

# A Socialist ACTION



Nicaragua  
p. 16

OCTOBER 1985 VOL. 3, NO. 10 50 CENTS

## 'Reforms' whitewash South Africa terror



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

"The decision has been made to dismantle apartheid," Herbert Beukes, Pretoria's ambassador to Washington, pledged before millions of U.S. television viewers last month.

At almost the same moment the ambassador gave his assurances, troops in armored carriers stood with rifles ready as thousands of Black people gathered near Capetown to honor a youth killed by police.

Close to the coffin, which was draped in the black, gold, and green colors of the African National Congress (ANC), a young man rose to address the crowd. He ridiculed the "reforms" that President P.W. Botha had proposed several days earlier.

"The police and army are brutalizing our people," he told the crowd. "What reforms can he talk about when meetings and protests have been made illegal by the state?"

About 700 people have been killed during protests in South Africa this year—almost all of them shot down by police. Over 16,000 have been arrested.

As its troops went into action in Angola last month, the apartheid regime left no doubt that it intends to fight to the end—even through a war that could devastate the entire region—to maintain its rule.

Along the way, the government may be forced to grant certain concessions. But, as Minister of Constitutional Plan-

*(continued on page 15)*

## Unionists reject Cold War campaign

By ALAN BENJAMIN

The top leadership of the AFL-CIO, in close collaboration with the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), has launched a campaign aimed at countering the deep opposition within the labor movement to U.S. interventionist policies in Central America.

The campaign includes labor seminars on Central America in nine states, tours by high labor officials to state AFL-CIO conventions, and the distribution of hundreds of pages of newly released "fact sheets" about the "horrors" of the Sandinista government of Nicaragua and the "virtues" of the "democratic" government of Jose Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador.

The campaign is scheduled to wind up in late October at a meeting in Anaheim, Calif., which will be held two days before the biennial AFL-CIO national convention.

The International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO and AIFLD are thus hoping to line up as many delegates as possible at the convention behind their policies in support of the U.S. war against the people of Central America.

### Isolate and overthrow Nicaragua

The official kickoff of this campaign, described by one labor leader as "Kirkland's dog-and-pony show,"

occurred in New York on Sept. 13-14. There, Irving Brown, head of the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Department, and William Doherty, head of AIFLD, told 100 carefully selected labor officials that "communism" must

be stopped at all costs in Nicaragua.

Reminiscent of his Cold War speeches of the 1950s, Doherty charged Nicaragua with "violating basic trade-union and human rights."

He also praised the Duarte government and urged further military and economic aid to El Salvador.

Doherty based these charges on an Aug. 30, 1985, AIFLD report titled "Sandinista Deception Reaffirmed: Nicaragua Coverup of Trade Union Repression."

This flimsy document, with few facts

and typical CIA disinformation tactics (AIFLD's ties to the CIA are widely known and have been fully documented), alleges that "the Sandinistas in collusion with the government-created unions were and are determined to destroy the two democratic centers in Nicaragua, the Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CUS) and the Nicaraguan Workers Confederation (CTN)."

These "truths," however, are not substantiated. In fact, various U.S. trade-union delegations to Nicaragua have

*(continued on page 17)*

## Hormel strikers stand strong despite odds

By JAKE COOPER

MINNEAPOLIS—Unionists throughout the Midwest are coming to the aid of the packing-house workers in Austin, Minn., who are fighting for their union and their jobs at the Hormel Packing Co.

The workers, organized in Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW), have been on strike since Aug. 14, when they rejected Hormel's proposal to cut wages and break the union.

As soon as they hit the bricks, the strikers set up a Support Committee to rally aid—mainly food and money.

As a veteran of the 1934 Teamsters' strike, I got involved in support activities in Minneapolis. We gained an immediate response.

Those who joined the Support Committee included steelworkers, auto-workers, railroad workers, oil workers, a teachers' organization, the letter carriers, electrical workers, construction workers, government workers, other UFCW locals, and other labor and religious groups.

A food caravan left from Ford Local 879 in St. Paul on Sept. 1. It was headed by about 50 motorcyclists. The caravan was about two miles long and wound around the Austin Hormel plant into a city park where about 800 to 900 workers gathered and various people spoke.

We had a 45-foot semitrailer filled from front to back. While we unloaded, the enthusiasm of the strikers was amazing. They couldn't believe we had brought so much food down to them.



Rally in support of Hormel strikers

I haven't seen spirit like this since the '34 and '48 strikes, when we shut down the Armour, Swift and Cudahy plants. There was a national strike at the time.

Right now the strikers are in a critical situation. They've been out for over a month. According to a report on TV the

*(continued on page 5)*

International Outlook: A new supplement. See pp. 7-14

**Fight back!**



# New Yorkers say 'no way' to nukes

By CLIFF CONNER

NEW YORK—The U.S. Navy wants to bring nuclear weapons into New York City's harbor, but more than a 100,000 New Yorkers have said: "No way!"

That's how many people put their signatures on petitions to force the Navyport issue onto the November ballot.

On Sept. 5, organizers of the petition drive turned in 41,956 signatures to the Board of Elections. Earlier in the summer more than 60,000 had been submitted.

The peculiarity of New York's ballot laws required a "two-phase" petitioning effort. Thirty thousand valid signatures of registered voters were required in the first round and 15,000 in the second round.

Round One ended in victory when the first 60,670 signatures were turned in and city officials certified more than 34,000 as valid.

Round Two seems destined for an equally successful conclusion. With nearly 42,000 signatures submitted and only 15,000 valid signatures required, election officials have already conceded that the

Navyport issue is likely to be on the ballot.

But there is still a Round Three ahead and it is the decisive one. That is the campaign to reach the millions of New York City voters with the anti-Navyport message before the November elections.

Meanwhile, local allies of the Pentagon have crawled out of the woodwork to file a lawsuit aimed at blocking the referendum. Two City Council members representing Staten Island—where the Navyport is scheduled to be built—are suing to force a line-by-line validation of the signatures.

While the suit's sponsors have little hope of proving the petitions invalid, their court action has a great deal of harassment potential. If successful, it could divert activists, who would otherwise be campaigning for the referendum, into a tedious morass of paperwork.

Lawyers for the anti-nuclear coalition, however, feel that the legal basis of the suit is so scant that it may simply be tossed out of court.

Mayor Edward Koch also took a shot at crushing the ref-

erendum in the egg. He hinted to the press that he would help the Navy complete its dealings with the city before November, thus rendering the referendum moot.

Koch's attempted end run around the controversy, however, was a flop—he was thrown for a loss. Publicly challenged during his re-election campaign to defend such an undemocratic procedure, he was forced to back down and agree to "let the people vote" on the issue.

Other pro-Pentagon forces have been busy raising big bucks from big business for a "war chest" to defeat the referendum. Anti-nuclear sentiment in New York runs so deep, however, that the right-wingers' campaign could well backfire.

Rather than teaching New Yorkers to learn to love The Bomb, it might have the opposite effect by drawing broader attention to the issue.

Nevertheless, the coalition that gathered the 102,626 signatures—led by New York Mobilization for Survival—is not relaxing. It plans to carry out a massive campaign from now through election day.

The focus will be on the dan-

## Socialist ACTION

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gers of having nuclear doomsday weapons bobbing about in the harbor, while countering the Pentagon's phony lure of "jobs" to be created by the Navyport.

The power of the referendum lies in the fact that if it passes it will be legally binding on the city government. The city would be effectively prohibited from providing land or funds, or cooperating in any way, with the construction of the Navyport.

The Pentagon, however, would not be legally bound by the vote. The Navy could go over the head of the city government and seize the land it needs under "condemnation" proceedings.

The political costs of such an

action are obvious. Building the nuclear base in the face of a clear majority vote against it would cast the Navy in the role of undemocratically ramming it down the throats of a hostile population.

A Navy spokesperson, asked by reporters what would happen if the referendum passes, said, "We would have to re-evaluate the whole situation."

Indeed they will.

When New Zealand told the Reagan administration that its nuclear-armed ships were no longer welcome there, the White House's reaction was one of extreme distress. What will they do if New York City now tells them to take their nukes and shove off? ■

## Take action for Socialist Action



pleased to include our interview with Jim Guyette, leader of the strike against the giant Hormel meatpacking company.

We are also printing an on-the-scene article on the Hormel strike by Jake Cooper, who was a leader of the 1934 Teamster strikes and is now centrally involved in the Hormel Strike Support Group in the Twin Cities.

Both provide insights into the fight against the growing wave of demands for union concessions—a discussion we focused on last month in our *FORUM* section.

Our mission is to help build solidarity with those who fight against the injustices of the capitalist system—not just to report the news.

**New pamphlets on the way!**

The aim of our fund drive is to improve the technical facilities of our newspaper and to start publishing inexpensive pamphlets on issues of the day. We look at this project as an indispensable part of our effort to build a mass socialist party.

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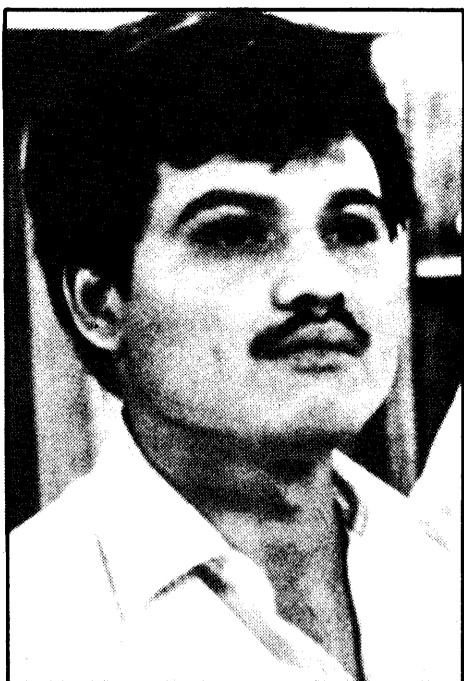
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Egardo Garcia, leader of the pro-Sandinista trade-union federation, will be featured speaker at Nov. 2 antiwar conference.

By JEFF MACKLER

The San Francisco Labor Council (AFL-CIO) on Sept. 9, 1985, unanimously approved a proposal to support the Nov. 2 antiwar conference sponsored by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice. [See conference call and endorsers in September issue of *Socialist Action*.]

This action was followed by similar votes of the San Mateo Labor Council, the Marin Central Labor Council, District 115 IAM, and dozens of other Bay

# New flood of support for Nov. antiwar conference

Area labor bodies. Hundreds of endorsements have already been received as a result of the first coalition mailing.

The conference will feature two major panels opposing U.S. intervention in Central America and U.S. support to South African apartheid.

Another major session entitled "Can nuclear arms be stopped; Is a peace economy possible" will feature Jane Gruenbaum, executive director of the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, and William W. Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists.

The Central American discussion will consist of a dialogue between Egardo Garcia, president of the Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Council (CSN), and several leading U.S. trade unionists.

Unionists at this session include Keith Johnson, president, International Woodworkers of America; James Herman, international president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU); Dolores Huerta, first vice president, United Farm Workers of America; David Dyson, union label director, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU); and others.

Dyson has been a central leader and public spokesperson for the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador.

This committee, which includes the presidents of 24 national unions, recently published a report on the findings of a prominent trade-union delegation to Nicaragua and El Salvador. The report strongly opposed U.S. intervention in Central America and condemned the murderous attacks on the trade-union movement in El Salvador, holding the Duarte government responsible.

According to Carl Finamore, one of the conference staff organizers, "The bulk of the funds received by the Mobilization so far have come directly from organized labor."

Finamore reported a number of sizable contributions from major unions in the area.

## Reception picks up support

On the eve of the conference, the Mobilization is sponsoring a reception and fundraiser for Naomi Tutu-Seavers, the daughter of Nobel Laureate Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Funds from the benefit will also be destined to the Bishop Tutu Refugee Project.

In addition to Naomi Tutu, the reception will feature Pulitzer Prize winning

author Alice Walker, who will read some of her works for the benefit.

Activist-musician Peter Yarrow (of the group Peter, Paul and Mary) will perform for the event.

The invitation to the reception is being issued by a group of religious leaders whose organizations represent much of the church community in the Bay Area.

The Rev. William E. Swing, Episcopal bishop of California, will open the reception set for Grace Cathedral on Nov. 1, 1985, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Other prominent reception hosts, who will also speak at the conference, include Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer, San Francisco Labor Council; John Henning, executive secretary-treasurer, California Labor Federation (AFL-CIO); and Mario Obledo of the League of United Latin American Citizens.

The Nov. 2 conference will serve an important educational function. It will also provide a forum of opposition to the current U.S. war drive. But more important, as the conference call states, one of its goals is to "issue a call for another large Bay Area mobilization in April 1986."

# Boston rally knocks U.S. war policy

By JIM HENLE

BOSTON—Breaking through the official silence, 1500 protesters marched on Boston Common on Sept. 21 chanting, "Stop the bombing, stop the war, U.S. out of El Salvador!"

Sponsored by the Stop the Bombing Coalition, an ad-hoc formation, the rally was called to focus attention on the increasing aerial bombardment of the Salvadoran countryside.

Hundreds of Salvadorans have suffered casualties, and tens of thousands have been displaced in the regime's efforts to isolate the FMLN/FDR opposition forces from the population which supports them. Without money, equipment, and training from the United States, the air war could not continue.

The range of concern over the effects of U.S. policy was evident in many

speeches. Nancy Finkelstein, president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, spoke of the repression of unions in El Salvador, the kidnapping of union leaders, and the abysmal state of education there.

Arnoldo Ramos of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) spoke of the widening war and the scotching of peace talks by the United States. If no agreement is reached, he said, "then we will have a situation like Vietnam because the people of El Salvador will continue to fight."

A number of speakers pointed to the parallel between U.S. support for South African apartheid and its support to Central American dictatorships and called for the funding of human needs—not war, racism, and oppression.

The rally was highlighted by a funeral procession commemorating the

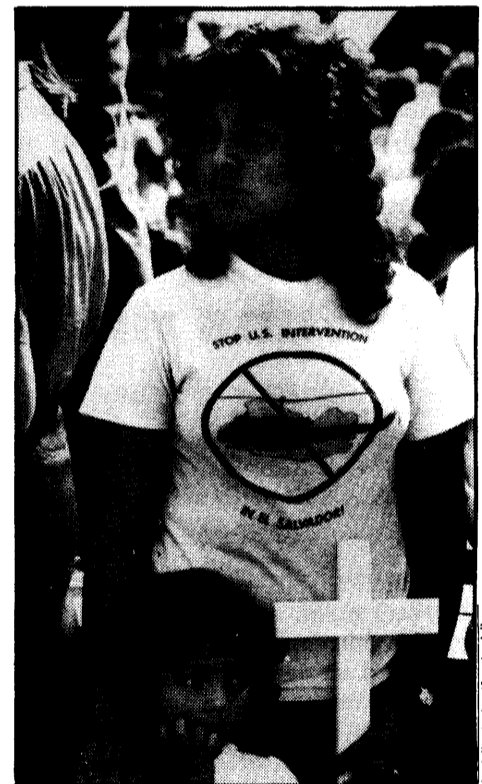
51,000 Salvadorans killed since 1979. Pledge of Resistance members planted white crosses on a hill behind the crowd.

The rally was called in conjunction with the National Pledge of Resistance Days of Action. The Pledge has grown in opposition to U.S. war moves in Nicaragua and has extended its outlook to El Salvador as well. The Pledge also plans a march on Sept. 23 to the INS detention center to protest the detention of two Salvadorans held for deportation.

The first El Salvador demonstration in a year, the Sept. 21 action showed that the opposition to U.S. policy can be mobilized when organizing is combined with grass-roots activity and educational campaigns.

An effort to build a broad coalition is vital in securing increased labor support for antiwar actions.

As the war escalates in El Salvador, public actions can be an important step in building a broader movement. A meeting of the Stop the Bombing Coalition will be held on Oct. 2. For more information on the work of the coalition call CASA at (617) 492-8699.



Protesters on Boston Common on Sept. 21

# Anti-apartheid day declared

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

CLEVELAND—Support for an Oct. 11 Cleveland rally calling for an end to all U.S. ties to apartheid continues to grow.

At its first meeting of the fall on Sept. 11, the Cleveland Federation of Labor endorsed the rally. Many prominent local trade-union officials, civil rights organizations, politicians, religious leaders, and community groups have also endorsed.

The Cuyahoga County Commissioners passed a resolution declaring Oct. 11 anti-apartheid day in Cuyahoga County. A similar resolution is expected from the Cleveland City Council.

United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 880 will host the Friday evening rally.

Featured speakers include Willie Baker, UFCW International Vice President and director of its civil rights department; Nomonde Ngubo, an inter-



national staff representative of the United Mine Workers and a co-founder of the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa; Shuping Coapoge, a member of the African National Congress delegation to the United Nations; Charles Pinzone, Executive Secretary and Business Manager, Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council; and Warren Davis, Director, UAW Region 2.

# Canadians back protests

By BARRY WEISLEDER

TORONTO—The Toronto Anti-Intervention Coalition (TAIC) has issued a call to all groups and individuals in English Canada and Quebec to participate in a demonstration on Oct. 26.

The coalition includes more than 80 antiwar, solidarity, church, women's, and community organizations. The call has been issued to coincide with anti-intervention protests on Oct. 26 across the United States and other countries.

The convergence of the anti-intervention and disarmament movements in this action is an important development.

The demands of the coalition are as follows:

1) Stop U.S. economic and military intervention in Central American and the Caribbean. Hands off Nicaragua. U.S. out of Grenada.

2) End Canadian involvement in U.S. militarism. No to "Star Wars" and

Cruise Missile testing. Convert war production and research to production of socially useful goods and services. Money for jobs and human needs, not war.

3) Increase Canadian trade and government aid to Nicaragua. Establish a Canadian Embassy in Nicaragua. Halt aid to the dictatorships of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

All those interested in helping to build this protest are urged to contact TAIC at 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7, or call 537-3520.

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Tribune strikers march in Labor Day parade in Chicago.

Socialist Action/Tina Brecock

## Chicago Tribune presses ahead with union-busting effort

By CARRIE HEWITT

CHICAGO—Some 1000 production workers, on strike against the *Chicago Tribune* since mid-July, are still walking the picket lines as the newspaper's negotiators continue to stall at the bargaining table.

The three locals representing the *Tribune's* printers, mailers, and press operators walked off the job on July 18. The company provoked the strike—the first since 1947—by refusing to back down on a series of blatant union-busting demands.

At the heart of the dispute is the meaning of a lifetime job guarantee that the printers won in 1975, when they agreed to let the *Tribune* bring in high-tech equipment.

The paper is now trying to avoid its end of the bargain by insisting on the right to transfer workers displaced by advanced technology into different jobs—including maintenance, truck driving, and electrical and other trades.

The printers' union vehemently opposes these mandatory transfers. Most of its members, whose average age is 55, have worked in the composing room for decades. New assignments would put them at the bottom of their new union's seniority list and would result in loss of pay and other benefits.

