trade union leaders and representatives of peasant organizations, 115 heads of political parties and other political organizations, 90 delegates from religious groups, 40 military officers, numerous large capitalists and landowners, journalists, artists, scientists, and others.

Even the Argentine government, which recently decreed a brutal set of austerity measures as part of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, sent an official representative to the Havana meeting.

"The debt is unpayable"

Although the continental meeting did not issue a final declaration on how to confront the debt crisis, the overwhelming majority of the delegates agreed that the \$360 billion debt is "unpayable and uncollectible." Rodomiro Tomic, leader of Chile's Christian Democratic Party, stated this point succinctly: "The debt is unpayable because we simply don't have the money."

Still, the inability to draft a final declaration reflected the wide range of strategies put forward to resolve the problem of the debt.

Some, such as Carlos Emmanuel, the representative of the Ecuadorian government, argued that the debt should be renegotiated with the creditor banks. "We think the debt should be repaid," Emmanuel stated, "but in such a way that does not affect the democratic and social stability of our countries."

Others, such as the ex-president of Colombia, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, pointed to the Peruvian example as a realistic and correct road for the debtor nations. Last month, the newly elected president of Peru, Alan Garcia, decided to earmark a maximum of 10 percent of gross export earnings for yearly interest payments on Peru's \$14 billion debt.

Still another position was taken by Anselmo Sule of Chile, head of the Latin Ameri-

can Bureau of the Socialist International. "We have a responsibility to pay back only about one third of the [\$360 billion] debt to the creditor banks," Sule said.

In this Sule echoed the views presented by Willy Brandt, ex-prime minister of West Germany and president of the Socialist International, in an interview with the Mexican daily *Excelsior* on May 9. Brandt then stated:

"The foreign debt of the poorest nations of the Third World must be cancelled. They must be freed from paying their debts. For the other nations I call for a system that significantly reduces the severe burden of the debt."

In the *Excelsior* interview Brandt also called on the Latin American governments "to reach a common position to put pressure for the renegotiation of the debt and for a reform of the international monetary system."

"Cancel the debt"

By far the most radical position on the debt, however, was presented by Fidel Castro in his closing speech to the meeting. "The debt is a cancer," Fidel stated, "a cancer that multiplies, that spreads throughout the body, that destroys the body. It requires a surgical removal. Nothing short of surgery can solve the problem."

Reiterating a proposal he has made frequently in recent months, Fidel urged the cancellation of the debt and the formation of a debtor's cartel of Latin American governments. Fidel explained at length why

Cartagena Group [which represents the governments of the 11 biggest debtor nations in Latin America and the Caribbean], but that its "only objection is that the Group has not expanded to include the other countries in the continent."

Finally, affirming that his proposals are not counterposed to anyone or any group seeking to find a solution to the economic problems of the region, Fidel stated that Cuba "is in agreement with and supports the idea of a meeting of Latin American heads of state, as was originally proposed by Argentine president, Raul Alfonsin, and later by his Peruvian colleague, Alan Garcia."

New economic order

Despite the differences on strategy, most of the conference's participants also agreed that the cancellation of the debt was only one of the problems facing the Latin American economies.

Throughout the conference, speakers insisted on the need to tie the issue of the Latin America debt to the demand for structural changes in the relations between the developed and underdeveloped nations.

The most commonly stated position, which was also Fidel's position, was the call for "a new world economic order" based on the principles approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974. This proposal was submitted by then president of Mexico, Luis Echeverria Alvarez, and has been endorsed by nearly all of the bourgeois governments of the semicolonial countries.

These principles affirm the

"IMF austerity measures amount to a declaration of war against the people of Latin America."

any other solution—such as paying 10 percent of foreign export earnings—"is simply not facing reality."

For the first time, though, Fidel also called on the Organization of American States (OAS), to intervene in finding a solution to the Latin American debt crisis. "It would be magnificent if, for once, the OAS did something useful and helped to resolve this problem," Fidel stated.

The OAS, it must be remembered, was created by and is totally subservient to the U.S. government, which utilizes it to promote its own interests in Latin America.

Further Fidel noted that Cuba is not opposed to the

need to eliminate "the unequal exchange, the unjust practice of protectionism, the uncontrolled actions of the transnational companies, and the monetary and financial manipulations that establish high interest rates and favor the overvaluation of the dollar."

Without such modification in international relations, it was repeatedly stated, the situation would be the same or worse than it is now—even if the debt was cancelled.

An incorrect framework

One of the central theses underlying Fidel's position on the debt is that the immense burden of interest payments is (1) a brake to economic development, (2) a threat to national sovereignty, and (3) a destabilizing factor in the region.

All of these are, of course, true. The austerity measures demanded by the IMF as a precondition for rescheduling the debt payments (severe wage cuts, drastic reductions in public spending, devaluation of the currency, etc.) amount to a virtual declaration of war against the people of Latin America.

