

A Socialist ACTION

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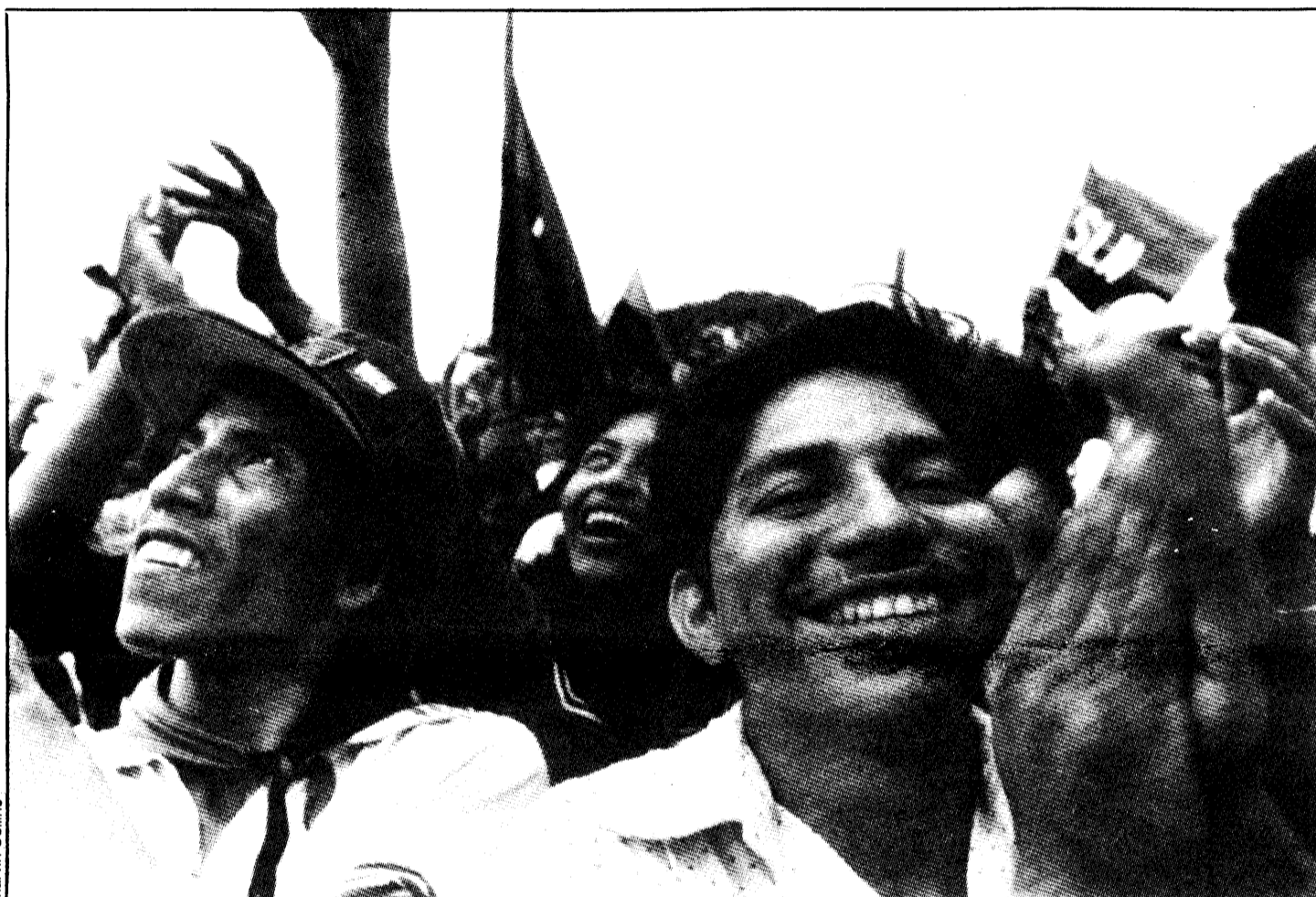


SEPTEMBER 1987

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Will new 'peace plan' end war in Central America?



In the name of "democratization," the U.S. government hopes to undermine the Sandinista majority established by democratic elections in Nicaragua. The United States has said, moreover, that the Sandinista government's process of "democratization" must be "irreversible" before it is willing to abandon the contras.

Black mineworkers settle historic strike in S. Africa

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

"Everything in this country is built on gold," a representative of South Africa's mine owners said recently. "Without it, this country would be nothing."

Indeed, half of South Africa's export earnings come from gold mining. When the country's Black mineworkers went on strike last month, they threatened to send the economy reeling.

For 21 days, the mineworkers held fast against South Africa's largest corporations. Despite the lack of strike benefits, some 335,000 workers stayed out, according to the independent Labour Monitoring Group. They shut down about half of the country's gold mines and one-fifth of its coal mines. The companies reported losses of as much as \$225 million in revenues.

But the costs were high for the workers, too. At least 46,000 strikers were fired, hundreds were arrested, over 350 were injured, and nine were killed by security guards and police.

"A dress rehearsal"

On Aug. 30, the strikers voted to return to work. For the moment, their fight—the

largest strike in South Africa's history—was suspended.

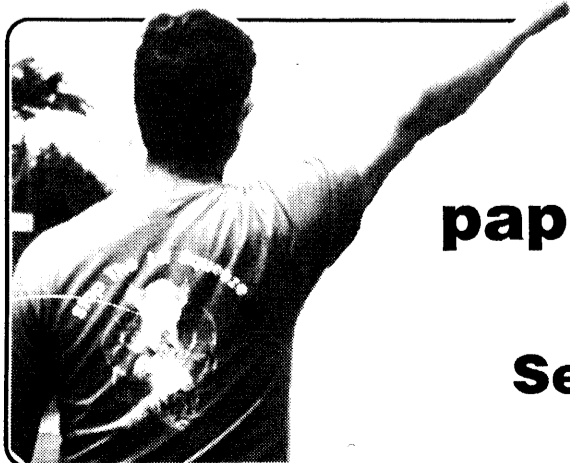
"The strike showed that the union had the support of the workers," said Cyril Ramaphosa, president of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), as he announced the settlement. "It was an important organizational victory for the workers."

The mineworkers' achievement can be gauged by the fact that, in the past, no strike in the industry had ever lasted longer than two days. Now, the union has

emerged from the struggle even stronger. In some regions, for example, union officials who were arrested were replaced by rank-and-file workers.

Nevertheless, after the companies began firing tens of thousands of workers, the union leadership believed it was necessary to accept their terms. The focus was placed on next year's negotiations. "If everyone were fired and sent home," one union official explained, "we might have needed

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Maine paperworkers strike

See page 4.

In 1984, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama—the "Contadora" group—proposed a peace plan for Central America.

After the Nicaraguan government agreed to sign the document, the Reagan administration added unacceptable conditions that effectively blocked an agreement. President Reagan demanded that the Sandinistas negotiate a form of power-sharing with the murderous contras.

On Aug. 7, 1987, Nicaragua and four

Editorial

other Central American countries signed a peace agreement proposed by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. The new document stipulates that by Nov. 7, 1987, all foreign aid to "irregular" military forces fighting in Central America must end. It also calls for "national reconciliation" and a process of "democratization" in each of the five countries.

Two days prior to the Aug. 7 signing of the Arias plan, President Reagan and House Democratic leader Jim Wright presented a "peace plan" of their own.

This bipartisan plan demanded that the Sandinistas establish a cease-fire, negotiate with the contras, and restore suspended civil liberties.

But the Reagan-Wright plan was not designed to achieve peace. It was a transparent attempt to secure congressional approval of continued military aid for the Nicaraguan contras. It specifically included conditions the Sandinista government had vowed it would never accept—like negotiating with the contras.

Adjusting to new situation

After seven years of U.S. military support, the contras have failed to gain even a foothold of popular support in Nicaragua. This fact, combined with the illegal U.S. activities exposed during the Contragate hearings, compelled the U.S. government to make a gesture toward negotiations with Nicaragua.

In the aftermath of the signing of the Arias plan, the U.S. imperialists have had to adjust to a more difficult diplomatic situation.

While "welcoming" the Arias plan, U.S. government officials have nonetheless criticized it for (1) not demanding sufficient concessions of the Sandinistas, and (2) leaving the contras out on a limb.

The adoption of the Arias plan, in this sense, represents a diplomatic victory for the Sandinistas. Unlike the Reagan-Wright plan, the Arias plan legitimizes the Nicaraguan government and denies legitimacy to the contras. It puts the onus for aggression on the United States and provides the Nicaraguan Revolution some "breathing space."

But the U.S. government has vowed to pressure the Central and Latin American governments into making the Arias plan conform to the Reagan-Wright plan, which

(continued on page 7)

— Fight back! — Fresh from the factory — into your arms



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

I'm sure most of you view President Reagan as a complete fake. A phoney and a top-notch liar. You may well ask how this man who finances the murder of women and children in Nicaragua could possibly care about abortion.

Now the truth is out. The president's biggest concern is that there are "thousands of childless families still waiting for children to adopt." (It is probably true that they want only white, Christian children—but that is another problem.) So now we know why Reagan is opposed to abortion!

In a speech from Santa Barbara on Aug. 24, Reagan announced a federal task force to encourage adoption as an "alternative for pregnant women."

"We must expand and broaden our efforts to make sure that family-less children are adopted," Reagan said. "We must do all we can to remove obstacles that prevent qualified adoptive parents from accepting these children into their home."

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater acknowledged that the pro-adoption initiative is

also part of Reagan's anti-abortion campaign.

Time to deliver!

All women with working ovaries and wombs had better get those factories in working order. Mr. Reagan expects you to deliver. You know how he always urges his business friends to make the American worker increase production.