Other major issues are the company's demands for a two-tier wage system and the elimination of pension plans and the union hiring hall.

### Goons attack press operators

Not content with tough talk at the bargaining table, the *Tribune* sent a goon squad into the press room a few minutes before the original strike deadline.

According to Sherman Carmell, attorney for the press operators, the *Tribune's* security agents stormed into the printing plant with guns, clubs, and vicious dogs. Press operators were ordered to shut down the presses and forcibly herded into the cafete-

ria—where they were restrained against their will.

After the incident made a splash in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Charles Brumback, president of the *Tribune*, stifled additional public outcry by issuing a brief apology. Brumback stated cryptically that he had cautioned the guards "to use more restraint in any future such incident."

Within days of the strike, the *Tribune* managed to resume publication of a regular-sized paper with full color. By mid-August, the paper reportedly had replaced most of the striking workforce, which earned \$14 an hour plus benefits, with scabs paid about \$8 with no benefits.

The paper is now dragging its feet by insisting on the time-consuming process of negotiating with each union separately.

### Teamster leaders deny support

Difficulties flowing from the strikers' inability to put a dent in the papers' production have been further compounded by the failure of the Teamsters' leadership, which represents the *Tribune's* truck drivers, to take any action to support the strike.

The problem became clear when Teamster President Jackie Presser lashed out against the strike, calling it a "crass tactical move calculated to arouse anti-Teamster sentiment in the midst of the current electoral struggle."

At the time, ITU members around the country were voting on whether to merge with the Teamsters. When the results of the balloting were released on Aug. 27, the proposed merger was rejected by almost a two-to-one majority.

Despite these hurdles, the *Tribune* strikers have continued to fight back.

A strike support headquarters, set up by the Chicago Newspaper Union Employees Unity Council, remains open around the clock and picket lines are organized at plant gates. A support rally of about 1000 strikers was held on July 24, and a spirited contingent of about 1500 strikers and supporters marched in Chicago's Labor Day parade.

The unions now see their main task as continuing to organize a broad-based boycott campaign to apply pressure on the paper's circulation and advertising. Some 10,000 subscriptions have been cancelled since the strike, according to the unions' calculations.

Donations and messages of support can be sent to: Chicago Newspaper Union Employees Unity Council, 1340 W. Washington, Chicago, IL 60607. ■

## GM runs rings around the UAW at new Saturn plant

By DEAN COHEN and MARTIN TOKAY

CLEVELAND—The United Auto Workers union announced on July 26 that its International Executive Board approved an agreement for the much-heralded Saturn Small Car Plant.

The UAW called its agreement with General Motors, Saturn's parent company, "revolutionary." The union said that it "helps save the American small car." A close examination of the pact, however, shows it to be potentially the most damaging thing to ever hit the UAW.

The pact has been lauded in the union and through the media for its "permanent job security" and high wages. At first glance the wages do seem very good. But these wages will exist only during a one-year "bridging period."

After the one-year period, wages will be "adjusted" to only 80 percent of the average straight-time hourly rate at other UAW-represented car plants. In addition, new hires will be paid 64 percent of the prevailing industry rate. It will take a new hire two years to work up to the 80 percent rate.

There are also provisions for a reward system, the first in the industry since pre-union days in the 1930s. Through a system of "incentive and merit," the Saturn worker will be able to reach the average GM wage rate. "Incentive" has always meant speed-up, and "merit" has meant favoritism.

The "permanent job security" is nothing less than a transparent sham. The agreement reads:

"Those Saturn members [workers] who are eligible for job security [80 percent of the workforce]



shall not be laid off except in situations which the S.A.C. [Strategic Advisory Committee] determines are due to unforeseen or catastrophic events or severe economic conditions."

It takes no crystal ball to see that "unforeseen or catastrophic events" is completely open to any interpretation and that the 1980-82 recession would be classified as a "severe economic condition." Moreover, the union will be allowed only one member on the S.A.C.

The biggest change is in the area of union representation. Instead of a system of stewards, the Saturn structure provides for a system of "counselors" and "advisers" to serve as "administrators of the agreement on behalf of the union."

Each "business unit adviser," for example, would administer the agreement for over 1000 workers. These advisers—who must work at their jobs rather than represent workers full time—will not have much time left for what the company calls "conflict resolution."

General Motors has agreed to staff the Saturn plant from the rolls of laid-off GM workers. But workers who accept work at Saturn will forfeit any recall rights to their old GM plant.

Although GM agreed from the beginning that the workers would be represented by the UAW, the agreement was later qualified to "within the extent of the law" when Tennessee—a "right-to-

work" state—was named as the plant site.

GM Chair Roger Smith has stated that he intends to "Saturnize" the entire industry by the year 2000. Unless unionists can mobilize rank-and-file opposition to the Saturn Pact, Smith may realize his dream even sooner.

The Saturn pact must be a major focus of UAW activists at the next national convention in May 1986. ■

## ... Steelworkers

(continued from page 20)

presidents, were arrested as they prevented the company from removing steel. Strikers, who have successfully stopped the company from moving any steel, describe this as one more provocation on the part of the company.

### Largest Labor Day rally ever

On Aug. 31, 5000 steelworkers and their supporters participated in the largest Labor Day rally ever held in Jefferson County.

Car caravans and chartered buses filled with steelworkers from Districts 20 (Western Pennsylvania), 27 (Canton, Ohio), 28 (Cleveland), and 29 (Detroit) traveled to Steubenville, Ohio, to participate in this rally. They brought almost \$50,000, which had been collected at plant gates and through local union donations.

District 23 staff representative Jim Bowen summed up the mood of the crowd when he described the need to tell the steel bosses: "Enough is enough. We've given at the office already and we're not going to give anymore."

Tony Bumbico, representative to the United Mine Workers International Executive Board from District 6 (Eastern Ohio) offered his union's continued support, saying it's important to "demonstrate that organized labor will take no more backward steps."

International President Lynn Williams compared this fight to the initial

battles for union recognition 50 years ago. He assured the crowd that just like 50 years ago, the strength and determination of the workers would result in victory.

On Saturday, Sept. 7, bus loads of steelworkers from Ohio and Pennsylvania went to the small town of Monessen, Pa., for a march and rally in support of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh strikers. Community support was evident as the whole town turned out—some marching, others lining the street to cheer the demonstrators on.

Support resolutions and donations continue to pour in from steelworker locals around the country.

The importance of this fight is also recognized by many other working people as evidenced by the unanimous vote of IUE Local 717 in Warren, Ohio, to donate \$500 and \$100 a week until the dispute is settled and by the decision of UAW Local 1250 in Cleveland to take a plant-gate collection for the strikers. ■





The following is an interview with Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9 United Food and Commercial Workers union, currently on strike in Austin, Minn. The interview was conducted on Sept. 20 by Hayden Perry.

## Interview with Jim Guyette:

# Why the stakes are high in Hormel strike

**Socialist Action:** What is the status of the strike now after one month?

**Jim Guyette:** Well, the company is not willing to negotiate with the union. The company is indicating that they are going to hire replacement workers.

**S.A.:** How many scabs would that involve to get them going?

**Guyette:** My guess is they're talking somewhere in the neighborhood of 600 to 800 people.

**S.A.:** What else is the company doing to fight the union?

**Guyette:** They are taking some machinery out of the plant. They are also pitting worker against worker and community against community.

**S.A.:** Is there a racial or nationality division within the working force?

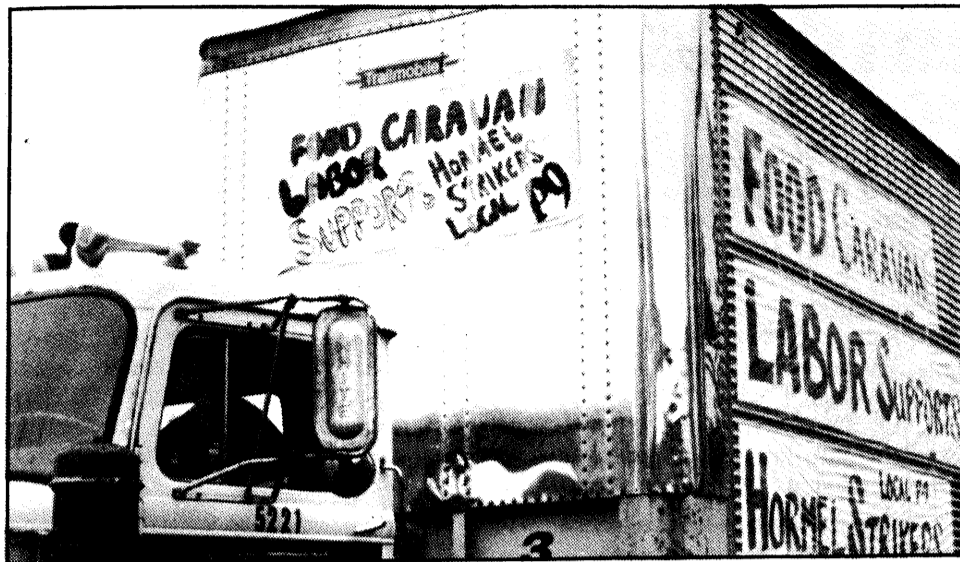
**Guyette:** The company has hired only enough minorities to qualify. It's pretty much a white working force although I will say that the minorities that we have in the plant are some of the strongest, most militant union folks we have.

**S.A.:** I hear there's a support committee raising money and food donations from throughout the state.

**Guyette:** Yes, it's been working out pretty good. We have a support group in the Twin Cities and one in Duluth, and they've been helping us out a great deal.

**S.A.:** What is the role of the International?

**Guyette:** They are sanctioning the strike. They're currently paying us \$65 a week in strike benefits. But we got a letter today saying that they're going to cut that down to \$40 a week. They say



Socialist Action/Mike Zukowski

they do not have enough money.

**S.A.:** Doesn't the International realize that this strike can determine the future of the whole International?

**Guyette:** There's been folks who say that our fight is an economic fight only over 69-cents an hour. It's much more than that. The company wants a two-tiered wage system.

The company wants further reductions in wages and benefits. They want a management-rights clause that would give them the power to determine who works overtime, who gets what job, who gets to break in on what job, who would get premium pay for Saturday and Sunday, and who would get holiday pay during the week.

They also have a clause which we feel conflicts with our First Amendment rights. They say there can be no hand-billing or any other similar activities. They also want further cutbacks in seniority.

They have dramatically increased the injury rate in the plant. Major lost-time injuries have gone up 119 percent since 1981. The injury rate average for 1984 in the meatpacking industry was 33 injuries per hundred workers. In 1984, our injury rate was 202 injuries per 100 workers. People were getting injured twice or more in a year.

**S.A.:** They've got other plants, I understand. Do you think they might close down the Austin plant, or is that

difficult for them?

**Guyette:** It's difficult for them because this is the newest and most modern plant in the industry. The workers here in 1984 produced 55 percent of the company's total output with 1740 employees. In the rest of their plants they had 3450 other employees producing the other 45 percent.

**S.A.:** What about the level of organization in the industry as a whole?

**Guyette:** Some non-union plants are cropping up because the argument comes forth, "We don't want to join your union to take pay cuts."

To discourage unionization, the meatpackers hired a professional union buster in the fall of 1983.

**S.A.:** How is the community? Do the townspeople support you?

**Guyette:** There's a lot of folks who are afraid because of reprisals from the company. We have a very incestuous situation in Austin. I think if a secret ballot vote were taken of the town, the town would clearly be behind the union.

But the people who have spoken out are the company-type people who belong to the country club. They're saying we need to take more concessions. We've taken concessions 16 out of the last 23 years. We once had a workforce of 7000 and a town of 32,000. Sixteen concessions later we have 1540 employees and a town of 22,000. Concessions is not the answer.

We are in a situation like the PATCO strike. Lots of folks are playing union politics with our situation. They want to pick and choose the strikes they will support. This is wrong.

There is no difference between a steelworker in Pittsburgh or an auto-worker in Detroit. They both need our support. "United we stand, divided we fall" has to be preached more in our union halls. ■

## ... Hormel strike

(continued from page 1)

other day, the only time some of the children of the Hormel workers get a good meal is when they go to school. So there is great hardship among the workers right now.

### Strikers overcome hurdles

The P-9 strikers won additional support from delegates at the Minnesota AFL-CIO State Convention on Sept. 22-24. They organized a 300-strong contingent of Hormel workers to spread the word about the strike to the delegates and were able to prevent the state AFL-CIO leadership from ignoring it.

The state leadership seems to be backing efforts by the UFCW International to stop this strike from becoming a rallying point. But many union activists realize that the strike is the most important battle labor is fighting in Minnesota. They sense the outcome of the P-9 strike could affect the entire labor movement here.

In another development, P-9 was able to halt Hormel from preventing the union's "corporate campaign" of informational leafleting at First Bank Systems. The union has been aggressively leafleting to inform the community of the inhuman policies of the Hormel Co. and its financial partner—First Bank.

The company, claiming that the union was carrying on an illegal secondary boycott at First Bank, asked for an injunction against the union. It was also hoping to refer the matter to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

A lower court judge, however, ruled that the issue of informational leafleting

went beyond the province of the NLRB. This was an issue of free speech and would have to go to a federal court, the judge ruled.

The Minnesota Civil Liberties Union has already offered to defend the union's First Amendment rights.

In the meantime, we are trying to arrange for another caravan of food to

go down to Austin in the next couple of weeks. We are contacting all of the local unions in the Twin Cities to try to raise enough money.

Donations should be sent to United Support Group, P-9 Emergency and Hardship Fund, 316 Fourth Ave. NE, Austin, Minn. 55912. ■

## S.F. bus drivers slam the brakes on takebacks

By SEYMOUR KRAMER

SAN FRANCISCO—School bus drivers in this city, members of the United Transportation Union's Local 1741, won an important victory this summer against the takeback schemes of Laidlaw Transit Inc., North America's largest school bus contractor.

Over the summer the corporation proposed 119 takebacks—including a two-tier wage system, wage freeze, destruction of cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) provisions, and a one-third reduction in healthcare benefits.

On the eve of the Labor Day break, the takebacks remained on the table. Seventy-two hours later the company's hired gun left negotiations without a single concession in his pocket.

Since the victory, drivers have been showing up to work in tee-shirts reading: "UTU 1741—We beat the two tier!"

The school bus drivers won because of the democratic, rank-and-file character of their union and because they learned the lesson of previous battles in San Francisco: The only way to resist the bosses' flood of takebacks is to surround each union under attack with a wall of solidarity.

Drivers and union officers spoke before over 75 union meetings in San Francisco and received the endorsements of more than 100 union groups, labor councils, and executive boards. An outreach commission was set up to

involve community and church groups. This work began a full year before the contract expired.

Drivers initiated a strike committee that had a system of picket captains in place a week before the opening of school. Plans were in motion for a daily strike newspaper, strike kitchen, and an

educational campaign directed at parents.

The spirit of involvement and knowledge that no scabs would be tolerated permitted the membership to remain solidly committed to the program of no concessions.

San Francisco school bus drivers have come away from their victory with a new understanding of the union ideal. We learned that solidarity is the only road to rebuilding the strength of the labor movement. ■

## Labor Day march draws 15,000 in Grand Rapids

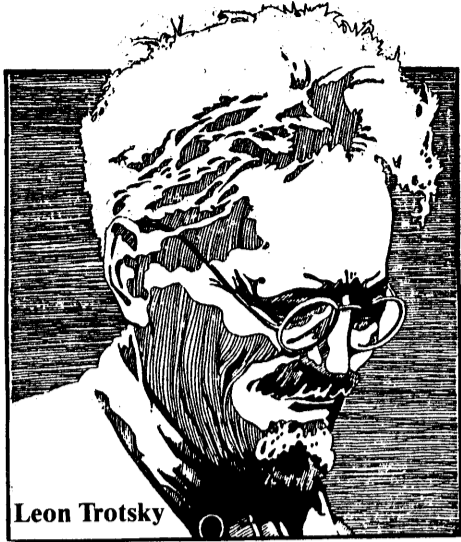


Socialist Action/Mike Zukowski

For the first time in 34 years workers in Grand Rapids, Mich., marched through town to celebrate Labor Day. 125 units from local unions and other workers formed a parade of over 15,000 marchers. One unionist commented, "It is good to see people come down for this. I am very surprised, and it makes you feel good."

Leonard Woodcock, former UAW International President addressed the rally at the end of the march.





Leon Trotsky

By MILTON ALVIN

The following is the second and final part of the speech given by Milton Alvin in tribute to James P. Cannon and Leon Trotsky.

Alvin, who joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935, gave this speech in Los Angeles on Aug. 25, 1985.

The beginning of World War II brought on a dispute within the American Trotskyist movement over the question of what attitude to take toward the Soviet Union in the war and whether or not the class nature of the USSR was proletarian.

A faction arose within the Socialist Workers Party that refused to defend the Soviet Union in the war. Trotsky took an active part in the debate, which lasted about seven months. He wrote many articles and letters opposing those who had capitulated to the pressures of U.S. imperialism. These were collected in a book entitled "In Defense of Marxism."

Cannon, who supported Trotsky, headed a group that had a majority and eventually kept the party solidly committed to its founding principles. His main contribution was also put in a book called "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party." Trotsky expressed the opinion that if the long, drawn-out dispute had not produced anything more than this book, it would have been worth it.

The opponents of the Trotsky-Cannon group split from the Socialist Workers Party and formed the Workers Party. But after several years this party disappeared, a result that confirmed Trotsky's and Cannon's assessment of them.

In the same year that this fight was concluded, Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico by a Stalinist agent. But his voice was not stilled. Many books of his writings over the years were published, and they contributed and continue to help in the education of those who read them.

#### Smith Act trials

In 1941 Cannon and others, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Minneapolis Teamsters Union, were indicted under the notorious Smith Act. This was directly ordered by President Roosevelt, who was making a payoff to Dan Tobin, head of the Teamsters Union. Tobin had been in a dispute with the Minneapolis union, which was led by the Trotskyists.

After the trial, which resulted in a conviction of 18 of the defendants, three appeals were made to the Supreme Court. But these nine paragons of justice refused even to hear the appeals, the first under the Smith Act. The victims of this miscarriage of justice went to prison for varying terms, from one year to 16 months.

A large-scale defense was mounted for them, and a lot of support was won—especially from unions.

One of the results of the trial was the publication of Cannon's testimony, both direct and cross examination. Called "Socialism on Trial!" it has been the best-selling single work ever published

# The legacy of Trotsky and Cannon for our age

by American Trotskyists. It is frequently used as a text introducing the ideas of Marxism to people who want to learn about modern political problems and how they should be solved.

From prison Cannon sent many letters giving his ideas on current problems. These have been made into a book and published as "Letters From Prison." These letters enabled Cannon to participate, at least in part, in the party leadership.

#### Always looked to working class

Cannon was influential in turning the party toward the unions and mass work, all of which had been reduced during the early war years. By 1943, however, the entire international situation was changing.

