

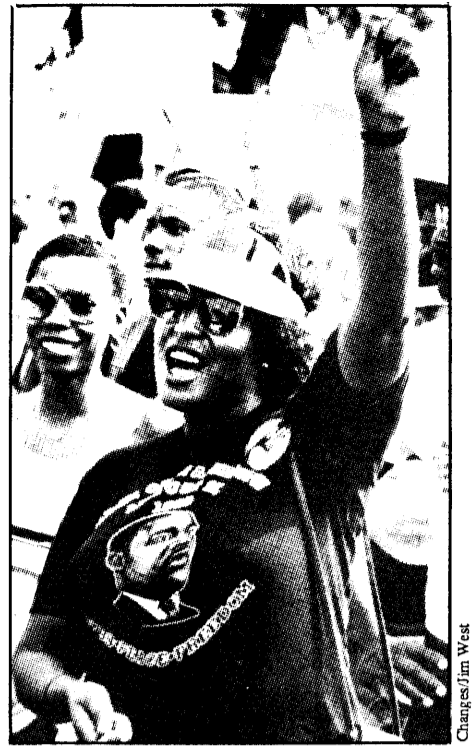
# A Socialist ACTION

JANUARY 1986

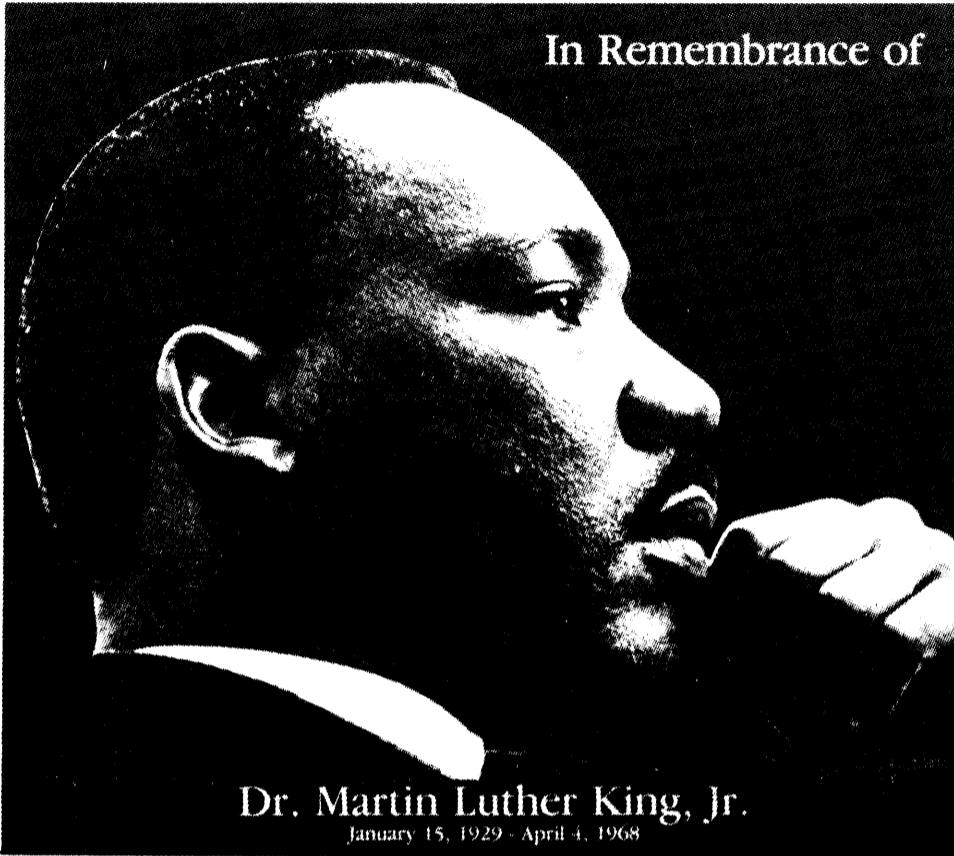
50 CENTS

Vol. 4, NO. 1

## War moves, cutbacks demand huge protest



Changes/Jim West



In Remembrance of

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

Last April 20, over 125,000 people took to the streets in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other cities to demand no U.S. intervention in Central America; no support to apartheid; jobs and justice, not war; and freeze and reverse the arms race.

Since April 20, U.S. government attacks on working people at home and abroad have intensified. Congress voted its approval of U.S. aid to the contras fighting to overthrow the Nicaraguan government and continues to supply weapons and money to the Salvadoran terrorist government. The administration applauded the recent contra downing of a Nicaraguan helicopter, giving broad hints that the United States would help to make it happen again.

The U.S.-backed apartheid government of South Africa has murdered hundreds, imprisoned thousands, including school children, and broken strikes. It obviously feels no real pressure from its imperialist allies—especially the U.S. government—to reform or even to curb its repression.

The Reagan-Gorbachev summit con-

(continued on page 6)

## U.S. Blacks: Poor, losing ground

By JOE RYAN

What is the state of Black America almost 18 years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?

According to "The State of Black America—1985," the annual National Urban League report, "In virtually every area of life that counts, Black people made strong progress in the 1960s, peaked in the '70s, and have been sliding back ever since."

Indeed, the situation for Blacks in the United States has worsened dramatically. The defeats being suffered by working people in general—through plant closures, strike-breaking, concessions, and cut-backs—have hit Black people the hardest.

Historically the victims of racism, discrimination, and violence, Black Americans face even more racist attacks today. In Philadelphia, racist forces recently mobilized to stop Black people moving into a mainly white neighborhood. In Concord, Calif., a young Black gay man was murdered by hanging.

Blacks also face increased poverty, unemployment, and attempts to roll back

## S.F. coalition calls antiwar demonstration for April 19

By JEFF MACKLER

SAN FRANCISCO—The San Francisco Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice, the coalition that organized the demonstration of 50,000 here last April 20, voted unanimously on Dec. 18 to issue a call for a second demonstration protesting U.S. foreign and domestic policies. April 19, 1986, was set as the date for the action, which will begin in San Francisco's Dolores Park and proceed for two miles to the downtown Civic Center.

The Mobilization reaffirmed its commitment to the coalition's four demands: No U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean; No U.S. Support to South African Apartheid; Jobs and Justice, Not War; and Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race.

Coalition leaders have repeatedly pointed out that despite majority public support for these demands, U.S. policy continues to place the interests of the few above the desire of the American people for peace, jobs, and justice. The organization of a visible and massive demonstration is seen by the Mobilization as central in winning additional support for its demands.

A broad leadership body was elected to set the coalition's course in the coming months. Included in this group are representatives from the major AFL-CIO central labor councils in the area, as well as a wide range of groups representing

community, peace, solidarity, student, religious, women, gay, lesbian, and other organizations.

Among those present at the Dec. 18 Mobilization meeting were Walter Johnson and Art Pulaski, heads of the San Francisco and San Mateo Labor Councils respectively, and Al Lannon, president of

the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 6. They agreed to join a coalition steering committee of more than 45 organizations that will now take responsibility for all aspects of the spring mobilization.

The steering committee will be ex-

(continued on page 6)



Winning hearts and minds

## Martin Luther King on South Africa, See p. 4

the civil rights gains of the 1960s. Despite the slight recovery in the economy from the 1981-82 recession years, Blacks in 1985 find themselves in the worst economic condition in 30 years! Furthermore, all trends indicate no improvement or relief in sight. The gap between Black and white America is widening.

Poverty has increased

Today, one out of three Blacks lives beneath the poverty line, compared to one out of eight whites. According to statistics compiled in 1982 (the last year available) over 47% of Black children under the age of 18 live in poverty. That is, almost half of all Blacks under 18 are poor. Over half (51.5%) of all Black children under the age of three live in poverty.

The scourge of unemployment, which has traditionally hit Black workers twice as hard as whites, has increased proportionally. In the recession year of 1975,

(continued on page 4)

International Outlook: South Africa, See pp. 7-12

**Fight back!**



**Socialist ACTION**

# Abortion issue hits close to home

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

It was the year 1945—28 years before the historic U.S. Supreme Court Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion—that I knew I would need an abortion. My daughter was eight months old. My husband and I lived with my mother because we could not afford an apartment of our own, and I was three months pregnant.

Through word of mouth, checking with family and friends, we finally located an abortionist. He worked in a pharmacy. I was four months pregnant before we could scrape up the \$300 for the abortion.

The abortionist arranged to pick me up in his car and drive me to Staten Island, N.Y., for the operation. Fearing a possible mishap that could lead to criminal prosecution, he refused to allow my husband to go with me. It was winter, but I was more cold from fear than from the miserable weather.

We went to an apartment that was empty—except for a kitchen table—where the abortion was performed. I was sworn to silence

throughout the operation. I was told not to scream or even moan. When it was finally over, he drove me to a movie theater, where I met my husband who then took me home.

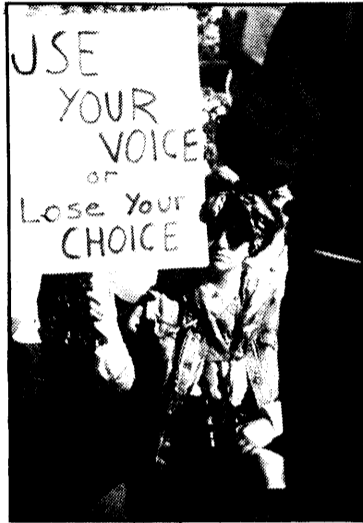
Hours later I hemorrhaged and was taken to Coney Island Hospital, where the job was finished. At the hospital the doctors accepted my unlikely story of a miscarriage. Had they not done so, they would have had to call the police and refuse treatment until I

revealed the name of the abortionist.

My second illegal abortion took place when my second child was five years old. This time it was performed in a doctor's office. I was told to be ready to get up off the table at any time if there was a knock on the door. Once again, after I got home, I began to hemorrhage. Again I was taken to the emergency ward of Coney Island Hospital, where I was given two transfusions.

My first abortion came about because I knew nothing about birth control. The second, because my birth control failed. With both abortions I was in mortal fear for my life. I did not want to leave my little babies to be raised by someone else. But the fear of having another child with an income already barely sufficient for our small family drove me to risk death.

Millions of women have made that bitter choice, and many have died from botched illegal abortions. In 1968 the President's Crime Commission reported that "one million illegal abortions



Socialist Action/Joey Ryan

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were performed annually." The Crime Commission further stated that "350,000 women per year suffer complications and 5000 die. Illegal abortion is the leading cause of maternal deaths in the United States."

The incidence of abortion deaths was actually higher. Many of the deaths from abortion were hidden by misleading death certificates—to prevent embarrassment for the grieving families.

Is all that misery over? No! Despite the Jan. 22, 1973, Roe vs. Wade decision that made abortion legal, right-wing forces are trying to bring back the back-alley death traps.

We have an opportunity in 1986 to reassert our right to control our own destiny. The National Organization for Women has called for "Marches For Women's Lives" in Washington, D.C., on March 9 and in Los Angeles on March 16. These actions can contribute to saving the lives of millions of women who will be maimed or killed if we allow the right-wing big mouths to take away our right to legal abortions.

Get in touch with your local chapter of NOW and join the effort to build these marches. If you don't have a chapter near you, then start one. Mobilize as if your life depended on it...because it does! ■

## Schlafly and the contras: Birds of a feather

By MARK HARRIS

Whether its Russians in Afghanistan, liberals in Washington, women in the army, or god in the schools, Phyllis Schlafly has a way of making the most of the media—and the worst of an issue.

Now she's done it again. *The Washington Post* reports that Schlafly's Eagle Forum is putting together "Freedom Fighter Friendship Kits" to send to those foot soldiers for savagery known as the Nicaraguan contras.

I'm sure the contras could use a good morale boost. In the hierarchy of those hirelings in the service of corporate America, these guys have strictly entry-level positions. They work crazy hours, usually the night shift, since that seems to be the best time to cut the throats of innocent people. And they're always on the go, fleeing the scene of their latest atrocity.

And what thanks do they get? Not much in Nicaragua, where they have such little support that "you can't even find graffiti on the walls," as one U.S. official told *Business Week*. "With all the money we're spending," the official complained, "you'd think we'd have enough for a bucket of paint."

As for Ronald Reagan, he appreciates them about as much as a rich white actor might appreciate the "faceless natives" who march around mindlessly in some old Hollywood movie, usually in large groups, while rich white people engage in meaningful dialogue.

Still, Schlafly thinks Washington's script for a shoot-out in Central America has the makings of a potential blockbuster. But she and her friends know it must be hard, working on-location as an extra in this U.S.-made production.

They know, for one thing, that it means being on your feet a lot. That's why the kits include foot powder, as Elaine Middendorf, Missouri state director of Eagle Forum, explains, for those moments "when their feeties in their bootsies start hurting."

Feetsies in their bootsies? Does

Middendorf know she is talking about ex-National Guard officers for the dictator Somoza? What's next: A line of Cuddly Contra Patch dolls for the kids?

Middendorf says that the kits also include Crest and Colgate toothpaste, Bayer and Anacin aspirin, Life Savers, Band Aids, and Doublemint Gum. The latter to "double your fight," as Middendorf notes.

Patriotic free enterpriser that she is, Middendorf manages to plug a few well-known products while doing her part for the contra cause. Are there royalties involved here? Then again, maybe Eagle Forum just wants to remind its contra friends what their cutthroat crusade is really all about—making the world safe for major American name-brand products.

And there's more: Shaving supplies, thread and sewing needles, combs, soap, and, last but not least, a Spanish-language Bible. Middendorf says, "These are important things. It's part of man's dignity to be able to keep some semblance of being civilized in battle."

Semblance is the operative word here. Next time the contras murder some family, or cut the stomach of a pregnant woman, at least they will do so clean-shaven, clothes mended, hair neatly parted, and Bible in hand.

There's an old saying that an eagle can descend to the heights of a hen, but a hen can never soar to the heights of an eagle. In Schlafly's case, her Eagle Forum can flap its wings about "freedom" to its hearts content, but when it comes to genuine social justice, this group can't even get off the ground.

As for the contras, it's probably inevitable that when they are finally defeated, the United States will open its doors to another bunch of right-wing losers. Should they move to the San Francisco Bay Area, I'm afraid the name alone might attract them to Contra Costa County.

If so, let's just hope they take up residence downwind from one of that county's many conveniently located chemical plants. Then they can really reap the rewards of capitalism. ■

## The terrible twos? Not for us

Dear reader,

Thanks to you we've celebrated our second birthday by surpassing both our subscription and fund drive goals. We are entering our third year of publication with 266 new long-term subscriptions (41 more than we projected). We have also raised \$12,372, far surpassing our \$10,000 goal.

You are now reading the results of that project. This newspaper was typeset with our new equipment purchased with your generous contributions. Soon we will expand our publication efforts to include a series of popular socialist pamphlets.

Our December issue brought praise from readers in several parts of the country. We were especially gratified to hear that one reader reproduced the article on the rail contract and distributed it to co-workers.

Readers in the San Francisco Bay Area will be able to mark the second birthday of this newspaper at a celebration on Jan. 18. Speakers will be *Socialist Action* editor Alan Benjamin, Carl Finamore, and various labor and community activists and leaders. For more information on this event call (415) 821-0458.

For all two year olds, life is just beginning. We too are just at the beginning of building a revolutionary socialist newspaper and organization. So we won't stop asking you—our readers—for your suggestions and your help. Please contact us if you would like to distribute *Socialist Action* or make a contribution.

And thank you again—The Editors.



Socialist Action/Michael Schreiber

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# Boston hotel workers buck concession trend

By ART LECLAIR and ROGER SHEPPARD

BOSTON—In the December issue of *Socialist Action* we reported on the possibility of a major hotel strike in Boston. As we went to press it appeared almost certain that 4000 members of Local 26 of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union were going to walk out at midnight Dec. 1.

However, due to the visible strength and solidarity of the union membership—along with the forceful leadership of President Domenic Bozzotto and the negotiation committee—not only was a strike averted but a major victory was won.

On Dec. 3 the membership of Local 26 overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year contract that will boost wages more than 6 percent annually. New hires, however, will earn 25 percent below the regular wage for four months. The bosses had demanded that the entry level lower wage last for one year.

According to the agreement, management will also contribute a 26-percent increase in insurance premiums, health and welfare benefits from the first day of employment, and the pension fund.