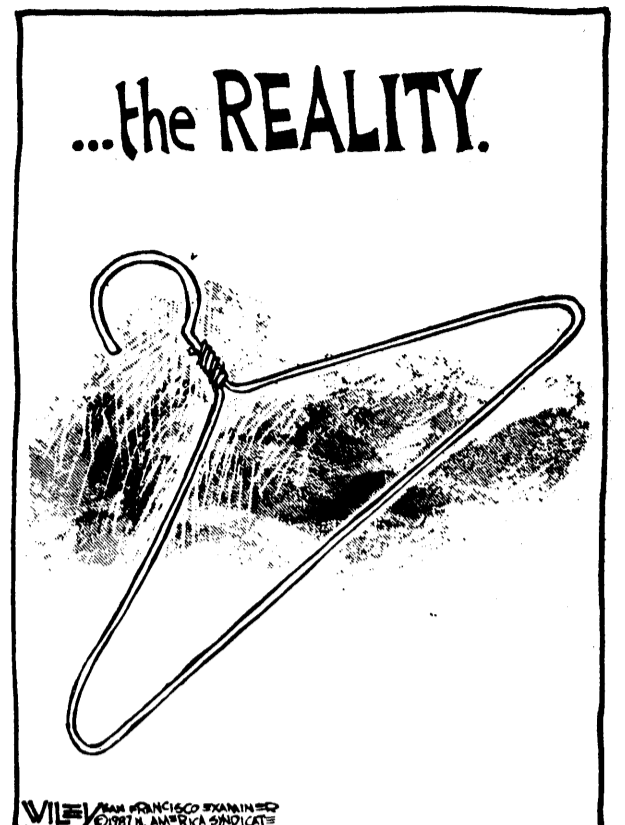
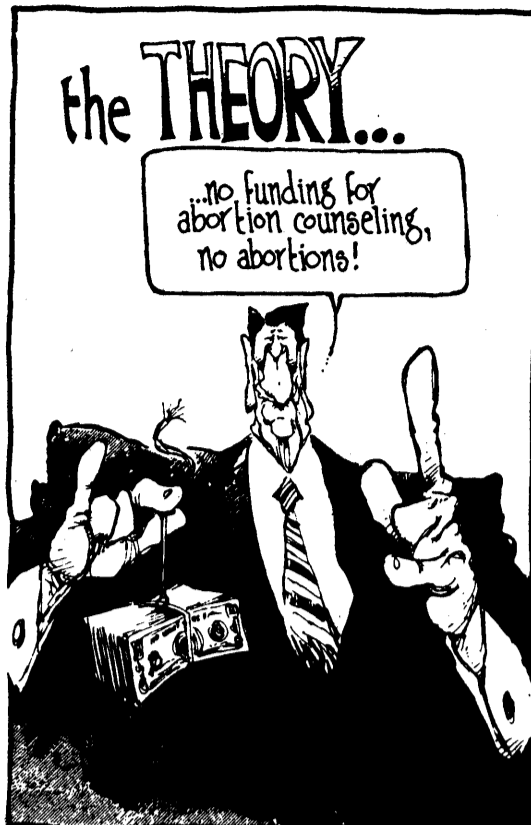
And if you don't produce more babies, just remember what Reagan did to PATCO. He shut the air-controllers' union down—just as he is attempting to shut down all family-planning clinics that mention the word abortion.

Reagan is not alone in his mania for women to give birth. Besides having roving fundamentalist Christians bombing abortion clinics while carrying "old ragged crosses," he has the support of the Democratic and Republican politicians who are working overtime to ensure that the female stays in her proper position—barefoot in the winter and big in the summer.

California's consent bill

In California, Democrats and Republicans are working to force minors to go to court in order to obtain an abortion if they cannot get the consent of their parents or guardian.

Phil Isenberg, a "liberal" Democratic state legislator from Sacramento, introduced a bill which would allow welfare workers instead of parents to give their consent. But his bill also included a provision that parents would be financially responsible for the support of their children's babies.



The "pro-life" forces opposed this part of the bill because it would encourage parents to allow their daughters to get an abortion. However, the "parental-consent" bill which passed the California Assembly in June with a 46-28 vote is now headed toward the state senate—where both political parties are expected to adopt it.

If the bill is passed, it will mean that a minor who gets an illegal abortion could go to jail, that a doctor who performs an abortion on a minor could be jailed, or—if papers are not filled out properly—parents, guardians, doctors, and pregnant children could all be jailed.

The young mother could be

declared unfit and forced to give her child up for adoption. Reagan's hopes for a child for every "qualified" childless family would thereby be fulfilled. It all works so well together!

"Plenty" for whom?

California, land of plenty, is also trying to cut out Medical funding for abortion for poor women. The state budget has a surplus of \$1.1 billion. All the politicians were recently given a 10-percent raise. But we don't, according to the politicians, have enough money for poor women to have "legal" abortions.

Medical funding for abortion should reach the California

Supreme Court in January.

The attitude of our elected representatives was put so well by Rep. Beau Boulter, speaking to a group in Wichita Falls, Tex. "The least among us is not entitled to the same medical treatment as the richest person in America," he said. "I do not want to get socialized medicine because then nobody will get excellent medical treatment."

All of Rep. Boulter's medical expenses are free at taxpayers' expense. If he needs a hair transplant—we have to pay for it. He has socialized medicine. It's poor women and working people—who don't have it—who need socialized medicine. ■

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Northern California organizations are responding to federal and state attacks on a woman's right to abortion with stepped up activities this fall.

Planned Parenthood has filed a lawsuit to stop the new U.S. government policy of denying funds to birth-control programs that include abortion services. These include programs in other countries that the United States previously contributed to.

Planned Parenthood is also working to defeat California legislation requiring parental consent for minors to get abortions.

Rosie Jimenez, the first woman to die

Women respond to repel abortion rights attacks

as a result of the denial of public funds for abortion in 1977, will be commemorated in a series of events on Monday, Oct. 5. These events, spearheaded by the California Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), and sponsored by the Northern California Pro-Choice Coalition (which includes all major pro-choice organizations in the area), include "human billboards" at major intersections during morning and evening rush hours.

Also planned are a 6 p.m. reception at

the American Civil Liberties Union at 1663 Mission Street, suite 460, in San Francisco; an 8 p.m. march to the New State Building at Van Ness and McAllister Streets; and a candlelight vigil there from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

CARAL is establishing committees all over Northern California, including in Monterey, Shasta, Stockton, and Sacramento. For more information call (415) 751-0300.

NOW's "alert" campaign

San Francisco National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) has re-activated its Reproductive Rights Task Force by launching a "campaign to alert the public" through information tables set up on Saturdays in various neighborhoods.

Through this campaign, N.O.W. activists hope to talk with thousands of people. They think that many will be convinced to sign petitions and to send postcards to legislators to support public funding for abortion and to oppose Judge Bork, President Reagan's nominee for U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

NOW is also participating in a variety of demonstrations planned during the visit of Pope John Paul II. The events will protest the Catholic Church's opposition to homosexuality and women's rights. For more information on NOW activities, call (415) 861-8880.

CLUW sponsors speakout

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) has joined the pro-choice fight,

calling for a public speakout on abortion rights this fall. The event, in the planning stages, has been endorsed by three CLUW chapters (East Bay, San Francisco, and Sacramento) and the Northern California Pro-Choice Coalition.

A planning meeting is set for Sept. 10, 7 p.m., at 1345 Mission Street, San Francisco. For more information, call (415) 641-0873. In the East Bay, call (415) 569-8847. ■

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Labor's Role In Central America

Speakers:

Daniel Cantor, Staff member of the National Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador

David Jessup, Special Assistant, American Institute for Free Labor Development, AFL-CIO

CLUW Representative, member of Coalition of Labor Union Women

Saturday, Sept. 19, 7 p.m.

Laney College Forum, 900 Fallon St.

(Near Lake Merritt BART Station)

Reception to follow at SEIU Local 790, 522 Grand, Oakland, CA

sponsored by the

Coalition of Labor Union Women

(Capitol Area, East Bay, and San Francisco chapters)

Ryan confronts capitalist candidates in S.F. race

By DAN PATTERSON

SAN FRANCISCO—With two months left in the San Francisco mayoral race, the socialist campaign is already making an impact.

On Aug. 3, Joseph Ryan, the Socialist Action candidate, was the first mayoral contender to submit signatures endorsing his right to be on the November ballot—turning in over 6000 names to the Registrar of Voters. With the petition drive successfully completed, the Ryan campaign will now focus on reaching out to San Franciscans with the socialist program for jobs, not war.

In a city suffering from deteriorating schools, skyrocketing rents, attacks on unions, and an unchecked AIDS epidemic, a program that puts human needs before profits will get a good hearing.

Capitalist candidates

The capitalist candidates in the mayoral race—virtually all Democrats—are spending more time attacking each other than attacking the problems that plague working people in what was once a strong union city.

The candidates include:

- John Molinari, a member of the Board of Supervisors who is supported by incumbent mayor Dianne Feinstein.

Formerly a Republican, Molinari switched his loyalty to the Democratic Party years ago so he could have a fruitful career in this strongly Democratic Party-controlled city.

- Art Agnos, a California state assemblyman who is trying to pose as the "real liberal" in the campaign.

Agnos tries to project himself as a friend of the small businessperson and working people. His campaign

"... if you really want to shake up the employers and the Democrats and the Republicans, you should endorse the socialist campaign."

slogan is: "Who will be able to afford to live in San Francisco?" However, since Agnos is independently wealthy—due to some shady real estate deals recently exposed in the press—this is obviously a question he doesn't have to ask of himself.

- Louise Renne, the San Francisco city attorney who smiles a lot and says very little.

Renne's campaign slogan is: "She's not supported by the fat cats." Of course she neglects to mention that her husband is one of the fat cats—a prominent San Francisco millionaire.

Other candidates include Roger Boas, former city manager and owner of the most successful auto dealership in the city; Cesar Ascarrunz, a wealthy night club owner who runs in every election; and Warren Hinckle, a popular columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* who tries to pattern himself after New York's Jimmy Breslin.