The Germans were defeated at Stalingrad. The Italians were knocked out of the war, and in the United States the coal miners conducted a series of strikes that were successful in winning new gains.

On the basis of these and other developments the party began to grow. And in the two-year period between the 1944 party convention and that of 1946, an unprecedented 1000 new members were recruited.

By the early part of 1945, Cannon and the other prisoners were released and resumed their political activity. At the 1946 convention the party adopted the "Theses on the American Revolution," largely the product of Cannon's work.

Cannon's report to the convention and the "Theses" were published in the pamphlet, "The Coming American Revolution." They served to direct the party toward a long-range goal of a revolution in this country and have focused



the attention of genuine Marxists in that direction.

But the favorable climate in the political arena during the 1943-1946 period came to an end with the adoption of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. The witchhunt and the McCarthy period followed. The 1950s were dominated by a reactionary atmosphere and apathy on the part of youth, workers, and others among whom we traditionally functioned.

It was impossible for Cannon or anyone else to alter this state of affairs, and all we could do was hold on. Those were difficult days for us, and we suffered many losses of members.

It wasn't until the 1960s that a turn was manifested when Blacks, women, youth, anti-Vietnam war groups, and

others began a series of actions that indicated the witchhunt period had passed and a new upsurge was in the making.

In 1952 Cannon and his companion, Rose Karsner, moved to Los Angeles and from this point on he participated in the party leadership through correspondence. He and Farrell Dobbs exchanged posts, Cannon becoming party chair and Dobbs national secretary.

At the 1963 party convention Cannon became an advisory member of the national committee, marking his retirement from active party leadership. In

**"Trotsky was one of the greatest thinkers of human history."**

the 11 years that remained to him, Cannon concentrated on his files, selecting material for publication. A number of books resulted from these efforts.

On Aug. 21, 1974, he suffered a heart attack at his home and died. He was 84 years old.

#### Co-leader of Russian revolution

It is necessary for us to try to place these two individuals, Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon, into the historical context of their time and the work they did.

In Trotsky's case the task is easier, as his life's work is documented in many books, pamphlets, articles, and letters, most of which have been published. His activities, moreover, attracted great public notice. Although Stalinists and others have tried to bury his real record underneath an avalanche of falsehoods of all kinds, the truth will triumph in the end.

Cannon was fond of using the quotation he attributed to Mark Twain that "A lie can get halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes." That will be the case with Trotsky, one of the greatest thinkers the human race has produced and an activist second to none.

I think that the two most important contributions made by Trotsky were, first, the theory of permanent revolution, which has been confirmed in every revolution since the Russian in 1917.

This theory holds that revolutions, in order to solve the fundamental problems of the colonial and semicolonial countries, cannot stop at the stage of capitalism (as did the revolutions of the 19th century), but must be telescoped with and become proletarian revolutions. They must be led by the workers in alliance with all the oppressed in order to succeed.

Trotsky's second most important contribution was the Transitional Program, a program of demands that bridge the gap between the present consciousness of the working class and revolutionary conclusions.

Trotsky became a widely known political figure when he became chair of the St. Petersburg Soviet in 1905. He occupied the same post 12 years later and from there led in overthrowing the Kerensky regime in October 1917.

He was co-leader with Lenin of the Soviet Communist Party and the Third International, holding important government posts.

He built the Red Army from scratch and led it during the victorious civil war from 1918 to 1921.

With Cannon, it will probably take longer and be more difficult. He did not lead any revolution, form armies, or advance any new theoretical conceptions as Trotsky did. Nevertheless, his contribution to the socialist cause was very great.

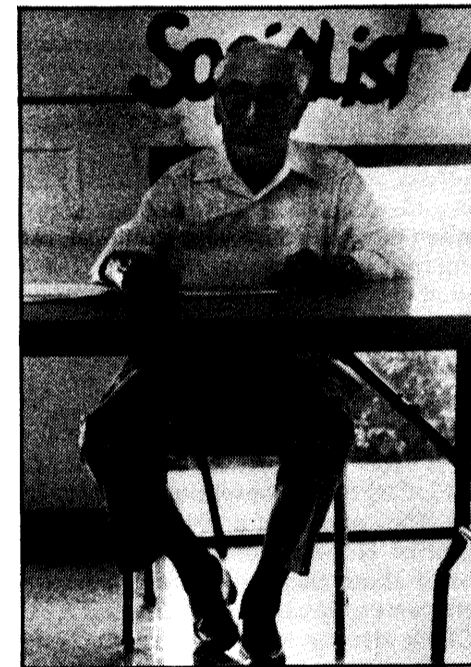
He began his work in the early years of the 20th century as a youth when he became a Wobbly, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. Later, he joined the Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs.

#### Founder of American Trotskyism

In 1919 Cannon was a founder of the American Communist Party and became a member of its national committee in 1920. In 1928 he was expelled from the Communist Party and together with others became a founder of American Trotskyism.

He helped found the Fourth International in 1938. He did outstanding work in educating a cadre of socialist revolutionaries in this and other countries.

Many of his writings, speeches, letters, articles, and so on, are published. Cannon told me that a good way for beginners to get acquainted with socialism is to read his writings first, as an introduction. Then go on to Trotsky



Milton Alvin speaks at Cannon-Trotsky tribute on Aug. 25.

and Lenin and finally to Marx and Engels.

I believe that Cannon's main contribution was his insistence on being known as an "orthodox Marxist" and teaching others just what this meant.

He paid particular attention to the orientation of the party, making a careful analysis of each political period, and taking on such tasks as were in harmony with the events. He was outstanding in teaching good organizational methods. He did a great deal to expose Stalinist treachery. He contributed to teaching the history of socialist activity in the United States.

I have emphasized the published works of Cannon and to some extent Trotsky because the older generation of revolutionaries who had the good fortune to learn directly from either or both of these two is rapidly disappearing.

This makes it necessary for the coming generation to learn from the written words of our teachers, as indeed Lenin and Trotsky learned from Marx and Engels.

I am confident that this will be done and that new revolutionaries will rally to the socialist cause and that the ideas and work of Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon will triumph. ■



# International Outlook



A Marxist  
Theoretical Review



In this issue of *Socialist Action* we inaugurate a theoretical supplement.

Lenin taught the organic connection between theory and action. "Without a revolutionary theory," he explained over and over again, "there can be no revolutionary movement."

Unfortunately, this respect for theory has never been more scorned by movements in the world that call themselves revolutionary—and Leninist, to the bargain—than in recent years.

## Barren pragmatism

It's no mystery why nearly the entire socialist movement has succumbed so definitively to an anti-Marxist, anti-scientific, barren pragmatism.

Since World War II, the world has witnessed 12 countries—including China with its 1 billion people—taking the road to socialist revolution. But in every case, the leading political forces involved set out to fight for sharing governmental power with a section of the bourgeoisie—not for its overthrow.

The Stalinists, the most cynical and demagogic advocates of class collaboration, argued that the revolution they sought had to take place in two separate stages. They relegated the second stage of the revolution—the socialist stage—to the distant future owing to conditions of political and economic backwardness in the neocolonial world.

They faithfully attempted to carry out such a policy, which they repeatedly explained was limited to achieving democratic reforms within the framework of capitalist property rights. They were nevertheless forced to go beyond these self-imposed limits when the counterrevolution and irreconcilable economic crises threatened to overwhelm them.

The imperialists, along with the Stalinists themselves, explain away this contradiction between stated aims and actual results very simply—as "insidious" or "tactical" deception (adjectives chosen by each for their own reasons). But this "explanation" is not consistent with the facts.

Fidel Castro, in contrast to the Stalinists, has honestly explained his own surprise at the course the Cuban revolution followed. He makes no claim of having been a Marxist—a revolutionary socialist—until some time after the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship.

And to the credit of Fidel Castro and the team of revolutionary fighters which led their struggle, Cuba advanced the furthest of all the post-World War II social revolutions, establishing a workers' state relatively free of the bureaucratic deformations that



Spanish workers mobilize against fascists in 1930s.



Rally in Panama in 1959 supporting Cuban revolution and demanding U.S. out of the Canal Zone

## Marxist theory and its relevance for today

have made the workers' states in Eastern Europe and Asia caricatures of the socialist future.

### Prepares ground for defeat

The facts of history stubbornly testify that the reformist theory of stages politically and militarily disarms the workers and peasants and prepares the ground for defeat.

The theory was first systematically developed by the Mensheviks, who opposed the socialist revolution in Czarist Russia. First, they argued, Russia must go through a period of capitalist development. Only then would it be in order to fight for socialism.

Refuted by the October 1917 revolution itself, the two-stage theory was, following Lenin's death, resurrected by Stalin and applied in China. It led the workers who followed the Communist Party to accept their being disarmed, without a fight, by the political leader of the "anti-imperialist" Chinese capitalists, Chiang Kai-shek.

Tens of thousands of Chinese workers were then slaughtered, and along with them, the Chinese revolution of 1925-27.

The two-stage revolution is really the rationalization for class collaboration. It restricts the struggle of workers and peasants to reforms within the limits of capitalism.

### Theory is generalized

The theory of stages was soon adapted to the imperialist countries themselves. The operative section of this Menshevik-Stalinist theory of stages is its advice to workers to have

confidence in an allegedly "anti-imperialist" or "anti-fascist" or "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie.

In the Spanish revolution of 1936-39, the Popular Front was the new name invented by the Stalinists to hide the class-collaborationist essence of their strategy.

The Popular Front, a strategic alliance with "anti-fascist" capitalists, required the workers to oppose the peasants' demand for land and the Moroccan peoples' demand for independence from Spain.

The champions of the Popular Front insisted on paying this price for the help of the "progressive" capitalists against the fascist counterrevolution—a price far more costly to the revolution than that "gained" from the alliance with the "anti-fascist" capitalists.

In the same period France underwent a similar crisis. The Stalinist-led Popular Front, there too, proved to be the political road to defeat.

The stupendous horror of World War II itself was a consequence of defeats in Spain and France—two of the most outstanding of the missed opportunities for socialist revolution during the world capitalist crisis of the 1930s.

Victorious workers' revolutions in these two advanced capitalist countries, with their more numerous and experienced working classes, would have given a powerful impetus to world revolution. In a context of successful revolutions in one or both these countries, the "luxury" of interimperialist war to settle their quarrels would have been fatal for the

world's capitalists.

Again, at the end of World War II, the Stalinist parties of France, Greece, and Italy refused to take power. But power lay in the streets after the military defeat of the fascist regimes.

The capitalists of these countries, discredited because of their collaboration with German and Italian fascism, were incapable of ruling in their own name. They had lost virtually all authority and influence in any section of the population.

The Communist parties, along with their social-democratic class-collaborationist counterparts, rescued capitalism by joining coalition capitalist governments in these three countries and throughout Europe.

The pattern is always the same. The capitalists, threatened by upsurging workers and peasants, and badly discredited, welcome the help of workers' parties in stemming revolutionary mass mobilizations.

The popular front is then discarded by the capitalists—and the workers often crushed—as soon as their revolutionary momentum has been dissipated and the workers demoralized.

### Postwar boom and decay

This sequence of defeats led to an unprecedentedly long period of stability for capitalism in the imperialist centers—only now coming to an end.

But in the countries occupied by the Red Army—and in Asia—a different dynamic was set into motion. Germany in Eastern Europe and Japan in Asia, the main bulwarks of capitalism in the countries they conquered, were militarily defeated. This, paradoxically, deprived world capitalism of an effective military instrument for defending itself against an unabating upsurge of workers and peasants.

While the imperialist countries—victor and vanquished alike—prospered in the post-World War II boom, it was at the expense of the super-exploited masses at the neocolonial extremities of world capitalism.

The resulting decay and decomposition of any remaining social base for capitalism in these countries so weakened the local ruling classes that, like

**"The theory of stages restricts the struggle in capitalist limits."**

rotted trees, they could be felled with a dull axe.

This, in a nutshell, is the Fourth International's historically developed analysis of the post-World War II overturns of capitalism. It remains the only consistent materialist analysis of these events.

It explains the defeats in Spain, Chile, and Indonesia, as well as the victories in Cuba and China. In fact, any "theory" that cannot account for defeats, is worthless as a guide to action.

A majority in the Fourth International today have had a change of mind. The following selections in this review are indicative of some of the views in contention today in our world movement. —NAT WEINSTEIN ■



## A response to the SWP leadership:

# Is there a capitalist remedy for underdevelopment?

By SEAN FLYNN

A central element of the Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) rejection of its revolutionary heritage is its discarding of Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

This theory, first devised for Russia in 1905, holds that in the underdeveloped countries of the 20th century, the bourgeois-democratic tasks—national liberation, land reform, political democracy, etc.—can be fully won only through the course of an anticapitalist revolution that establishes a dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry.

Trotsky further held that such a revolution would not be secure, much less realize its full social potential, unless it was aided by successful socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries. In fact, the Trotskyist movement analyzed the bureaucratization of the Soviet Union as the result—in the last analysis—of the failure of the post-World War I proletarian revolutions in Western Europe.

Beginning in 1982, the leadership of the SWP substituted for this concept Lenin's pre-1917 theory of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," ostensibly to compensate for Trotsky's alleged "underestimation" of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. In SWP parlance, a "workers' and farmers' government" was the concretization of the "democratic dictatorship" in our epoch.

Despite the terminological dispute between "proletarian dictatorship" and "democratic dictatorship," a workers' and farmers' government was, in the SWP's lexicon, an explicitly anticapitalist formation. Thus the SWP retained a tenuous link to its revolutionary-Marxist past.

But that link began to be severed this summer.

### A prolonged antifeudal stage?

In August 1983, a military coup in the extremely backward West African country of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) brought to power a group of radical anti-imperialist military officers.

The new government began mobilizing the populace of this impoverished land against imperialism. It began a land reform.

Shortly thereafter, glowing articles appeared in the SWP press.

In the discussion period leading up to the August 1985 SWP convention, a

**"SWP's stagist view is not merely an error of formal logic."**

party member proposed that Burkina Faso be labeled a workers' and farmers' government. SWP leaders Doug Jenness and Steve Clark disagreed, saying that while the measures taken by the Burkinabe government were progressive, they were not anticapitalist.

If the sole issue was merely the label to be placed on the government of Burkina Faso, there would be no reason for concern. Jenness and Clark, however, used the debate to rationalize the government's procapitalist policies and to draw sweeping

conclusions bearing on revolutionary strategy for large portions of the globe. In their response they stated:

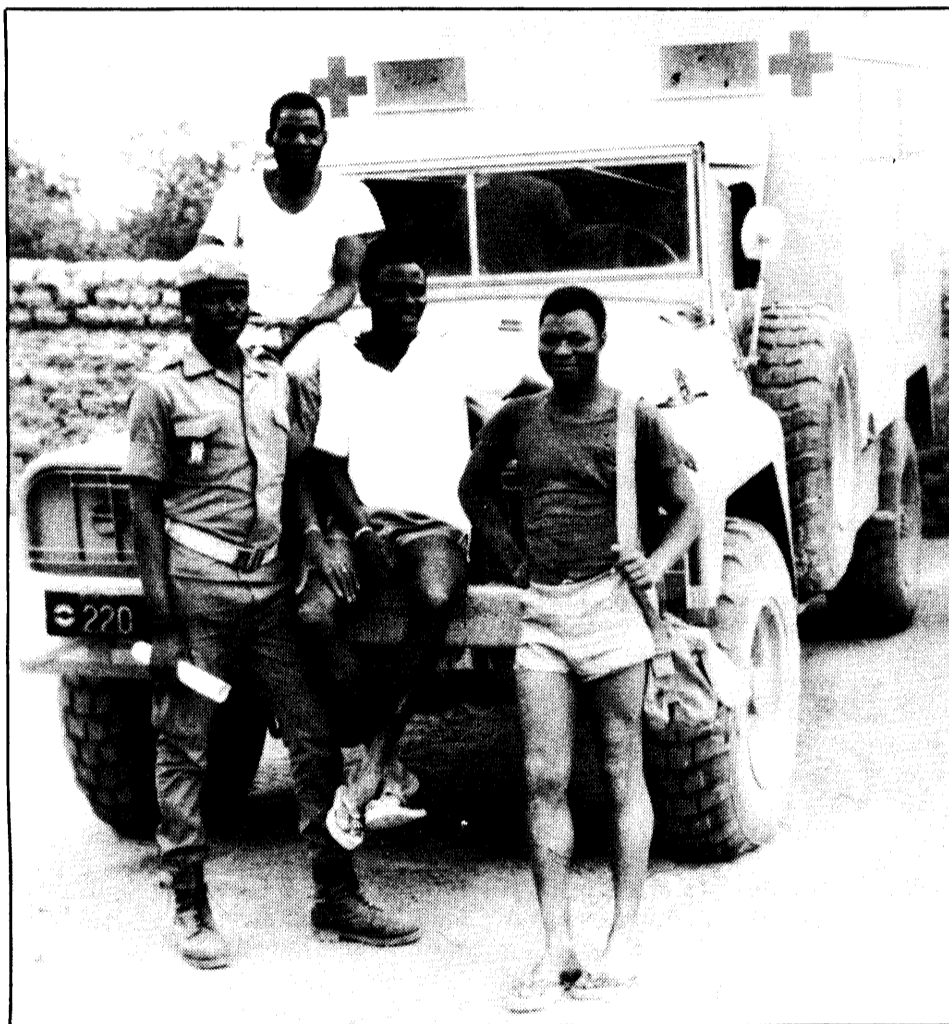
"An anticapitalist revolution is not on the agenda in a number of countries in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. This is because of the low level of capitalist development in these countries, the small size and weight of the working class, and the predominance of precapitalist and prefeudal social relations in the countryside." [*Discussion Bulletin*, v. 40, p. 11, emphasis in original.]

Such arguments are not new.

fact that the economies of all the semi-colonial and underdeveloped capitalist states remain at the whim of the world market.

This is especially true for the most underdeveloped countries whose economies depend on the export earnings of two or three agricultural or mineral products subject to volatile price fluctuations determined in New York, Paris, London, or Tokyo.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, imperialism created a comprador bourgeoisie based on the indigenous middle-class (traders) and allied to precapitalist ruling strata. Imperialism, acting through its comprador agents, began destroy-



Soldiers in Gorom-Gorom, Burkina Faso

Indeed, the Mensheviks used them to prove that the socialist revolution in Russia was impossible. Their view was that a capitalist stage was necessary in Russia in order to develop a working class sufficient for an anticapitalist revolution.

Lenin's 1917 *April Theses* were a polemic against similar arguments within his own party which were raised to justify not aiming for the seizure of power.

In our era, the Stalinized Communist parties used the same reasoning to support the "progressive bourgeoisie" in their own countries against imperialism and precapitalist survivals.

A similar logic was utilized by the petty-bourgeois military officers in Mali and Egypt, who established "state-capitalist" regimes. Middle-class politicians like Sekou Toure in Guinea and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana used the same arguments to theorize how their "anti-imperialist" revolutions were neither capitalist nor socialist.