According to Bozzotto, "This is the finest package that's been negotiated in the country since '82" (Local 26's last contract).

The contract also contains strong language against discrimination and sexual harassment. The hotels have agreed to

open up the higher-paying "front of the house" jobs to minorities and give the first shot at promotions to current employees. The hotels will also finance a pre-paid comprehensive legal fund for employees.

How did Local 26 buck the trend of concession contracts? First is the leadership team around Bozzotto. They have established the policy of beginning to organize for the next contract fight the day after you sign the contract.

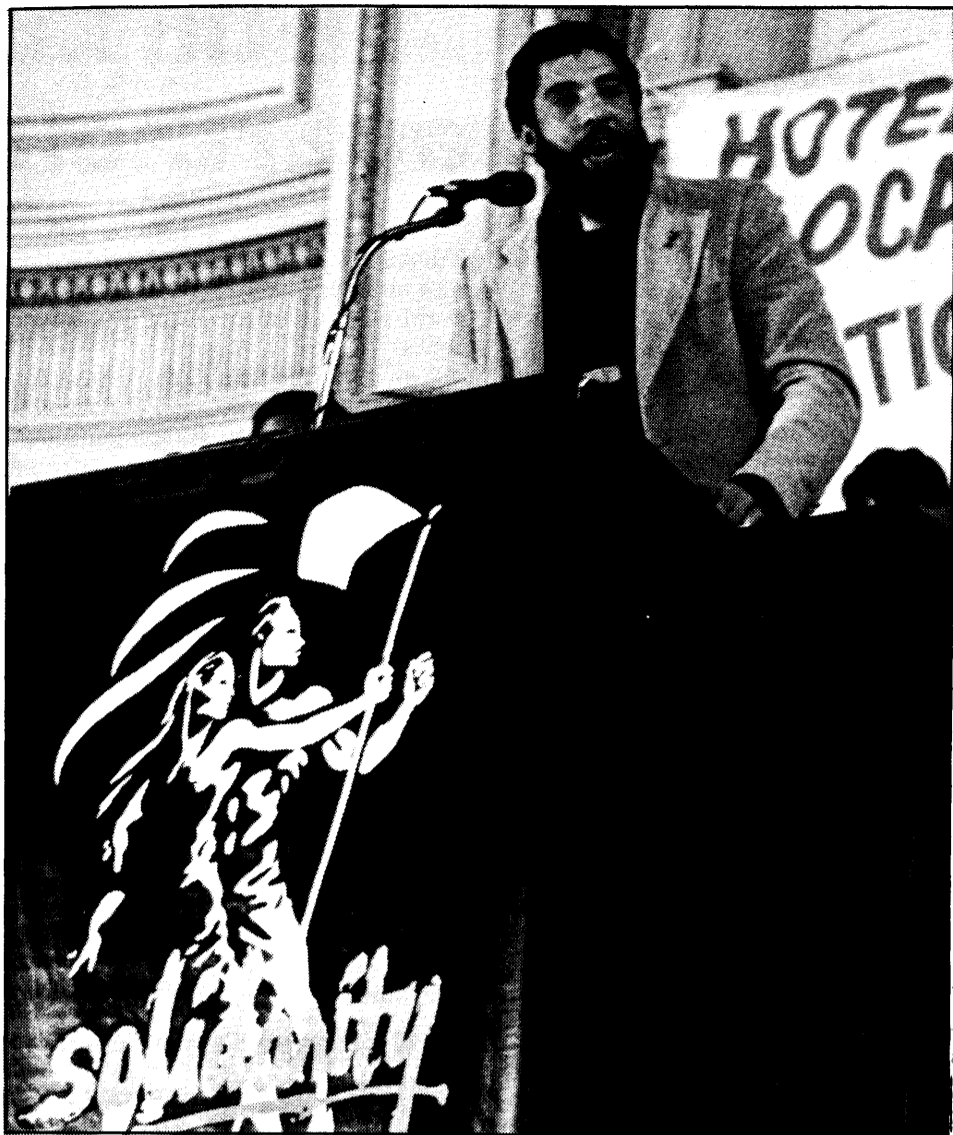
This method of mobilizing the rank and file far in advance of negotiations is one element. The second is holding mass democratic meetings to report back on all details of the negotiations.

The other major factor in the success of Local 26 is Bozzotto's recognition of the importance of the minority communities as central allies in the struggle to obtain a fair and decent contract.

With this in mind, Local 26 published all its leaflets and strike related materials in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Haitian Creole so that no segment of the local would be isolated.

Finally, Local 26, as it had done during the Greyhound strike in 1983, reached out to the entire labor movement in the Boston area. At a massive rally held before the strike deadline, over 1200 members of Local 26 and their supporters gathered to hear State AFL-CIO President Arthur Osborne and other labor officials speak on the importance of organized labor solidarity.

The victory of Local 26 provides a



Rev. Graylan-Ellis Hagler, community activist and union supporter, addresses Nov. 20 meeting of hotel workers to call strike vote.

breath of fresh air for the labor movement in Boston. The methods employed by the hotel workers to achieve it will inspire

others to take up the challenge of the bosses and fight for dignity and better conditions on the job.

# Grocery strike ends

As we go to press: A settlement has been announced in the L.A. supermarket strike. The Teamsters voted to settle on Dec. 26. The meatcutters rejected the contract in the first vote, but accepted a two-tier contract in a second vote on Dec. 29. Despite the overall vote, and pressure from the UFCW international leadership to approve the contract, a majority in two of the three meatcutter locals still voted down the contract.

By DAVE COOPER

LOS ANGELES—After several bitter weeks, the supermarket strike/lockout of 22,000 Teamsters, meatcutters, and warehouse workers in Southern California continues to pose a major challenge to the labor movement.

The Teamsters and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) seek only an extension of their present contract. But the employers, with profits up 14 percent, still insist on major concessions.

In an apparent attempt to divide the Teamsters from the meatcutters, the Food Employers Council has offered a proposal that would apply the two-tier wage scale only to automotive and non-food warehouse workers. These workers

constitute less than 20 percent of the Teamster membership.

Three thousand strikers and supporters rallied in downtown Los Angeles at McArthur Park on Dec. 6, 1985. It was

clear, despite some militant-sounding speeches, that the Teamster and UFCW leaderships had no new tactics to announce.

Instead, they reiterated their plea to the employers to return to the bargaining table for "good-faith" negotiations.

The strike has reduced company profits over the past weeks, but not enough to

compel this multi-billion dollar food industry to retreat from its union-busting goal. The employers have demonstrated their capacity to keep the struck supermarkets and warehouses operating. Unless this state of affairs is challenged by the organized labor movement, the prospects for a union victory remain distant.

# Union rights subject for Illinois teachers

By ADAM SHILS

CHICAGO—Seven hundred teachers' union activists met in Springfield for the Collective Bargaining Conference of the Illinois Education Association (IEA). The IEA is the Illinois affiliate of the National Education Association.

The conference, which was held Dec. 6-7, was aimed at providing teacher unionists with the information and training that is necessary for an effective defense of teachers' rights.

The conference included a large number

*Adam Shils is the president of the Aptakasic local of the IEA.*

of workshops on the daily concerns of the NEA members. There were sessions on grievance procedure, changes in labor law, collective-bargaining training, enforcing the contract, and how to fight for improved working conditions, and many other topics.

It was an inspiring experience to see 700 teachers seriously discussing some of the key questions their unions face—questions that we are so often told are so complex that we should "leave them to the experts."

The highpoint of the conference was the keynote speech by IEA President Reg Weaver. Weaver placed the IEA's activity in the context of the labor movement's fight against concessions. He began by declaring, "When somebody asks me about concessions, I say 'Concessions? No! No! I ain't ever going to give you any!'"

Weaver then explained the offensive against the American labor movement, discussing the attack on PATCO, the use of bankruptcy laws, the flight of capital, the types of decisions made by the National Labor Relations Board and the media campaign to blame the labor movement rather than the employers for the economic crisis. He concluded by warning against the dead-end of concessions.

This speech is only the latest example of the tremendous evolution that the NEA has undergone—from a "professional association" outside of the labor movement to a full labor union.

The conference had its weaknesses,

however. The self-defeating policy of supporting the bosses' political spokesmen was continued by having Republican Governor Jim Thompson, a prominent supporter of the Reagan administration, address the conference.

Also, some speakers advocated the teacher versions of one of the "innovations" that have been introduced as part of the bosses' campaign against the trade-union movement. There was discussion of changing wage structures so that high-seniority teachers would be paid some of the money that presently goes to new teachers and of "Educational Quality Circles" with the employers. These ideas will have to be confronted and defeated if teacher unionism is to flourish.

The Illinois Collective Bargaining Conference showed the reservoir of energy and activity that exists in the trade-union movement. Hopefully, the conference will aid teachers in preparing for the struggles to come.

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## Come Celebrate the Second Anniversary Of Socialist Action Newspaper

Special Guest Speakers:

Jake Cooper, participant in the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strike  
Charlene Tschirhart, exec. dir. San Francisco Nuclear Freeze  
A representative from the FDR/FMLN  
Ignacio De La Fuente, business manager, Molders Union Local 164  
Al Lannon, president Warehouse Local 6, ILWU  
Seymour Kramer, delegate, San Francisco Labor Council  
Pat Norman, coordinating comm. Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice

Featured Speakers:

Alan Benjamin, editor, Socialist Action  
Carl Finamore, Socialist Action nat'l anti-war director.

SAT. JAN. 18, 1986 8:00pm  
Warehouse Local 6 Hall,  
255 9th St. San Francisco, Ca.





# Martin Luther King on apartheid in South Africa

The following are excerpts from a statement made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Dec. 10, 1965, at a meeting at Hunter College in New York City.

## On South Africa's government:

The South African government, to make the white supreme, has had to reach into the past and revive the nightmarish ideology and practices of nazism. We are witnessing a recrudescence of the barbarism which murdered more humans than any war in history.

In South Africa today, all opposition to white supremacy is condemned as communism, and in its name, due process is destroyed; a medieval segregation is organized with 20th century efficiency and drive; a sophisticated form of slavery is imposed by a minority upon a majority which is kept in grinding poverty; the dignity of human personality is defiled; and world opinion is arrogantly defied.

## On the U.S. role:

We are immediately struck by the fact that the United States moved with strikingly different energy when it reached a dubious conclusion that our interests were threatened in the Dominican

Republic. We inundated that small nation with overwhelming force, shocking the world with our zealotry and naked power.

With respect to South Africa, however, our protest is so muted and peripheral it merely mildly disturbs the sensibilities of the segregationists, while our trade and investments substantially stimulate their economy to greater heights.

We pat them on the wrist in permitting racially mixed receptions in our Embassy and by exhibiting films depicting Negro artists. But we give them massive support through American investments in motor and rubber industries, by extending some \$40 million in loans through our most distinguished banking and financial institutions, by purchasing gold and other minerals mined by Black slave labor, by giving them a sugar quota, by maintaining three tracking stations there, and by providing them with the prestige of a nuclear reactor built with our technical cooperation and fueled with refined uranium supplied by us.

## On Black Americans and Africa:

For the American Negro there is a special relationship with Africa. It is the land of his origin. It was despoiled by invaders; its culture was arrested and concealed to justify white supremacy. The American Negro's ancestors were not only driven into slavery, but their links with their past were severed so that their

servitude might be psychological as well as physical.

In this period when the American Negro is giving moral leadership and inspiration to his own nation, he must find the resources to aid his suffering brothers in

his ancestral homeland. Nor is this aid a one-way street. The civil rights movement in the United States has derived immense inspiration from the successful struggles of those Africans who have attained freedom in their own nations. ■



Police dogs attack demonstrators led by Martin Luther King in Birmingham, Ala., 1963. (Above, Rev. King arrested in Montgomery, Ala., 1956.)

## ... Black America

(continued from page 1)

14.5% of Blacks were unemployed, compared to 7.6% of white workers (almost double). At the end of 1984, 16% of Blacks and 6.5% of whites were unemployed (more than double).

The Urban League estimates that close to 33% of the Black workforce suffered from unemployment during the first three quarters of 1983. This estimate includes those Black workers who have low-paying, part-time jobs because they could not find full-time work and those who have become discouraged and stopped looking for work. The reality today is not appreciably different.

For the Black family the results have been catastrophic. The lack of employment opportunities and the misery of poverty have been directly responsible for the disintegration of the two-parent Black family. In 1960, 22.4% of Black families were headed by women. By 1983, this figure had increased to 42%.

This means that although undeniable economic progress was made by the two-parent Black family over the last 30 years, usually with the husband and wife both working, the family unit that is increasing the fastest is single female-headed households—the poorest of all family units.

In 1983, the median income for Black female-headed households was just a little more than half that of white female-headed households (\$7,999 compared to \$13,761). The poverty line for a family of four in 1981 was \$9,287. Thus the majority of Black female-headed households lived in poverty.

## Black youth

The unemployment rates for Black teenagers today are far worse than 30 years ago. In 1983 the unemployment rate for Black male teenagers was a staggering 42.7%, compared to 18.3% for white male teenagers. In 1955 the rate was 12.9% unemployment for Black male teenagers and 10.4% for whites.

Black female teenagers faced a 56.1% unemployment rate, compared to 14.9% for whites in 1983. The ratio in 1955 was

21.4% versus 7.7% respectively. Overall, Black teenage unemployment has tripled!

The U.S. capitalist system offers very few options to Black youth today. In many cases the choice is either joining the Armed Forces or ending up in prison.

The statistics of racism and misery also extend to the wombs of Black mothers. According to Public Advocates, a research law firm, the Black infant-mortality rate was 91% higher than that of whites.

## Bosses profit from racism

Black America is being ravaged by capitalist America. Far from being the policy of just a single individual who happens to occupy the White House, the severity of the current attacks against Black economic and political rights has been determined by two decisive factors.

First are the needs of the capitalists. In order to increase their rate of profit they must drive down the standard of living of all American workers and their families. Blacks have taken the brunt of this attack because of the historical legacy of racism and the inequality they face as an oppressed nationality.

These attacks will continue and

intensify because the private-profit system cannot prosper otherwise. Both Democratic and Republican party administrations have led this attack because they defend and administer the capitalist system.

The second decisive factor is the response of the Black community. All the gains that are now under attack—affirmative action, school desegregation, equal housing, and job opportunities—were won by the Black community through mass mobilizations and protests independent of the Republicans and Democrats.

The civil rights struggles of the 1960s won the support of the majority of the population because of the militancy of Blacks and the moral authority of their struggle for justice. Getting these protests off the streets was the goal of the Democratic party.

The degree to which mass actions for Black rights have been taken off the streets and channeled into the Democratic Party can be measured by the increased attacks on the gains of the 1960s.

In 1970, after a decade of struggle that even took the form of rebellions in the

urban ghettos, Blacks came closest to narrowing the gap in the median income between themselves and whites. The rate that year was 62%, and it has been downhill ever since. Today the gap in median income is back to what it was in 1955—55%!

## Democrats derail struggle

At a time when there are over 300 Black elected officials, including mayors of major cities, Black America finds itself being pushed back to 1955.

Many Black leaders today—like Jesse Jackson—are seeking through the Rainbow Coalition to register Blacks into the Democratic Party. This self-defeating strategy has resulted in the demoralization and disorganization of a powerful social force: the struggle for Black liberation.

Malcolm X, who like Martin Luther King, was assassinated because of his uncompromising struggle for Black rights, made it clear that Blacks will only make progress through self-organization and political independence.

At a speech to the founding rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity in June 1964, Malcolm X explained why Blacks should reject both the Democratic and Republican parties: "We won't organize any Black man to be a Democrat or a Republican," he said, "because both parties have sold us out. Both parties are racist, and the Democratic Party is more racist than the Republican Party."

## Malcolm's words ring true

The Black majority of South Africa has a shared heritage with the Black civil rights struggle in the United States. Many of the tactics used currently by South African Blacks, like boycotts of white businesses, sit-downs, mass marches, calls for solidarity, bringing international pressure to bear, were used in the struggle here.

These lessons will come back home. If statistics are any indicator, the Black community is a revolutionary powder keg. No other segment of society has less of a stake in the status quo.

Combined with the struggle of all workers and oppressed people for social justice, Black working people—who are the overwhelming majority of Black America—will play a leading and decisive role. ■



# A little-known hero who achieved big results

By MILES S. RICHARDS

It has been 30 years since the great Montgomery bus boycott—one of the most significant events in the history of the civil rights movement.