Virtually all the major candidates are businesspeople, employers, or are very rich. There is certainly no real choice here for working people and the oppressed.

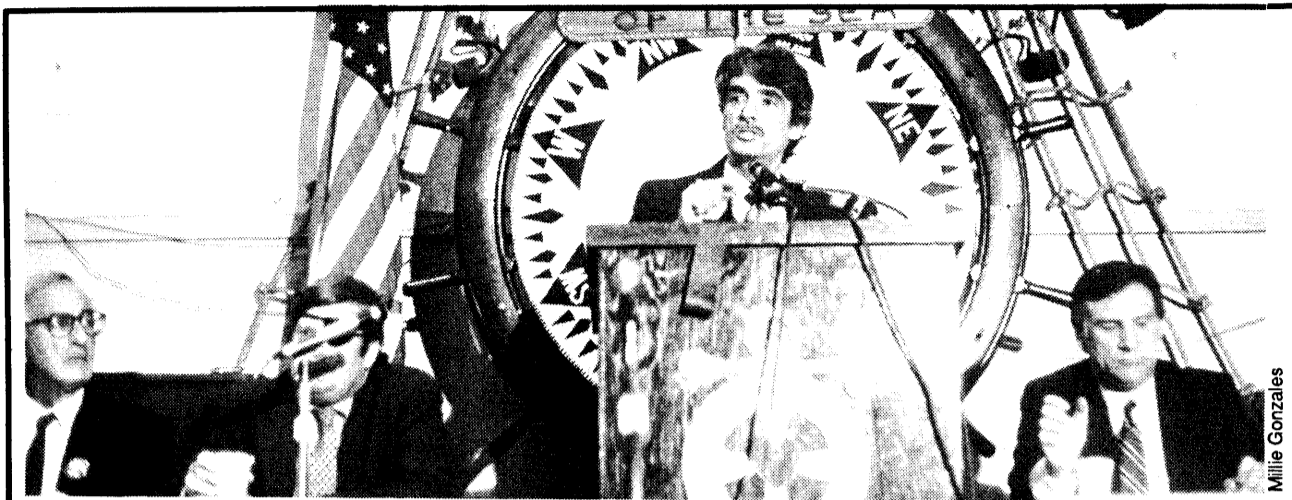
Labor Council debate

After being excluded (un-invited) from previous candidates' meetings, Ryan was finally able to confront these candidates in a head-on debate organized by the San Francisco Central Labor Council on Aug. 10.

The meeting was organized to select which candidate the labor council would endorse. While it was assured in advance that the endorsement would go to either Molinari or Agnos, the labor delegates from the 75,000-member council were willing to listen to the socialist alternative.

At the labor meeting, all the capitalist candidates promised that if elected they would be "friends" of unions, "accessible" to unions, and "fair" to unions. But they all stopped short of saying *concretely* what they would do for unions when there was a fight with the employers.

In contrast, Ryan was very concrete. On the issue of jobs, he said funds should be provided for building low-



Joseph Ryan speaking to over 200 delegates at San Francisco Central Labor Council meeting on Aug. 10. Other candidates are (left to right) Roger Boas, Warren Hinckle, and John Molinari.

The following are the opening remarks made by Joseph Ryan, the Socialist Action candidate for mayor of San Francisco, at the San Francisco Central Labor Council "Candidates Night" on Aug. 10, 1987. Over 200 delegates were in attendance.

Brothers and Sisters,

As you know, the labor movement in San Francisco and throughout the country is in deep trouble. Locally, it has become increasingly hard, if not impossible, to win strikes.

Police are used to herd scabs and attack picketlines. Judges issue injunctions that violate our first amendment right to mass picket. And with this as the background, the employers are confident they can defeat us in their quest for more concessions and takebacks.

Look at the example of the auto mechanics, who have been on strike for over a year and are limited to one picket per gate; or the retail clerks, who in 1984 were harassed and arrested by police because they wanted to mass picket for their economic and democratic rights during that strike and lockout.

We are in a situation today where we face vicious attacks against our living standards and both our hands are tied behind our back. And all this is happening in a city that is renowned nationally for being a strong

union town. All this is happening in a city where the so-called "friends of labor"—Democrat or Republican—have invariably been elected.

It wasn't always this way. San Francisco became a strong union town because of the sacrifices and militancy of the workers. The progressive social reputation of San Francisco and its good standard of living were built on the struggles of working people in the 1930s and '40s.

Blood was spilled, heads were cracked, injunctions were challenged, and working people mobilized by the thousands to defend their interests. But today we see these conquests being attacked and betrayed.

All of the candidates up here tonight are asking for your endorsement. With the exception of myself, they are all Democrats or Republicans and they are all business people. Some of them, in fact, are employers. They all believe that the employer has a right to make a profit. They all say that they are qualified to represent the interests of everyone.

The situation we as working people face, however, is that the profits the employers make are based on cutting our wages, gutting our benefits, and breaking our unions. To claim to represent everyone—bosses and workers alike—can only be a statement that is designed to fool us.

The most progressive outcome

that could come out of this meeting tonight would be that you endorse and run Walter Johnson [secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Central Labor Council] for mayor of San Francisco on a labor program independent of the Democrats and Republicans.

Only by running one of your own representatives as a candidate can you be guaranteed that you'll have a mayor who *won't* try to represent the interests of everyone—but will represent *your* interests, the interests of working people, exclusively.

In lieu of that, however, I am seriously seeking your endorsement for mayor based on a program that can be boiled down to a simple and reasonable idea: working people make the city run, working people should run the city.

The offensive of the employers, their politicians, and their police and courts mean that the labor movement will have to organize working people into their own political party. It's the only way we can protect and defend ourselves.

But I must suggest to you that if you really want to shake up the employers and the Democrats and Republicans, you should endorse the socialist campaign. You'll be sending a message loud and clear to the ruling interests in this city that you are not to be taken for granted. Thank you. ■

cost housing, schools, and medical facilities. "Our hard-earned tax dollars should be used for construction—not destruction," he said.

"The labor movement," Ryan said, "should propose a mass construction program for the Black community of Hunters Point to provide union jobs and services. This is a far better alternative to the dangerous consequences of militarizing the bay through homeporting the U.S.S. Missouri at Hunters Point."

Ryan addressed the problem of strike-breaking by San Francisco employers. When the other candidates were asked what they thought the role of the police should be during strikes, only Roger Boas, the car dealer, answered: "Police shouldn't be involved, but, on the other hand, public safety must be maintained and the best way to solve labor disputes is through binding arbitration."

The silence of the other capitalist candidates could only mean that they agreed.

Boas's answer didn't win much applause from labor delegates who have seen one strike after another defeated by court and police intervention against effective picketlines.

Ryan, however, was delighted to answer the question and jumped up to respond:

"The role of police during strikes should be that they are nowhere to be found. The police are strike-breakers, henchmen for the employer, and they have the blood of hundreds of workers on their hands. As mayor—and

with the help of the labor movement—I would prevent the employers from using police as scab-herders. I would also help striking workers organize to protect themselves from the attacks of police."

This answer elicited sustained applause from the 200-plus delegates.

In his summary, Ryan told the Labor Council what they should do to reverse the attacks they face. "It's the working people of San Francisco who have the power to make the kind of changes I'm talking about. The labor movement should reverse its reliance on so-called "friends of labor" in the Democratic and Republican parties and organize its natural base—the majority of working people—for political action. There is no other way."

At the end of the meeting some of the delegates came up to Ryan to express their appreciation for his views. "You told the truth," one SEIU delegate said, "and I'm glad you came."

While it was clear that Ryan's ideas were well-received by many delegates, it'll take more than a class struggle speech to end labor's dependence on capitalist politicians. The labor council voted by voice to endorse both Molinari and Agnos for mayor. Instead of one lesser-evil, there are now two lesser-evils.

In any event, the labor council meeting set a precedent for further face-offs between candidates who want to fool people and a candidate who wants to mobilize people. ■

Maine paperworkers say: 'No more concessions'

By ART LECLAIR

JAY, Maine—On Aug. 1, more than 8000 union members and supporters from the six New England states participated in one of the largest labor demonstrations in Maine's history. A march and rally took place here in support of 1200 striking workers at the International Paper Co. (I.P.) mill.

The workers walked off their jobs on June 16 after rejecting company demands for concessions. The company's proposal includes an end to premium pay for Sundays and holidays and more flexible workrules (which would eliminate 178 jobs). An I.P. spokesman stated that the takeaways "are absolutely necessary if the company is to remain competitive."

I.P. is the largest paper manufacturing company in the country. The union had offered to work under the terms of the previous contract—but the company wanted more.

Some 3400 paper workers are either on strike or locked out of four I.P. mills nationally. Their local unions have begun a coordinated effort to bring the company back to the bargaining table, vowing that no one will return to work unless every one does.

"The number-one item"

People here remember last summer's bitter 11-week strike at the Boise Cascade mill in nearby Rumford, Maine. More than 300 union members lost their jobs when that company hired scabs in their place.

But William Meserve, president of United Paper Workers International Union Local 14, which represents most of the strikers in Jay, vows that the union will not settle with I.P. until all 1200 members are assured that their jobs are waiting for them. "That is the number-one item on our agenda," Meserve stated.

Since the strike began, over 600 scabs have been hired. They include 250 employees from an Alabama-based mill that the union describes as "professional strike-breakers."

Town meeting helps strikers

Nearly 1000 voters met in a special town meeting on Aug. 11. Amid thundering applause, three union-initiated ordinances were adopted. The measures call for:

- Abolishing the use of professional strike-breakers in Jay. (A similar bill enacted by the state legislature was vetoed earlier by Maine Governor John McKernan Jr.)
- Establishing tougher requirements on large-scale temporary housing in the town. (Fifty trailers on mill property are being used to shelter scabs.)
- Strengthening the town's environmental oversight role with a \$75,000 appropriation to pay staff and consultants. (When I arrived in this picturesque little town of 5100, the first thing I noticed was the foul smell from the river. According to several strikers, the company dumps its waste materials into the water.)