Although some temporary gains were won by the exploited of these countries, in all cases these nations remained entrapped within capitalist bounds and thus in the web of imperialism.

At the beginning of the century, imperialism united the world under its domination. This is signified by the

ing the native communal economy in order to convert more and more acreage for the production of cash crops destined for the world market.

In doing this, imperialism committed the African masses to famine, misery, and underdevelopment while creating a mining and agricultural working class.

### Revolutions must attack capitalism

Under these circumstances, in the post-World War II period of "decolonization," a number of African states attempted to develop the productive forces of their societies using the vehicle of "state capitalism." Often this was done under the guise of "African socialism." Thus the state became the main vehicle for the attempted capitalist development of the country—through state ownership of industry and the financial system.

But such attempts—in Mali, Guinea, Egypt, and now in Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, and Benin—were based on a demobilized and repressed working class. The economies, moreover, remained fundamentally subject to the law of value rather than the logic of the plan.

In this manner, the state sector became the breeding ground for new capitalist layers arising out of the military and state bureaucracy. In Egypt

and Algeria, ownership of many of the nationalized enterprises has been transferred to this new bourgeoisie. This is the price of an anti-imperialist revolution that is not also anticapitalist.

### "Bolshevik" orthodoxy

SWP leaders Jenness and Clark try to avoid these conclusions by insisting that even in countries like Burkina Faso, "the alliance of exploited producers—the peasants, other rural toilers, and urban workers" would be the heart of the "antifeudal" revolution.

They compare Burkina Faso to the Russia of the early 20th century, wherein Lenin raised the "democratic dictatorship" slogan as the "class content of a victorious revolution."

"Moreover," they continue, "the 'victorious revolution' referred to by Lenin was not the *anticapitalist revolution in Russia*, but the *democratic revolution against tsarism and landlordism*, and for a democratic republic, a radical agrarian reform, and labor rights" (p. 12, emphasis in original).<sup>2</sup>

Jenness and Clark scholastically reason that while social progress can come only if led by an alliance of the toilers, the aim of that alliance (and of the "popular revolutionary dictatorship" it brings to power) isn't necessarily anticapitalist. Thus a "workers' and farmers' government," by definition anticapitalist, is only one variety of "popular revolutionary dictatorships."

The reference to Lenin's thinking before 1917 is, of course, true. However, our born-again Leninists forget that when Lenin was advocating the *democratic dictatorship*, he accepted the political and economic consequences of the slogan:

"The whole content of the revolutionary mass struggle at the present stage is whether Russia is to be a Junker-bourgeois state (as Stolypin and the Cadets desire), or a peasant-bourgeois state (as the peasants and workers desire).

"One cannot take part in such a revolution without supporting one section of the bourgeoisie, one type of bourgeois evolution against the other. Owing to *objective economic choices*, there is not and cannot be any other 'choice' for us in this revolution than between a *bourgeois-centralized republic of peasant-farmers* and a bourgeois-centralized monarchy of Junker-landlords..." [*The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy*, *Collected Works*, v. 13, p. 217, emphasis added].

Lenin reached this conclusion under the influence of George Plekhanov, a Menshevik and the father of Russian Marxism. Applying a mechanical materialist approach to social development, Plekhanov believed that the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution had to be *completed* and capitalism developed, before socialism and an anticapitalist revolution could be put on the agenda.<sup>3</sup>

### The lesson of 1917

It was only in 1917 that the chaos caused by World War I convinced Lenin that only socialist solutions could solve Russia's bourgeois-democratic problems. Thus in 1921 he concluded:

"We said—and proved it by deeds—that bourgeois-democratic reforms are a *by-product* of the socialist revolution... The first develops into the second. The second, *in passing*, solves the problems of the first. Struggle, and struggle alone, decides how far the second succeeds in

(continued on page 9)

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outgrowing the first" ["Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution," *Collected Works*, v. 33, p. 54, emphasis added].

The Communist International drew similar conclusions for the underdeveloped countries in general. At the 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East, Gregory Zinoviev, chairman of the Comintern, stated:

"For a long time the view existed that, first of all, each country must pass through the capitalist stage, creating big factories and large-scale factory owners... and only then could there be any question of socialism. We now think that this is not so.

"From the moment that even just one country has broken away from the chain of capitalism, as Russia has done, from the moment that the workers have put the question of the proletarian revolution on the agenda, from that moment we can say that in China, India, Turkey, and Armenia it is possible and necessary to begin fighting directly for a Soviet system" [*Baku: Congress of the Peoples of the East*, p. 31].

**Internationalism abandoned**

The main error in the Jenness-Clark schema is that they see underdeveloped countries like Burkina Faso in isolation. Of course when looked at alone, socialism is not on the agenda in Burkina Faso—nor for that matter in Grenada, Laos, and even Nicaragua.

In answer to this objection, the Comintern in 1922 pointed out:

"The workers in the East have to ally with the proletariat of the advanced countries, not only in the interests of their common struggle against imperialism, but because only the victorious proletariat of the advanced countries

the National and the Colonial Questions," *Collected Works*, v. 31, p. 146, emphasis added].

**What the discussion reveals**

Jenness' and Clark's resurrection of a stagist conception of revolution is not merely an error of formal logic. Rather, it reflects a profound pessimism in the revolutionary potential of the workers of the advanced countries.

For if these workers cannot come to the aid of a Burkina Faso or similar countries, then the exploited and oppressed of these lands have no choice but to rely on their own efforts.

And if, according to the new logic of the SWP leaders, a socialist revolution is excluded, then only capitalism can create the conditions for the development of the productive forces of society, including the development of an industrial proletariat.

But, as the history of the 20th century has clearly demonstrated, a break with underdevelopment is impossible within the framework of capitalism.

The logic of the new positions adopted by the SWP leads almost inevitably toward an exclusive perspective of strategic alliances with sectors of the "progressive" native capitalist class—the necessary allies during the first "democratic" stage of the revolution.

But such a strategy only delivers the revolution to a wing of the class enemy and ultimately paves the way for the defeat of the revolutionary movement.

So the next logical step in the SWP's tortuous course away from revolutionary Marxism will be political support for such "revolutionary popular dictatorships" as the Dergue's Ethiopia and Qaddafi's Libya.

A far more serious mistake, however, has been set into motion by the SWP's new line. It is a historic law that such views cannot be reserved for only the more backward countries like Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, or Libya. Once embarked on a line which justifies



Burkina Faso's President Thomas Sankara (right) with Ghana's leader Jerry Rawlings

primary importance if the workers and peasants of the continent are to put poverty and famine behind them.

The need for an international outlook is underscored by the experience of the revolutionary-nationalist regimes that took power in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

In these countries, the leading party called itself "Marxist-Leninist" and won power through armed struggle. But after national independence was won, both states failed to mobilize the

encouraging revolution in Africa, a prospect which necessarily challenged the artificial division of the continent.

So the effect on Angola and Mozambique, which accepted this framework, was to deepen their isolation. And now, dissatisfied by the results, Mozambique has begun to turn to the Western imperialist powers, sending its ambassador to Washington, submitting to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, and seeking U.S. capital investment.

The path to social liberation is an arduous one which cannot, in our epoch, be resolved within the framework of the national state. Today, the African revolutions stand on the threshold of a monumental event which could help answer the dilemma faced by Angola, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, and a whole host of African countries—the overthrow of the settler-colonial Republic of South Africa by the workers and peasants of that most developed country in Africa.

In the face of that prospect, the anti-Leninist outlook projected by the SWP leadership must be decisively rejected.

The SWP must return to the principle inscribed in the statutes of the Communist International: "The emancipation of the workers is not a local, nor a national, but an international question" ["Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos," p. 124, emphasis in original.]

**"Social liberation is impossible within the limits of one nation."**

workers and peasants to fight for their own interests and refused to touch imperialist concerns that were the major source of foreign exchange. Finally, the new regimes continued to recognize the narrow national framework imposed on them by imperialism.

This framework led Angola and Mozambique to sign accords in 1984 with South Africa prohibiting the use of their national territory by the South-west African People's Organization (SWAPO) and the African National Congress (ANC) as sanctuaries for operations into Namibia and Azania respectively. Thus these "revolutionary anti-imperialist" fighters ultimately capitulated to their self-avowed main enemy.

**The limits of "campism"**

This debacle was also aided by the acceptance by the ruling MPLA in Angola and FRELIMO in Mozambique of the "campist" view of the world promoted by the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union. In this view, two global class camps face each other: imperialism, on the one side, and anti-imperialism, led by the USSR, on the other. The USSR was seen as a staunch champion of the semicolonial and "non-aligned" world.

But the privileged bureaucracy of the deformed Soviet workers' state had a higher interest—the preservation of its own caste interests. Thus "detente" with the West and "stability" throughout the world were justified under the anti-Marxist pretense of building "socialism in one (their own) country."

It is no more realistic to build socialism in the Soviet Union alone than it is in Cuba, Vietnam, or China—or in all the less developed countries put together.

The Soviet Union, too, can catch up with and surpass capitalism only with the help of socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. "Socialism in one country" is the rationalization for collaborating with world capitalism, not struggling for its overthrow everywhere.

Thus, the Soviet bureaucracy had no desire to disturb the status quo by



Market in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso

will give them disinterested aid in the development of their productive forces.

"Alliance with the proletariat in the West will pave the way to an international federation of soviet republics. For backward peoples the soviet system represents the smoothest form of transition from primitive conditions of existence to the higher Communist society" ["Theses on the Eastern Question", in *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, pp. 413-414, emphasis added].

Or as Lenin bluntly put it:

"All the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities... are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the soviet system's victory over world imperialism" ["Preliminary Draft Theses on

class collaboration in these countries, the inevitable tendency is to generalize the need for such multiclass alliances in the more advanced countries of the world.

**Bourgeois nationalism in Africa**

The discussion also reveals an adaptation to the bourgeois-nationalist framework of "real politik." Jenness and Clark note that one of the uncompleted bourgeois tasks in the underdeveloped and tribally divided Sub-Saharan Africa is the forging of a "nation" (p. 12).

But one of the central political problems of the continent is that national boundaries were artificially erected by the colonial powers to better serve their interests of exploitation. And the native ruling elites that inherited these borders jealously defend them precisely because they carve out distinct spheres of influence which allow them to enrich their own coffers.

The slogan of a united, socialist federation of African states is therefore of

1—Jenness' and Clark's application of the term "feudal" or "prefeudal" to describe the rural society in the underdeveloped countries is a revealing adaptation to Stalinist theory.

The Stalinists reduced the complex social development of humankind to a rigid schema, in which barbarism was succeeded by slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism in that order. They could thereby "scientifically" justify their support to the national bourgeoisie in its fight against "feudal" holdovers.

But Marx recognized that much of the world had never experienced a feudal stage, and Lenin recognized that in many cases capitalism (in its imperialist stage) had been forced on the backward countries. Indeed, it was precisely the rise of imperialism which foreclosed capitalism as an avenue for independently developing the productive forces of the semicolonial world.

2—In the debate leading up to the 1981 SWP convention, Steve Clark posed as a defender of permanent revolution. In the SWP's internal discussion bulletin Clark stated categorically that the party was not abandoning permanent revolution.

But the week after the convention, at a meeting of the National Committee, the SWP leadership unveiled its anti-Trotskyist "Leninism." And in his three-part class series at the August 1985 SWP convention, Clark admitted that the SWP leaders had begun to change their minds about permanent revolution as early as 1979.

In fact, Clark's recent class series represented a thorough and definitive break by the SWP leadership with Trotsky's theory, one of the fundamental bedrocks of revolutionary Marxism in our epoch. In the footsteps of Joseph Stalin, Clark falsely accused Trotsky of "underestimating the peasantry." Trotsky's insistence on the need to expropriate bourgeois property, Clark stated, has been at the root of the "constant leftist deformations of permanent revolution."

3—Significantly, Steve Clark's August 1985 lectures on the defects of the theory of permanent revolution also parroted Plekhanov's insistence that the democratic revolution had to be completed before the socialist revolution could begin.





**FNTMMP**  
National Mineworkers  
and Metalworkers union

# Unions in Peru move to form workers party

On April 14, 1984, over 40 prominent Peruvian trade union leaders united to form a National Organizing Committee for a Workers Party. The meeting was called by Victor Cuadros, president of the National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Union of Peru.

Cuadros, whose 50,000-member union has been at the forefront of the struggle against the country's various capitalist governments, is one of the best known and most respected trade union leaders in Peru.

This meeting adopted a political platform, which it immediately published in pamphlet form, and voted to set up a 14-member Provisional Political Committee to prepare the founding conference of the Peruvian Workers Party.

The party's founding conference is scheduled to take place later this fall.

During the past 18 months, the Organizing Committee has published six issues of its newspaper, "El Trabajo." It has formed scores of local "political groups for a Workers Party," which have attracted union activists from various political tendencies. According to Cuadros, many of the new recruits have come from the Izquierda Unida' (Left Unity.)

The editorial board of the committee's newspaper includes Victor Cuadros; Nazario Tintaya, general-secretary of the National Federation of Municipal Workers of Peru; Alejandro Taza, general-secretary of the Electro-Lima Workers Union; and Jose Ona, legal adviser to the National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Union.

## An important breakthrough

The successful steps toward the formation of the Peruvian Workers Party are of key political significance for the workers of Peru and the rest of Latin America. The platform of this proposed Workers Party, major excerpts of which are published below, represents a clear call for independent, working-class politics.

For the past five years, the Peruvian workers' movement has

been sidetracked by the class-collaborationist Izquierda Unida (IU), a popular-front type formation that includes the large majority of Peru's left parties as well as small but significant sectors of the capitalist class.

IU is led politically by the Stalinist Communist Party of Peru (PCU) and by the capitalist party of the generals of the Velasco Alvarado military regime (PSR). After the recent presidential elections, IU has offered its critical support to the newly elected capitalist government of Alan Garcia.

The emergence of a class-struggle current involving recognized leaders of the Peruvian labor movement on the basis of a principled political program is therefore a major breakthrough for the Peruvian working class.

## "Support real steps forward"

At its 11th World Congress in 1979, the Fourth International adopted a resolution on Latin America which urged its sections to "support any real steps taken by significant sectors of the workers' movement on the road to independent political action—even if these steps are accompanied by programmatic weaknesses."

That resolution also affirmed support to electoral coalitions with other forces, provided that "any alliance be clearly independent of the bourgeoisie and that it be clearly opposed to class-collaborationism."

This resolution oriented the Brazilian Trotskyists, organized around the magazine *Em Tempo*, to play a major role in helping to establish the mass-based Brazilian Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores/PT).

Today, the example of the Brazilian PT is being extended to Peru. This important development provides revolutionists with new opportunities to effectively challenge the mounting attacks on the workers and peasants of this country.

—ALAN BENJAMIN

viduals, currents, and organizations within Izquierda Unida who are resisting the reformist leadership of the front and who, through one form or another, are looking to express the revolutionary aspirations of our people.

The reformism of the leadership of IU, because of its policies of conciliation with the bourgeois state, can lead the Peruvian people to bloody defeat, as was the case with the Chilean people under the Unidad Popular of Salvador Allende.

Only the united front of the workers, the peasants, and of all the oppressed against imperialism and the capitalist class can lead to victory and prevent Peru from becoming another Chile.

## On "Sendero Luminoso"

It is within the political void created by the absence of a genuine revolutionary alternative for the working class and the exploited of Peru that the armed actions of "Sendero Luminoso" (Shining Path) have taken place.

As revolutionary militants, we respect the heroism and self-sacrifice of those who have taken up arms to struggle, as they see it, against the present system of injustice.

We offer our solidarity to the fighters who have been detained. We will fight for their status as political prisoners and for their freedom.

But as proletarian militants, we have the duty to explain that we do not support the militarist and vanguardist methods undertaken by "Sendero Luminoso." There can be no victorious armed struggle without the organization and

The following are major excerpts from the founding platform of the Organizing Committee for a Workers Party in Peru. The document was adopted in Lima, Peru, on April 14, 1984. The translation and abridgement are by Socialist Action.

By means of this political document we are addressing the workers, students, and progressive intellectuals (be they members of Izquierda Unida' or not) who, loyal to the principles of socialism, are fighting for a revolution that will emancipate the working class and all the oppressed from the yoke of imperialism and capitalism.

We are submitting our platform for an open and comradely discussion. We are certain that the document can be perfected with the contributions of other workers who, like us, are seeking the road to building a political organization that genuinely represents all the exploited and oppressed.

## On the Belaunde government

The current government of Fernando Belaunde Terry is a government of the capitalists. Like the previous Belaunde government of 1963-68, it is an agent of the imperialist oppressor.

Consequently, our position toward this government—as toward any government tied to native and foreign capitalism—is that the proletariat and the oppressed majority must maintain their fullest class independence. Only in this manner will they be able to win their demands and impose a government of the

working class and all the oppressed.

Some voices have been raised from within the workers' movement [reference to Izquierda Unida and the Communist Party of Peru (PCU)—The editors], calling on the

Belaunde government to change its economic policies.

But to ask this government to change its policies is like asking an elm tree to bear lemons. This government, which represents the imperialist monopolies, can only carry

out policies in the interests of the oppressors.

We must defeat the positions put forward by the reformists, who are deceiving the people by calling for a change of the minister of the economy.

## On the APRA

Following the teachings of Jose Carlos Mariategui<sup>2</sup>, we characterize the APRA<sup>3</sup> as a bourgeois party.

Although it is true that the

**"There cannot be a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism."**

APRA raised the banner of democracy and anti-imperialism in the 1930s, it has consistently capitulated to imperialism and to the capitalists since that time.

It for these reasons that we must reject the idea that it is possible to reach an electoral agreement with the APRA or even "a government with the APRA," as is being proposed daily by the PSR<sup>4</sup>, one of the parties in the Izquierda Unida.

## On Izquierda Unida

Izquierda Unida (IU) is an electoral front which has won the sympathy of many important sectors of the people. But it is an organization which is led by reformists who reject the class struggle. Moreover, IU is permeated with the electoralist cancer of petty-bourgeois politicians who have forgotten about social revolution.

Having said this, it is also true that there are many indi-

viduals, currents, and organizations within Izquierda Unida who are resisting the reformist leadership of the front and who, through one form or another, are looking to express the revolutionary aspirations of our people.

Mobilization of the masses, with the proletariat in the leadership. Military actions that are isolated from the struggles of the exploited in no way favor the cause of the workers and peasants. On the contrary, they offer the reactionary government the pretext to attack the organizations of the people.

It is true, though, that there cannot be a "peaceful transformation of capitalism" or a "peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism." The victory of the oppressed and exploited is impossible without the destruction of the capitalist state by means of armed revolution.

It is for this reason that a party of the workers must prepare itself and prepare its class for the transformation of

(continued on page 11)





(continued from page 10)

the class struggle into a war against the class enemy.