Much attention has been accorded to the roles of Rosa Parks and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in this important story. But few recall the singular part played by E. D. Nixon, a longtime Black activist in Montgomery. He was the only person at the time of Park's arrest to accurately assess the full potential of the situation.

For the first five decades of the 20th century, Montgomery, Ala., had been a bastion of segregation. The white power structure, with auxiliary aid from both the city police force and the Ku Klux Klan, had ruthlessly quashed all opposition from the Black community.

The Black leadership (mostly clergy) was fragmented and indecisive. Citing community apathy, they preferred to sit tight until

the times got better. E. D. Nixon was one leader, though, who refused to accept the do-nothing approach.

Nixon was not typical of many of his Montgomery contemporaries. He had been (for 20 years) a field organizer for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. His labor record made him suspect to some of his peers, but it had given him solid national contacts.

Veteran observers have noted that E. D. Nixon had been the driving force behind anti-segregation agitation in Montgomery for 25 years when the bus boycott began in 1955. Besides founding the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he had spearheaded several moderately successful voter registration drives in that part of Alabama.

For his efforts he received several beatings at the hands of white thugs, usually abetted by off-duty policemen. His house was bombed, and the Klan planted burning crosses in his yard on numerous occasions. Despite constant death threats, E. D. Nixon refused to desist.

A notable ally was Rosa Parks, the longtime secretary of the Montgomery NAACP. On Dec. 2, 1955, Parks impulsively refused to relinquish her city bus seat to a white man and join her "fellow Negroes" in the back, as was customary. Parks was arrested for disturbing the peace and violating a city bus segregation ordinance of longstanding. Nixon went down to bail her out. At that point an idea dawned.

Rosa was of solid reputation and therefore, a perfect test case. They scorned a police offer to drop the charges if they left quietly. Nixon decided it was time to test "Jim Crow justice" in court.

Both Parks and Nixon began to mobilize support for a possible Black boycott of the Montgomery city bus system. This was to compliment the legal work required in Parks' test case, which ultimately went to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Nixon quickly called many of his fellow activists—mostly clergy. He also called the

then 26-year old Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a comparative newcomer to Montgomery.

Despite an initial reluctance to get involved in the struggle, King agreed to participate. An initial community meeting was held at King's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church on Dec. 5. At this meeting, the Montgomery Improvement Association was created.

Most participants, including the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, were prepared to elect Nixon to this organization's presidency. However, he declined to run, and to everyone's astonishment, he nominated Rev. King to that post.

Nixon sensed King was a charismatic figure and a brilliant speaker. He was erudite, college trained, and personally above reproach. It was not easy for white politicians to target him for a slander campaign. Subsequent events during the next year underscored Nixon's judgement.

## An organizer and teacher

Actually, E. D. Nixon wanted the job of treasurer. His national labor contacts were to prove useful to the cause by supplying needed money and support. A. Philip Randolph and the Reuther brothers (Walter and Victor) proved most supportive on both counts.

Nixon managed to raise \$400,000 during the nearly year-long struggle. Nixon also proved invaluable in keeping a tight leash on young hotheads who sought violent street confrontations with white opponents.

The white racists fought back with every weapon they possessed. This ranged from court injunctions to Klan "night rides." But the Black community of Montgomery never wavered in its support of the bus boycott.

By November 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court had declared the segregation ordinance of Montgomery unconstitutional—based upon Parks' appeal of her conviction. On Dec. 21, 1956, Nixon and King boarded a city bus to symbolize the end of their victorious struggle.

In later years, King and Parks received



Walking home in support of 1956 Montgomery bus boycott.



Passenger alone in bus during 1956 Montgomery boycott.

great acclaim. The former, of course, became perhaps the best-known national Black leader. But E. D. Nixon was shunted to the background. He remained in Montgomery to pursue both his union and civil rights work. Although King always gave him his due—most other observers preferred only to highlight King's role at Montgomery.

Eventually, most chroniclers overlooked Nixon's contributions altogether. In 1980, at the 25th anniversary celebration of the event in Montgomery, Nixon was not even invited to participate.

Today, E. D. Nixon is 86 years old and resides with a married daughter in Montgomery. Despite his lack of recognition, about which he is basically philosophical, he will be remembered in history for his vital contribution to the birth of the civil rights movement. ■

## BOOK REVIEW

By MARK SCHNEIDER

*Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*, by J. Anthony Lukas, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, 659 pages, \$19.95.

Nowhere was the resistance of racists more violent, better organized, and long lasting than during the battle to desegregate Boston's public schools in the mid-1970s.

In the wake of a 1974 desegregation order by Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity, white mobs took to the streets on a daily basis—hurling rocks, screaming racist epithets, beating Black victims. During the crisis, politicians from Mayor Kevin White to President Gerald Ford fanned the flames by denouncing "forced busing."

Yet the Black community and its allies won the battle. Ten years later Boston's schools are desegregated. Police cars accompany the buses, and there are still incidents of racist violence, but the organized racist movement has been severely set back. Despite the withdrawal of many white children from the schools, desegregation is now accepted as a fact of life.

In this context appears J. Anthony Lukas' *Common Ground*, a journalistic account of the impact of the desegregation struggle on the lives of three Boston families—Irish, Black, and Yankee.

The book makes compelling reading. Every major character is presented with a *Roots*-like chapter detailing the complete family history. Lukas presents the social conflict from the point of view of various family members so convincingly that the

## Book on busing not grounded in reality

reader feels he or she is looking at the world just as each character sees it.

In addition, five key actors in the drama and the institutions they represent are depicted in depth: Mayor Kevin White, ROAR leader Louise Day Hicks, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, *Boston Globe* editor Tom Winship, and Judge Garrity.

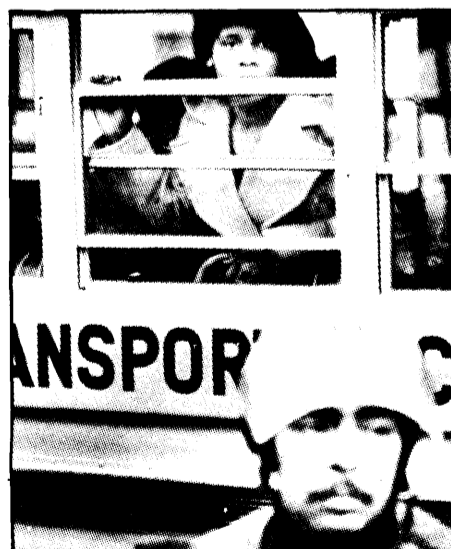
### For or against busing?

*Common Ground* is an interesting social history. But it makes no effort to tell the story of the political battle as it actually unfolded. Lukas doesn't sum up anything, nor does he allow the characters to sum up. Seemingly, the book makes no case for or against busing as a way to desegregate the schools.

However, all social histories are influenced by a political bias, and Lukas' bias, despite all his attempts to be objective, deeply flaws his account. *Common Ground* exudes an atmosphere of disenchanting liberalism. While the ugliness of the racists emerges, the Black struggle against racist violence and for busing is simply omitted. Busing appears as a project of idealistic Yankee liberals. Like all half truths, this is really false.

Busing became an issue in Boston because Black parents fought for it in court, and Black youth displayed incredible courage and tenacity in facing down racist mobs in the streets.

Time and again the Black community and its allies outmobilized the racists in the



streets to demonstrate their determination to win their goals.

Lukas, however, never tells this story. For the former *New York Times* reporter, this news is not fit to print. Of the five political leaders he chose to profile, incredibly not one is Black. The bias also emerges in the choice of families.

Mother and daughter McGoff, who are Irish, are activists in Powder Keg, the Charlestown racist outfit, so we get a lot of details about this group's internal politics. But the Twymon family, which is Black, is not equally involved in the desegregation struggle. The mother is something of a church activist involved in the housing

issue, and her estranged sister's home is attacked by racist thugs. But the balance is not the same.

The Twymon daughters, who are bused to Charlestown, are somewhat overwhelmed by the situation. Understandably, they begin to cut school. Lukas' message is hazy, but there: Busing was an obstacle to their education. In reality, racists were the obstacle to their education.

Disillusionment with social change is personified by the Diver family, who are New England Yankees. A Harvard Law graduate, Colin Diver turns down a big money job for public service in the liberal Kevin White administration during the late 1960s. But as White marches steadily to the right, concluding a secret deal with Louise Day Hicks, Diver becomes disenchanted and ultimately withdraws from government for academia.

Turning his attention to the very real problem of crime in the South End, Boston's only integrated neighborhood, Diver organizes community patrols. He quickly finds himself in the role of urban vigilante. Rejecting this alternative, the family leaves the South End for the suburbs.

Some might conclude that the problems Diver sought to change are intractable and have their roots in human nature. But the real lesson of the Diver story is quite different. Social change is made by oppressed people struggling in their own interests. That's the way the battle of Boston was won, in reality.

Racism, crime, unemployment, poverty: These will be with us until its victims organize to replace the social system that spawns these horrors. This sense of things is completely alien to *Common Ground*, and that's the vacuum on which this nonetheless intriguing story founders.



# Union ranks debate concessions fight

By CARRIE HEWITT

CHICAGO—Some 450 union activists from across the country participated in the founding conference of the National Rank-and-File Against Concessions (NRFAC) held here Dec. 6-8.

The new organization, according to conference organizers, hopes to build a national network of union locals committed to a "no-concessions" policy.

The major goal of NRFAC is to overcome the problems caused when union locals are left on their own to fight against the current epidemic of employer demands for concessions. The statement of purpose approved at the conference calls for NRFAC to "provide direct, immediate aid to those unions who have chosen to fight concessions."

Initial steps toward building a national anti-concessions network began earlier this year in Minnesota after a number of local labor leaders came together to organize support for the Local P-9 packinghouse workers' struggle against Hormel.

This and other strikes waged in other parts of the country by steelworkers at Wheeling-Pittsburgh and shipbuilders at Bath, Maine, convinced a core group of 35 local union leaders to issue a call in June for a planning meeting which then provided the impetus for the formation of NRFAC.

A major theme running throughout the conference was the question of uniting the labor movement to provide solidarity for local unions struggling in isolation against concessions demands.

In keeping with this, keynote speaker David Patterson, director of USWA District 6 in Ontario, Canada, and vice president of the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), urged conference participants to follow the coalition-building strategy of the CLC and to force union leaders to join together in carrying out the fight against concessions.

The need for aggressive union leadership was the focus of the main panel discussion. Speakers on the panel included Ron Weisen, president of USWA Local 1397; Pete Kelly, president of UAW Local 160; Jim Guyette, president of UFCW Local P-9 (currently on strike in Austin, Minn.); James Coakley, president of UAW Local 1200; and Greg Arnette, member of the executive board of USWA 1293.

The remainder of the conference was devoted mainly to informative workshops on such topics as strike strategies against concessions; building local coalitions; and the struggles in the steel, auto, and shipbuilding industries.

Unfortunately, it is not clear that NRFAC will be able to meet its objectives.

Little attention, for example, was paid to the practical aspects of how NRFAC will go about achieving its goals. Beyond approving a set of by-laws establishing an organizational structure for NRFAC and electing an executive board, the issue of what specific course of action NRFAC will pursue in the coming months was not addressed.

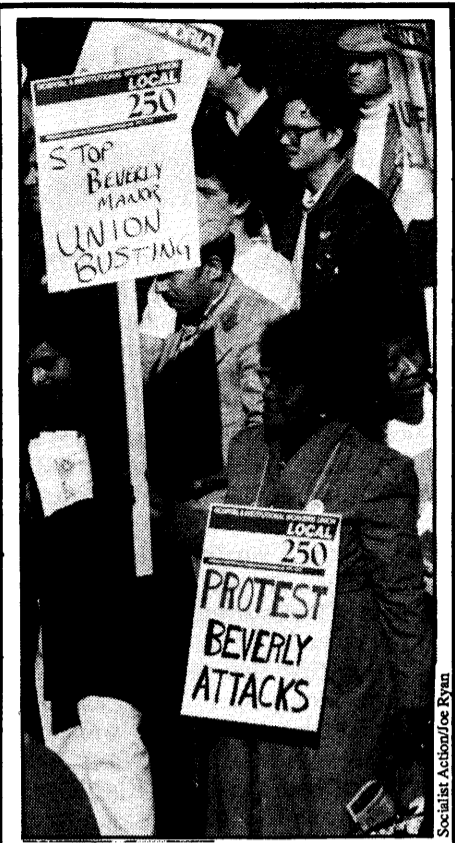
Important questions, such as how NRFAC plans to reach out to the labor movement to recruit new affiliates to its solidarity network and how NRFAC intends to raise and distribute aid to unions involved in anti-concessions fights, were unanswered.

Another unfortunate limitation of the conference was the bureaucratic way the floor debate was controlled.

For a rank-and-file organization, the time permitted for discussion from the floor was extremely limited. Less than an hour was set aside during the entire two-day conference for participants to take part in the conference decision-making process.

In addition, the discussion of NRFAC's proposed by-laws was abruptly cut off after an amendment was presented from the floor. Another sour note was sounded at the close of the conference when a bitter dispute broke out over the fairness of the election of the two regional directors from the Chicago-Gary area to NRFAC's executive board.

If NRFAC is to fulfill its promise as a vehicle for waging a fightback campaign against concessions, it is clear that larger forces must be drawn in and more democratic procedures adopted so that the problems of the founding conference can be overcome.



Workers at Beverly Manor convalescent hospital in San Francisco protest company attempts to decertify their union. Beverly is part of the largest convalescent chain in the world, with over 900 homes.

The chain, which earned \$46.9 million in profit in 1984, starts its employees at \$3.95 an hour.

## ...Protest

(continued from page 1)

ference in no way made the world safer. Reagan came home and immediately took steps to build the new first-strike weapon system called "Star Wars." The U.S. military budget has soared to record heights.

Union-busting and demands for concessions from working people are the watchwords for U.S. corporations. The government, at the federal, state, and municipal level continues to gut essential social services.

### Labor ready to act

Already, large international unions such as the United Steel Workers of America, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and the International Association of Machinists have shown their readiness to oppose the warmakers by endorsing the April 20, 1985, demonstration for peace, jobs and justice in Washington, D.C.

In San Francisco, the labor movement actively participated in the planning of the local demonstration. All eight Bay Area central labor councils endorsed the march and sent representatives to the planning committee. John Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, co-chaired the rally. Large spirited labor contingents marched.

Delegates to the recent AFL-CIO convention challenged that organization's traditional all-out support for U.S. foreign policy.

Yet, despite the urgent need for visible and unified antiwar protests and evidence of widespread support for the four demands of last April's demonstrations, the antiwar movement nationally is in a state of disarray.

Many of the coalitions in various cities that organized participation in the April 20 actions have disbanded. In most areas, fall antiwar activities were quite modest. Some notable exceptions were union-led demonstrations and rallies against apartheid in Newark, Detroit, and elsewhere.

Also, in San Francisco a successful conference was held Nov. 2 [see December 1985 *Socialist Action*]. The San Francisco Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice brought together labor, civil rights, peace, and religious organizations in support of



its four demands.

The decision last June of the national April Actions' steering committee not to initiate any fall actions was largely responsible for this lull in antiwar activity. At the same steering committee meeting, a motion was passed to plan a national demonstration for April 26, 1986.

Such a demonstration is sorely needed to help counter the U.S. government's assault on workers at home and abroad. It would have the potential to actively involve the labor unions and to bring thousands into the streets in support of jobs, peace, and justice.

### A serious setback

Unfortunately, the April Actions' Administrative Committee met in November and decided not to go ahead with an April 26 demonstration. It said it lacked the necessary organization and resources to plan such a mobilization but held open the possibility of calling some type of action in June. This decision represents a serious setback.

While plans are under way for a big antiwar demonstration around the four demands in the San Francisco Bay Area this coming April, this effort is not being matched on a national level. [See San Francisco demonstration call.]

But the objective need for such a national effort is well established. The people of South Africa, Central America, and indeed, of the entire world, need concrete evidence that the U.S. government does not have the support of

the American people.

Millions of people in this country support the right of the people of Central America to govern themselves, free from U.S. intervention. Millions oppose U.S. support to apartheid. Millions oppose the nuclear arms race. Labor's demands for jobs and social justice at home are vital issues for all working people.