I.P. has stated that it will challenge the new ordinances in court, charging that they "violate state and federal law and inject the town into a labor dispute."

A barbed-wire fence

All in all, it looks like another long, protracted struggle against another corporate giant. But the strikers are in it to the finish. One union member with more than 20 years in the mill pointed to a gleaming 10-foot-high section of chain-link fence topped with heavy-gauge barbed wire.

"See that fence," he said, "it's almost seven-and-a-half miles long. They put it up right before the negotiations started. I.P. said they were just complying with a state law requiring the fence." He added, "I think it is only there to keep us out."

He then said he had heard of another mill, not far away, at which contract talks are scheduled to begin soon. "Guess what?" he asked, "They are putting up a fence too."

He chuckled and concluded, "I wonder if they really think that fence is going to keep us out if we decide to go in?"



Over 8000 union members and supporters demonstrated to support paperworkers in largest labor action in Maine's history. International Paper Co. workers have been on strike since June 16.

Coors boycott settlement:

'A very partial and incomplete victory'

By MAY MAY GONG

ADOLPH COORS CO.: maker of Coors beer.

- In 1977 fired its striking employees and decertified their union.
- Placed potential employees through lie-detector tests, asking them such things as "Are you homosexual?"
- Is known as the "dynasty" of the New Right.
- Bankrolls activities of figures such as Phyllis Schlafly, Jerry Falwell, and more recently, the Nicaraguan contras.

For over a decade now, numerous Black, Latino, gay, and women's organizations have been boycotting Coors beer. In 1977, when Coors broke the union, the AFL-CIO joined in the boycott.

The boycott has had a devastating effect on the sales of Coors beer. According to the AFL-CIO, Coors sales in the company's home area of Colorado have plummeted from 47 percent of the market to 22 percent since 1977. In California, sales dropped from 44 percent to 14 percent.

This poor reception in the Western states forced Coors to move east. But the boycott followed them. The gay movement has played an especially important role in the boycott's success—no Coors is served in virtually all of the gay bars around the country.

Last month, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland claimed a resounding "victory" in the dispute with Coors. He said that the 10-year-old boycott could be called off.

Coors reportedly made two concessions in the settlement: (1) All future plant construction will be done under a negotiated labor agreement. (2) Coors will

not intervene in future AFL-CIO union-election campaigns.

Should you rush out and buy a few six-packs right now? According to Howard Wallace, former AFL-CIO Northern California coordinator for the Coors boycott, "This is a very partial and incomplete victory."

Coors has already made it very clear to its workers that a union would not be welcome, and that workers voting in favor of a union would *especially* not be welcome. Besides, most workers at Coors have already been screened out for their anti-union stance.

Coors executives have pointed out that the new agreement does not prohibit them from hiring non-union labor on future construction projects. It only mandates an agreement with the unions. Coors is still scab beer.

Furthermore, Coors profits still benefit the likes of Schlafly, Falwell, and the contras. Why call off the boycott then?

"The AFL-CIO did not involve their own boycott organizers in the negotiations and did not confer with any other sectors of the coalition," says Howard Wallace.

Coors was becoming desperate. It needed a shot in the arm to boost its sagging sales. To be able to publicize that the boycott had been called off was for Coors a dream come true.

Several months ago, the Teamsters union had begun an organizing drive at the Golden, Colo., plant. The Teamsters are not affiliated with the AFL-CIO. With the agreement made between Coors and the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters are now iced out of the union turf battle.

The Coors Boycott Committee will continue to organize the boycott. "We

don't want a quarter loaf, we want the whole loaf!" says Wallace.

If you are interested in helping the Boycott Committee or would like more information, please contact the Coors Boycott Committee at 655 14th St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Telephone (415) 861-0318.

Big fight brewing in rail

By MAY MAY GONG

An historic confrontation is brewing between rail labor and management. The carriers see the contract negotiations scheduled for 1988 as an opportunity to take back gains that were won by workers through decades of struggle.

In order to help prepare union members for the upcoming contract year, rail workers in the Upper Midwest are planning a solidarity conference.

The Rail Union Solidarity Conference will attempt to mobilize unionists against the latest threat from rail management—the "shortline."

Through the union-busting shortline scam, the rail carriers are assembling a transcontinental network of non-union lines to be used in the event of a national rail strike. The rail carriers are also petitioning Congress to forbid secondary picketing by rail unions.

Rail labor needs a strategy to defeat this union-busting drive.

The conference is open to all rail-union members and their spouses. It will be held in the Cotillion Ballroom at the Ritz Hotel, 315 Nicollet Mall, downtown Minneapolis, Minn., on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 11 and 12. For more information call (612) 789-3302.

By KAREN SCHIEVE

A new three-year contract was ratified by members of the Department Store Employees Union, Local 1100, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), in San Francisco on July 30.

The voting was by mail ballot, and of those who voted, approximately 80 percent voted "yes" and 20 percent voted "no" on the employers' so-called "final offer." The contract covers employees at Macy's and Emporium stores, who are the majority of the union.

The 3700-member union is the second largest in San Francisco and is one of the few unions in the country of organized department store employees. The union struck for six weeks in 1984, and the employers got only a modified two-tier contract. The 1984 strike forced the employers to retreat from their initial union-busting proposals.

"Best possible offer?"

The leadership of Local 1100 is calling the new contract the best possible without a strike. The new contract, however, is concessionary, and the negotiating process was one that omitted the membership.

The 1987 negotiations began with outlandish union-busting proposals from the employers. For example, the employers wanted the right to fire an employee "if any company rule or policy was violated, but not limited to that."

The 24-member union negotiating committee, which was appointed by the Local 1100 leadership, consistently took a position of "no concessions." The general consensus was that members did not want to strike for gains but, if necessary—especially if provoked by the employer—would fight determinedly to keep what the union had struck over in the past. The employers' outrageous first "final offer" was rejected by a 91 percent "no" vote in mid-June.

Unfortunately, what happened next is a good lesson on how *not* to negotiate a union contract.

Secret negotiations

After the rejection of the first company offer, UFCW international representatives stepped in. With the cooperation of Local 1100 President Leslie Rainey, they circumvented the negotiating committee and began secret negotiations with the employers; secret, that is, from the membership.

For two weeks, neither the negotiating committee nor the membership saw their leadership or knew the location of bargaining talks. This was quite a surprise move. The next two weeks of secret negotiations had a demoralizing impact on the members. No longer did the negotiating committee serve as a conduit of

Karen Schieve was a member of the 1987 Local 1100 negotiating committee.

Retail Clerks, with hands tied, settle on contract



S.F. retail clerks were kept uninformed of contract negotiations.

information about all aspects of negotiations.

Members of the negotiating committee had to tell the truth. They had no idea what was going on; no idea what they were gaining or losing at the bargaining table; no idea of the likelihood of a strike.

The few leaflets that were distributed via the union staff contained, at best, only vague information. One leaflet, seeking to justify the secret talks, even blamed the negotiating committee for the breakdown of previous negotiations!

During these two crucial weeks, there was not one rally; not one informational picketline; not one event or meeting organized to involve the membership in a serious manner.

Bureaucracy organizes defeat

To cover themselves, the UFCW international union *did* begin a "customer pledge card" campaign. Macy's and Emporium customers were asked to sign cards saying that in case of a labor dispute, they would not shop at the affected stores. As far as it goes, such a request from the public is in order.

The problem is that this tactic became the main strategy for getting a new contract, and was used in lieu of mobilizing the membership and reaching out to the entire Bay Area labor movement. This pitiful attempt at "action" did not, as expected, excite an already deflated membership.

The result of the secret negotiations was that, at the end of July, the members were told that the employers' final "final offer" was to be voted on by mail ballot.

Traditionally, in Local 1100, contract decisions are made by one or two days of mass meetings where questions are asked and points of view debated. At the conclusion of these meetings the contract is accepted or rejected by secret ballot.

This time no meetings were held to explain or answer questions regarding the employers' offer. Many members were so confused over the employers' "legalese" language that they chose not to vote—never mailing in their ballot. Only 67 percent of the members mailed back their ballots.

Concessions without a fight

The employers got some of their most sought-after takeaways. New hires are on a *three-tier* for Sunday premium pay and health and dental benefits. Maternity benefits were *cut* from one year's leave to four months. Sick pay was *reduced*. All members *lost* Washington's birthday as a holiday. Working on Sundays or holidays is *no longer* voluntary and will be filled according to inverse seniority.

New hires into "big ticket" items will have their monthly commission checks greatly *reduced*. The establishment of the six-day work week at straight time (if under 40 hours) and all varieties of hourly shifts was achieved by the employer.

Only one classification of workers (of which there are many) received a 10-cents-an-hour wage increase for each of three years. Clerical workers obtained a 20-cents-per-hour wage increase.

The employers also used the "lump sum" bonus instead of real hourly increases. The problem with "lump sums" is that they do

not enter into an employee's base pay. This means that vacation pay, sick pay, etc., which are based on the hourly rate, will suffer. In addition, "lump sums" do not accumulate year after year to add to a worker's hourly rate—like real wage increases.

Need new leadership

Leslie Rainey, Local 1100 president, argued that she got the best possible contract without a strike. There are at least two fatal flaws in her assessment.

If the number one concern of unions is to avoid strikes at all costs, even if it means serious concessions *contract after contract*, then workers are in deep trouble.

The labor movement was built by workers and their leaders who fought for and struck over higher wages and better working conditions. For years, Local 1100 maintained the best union contract in the United States for department store employees because periodically—when forced to—the union took on the bosses. It is only the *real* threat of a strike—*plus striking*—that can produce a good contract.