And these measures are surely destabilizing the capital-



Poster of Latin American- Caribbean Trade Union Conference on Foreign Debt held in Havana, Cuba. The conference voted overwhelmingly to make Oct. 23 a continental day of protest against the imperialist debt.

ist system. Today millions of oppressed people in the region, with the independent trade unions taking the lead, are rising up and saying, "We cannot tolerate this situation any longer." As Fidel stated in one of his recent interviews, Latin America has become a powder keg about to explode.

Mass food riots against the IMF have already broken out in the Dominican Republic. The nationwide strike waves of the Brazilian metalworkers and of the Bolivian mineworkers for higher wages and against layoffs is another sign of the revolutionary ferment developing in the region. A revolutionary situation is in the making throughout the continent. (See *Socialist Action*, July 1984, pp. 9-12.)

Yet, while he has very correctly launched a continental campaign to cancel the debt, Fidel has made the important mistake of placing this struggle within the framework of a "two-stage" strategy for revolution in Latin America.

"Socialism is not on agenda"

One of Fidel's main points in his many interviews and speeches on the Latin debt is that the preconditions for socialist revolution do not exist today in Latin America. In an interview published in the Dec.

26, 1984, issue of *The Guardian*, Fidel states:

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

Given that socialism is not on the agenda, according to Fidel, it is therefore necessary to urge a policy of "national unity" with the national bourgeoisies to confront the IMF and U.S. imperialism. Only by removing the burden of the debt payments and by reforming the international economic order, Fidel affirms, will the objective conditions exist for the socialist revolution.

"I consider the struggle for a new world economic order to be the most important thing the Latin America and Third World countries can do now," Fidel told the Mexican daily *Excelsior*, "because it can lead to the creation of conditions needed for real independence, real sovereignty, and even the right to carry out social

(continued on page 17)

New theoretical supplement

Our October issue of *Socialist Action* will feature our first issue of the *Socialist Action Theoretical Review*, a special eight-page supplement to our regular edition.

Our first *Theoretical Review* will contain the following articles: "The SWP's Deepened Attacks on Trotskyism and the Fourth International," by Sean Flynn; "The Meaning of the 12th World Congress of the Fourth International," an interview with Daniel Bensaid; "The Stakes in the Discussion on Central America," an edited version of the resolution approved by the first national convention of Socialist Action; documents of the Peruvian Workers Party, and other short articles.



Protest against IMF-imposed austerity. Sao Paulo, September 1983.

(continued from page 16)

changes—and not only the right but the objective possibility of doing so.”

In his speech to the closing session of the conference on the “Situation of Latin American and Caribbean Women Today,” Fidel put it this way:

“Well, two, three, four, 10 revolutions in Third World countries, what would they mean on their own? I think it is more important right now for all those countries—I say so in a calm and objective manner—to solve the problem of the debt, the new international economic order, and create real conditions for development, because social change alone won’t solve the tremendous accumulation of economic and social problems.”

An accurate formulation of

contradictions with imperialism, are adopting positions which converge with those of the proletariat, the peasantry, and other non-capitalist sectors in the anti-imperialist struggle and for the conquest of economic independence and complete national sovereignty.”

Ruiz-Soto then notes that “no less important in this alliance is the group of progressive military [men] who are honest and who have spoken out for profound political and social change and have led important popular movements in defense of national sovereignty.”

Anti-imperialist united front

There is nothing wrong—quite the contrary—for Fidel and the Cuban Communist Party to urge a limited (not strategic or programmatic) front with sectors of the national bourgeoisie for the cancellation of the debt to the imperialist banks. Such a tactic

bourgeoisies of the region have demonstrated that they fear the revolutionary upsurge of the masses more than they dislike Yankee imperialism. They have fully demonstrated their inability to offer any solutions to the pressing problems of the oppressed nations.

Indeed, the national bourgeoisie is above all a ruling class which lives off the labor of the workers and peasants. The class antagonisms between workers and bosses, and peasants and landowners, in the semicolonial nations cannot be brushed aside or relegated to some future time.

The key purpose of the tactic of the anti-imperialist united front is precisely to win the oppressed majority away from the national bourgeoisie and to propel the working class in alliance with the poor peasantry into the leadership of the struggle for the uncompleted national-democratic tasks of the revolution: democracy, national liberation, agrarian revolution, and development.

The workers’ movement can march alongside the bourgeoisie against the imperialist debt and the IMF, but it must do so under its own independent class banner. In this way, as the bourgeoisie refuses to champion the demands of the workers and peasants and as it retreats from the fight against the imperialist debt—as it will invariably do—it will be thoroughly exposed before millions of people.

The example of the Brazilian PT

In Latin America today, the only correct framework for pursuing a campaign for the cancellation of the debt is the struggle to promote and build independent workers’ parties—such as the Brazilian Workers



Fidel Castro

company of Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), the president of the Brazilian PT.

During this tour, Lula gave an interview to the daily *O Estado De S. Paulo* in which he stated: “Since the time we founded the PT, we have awaited the emergence of parties similar to ours because there are identical problems in the rest of Latin America.”