These four interrelated issues have the potential of broadening participation in the antiwar movement. The four demands make it easier to get official labor participation since most labor unions are on record against apartheid and for the nuclear freeze.

Explaining the negative impact of U.S. military policy on jobs is essential for increasing the active participation of

working people. These four issues are the most effective demands for mobilizing the widespread sentiment for peace, jobs, and justice.

### Mass actions needed

One argument being raised against organizing a national spring mobilization is the need to focus attention on the electoral arena with the project of trying to defeat the most outspoken pro-war candidates.

The policy of war abroad and austerity at home, however, is a bipartisan one. Replacing one Democrat or Republican with another won't result in any real change. Instead, it will divert attention from building an independent protest movement that can effect positive change. Such an approach also ignores the fact that the attractiveness of the four demands extends beyond supporters of any particular party or candidate.

The decision of the April Actions' steering committee, reached by a handful of leaders of solidarity and peace groups in New York, points to the need for a broader national coalition—a coalition that includes representatives of labor, local coalitions, student groups, religious organizations, civil rights and women's groups. The potential for building such a coalition clearly exists.

The decision of the San Francisco coalition to call for an April mobilization in the Bay Area is a positive one that needs to be repeated in other parts of the country. There is still time for the April Actions' Administrative Committee to reverse its November decision and issue a call for nationally coordinated demonstrations in April 1986.

## ...S.F. march

(continued from page 1)

panded at future meetings to reflect new forces that are won to the coalition's demands.

The Mobilization set Jan. 28 for its first mass meeting. All those who support the four demands and who desire to work on the action will be welcomed to participate and help determine the coalition's course.

The call for the April 19 action came after months of preparation and consultation with activists in the Bay Area. It

was preceded by a highly successful Nov. 2 conference sponsored by the Mobilization, which drew more than 400 activists.


The key forces in the labor movement and from the peace and community organizations in the area that worked on this conference saw its success—and the government's continued attacks on workers at home and war moves abroad—as the basis for placing the Mobilization on an action footing in the spring.

Mobilization leaders hope that their action in calling the April 19 demonstration will stimulate other coalitions in the United States to act similarly.

# International Outlook



A Marxist  
Theoretical Review

JANUARY 1986 



## What is the nature of the revolution in S. Africa?

By ADAM SHILS

Socialist Action places great emphasis on the importance of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. This has led many political activists to charge Socialist Action with being caught up in an obscure historical debate with little relevance to the problems of social change today.

Theory and program, however, are not just books on the shelf, but are a guide to action.

Some currents in the workers' movement are today presenting an analysis that simplistically reduces the complex problems of the revolution in South Africa to a "national-democratic revolution" led by the African National Congress (ANC). This position neither captures the reality of South African economics and politics nor puts forward a strategy that could lead to Black workers' power and a genuine democratic revolution.

The idea of the "national-democratic revolution" flows from the notion that there is no immediate prospect of socialist revolution in South Africa and that it is first necessary to go through a stage where the economy develops on a capitalist basis. A strategic governmental alliance with the "national bourgeoisie" is required to complete the tasks of this stage of the revolution (land reform and national independence).

The forces supporting these aims, however, would vigorously oppose measures pointing toward socialism, such as the nationalization of industry under workers' control. This is the perspective of "national-democratic revolution"—the theory of stages—in colonial or semi-colonial countries.

### Class against class

But the implementation of this two-stage theory would have disastrous results in South Africa. South Africa is an industrialized capitalist country. Twenty-nine percent of South Africa's workers work in the manufacturing industry. South Africa is clearly a country where all the problems of "class against class" are posed with a vengeance.

There has been a tremendous growth of the Black working class in the past decade. The National Union of Mineworkers alone has 200,000 members. There are 670,000 workers organized in the Black trade-union movement. Last year saw the highest number of strikes ever—469. Of these strikes, 181 were for higher wages, 97 were against firings or layoffs, 47 were for union

recognition, and 44 were for improved working conditions.

There were 378,000 work days "lost" in those 469 strikes. Approximately 1 million Black workers participated in the two-day workers' action in the Transvaal in November 1984, which was organized in part by the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA).

Many more statistics could be quoted. The point is clear: A potentially powerful Black working class already exists. It will mature and develop in the course of the struggle and will be the driving force of the South African revolution.

### Who would run industry?

How would this working class fare under a revolutionary "national-democratic" government? Let us suppose for a minute that a government came to power in South Africa pledged only to democratic demands, such as ending apartheid and initiating land reform, but putting forward no program of transitional demands pointing toward socialism.

In this situation, who would run the factories and mines? How would problems of unemployment and inflation be resolved? Whose side would the government be on when strikers fighting for their vital class interests clashed with the police?

We can take the situation one stage further. In the "turmoil and crisis that would accompany the end of apartheid and the installation of a "national-democratic government" there would inevitably be strikes, factory occupations, and workers' control. This has always taken place during social crises in countries with a large working class.

How would a government pledged to "national-democratic unity" with a wing of the capitalist class handle such a situation? There is every reason to believe that so long as the capitalist class retained a presence in the government, as well as its essential social and economic power, they would turn violently against the working class. There are scores of examples of governments calling themselves "national democratic" that have broken strikes and murdered working class militants—thereby preparing the ground for the crushing of the revolution.

### Discussion in South African unions

This is not just a concern of "side-line critics." There is an important discussion going on in the Black workers' movement today in South Africa about this problem. A significant number of South African trade

unionists, in fact, have spoken of the need to fight for workers' power.

FOSATU has made clear its support for Solidarnosc in Poland. Both the widely respected *South African Labour Bulletin* and the *FOSATU Worker News* have published articles supporting the Brazilian Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores/PT). [See December 1985 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

A wing of the mass resistance movement has carried the discussion of class independence even further. The Cape Action League (CAL) has written that they believe that "the interests of the bosses and workers can never be the same. Therefore, an alliance between the workers and bosses can only serve the interests of the bosses.... We do not believe that it is possible to fight apartheid without also fighting the capitalist system that breeds it. We believe that only the working class can lead the struggle against economic exploitation" (Statement of the Cape Action League, quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, Nov. 18, 1985).

The National Forum and the Azanian Peoples Organization call for a socialist workers' republic. Obviously, not every participant in this debate has a perfect position on every issue, but a real debate is going on—one that reflects a real issue.

The "national-democratic revolution" perspective has nothing to say to the militants in South Africa concerned with these issues. The South African revolution demands a combination of democratic demands and working-class transitional demands pointing toward socialism. This is the only way to cement the alliance between the working class and all the oppressed. It represents the only way to develop the clarity of the mass movement on the profound interconnection between apartheid and the whole South African capitalist system.

### A process of permanent revolution

A 1983 statement by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International captures this combination of objectives well. "The South African revolution will conform with class reality, that is, with the social, economic, and political structures of the country. It will take the form of a *process of permanent revolution* that would seek to resolve the national question, the question of equal civil and political rights and the land problem in the interests of the great majority of the population: Africans, Coloreds and Indians.

"At the same time, given the preponderant weight of the industrial, mining, and agricultural proletariat in the working population, the struggle for these rights will be carried out through proletarian means of action and organization and will be combined more and more with the struggle for class objectives proper to the proletariat....

"The South African revolution will begin on the terrain of the national question. The struggle in the factories expresses above all the will of Blacks to organize as Black workers to win their emancipation. Their mobilizations *combine* diverse immediate demands (salaries, work conditions, residence rights, solidarity against repression) with the struggle for national-democratic demands for *national liberation* (equal rights, freedom of expression and organization).

"The development of the revolutionary process from a struggle for national-democratic demands into a fight for anti-capitalist objectives will thus be *uninterrupted*" (*International Viewpoint*, March 7, 1983, emphasis in original). ■

## IN THIS ISSUE: REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

•What is the nature of the South African revolution?—By Adam Shils

•Black workers blaze a path to South Africa's future—By Michael Schreiber

•The Labor movement in South Africa—A four-way dialogue

•Who's who in South Africa: A political glossary—By Ann Robertson



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

# Black unions blaze a path to South Africa's future

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a "superfederation" founded a month ago in Durban, South Africa, is the culmination of more than a decade of struggle by the country's Black and non-racial trade unions.

The independent unions were born during the massive strike wave of 1973, when over 90,000 Black workers downed their tools. A year later, some 30,000 workers had joined the unions.

Today, membership in the Black and non-racial unions has mushroomed. Thirty-six unions, representing 500,000 workers, agreed to put aside some of their tactical differences and join together inside COSATU.

Another 200,000 workers are enrolled in unions from the Black Consciousness tradition that have expressed disagreement with COSATU's program to open membership to people of all races.

The growth of the trade unions has been paralleled by that of the anti-apartheid struggle. Actions such as last month's "Christmas boycott" of white-owned stores around Johannesburg have been led by coalitions of political, student, and community organizations.

There have been important convergences between the community and the trade-union wings of the movement. Trade unions, for example, helped to organize the November 1984 general strike in the Transvaal region, in which about 1 million people took part. The action was initiated by a student group and supported by affiliated chapters of the United Democratic Front—a mass-based anti-apartheid coalition.

Until very recently, however, many trade-union leaders had settled into a kind of division of labor with the community and political groups. Unions such as the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), one of the major components of the new "superfederation," preferred to concentrate most of their activity on workplace issues rather than on broader anti-apartheid actions in alliance with community organizations.

## Political action by the unions

But the trade unionists' hesitations toward "political" action may soon be overcome. "There's no way we can divorce ourselves from the struggle," says Chris Dlamini, FOSATU president. "In the state of emergency, union people are also being detained and killed."

The newly elected president of COSATU, Elijah Barahi, made the same point to a Dec. 1 rally of 10,000 workers during the federation's founding conference. Within six months' time, he said, "If the pass laws haven't been lifted, we will instruct everybody to burn their passes and ignore policemen who order Blacks to produce their passes."

Mineworkers' General Secretary Cyril Ramaphosa told the rally, "The government has clearly demonstrated that it is no longer in control of the country. It is about time that the working class call on him to lay down his powers and let the legitimate leaders of this country take over."

The top spheres of world finance were quick to understand the potential threat to the profit system in South Africa posed by the newly unified trade-union movement. *Business Week* magazine noted that COSATU's "defiant bid for power" was "spearheading a stunning transformation of South Africa's political climate."

The *Wall Street Journal* nervously termed the new trade-union federation "the most organized political challenge ever from Blacks." It also warned, "To violently suppress the unions, as the government did in earlier decades, would incur the wrath of international opinion at a delicate time."

## The Communist Party

But big business is not alone in its puzzlement over how to deal with the growing political orientation of the labor movement. The South African Communist Party (SACP) appears to be equally ill at ease.



Worker on British-owned farm in Natal

Although the SACP has published several articles offering a wary approval of the trade unions' unification process, it drew the line when FOSATU General Secretary Joe Foster suggested in 1982 that workers should take a further step and build their own political organization.

An article in the Second Quarter 1983 issue of *The African Communist*, the journal of the Communist Party, charged that Foster's call for a new "workers' movement" would have a "disruptive and divisive effect" on the African National Congress (ANC) and would compete with the SACP itself.

But the Communist Party's diatribes against the trade-union movement reach a new low in the most recent issue of *The African Communist* (Fourth Quarter 1985). Writing on the eve of COSATU's founding conference, the journal's editors allege that South African bosses are backing the unions in order to win support away from the ANC!

*The African Communist* refers to an appeal by Stellenbosch University Professor Blackie Swart, who warns employers and the government that using strong-arm tactics against the independent trade unions could lead to unmanageable unrest, which would cause workers to "shift toward more politically motivated organizations."

"In other words," the editors deduce, "he is appealing to the bosses to let the unions succeed in negotiations for higher wages and better conditions because failure at the negotiating table would throw the workers into the arms of the ANC and SACP."

From there a small slight of hand is necessary: "This explains why so many employers recognized the relevant trade union and allowed it to function. This explains why millions of rand are being channelled by the CIFTU, AFL-CIO, and other bodies toward South African unions, which it is hoped will develop into a 'third force' drawing workers away from the ANC."

## Why the CP lies

Lies and slander against working-class militants, of course, have been standard ammunition in the arsenal of the Stalinist Communist Parties of the world for almost 60 years. At the end of the 1920s, the revolutionary parties of the Communist International were broken and tamed to serve the short-sighted foreign policy of the conservative caste headed by Joseph Stalin that had taken power in the Soviet Union.

In order to redirect and mislead the revolutionary movement, the Stalinists had to trick the rank and file into believing that CP leaders who refused to back the takeover had somehow betrayed the membership. For

that task, slander was necessary.

For example, Leon Trotsky, respected as one of the main leaders of the Russian Revolution, was said by the Stalinists to have "belittled Lenin." Later, in exile, he was charged with being "an agent of Hitler and the Mikado."

In the United States, James P. Cannon and other former CP leaders who had joined the Left Opposition against the Stalinists were charged with being "counterrevolutionists" and "agents of American imperialism." (Cannon and the U.S. Trotskyists later went on to found the Socialist Workers Party.)

## The "two-stage revolution"

A similar process took place in the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA—as the SACP was then named). In 1928, the Stalinist leadership in the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) bureaucratically ordered the CP to adopt a slogan calling for "an independent Native Republic as a stage toward a workers' and peasants' republic" [my emphasis—M.S.].

The formula of a "two-stage revolution" conformed with the new program of the Communist International, which met in Moscow that year. The program said that a "bourgeois-democratic" revolution was on the agenda in colonial and underdeveloped countries.

This revolution—which would win national liberation and democratic rights for the oppressed masses—was seen as a separate stage from a later struggle that would bring the working class to power and begin the construction of socialism.

In practice, the Stalinist theory required the working-class movement to form a long-term bloc with bourgeois forces that were deemed "democratic," "anti-imperialist," or "friendly to the Soviet Union."

Only a year earlier, the new line had been tested in China with disastrous results. The International had ordered the Communist Party to subordinate itself to the bourgeois Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang soon turned around and slaughtered thousands of workers and peasants who had been disarmed by Stalin's endorsement of him. [See Ralph Forsyth's article on China in this issue of *Socialist Action*.]

Now the two-stage schema was to be introduced into South Africa. But some Communist Party leaders opposed it. The chairman of the CPSA, Sydney Percival Bunting, countered the Stalinist line with the observation that "the class struggle is here practically coincident and simultaneous with the national struggle."

Ernest Harsch, in his now out-of-print book, "South Africa—White Rule, Black Revolt," made some perceptive comments on the Stalinist misorientation of

the CPSA. The Workers Party nature of South Africa—the national liberation struggle in the direction

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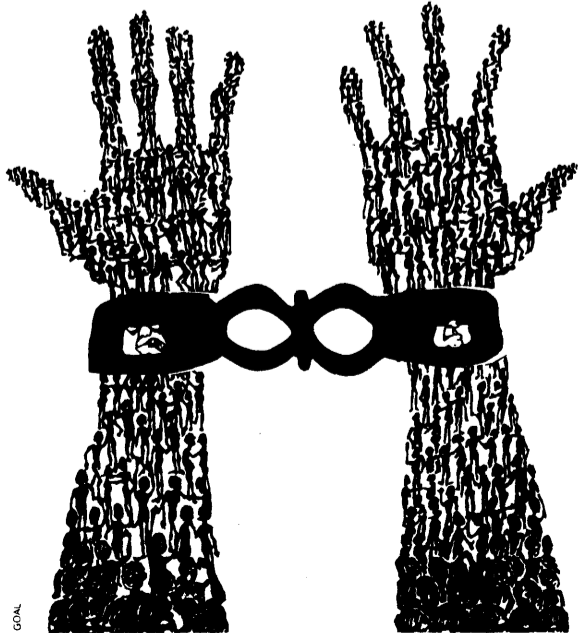
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the CPSA. Harsch, a spokesperson for the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, pointed out, "The nature of South African society and the class dynamic of the national liberation struggle will in practice lead in the direction of challenging capitalism itself.

"The crucial mistake was insisting that a Black republic would be brought about through a bourgeois revolution. In this way the ECCI ensured that the CPSA would be unable to fight for a Black republic in an effective, revolutionary manner.