Secondly, the so-called "best possible offer" was secured without any serious attempt at organizing and mobilizing the membership. Imagine the improvement of a "final offer" if the leadership actually used the militancy of the workers to seriously threaten a fightback.

It is important for all union members who suffer setbacks that they not blame themselves, other union members, or the unions for such defeats. It is clear that workers need a leadership that is not willing to avoid a strike out of fear of putting up a serious fight. ■

By ROLAND SHEPPARD

On Aug. 7, 1987, approximately 200 building trades workers participated in a noon rally in downtown San Francisco. They were protesting the non-union, \$30-million modernization project of the USX steel plant in Pittsburg, Calif. The demonstration was called by the rank-and-file committee against the two-gate.

The two gate-system is a method by which the solidarity of the building trades unions is broken down by having different trades cross different picket lines on different job sites. Two gates—a union gate and a non-union gate are set up on job sites. During a labor dispute, the affected union is only allowed by law to picket the non-union gate.

The union is thus prevented from completely shutting down the job site because other unions enter through the unpicketed union gate. When other unions do respect a picketline by not going

USX and S. Korea try to bust construction unions

through the union gate, the Taft-Hartley law is invoked against them.

No organization of the ranks

The new, modernized plant will be run by USS-Posco, a joint venture of USX and Pohang Steel of South Korea. USX shut down its basic steel plant in Geneva, Utah, laying off 3000 workers. When the project is completed, Pohang will send 1 million tons of semi-finished steel annually to USX in Pittsburg.

BE&K, a non-union Alabama contractor, has been hired by USS-Posco to modernize the plant.

The response of the building trades' unions has been to ask for a project agreement. Project agreements are the new

ploy by the building trades' unions. Instead of organizing workers or signing up contractors, they now seek to organize on a job-to-job basis.

These project agreements more often than not undermine the contracts that unions have in the area. From the point of view of "business unionism," they pick up initiation fees and hourly dues from non-union workers at the expense of the wages from their regular dues-paying membership.

While the demonstration expressed solidarity amongst the trades, the carpenters' union officials are trying to cut their own special deal behind the scenes.

Without an approach to unite all workers in a concerted fight, whether in the building trades or the steelworkers' union, the best

that can happen will be union-sanctioned wage cuts at the USX plant. This will further set the stage for breaking the building trades' unions.

For example, in Buckport, Maine, non-union BE&K was removed from a job at the Champion Paper Co. through joint action by the building trades and the paperworkers unions.

Coordinated and militant actions like this will be the only way to upset the plans of the employers for breaking the building trades unions in Pittsburg, Calif. ■

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L.A. 'Death Squads' linked to El Salvador



Symbol of Death Squads left on doors in El Salvador.

Susan Meiselas

By DAVE COOPER

LOS ANGELES—Beginning last May, several Salvadorans active in the solidarity movement here received death threats attributed to the right-wing Death Squads operating in El Salvador.

On July 7, a Salvadoran woman was kidnapped, raped, and beaten. Ten days later, a Guatemalan woman was kidnapped. The Rev. Luis Olivares, pastor of Los Angeles's largest Latino parish, received a note signed "E.M.," the initials of El Salvador's *Escuadron de la Muerte* (Squadron of Death).

Nearly 30 others have been harassed or had their property vandalized. [See story in the August 1987 *Socialist Action*.]

I recently spoke to Nell Lancaster, an activist in the Southwest Regional Office of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), one of the organizations whose members have received death threats.

Lancaster said that these attacks are an attempt to intimidate people in this country from associating closely with the Central American support movement. She pointed out that the local events correspond—in terms of the time they occurred and the methods that were used—with a heightened

wave of repression in El Salvador.

"The months of May, June, and July have seen a terrific upsurge in repression against unions, student groups, and community organizations in El Salvador," she told me. "These groups have been pressing the government with concrete economic demands that cannot be met so long as the war continues."

"To silence them," Lancaster said, "because the government is determined to continue the war, there has been a sharp increase in open repression. Several times in July, government security forces fired on unarmed striking workers who were

demonstrating. The offices of the Mothers of the Disappeared were bombed in May."

There has been a sharp upsurge in the number of corpses found in the streets around San Salvador, Lancaster said. In late June, the Hernando Martinez Brigade, one of the most notorious of the Death Squads, issued a list of 14 students and professors at the University of El Salvador that they ordered to leave the country or be killed.

The Los Angeles Police Department has tended to downplay the political aspects of the local attacks. "Is it really a Death Squad type of thing?" a police official commented in the *Los Angeles Times*. "We're not dismissing anything, but we suspect politics is only a quarter of the pie here."

Harold Ezell, the Western regional commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), went to the point of suggesting that the attacks could have been faked by the Sanctuary Movement to gain public sympathy.

"It is inhumane to assert that a Catholic priest would fabricate a death threat," Lancaster told me. "Or that a woman would somehow arrange for herself to be burned, tortured, and sexually molested to gain publicity."

"And beyond that," she continued, "Ezell charges that these attacks were a public-relations ploy to persuade Congress to extend voluntary-departure status for Salvadoran and Nicaraguan refugees. This is completely without any basis in fact. He has been challenged by Congressman Joe Moakley [who has co-sponsored legislation on the issue] to come before his committee and present any evidence he has to support his assertion."

Despite the attacks, Lancaster stressed, CISPES members are committed to continuing their work of support and fund-raising for the people of El Salvador, protesting human-rights violations, and working to pressure the U.S. government to stop their intervention in El Salvador.

CISPES is demanding a full public investigation which could uncover the ties between the local attacks and Death Squad activity in El Salvador. ■

Ann Salmeron is a member of CASA (Central America Solidarity Committee) in Boston. She was interviewed last month by Jim Henle.

Socialist Action: You have just returned from El Salvador. Who sponsored your tour and what was its purpose?

Ann Salmeron: Our group was sponsored in El Salvador by the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS). We were organized in this country with no formal sponsorship. All together on the tour, there were five labor representatives and five representatives from solidarity groups.

We represented ourselves as a delegation that was primarily interested in learning about the union movement in El Salvador. We were there from July 19 until Aug. 1.

S.A.: I attended a conference in El Salvador last year, and one of the things that came out of the labor workshop was a resolution to set up sister-union type relations between the United States and El Salvador. That seems like a logical first step—to set up delegations from unions to go over and observe and have discussions with the UNTS.

Salmeron: Many of the people that we dealt with had a high level of militancy and class consciousness. Yet it struck me that these same people had a low level of awareness of the situation in the United States.

They thought that it was because of U.S. workers that they had AIFLD [an international department of the AFL-CIO which is financed by the U.S. State Department] in El Salvador. Somehow, they thought, U.S. workers were benefiting from that.

S.A.: Which unions were you able to talk to and what is the general state of the union movement in El Salvador today?

Salmeron: Well, we saw dozens of unions. Most of them were urban unions. We visited them at their union offices, and we also tried to visit as many workplaces as possible. But unfortunately, many of the

Antiwar activist tours Salvadoran unions



Salvadoran army troops have been used to break strikes.

Syigma

workplaces are militarized, so we couldn't go in.

There are strikes everywhere. We went to the SSI worksite—the Social Security Institute—in the cities of San Salvador, San Miguel, and Santa Ana. That strike is the most prominent one now. Two marches supporting the SSI workers were fired upon by the government.

S.A.: The papers here report that there was a lot of rock throwing and strikers carrying clubs with nails in them, and that much of this is encouraged by the FMLN.

Salmeron: We participated in two marches—an annual July 30 commemoration of a student massacre in 1975 and then a UNTS march—and we saw no evidence of that. When we were there, the papers reported that the government fired on the last march because the protesters (the paper referred to them as the "UNTS/FMLN" protesters) were carrying Uzis and M-16s, which is the most utterly absurd thing in the world.

Union members may talk to you about their view of one tendency versus another, but publicly the union movement has no relations with the FMLN. They think it's important that they not have any formal relationship right now because people are still terrorized.

If you're going into a factory for union organizing and everybody thinks, "That's the FMLN," then people aren't going to come out into the street and support you.

Also, once they are officially categorized as the urban wing of the FMLN, then they'll be a legitimate military target and will give the government an excuse to escalate the repression without there being much of a response in the United States.

And the people within the UNTS are really much broader than FMLN supporters. The union movement is so broad in El Salvador because basically the Duarte government is completely bankrupt. They spend every penny on the war.

The living standard has deteriorated

dramatically in the last few years. Unemployment is as high as 50 percent. Public discontent over economic conditions is amazing. Contrary to what the media reports, the UNTS is growing.

S.A.: Are women's issues expressed in the labor movement?

Salmeron: I think in the labor union movement there's some real feminist militancy developing. We talked to the Women's Committee of the Social Security Institute strikers and to the Women's Committee of FENASTRAS. These women were right up there on a lot of women's issues ranging from abortion to the role women have been playing in the political process.

Even the most progressive men expect the women to do all the housework. They told us about women who were beaten by their husbands for becoming too involved in union or political struggles. This seems to be very common, and the women are very much aware of the problem.

They see the need to organize around women's issues as well as general political issues. Some of the most militant unions in El Salvador are composed mostly of women.

S.A.: One of the provisions of the new peace plan is that it's supposed to allow democratic rights in the country. Clearly, people don't take that very seriously because all the opposition papers are closed down. There's constant terror.

Salmeron: No, it's just a way of sledgehammering Nicaragua. The Salvadorans are pretty savvy to that. In El Salvador, Duarte is offering an amnesty program in which he says he will talk to anybody who lays down their arms and comes back into San Salvador. It's obviously ridiculous given the level of repression.

There have been a whole series of captures, mutilations, rapes, and deaths. Three members of the coffee workers union have been abducted and remain disappeared since May. Bodies are appearing everywhere. ■

U.S. blocks aid to Nicaragua

Most Nicaraguans are desperately hoping that an end to the contra war is in sight with the signing of the new Central American "peace" agreement, reports *Socialist Action* correspondent Nancy Elnor, who has spent the last three months in Nicaragua.