On June 19, the *Folha* of Sao Paulo printed a press release from the Brazilian PT which stated, “The Workers Party announced yesterday that it will support and collaborate in the founding of the Peruvian Workers Party on Aug. 16-18

debt and of imperialist domination to the attention of millions of workers and peasants in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is entirely progressive.

But for the call to cancel the debt to genuinely serve as a lever to move the workers’ and peasants’ movements forward on a revolutionary course, it must break out of the “two-stage” framework.

This “two-stage” framework at best fuels illusions in the ability of the national bourgeoisie to lead a fight against imperialism. At worst it can derail the campaign for the cancellation of the debt by misorienting the only political force—the working class in alliance with the poor peasantry—that is capable of consistently fighting to break with the IMF and its policies.

The vehicles for advancing the struggle against the debt are not the Organization of American States, the United Nations 1974 resolution, or even an expanded Cartagena Group. These can only sidetrack the movement.

In the epoch of imperialism, as Leon Trotsky explained, the tasks of national liberation and economic development are inextricably bound up with the socialist revolution. In other words, without a socialist revolution there can be no national liberation and development in Latin America.

The example of the Cuban revolution itself is the best proof of the validity of this theory.

At the closing of the continental conference in Havana, Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula) told a journalist of the Mexican magazine *Proceso* that the five-day meeting “was able to diagnose the disease but not to provide a cure.”

Lula then went on to explain what is at the heart of revolutionary strategy in Latin America: “The most important thing, though, is not what we all say here but what we do when we return to our own countries... The key task before us is to take this issue to our people. Without mobilizations of the masses, nothing will happen.”

“A revolutionary situation is in the making throughout the continent.”

Fidel’s strategy is presented in the Aug. 5, 1985, issue of *Frontline* newspaper. Fully supporting Fidel’s views, the author of the article, Ethan Young, writes the following:

“One reason for Cuba’s improved relations with other Latin countries is that while Castro has been using his rising prestige to set a pro-Latin, anti-imperialist pole on the political scene, he has also been stressing the need for political and economic stability in the current period of post-military governments and warning against any tendency to seek instant revolution out of the ruins left by the crisis.”

Fidel, Young writes, is concerned about bringing together “a Latin Americanist front uniting everyone to the left of Augusto Pinochet” with the purpose of establishing increased democracy and economic independence.

Revolutionary nationalism

The theoretical underpinnings of Fidel’s overall strategy on the debt question were formalized at the International Theoretical Conference held in Havana in April 1982.

The conference’s keynote report was presented by Antonio Diaz Ruiz-Soto, head of the Cuban Communist Party’s Department of Internal Education (*Cuba Socialista*, No. 3, June 1982). In it he advocates the need to create the “broadest anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic democratic fronts” with the national bourgeoisies and the “patriotic” military.

Such broad alliances must “counterpose the defense of patriotic and revolutionary nationalism to the ravenous policies of imperialism and its internal allies,” Ruiz-Soto explains.

“It is a historical reality,” Ruiz-Soto continues, “that sectors of the national bourgeoisie in Latin America, due to their

is called the anti-imperialist united front.

But it is a serious mistake to advocate a policy of “national unity” with the national bourgeoisie in the framework of so-called “anti-oligarchic” fronts. These formations necessarily subordinate the interests of the workers and peasants to the needs of the national capitalists.

The national bourgeoisie in the semicolonial countries is a semi-oppressed class. It has no independent access to the world market and receives only a small portion of the immense amount of surplus value produced in their own countries. Its contradictions with imperialism are real.

The national bourgeoisies will inevitably recoil at the outrages of the imperialist overlords and will try to seek a larger share of the pie for themselves. This is the meaning of their call for a “new international economic order.”

There is no better example of this resentment and anger than the scores of “anti-imperialist” declarations made by prominent bourgeois figures at the continental conference in Havana.

But as the history of the entire 20th century has taught us, the national bourgeoisies of Latin America and of the semicolonial world will inevitably pull back from a fight against imperialism.

At all times, the national

Party (PT)—throughout the continent.

Only this orientation can channel the mass sentiment against imperialist and capitalist exploitation into an organized revolutionary force capable of wresting power from the ruling classes and establishing a new state based on the democratic institutions of the workers and peasants.

In early June, a delegation of Peruvian trade union leaders and members of the Provisional Committee for a Workers Party traveled to Brazil, where they toured the mining region of Santa Catarina in the

in Lima during the congress of the Peruvian workers.”

The extension of PT-type, independent, class-struggle formations marks a tremendous step forward for the revolutionary movement in Latin America. It is a course that can and must be extended beyond these two countries.