**On the National Popular Assembly**

Along with many other class-struggle currents in the workers' movement, the National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Union of Peru (FNTMMP) has fought over the years for the centralization of the local popular assemblies, defense fronts, unions, and other organizations into a National Popular Assembly.

Like the mineworkers, we therefore support the National

the Peruvian revolution."

Flowing from its politics, the PCU consistently justified the military government's repression of the mass organizations: the massacres of Huanta and Ayacucho in 1969, Cobriza in 1971 and the persecution of the miners in Cujone and Millontingo, etc.

For this reason, the PCU, carrying out the government's dirty work, organized one maneuver after another to break and divide the National Mineworkers Union headed by Victor Cuadros. It went so far as to slander Victor Cuadros and the main leaders of the

the working class and the oppressed people in all countries of the world. This must be done through organized campaigns and concrete acts of class solidarity.

At the root of our internationalism is the understanding of the international character of the world economy and the international unity of the class struggle.

Unfortunately, as a result of the degeneration and reformist deviations of the so-called Communist parties, proletarian internationalism also degenerated and was liquidated.

But we, as worker militants, have the duty to fight for the international unity of the working class, as Jose Carlos Mariategui sought to do. We must fight for a genuine revolutionary international organization of the workers to advance in a more effective way the struggle against imperialism and for the international socialist revolution.

Contrary to what the bourgeoisie and its agents in the workers' movement tell us, fighting for proletarian internationalism does not mean turning one's back on the national struggle.

On the contrary, only consistent internationalists can fight for national emancipation and sovereignty against the imperialist oppressor. It is the so-called "patriots" who end



Workers return to homes in Comas, one of Lima's shantytowns.



Miners' leader Victor Cuadros, PRT leader Hugo Blanco, and Antonio Aragon, a leader of a faction which split from the PSR. All three were elected to Constituent Assembly in 1978.

Popular Assembly, which brought together 220 delegates from major unions, peasant organizations, slum-dweller associations, political parties, etc., on March 7, 1984. This assembly expressed the deep desire of our people to form a united front of the oppressed to get rid of the Belaunde government.

Whereas the current governmental parliament is totally subservient to the president of the republic, the National Popular Assembly has begun to structure itself as the repository of the sovereign will of the masses—a will that has been trampled upon and ignored by bourgeois democracy, which serves only the ruling rich.

**On the need for political independence**

The struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie is an irreconcilable struggle that must end with the victory of the proletarian revolution over capitalism.

In our country, the banner of class independence has been defended through a permanent battle with the class-collaborationist, reformist forces—particularly the Peruvian Communist Party "Unidad" (PCU). These forces have consistently offered support to the ruling capitalists and have therefore been compelled to carry out divisive politics in the workers' movement.

The PCU, which still controls the CGTP [the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers], has carried out these class-collaborationist policies for the past 15 years.

The PCU sought to deceive the workers by offering its full support to the armed forces under Gen. Velazco Alvarado. It told the workers that the army was the "vanguard of

miners' union as "counterrevolutionaries." The PCU applauded their imprisonment and subsequent deportations.

Today the PCU advocates a policy of critical support to the Belaunde government. Together with the rest of Izquierda Unida (IU), it has adapted to the bourgeois parliament and to bourgeois legality.

The PCU and IU called for a change of the minister of the economy and opposed the call for immediate and direct general elections following the defeat of the ruling party in the municipal elections of November 1983.

Nonetheless, the reformists and the ruling class have not been able to contain the development over the past 15 years of important independent class-struggle currents in the major union federations such as the FNTMMP, SUTEP, CCP, and other important unions.

This broad, class-struggle current has been at the center of the major class battles against the Velazco, Morales Bermudez, and Belaunde governments. These currents contributed to the formation of the FOCEP and UDP.

And today these currents are seeking to become organized politically in a genuine working-class, revolutionary party.

**For proletarian internationalism**

As it was for Jose Carlos Mariategui, who explained that the "Latin American revolution would be purely and simply one phase of the world revolution," proletarian internationalism must be the guiding principle for our revolutionary activity.

Concretely, this means that the Peruvian working class must solidarize itself with the struggles for emancipation of

those who put them behind bars for forming their own trade unions.

Our principal slogan must continue to be the one put forward by Marx and Engels: "Workers of the World, Unite!"

**For socialism**

The struggle of the working class and of all the oppressed for their emancipation is the struggle to replace the rotten and agonizing capitalist system with socialism.

The Russian revolution of October 1917 was the beginning of the international socialist revolution. Since that time, and with its own distinct national particularities, the proletarian socialist revolution

fight that broke out in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death, he was vilified by the Stalinized Comintern. He died at a very young age before he could fully take up the struggle for the Left Opposition.

3—Alan Garcia, the current president of Peru, is a member of the APRA. This party was founded in the 1930s by Victor Haya de la Torre, who died in August 1979.

4—The Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), its name notwithstanding, has nothing to do with the struggle for socialism. It is a capitalist party formed by the generals of the "first phase" of Gen. Velazco Alvarado's bourgeois-nationalist government (1969-75).

Gen. Leonidas Rodriguez, who heads the PSR, was a key figure in that government. He was in charge of SINAMOS, an abortive scheme for subordinating all mass organizations to the military regime. The PSR is an important component of Izquierda Unida, with the generals of the "first phase" being the front's most prominent and visible leaders.

In April 1978, Hugo Blanco, the leader of the Peruvian Trotskyist movement, explained that he would never join a common programmatic or electoral front with the PSR. "We have seen that those gentlemen have not used arms in defense of the peasants but in defense of the oppressors," Blanco said. "From now on we have to educate the working class not to place confidence in its class enemies."

5—Partido Comunista Unidad (PCU) is the pro-Moscow Stalinist party in Peru. Its secretary-general, Javier del Prado, is also the provisional national coordinator of IU, demonstrating clearly the predominant influence of the Stalinists in this front.

6—Gen. Velazco Alvarado was president of Peru from 1969 to 1975. He enacted a series of limited reforms but was unable to incorporate the independent mass organizations into his capitalist government.

7—The Sindicato Unico de los Trabajadores de Educacion del Peru (SUTEP) is the national teachers' federation of Peru. Although one of the more combative unions in the country, it has been saddled by the misleadership of Patria Roja, an ultraleft Maoist group.

8—The Confederacion Campesina del Peru (CCP) is the major independent peasant federation of Peru.

9—The Workers, Peasants, Students, and Poor People's Front (FOCEP) was formed in 1977 by the various Peruvian Trotskyist organizations and hundreds of independent union and peasant leaders. Hugo Blanco and other Trotskyists were elected to the Constituent Assembly on the FOCEP slate.

10—The Democratic People's Union (UDP) was formed in 1977 at the same time as FOCEP by a series of important trade union leaders and centrist political parties. The difference between the UDP and the FOCEP, as Hugo Blanco explained in 1978, "is that the UDP thinks it is possible to get together with the generals of the 'first phase,' and we think not." The UDP's two major leaders were Alfonso Barrantes Lingan, currently mayor of Lima and president of the IU, and Victor Cuadros, president of the National Mineworkers and Metalworkers Union of Peru and current head of the Peruvian Workers Party. Cuadros, who was elected to the Constituent Assembly on the UDP slate, broke with Barrantes Lingan and the class-collaborationist policies of IU after seeing the IU capitulate to the Belaunde government from 1980 to the present.

**"We are with the Polish workers because they defend socialism."**

up being the agents of imperialism.

It is for this reason that, at the same time we unconditionally support the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Central America who are fighting, guns in hand, against Yankee imperialism, we must also fully support the struggles of the Polish workers and their union, Solidarity.

We do not hide our ideological and political differences with leaders of Solidarity, like Lech Walesa. But the ideological struggle and debate within the workers' movement must not prevent us from forcefully demanding the release of the Polish unionists who have been jailed for fighting to form unions independent of the state.

We are with the Polish workers because it is they who are defending socialism, not

has been extended to China, Cuba, Korea, Nicaragua, and other countries that have torn themselves away from imperialism through revolutionary struggle.

Despite the degeneration and bureaucratic deformations in the Soviet Union and other countries where the workers overturned capitalism, socialism continues to be the only solution to the agonizing capitalist system.

The struggle against the violence and arbitrary actions of these bureaucracies—like in Poland—is also an integral part of the world socialist revolution.

In Peru, it will be the proletarian socialist revolution that will expel the imperialist oppressor and will simultaneously begin the abolition of private property in the means of production.



1—Izquierda Unida (Left Unity) is an electoral alliance between working-class parties and sectors of the capitalist class. Formed in 1980, IU came in second place in the recent presidential elections in Peru.

IU's presidential candidate, Alfonso Barrantes Lingan, capitulated to the pressure of the capitalist forces in IU and withdrew his candidacy from the second electoral round, thus securing the election of Alan Garcia, the candidate of the APRA.

2—Mariategui founded the Peruvian communist movement and the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP) in the 1920s. He won the Peruvian Socialist Party to the Third International (Comintern) of Lenin and Trotsky and was a great admirer of the Bolsheviks. After declaring his sympathies for Trotsky and the Left Opposition in the

The following is an edited version of the resolution, "The Stakes in the Central America Discussion," adopted by the first national convention of Socialist Action in November 1984.

Some of the most dramatic and important events for revolutionaries today are occurring in Central America.

In Nicaragua, a revolutionary government has taken power. It has taken steps which run counter to the interests of imperialism and the native ruling classes. These steps have sparked the sharp antagonism of these reactionary forces, who understand the real threat presented by this revolutionary process—the potential for the complete expropriation of capitalist economic interests.

The revolutionaries leading these events represent the growth and development of the Castroist current. The roots and ideology of that current can be traced back to the Cuban revolution and its impact throughout Latin America.

Despite the important achievements in action of this current in the Central

**"There is no road to national liberation short of socialism."**

American revolution, we must also acknowledge that the weaknesses of Castroism can be seen within these struggles. These weaknesses take the form of serious theoretical and programmatic gaps and errors (for example on the nature of Stalinism or the role of the neocolonial capitalist class) which result from the specific historical conditions in which the Cuban revolution took place.

The clash in Nicaragua between the masses led by the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN), on the one hand, and the old ruling classes and their supporters, on the other, is becoming sharper and sharper. It has reached the stage of a major armed invasion by counterrevolutionaries backed by U.S. imperialism.

A decisive showdown is shaping up that must end either in the overthrow of the still dominant economic power of the capitalists and the creation of a workers' state resting on nationalized property, or in the defeat of the revolution.

This is the question of permanent revolution as it has always been understood by the world Trotskyist movement. In the age of imperialism there can be no road to national liberation except through a process of workers' revolution—of socialist revolution.

The revolution taking place today in Central America is, and will on an increasing scale, have an extraordinary impact on the coming American and world socialist revolution. Our discussion in Socialist Action takes place within the framework of our unconditional support to the revolutionary workers and peasants and their organizational expressions in Central America.

We are unconditionally in support of a military victory by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador and by the FSLN in Nicaragua against the internal and external forces of world capitalism and its most virulent and potent agency, U.S. imperialism. And, of course, we support every forward step by the Sandinista revolutionary government against capitalist power and toward a workers' state in Nicaragua.

#### A heterogeneous current

We must begin with an important fact in our approach to the leading forces in the Central American revolu-

# The stakes in the debate on C. America



A supporter of the FSLN in Nicaragua

tion. They do not constitute a single monolith.

The largest and most influential component, it is true, is made up of forces that have modeled themselves politically on the profoundly revolutionary practice of the Castroist leaders of the Cuban revolution. These revolutionists of action, therefore, encourage the greatest optimism regarding the outcome of the current stage in the world struggle for workers' power and socialism.

But it is no less true that among the ranks of the revolutionists of action in Central America are the traditional representatives of political betrayal in the shape of the Stalinist and social democratic class-collaborationist currents. These forces are working vigorously to contain the revolution within capitalist limits.

Although a small minority within the revolutionary camp, the influence of Stalinism and the social democracy is amplified with the considerable assistance of the Stalinist bureaucracy at the helm of the Soviet Union—not to mention the social-democratic agencies of capitalist governments in Western Europe and the Americas.

These class-collaborationist forces

have recently succeeded in driving the Salvadoran FMLN to the right with the adoption of the "peace plan," the Government of Broad Participation (GAP). But even so, our optimism is bolstered by new evidence of growing resistance to this program within the FMLN and among revolutionary forces who have been undemocratically excluded from the FMLN.

Ruben Zamora, a principal leader of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (the conservative political arm of the FMLN), has been compelled to defend the "GAP" against mounting opposition within the fighting forces of the revolution in El Salvador. Zamora clearly establishes the *strategic*—not *tactical*—character of the "GAP" in an interview reprinted in the Oct. 29, 1984, issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

We would do a terrible disservice to the revolution were we to be silent regarding the ideological struggle that has erupted within the Salvadoran revolutionary movement.

We would make the biggest mistake if we were to adapt passively to the political line of the revolutionary forces in Central America today—particularly those who are advocating the "GAP."

On the contrary, we have an *obligation* to participate in this ideological struggle.

As Leon Trotsky noted, "One does not demonstrate one's friendship for a revolutionary organization in a difficult situation by closing one's eyes to its mistakes and the dangers arising from them."

This was the cardinal error made by the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Some of us warned, during the 1981 SWP convention discussion, that the SWP was in danger of following the logic of their adaptation to Castroism and would ultimately be led to break with Trotskyism, the Permanent Revolution, the Transitional Program, and with the Fourth International (FI).

We are not happy that this fear has been to a great extent confirmed by the SWP's subsequent evolution. [See articles on the SWP in this supplement.]

#### New conceptions

While we are confident that the Fourth International (FI), unlike the SWP in the grip of the Barnes faction, is completely capable of regaining its balance, the United Secretariat (USec) majority is showing evidence of a similar course toward adaptation.

Two of the most recent USec majority resolutions, "The Report on the Present Stage of Building the International" and "The Central American Revolution," show evidence of a dangerous trend toward rationalizing and adapting to erroneous strategic conceptions held by the currently dominant wings of the revolutionary forces in Central America and the Caribbean. [See excerpts in this supplement from FI leader Daniel Bensaid's recent interview in *International Viewpoint* expressing some of these new conceptions.]

The following are five major points where the USec resolutions depart from the historic positions adopted by our world movement over many decades.

1) The USec majority resolutions defend the "GAP" in El Salvador on "tactical" grounds. In its resolution, "The Central American Revolution," the USec majority states:

"The objective [of the "GAP"] is to give this movement, starting from its reality, a dynamic of political confrontation with the practical policies of the present government. To do this it has to be offered an overall perspective which links democratic, anti-imperialist, and immediate economic demands. That is the way to throw off balance the leaderships of the popular organizations who want to subordinate the activity of the masses to the needs of the regime."

And the USec authors conclude: The "GAP" platform can have this effect."

The USec majority, however, dismisses the fact that the FDR/FMLN "peace plan" proposes to achieve these demands by a coalition government "in which no single sector will have control" and backed by an army resulting from the fusion of the FMLN forces and a purged Salvadoran army.

Socialist Action supports the right of the Salvadoran revolutionists to negotiate with Duarte or whomever. But as revolutionists, we cannot take part in misleading workers by giving *political* support to a program that calls for the merger of the two armies and that clearly commits itself to the preservation of capitalism in El Salvador.

Even if the capitalists do not consider it necessary *at this time* to resort to the "GAP" (they feel that Duarte may do the job and therefore would only turn to the popular front as their last card against the advancing revolu-

(continued on page 13)



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tion), it is wrong to give *political support* to a program of class collaboration.

2) The USec resolutions *reverse* their previous positions and now support programmatic, electoral, and governmental alliances with so-called minor capitalist forces on the grounds that the worker and peasant components have "hegemony."

In a footnote to the USec resolution on Central America, the USec majority states its support for the FSLN policy

**"We remain convinced of the need for the FI in every country."**

of alliances with the capitalist class in the National Patriotic Front (FPN), a front which was formed in early 1979.

In a major self-criticism of the position it held for five years, the USec majority states that the FSLN's "actions [in alliance with the capitalists] were incorrectly grasped (problem of hegemony) and were not situated in the context of the battle for 'national unity against Somoza' in the sense understood by the FSLN."

3) The USec resolutions overturn their own analyses of the phases of the Nicaraguan revolution which had up to the adoption of the new positions—for five years—correctly maintained that the revolution had yet to establish a workers' state.

The USec resolution on Central America now states that Nicaragua became a workers' state in July 1979, at the time the Somoza dictatorship was overthrown.

This momentous revision of the USec's previous analysis is offered without any attempt at a serious explanation, except in the footnote cited above.

The previous FI resolutions called for the completion of the agrarian reform, the establishment of soviet forms of workers' rule, workers' control, and the resolution of the "mixed economy," i.e. the overthrow of the partially dismantled capitalist state.

By reversing its positions, the FI is now rationalizing the non-completion of these tasks on the ground that the workers' state existed in Nicaragua from the outset. This method, at the very least, throws into question the applicability of the Transitional Program to the Central American revolution.

If adopted, the new USec majority positions would obviate the reason for the existence of sections of the FI in Central America.

For our part, we remain convinced of the need to build and strengthen the FI in every country of the world on the basis of our historic program. We have something to say in Nicaragua on the basis of our program and heritage concerning the mixed economy, workers' democracy, and proletarian internationalism.

But to advance these ideas, we need an independent expression of the FI in Nicaragua, Cuba, and El Salvador—whatever the tactical considerations involved in organizing supporters of the FI in these countries.

4) Another even more important mistake in the USec resolutions lies in their generalization of the Nicaraguan FSLN's policy of class alliances to other countries.

Whereas in the past the USec majority saw the FSLN's policy of alliance with the bourgeoisie in the FPN as an obstacle and danger to the revolution, it has now concluded that this policy of class alliances with the bourgeoisie was correct and must be extended to other countries as well.

The USec majority also says that the Nicaraguan revolution triumphed without the need of a party of the

Fourth International—a heterogeneous revolutionary front was sufficient—and so it questions whether or not it is still necessary to build the Fourth International in Central America.

As in other postwar revolutions, the USec majority fails to see that the revolutionary movement of the masses broke through the barrier erected by the alliance with the capitalists. That the masses overcame this obstacle without the benefit and need of the revolutionary party is due to the exceptional decay and decomposition of imperialism and its comprador capitalist class which have prepared the ground for the revolutions following World War II.

What the USec resolutions fail to see—and hence the danger of "generalizing"—is that such alliances will prove to be an insurmountable obstacle in countries with stronger and broader-based national bourgeoisies. And this obstacle will be compounded unless the revolutionary party is built on the clearest possible political program—the program of the Fourth International. Only this program can mobilize the full power of the oppressed and exploited masses.

The first extension by the USec majority of the FSLN's policy of class alliances was its political support to the Izquierda Unida (Left Unity) in Peru and the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) in Uruguay. Both are clearly popular-front formations.