"Nicaraguans are yearning for peace so that the millions of dollars spent for military defense can be redirected toward meeting human needs," Elnor writes. "They want an end to the bloodshed, to the suffering, to the long food lines, to the hunger."

Edgardo García, secretary general of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), told *Socialist Action*:

"If the [contra] war of aggression is stopped, we will be able to organize production effectively, work harder, and meet the social needs of the population. If the contra war is ended, with all our limitations, our revolution cannot be defeated. We are invincible."

An entire arsenal for sabotage

Assuming for a moment that the U.S. government is compelled to call a halt—at least for the time being—to the contra war, it is no secret that its ultimate goal remains to crush the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Even if the U.S. government is forced to keep the contra card in its back pocket for some time, it still has a whole set of

other means at its disposal to attempt to destabilize the Nicaraguan government and economy.

The U.S. government, for example, controls world finance and commerce. It has blocked foreign credits to Nicaragua from international lending agencies, resulting in the loss of over \$550 million in development loans.

It has also put tremendous pressure on the European and Latin American capitalist countries to halt their aid programs to Nicaragua.

West Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, which once had important aid programs to Nicaragua, have ended them. The Netherlands has sharply curtailed its \$12-million assistance program. In the case of France, President François Mitterand recently halted disbursements on a \$100-million loan because the Sandinistas were not able to make interest payments.

And, more important, the U.S. government has been effective in blocking vitally needed oil shipments to Nicaragua.

[In this, it has received the aid of the Soviet bureaucracy, which last May cut oil shipments to Nicaragua by 40 percent. According to *The New York Times* (Aug.



Funeral for one of 31,200 contra victims

20, 1987), the Soviet leadership made it clear to Sandinista officials that "Moscow was not willing to underwrite the Nicara-

guan economy as it has for Cuba since the early 1960s.]"

In search of oil

In June 1987, the Sandinista leadership made a desperate appeal for international help to relieve Nicaragua's critical oil shortage.

Vice President Sergio Ramirez and FSLN Commander Carlos Nuñez traveled to various countries in Eastern and Western Europe and Africa in search of oil. But, according to Ramirez, the efforts "did not provide the results we hoped for."

In mid-August, following the signing of the regional "peace" agreement by the five Central American presidents, Sergio Ramirez reiterated this appeal for oil. "Unless we receive oil," he said, "we will be facing serious problems and our peace efforts that are unfolding in Central America will be weakened."

During the first five years of the revolution, Mexico and Venezuela had supplied most of Nicaragua's oil. But in 1985, under pressure from the U.S. State Department, both countries suspended oil shipments.

In late July 1987, Mexico and Venezuela again declined to restore oil shipments to Nicaragua—despite the Sandinista government's urgent appeals.

So long as the Sandinista government is committed to defending the Nicaraguan Revolution, political and economic pressures of this kind will inevitably be exerted by the U.S. government to attempt to roll back the revolution. ■

... Peace plan

(continued from page 1)

it states is still the "operative United States proposal."

And the Arias plan is sufficiently vague in many areas to permit the U.S. government sufficient room to maneuver for concessions.

Maneuvering for concessions

Specifically, the United States has stated that the Sandinista government's process of "democratization" must be "irreversible" before it is willing to abandon the contras.

Under the Arias plan, what is meant by "irreversible" would be left to an international Verification Commission to decide. If that commission found that the Sandinistas had violated the terms of the agreement, the United States would then have the justification for renewed military aid to the contras—and eventually direct U.S. military intervention.

The U.S. government hopes to use peace negotiations to minimize the extent of public protests—especially in the United States and Central America—if they decide to move in for a kill.

The U.S. government has also demanded that any cease-fire in Nicaragua be negotiated directly between the Sandinista government and the contras. The Sandinistas, on the other hand, have stated that they are willing to negotiate only with the real contras—in Washington, D.C.

In the name of "democratization," the U.S. government hopes to undermine the Sandinista majority established by democratic elections in Nicaragua.

If the Sandinista government can be forced to grant the Nicaraguan capitalists unfettered freedom to mobilize against the revolution, the U.S. government might be willing to put the contras in their back pocket—at least for the time being.

But if the Sandinistas don't make the concessions demanded by U.S. imperialism, the U.S. government has said it will not play ball. In fact, Reagan administration officials have floated the idea of putting the money for military aid to the contras in an escrow account in the event "peace talks fail."

Containing the revolution

While the Arias plan grants international recognition to the Sandinista government, it does the same for the reactionary regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This is an aspect of the Arias plan the U.S. ruling-class media has openly praised.

The Arias plan also equates the liberation

forces in the region with the Nicaraguan contras. The FMLN guerrilla forces in El Salvador, for example, must lay down their arms and participate in the political process according to conditions established by the government of José Napoleon Duarte.

But unlike the contras in Nicaragua, the liberation fighters in El Salvador receive virtually no foreign military support. In fact, the contra war in Nicaragua was initially justified by the United States to interdict fictitious arms shipments from Nicaragua to the FMLN.

This aspect of the Arias plan strengthens the U.S.-backed regimes in Central America and contributes to containing and isolating the Nicaraguan Revolution.

Right to negotiate

The Sandinista government, which is under the imperialist gun, has every right to negotiate with whomever it chooses to gain a reprieve against the continued contra war.

But the Nicaraguan Revolution cannot survive in isolation in U.S. imperialism's

back yard. The only genuine allies of the Nicaraguan Revolution are the workers and peasants in the other Central American nations and throughout the world.

The Nicaraguan Revolution is closely bound up with the extension of the revolution and the establishment of a socialist federation of Central American states.

Only then will there be a lasting peace in the region. At the present time, however, the Sandinistas have every right to maneuver and exploit—diplomatically—the contradictions, crises, and difficulties of U.S. imperialism.

Task of antiwar movement

The U.S. anti-intervention movement must not be derailed into calling for support to a peace agreement the Sandinistas have been compelled to sign.

In addition to denying the right to self-determination to the people in El Salvador or Guatemala, this agreement only plays into the hands of capitalist politicians in this country who talk about peace while

preparing for war.

While Reagan and the Republican Party have taken the most intransigent stance in opposition to the Nicaraguan Revolution, the Democrats, including their most liberal wing, are no less hostile or treacherous.

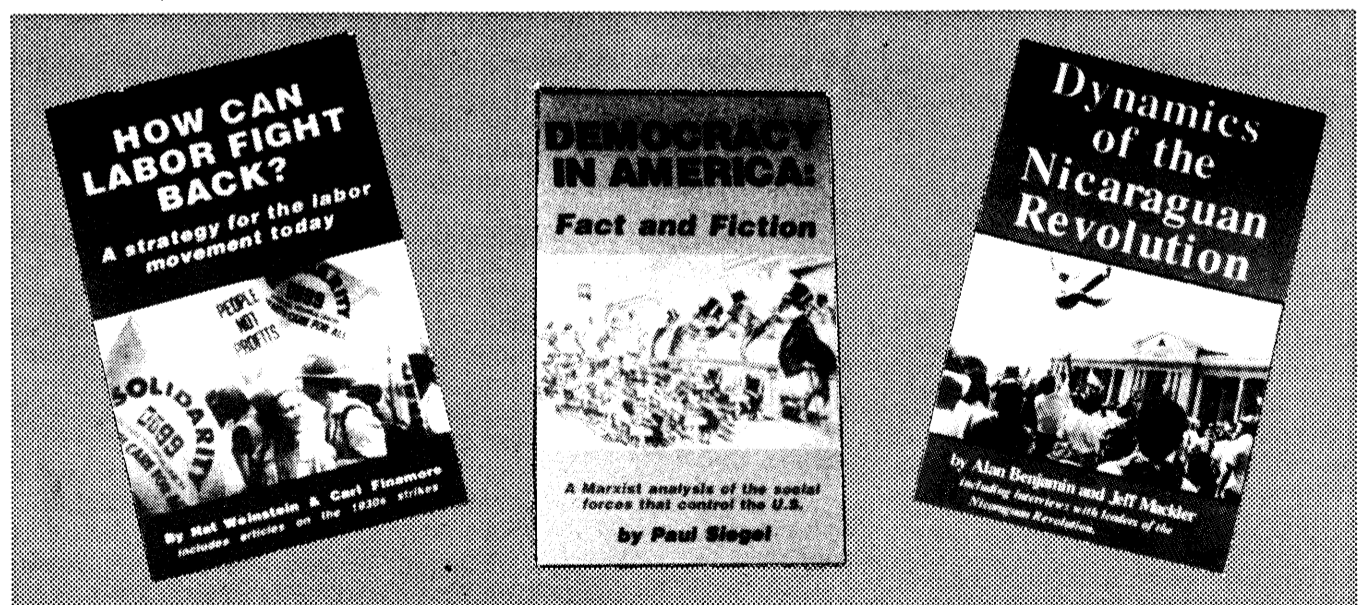
The liberal Democrats will also insist on "irreversible" concessions before they will allow the Nicaraguan people to go in peace.

The central reason for the current impasse of U.S. imperialism in relation to Nicaragua is the mass opposition of the American people to U.S. intervention.

Any "breathing space," "guarantees," or temporary peace that the Nicaraguan Revolution is able to secure is based on the mobilization of the U.S. antiwar sentiment and the continued resistance of the Nicaraguan people to contra aggression.

The demands of the movement must remain "U.S. Hands Off Nicaragua!" and "U.S. Out of Central America." These demands, moreover, will give the Nicaraguan government the most leverage for negotiating the best possible settlement in the region. ■

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Mexican elections pose challenge for left parties

By ALAN BENJAMIN

MEXICO CITY—Some time within the next few months, Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid—following a 50-year tradition—will handpick his successor. The Mexican press is rife with speculation about which of the possible contenders will be Mexico's next president.