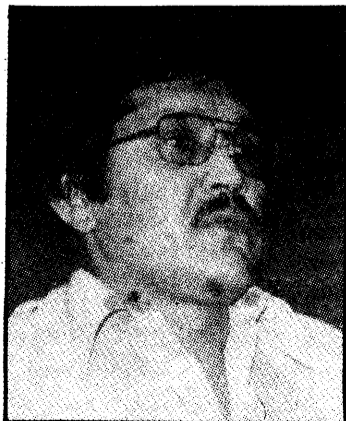
The example of the Cuban revolution

The fight against the imperialist debt and for a break with the IMF and its policies has been given a big boost at the recent conferences in Havana. Fidel’s call for a debtors’ cartel has brought the issue of the

“The conference was able to diagnose the disease but not to provide a cure.”

“The foreign debt was contracted by the governments of the Latin American countries on the backs of the people. In this manner, these governments demonstrated their incapacity to advance the economic and social progress of our peoples; a task which can only be accomplished by a sovereign break with imperialist oppression, as was demonstrated by the historic Cuban Revolution.”

—Excerpts from a resolution presented by Victor Cuadros, president of the National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Union of Peru and a leader of the Peruvian Workers Party, to the Latin American and Caribbean Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt held in Havana, Cuba, on July 15-18, 1985. [Full text will be published in our next issue.]



Victor Cuadros

Socialist veteran honors Trotsky and Cannon



The following is an edited version of a speech by Milton Alvin in tribute to James P. Cannon and Leon Trotsky. Cannon and Trotsky both died Aug. 21, but 34 years apart; Cannon in 1974, Trotsky in 1940.

Alvin, who joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935, gave this speech in Los Angeles on Aug. 25, 1985. We are running it as a two-part series beginning with this issue.

By MILTON ALVIN

The longtime collaboration between Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon stands as a unique chapter, but not the only one in the history of revolutionary socialism.

One is reminded of Marx and Engels and their many years of work together. The Trotsky-Cannon team lasted from the early years after the Russian Revolution until Trotsky's death in 1940, a period of almost 20 years.

The first direct help on the part of Trotsky to Cannon came in 1922 at the time of the Communist International Fourth Congress held in Moscow. Cannon and others in the American Communist Party wanted to come out of the underground, where it had been since it was organized in 1919, and to function openly and legally.

Trotsky's help was solicited and received after Cannon described the situation to him, explaining that it was possible to work in an open manner. At this meeting Trotsky was amused to learn that the "undergroundists" in the United States made it a matter of principle to function in this way, as Bolsheviks had in Tsarist Russia before the revolution.

It was pointed out that the situation in the United States was entirely different from that of Tsarist Russia. Trotsky sided with Cannon's view and promised that if it became necessary, he would take the question up with Lenin. But this was not needed as the Congress commission on the question supported Cannon's position.

"Socialism in one country"

Beginning in 1924, a great struggle took place in the Soviet Communist Party over fundamental questions. These were mainly around Stalin's new theory that socialism could be built in the Soviet Union alone, without revolutions elsewhere.

It meant abandoning world revolution as the basis for a socialist society and reduced the international communist movement to border guards largely defending the Stalinist bureaucracy. Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country" was diametrically opposed to what Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky believed.

Also in dispute was the false policy imposed by Stalin and Bukharin upon the Chinese Communist Party, which was compelled to give up its independent status and join the Kuomintang, a capitalist party. This led to the defeat of the Chinese Revolution in 1927.

Also, Trotsky fought against growing bureaucracy in the Soviet Union itself. Before Lenin died in 1924, he had proposed to Trotsky that they mount a campaign against Stalin and the growing bureaucracy that Lenin feared. This was agreed to but Lenin's death prevented him from taking part in the fight.

Lenin did, however, leave a testament in which he called for the removal of Stalin from his post of general secretary of the party. In the same document, which was hidden from the party by Stalin, Lenin described Trotsky as the most able member of the Central Committee, thereby implying that Trotsky should be his successor.

Cannon sides with Trotsky

None of this was known in the American Communist Party, nor was there any knowledge of the great struggle over principles that took place in the Soviet Union from 1924 to 1927. While denunciations of Trotsky and Trotskyism were plentifully sup-

plied to American communists, the actual issues in dispute were hidden from them.

Cannon refused to join the anti-Trotsky campaign, and when some of his supporters urged him to do so in order to protect themselves from attacks, he would not, explaining that it was not his place to oppose leaders of the Russian Revolution over issues that were unclear in the United States.

In 1927, after the defeat of the revolution in China, as well as other defeats—especially in Germany in 1924—Stalin was riding a wave of Thermidorian reaction and succeeded in expelling Trotsky and his followers from the Soviet Communist Party.

Trotsky was exiled to Alma Ata in Soviet Asia from where he kept track of events and corresponded actively with those who had been in general agreement with his views.

He then had no contact with American communists. The latter were going through factional fights of their own, but not over the questions that divided the Russian party into warring groups.