Claiming that the FSLN had

analysis of the Algerian Ben Bella government of the early 1960s. This government had been correctly characterized as a workers' and farmers' government, but not yet a workers' state. Now the USec majority claims that the Ben Bella government never broke with the bourgeoisie at the governmental level.

In fact, the USec majority rejects the "validity of a characterization which combines workers' and peasants' government and capitalist state."

And in so doing it also rejects the FI's historic analysis of the Cuban revolution.

We believe these mistakes can be corrected and our world movement stopped from following the logic of these revisions to its ultimate conclusion. Toward this end, we wish to point to the theoretical questions at the root of the current dispute.

A frank and sharply clear statement of the problem is indispensable. False diplomacy that gets in the way of clarifying differences is harmful and would be a major departure from our tradition of comradesly but uncompromising political argument.

**The roots of the dispute**

Our discussion has revealed a vast confusion concerning basic programmatic positions within the Fourth International. It concerns, among other things, a confusion between the workers' united front and the anti-imperialist united front, on one side, and the

nor the anti-imperialist united front can be based on a program that includes the defense of capitalist property rights. This is a class-collaborationist programmatic alliance—better known in the hands of counterrevolutionary Stalinists and social democrats as the popular front.

Nowhere in the historic programmatic positions adopted by the American or world Trotskyist movement is there even a hint that support or participation in a capitalist programmatic alliance, electoral coalition, or governmental formation that includes the capitalist class is within the bounds of *principle*—even with "insignificant representatives" or "shadows" of the capitalist class.

The principle of working class political independence has been affirmed and reaffirmed on numerous occasions in programmatic documents like the "Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution" and in shelves of writing on this question by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky—to name only the most prominent authors.

**Anti-imperialist united front**

The Third International under Lenin and Trotsky first advanced the tactic of the anti-imperialist united front:

"Just as in the West the slogan of the workers' united front has helped and is helping to expose the social democrats' sell-out of proletarian interests, so the slogan of the anti-imperialist united front will help to expose the vacillations of the various bourgeois national groups . . .

"The colonial revolution can triumph and defend its gains only if accompanied by a proletarian revolution in the advanced countries" (*Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Communist International*, pp. 415-416).

Nowhere in these "Theses," nor in any writings by Lenin and Trotsky, nor in any line documents of the SWP or FI (until now), is there any statement, hint, or suggestion that a *programmatic* alliance with any sector of the capitalist class is permissible in a colonial or semicolonial country.

On the contrary, the same principle of working class political independence from the capitalists (in this case the national capitalist class) applies with equal force in this arena of the world class struggle.

Limited unity in action with sectors of the national capitalist class against imperialism is permissible, but always under separate programmatic banners—never under the banner of the class enemy.

In reaffirming our historical position on class alliances, we also reaffirm the theoretical conquests (currently being challenged) regarding the workers' and farmers' government as a transitional slogan in the struggle for the workers' state and as a theoretical link



Salvadoran workers build barricade on highway in Usulután.

"hegemony" in the new government that took power after the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, the USec encouraged its sections to follow the Nicaraguan "model" and join the Izquierda Unida and the Frente Amplio in order to seek to gain "revolutionary hegemony" within these fronts.

The USec resolutions—overturning the historic position of the FI—now support participation in these multi-class formations organized on a capitalist *programmatic* foundation, for the alleged purpose of gaining a better hearing and "to help determine whether it [the Izquierda Unida] becomes a reformist front that holds back the mass movement or a revolutionary front that pushes the process forward" (Hugo Blanco, "Left Unity and 'Sendero Luminoso,'" *Intercontinental Press*, March 19, 1984). [See articles on Peru in this supplement.]

This policy of the Blanco-led majority of the Peruvian Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) in joining the Izquierda Unida popular front-type electoral alliance has been *endorsed* by the USec majority resolutions.

For revolutionists loyal to the program of the Fourth International, seeking "hegemony" within a programmatic coalition with sectors of the class enemy is impermissible.

5) In the same footnote to its resolution on Central America, the USec majority overthrows its theoretical

popular front, on the other.

The workers' united front is based on unity for objectively anticapitalist action by mass workers' organizations. It must not rule out the right of each component to advocate its full program and the right to mutual criticism at the same time that united anticapitalist action is organized and carried out. The aim of the united front is to unite in action mass organizations led by contending political currents.

The united front, therefore, can only be set into motion on the basis of one, or at most a few issues. To achieve a broader-based, anticapitalist *programmatic* coalition is unrealistic. The more issues included as the basis for common *action*, the less is the possibility for politically divided mass organizations to unite.

The anti-imperialist united front is the application of the united front to underdeveloped countries, where the tasks of the democratic revolution have pressing urgency and thus, alliances with capitalists are not excluded.

But such alliances must be restricted exclusively for the purpose of carrying out joint action for *specific and limited aims*. It should go without saying that a sharp programmatic and organizational differentiation is essential between the workers and their momentary capitalist allies.

Neither the workers' united front

**"We stand on the line put forward by Joseph Hansen."**

explaining the transition from capitalism to the workers' state.

We stand on the general line defended in "Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution" by Joseph Hansen, which is an outstanding example of the application and refinement of the theory of permanent revolution and which clearly establishes the revolutionary-Marxist criteria for determining the class character of the state now being challenged from inside our world movement. ■



The following are excerpts from an interview with Daniel Bensaid, a leader of the Fourth International and of its French section, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR).

This interview on the meaning of the 12th World Congress of the Fourth International, first appeared in the April issue of *Critique Communiste*, the theoretical magazine of the LCR, and was translated in full in the June 17, 1985, issue of *International Viewpoint*.

**Question:** In accordance with the stalemated world situation that you have just described, it seems that the forces of our International have not experienced any notable growth in the recent years. Five years after the last world congress, how does the strength of the Fourth International look in those countries where it has organizations?

**Daniel Bensaid:** Except in Mexico and to a lesser extent in Brazil, the International has not grown numerically since the Eleventh World Congress. Overall, we have maintained our forces. There have been gains in terms of new sections, mainly in Brazil, Uruguay, and Ecuador. Our first African section has been recognized in Senegal.

The fact that we have maintained our strength might seem to represent a static situation. But in Latin America, where we were badly weakened by the split that followed the Eleventh World Congress, the International has been rebuilt, consolidated, or advanced in most countries of the continent, leaving aside Central America.

In Europe, our strength has remained the same or declined in some cases. But at the same time we have made progress in terms of our organizations putting down social roots, stabilizing their functioning, and building leadership teams.

This is very important when you remember that after 1968 the organizational continuity of the sections emerging from entryism was precarious. In 15 years this capital has been rebuilt. In the last years it has been consolidated. Finally, the dominant note at our congress was a determination to go about political work differently.

**Question:** There, you have to make clear what you are talking about.

**Bensaid:** You have to remember that in the past, the International, not exclusively but mainly, served as a point of reference for analysis and for defending our program in the most general terms.

That was in part the inevitable result of isolation and having to struggle against the current, even though there was a constant striving to keep the connection with practical work and to do the utmost with our limited resources, as is shown by the help we gave to the Algerian revolution.

For example, we defended the concept of permanent revolution against the Stalinist theory of revolution by stages, with a feeling that from this flowed quite naturally the answer to political situations. For many sections there was no difference between putting forward their general ideas in propaganda and political activity in the form of initiatives, tactics, operations, answers to day-to-day political problems.

This situation was particularly dangerous because every concrete political response to a given problem tended to appear either as a direct confirmation or betrayal of the program. There was no flexibility, no room in between. This mechanism is no doubt behind a lot of the splits we have seen.

What is new is the idea that we are trying to respond to concrete political problems. We could for example discuss in general terms the permanent revolution, the worker-peasant alliance, determine whether in the context of the democratic tasks in antidictatorial struggles, we can make alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie.

But for all the Latin American sections today

## Interview with Fourth International leader: The meaning of the 12th World Congress



Student upsurge in May 1968 in Paris. French Fourth Internationalists were in the leadership of this fight.

these questions are no longer something to be discussed on the level of principles alone or general theory. Because every one of them faces a concrete problem that it has to solve.

Should we be in the Izquierda Unida in Peru? How should we fight against extending this coalition to the APRA, which is a full-fledged bourgeois party? How should the electoral battle be waged from this stand point?

In Brazil our comrades took part in the formation of a mass workers' party, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). But this is neither the major nor the only party of the working class. How should we appeal to other sectors and continue to build the PT? This party exists as an independent working-class party. But independence in and of itself is not a complete class program.

In Uruguay, should we join the Frente Amplio, a broad front which does include a bourgeois party but also embodies the united resistance to the dictatorship, which has been the political expression of the united reorganization of the trade-union movement, which gave rise to a thousand local and street committees, etc. in Montevideo?

And if we should be in this front, what sort of fight should we wage in it? These are the problems that the sections want to discuss now.

**Question:** Fine. But there are still the basic problems that arose in the International under the impact of the Polish and Nicaraguan revolutions. What is more, our movement is absent as an active force from the Central American scene. How did the World Congress respond to this situation?

**Bensaid:** In a way, the Nicaraguan revolution represents a challenge for us. It is a revolution made by others, and at the beginning we understood it badly.

This situation could produce two extreme reactions in our ranks. One is to reject a programmatic

guide that they think kept us from recognizing the Sandinista revolution and linking ourselves to it.

For the comrades who are developing this position in the International, the theory of permanent revolution is a sectarian theory that leads us away from understanding real processes. So, we have to get rid of it.

What remains valid about Trotsky, according to these comrades, is his defense of the traditions of the Third International, of its first four congresses. On the other hand, they think that what Trotsky added in the 1920s and the 1930s handicaps us today.

This reaction could give rise to a debate counterposing revision and orthodoxy, which would have been disastrous. To the contrary, we tried through a concrete study of the Nicaraguan revolution to determine whether our programmatic guidelines were relevant and how they had to be updated.

Did the Sandinistas lead their revolution in spite of themselves, despite their policy of alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie, despite their conception of economic transition? Or did they do so thanks to their policy? Today, while we might make some criticisms of certain aspects, we recognize that the Sandinistas won thanks to their policy and not "in spite of it."

It is necessary to study this policy and to determine where it creates problems for us. We collectively reread Trotsky's work on permanent revolution and eliminate some confusion. While the bourgeois-democratic and socialist tasks of the revolution are not separated in time by a Chinese wall, they are not totally telescoped either. The proletariat can have different allies at different times in the revolutionary process.

Unfortunately, some Trotskyists put forward a version of the theory of permanent revolution in the dependent countries that resembles the one that the Stalinists criticize, that is, an ultra-leftist one, the struggle for power right away and not as the result of a revolutionary process that may

**"We are a current that has preserved an international view of revolution."**

begin by struggles around democratic, antidictatorial, and national demands.

Another danger was to fall into a certain masochism and false humility. Other people have made revolutions. We should learn from them. We reject this. Of course, we always have to learn from experiences.

But we are a historical current that preserves one little thing in particular, an international view of revolution, which from its origins has represented an alternative to Stalinism. Unfortunately, today, even among revolutionists, you don't find very many who share our position of supporting both Solidarnosc in Poland and the revolution in El Salvador.

In the same way, we, who have maintained a programmatic tradition for decades, should not run away from it at the very time that other people in Latin America are discovering that the democratic and socialist phases of the revolution are part of the same process, when the Salvadoran Communist Party, under the pressure of events, is rejecting the old Menshevik and Stalinist theory of "two revolutions," a democratic one and a socialist one separated in time.

It is not for us to retreat at a time like that! There is no reason to hang your head or eat humble pie when history proves you right.

We can integrate ourselves completely into this rethinking and re-examination if we are involved in the work and are an integral part of the process. The determination to do this was general in the World Congress and there was a confidence in the role that the International can play if we are clear about what can be done and achieved today. ■

1—Izquierda Unida (Left Unity) is an electoral coalition whose dominant component is the Peruvian Communist Party. It includes within it bourgeois political representatives and is committed to a program that goes no further than radical reforms within capitalist boundaries—*Socialist Action*.

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# ...S. Africa

(continued from page 1)

ning and Development Chris Heunis emphasized, Botha's proposal to give Blacks a kind of citizenship "does not mean they will exercise political rights in South Africa."

## Capitalists begin to panic

In recent months a significant portion of the capitalist class has expressed its impatience with Botha's policies. Leading clarions of South African finance such as *Business Day* magazine and *The Financial Mail* have demanded bluntly that President Botha "leave office now."

Otherwise, they warn, business executives will continue to pack their bags. During the last four months, for example, U.S. corporations have pulled out nearly a tenth of their \$2.3 billion investment in the country.

"We have to go to power-sharing [with Blacks]," Gerald S. Muller, the deputy director of Nedbank—the country's largest domestic bank—pointed out to the *San Francisco Examiner*.

Alfred Leroy, the managing director of Palabora Mining Co., joined in. "It would be nice to think that we are altruistic," he told the *Examiner*, "but it makes good economic and social sense to build a stable workforce."

Even under the expanding economy of the 1970s, according to *Business Week*, the apartheid system "hurt economic growth by limiting labor mobility and creating an artificial shortage of skilled workers."

But today's call for "power sharing" by sectors of the South African capitalist class (as well as by the Reagan administration) has a deeper motive. Big business fears increasingly that the government may not be able to sustain itself—nor safeguard profits—against the Black rebellion.

The self-styled realists among the capitalists have begun to recognize that Black-majority rule may not be far off. Will the mineowners, the factory owners, and the landlords be forced to flee, they wonder? Or can they—by offering the possibility of "power sharing"—moderate or sidetrack a revolutionary mobilization of the masses?

*Business Week*, speaking for capitalists in the United States, points out: "The majority of South Africa's Blacks, especially its young people, see capitalism and apartheid as inextricably linked."

"But some accommodation is possible," the editors advise. "Black leaders in neighboring Marxist states have been willing to employ foreign multinationals that stay to run mines and plants."

Accordingly, on Sept. 13, seven South African executives and journal-

## "The Black trade unions are beginning to lead."

ists donned their polo jerseys and flew off to Zambia to see if they could strike a deal with exiled leaders of the African National Congress.

The main spokesman for the group, Anglo-American Corp. Chairman Gavin W.H. Relly, told the press before leaving, "I think it is a very good idea that the South African business community should be able to explore with the ANC whether there is a meeting of the minds between a free-enterprise society and Marxist control."

Relly was not entirely encouraged by the outcome, however. The president of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, told the business leaders that if the ANC should come to power some major corporations would be nationalized.

Tambo did volunteer the opinion, however, that the talks represented "a very important contribution to the proc-



## Free Nelson Mandela

ess of seeking ways and means of ending the violence of apartheid."

He expressed hope that in future meetings with the capitalists "we might even begin to agree about what exactly should be done."

Nevertheless, in its calls to "make the apartheid system unworkable, make the country ungovernable," the ANC has demonstrated that they will continue in their efforts to help mobilize the masses in struggle.

### Black unions in forefront

The African National Congress and its imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, command respect and even reverence by

millions of South Africans. But the ANC is the first to admit that most mass protests take place outside of its leadership and control.

The Black trade unions are beginning to step in to help fill the void of political leadership. During the past year Black workers have carried out a number of regional general strikes around political demands. On Aug. 28 some 3000 workers struck the Mercedes-Benz plant in East London, in the Eastern Cape region, to demand freedom for Nelson Mandela.

The unions recently worked with community organizations to spearhead a two-month boycott of white-owned

## Interview with S. African activist: Who leads the fight against apartheid?

The following remarks by a leader of the South African National Forum are taken from an interview that first appeared in *Was Tun*, a weekly newspaper published by the German section of the Fourth International.

**Was Tun:** What are the differences between the two large political alliances of the liberation movement—the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum (NF)?

**Answer:** They were both born in 1983. The NF has remained loyal to its initial idea, which is to build a common opposition encompassing all the forces that refuse to accept the new constitution [issued by the government—ed.].

The founding of the National Forum was above all the act of AZAPO, the only legal organization born from the Black Consciousness Movement and the Cape League of Action.

The United Democratic Front came into existence primarily at the initiative of the African National Congress (ANC). The term *democratic* in its name indicates, nonetheless, the intention of integrating liberal organizations (Black and white) into the front's leadership bodies.

The two alliances essentially bring together Black workers. The Black middle class and intellectuals are represented in both. The UDF also has capitalist elements (mainly white), liberals,

and businessmen with links to big capital.

Of course, the NF has white members that come from grass-root, student, and union organizations, but one does not find that capitalist element. CUSA, one of two big Black union federations, is in both the UDF and the NF.

The basis of the NF is the "Manifesto of the Azanian People," which is not a socialist program but puts socialism on the order of the day.

The UDF, on the other hand, was not even able to agree on the basis of the "Freedom Charter," the manifesto drafted in 1955 by the ANC for a bourgeois-democratic anti-apartheid coalition.

We look forward to unity of action with the UDF but not a political alliance, because we refuse this type of unity with liberals.

**Was Tun:** What role does the labor movement play in the South African revolt?

**Answer:** There is no doubt that the labor movement has played an important—if not decisive—role in various ways. The strikes that began in September 1984 in the Vaal Triangle (the industrial region of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State) were transformed into a regional general strike by November.

These actions were the starting point of the revolt. This movement was carried out principally by the two large

businesses in the industrial areas of the Eastern Cape and the Transvaal.

At the present time, trade unionists and anti-apartheid activists alike are engaged in important activities to promote unity in the struggle. This has engendered a lively discussion about the question of alliances.

At the end of November, some 16 unions plan to come together to form a united federation of about a half-million members. The unions include FOSATU, a large independent non-racial federation, and most of the CUSA federation, which includes the giant National Union of Mineworkers.

Several trade unions, including CUSA, affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF) when it was formed two years ago. The two million-member UDF helped on the strike-support committee for the recent miners' strike, for example.

But FOSATU refused to join the UDF. While declaring its solidarity in the struggle against apartheid, FOSATU pointed out that the UDF was a multi-class organization and had no clear structure through which the working-class organizations could determine policy.

Many of the UDF's leaders are allied with the African National Congress and with the Communist Party (CP).

The discussion is heating up. Leaders of FOSATU have raised the need for a labor party based on the trade unions. The Communist Party has responded by publicly criticizing the FOSATU leadership in an article entitled, "A trade union is not a political party."

The CP charged in another article that FOSATU leaders and other unionists were "fascinated by Brazil."

The article criticized FOSATU for writing in its union journal about the Brazilian workers' movement.