"As the party's record showed after it adopted the slogan, the stress on the bourgeois-democratic nature of the struggle led the CPSA to de-emphasize the leading role of the Black working class, to look toward Black petty-bourgeois figures as the 'natural' leaders of the struggle, and even to flirt with supposedly 'democratic' sectors of the white ruling class."

After the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed in 1939, for example, the Communist Party sponsored joint antiwar meetings with the capitalist National Party—which was pro-Nazi.

When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, the CPSA suddenly adopted a "pro-war" line. The work with the National Party was dropped in favor of alliances with various "liberal" capitalist forces—including elements of the ruling United Party.

One CPSA pamphlet of the time advised workers that because of the war effort, they "must try all ways of settling disputes with the bosses before calling strikes."

### SWP echoes Stalinist line

The Stalinist "two-stage" line on South Africa has found its echo recently in the United States—from a source that would have been completely unexpected six years ago when Ernest Harsch wrote his book.

The Socialist Workers Party leadership has now decided that it's necessary to "strip away remnants of sectarian and ultraleft obstacles" within the program that guided the Trotskyist movement for over 50 years.

But while ridding itself of alleged "obstacles" in its program, the SWP appears to be lurching toward a shameful opportunism. The August 1985 plenum of the SWP National Committee approved a report on the struggle in South Africa by National Secretary Jack Barnes that replaces a Marxist analysis with one culled directly from the lexicon of Stalinism.

In his report to the plenum, which is published in the Fall 1985 issue of *New Internationalist* magazine, Barnes stresses, "What is on the agenda in South Africa is the bourgeois-democratic revolution, not the democratic stage of the socialist revolution."

At times, Barnes cloaks his revision of the historic SWP program with radical-sounding verbiage. He predicts that the bourgeois-democratic revolution "will disarm the old state power and it will raze to the ground all the old state structures." It will result in the "establishment of a new state power."

Very radical sounding! But Marxists point out that state power is based upon the class holding economic power, and Barnes says in his report that capitalism would remain: "The South African revolution is not an anticapitalist revolution. It will open the road to the transition to an anticapitalist revolution, but no one can predict how long, or short, that road will be."

If Barnes could only pause in his flight from Marxism, he might profit from Lenin's advice to study Frederick Engels' "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State."

"This book," Lenin explains, "says that every state in which private ownership of the land and means of production exists, in which capital dominates, however democratic it may be, is a capitalist state, a machine used by the capitalists to keep the working class and poor peasants in subjection."

How does Barnes wriggle out of his anomaly? He merely indicates that the "state" he wishes to tear down is not the South African capitalist state at all, but a new non-Marxist category labeled "the apartheid state." A simple twist in terminology, and Barnes plunges ahead!

According to Barnes, the "first" revolution, the bourgeois-democratic one, has three main goals in South Africa—forging a unified non-racial nation-state; establishing a democratic republic based on "one person, one vote;" and winning the right of Africans to become "free farmers."

In Western Europe and North America, the bourgeoisie (that is, the capitalist class) largely completed each of these three tasks when they made their revolutions against the old order centuries ago.

The democratic phase of the bourgeois revolution was left uncompleted, however, in South Africa and other former colonial countries. As the capitalists built South

Africa into an imperialist power, they developed the country in an *uneven* manner—forcing the Black majority into the mold of a super-exploited caste within the working class.

To imply that the national oppression of Blacks can be substantially alleviated—let alone abolished—while capitalism remains is misleading on Barnes' part. It suggests to Black people that the capitalist class can be induced to resolve their fundamental problems while continuing to hold state power.

But the capitalists rely on the state superstructure, in large part inherited from colonial times, in order to fulfill their need for cheap labor. That is why even "anti-apartheid" liberals, such as those in the Progressive-Federal Party (financed mainly by the multinational Anglo American Corporation) are opposed to Black majority rule. They counter the demand of Blacks for "one person, one vote" by advocating a governmental solution that grants the white minority veto power over all decisions.

The capitalists' drive for profits has created broad areas of destitution in South Africa that rival the most underdeveloped lands in the world. Barnes highlights the exploitation of Black farmworkers—one of the most brutal results of capitalist relations in South Africa.

### Black farmworkers

The Black rural population has been highly proletarianized for decades. Government statistics reveal that economically active Blacks classified as "peasants" fell from 51 percent in 1936 to 8 percent in 1951—and far less today.

Most Black tenant farmers who remained in white areas after 1980 have been driven out. Black people in the overcrowded government-created "homelands" are not permitted to own more than four hectares of land to grow their crops, and most plots are much smaller.

The great majority of rural Blacks must labor on huge highly mechanized and profitable white-owned farms. (Between 1964 and 1982 the number of white-owned farms fell by almost a third, as smaller farms were gobbled up by big capitalist corporations.)

But mechanization has eliminated hundreds of thousands of Black farmworkers' jobs. Between 1968 and 1981 permanent employment on white-owned farms fell by 50 percent. Seasonal employment declined by 70 percent.

Those farmworkers who manage to get jobs are also impoverished. A report published by the Farm Labor Project in 1983 reported that average cash wages ranged from about \$25 to \$45 a month, although some workers received as little as \$2 a month. A survey of the corn-growing region of the Western Transvaal in 1980

revealed that over half the workers received about \$12 a month—but that was paid out mainly in bags of flour.

What road does Jack Barnes suggest for Black farmworkers in their struggle for liberation? He puts forward one basic prescription in his report: Black workers must struggle to win the right to own land and produce cash crops for the market. He suggests a South African "Homestead Act," reminiscent of the 19th century law in the United States that opened the Middle Western frontier to settlement by farmers.

But as far back as 1848, Marx and Engels could write, "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

### A new peasantry?

This observation in the "Communist Manifesto" is ignored by Barnes, who opts for the resurrection of what is essentially a pre-capitalist economic category—the peasantry—already transcended in South Africa by advanced capitalist methods of agricultural production.

In reference to the South African working class, Barnes states, "One of the goals of the South African revolution is the 'deproletarianization' of a part of this class, in the sense of winning the right to become property-holding farmers."

Barnes goes on to state that the highly productive large factory farms should be broken up and re-divided. But this would create several problems: Efficient mechanized production would be made more difficult. And a new class of small competing landowners would disrupt the close community of interest that capitalism has forged between the urban and rural proletariat.

Revolutionaries would support a movement among agricultural workers to take over the land. But private land ownership is not the only demand that the struggle of rural Blacks might raise.

In Russia in April 1917, for example, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party called for the *nationalization* of the land under the management of local democratic committees of agricultural workers. They left to the farmworkers the question of whether to break up the huge estates or maintain them as cooperatives and state farms.

Lenin conceded that nationalization was a bourgeois measure since it would allow peasants to rent land from the state in order to sell their crops on the market. But at the same time, he pointed out that nationalization—together with other acts such as government control of the banks and capitalist trusts—would serve as a "transitional measure" that would "bring about a situation where Russia stands with one foot in socialism."

Barnes not only breaks with the transitional method

(continued on page 12)



Luis Inacio da Silva (Lula), president of the Brazilian Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores/PT) is seen here at the center of a group of striking plastics workers in Sao Paulo. The Brazilian PT is being looked to as an example by leading trade unionists in South Africa, who see the need for the unions to form their own political party.

Since its formation in 1980, the PT has constantly placed the struggle for democracy and for workers' rights at the center of its activity. In the recent municipal elections in Brazil the PT obtained 15 percent of the vote nationally. Its candidate won in the Northeast capital city of Fortaleza. Another candidate was robbed of a victory in Golan, when the city government mysteriously produced 10,000 ballots after the PT had already been declared the winner.

The PT's success in becoming the champion of the struggles of all the oppressed can be demonstrated by the way it conducted its election campaign in Fortaleza. From May to July of last year, 30,000 teachers were on strike in the state of Ceara. After the strike was settled in favor of the teachers, the bankworkers walked off their jobs. Soon after, this city of 1 million people was paralyzed as all the transport workers joined the bankworkers in their strike.

Throughout the campaign, the PT publicized the demands of the strikers and urged support for their cause. It turned over its radio and TV time to the strike leaders and denounced the brutal government repression against these workers and against the landless peasants who had occupied the land of ex-governor Gonzaga Monte.

After the elections, 70,000 people joined the new mayor, PT member Maria Luiza Fontenelle, in a victory celebration in front of the city's municipal building.

# A discussion on the labor movement in South Africa



The following is a four-way discussion among South African revolutionaries and anti-apartheid activists in Great Britain. The discussion took place in London last November.

Bob Fine, co-author of "A Question of Solidarity—Independent Trade Unions in South Africa," had recently returned from a four-week visit to South Africa. He discussed his impressions and ideas with Charlie van Gelderen, a veteran South African Trotskyist now living in Britain; a Black South African revolutionist, a sympathizer of the Cape Action League, identified below as X; and Martin Thomas, editor of Socialist Organizer, a socialist newspaper published in London.

**Bob Fine:** My main impression, from the trade unionists that I met—in the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU); in the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union; in the General Workers Union (GWU); and others—was the depth of workers' concern with trade-union democracy. (1)

As the new labor federation [embracing FOSATU, National Union of Mineworkers, and a number of other unions] becomes a possibility, workers are discussing ways in which they will be able to extend the democratic structures that already exist into the new federation.

A lot of workers drew a close link between the structures of democracy in their own unions and wider questions of democratic organization inside South Africa. So, for example, one of the ways in which workers would address the character of the United Democratic Front (UDF) (2) is to ask: what structures does the UDF have? To whom are their leaders accountable? What kind of education does the UDF provide for its members? What possibility is there of recall of their officials?

**Charlie van Gelderen:** I read a report of a UDF meeting where a Black trade unionist asked the question: How do we know if you get into power that what's going to happen here is not what has happened in other parts of Africa?

**Fine:** I heard that as well, a number of times. The question of the relationship between democracy and socialism is often raised. There were a number of discussions in the trade-union educationals about nationalization. The Freedom Charter [of the African National Congress] (3) has a clause which doesn't exactly call for nationalization, but is along those lines—ownership by the people of the monopolies.

The trade unionists asked themselves the question: What has nationalization got to do with

socialism, unless nationalization also means democratic control of industry by workers? There is strong emphasis within the trade-union educationals on workers' control in industry.

The problem of Eastern Europe also came up a lot. A lot of workers had followed the progress and defeat of Solidarnosc—there were a lot of articles in the trade-union newspapers—and there was a strong belief that socialism without free trade unions was a contradiction in terms.

**X:** How widespread is this discussion? Is it confined to the top layers, the leaders, the shop stewards, or do you find it at the shop-floor level?

**Fine:** My impression is that the discussion is not just among leaders. It percolates further than that...The education is much broader than trade-union education here. All kinds of political issues are taken up. But there's no attempt to counterpose directly the politics being established within the trade unions to the politics of the ANC or orthodox nationalism. There's an implicit counterposing, but no explicit counterposing.

## African National Congress

**van Gelderen:** Can we move on to the question of the ANC? The impression I get is that though the ANC is not necessarily leading what is happening in the townships, the people there feel inspired by the ANC and look to the ANC, either directly or through the UDF.

**Fine:** Yes. The symbols of the ANC are very powerful: "Free Mandela," Freedom Charter, the colors of the ANC. I found a lot of people in the unions who supported the UDF, and many of those support the ANC.

But it's an odd kind of support. It's almost: "Here's a collection of symbols, and we'll give those symbols our own content." No one really knows precisely what the ANC stands for.

In some areas there is a lot of fluidity between the UDF and the unions. In Natal, both the UDF and the unions face a common threat from Buthelezi's Inkatha movement. (4)

The main point is that workers in the unions will adopt one form of politics or another. And at present there are basically three places you can go: the UDF/ANC circle, Black Consciousness (5) in one form or another (which a sizeable minority of workers do), or in Natal a lot of workers belong to Inkatha. The trade-union movement as such does not have a political voice.

The lack of an independent workers' voice is becoming much more apparent.

**X:** How much National Forum presence is there in the unions? (6)

**Fine:** There is a presence, especially in Johannesburg.

Talking to workers at the educationals there I found that many support Black Consciousness. And I think that some of the very top FOSATU officials in that area are pretty sympathetic to the National Forum. I think the overwhelming political presence, though, for better or worse, is the UDF.

## A workers' party?

**Fine:** I met almost no one who thought that a workers' party was an immediate possibility. A lot of people felt that they were in a political vacuum. A lot of people were saying, "We have to do something political," but were not very happy with the options available. On the other hand—and this leads to a kind of paralysis—there's a notion that it's impossible to set up an alternative to the ANC—the symbols of the ANC are too strong, the tradition is too strong. To try to take on the ANC would be big trouble.

Also, within the trade-union movement there is a very strong current which doesn't give top priority to the question of a party. Top priority is building a trade-union movement. I suppose there is a syndicalist element there, which says that the party is important but it can wait—it is always something for a future date.

So in the place where the best human resources for the building of a workers' party are to be found, a lot of those resources are still directed to the trade-union movement and not toward a party.

The question of a workers' party is on the agenda, and ought to become more explicitly on the agenda. But there is a danger of a kind of substitutionism. The trade unions at the moment are not willing to go down that road, but it seems to me either a workers' party will come out of the trade union movement, or it will not come out at all.

**van Gelderen:** Yes, there is a danger of syndicalism, especially in the General Workers Union, which seems to be much inclined toward a simple position of just building up trade-union strength, rather than building a political party. But how do the trade unions relate to the community organizations?

**Fine:** The trade unions' relation to community organizations is entirely different in different parts of the country. In Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape, relations are disastrous. Trade unionists are fingered as collaborators. When there was a call for a general strike in that area for one day—from Boesak [of the UDF] I think it was—the unions objected. They said you can't just call on workers to do things—it's the workers who decide, not a call from on high.

In other areas relations are much better. In some areas community organizations are based in the unions.

I think the most advanced notion coming out of FOSATU is "transformative politics." This means that the structures built up by trade unions in the workplaces—i.e. solid, democratic, grass-roots structures—should be extended into the community, so that for the next period of time the unions can be involved in building community organizations.

Also, that the kind of politics that unions engage in in the workplace—the posing of demands on immediate questions: the right of access to workers, better wages, better conditions, end to discrimination against women—should be extended from the workplace to the community.

The idea is that in this way the unions will be able to develop a solid base in the community as a step toward developing their own political voice. The problem, of course, is that the development of community

(continued on page 11)

## International VIEWPOINT

The latest issue of *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly news magazine published under the auspices of the Fourth International in Paris, features a dossier on Poland. It includes articles analyzing the past and present debates of the opposition, and especially of Solidarnosc. The program of a new political current, the Workers Opposition, is the subject of a series of articles.

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(continued from page 10)

organizations is not a substitute for the development of a party.

**FOSATU and independent politics**

**X:** Joe Foster of FOSATU made a very good speech in 1982 about the need for independent working-class politics. But what worries me is that I don't see any effort by FOSATU since then to carry those ideas forward. It looks like a project abandoned by FOSATU.

**Fine:** I think you're right. The speech was out on a limb, and very little has been done to turn it into reality. FOSATU was dragged into politics by the rapidly escalating events...in particular by the politicization of its own members.

**van Gelderen:** I think the difficulties in the way of a workers' party in a way are analogous to the situation here [in Great Britain], where the immediate feeling among workers is to get rid of Thatcher. There the feeling is to get rid of apartheid, and the ANC represents the main force, like the Labour Party does here, for the immediate task.

**Fine:** Yes. One of the things I learned there was the strength of the ANC's appeal. In a way the analogy with the Labour Party is a good one—to the extent that we have to understand the strength of the Labour tradition here, and also the ANC tradition has important strengths which we need to understand if we're going to relate to it adequately.

**X:** The ANC has very strong symbols. But are these symbols visible to the population as a whole? Or just to the urban population? And not everyone in the urban population, but only the educated people, the ones who read newspapers?

I think the process by which the ANC is becoming visible to everybody is the mass funerals. The majority of the people at those funerals have come to bury a friend, a relative, a member of the community. But during the funeral—through the ANC colors draped on the coffin and so on—they are brought into contact with the ANC. The majority of these people will be people who do not read newspapers.

**Fine:** I don't know. My impression is that the ANC's popular appeal is growing very rapidly. The organizations that are going to come out of this present period the strongest, most unscathed, are not the ANC organizations but the trade-union movement. The problem is to translate that organization into a political presence.