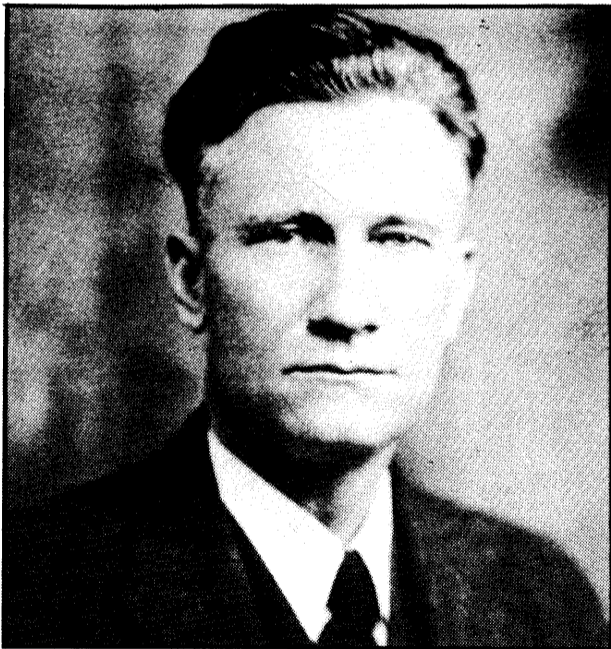
A congress of the Communist International was scheduled to be held in 1928. From his exile in Alma Ata, Trotsky sent a document to the congress for its consideration. It was titled "A Criticism of the Draft Program" and was a sustained attack upon a draft by Stalin and Bukharin which had been submitted to the congress.

Because Cannon and a leader of the Canadian Communist Party, Maurice Spector, were both members of the program commission at the congress, each received a copy of the Trotsky document which had been translated into English. This letter opened their eyes to what had been going on in the Russian party.

After studying it, Cannon and Spector agreed to fight for the ideas expressed in Trotsky's document. But they also decided not to open the fight in the Soviet Union, where they would not stand a chance, but to take the document back to the United States and Canada and open the fight there.

They did this and very quickly Cannon and two of his associates, Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, were expelled from the party. They then formed a new organization and went about the business of building a new party.

They concentrated upon the Communist Party,



James P. Cannon: 1890-1974

where they had never had a hearing for their views, and considered themselves an unjustly expelled faction, demanding that they be readmitted to the Communist Party with democratic rights.

Stalinist betrayal

In 1929 Trotsky was expelled from the USSR and he and his companion, Natalia Sedova, and one of their sons, Leon Sedov, who was a political associate, took up residence on a Turkish island. From here Trotsky was able to continue his explanation of what had happened to the Soviet Union and the nature of Stalinism.

This work, begun in 1924, now proceeded to become one of his most important contributions: An understanding of Stalinism as a revisionist, counter-revolutionary tendency. He also did a great deal of writing, including his monumental three-volume "History of the Russian Revolution."

In the early 1930s, as the threat of Hitler hung over Germany, Trotsky turned his attention to that country. Urging the Communist Party and Social Democrats to form a united front against the Nazis,

Trotsky turned out one article after another.

Between them, these two working-class parties were larger than Hitler's. But the Communist Party raised the slogan "After Hitler, Our Turn" and called the Social Democrats "Social Fascists" and a greater danger than Hitler. For the most part the Social Democrats looked with disfavor on the Communist Party and rejected any united front with them.

Thus Hitler was able to move into power without any real struggle.

This surrender to Hitler on the part of the Communist Party, which was carrying out Stalin's policy, convinced Trotsky that the Communist International was no longer viable as a revolutionary organization. He began the process of urging his co-thinkers to move toward the formation of a new, Fourth International.

Cannon and American Trotskyists were in agree-

"Trotsky fought against the growing bureaucracy in the Soviet Union itself."

ment and began to work accordingly to popularize the idea of a new international.

In 1933, Trotsky received permission to live in France and he and his household moved there. But conditions were unfavorable and eventually Trotsky and his companion, Natalia Sedova, were compelled to seek another country in which to live. They moved to Norway in 1935.

During their stay in France Trotsky was able to help his French associates. He received a visit from Cannon during this period.

The steps taken by the Communist League of America—the 1934 merger with the Musteite American Workers Party, and their entry into the Socialist Party in 1936—were supported by Trotsky.

Cannon was the foremost leader of the Americans who worked in favor of these mergers, which resulted in increases in the number of Trotskyists in America. In addition, Trotskyism was given a boost by its leadership of the victorious 1934 teamsters' strikes in Minneapolis.

Cannon helped in these events which, together with the strikes in Toledo and San Francisco in the same year, led in clearing the road to the formation of the CIO and the growth of industrial unionism.

By 1937 the welcome that Trotsky had originally received in Norway had undergone a change. Conditions imposed upon the Trotsky household, making them virtual prisoners, made it impossible to remain in Norway.

An opportunity to go to Mexico arose through an invitation from President Cardenas. In 1937 they moved to Coyoacan, near Mexico City. The infamous Moscow trials were still taking place.