But these will be no ordinary elections. Five years of economic crisis marked by record inflation and spiraling foreign debt have greatly sapped the legitimacy of this one-party political regime.

A growing number of Mexican working people have begun to understand that no matter which candidate of the PRI (the Spanish acronym for Mexico's ruling party) is elected, things will not change for the better.

Indeed, in order to pay back its \$103-billion foreign debt, the Mexican government—following the dictates of the International Monetary Fund—has imposed a series of harsh economic austerity packages. This has led to unbearable hardships for Mexico's poor and oppressed.

Inflation is nearing the 200-percent mark. The value of the peso, Mexico's currency, has fallen to about 1500 to the U.S. dollar. And over 2 million workers are without jobs; 675,000 of them having permanently lost their jobs in the last four years.

The "reconversion" of Mexican industry demanded by the IMF has also meant the proliferation of "maquiladora" sweat-shop factories near the U.S. border, the reprivatization of nationalized industries, and the bankruptcy of large Mexican capitalist ventures—such as the steel mills in Monterrey.

A new period of combativity

These capitalist austerity measures have, in turn, provoked mass discontent, mobilizations, and even strikes. A new period of working-class combativity is opening up.

From November 1986 to February 1987, university students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) mobilized by the hundreds of thousands against "reforms" aimed at adapting the university to the needs of industrial "reconversion." [See article in this section.]

The six-day strike of the Electrical Workers' Union (SME) was the first national industrial strike in many years. SME strikers demanded better wages and working conditions. Thousands of strikers also backed the student struggle and marched with the students in mass rallies in early February.

In March, teachers in the state of Chiapas staged a 60-day strike for better pay. And most recently the strikes of the autoworkers at Volkswagen in Puebla and Ford in Hermosillo, Sonora, have demonstrated the determination of the Mexican workers to resist the all-out attacks on their standard of living.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of landless peasants continue to occupy lands of the "terratenientes"—or large landowners. In April, thousands of peasant families in the state of Sonora confronted the police and the army before they were finally evicted from the occupied lands.

Democratic Current of the PRI

Against the backdrop of this economic crisis—and of the increased mobilizations by the workers—an important ruling-class political crisis has also developed.

For the first time in 50 years, a split has developed within the ruling PRI. A dissident Democratic Current has emerged with the demand to open up the presidential succession process and to return to the PRI's nationalist and populist economic policies.

The Democratic Current fears that the

government's "deviation from the PRI's revolutionary course" could spark further mobilizations and threaten the very foundations of capitalist rule in Mexico.

The Current is headed by former party president Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of former

Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas (the man who nationalized Mexico's oil in the late 1930s.)

Manuel Aguilar, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International, describes the emergence of the Democratic

APOYA AL CEU



PRT poster calling for support to the University Student Council, the elected leadership of the fighting student movement. Banner reads: Abrogation [of the "reforms"] or Strike!

How students forced government to retreat

In November 1986 the student movement at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico's largest university, exploded in reaction to new "reforms" proposed by Jorge Carpizo, the UNAM rector.

The "reforms" included cuts in government subsidies to the university, more restrictive admissions policies, and ever-increasing tuitions and registration fees.

The majority of the 300,000 UNAM students promptly organized to demand the withdrawal of the "Carpizo Plan." Mass assemblies were held on the campus, and a new student leadership—democratically elected by mass meetings in each university department—came forward: the University Student Council (CEU).

Teach-ins featuring debates between student leaders and the rector were broadcast over radio and TV. A student strike which shut down the university was called in mid-January 1987. On Feb. 9, over 350,000 people marched in the capital's downtown square, the Zócalo, in support of the students' demands.

Finally, on Feb. 10, Carpizo and the government were forced to retreat. Carpizo withdrew his reform project. He also agreed to the students' demand to convene a University Congress (Congreso Universitario) that would be

open to delegated representatives of the students (the CEU), the university workers' union (the STUNAM), the faculty, and the administration.

This Congress would decide all questions concerning the programs, character, and future of the UNAM. It was widely understood that the student-worker majority at the university would easily defeat the Carpizo "reform" proposals.

Since February, however, the government and the university administration have launched a major "red-baiting" and "violence-baiting" campaign against the University Student Council (CEU)—and against the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) in particular.

Carpizo has placed full-page ads in the major dailies denouncing the CEU and PRT for provoking "acts of terrorist violence and vandalism" on the campus and for "manipulating the student movement."

The CEU and the PRT have rejected all the charges. They claim that government agents have burned the campus buildings and buses.

The government's attacks are designed to weaken the CEU and to postpone—or even cancel—the University Congress in order to ram through the Carpizo "reforms" some time in the future.—A.B.

Current as follows:

"As was to be expected, the crisis has reached the ruling PRI. The Democratic Current represents the first important fissure in the official party. It is, in fact, a split—even though the Current has not yet been explicitly expelled from the PRI.

"The Current represents the emergence of a sector of the capitalist class which is uneasy with the course of the PRI and wants to do something about it. It wants to prevent the total abandonment of the traditional reformist rhetoric and practice of the party." (*Bandera Socialista*, July 20, 1987)

The left and the elections

Meanwhile, the upcoming 1988 presidential elections have also become a focus of activity and debate among the various parties comprising the Mexican left.

The two main reformist parties on the left, the Mexican Workers Party (PMT) and the Socialist Unified Party of Mexico (PSUM), fused in April 1987 with three minor parties to create the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS).

The PMT is a petty-bourgeois nationalist party; the PSUM is led by the pro-Moscow Stalinists. Both parties have an important following among intellectuals and the media, as well as strong links to the trade-union bureaucracy (the "charros") and to the dissident Democratic Current of the PRI.

In early 1986, the PSUM issued a statement calling on all left parties in Mexico to form a "mass party of the left." The PSUM was particularly intent on getting the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) to join this fused party.

The PRT is a Trotskyist party with a proud 10-year history and deep roots in the mass movements. [See article in this section on the PRT convention.]

In August 1986, the PRT leadership—after considerable debate—decided to oppose a fusion with the PSUM and the PMT, which had accepted the PSUM's offer.

The PRT proposed instead that they all form an electoral coalition that would run a single left candidate in the 1988 presidential elections.

The PRT resolution stated: "It would be greatly irresponsible to prematurely create a unified party, which would have important differences within it, and which could break into pieces soon after its creation."

The PMT and PSUM rejected the PRT's coalition proposal and insisted that the PRT dissolve into a fused political party.

Test of events clarifies debate

By the spring of 1987, a new factor had entered into the debate over regroupment of the Mexican left.

In late 1986 and early 1987, student protests, land occupations by landless peasants, and workers' strikes broke out throughout the country. This proved to be a better measure of the possibilities of fusion between the PMT/PSUM and the PRT—as these parties were being put to the test of events.

One revealing example of how the different parties responded to these events was the resurgent student movement.

The PRT threw itself into the student movement. It earned great respect among the UNAM students. A large number of delegates to the University Student Council (CEU), the elected leadership of the movement, were PRT members.

But Heberto Castillo, longtime leader of the nationalist PMT and probable presidential candidate of the newly formed PMS, came out publicly against the CEU.

Castillo characterized the CEU as "reactionary" and "unrepresentative of the students." Leading intellectuals in the PSUM also lined up behind the university rector against the student movement.

In its public press, the PRT denounced the PMT/PSUM leaders for their betrayal of the students' interests. The PRT explained that the heinous role played by the PMT and PSUM was motivated by

(continued on next page)



Rosario Ibarra speaks at July 26 PRT rally.

Göran Jacobsson

PRT convention launches Rosario Ibarra for president

By ALAN BENJAMIN

MEXICO CITY—The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International, held its Fifth National Convention here from July 25 to Aug. 2, 1987.

The main public rally took place on July 26. The remaining seven days were devoted to an internal discussion of the Mexican political situation and of the party-building tasks of the PRT.

The PRT credentials committee reported that 345 convention delegates were elected in 84 party units throughout the country, representing a total of 3438 members.

Convention public rally

The opening rally of the PRT convention reflected the deep roots the PRT has been able to establish in the mass movements during its 10-year existence.

Nearly 4000 people—mainly PRT members and their supporters from around the country—crowded into the largest auditorium of the Centro Médico to hear a

four-hour rally.

PRT peasant delegations came by buses and trucks from as far north as Sonora and as far south as Chiapas just for this event. As they entered the auditorium, they were loudly cheered with deafening chants of "PRT, PRT, PRT!"

Regional trade-union, slumdweller, women's, and student delegations were also greeted with loud applause and cheers.

Speakers at the rally included two of the five elected PRT deputies; Rosario Ibarra, the well-known human-rights activist who was the PRT presidential candidate in 1982; and leaders of other left political parties with which the PRT had just recently formed a "Federation of Parties of the Revolutionary Left." Miguel Romero, a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, also spoke.

The Federation of Parties of the Revolutionary Left was formed on July 22. It is an electoral bloc of seven parties that agreed to run Rosario Ibarra for president under the electoral emblem of "Unidad

Popular"—or Popular Unity.

The Federation program states that "participation in the elections should not be seen as a means to attain political power, but rather as a vehicle to strengthen the mass movements. The only road to power is through the direct revolutionary action of the toilers."

Rosario Ibarra speaks

In her speech to the rally, "Rosario"—as she is commonly known throughout Mexico—strongly condemned the austerity measures and the repression foisted on the Mexican people by the government of Miguel de la Madrid.

She described the July 24, 1987, demonstration of 20,000 "damnificados"—victims of the 1985 earthquake—whose demands for decent shelter have still not been met.

Rosario, who headed the demonstration, said that "the earthquake victims—together with all the victims of this oppressive system—need an electoral coalition that will serve as a vehicle to strengthen the mass movements and to make the voices of

are two poles of the left.