At the moment everyone feels that power is on the agenda. And who are the trade unions when power is on the agenda? They chip away—better conditions here, a workers' organization there—but they don't address themselves to the really central questions of power. And the ANC does.

**What road for South Africa?**

**van Gelderen:** It seems to me that there are only two roads for South Africa, over five or 10 years. Sooner or later this regime must give way. The most likely thing at the moment is some kind of agreement between the ANC and the white bourgeoisie. The only other alternative is that even the democratic demands of the Freedom Charter can finally be realized only through something completely different—a workers' party.

**Fine:** Part of the problem with the Freedom Charter is that the means are so disconnected from the ends. There's a loosely-defined democratic vision, but that vision is entirely abstracted from any means of getting there. Without some democratic element in the means of getting there, you'll never get democracy.

**Martin Thomas:** There seems to be a contradiction in the way the ANC conducts politics. The immediate slogans put forward are fantastically militant—"Make South Africa ungovernable," "No education before liberation," blank opposition to everything. On the other hand, there they are lobbying governments for sanctions, talking to the capitalists, and so on. And the social program they put forward is in fact very moderate.

The explanation, I think, is that the ANC's vision is not one where a new South Africa will be created by the people taking control: but the role of the mass of the people is just to be disorderly and to put the government in a position where the government then has to negotiate with the ANC. The whole thing takes place over the heads of the people.

This approach has dangers, it seems to me, not only in the long term but also in the short term.

Oliver Tambo [president of the ANC], in an interview with *Newsweek*, said that he could see the downfall of apartheid maybe in 10 years, being optimistic. The perspective of making South Africa ungovernable might be a good tactic if you think that the government is going to fall in a few months: But 10 years?

To pursue that sort of politics cannot but create divisions among your own people: People become exhausted and frustrated by the disorder. The logic of it, despite all the ANC's calls for unity, is to fragment and divide. Which from the point of view of the ANC is not necessarily a bad thing: It ensures that the initiative remains in their hands.

**Fine:** Yes. I don't think the uprisings take place in the townships because the ANC called for them.

They take place because of the extraordinarily difficult



ANC leader Nelson Mandela

conditions that people in the townships face. The problem with the ungovernability slogan is that it does not offer any sense of what a workers' government would consist of.

When the students and the people in the townships throw their bodies against the police, the ANC doesn't so much try to organize that as to use it as a bargaining weapon.

**Capitalism needs apartheid?**

**van Gelderen:** Most of us, myself included, have firmly believed that in South Africa capitalism can't exist without apartheid. I'm not so sure that still holds true today, with more sophisticated industry in South Africa.

The problem, of course, is the mines. The low productivity of Rand ore still demands cheap unskilled labor to make those mines profitable. But they can create a Black aristocracy of labor and still have a mass of unskilled workers on low wages.

**Thomas:** Isn't it a fact that wages in the gold mines, after declining or stagnating for 80 years, have risen considerably since the early '70s?

It seems to me that the problem for the government, in dismantling some of the special features of South Africa and turning it into a more "normal" racist capitalism, is not so much some economic impossibility in the abstract as the difficulty of dealing with its base, the white population.

**Fine:** "Is capitalism possible without apartheid in South Africa?" In a sense it's the wrong question. Theoretically we can argue it until the cows come home. What we have to be warned against is that certainly capitalism without apartheid is what a lot of people are trying to establish. Whether it is, in fact, established will be determined not theoretically but in practical politics.

The Progressive Federal Party (7) and the capitalists are putting forward a definite anti-apartheid position. It's just not pro-socialist and not pro-democratic. They want a kind of federal power-sharing that will guarantee private enterprise.

A lot of people say that the government is just perpetuating the old apartheid system under a slightly new guise. I think that's probably right so far, but if sufficient pressures are put on the government, I wouldn't put it past them to pursue a program of reforms to a point where the major planks of apartheid are eroded.

In its place you'd have a military-bureaucratic dictatorship, partially de-racialised, that offers us nothing at all, no improvement on apartheid.

We have to be aware that there are kinds of "anti-apartheid" that have nothing to do with democracy and nothing to do with socialism.

**X:** It is in the context of these changes that a workers' party has meaning.

It seems that capitalism in South Africa is capable of de-racialising itself. I'm not happy with the theories that say capitalism is inseparable from apartheid. Theoretically, from an abstract point of view, that may be very correct. But in terms of practical day-to-day politics an understanding like that can turn into ultra-leftism, where you do nothing because the struggle is not against capitalism.

It is only through a workers' party that you can have a combined struggle, a permanent revolution. In the context of the changes that are taking place you need a workers' party to defend the workers' interests, to carry on the workers' struggle. You're not going to get socialism overnight. If in the context of these changes the ANC comes into power, either alone or as part of a coalition, you will need a workers' party that will stand in opposition.

(1) The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) has been the largest of the non-racial (mainly Black) trade union groups that have developed since the early 1970s. It has joined the newly-formed Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

(2) The United Democratic Front (UDF) is a coalition of some 645 organizations, broadly reflecting the politics of the African National Congress.

(3) The African National Congress (ANC) is the main nationalist organization, dating back to 1912. It has been closely allied with the South African Communist Party.

The Freedom Charter is a manifesto adopted by the ANC and other organizations in 1955, which codified the South African Communist Party's strategy of a "two-stage revolution." The first stage posits an alliance with the liberal capitalists in a struggle for democracy. The second stage, the struggle for socialism, is relegated to a future stage.

(4) Inkatha is a conservative movement, based mainly among Zulus, and led by Gatsha Buthelezi, chief minister of the KwaZulu bantustan in Natal. Inkatha is allied with the Progressive Federal Party.

(5) The Black Consciousness Movement arose during the mid-1970s. Influenced by the Black nationalist movement in the United States and Africa, it called on Blacks to unite against the apartheid regime. In recent years many of the Black Consciousness organizations have evolved in a more explicitly anti-capitalist direction. The main exponent of this movement is the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO).

(6) The National Forum is a coalition that includes AZAPO and the left-wing Cape Action League.

(7) The Progressive Federal Party is the main white opposition party, formed in the late 1950s. It is backed by major capitalist interests. It advocates a federal power-sharing system with veto powers for the white minority. It is allied with Inkatha.



Police surround Black workers on strike in South Africa.

# Who's who in South Africa

A serious discussion over revolutionary strategy is taking place in South Africa. We are publishing below a guide to some of the parties, unions, and coalitions involved in the anti-apartheid struggle and in the broader discussion over the strategy and goals of the revolution.

## Political parties

Among the many political parties of opposition today in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) is the oldest and most firmly established. It originated in 1912 and steadfastly pursued a non-violent path in its resistance to apartheid for almost five decades.

Initially based among the Black middle class, it did not demand a universal franchise until 1943. In 1956 it adopted the Freedom Charter as its political program. This program includes, among other things, the call for "one person, one vote," a minimum wage, a 40-hour work week, the redivision of the land, and the nationalization of mineral wealth, banks, and "monopoly" industries. Elsewhere, however, the ANC has indicated that it is not considering the nationalization of all monopoly industries.

The Freedom Charter does not call for socialism but for a national-democratic revolution. The Charter is in line with the Communist Party's strategy of a "popular front," which seeks to unite the working class and pro-capitalist forces around a common political program.

Only after its banning in 1960—along with the imprisonment of many of its leaders—did the ANC include armed struggle in its arsenal of weapons. It is allied with the Communist Party and some overlap exists among the leadership. Although the ANC enjoys the largest following of any political current in South Africa, it has neither controlled nor led the numerous protests that have shaken the nation during the past 15 months.

The South African Communist Party (SACP), which was founded in 1921, was banned in 1950 and has operated underground and in exile ever since. The CP supports the politics outlined in the Freedom Charter, acknowledging that "it is not a program for socialism."

While claiming socialism as a long-term goal, the CP has argued that its realization must be effected in stages. Hence the CP is quick to criticize as "sectarian par excellence" those organizations to its left (such as the National Forum) that argue for merging the working-class struggle with the national-liberation struggle.

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was formed in 1959 by disaffected members of the ANC. Its criticisms were two-fold: It objected to the effective presence of the Communist Party within the ANC and the presence of whites and Indians in leadership positions.

At its inception, PAC's president criticized the ANC for regarding the struggle for freedom as essentially a struggle for the liberation of workers of all races. Instead, he argued, the revolution was a national struggle with the goal of liberating all Black people. In 1960 it declared itself Maoist and in the same year was banned, along with the ANC.

The term "Black Consciousness" refers both to an ideology and to various organizations that have loosely coalesced around this ideology. It was spearheaded primarily by Black students in 1968, with the thesis that Black liberation could only be accomplished by Black people.

European values were eschewed in favor of a purely African culture, and emphasis was placed on psychological liberation. Black Consciousness spanned not only pro-capitalist groups, which were organized to promote Black business, but other groups that eventually developed in an anti-capitalist direction. In 1976 it led the uprising in Soweto and was banned the following year. Steve Biko, its most prominent leader, was brutally murdered by the South African police while held in detention.

The Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) was initiated in 1978, following the proscription of the Black Consciousness movement. Like its predecessor, it has chosen to exclude white participation, although there has been considerable internal debate over this. It has undertaken support for strikes, bus and rent boycotts, and has affiliated with the National Forum.

## Unions

Although the trade unions have never been proscribed in South Africa, they were denied formal recognition until 1979. Since then the trade-union movement has mushroomed so that today it represents a formidable challenge to the apartheid system.

In 1969, there were 16,000 Black union members; in 1975, 40,000; and in 1984, 550,000. Now, there are



Participants in 1955 congress that adopted the Freedom Charter.

about 700,000 members spanning virtually all of the key sectors of the economy. Individual unions have augmented their power by joining together into federations.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was formed in 1955 as a non-racial federation and has consistently taken up political as well as economic struggles, allying itself with the ANC. With the increased political repression in the 1960s, SACTU was forced underground. At its height in 1961, SACTU included between 35 and 45 unions with a membership totaling 53,000.

The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) coalesced in 1979 as a non-racial federation and has been rooted in powerful unions, including those in the auto, metal, food, transport, and textile industries. Although not allied with any political party, nor with the United Democratic Front or the National Forum, it has gone on record in support of the creation of a workers' movement to lead the political struggle. It supports "one man, one vote," and has denounced the *Bantustan* policy.

FOSATU's first general secretary, Joe Foster, explained the federation's position in the following terms: "Workers need their own organization to counter the growing power of capital and to further and protect their own interests in the wide society...However, in relation to the particular requirements of worker organizations, mass parties and popular political organizations have definite limitations which have to be clearly understood by us."

## ... union challenge

(continued from page 9)

used by Lenin but—like his Stalinist mentors—distorts it. He implies that this method, which the SWP employed in the past, was equivalent to attempting to "impose a full, socialist program" upon the mass movement.

Barnes senses that many members of the Socialist Workers Party might remember that Trotsky wrote his "Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution," which was the founding programmatic document of the Fourth International, in consultation with the SWP.

Trotsky put forward a set of transitional demands as a bridge "stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

Trotsky insisted that the working class in colonial and semi-colonial countries champion the fight for *democratic demands*—such as those calling for national independence and agricultural revolution—which would predominate at first in the struggle.

These demands would be combined with others raised by the working class in its struggle. (Some trade unions in South Africa, for example, have raised the demand for a 40-hour week at the old rate of pay in order to combat unemployment.)

Trotsky emphasized that "democratic slogans, transitional demands, and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in the struggle, but stem directly from each other."

In contrast, as a corollary of his two-stage theory for South Africa, Barnes substitutes a "minimum program." This is a concept dredged up once again from the Stalinists, who borrowed it from the Sunday Socialists of the Second International.

In South Africa, Barnes says, "the minimum program of a revolutionary workers' party, of a communist party" is the Freedom Charter, a document passed by an alliance of organizations including the African National Congress (ANC).

The ANC is promoted as "the vanguard organization of

Foster criticized the ANC as a "popular front" and added: "To the major Western powers it has to appear as anti-racist but not as anti-capitalist. For the socialist East it has to be at least neutral in the superpower struggle and certainly it could not appear to offer a serious socialist alternative to that of those countries, as the response to Solidarity illustrates."

A second federation, the Council of South African Unions (CUSA), was founded in 1980 by unions in disagreement with FOSATU over the role of white members. CUSA, under the influence of the Black Consciousness movement, emphasizes the importance of an exclusively Black leadership.

An important sector of CUSA has articulated one of its goals as "a healthy relationship with the employers." CUSA has affiliated with both the National Forum and the United Democratic Front but has been excluded from COSATU [see below] because of its exclusion of whites.

This past month a new "super-federation" was organized: the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), representing 500,000 workers. In addition to FOSATU, it includes as its largest single member the National Union of Mineworkers, which alone has approximately 200,000 members and whose vice-president, Elijah Barahi, is the federation's new leader.

Not politically shy, this new federation has already announced its intention to defy the pass laws. It has given its support to the call for disinvestment of foreign business, and has set a six-month deadline for the abolition of apartheid, with threats of civil disobedience, general strikes, etc.

## Coalitions

In 1983, sparked by the white minority government's decision to include a token representation of Asians and Coloureds in Parliament (but no Africans), two coalitions emerged to protest this new affront in particular and apartheid in general.

The largest of the two, the United Democratic Front (UDF), has attracted 600 organizations, ranging from unions to community groups, with a membership totaling over 1.5 million. It is non-racial and multiclass, including capitalist organizations within its ranks. Ideologically, the UDF has taken up a sympathetic posture toward the ANC, to the point of endorsing the Freedom Charter.

To the left and smaller than the UDF stands the National Forum (NF), including seven unions, CUSA, AZAPO, and, as its left-wing, the Cape Action League. Unlike the UDF, the NF calls for socialism. It insists on the nationalization of the land and workers' control of the means of production. In opposition to the CP and the ANC, it argues for the formation of a "united front of workers' organizations in direct opposition to any popular-front strategy."—ANN ROBERTSON

the democratic revolution," a non-Marxist category that even excels the gibberish of the Stalinists. But the Stalinists, after all, style *themselves* the vanguard and the ANC the leader of a multiclass "popular front."

## Working-class independence

Barnes counsels that if the working class "charts a course toward the fight for power, not relying on bourgeois liberals, then it will play the decisive role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution in South Africa." But what can "the fight for power" mean other than the fight of workers to take state power from the bourgeoisie?

Barnes' stance reflects a profound pessimism concerning the ability of the working class to fight for its own interests. But the working class in South Africa has gained great confidence during its struggles of the last few years.

Elijah Barahi reflected a widespread sentiment among workers when he told the founding conference of the new trade-union federation that "COSATU is going to govern the country. COSATU will nationalize the mines under the government. And even some of the big industries will be taken over by the government of COSATU."

Last year there were 469 strikes in South Africa, the largest quantity by far in the country's history. As the struggle escalates, the need for leadership becomes ever more crucial. The working class must build its own party.

Some trade union leaders have pointed to the example of the Workers Party of Brazil (PT), an organization based on the fighting trade unions of that country. [See December 1985 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

As FOSATU General Secretary Joe Foster put it, "Workers must strive to build their own powerful and effective organization even whilst they are part of the wider popular struggle."

"This organization is necessary to protect and further worker interests," Foster noted, "and to ensure that the popular movement is not hijacked by elements who will in the end have no option but to turn against their worker supporters." Foster concluded that building such an organization is "a fundamental political task." ■



# Ray Sparrow 1914-1985

By ASHER HARER

*The following are excerpts from opening remarks made by Asher Harer at a memorial meeting organized by friends, family, and co-workers of Ray Sparrow, who died on Nov. 16, 1985.*

We have come together this afternoon to remember the life of a remarkable person who left his mark on history.

He was a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and a member of its National Committee from 1941 until 1975. For many years he was a "footloose radical" who took any assignment offered: 1936-1938 to Chicago; 1938 back to San Francisco, there to work in the Merchant Marine.

We will remember Ray's many contributions to the working-class struggle for emancipation and socialism: Ray's joy in a good fight, a victory on the picket line, or a political struggle over strategy and tactics that clarified and moved things ahead; his gift as a storyteller.

I first met Ray in 1938 in San Francisco. I was quite new to the movement. But he was already an "old-timer" at age 23! He had been in communist youth groups since age 14. In 1933 he was Communist Youth organizer. That year he broke with Stalinism and joined the Young Spartacus League, the Trotskyist youth. He organized anti-fascist marches and rallies, made speeches, recruited, and educated for the League.