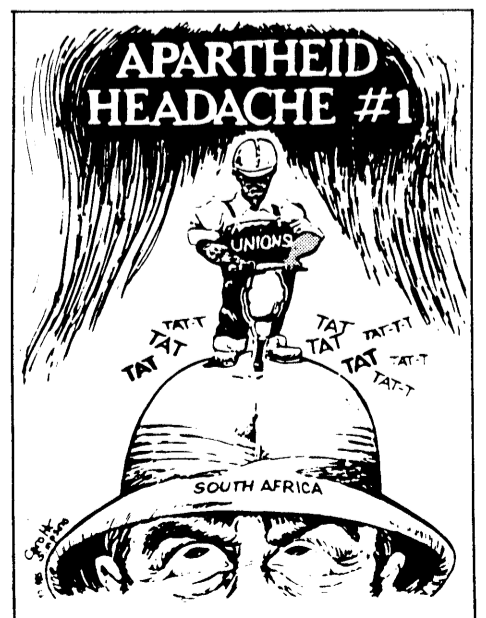
Many union activists in South Africa consider the Brazilian Workers Party (PT)—a mass-based political organization based on the independent union movement—as an example of the type of organization that should be built to give leadership to the struggle of South African working people. ■

union federations, FOSATU and CUSA. Until then, FOSATU and CUSA had abstained from openly political actions in order to avoid government attacks.

After the general strike, many leaders of FOSATU were arrested. They were then brought to trial for "high treason."

The unions encourage their members to participate in political actions in the Black ghettos. Not necessarily as union members, because that would cause their immediate ban, but by participating in grass-roots organizations and in spontaneous revolts.

I would distinguish three different kinds of groupings. At the extreme left, one finds the unions close to the Black Consciousness Movement. In the center, one finds FOSATU and CUSA, which now want to merge. More to the right is the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which is close to the African National Congress. ■







# FSLN women's leader confident of success

Comandante Doris Tijerino is a commander in Nicaragua's Sandinista Army. She is also the coordinator of the Women's Continental Front Against Intervention (WCFAI), a front that was formed in 1982 to denounce and organize against U.S. imperialist intervention in the hemisphere.

Karen Wald, a North American correspondent in Cuba for the International News Service, interviewed Comandante Tijerino in Havana, Cuba, in June 1985 during the "Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean" called by the WCFAI. [See article on the conference in the September 1985 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

We are reprinting below excerpts from this interview on the current situation in Nicaragua. The translation and abridgment of the interview are by *Socialist Action*.

**Karen Wald:** How has U.S. intervention affected the Nicaraguan people, particularly the women?

**Doris Tijerino:** Let me give you an example. For us women in Nicaragua, it has taken a great deal of effort and sacrifice to build rural childcare centers. Such centers had never existed in the past.

These centers are a place where the peasant women can leave their children for the day—where the children can eat in special dining halls. But they are usu-



Children at a childcare center set up near one of Managua's main markets

ally located out in the countryside far from the major towns and cities.

Frequently bands of Somocistas [enemies of the Somoza dictatorship, currently the large bulk of the *contra* forces—The Editors] destroy our centers, burning down the buildings and

killing our children.

Life is very difficult for us. Still, this has not deterred the Nicaraguan women from continuing this work and becoming incorporated into the revolutionary process.

If U.S. imperialism thinks it can ter-

rorize the Nicaraguan people into submission, it is thoroughly mistaken. On the contrary, all it is doing is deepening the people's determination to fight the Somocista bands, to join the militias, and to increase production to meet the needs of the family and the needs of national defense.

We in Nicaragua do not like having to divert our resources to the war effort but we are compelled to do so. It would be irresponsible—even criminal—on our part if we were to allow a return to the past.

The past meant 50,000 deaths for our people. To those we must add 8000 more who have died fighting the *contras*—a total of 58,000 deaths to defend our just cause.

A return to the past would mean forgetting what we learned during the literacy crusade. It would mean forgetting about the possibilities of building childcare centers, which there are still too few of.

It would mean a return to the days when polio killed our children. During the past four years not one child has died of polio. Polio has been eradicated. To return to those days would be criminal.

Frankly, we Nicaraguans would prefer to die—every single one of us—on the battlefield, or in a direct confrontation with imperialism, in the event of an invasion, than to allow a return to the past.

Yes, the Somocista bands do bother us and place obstacles in our path. But these bands would be meaningless—they would have been wiped out long ago—if it weren't for the support they receive from the U.S. government. ■

## ... Bolivian strike

(continued from page 20)

Placers, Philips Brothers, Tennant, and others.

Under Gen. Hugo Banzer, from 1971 to 1978, Bolivia approached the totalitarian ideal of the "national security state."

The workers' and peasants' unions were smashed, and labor organizers and political radicals were killed or exiled.

The population paid with its health and its life. Life expectancy in Bolivia is between 36 years and 56 years, depending on the region. The Indian peasantry, which makes up half the population, had an annual income of \$174 in 1980—it has declined since then.

A factory worker today makes about \$15 per month. The infant mortality rate is 213 per 1000 live births (compared with 15.7 per 1000 for Sweden or 21.4 per 1000 for the United States). And 70 percent of Bolivia's children suffer from malnutrition. Some 5.7 million of the 6 million Bolivians earn less than \$300 per year.

"It was impossible even to demand a living minimum wage after 1971," says Peredo. "It was impossible to make any demands under Banzer. Each strike was the object of severe repression, with jailings, deaths, and deportations."

### UDP betrays aspirations

Naturally when the military regime ended, the workers and peasants put great hopes in the UDP government of Siles, which took office in October 1982.

The UDP was a coalition of the left wing of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MRN-I) of Siles, the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB), and the radical Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). But the UDP lacked both a program and a will; it pleased neither the proletariat and the peasantry nor the bankers and the businessmen.

All economic problems multiplied. Inflation reached 14,000 percent. One dollar came to equal 900,000 Bolivian pesos. Bolivia fell \$927.9 million in arrears on its foreign debt of \$3.6 billion by last June. It had suspended all payments sometime before. Factory

wages fell. Prices rose. Even the peasants' potatoes seemed smaller.

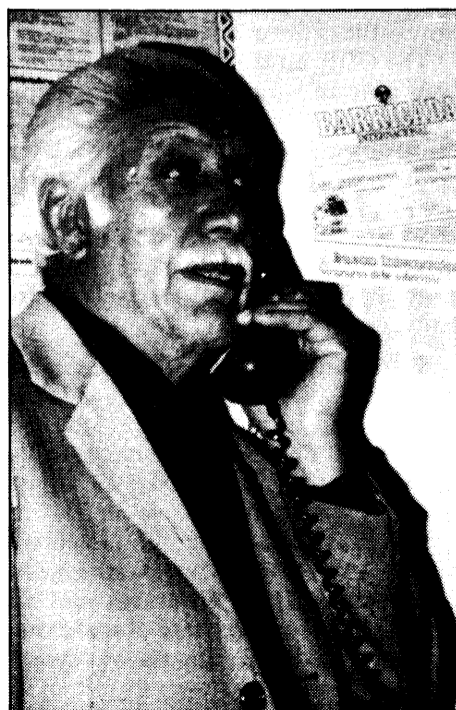
By February 1985, the workers were riled up—if not yet up in arms—and declared a general strike which lasted into March and culminated in huge demonstrations of miners and factory workers in La Paz.

Some leftists think that the workers could have taken power at that time, had there only been a revolutionary party.

The entire left, however, was discredited by the Siles government because the UDP was seen as a left government. All of the parties associated with the government went into crisis and split up, resulting in a big increase in the number and a reduction in the size of the left groups.

As a result, many who had voted for the reformist UDP in October 1982 voted for the fascist ADN in July of the 1985. Gen. Hugo Banzer won a plurality of the votes. In the parliament, however, the left, center, and even some conservative parties united to elect Paz president.

The failure of the UDP was a disaster and it will take some time to undo it. It



Juan Lechin, leader of the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB).

requires a real re-thinking of the reformist politics which have dominated the labor left in Bolivia since the revolution of 1952.

One of those who is going through that re-thinking process is Emil Balcazar, a 38-year-old miner in the country's biggest mine, Siglo Veinte.

Balcazar originally came from Santa Cruz in the tropics, but moved to the highlands, the altiplano, looking for work. He became a miner in 1968 and shortly thereafter joined the Communist Party.

He was jailed twice by Banzer's government—once by mistake—and once in 1976 for helping to organize a general

**"The immediate cause of the crisis is Paz's austerity program."**

strike against the military occupation of the mines. He spent two years in prison and was tortured.

When Banzer fell, Balcazar got out of prison, and, as a Communist Party member, worked for the election of the Siles UDP. He was elected to parliament as a Communist.

But when the Communists didn't push for power through the UDP, Balcazar left parliament and returned to the mines. He then helped Ramiro Barrenechea, the former leader of the *Jota*, the Bolivian Communist Party Youth, organize a split in the party.

Balcazar, and others in his party, the PCB-Barrenechea, have rejected the reformist UDP, but they still have not rejected the method of alliances between capitalist and workers parties in government: the popular front.

He believes it was correct for the PCB to join the UDP. "But they should have transformed the democratic process into a revolutionary process," he says. He still believes the workers' parties could have dominated such a coalition.

"We are convinced," he says, "that the left could have been hegemonic in

the UDP, but the problem is that the leaders disarmed and demobilized the masses, and the Communist Party leaders were responsible."

Balcazar and his comrades have moved to the left, but it isn't clear that they will be able to break with the reformist strategy or the deeper Stalinist politics of the PCB.

They may become a centrist party with a revolutionary rhetoric which only serves to obscure the need for a revolutionary strategy.

### Possibilities and dangers

Attempting to win the PCB-Barrenechea faction and the left-wing MIR-Masas faction to another strategy is the Trotskyist POR-U, the Unified Revolutionary Workers Party [the Bolivian section of the Fourth International—The Editors].

Antonio Moreno, a leader of the POR-U says:

"We are looking for a realignment or regroupment of all the forces of the left which came out of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and the MIR.

"We have to put the left back together again and get back the political authority of the left within the mass movement.

"We should be able to carry out a great campaign to unify not only these parties, but also all of the exploited classes under the leadership of a new party."

The Trotskyists of POR-U want a regroupment of the revolutionary left into a new revolutionary party. They see the Sandinistas of Nicaragua and the FDR-FMLN of El Salvador as their models.

It's an optimistic strategy with possibilities and also with dangers. The POR-U is a small group and the other left parties are mostly nationalist and Stalinist parties which have by no means completely re-examined and come to grips with their problematic histories.

The danger is that the POR-U will be disoriented by the larger centrist groupings. The possibility is that the Trotskyists in POR-U will be able to give a revolutionary direction to a mass movement. ■



The U.S. war against Nicaragua escalated dramatically Sept. 13 with the gunning down of a Nicaraguan helicopter by six Honduran jet fighters. Honduras, which has been harboring the *contras*, has now put its U.S. military equipment and U.S.-trained pilots to full use against the Nicaraguan revolution.

The threats of further border provocations and of a full-scale war with Honduras are greater than at any time in the past.

To find out more about the current situation in Nicaragua, *Socialist Action* spoke with Brenda Bishop, a member of the New York chapter of the National Lawyer's Guild, who just returned from a two-week fact-finding trip to Nicaragua.

**Socialist Action:** How has the U.S. war against Nicaragua affected the daily lives of the people there?

**Brenda Bishop:** It has done this in many ways. Let me give you one example. As we were driving on the road to Esteli, in Northern Nicaragua, we had to take a huge detour because of the *contra* attack at La Trinidad [just south of Esteli] that took place Aug 1.

The bridge was down. On the side of the road we saw a burned bus which had been ambushed by the *contras*.

As we passed the burned bus, the driver of our government truck told us about the number of their trucks—nine so far this year—that had been attacked and burned. Many of these are new trucks from Japan.

On the same road you could also see the burned portion of one of the many grain silos that had been hit during the same attack. Silos are a classic target of the *contras* in the Northern region.

The *contras* were able to do a good bit of damage in La Trinidad, killing 17 people and burning down a healthcare center, the post office, and other buildings.

But they did not begin to get close to their main target, which was the town of Esteli.

**S.A.:** Why was that?

**Bishop:** Because of the deep opposition of the people to the *contras*.

I was told by someone in Esteli that as the *contra* forces were advancing toward Esteli, they realized they could not penetrate the Sandinista forces. They apparently sent word of this to their leadership, but were ordered to go ahead anyway.

In the space of a week, the *contras* actually lost 120 men, with another 80 wounded. So their losses far exceeded the losses of the civilians or the Sandinista forces.

**S.A.:** What is the mood of the people you talked to in Esteli?

**Bishop:** Surprisingly, although these attacks actually took place near the town, the mood was incredibly positive. One of the Sandinista fighters seemed to express the sentiment of the people when he said, "We're ready. Let them come and we'll beat them back and go after them."

Esteli is a stronghold of the revolution. It is known to be very heroic because of the three insurrections there prior to the overthrow of Somoza.



U.S. citizens at regular Thursday demonstration against U.S. intervention at U.S. Embassy gates in Managua.

# Nicaragua sticks to its guns against contra terror



Worker from Chinandega asks questions to government leaders at "Face the People" TV session.

**S.A.:** What are some of the other effects of the U.S.-backed *contra* war?

**Bishop:** There are many hardships such as not finding toilet paper anywhere or having to wait forever to get a bus or a taxi—because they're falling apart and there are no spare parts. This definitely wears on people.

On the other hand, most of the people we spoke to understand that the U.S. embargo and the U.S. war are largely responsible for these problems.

They understand why 40 percent of the country's budget has to go to the military and they are willing to make these sacrifices.

So despite the hardships, Nicaragua is a very dynamic, vibrant kind of society. The people are moving ahead with reconstruction and are excited about the new constitution.

**S.A.:** Tell us more about the new constitution.

**Bishop:** The FSLN and the government are hoping to move their program forward with the new constitution.

The drafting of the constitution is a two-step process. The first step is the preparation of a draft that is scheduled to come out at the end of this year. Those involved in this stage in the process are the national leaderships of the mass organizations.

Then throughout next year, they are going to have hearings or open sessions all over the country. These will be open not only to the local and regional mass organizations but to anyone who wants to comment on the constitution.

**S.A.:** Do the people you spoke to think their views will be taken into account and incorporated into the final

document?

**Bishop:** Yes. People see this consultation much in the same way as they see the radio show called "Contacto Seis-veinte" on the Voice of Nicaragua. This program is on the radio every day for four hours. The whole show consists of people phoning in and complaining about the government—primarily the bureaucracy.

We heard a little bit of the show. The interesting thing is that immediately after the complaint is made, the interviewer calls up the government office or department to file the complaint and to ask what is going to be done about it.

People were very excited about this. They feel they have a chance to say what they want. They believe these mechanisms are legitimate and do give them some input. ■

## ... Cold War

(continued from page 1)

reported that despite the well-known ties of the CUS and CTN to the *contras* and to the CIA, these "unions" still manage to conduct their business openly and publicly. [See "Report of West Coast Trade Union Delegation to Nicaragua," Labor Network on Central America, November 1984.]

### Stop two: Minnesota

On Sept. 22-24, the top labor officials took their tour to the Minnesota State AFL-CIO convention. But here they were not speaking to a few hand-chosen officials who, for the most part, already agreed with the State Department's policies.

Thomas Donahue, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, was dispatched to St. Paul, Minn., to present a resolution to this gathering of over 700 delegates. The resolution called on Nicaragua to "open a dialogue with its democratic opposition [i.e. the *contras*, whom the Sandinistas have vowed never to negotiate with—A.B.] and to implement a system of democratic pluralism as originally promised to the Organization of America States."

The resolution, to Donahue's great displeasure, went down to a resounding defeat. Moreover, resolutions demanding an end to U.S. military aid to El Salvador and an end to U.S. support for

the *contras* were overwhelmingly approved.

The delegates to the convention, reflecting the sentiment of millions of working people in this country, were not afraid to buck the top AFL-CIO leadership and to say "no" to U.S. intervention in Central America.

### Big rifts in labor

The AIFLD/AFL-CIO "dog-and-pony" show is likely to meet the same kind of opposition within the ranks of labor in other cities.

Over the past few years, opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America has grown tremendously. This is not the McCarthy era.

On the contrary, the rifts in the labor movement over Central America are becoming wider. For example, the National Labor Committee in Support of Human Rights and Democracy in El Salvador, which includes the presidents of 24 international unions, has issued various fact-finding reports opposing the official AFL-CIO position on Central America.

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

Regarding Nicaragua, the delegation

recommended that the U.S. government "end all military support for the counterrevolutionary groups ('contras') attacking Nicaragua from Honduras and Costa Rica."

Other signs of this increased opposition to the official AFL-CIO policies include the large labor participation in the April 20, 1985, antiwar events; the broad labor endorsement of tours of Central American trade unionists; and the impressive labor participation in the upcoming Nov. 2 antiwar conference in San Francisco [see page 3].

### Organize broad speak-outs

The AIFLD/AFL-CIO International Affairs Department officials are painfully aware of this situation. Their fall tour is aimed at undercutting—and, if possible, reversing—this majority antiwar sentiment within the labor movement.

But, if the Minnesota AFL-CIO State Convention is any indication, their mission is destined to flop.

Still, their counterattack is very serious and must be answered energetically by all supporters of democracy and human rights within the labor movement.

Broad labor speak-outs against the U.S. war in Central America, such as the one on Nov. 2 in San Francisco, must and can be organized in other cities. Now is the time to prepare these events. ■

# 'Dim Sum' offers a tasty slice of life



By MAY MAY GONG

"Dim Sum" is a soft, gentle film depicting the day-to-day activities of a San Francisco Chinese family and, in particular, the close relationship between mother and daughter.

Lauren Chew, an assistant professor at San Francisco State University, plays Geraldine, the daughter. Her mother,

Mrs. Tam, is played by her real-life mother, Kim Chew.

Dim Sum is the name of a tasty Chinese luncheon treat and, literally translated, means "a little bit of heart."

Reviews for "Dim Sum" have been overwhelmingly favorable and rightly so. In the film, the Chews need only play slightly altered versions of themselves: a firmly unassimilated Chinese

immigrant who still speaks virtually no English even after 40 years in the United States and her modern, vivacious, daughter.

Mrs. Tam has lived the quiet existence typical of many Chinese immigrants but especially Chinese women. Isolated by language and culture and alienated by American ways, they surround themselves with family and draw their entire identity from them.

Geraldine's decision to live at home with her widowed mother is based on her own needs and fears as well as her guilt feelings about abandoning her mother. While Mrs. Tam urges her daughter to move out and marry her boyfriend, she also needs her daughter's company and, in fact, finds no other reason for living. Geraldine insists she's just not ready for marriage.

Through these two women, "Dim Sum" brings us the simultaneous blending and fading of cultural traditions.

### An antidote

Director Wayne Wang acknowledges that there is a "bad side to Chinatown" and that recent films such as "Year of the Dragon," "Rambo," and "Missing in Action" only serve to reinforce the image of Asians as sneaky and evil. He has expressed the hope that "Dim Sum" will be a sort of "antidote" to such films.

Indeed, "Dim Sum" is refreshing in that it shows Asian-Americans interact-

ing with each other, sharing many of the same doubts and fears and joys that most people in this country know. And I think that for many Chinese-American viewers, "Dim Sum's" faces and voices bring back memories like no other film today can.

But as a response to the anti-Asian films it falls short because it does not adequately deal with the darker side of Asian-American life.

For many Asians, life in the United States is unfortunately not as smooth and harmonious as is shown in "Dim Sum."