By decision of the Norwegian government, Trotsky had been prevented from replying to false Stalinist charges that he was an agent of Hitler and the Japanese, among other things. But from Mexico his voice was heard.

"Not guilty"

In the United States a Commission of Inquiry was organized to hear Trotsky's side. Cannon was instrumental in getting the eminent philosopher and educator John Dewey to act as a chair of the Commission.

Hearings were held in Mexico during 1937 and the result was the publication of two books: "The Case of Leon Trotsky" and "Not Guilty."

The Commission's work absolved Trotsky from any of the charges made by the Moscow Stalinists and did a great deal to expose the falsity of the frame-up trials staged by Soviet bureaucrats.

In 1938 the Fourth International was founded at a meeting in Paris where Cannon was a delegate from the United States. The founding document, commonly known as the "Transitional Program For Socialist Revolution," was drafted by Trotsky. He asked Cannon to submit this document in the name of the Socialist Workers Party, the newly formed Trotskyist party in the United States. This was a gesture of his close collaboration and confidence in Cannon's team.

Part two of this speech will be continued next month. ■

Disagrees on Lenin

Dear editor,

In a recent article, Ann Robertson claims that the significance of Lenin's "April Thesis" is not in its continuity but rather in its discontinuity with the program he had shaped since 1905.

In her examination of the Bolsheviks' activity, she writes that prior to Lenin's arrival in Russia, "other leaders such as Stalin and Kamenev were forced to implement the Bolshevik program alone..." Nonetheless, she continues, they were proud of their activity and eagerly anticipated Lenin's approval. They were shocked, however, to learn that Lenin denounced their "implementation" of the Bolshevik program and was demanding a new course.

Given that the central leadership then in Russia lent critical support to the Provisional Government of Lvov, the strong implication arises that Lenin's Bolshevik program had misled those who were loyally implementing it. Lenin apparently recognized this error at the last minute and was able to re-educate the Party by adapting to Trotsky or at least scraping his previous strategy.

All of this follows if it were true that the Party leadership was implementing the Bolshevik program prior to April. Yet, in order to critically support the liberal capitalist and semi-monarchist government, Stalin, Kamenev, et al., actually had to consciously break from the Bolshevik program that dated back to at least 1905, and instead defect to the program of the Mensheviks.

This was recognized several times by Trotsky himself. In "Stalin," he writes that "It is even hard to understand how any Old Bolshevik could have so forgotten the 14-year old history of his faction as to resort at the most crucial moment to the most odious of the Menshevik formulae."

And, "the very idea ran too drastically counter to the whole tradition of Bolshevism."

It seems that Trotsky, unlike Robertson, recognized that the central feature of Lenin's strategy throughout the "tradition" of Bolshevism was the opposition to liberal and Menshevik scheme of moderation toward capitalist governments on the part of the proletariat.

Whatever else one may think of Lenin's strategy for revolu-

tion prior to April, it seems impossible to argue that the Bolshevik leaders of February could justify their compromising attitude upon it.

In fact, in "Stalin," Trotsky goes on to critique Lenin's strategy in 1905, but this does not prevent him from recognizing this point, which united them throughout their careers as revolutionary Marxists, distinguishable from the liberals or Mensheviks.

It may be a matter of convenience for Robertson to hang Lenin and his program with the opportunist actions of some of the central leaders prior to April; if that were the case, then his supposed conversion to permanent revolution would appear all the more dramatic.

William Baker,
San Francisco

A response

Reply to Baker,

It is true that Lenin argued that the big bourgeoisie could not lead the bourgeois-democratic revolution because of its economic ties with the landed aristocracy. And it was this bourgeoisie which was ushered into power with the February 1917 Revolution.

Hence one might infer, as William Baker has done, that Lenin's analysis implied unyielding opposition to the February Provisional Government. But this analysis, in my opinion, overlooks a deeper issue in Lenin's development.

In 1905, in "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution," Lenin emphatically asserted, "Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does that mean? It means that the democratic reforms in the political system, and the social and economic reforms that have become a necessity for Russia do not in themselves imply the undermining of capitalism...; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a wide and rapid, European, and not Asiatic, development of capitalism; they will, for the first time, make it possible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class." (Vol. 9, pg. 48—emphasis added)

Because of the big bourgeoisie's impotence, this bourgeois-democratic revolution, continued Lenin, would be led by the proletariat and peasants. "But of course it will be a democratic, not a socialist dictator-



ship." (pg. 56)

In January 1918, however, Lenin had the following retrospective comment: "The Bolsheviks spoke of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1905, but today, when the Soviets are in power, when the workers, soldiers and peasants have said—in a war situation unprecedented for hardships and horrors, in an atmosphere of ruin, and in the face of death by starvation—that they will assume full power and will themselves set about building a new life, there can be no question of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. And the Bolsheviks said as much at their congresses and meetings and conferences, and in their resolutions and decisions, as early as last April." (Vol. 26, pg. 475—emphasis added)

In other words, in April 1917, Lenin was rallying in favor of a dictatorship of the proletariat, while Stalin et. al. were still working within the 1905 framework which, although it did not designate the bourgeoisie as revolutionary, nevertheless talked in terms of a revolution which would allow "the bourgeoisie to rule as a class."