Toward the end of World War II he was assigned to New York. He was active in the branch and wrote a popular column for *The Militant*. He served a stint as N.Y. branch organizer. But mostly, he was a sailor. He continued to sail well into the postwar period, the period of the great strike wave over much of the world.

In the 1950s during the McCarthy witch-hunt period, Ray, along with most other radicals, was "screened." That is, his seaman's papers were taken away. Ray loved going to sea.

Denied his occupation, he settled down in New York. His ship's carpenter experience stood him well. He became a skilled carpenter and cabinet maker, including work as carpenter foreman on the Guggenheim Museum in New York City and later as a building inspector. But this was all secondary to Ray—just a way to earn a good living.

When in 1965 the SWP called upon him to take on the job of fraternal delegate to the Secretariat of the Fourth International in Brussels, he accepted.

Back in San Francisco, Ray worked as a



Ray Sparrow

building superintendent. He carried a union card and was an active revolutionary socialist. He supported all strikes of the construction workers. No one ever died on a job run by Ray. He was job safety personified. And he helped open up construction jobs for oppressed national minorities and women.

We feel saddened by Ray's death. This gathering is a celebration of his life. ■

# Memorial meeting honors Ray Sparrow

SAN FRANCISCO—A memorial meeting was held Sunday, Dec. 15, for Ray Sparrow, Socialist Workers Party member and lifelong unionist, who died of a massive heart attack Nov. 16. Over 100 people crowded the ILWU Local 6 Warehousemen's hall, where the meeting was held.

Organized by family members, friends, and co-workers of Sparrow's, the memorial celebration of his life was chaired by Asher Harer [see excerpts of Harer's remarks, this page]. Several speakers shared their admiration of Ray's long years of work in the socialist movement, on the job, and as a very loving father to his son David.

Speakers included Ray's sister, Naomi Sparrow; Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action, who had traveled to revolutionary Grenada with Ray; longtime friend and comrade Ada Farrell; Carole Hayden, a friend; Roland Sheppard, who had worked with

Ray politically and in the construction trades. Other friends and comrades spoke from the floor. Most moving were the comments made by Ray's son, David Sparrow, who called his father his "best friend," a tribute that would have made Ray proud.

Messages from many of Ray's old friends and comrades were read, including from: Shawn Maloney, Seattle; Frank Lovell and David Weiss, New York; Ted and Dot Selander and Frank Barbaria, San Diego; Jean Tussey, Cleveland; Augusta Trainor, Boston; Pauline Furth and Charles Curtiss, Los Angeles; Ralph Schoenman, New Jersey; international friends Ruth Bullock, Vancouver, and Pilan, Lily, and Claude, Paris; The Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Freedom Socialist Party, and others [A message from Ernest Mandel, representing the Fourth International, was received after the meeting—The Editors]. ■

# Milton Snipper 1912-1985

By MILTON ALVIN

Milton Snipper, 73, a veteran of more than 50 years in the socialist movement, died in Los Angeles Dec. 10, 1985, of a heart attack after a long illness.

"Mit," as he was widely known, was a socialist and Trotskyist during all his years of political activity.

He was an active member of the cutters' local of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and a leader in the struggles of that organization in Los Angeles.

He participated in many strikes and other organizing efforts. He succeeded in recruiting a number of workers to Trotskyism during his active years in the cutters' local.

Mit was introduced to socialist ideas at home. Both his father and mother were socialists, so he had the advantage of an early familiarity with what turned out to be a lifetime commitment.

Mit became a Trotskyist when he made contact with members of the Workers Party who entered the Socialist Party in 1936. Thereafter, he gave his unfaltering support to Trotskyism.

In 1937, the Norman Thomas leadership of the Socialist Party decided to expel all those who showed any sympathy for Trotskyism. This included any members of the party who wanted to express their opinions on such vital questions as the Civil War in Spain. Ordinary democratic rights that had been promised to the

membership were revoked and a tough gag rule imposed.

Mit was among those who would not accept the gag rule and was expelled. He became a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party, which was organized by those who had been expelled from the SP.

In the new party Mit showed talent for local branch leadership and served on leadership committees and in various posts, including that of organizer of the Los Angeles East Side branch of the SWP.

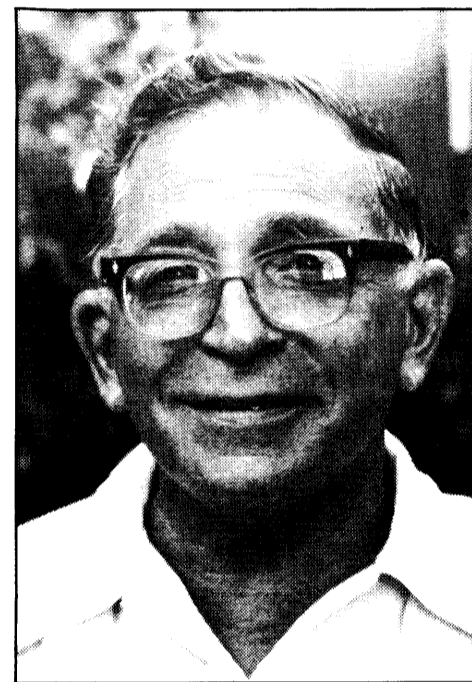
Mit's reputation in the party was that of one who could be depended on for sound political judgment. He was widely respected among the membership.

In 1952 he was the party's candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives. Mit carried out an active campaign and spoke at various meetings during the election period.

Mit was a modest man. He did not aspire to national leadership posts in the SWP, being satisfied with playing a part in the local leadership.

At the same time, he was interested in all political, theoretical, and organizational questions that came before the party. He was well read and well informed on all developments that affected party work. He was frequently consulted on every kind of problem, and his opinions were seriously considered by those who sought his advice.

In 1983 Mit was not in agreement with the drastic revisions being made by the



Milton Snipper

SWP leadership to its basic program. He and many others were arbitrarily expelled that year on trumped-up charges from the party that he had for so long and loyally helped build.

But this did not detract from his desire to keep on working for the socialist cause. Although he was not a member of any of the organizations that arose after the purges in the SWP, this was due not to changes in his commitment to the socialist future but to debilitating illnesses.

Mit Snipper will be missed by those who knew him and appreciated his work. ■

# Lillian Curtiss 1911-1985

Lillian Curtiss, after spending more than 50 years in the socialist movement, died in Los Angeles on Dec. 10, 1985. She was 74.

She had been ill for only a month or so when she succumbed to cancer. Her death, so unexpected, shocked her many friends and comrades.

Lil came from a socialist family. Her mother was an active member of the Socialist Party until her death.

Lil became a Trotskyist after coming into contact with members of the Workers Party who had entered the Socialist Party (SP) in a body in 1936.

Lillian and her husband Charles were among those who helped found and organize the Socialist Workers Party in 1938 after the Trotskyists were expelled from the SP. In the following year they were founding members of the Fourth International as well.

During this period Lil went to Mexico,

where she was secretary to Leon Trotsky, who had won the right to asylum after being exiled by the Stalinist government of the Soviet Union.

With the outbreak of World War II a severe factional struggle broke out in the Socialist Workers Party over the nature of the war and of the Soviet Union. Lil supported the SWP majority in this dispute as did Trotsky himself.

After a split took place in 1940, Lil and Charles moved to New York, where they lived for several years before returning to Los Angeles.

In party work Lil was a consistent and able contributor. While in New York she was an active leader in the work of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, formed to defend SWP and Teamsters' union leaders in the Minneapolis Trials. She also played a similar role in raising clothing and funds for the victims of the war in Europe.

She could always be depended on to do



Lillian Curtiss

her share of the work and more. She was widely respected, looked up to, and loved. Her warm personality and concern for the welfare of party members were legendary in the movement.

Lil never aspired to leadership posts. She resisted speaking at internal or public meetings of the Los Angeles branch.

But there was an exception to this. Several years ago, in July 1978, when she reached the 50th anniversary of her activity on behalf of socialism, the local SWP branch organized a special event to mark the date. At this combination meeting-picnic Lil did speak to a large audience that had come to celebrate the occasion and she did an outstanding job of describing her half-century in the struggle for socialism.

In 1983 Lil resigned from the Socialist Workers Party largely because it was dropping its revolutionary politics and factionally expelling many of its best members. Thereafter she did not join any other organization but retained her support for socialism to the end.

Her death is a blow to the movement. She combined the best traits in humanity—dedication to the struggle for a decent world with day-to-day concern and love for her fellow human beings.

—MILTON ALVIN

By RALPH FORSYTH

*The Long March, the Untold Story*, by Harrison E. Salisbury. Harper and Row, New York, 1985, \$22.35.

Harrison Salisbury, a veteran *New York Times* correspondent and author, has written a number of popular books about various aspects of Russian and Chinese history. His new book, "The Long March, the Untold Story," is a politically naive, yet gripping account of a thin slice of Chinese revolutionary struggle: the year-long, 6000-mile Communist retreat from Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) armies from October 1934 to October 1935.

Salisbury interviewed as many survivors of the Long March as he could find. He also retraced the route of the march and recounted the survivors' stories about life during the Cultural Revolution. Particular attention is paid to the role played by China's current leader, Deng Xiaoping.

Salisbury notes in the preface that the Long March was not a defeat or a victory, not really a march or a campaign, but a unique period of struggle and sacrifice that became symbolic of the determination and, in a sense, the righteousness, of socially necessary change—much like what Valley Forge was to America's bourgeois revolution or the storming of the Winter Palace was to the Russian proletarian revolution.

This book is well worth reading at several different levels. On the one hand, it is a well-written adventure story, with the physical hardships of the Long March graphically detailed. It also documents the political intrigues Mao faced with both the Stalinized Communist International (Comintern) and one of his own army commanders, Zhang Guotao, who, as head

# New book on China long on facts but short on insight



Stalin (above), Mao (right)

analysis of the events it describes. Most readers, whatever their political beliefs, want to understand historical events in some context. They need to know or argue about "why" things happen.

The source of the tragedy of the Long March, I believe, did not arise in China, but in the Soviet Union in 1922 when Lenin became gravely ill and Stalin gained control of the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern.

Almost immediately, the degeneration of both the internal and foreign policies of the Soviet Union began. This led from Lenin's uncompromising internationalism to Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," which subordinated the extension of the world revolution to the defense of the narrow interests of the new bureaucratic caste in power in the Soviet Union.

The effect of these changes, probably first evidenced in Germany in 1923,



KMT but ruled out a programmatic bloc with this capitalist formation.) Mao, for example, who was the organizational secretary of the CCP's central committee, left his party duties and worked full time for the KMT Shanghai executive headquarters.

So, in five short years, the lessons of the Russian Revolution were gone. The old Menshevik idea that semi-feudal countries with "uneven development" would have to pass through a capitalist stage of development before a socialist revolution was possible became dominant in the Comintern.

Having adopted this "stagist" theory of revolution, it was only logical for the CCP to support the "best" or most "progressive" movements, even if these were controlled by the mortal enemy of the workers—the capitalist class.

The subsequent events in China should be carefully examined by those who still accept this Menshevik policy.

Despite its revolutionary rhetoric, the KMT quickly discovered that its conflict with the workers was much more important than its conflict with the foreign imperialists. This became clear when, in May and June 1925, Chiang Kai-

shek took sides with the British troops that fired at Chinese workers in Shanghai, Canton, and Hong Kong.

As early as March 1926, Chiang started purging Communists in his KMT. The CCP tried to argue and scold Chiang (the Comintern kept sending emissaries to Chiang to "straighten out" the problems) but never, apparently, considered leaving.

Finally, as was predictable, the first of many massacres began. In early 1927 more than 100,000 Communist-led workers began strikes and demonstrations in Shanghai. The insurrection was at hand. It was a virtual reenactment of Petrograd in 1917, except that the workers were not armed and the Communist troops were in the wrong (KMT) army!

Thousands of workers and, then, CCP troops were slaughtered. In fact, the Red Army led by Mao was born as small bands of Communist soldiers fled south to Jiangxi province.

## The price of defeat

The working class lost all confidence in the CCP and was never again represented in the party in any meaningful way. The "Red" armies were almost entirely of peasant composition. They fought heroically but almost entirely in remote provinces far from the working class.

Political decisions were almost entirely dictated by the Comintern and the politics never changed. As late as 1949 the Comintern was still counseling Mao to maintain his political alliance with Chiang, which had been reestablished to fight the Japanese during World War II.

After the December 1927 Fifteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party all debate about the Chinese question stopped. Dissenters in the Comintern faced expulsion, arrest, and, in many cases, death. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, the CCP's founder and first general secretary, sided with Trotsky and the Left Opposition and was instantly victimized. (Ch'en later spent many years in the jails of the Kuomintang.)

Soon thereafter, the CCP became more of an army than a political party. Like its counterpart in the Soviet Union, it became committed to "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist powers and to stifling internal dissent.

The defeat of the 1927 revolution, I believe, is what led to the Long March. The Stalinization of the CCP, which the party never overcame even after overthrowing capitalism, is also what helps explain the purges of the Cultural Revolution and the CCP's sabotage of the indigenous revolutions in Indonesia and Ceylon. Finally, it is what continues to explain Deng's present accommodation toward U.S. capitalism. ■

## "Despite Salisbury's efforts to portray Mao as an anti-Stalinist rebel, the best evidence indicates that Mao endorsed Stalinist policy."

of the Communist Fourth Army, defied Mao's orders and nearly came into combat with Mao's First Army. Zhang eventually defected to the KMT.

On the other hand, readers with more political awareness will appreciate some of the new historical and personal information that Salisbury has obtained.

Essentially, the book is a sympathetic biography of Mao Zedong with a belabored (and unrealistic) explanation of why this "hero" all of a sudden turned into the villain who almost "destroys" China during the Cultural Revolution.

Mao didn't become psychotic or wasn't consolidating his power, Salisbury argues, but was reverting to a nihilistic Buddhist philosophy that "destruction...was valuable in itself." Salisbury expects Deng Xiaoping to correct Mao's aberration and to lead China on a new "Long March" to a new utopian era in Chinese history. At the book's end one can almost hear the violins playing.

### Major shortcomings

This book, to its credit, is certainly sympathetic to Chinese aspirations to create a socialist society. It recounts the destructive influence of foreign capitalism and the feudal rule of provincial warlords who dominated China until 1949.

Salisbury also describes how the Chinese Red Army gained sympathy and support from the peasants by paying their way (they had stolen gold) and redistributing land and resources as they passed through remote provinces. They did not rape and loot as the KMT armies did.

However, there are several major shortcomings in Salisbury's account that must be addressed.

"The Long March" lacks any cohesive

postponed the Chinese Revolution from 1927 till 1949, caused untold suffering, and eventually created a Chinese workers' state that was bureaucratically deformed from the outset.

Thus, I believe, Mao's purges and seemingly destructive policies toward his own Chinese Revolution (as well as others he helped sabotage—like Indonesia) should be understood in terms of his acceptance of Stalinist politics and not, as Salisbury thinks, because of his Buddhist background.

Despite Salisbury's efforts to make Mao an anti-Stalinist rebel, the best evidence indicates that Mao, despite minor differences (mostly in strategic military matters), accepted and endorsed Stalinist Comintern policy.

### Dissolution into Kuomintang

In July 1922 the Comintern, led by Stalin, Zinoviev, and Bukharin, ordered Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members to join the KMT, in their opinion the only "serious" nationalistic revolutionary group. The CCP members were instructed to join as individuals. The CCP was therefore essentially dissolved and the members placed under the control of the KMT.

In the Comintern only the Left Opposition led by Trotsky dissented. Mao is quoted in "Leon Trotsky on China" (Pathfinder Press, 1976) as an advocate and promoter of the Comintern's policy. Mao states directly that the hope of the revolution lies with the "merchants."

It is evident, then, that Mao recognized that the KMT was a bourgeois party and that the CCP should subordinate itself to the KMT leadership. (The Left Opposition advocated united-front actions with the

## ... Philippines

(continued from page 16)

combat "the tendency of the indigenous ruling classes to make compromises with foreign capital directed against the fundamental interests of the mass of the people (*Theses on the Eastern Question*).

In this way, the liberals and reformists could be outflanked and exposed. And as a corollary, the masses would learn to rely only on themselves and understand the need to establish an anti-capitalist government of workers and peasants.