The violent attacks on innocent families, the brutal murder several years ago of Vincent Chin in Detroit are but a few of the growing number of racist actions taken against Asians in this country.

A film like "Missing in Action" serves only to justify these attacks in the minds of many people.

Showing Asians as warm, family-oriented people only partially addresses this issue. At some point a film will have to be made that combines the wonderful qualities of "Dim Sum" with some sharper rebuttals to the regime that encourages and perpetuates the production of racist propaganda.

Nevertheless, "Dim Sum" is a movie not to be missed. The characters are genuine and sincere, and the film possesses such warm, touching qualities that "Dim Sum" is truly "a little bit of heart." ■

By STEVE ZIPPIN

With this issue we introduce Steve Zippin's new column on health, medical, and environmental topics, which will appear regularly in *Socialist Action*. We welcome letters from readers addressed to Steve concerning his articles and including suggestions for future articles—The editors.

One third of all babies born in the United States in 1985 will develop cancer during their lifetimes according to an article in the January/February 1985 issue of *Ca—A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*. This is an increase of 8 percent over cancer rates projected in 1978, a shocking 1 percent projected increase per year.

The authors, all in the Department of Epidemiology of the American Cancer Society, utilized data from the most recent SEER report. SEER (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Result) is



## Are we winning the 'war on cancer'?

an ongoing National Cancer Institute (NCI) program to track the incidence of cancer and the survival or cure rates.

Frightening as their projection is, the actual picture is somewhat worse. The authors of the article only include the most deadly forms of cancer. Skin cancers, for example, are not included in the SEER report. If all forms of cancer were included in the totals, the projected incidence rates would be much higher.

### Winning the "war"?

Grim statistics like these are often discounted in the popular press because, supposedly, the "war on cancer" is being won. Such reports tend to create a sense of security in people—allaying their fears. To some extent, this is the purpose of such reports.

Unfortunately there is little truth in their assertions. Although the cure rate for some types of cancer has gone up dramatically, "overall cancer mortality is going up," according to John Bailar of the Harvard School of Public Health.

Gina Kolata points out in the Aug. 9, 1985, issue of *Science* magazine that the age-adjusted cancer mortality rate has increased in the last 20 years. The death rate from cancer was 170.2 deaths per 100,000 people in 1962 and it stood at 185.1 per 100,000 in 1982.

Kolata also asserts that the oft-quoted increase in the five-year survival rate for patients with many types of cancer may be more apparent than real. Much of this increase in survival time may be due to a phenomenon known as the "lead-time effect" and may actually be more related to improvements in diagnosis rather than treatment.

If a cancer is diagnosed earlier, the patient will seem to live longer, regardless of the effectiveness of the treatment. If treatment success is

unchanged, earlier diagnosis does nothing to extend the life of the patient, but it does improve the survival statistics.

More people are living longer after their cancer is diagnosed, but their actual lifetime is unchanged. Recent lung and breast cancer studies described in the *Science* article show this lead-time effect.

### A "gentlemanly" discussion

John Cairns, also at the Harvard School of Public Health, told Kolata that there has been no significant increase in the survival rates from any of the major forms of cancer since the 1950s. Kolata quotes him as saying that the reality is so discouraging that it is difficult to discuss the situation in public.

"That is why this dispute [over success in treating cancer] is carried on in



such a gentlemanly way," Cairns told her. "People do get cancer and they have to be given encouragement. Research has to go on."

Wait. Do we want to keep this discussion on a "gentlemanly" level? Definitely not!

I believe this notion of special knowledge and special expert competence is part and parcel of the governing methods of the U.S. ruling class. People are

pushed to doubt their own abilities. Only the established experts are qualified to think and act.

We all make thousands of complex decisions every day during the course of our work and lives, but we are told that we are incompetent to understand factors that concern our very life and health.

Rather, I think we are all too competent to deal with complex questions such as these for the ruling class to keep their peace of mind! Does any reader not grasp the horror of one baby in three growing up and developing cancer? Do you need an advanced degree to understand the implications of an increase, not a decrease, in the cancer death rate?

### Blame the victim

Just as individuals are often blamed for their own diseases, so too are workers blamed for the decline of U.S. industry. If you develop cancer it must be your lifestyle or heredity that is at fault, not the system that encourages the discharge of hundreds of tons of carcinogens and toxins into the environment.

If you lose your job it is not because of capitalist inefficiency or deindustrialization in the search for superprofits, it is because you are a poor worker.

This "blame the victim" ideology is a very powerful weapon for the ruling class. It makes us doubt our ability to make changes in our lives. It hides the true sources of our problems.

A sense of fatalism is also encouraged. Cancer is considered the price of modern industrial society. Even if we tried to improve conditions it would mean the loss of jobs.

Some recent research indicates that people who see their lives as meaningful and productive have healthier immune systems than people who are depressed or alienated. The immune system is the body's first line of defense against disease or cancer cells. Perhaps by making a world where we are all engaged in work we find meaningful, we will have won a major victory against cancer.

But even short of such a revolutionary change, one can actually do a great deal to fight back against cancer. Not only are there lifestyle factors which can help, but we can become informed about pollution hazards and organize to eliminate them. This will be the subject of next month's column. ■

## Cannon on health

"The people will have ambition, under socialism, to explore the great universe and to unlock its secrets, and to extract from their knowledge new resources for the betterment of all the people.

They will organize an all-out war against sickness and disease, and there will be a flowering of the great science of medicine. They will look back with indignation, when they read in their history books that at one time people had to live in a society where there was a shortage of doctors, artificially maintained.

I believe it can be said with certainty that among the heroes of the new society, whom the youth will venerate, will be doctors of all kinds who will really be at the service of man in the struggle for the conquest of those diseases which lay him low.

Man's health will be a major concern, and sickness and disease a disgrace, not to the victim, but to the society which permits it."

—from a 1953 speech by James P. Cannon printed in *America's Road to Socialism*, Pathfinder Press. ■



# Memories of exile fire imaginative novel

BOOK REVIEW

By MARK SCHNEIDER

*To Bury Our Fathers: A Novel of Nicaragua*, by Sergio Ramirez. Translated by Nick Caister. Readers International, 1984. 253 pp., \$14.95.

Readers familiar with Nicaragua's literature know that the theme of flight, both in the sense of soaring and the sense of escape, is a prevalent concern. Under the dictatorship of the Somozas, dissidents and revolutionaries had to flee—to the mountains, underground in the cities, or abroad.

Sergio Ramirez, the new vice president of Nicaragua, chose exile. A lawyer and a writer, he lived in Germany in the early 1970s, where he wrote "To Bury Our Fathers."

Thanks to Readers International, publishers devoted to translating and disseminating literature by Third World writers, Ramirez' novel is now available in English.

This is not an overtly political book. It is a complex novel in which the author's presence is scarcely felt. This subtlety of presentation lends the story increased power.

Ramirez' subject is the generation which came of age after the assassination of Sandino in 1934 and yielded the center stage in the early 1960s with the re-emergence of the Sandinista movement.

### Shrouded in gloom

Ramirez' characters are mostly dreamers and failures. History has not permitted a resolution of their struggles and the fate of the characters is shrouded in gloom. The story covers 30 years and every corner



of Nicaragua, spilling over to other parts of Central America as well.

The center of the action is a 1957 confrontation in a Guatemala City brothel between exiled former Somocistas and their former comrade Col. Catalino Lopez. The exiles are now in rebellion and have plotted a revenge against the aging colonel.

Ironically, Col. Lopez—despite his crimes—is presented almost sympathetically by the oppositionist author. His is the only story told in the first person. What emerges is the portrait of a man who is limited

and weak, a pawn rather than a villain.

A coward, he evades battle with the rebel troops. When his own men are massacred, he shoots himself in the foot to cover himself.

The fiction intersects with historical reality. Somoza is identified only as *el hombre*, but Sandino, rebel chief Pedron Altamirano, and Rigoberto Lopez Perez—who assassinated Somoza—all figure in the story.

### An exile's book

As with most wide-ranging novels, a certain amount of depth is sacrificed. We never get inside a character's head. There is a lot of description of place. The prose is evocative, and the reader frequently gets the sense of a camera panning a room, a river, a settlement.

This is because "To Bury Our Fathers" is an exile's book, a book concerned with memory. Remembering the distant homeland, the exile is forced to live in the past, to settle accounts with his parents, with history. Coming full circle, the book begins and ends with characters remembering.

"To Bury Our Fathers" is a richly imaginative novel by a skilled writer. It is a dense, ominous story whose major literary device is foreshadowing. There is not a hint of propaganda or socialist realism in it; because of its almost dispassionate nature the nightmare world of the Somoza regime emerges more forcefully.

One cannot reflect on the artistic achievements of Nicaragua's vice president without thinking about the career of the North American president—also a cultural figure of sorts.

It happens that caged monkeys are put to symbolic use in Ramirez' work; if a movie is ever made of the book, perhaps it could be double featured with "Bedtime for Bonzo" to contrast our two cultures. ■

## Our readers speak out

### Spirit booster

Dear editor,

I received the August 1985 issue of *Socialist Action* and was elated to see the short article about Armenian political activists imprisoned in Ottawa.

I am one of them and I thank you for your tremendous positive solidarity gesture. It means a lot to us Armenian socialists—especially after 17 months of unjust incarceration—to see the international left take up the Armenian question. Your article was a welcome boost to our spirits.

I am a sympathizer of the Fourth International and have followed the political discussion within your ranks.

Socialist Action is doing a great job of clarifying and upholding the banner of the Permanent Revolution. Keep up the banner of the FI and strive to unify its various currents and tendencies.

In these times of economic crisis and Reaganite reaction, I would appreciate it if you could send all your literature to me.

Our trial begins on Sept. 23. After 18 months in jail, our morale is high. We will win as

the heroic peoples of the Middle East, South Africa, and Central America will win.

Long live revolutionary internationalism. No to individual terrorism.

Harout Ajemian,  
Carlton Detention Centre,  
Ottawa

### Our address?

Dear editor,

I enjoyed your "FORUM" section in the September issue of *Socialist Action* and found it a useful and important contribution to the discussion on how to fight effectively against the bosses.

In the April 1985 issue of your paper, in the interview with Anthony Mazzocchi, you had listed the address of the Workers Policy Project, a project with which I am also involved. After this article appeared, we received numerous calls from around the country asking for more information about the project.

In your September "FORUM" section, in your interview with me, you failed to list the address again. I would appreciate it if you would

inform your readers of our address.

Ed Ott,  
New York

Editor's reply,

I am sorry for the oversight. The Workers Policy Project, whose goal is to advance the discussion on the need for labor to break with the Democrats and Republicans and to form its own party, can be contacted at 853 Broadway, Rm. 2014, New York, N.Y. 10003.

### Brazil's PT

Dear editor,

I'd like to call to the attention of your readers an article on Brazil that appeared in the Sept. 4, 1985, issue of *The Guardian* newspaper.

In it the author, N. Patrick Peritore, makes a serious political error in his analysis of the role and significance of Brazil's Workers Party (PT).

Peritore states that the PT's refusal to support bourgeois presidential candidate Tancredo Neves represented a grave political error, causing a "crisis" in

the party and the split of three of the PT's federal deputies.

But the "crisis" in the PT, which has been largely overcome, was due to the capitulation of these middle-class figures to the pressures of the ruling class.

In fact, the working-class base of the PT in the Sao Paulo region voted overwhelmingly to expel the three deputies on the grounds they had crossed the class line by their support to Neves.

This is very significant. Most often, the leaders of the Latin American workers' movement end up capitulating to radical-sounding populists like Leonel Brizola [leader of the Democratic Labor Party], who is falsely presented by Peritore as a "socialist."

The PT leadership has also been correct to withstand the pressures of those forces inside and outside the PT who would like to overcome some of the party's current problems by rushing into programmatic regroupments with small, or not so small, radical petty-bourgeois parties.

These parties seek to limit the independent mobilization of the working class to the most limited "anti-imperialist" or "anti-oligarchic" demands. Nearly every one of them sees sectors of the national bourgeoisie as *political* allies of the workers.

The success of the PT in organizing on the basis of a program of working-class independence has sent chills up the spines not only of the capital-

ists, but also of the traditional radicals like Peritore.

David Walters,  
San Francisco

### Farmworkers

Dear editor,

One important feature of the Aug. 3 Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) convention that needs to be mentioned is the extent of rank-and-file involvement. [See story in September issue of *Socialist Action*.]

Unlike other trade-union conventions, with their large percentage of full-time staff serving as delegates, the overwhelming majority of delegates to this convention were farmworkers. The convention was conducted in Spanish to allow the delegates to participate more fully.

Not only were a large percentage of the convention delegates women, but four of the top eight elected officers were also women. Founding president Baldemar Velasquez was unanimously re-elected.

Several changes were adopted in FLOC's convention to make it easier for farmworkers to participate in future conventions. One changed the date of the next convention to coincide with the slack season for farmworkers. Another decreased the amount of time a farmworker needs to be a member in order to be elected as a convention delegate.

Shirley Pasholk,  
Cleveland



## WHERE TO FIND US

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As we go to press the Bolivian government has declared a 90-day state of siege and arrested thousands of workers and union leaders who began a nationwide general strike on Sept. 4. According to the latest news reports, however, the strike continues.

Soldiers have raided the factories and union halls, beating up workers and rounding up union activists. Juan Lechin, the leader of the Bolivian labor federation, and hundreds of others have been taken to isolated detention camps in the country's remote interior.

Dan La Botz, who was in Bolivia during the first two weeks of the general strike, has filed this eye-witness report and background analysis of the current situation in Bolivia—The Editors.

By DAN LA BOTZ

LA PAZ, Bolivia—Only two months after the national elections on July 14, Bolivia entered a deep political crisis.

The new conservative president, Victor Paz Estenssoro, announced an economic plan on Aug. 29 which would have reduced workers' real wages, cut back on food subsidies, and laid off some state workers.

In response, the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB) called a general strike which began on Sept. 4, and all workers from miners to school teachers walked off the job.

President Paz then retaliated by having the military seize seven key state industries: petroleum, electricity, railroads, buses, telecommunications, trucking, and the airports. Military police were ordered to patrol the center of La Paz, and there were several clashes between university students and

**"As the crisis deepens there is the danger of a military coup."**

the military resulting in at least three serious injuries.

The government and the unions aren't talking. Paz says he will speak to the union leaders only if they end the strike, while the union says it will end the strike only if Paz withdraws his "anti-worker, pro-oligarchy, pro-International Monetary Fund" economic plan. Paz says "the plan is not negotiable."

As the crisis worsens, there is both the danger of a fascist coup by the right wing of the military or Gen. Hugo Banzer's fascist ADN party, and the possibility of the workers toppling Paz and putting in power a more radical government, though neither would solve any of the underlying problems.

The possibility of a workers' socialist revolution seems unlikely at the moment because of the deep divisions on the left and the lack of a revolutionary party.

State is "worthless"

The immediate cause of the crisis is Paz's austerity program, but the social problems which underlie the crisis are complex. Their origins are to be found in the 1952 revolution, the nearly 20 years of military dictatorship from 1964 to 1982, and the failure of the Popular Unity government that ruled Bolivia from October 1982 to July 1985.

"We in Bolivia are living through a political crisis like that in the entire Southern Cone," says Antonio Peredo, editor of *Aqui*, a Castroist newspaper. "It's the crisis of the emergence from the fascist dictatorships."

Peredo was a founder of the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB) as a high-school student in 1950, but left the party in 1960 when he felt it was no longer revolutionary. His brother fought with

# General strike jolts new Bolivian regime



Tin miners in Bolivia

Che Guevara in the guerrilla movement in Southeast Bolivia, and he himself was later associated with the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Peredo lived in Chile from 1967 until the Pinochet coup in 1973, when he went into exile in Cuba. He secretly returned to Bolivia in 1975, but was taken prisoner in November of that year and held until February 1978, suffering torture.

Until recently he was the head of the Nicaragua news agency, but returned to Bolivia to take over as editor of the popular independent left weekly *Aqui*.

Peredo says there is now also a structural crisis:

"The Bolivian state that we have now is the result of the 1952 revolution. The state was then manipulated by 18 years of military dictatorships.

"In the beginning it was thought that the state could be democratically reformed and that the restoration of democracy would allow the state to function for the benefit of the Bolivian people.

"But in the last three years, the Siles' UDP government has demonstrated not only its political inadequacy, but it has also shown that the state which was formed in 1952 is incapable of defending the Bolivian people. It's worthless."

The origins of this "worthless" state are in the 1952 revolution which overthrew the government of the tin barons, La Rosca, as it was called.

The Trotskyist revolutionaries among

the tin miners pushed for the nationalization of the tin mines under workers' control and helped arm the peasants. But the revolutionary upsurge died down. The Trotskyists were out-manuevered, Juan Lechin Oquendo took control of the unions, and Hernan Siles Suazo and Victor Paz Estenssoro took control of the state.

They were nationalists, not socialists, and were prepared to make a deal with the United States.

Eisenhower recognized the revolu-

tionary government, and John F. Kennedy gave it military aid to rebuild the shattered army. The military program was such a success that in 1964 the U.S.-trained military officers overthrew the revolutionary government.

The military then ruled for almost 20 years, opening up the country to U.S. investors, including the Chase Manhattan Bank, U.S. Steel Corp., Lockheed Co., Gulf Oil, Grace, South American

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## Wheeling-Pitt strikers oust company execs

By MARIE WEIGAND

Last minute: On Sept. 20, Dennis Carney, chairman of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Corp., and five other company directors resigned from their posts, saying they wanted to clear the way for the resumption of negotiations with the striking steelworkers.

It is clear that the resoluteness of the strikers—and the fact they were granted unemployment compensation—has sent a signal to management that it won't be so easy to break this strike.

The following article, filed shortly before these resignations, provides a clear picture of the determination of the

Wheeling-Pitt strikers and the widespread support their struggle has received—The Editors.

CLEVELAND—Hiding behind Federal Judge Warren W. Bentz' bankruptcy ruling, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. stopped negotiations with the United Steelworkers of America and unilaterally imposed new wages, benefits, and working conditions on July 21, 1985.

Recognizing this as a union-busting maneuver, the 8500 workers at nine Wheeling-Pittsburgh plants in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia unanimously voted not to work under these slave-labor conditions.

Since the working conditions imposed by Wheeling-Pittsburgh constitute a lock-out, the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania agreed to pay unemployment-compensation claims filed by Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers. The company has returned to Judge Bentz, asking that he prohibit the states from honoring these claims.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh supervisors call workers on a daily basis, urging them to come back to work. A handful of office workers did cross the picket lines one day. When they left work, several hundred steelworkers successfully persuaded them not to scab again.

Although the company has been unsuccessful in its attempts to recruit scabs, several attempts have been made to move steel. As soon as the workers learn of these attempts, several hundred show up to make sure the steel does not move.

In Beech Bottom, W. Va., eight steel workers, including three local union

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