In this respect it is under-

standable why Stalin gave critical support to the February Provisional Government.

Ann Robertson,
San Francisco

Likes article on Mexico

Dear editor,

It is certainly nice to hear about the heartening electoral accomplishments of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra and other victorious candidates who ran on the PRT slate in Mexico [Socialist Action, August 1985]. Obviously, to gain 1.7 percent of the vote and elect six federal deputies is a very significant step forward.

It is striking that before the elections, the capitalist press in this country—especially the "liberal" press—chose to completely ignore that aspect of the story. On May 6, 1985, in *The New Republic*, William Orme styled them as the "fractious, ineffectual, Marxist left."

Moreover, Orme believed the "pro-business" National Action Party (PAN) was "the main beneficiary of popular resentment at the massive corruption and managerial ineptitude exposed by Mexico's debt crisis of mid-1982."

He and others in the United States were confident that the PAN, with its rightist program, would win such key races as the gubernatorial contest in Sonora.

Of course, since PAN failed to live up to its billing, many "Yankee liberals" have proclaimed the 1985 elections a grave setback. No credit was given to the leftist parties' abilities to emerge as clear alternatives to the PRI.

Clearly they cannot bear to contemplate that the example of Nicaragua has inspired the Mexican people to move in a similar direction. The future prospects are even better. That

scars all segments of the U.S. ruling class.

Keep up the good work in telling the real story.

Miles S. Richards
Columbia, S.C.

Update on Mexican vote

Editor's reply,

There is much more to the Mexican elections' story than what we were able to print last month. In coming issues we plan to focus on the situation in Mexico and the important role played by the PRT, the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

But for now a few additional bits of information: (1) The least-mentioned fact of these elections was the enormous rate of abstention. All independent sources agree that this rate was 60 percent nationally, a severe blow to the ruling party (PRI) and to the PAN, which was unable to capitalize on the tremendous discontent against the government's policies.

(2) The three major left parties as a whole increased their electoral strength significantly: The PSUM (the Mexican Stalinist party) obtained 3.55 percent of the vote and 12 deputies; the PMT (Mexican Workers' Party, a radical nationalist party) obtained 1.71 percent of the vote and six deputies; and the PRT, as we reported earlier, obtained 1.70 percent of the vote and six deputies.

The presence of 24 deputies from the left in the Chamber of Deputies is unprecedented in Mexico. But as Adolfo Gilly, a well-known Trotskyist living in Mexico, correctly pointed out in an article in the July 29, 1985, issue of *Proceso* magazine:

"If parliamentary cretinism is bad in those countries with a strong parliamentary regime; it is even worse in a system such as Mexico's, in which the parliament makes absolutely no decisions.

"The presence of the left in the parliament simply means that an important tribune has been obtained to support the mobilizations of the workers and the people—not to substitute for these struggles or even to lead them from the parliament."

—The Editor

We welcome letters from all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged.

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By WILLIAM LESSER

Salvadoran labor leaps to action

The labor movement in El Salvador has begun to spring to life. Recent work stoppages, sit-ins, and demonstrations bring back memories of the late 1970s before death squads and government repression drove the union movement underground.

Workers engaged in over 100 strikes last year compared to only four in the private sector during 1983. Garment workers, bank workers, hospital workers, fishing industry workers, postal workers, and employees of nearly every government industry have walked off the job in recent months.

The teachers' union, ANDES, has conducted a series of escalating work stoppages despite continuing repression. At least eight teachers have been murdered this year and 480 have been killed or disappeared since 1979.

Some job actions have been spectacular. About 12,500 Ministry of Agriculture employees went on strike in May in support of a co-worker abducted by the National Guard. On July 25 the secretary general of the Transport Union was freed by kidnappers after his union threatened to stop all public transportation.

On the same day, kidnappers were forced to free the general secretary of the Bank and Credit Workers after unionists in some 30 workplaces stopped work to demand his release.

Almost 20,000 workers and peasants rallied in San Salvador last May 1 to demand higher wages, freedom for political prisoners, and negotiations to end the civil war. It was the largest protest rally in the country in five years.

The banner of the National Federation of Salvadoran Unions (FENASTRAS) led the march. The FENASTRAS contingent was followed by an array of signs from other unions, including many from factories on strike.

Duarte attacks unions

The current upsurge is fueled by a deep economic crisis. A third of the working class is unemployed. The working class is grappling to recover from a four-year wage freeze that the government instituted in December 1980. Real wages have declined 40 percent during the last two years.

But President Duarte declared on



Urban workers demonstrate in the streets of El Salvador on May Day, 1984.

June 1 that "to demand outrageous wage increases... is really unreasonable and shows a lack of patriotism."