Indeed, solving the fundamental problems of Philippine society—land reform, political democracy, an end to foreign domination—is actually bound up with the first steps of an anti-capitalist revolution against a ruling class that will attempt to block any substantial attempt to accomplish these goals.

Genuine democracy, for example, will require Marcos' overthrow, the disbandment of the army and police, and new forms of government based on the

mass organizations of the people.

Raising the standard of living of the workers and poor of city and country will require the radical reorientation of the economy to produce for people, not profits, and the redistribution of income.

The only regime capable of tackling these problems will be one representing and defending the interests of the majority, a workers and peasants government basing itself on the mobilization of these classes.

But, like all of the countries of the underdeveloped world, the Philippine revolution can fully solve the problems of the country only if the revolution extends elsewhere, most particularly to the industrialized capitalist countries.

The Filipino workers and peasants have shown in struggle their capacity for overthrowing the old society and erecting one dedicated to serving the needs of the majority. That struggle has brought the Marcos regime to the brink of its downfall and brought deep unease to the U.S. government. Hopefully, the Filipino people will put forward a leadership capable of carrying their struggle through to its socialist conclusion. ■





# Terminal diagnosis for community hospitals?

This month's "Hazardous To Your Health" features Dan La Botz as a guest columnist.

In our December 1985 issue, I urged readers to become active in the struggle to reduce environmental carcinogens. Recent regulations show that it is possible to achieve success.

According to the Dec. 3 New York Times, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration is going to propose stricter limits for exposure to benzene, formaldehyde, and cotton dust.

The new formaldehyde standards resulted from a court order to OSHA to establish a standard or have the federal court set one. This was a direct result of a suit brought by the United Auto Workers (UAW) and 13 other unions.

Similarly, the benzene standards result from a suit brought by the United Steel Workers (USWA), which had not yet come to trial. The limit for benzene exposure in the workplace will be reduced from 10 parts benzene per million parts air to one part per million.

I'd like to thank readers who have expressed interest in "Hazardous to Your Health." Keep the letters coming with your comments and suggestions for future articles.—STEVE ZIPPIN

CHICAGO—The community hospital is a dying institution. Changes in the economy and in government policy have made the free-standing voluntary hospital an endangered species. It will soon be an extinct one.

Until the 1960s, health care in the United States was largely a personal matter. There was no national medical insurance or socialized medicine such as existed in other industrialized nations since the turn of the century.

The middle class bought insurance after the creation of Blue Cross in 1929, and the strongest unions won health insurance in union contracts in the 1940s. But most people had no medical insurance.

When Congress passed Medicaid and Medicare in 1965, millions of previously uninsured individuals entered the market for medicine. The total amount of public and private spending for health care rose from less than \$50 billion in 1964 to almost \$400 billion by 1984, from about 1 percent of the GNP to 10 percent.

Today health care is the third largest area of employment in the Chicago area.

The billions of dollars in taxpayers' money went to private professionals like doctors, whose salaries rose to an annual average of over \$100,000, and increasingly to private health corporations.

At the same time, profits in manufacturing were declining, so investors were attracted to the profitable and expanding health care industry.

Since the government insurance simply paid the bill,

This article originally appeared in the Nov. 7, 1985, issue of the *Free Press*, a community newspaper published in Chicago. It has been abridged and edited for *Socialist Action*.

## BOTTOM'S



the bills naturally increased. Hospital admissions, medical testing, etc.—all increased, because it was lucrative for the medical business, and the government was picking up the tab.

Many previously uninsured persons benefitted from the programs, but so did the new medical corporations.

### Investing in health

But there were also two new developments: the investor-owned hospital and the hospital system, whether profit or non-profit. A recent study by Bradford H. Gray of the National Academy of Sciences indicated that "the 755 hospitals owned by investor-owned chains in 1982 constituted about 11 percent of all hospitals in the United States. Adding the 282 hospitals the chains managed, they controlled about 15 percent of the hospitals."

When Ronald Reagan took office as president, he was committed to cutting back all of the liberal social programs, but after 20 years Medicare and Medicaid had become too popular and too institutionalized to be done away with.

So Reagan began a number of cost-cutting measures, the most important being to institute a system of payment based upon estimated average costs for specific procedures. The government would no longer simply pay the bill the hospital presented.

As a result, hospital admissions fell from 36.3 million in 1983 to 35 million in 1984, while average hospital stays declined from 9.6 days to 7.4 days, and the total number of hospital beds fell by 11,000 from a total of 992,616 in 1983.

While the government's medical bill was reduced, it meant that the not-for-profit free-standing voluntary hospital was in many cases no longer viable. There

were not enough patients to pay the bills.

Only the medical conglomerate had the resources—ultimately, the capital—to make the transition from in-patient to out-patient care, and from exclusively hospital acute care medicine to nursing home, psychiatric, sports, and other medical enterprises.

The little community hospitals now either had to become part of the new competitive medical system or be destroyed by it.

If some of the local voluntary hospitals only show the first signs of pressure toward corporate competition, some have already been swallowed by the medical empires, and others are trying to become empires themselves.

There is perhaps no better illustration of that than not-for-profit Evangelical Health Systems, created by the United Church of Christ, which is the largest health care system in the Chicago area.

### Medical empires

Rather than being gobbled up by a medical empire, it has created an empire of its own, including five hospitals in Chicago, three nursing homes in the collar counties, and a factory in Florida.

At the top of its corporate structure is the American Health Care Systems, located in San Diego, which owns 500 hospitals or 25 percent of all the hospitals in the country. It is made up of 35 of the biggest not-for-profit health systems in the country, which are equal share holders. One of those 35 companies is Evangelical Health Systems.

As for the hospital workforce, the increasingly capitalist character of all medical activities will mean, as E.D. Sclar wrote recently in the *Bulletin of the N.Y. Academy of Medicine*, that "large hospital chains can and will spend large sums to keep their work environments union-free...Barring any upsurge in labor militancy or an invigorated national labor leadership, labor costs can be expected to be kept to a minimum."

But if the chains exploit the workforce, it is not because they have any humanitarian commitment to the patient. Before the State of Illinois raised the ceiling for medical payments for welfare clients, both voluntary hospitals and for-profit Chicago-area hospitals were dumping hundreds of patients a year at Cook County Hospital.

If even the community hospitals were forced to turn away the sick because they were poor, can we expect a conglomerate based in Baton Rouge to be any more sympathetic?

In 10 years this revolution in health care will be all over, and U.S. health care, and perhaps much of the world's health care, will be divided among a few monopolies the way that automobile production today is divided among the big three.

Many hospitals in our neighborhoods will go the way of the Studebaker. Some are already part of the medical equivalent of GM and Toyota.

That is, unless a social movement comes along to advocate an alternative—one that places the medical needs of human beings before the profits of conglomerates.—DAN LABOTZ



## Our readers speak out

### Health, safety

Dear editor,

I am pleased to read Steve Zippin's column "Hazardous to Your Health," and hope that it continues for a long time. Ever since *Intercontinental Press* discontinued their column "Capitalism Fouls Things Up" in the late '70s, I have been wishing someone would initiate a new column along these lines.

As an activist on my local union's Occupational Health and Safety Committee it is important to have access to a wide range of information, especially from a critical anti-capitalist perspective. I hope that your organization will continue work in this area. There is so much to be done, and health and safety issues can be a very important issue for challenging the capitalist system.

I want to say I am very happy that your organization is carrying

on the tradition of the Fourth International in the United States and I wish you every success in the future.

Larry Dufay,  
Regina, Saskatchewan

### Yes to dialogue

Dear editor,

As a member of the San Francisco Bay Area trade-union delegation that attended the FENASTRAS convention in El Salvador this November, I would like to make some comments on Carl Finamore's article in the December issue of *Socialist Action*.

Finamore focused on the need to end repression against working people in El Salvador. "For trade union freedom" was one of the two themes of the convention. However, Finamore ignored the other major theme, "Dialogue and

negotiations for peace."

Throughout the convention chants of "Dialogo si, guerra no!" rang out in the convention hall. The major speeches and documents all spoke of the need for dialogue. Independent unions such as the teachers union (ANDES) and the social security workers (STISS) agreed with FENASTRAS in their demand for dialogue. Salvadoran workers also pointed out that the major obstacle to dialogue was the continued military aid to the Duarte regime from the U.S. government.

There are differences within the U.S. anti-intervention movement on which demands to put forward, and discussions of those differences would benefit the movement greatly. A good starting point for that discussion would be the demands of the Salvadoran workers' movement, "Dialogo si, guerra no!"

Carl Anderson,  
San Francisco

### Right emphasis

Dear Carl,

Thank you for the additional information. Actually the article you mention does prominently feature a chart with the adopted program of the FENASTRAS convention, including the demand of "dialogue and negotiations to attain peace."

However, the main body of the article did, indeed, stress the struggle for trade-union rights. I believe that those general issues

are the primary political basis for winning broad support and solidarity for the besieged unions in El Salvador.

This support should not be contingent on agreement with any specific political demand of the Salvadoran unions, such as "dialogo si, guerra no!". Therefore, I do not think the demand should be the basis of the anti-intervention movement in this country.

The article's emphasis reflected this political opinion.

Carl Finamore,  
San Francisco

An Emergency National Conference Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean will be held Jan. 24-26 in Los Angeles.

Sponsored by the Emergency National Council Against U.S. Intervention in Central America/The Caribbean, the conference sessions will be held at the Park Plaza Hotel.

A public rally titled "Labor Speaks Out" will open the conference Friday night at 7:30 p.m. For more information call (216) 382-4597. For room reservations call Sue Bender at (213) 384-5281.

# Can Philippine opposition defeat U.S.-Marcos alliance?

By SEAN FLYNN

The following is the second of a two-part series on the revolutionary struggle in the Philippines.

On the eve of the deadline for filing for the Feb. 7, 1986, Philippine presidential elections, the anti-Marcos but pro-capitalist opposition has shakily united behind Corazon "Cory" Aquino, wife of the assassinated senator, and Salvador "Doy" Laurel of the United Nationalist Democratic Opposition (UNIDO). As the price of unity, Aquino has agreed to run as the standard bearer for UNIDO, which is the most pro-U.S. wing of the anti-Marcos opposition.

Coming on the heels of the acquittal of Gen. Fabian Ver and others for the assassination of Benigno Aquino, the upcoming rigged elections will only further discredit the Marcos dictatorship. Yet rigged or not, the February poll will be seen by many Filipinos as a plebiscite on the regime.

Still, the patchwork electoral unity achieved between Aquino and Laurel barely conceals the lack of consensus among the capitalist opposition as to how to resolve the deepening Philippine political and social crisis.

Earlier compromises have broken down over how far the Philippines could or should distance itself from the United States. This was concretized in the attitude oppositionists took toward the U.S. military bases and the legalization of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). [For background on the CPP, see part one of this article in the December 1985 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

Two years after the massive demonstrations that followed the assassination of Benigno Aquino, the "parliament of the streets"—uniting workers, dispossessed peasants, church groups, and middle layers—continues to rear its head. Despite continuing repression, 100,000 demonstrators in various cities mobilized on Aug. 21, 1985, the anniversary of Aquino's murder, and again on Sept. 22, the 13th anniversary of the declaration of martial law.

The anti-imperialist slogan of "Down With the U.S.-Marcos Dictatorship," put forward by the CPP-led National Democratic Front (NDF) has begun to predominate over demands simply for the removal of the dictator. The more radical sections of the movement have organized "people's strikes," which are reminiscent of the general strikes organized in Nicaragua shortly after the murder of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro in 1978.

These developments show both the depth of the political crisis for Philippine



capital, as well as the lingering illusions existing among the urban population toward the liberal democrats appearing at the head of the opposition.

## UNIDO wants U.S. bases

On the right wing of the opposition lies UNIDO, a coalition of parties led by Laurel, who broke from Marcos a few years ago. Laurel appears to have the backing of a section of the Philippine Wall Street, which is justifiably concerned about the long-range interests of Philippine capital.

Laurel has also gotten a nod from the United States, which had covertly encouraged an Aquino-Laurel slate in the coming elections. UNIDO, after all, has consistently opposed the removal of U.S. bases from the Philippines, while Aquino commands much respect in the mass movement.

Cory Aquino and Agapito "Butz" Aquino (brother of the assassinated senator), occupy the right and left ends of the opposition center, a center also filled by the Liberal Party, a holdover from pre-Marcos days, and the Philippine Democratic Party-Laban, a Christian Democratic-type formation.

The two Aquinos split over whether or not to boycott the May 1984 elections to the powerless Philippine parliament. Cory Aquino, the Liberal Party, and PDP-Laban chose participation, while Butz

Aquino opted for a boycott and was a proponent of mass demonstrations against the regime.

Today, Butz Aquino heads the Filipino Social Democratic Movement and a center coalition called BANDILA.

BANDILA broke from the left wing of the opposition, today found in BAYAN, a coalition established in May 1985. BANDILA split because BAYAN was

diverge in action. UNIDO's orientation is toward elections, with the United States putting pressure on Marcos to peacefully step aside. BAYAN has thus far relied on mass mobilizations and the "parliament of the streets" to make its point.

Since the elections are seen by many as an opportunity to express opposition to the Marcos regime, BAYAN and its constituent formations will be under pressure to support the moderate Aquino-Laurel electoral slate. Whether BAYAN will succumb, run its own candidates, or call for a boycott, as its predecessors did in 1984, is difficult to say at this time.

BAYAN's actions and political positions have thus far made it (and the NDF) a legitimate anti-imperialist pole reflecting the aspirations of the masses. But there currently exists no revolutionary organization which clearly understands the need to drive home within BAYAN the strategic conclusion that the democratic tasks set forth in its program can only be solved through the seizure of power by the workers and peasants.

Hence the danger arises that BAYAN's middle-class leadership could bend to the clamor for anti-Marcos unity on a capitalist reform program.

For its part, the CPP has drifted away from Maoism. And while retaining the schema of the bloc of four classes, a stagist-theory of revolution, and the strategy of people's war based on the peasantry, it has begun to recognize the importance of the urban struggle.

By the CIA's estimate, the CPP is three years away from encircling and "liberating" the cities. But as made clear by fallout from the Aquino assassination, the political center of gravity lies in the urban areas. Whether the CPP can push

## "Genuine democracy will require Marcos' overthrow, and a new form of government based on the people's mass organizations."

more and more influenced by the underground National Democratic Front, which is based among the working class and slumdwellers' organizations.

BAYAN's most important component is the KMU-May First Movement, a labor federation established in 1980 that has a membership of some 250,000 unionists.

## Opposition programs

All components of the above-ground opposition call for Marcos' removal, but they disagree over how that can be accomplished and what other tasks must be performed by a post-Marcos government.

UNIDO's program contains references to land reform and democracy, but essentially stands for a return to the pre-1972 status quo, an end to the economic advantages of the Marcos clique, and no fundamental change in the country's relations with the United States.

BAYAN's program states that Marcos can only be removed by the Filipino people alone, without reliance on the United States. BAYAN calls for the dismantlement of "all authoritarian structures" of the regime, the expulsion of U.S. bases, and the abrogation of unequal treaties with the United States. It demands what amounts to the expropriation of Marcos and his cronies, the repudiation of foreign debts that "have not benefited the people," land reform, and the defense of workers' rights to a job and to organize.

Most importantly, UNIDO and BAYAN

further its reorientation to the cities, and whether it can overcome the handicaps imposed by its program, are key questions.

## Tasks of the revolution

The Philippines today are at an early stage of revolutionary development. A revolutionary-democratic consciousness is spreading among the people, who will more and more find themselves opposed not only to the Marcos regime, but to opposition groups like UNIDO, who seek only to reform the system rather than overthrow it.

The continued development of an independent mass movement and the parallel successes of the NPA in the countryside will ultimately force the opposition bourgeoisie to go over to the counterrevolution for fear of the people.

Yet the central—though thorny—problem lies precisely in ensuring the political independence of the workers, peasants, and urban poor in conditions where nationalism and the fight against dictatorship obscure the underlying class struggle.

The early Communist International advocated building "anti-imperialist united fronts" to bridge this contradiction. It was imperative that revolutionaries use this tactic to place themselves at the head of mass mobilizations around democratic and anti-imperialist struggles in order to

(continued on page 14)