The next day Duarte sent troops to occupy four hospitals to end the strike of workers who were asking for a \$2-a-day raise on a \$5-a-day salary.

The labor movement responded quickly. Telephone workers, clinic workers, and workers at water and power plants stopped work in solidarity with the hospital employees. Over 7000 workers braved blockades set up by the army to join a support demonstration called by the Committee of Workers Solidarity, a newly formed coalition of 25 unions.

After four days of demonstrations, the government agreed to release the workers who had been arrested and to grant a salary increase to the strikers.

But the repression continues. On

Aug. 1 Doroteo Gomez Arias, the legal adviser to FENASTRAS, was found hanged in his cell after being arrested by the National Police. On Aug. 9 police agents kidnapped Ramos Marquez, the general secretary of the Poultry Workers Union.

Union breaks pact

The government's repression and unwillingness to resolve the economic crisis and civil war have drastically reduced labor support for the Duarte regime and for its allies in the United States.

The Confederation of Salvadoran Workers (CST) announced on Aug. 9 that it was withdrawing from a political pact it had established with the Duarte government. The CST's pact of support had been negotiated through the UPD, a coalition of five unions that had been founded by the AFL-CIO's American

Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD).

In the spring of 1984 the AIFLD channeled thousands of dollars into the UPD's campaign chest to help elect Duarte to the presidency. But more recently the UPD has begun to join protest actions against the government's austerity policies and lack of support for human rights.

When the UPD began to press for a negotiated settlement of the civil war, the AIFLD decided it had had enough and tried to supplant it with a fictitious rival union. In a letter to AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, UPD Secretary General Ramon Mendoza accused the AIFLD of using "anti-democratic and destabilizing methods and blackmail against democratic trade unions."

Fall tour slated

Workers in the United States will get a first-hand report this fall on the labor situation in El Salvador and other Central American countries. A group of trade union leaders, including Francisco Acosta, the U.S. representative of FENASTRAS; Marta Alicia Rivera, the U.S. representative of the Salvadoran teachers union (ANDES); Denis Melendez, head of international relations of Nicaragua's Sandinista Workers Federation (CST); and others will tour U.S. cities.

Acosta and others will speak in San Francisco on Sept. 12 at the SEIU Union Hall, 240 Golden Gate Avenue, at 7:30 p.m., Tel. 861-0425.

The unionists will visit Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and other East Coast cities in October and November. More than 50 U.S. union locals and union presidents have already endorsed the tour. For more information write the Central American Labor Leaders East Coast Tour, P.O. Box 38, Brookline, MA 02146. Tel. (617) 277-7259.



By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

TOLEDO, Ohio—Farmworkers from Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, Georgia, and Texas gathered at the UAW Local 12 Hall here to participate in the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's (FLOC) third constitutional convention Saturday, Aug. 3.

A large banner behind the speaker's platform summed up the mood to the delegates: "Boycott Campbell's Until the Contract Is Signed. Hasta La Victoria!"

The first resolution adopted by the convention resolved to continue the struggle for unionization and the boycott of Campbell Soup Co. products. FLOC began as an organization of

Farmworkers meet, reaffirm boycott

farmworkers in Northwestern Ohio and Southern Michigan.

Unlike their counterparts in the Southwestern United States, these farmworkers do not work for large growers. FLOC realized that the small farmers who technically employ their members are not the ones who really determine wages and working conditions.

Therefore, rather than concentrate on signing collective-bargaining agreements with individual farmers, FLOC has concentrated on the large canning companies—singling out Campbell's as a target.

Although Campbell's denied any responsibility, increased support for the boycott—including from the Ohio Catholic Bishops—has forced Campbell's to the negotiating table. When it appeared likely the National Council of Churches was going to go on record supporting the boycott, Campbell's leaked word to the press that a settlement was near and that FLOC was calling off the boycott.

Although FLOC leaders are hopeful that Campbell's will settle soon, they

emphasize that the boycott is not over. Convention delegates unanimously voiced their determination to continue the boycott until the contract is signed.

"We're not animals"

Several convention resolutions addressed the poor working conditions facing farmworkers. During the debate, delegate after delegate stressed, "We're not animals, but they treat us worse than their animals."

A convention resolution on Nicaragua stated "that FLOC calls on the United States to cease its war of aggression against the people of Nicaragua and end all aid to the contras, and... FLOC calls on the people of the United States to pressure the U.S. government to end its policy of aggression in Central America."

A resolution on South Africa stated, "FLOC's struggle against the Campbell Soup Co. stands in solidarity with the oppressed Black people of South Africa in rejecting the system of apartheid as well as supporting the Black workers' struggle for liberation in that country."

Henry Nicholas, president of the

National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, addressed the convention stating:

"The labor movement must be up front leading the people we represent. The labor movement must be up front fighting for economic and social justice. The labor movement must be up front fighting the insane nuclear policies of this nation."

Nicholas added, "If some funds are

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BOYCOTT