"According to the PRT, there is a 'revolutionary' pole organized around the PRT and a 'reformist' pole organized around the PMS. This way of thinking is sectarian—pure and simple."

The PRT's rejection of a fused "left" party that would include major sectors of the capitalist class (the Democratic Current) is anything but sectarian. Nor was it sectarian for the PRT to be on the side of the UNAM students and the SME strikers. The PMS leadership was on the opposite side of the barricades.

The Rosario Ibarra presidential campaign will not be chasing after a wing of the capitalist class for support. It has set itself the task of "stimulating the independent activity and organization of the Mexican masses."

The Rosario Ibarra presidential campaign is sure to win a tremendous hearing from the workers and peasants of Mexico.

all the oppressed heard."

Rosario also insisted that any presidential campaign that genuinely seeks to promote the mass struggles be totally independent of all ruling-class parties and personalities.

She sharply criticized the other major left electoral coalition, the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), for opposing the university students' mobilizations and for directly advocating collaboration with sectors of the PRI, the country's ruling party.

The PMS was formed in April 1987 by a fusion of five political parties, the two most important of which are the Stalinist PSUM and the nationalist PMT.

"Some people are trying to deceive the Mexican workers and peasants when they tell them that the road to power is through the 1988 presidential elections," Rosario continued. She was referring to Heberto Castillo, the probable presidential candidate of the reformist PMS coalition.

The PMS's greetings

The PMS sent greetings to the PRT convention. In its statement, the PMS reiterated its request that the PRT join the PMS to form a "single, organically unified political party of the Mexican left."

The PMS statement continued, "The policy of two or more electoral poles does not benefit anyone. It only helps our enemies."

The PRT has consistently rejected this fusion proposal by the PMS, proposing instead that the two major forces on the Mexican left form an electoral coalition that would run a single left candidate in the 1988 elections.

Edgard Sánchez speaks

In his keynote speech to the convention's inaugural rally, Edgar Sánchez, a member of the PRT's Political Committee, outlined the PRT's election strategy:

"We have insisted on the need for a total electoral coalition between the two left parties with legal ballot status [the PRT and the PMS] which could serve as the basis for an alliance of all the left parties, including those without legal ballot status.

"But in view of the fact that an electoral coalition of all the left parties has not been possible up to this point, the PRT could not wait any longer to put forward its own election campaign and strategy.

"This is why we helped put together the Federation of Parties of the Revolutionary Left. And this is why we have proposed to all the left—and to this convention—that we run compañera Rosario Ibarra for president of Mexico in the 1988 elections.

"Our overall objective in these elections is to stimulate the independent activity and organization of the masses and in this manner build the party as a necessary instrument to advance our revolutionary goals.

"The PRT is not willing to change its political objectives for a plate of lentils. It is not willing to dissolve itself [into a fusion with the PMS] for a mere electoral agreement."

After many days of serious—often sharp—political discussion, a large majority of the delegates at the PRT convention voted to endorse the orientation proposed by Edgard Sánchez in his rally speech.

... Mexican elections

(continued from page 8)

their quest for an alliance with the Democratic Current of the PRI. (Castillo, in fact, had called on the Democratic Current to join their new party.)

Federation of left parties

On July 22, 1987, the PRT joined with seven other "revolutionary left" organizations to form an electoral coalition for the 1988 elections: the Federation of Parties of the Revolutionary Left. [See article on PRT convention.]

At a press conference, Federation leaders announced that Rosario Ibarra, a well-known human rights activist, would be their 1988 presidential candidate. They also said that while they "did not discard the possibility of an electoral alliance with the

PMS," they did not consider such an alliance to be "indispensable."

But prospects for a united electoral coalition appear quite remote.

In the days following the PRT convention rally, PMS leaders issued statements which seemed to rule out any coalition with the PRT and appeared aimed at putting the onus for a divided left on the PRT.

Pablo Gómez, ex-secretary general of the Stalinist PSUM and a major leader of the PMS, wrote the following in the July 30 *La Jornada*:

"Our proposal for organic unity has now been rejected by the PRT... The response of the PRT was the creation of their own electoral coalition, which is based on their very dubious notion that in Mexico there



Göran Jacobsson

At its second national congress held in Johannesburg on July 14-18, 1987, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) voted to endorse the Freedom Charter as its "guiding document." The Charter has been most often identified with the banned African National Congress (ANC).

In the interest of providing our readers with the clearest possible assessment of this conference decision, we are reprinting two viewpoints from activists in the anti-apartheid struggle.

The first article, by Anne Mack, is reprinted

A discussion

from the July 23, 1987, issue of *Socialist Organizer*, a socialist weekly published in England. It has been edited slightly for space.

Mack puts forward the view that a workers' party based on the unions is needed in South Africa. This view was advanced in 1983 by Joe Foster, secretary general of FOSATU, one of the trade-union federations that merged with other union federations in December 1985 to form COSATU.

The second piece consists of excerpts from an interview with Sath Cooper, a major leader of the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and of the National Forum of South Africa.

Both AZAPO and the National Forum call for socialism in South Africa and argue for the formation of a "united front of workers' organizations in direct opposition to any popular-front strategy."

The interview with Cooper was conducted by *Informations Ouvrieres*, a French socialist weekly, and was published in its Aug. 12-19, 1987, issue. The translation from the French is by *Socialist Action*.

By ANNE MACK

The second national congress of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) ended last weekend.

Nearly 1500 delegates, representing 712,000 workers, voted to adopt the Freedom Charter as a "guiding document." The Charter calls for a society in which:

- "The people shall govern.
- "All national groups shall enjoy equal rights.
- "The people shall share in the country's wealth.
- "The land shall be shared among those who work it.
- "All shall be equal before the law.
- "All shall enjoy human rights.
- "There shall be work and security.
- "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened.
- "There shall be houses, security, and comfort.
- "There shall be peace and friendship."

The adoption by COSATU of the Charter marks a very close identification between the independent Black trade union and the ANC. However, it leaves many political questions unanswered.

South African unionists back Freedom Charter

The Freedom Charter can be and has been interpreted in many different ways. Some see it as a socialist document, or at least as a document that could only be implemented by a workers' government.

Others view it as a vision compatible with a kind of welfare capitalism. That was certainly Nelson Mandela's view when he stated:

"It is true that in demanding the nationalization of the banks, the gold mines, and the land, the Charter strikes a fatal blow at the financial and gold-mining monopolies and farming interests...

"But such a step is absolutely imperative and necessary because the realization of the Charter is inconceivable...until the monopolies are first smashed up and the national wealth of the country turned over to the people.

"The breaking up of these monopolies will open up fresh fields for the development of a non-European bourgeois class. For the first time in the history of the country, the non-European bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to own its own home and right mills and factories, and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before...

"The workers are the principal force upon which the democratic movement should rely, but to repel savage onslaught of the national government and to develop the fight for democratic rights it is necessary that other classes and groupings be joined. Non-European traders and businessmen are also potential allies."

This sums up Mandela's strategy: A broad, multi-class alliance against apartheid, with the working class as a stage army rather than the leading class, and a model of post-apartheid South Africa which is explicitly capitalist.

Oliver Tambo of the ANC reiterated on several occasions recently that this is still the basic strategy of the ANC.

Talks last week [in Senegal] between the ANC and prominent Afrikaansers have underlined this.

Mandela's, which is the dominant interpretation of the charter, fits uneasily with the commitment of many trade unions to a socialist solution to the crisis of apartheid.

What appears to be happening is that COSATU is being drawn into a long-term strategic alliance with the ANC without there actually being any real agreement on long-term strategic goals.

Need for workers' party

This points to a second problem with COSATU's basic political position as expounded by miners' leader Cyril Ramaphosa. The NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] leader talks of a time when working-class politics "eventually become the politics of all the oppressed in this country."

The question is how best to pursue the struggle for working-class leadership of the liberation movement.

One of the alternatives to a "convergence" of the popular movement and the trade unions, which is the most popular option in COSATU at the moment, is to build a mass workers' party based on a significant section of the trade unions.

The workers' party idea draws out the political logic of positions such as that of the metal union, NUMSA, which said at its founding congress:

"The lack of initiatives and the confusion that exists within the community itself arise from the lack of a working-class program..."

"The organized working class can only take the lead in the struggle if it has a clear program and aims which clarify exactly what is wanted by the working class and what is meant by their demands."

A working-class program, however, needs an organization to embody it and fight for it; otherwise it is simply something suspended in mid air. A party is needed to do the job...

The decisions of COSATU's congress should therefore not be seen as closing down the option of building a workers' party. Rather, it has made the task more urgent.



COSATU president Elijah Barayi addresses delegates to the 2nd National Congress in July.

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AZAPO leader discusses trade unions and ANC

The following are excerpts from an interview with Sath Cooper.

Along with Steve Biko, who was assassinated on Sept. 12, 1977, Cooper is considered one of the most prominent figures in the Black Consciousness movement. He was imprisoned for nine years at Robben Island for his political activity.

In 1985, Cooper became president of AZAPO, an organization that was founded in 1978 following the proscription of the Black Consciousness movement. AZAPO later affiliated with the National Forum, a coalition including seven unions and various left-wing currents, like the Cape Action League.

Question: A few weeks ago, a meeting took place in the capital of Senegal between white South African liberals and representatives of the ANC. What do you make of this meeting?

Cooper: I think the Western press gave this meeting more attention than it deserves. What is essential is not what goes on at this type of gathering, but what goes

on inside South Africa in the mass movement.

The ANC is an important component of this movement, but it is not the only component. And it is precisely because there are many organizations that have contributed to promoting the mass mobilizations that there is so much concern in certain milieus about finding a "solution" to the current situation before it is too late.

Question: One of the major federations of Black workers, the COSATU, recently held its congress. Much has been said in the French press about the congress' decision to endorse the Freedom Charter.

Cooper: The COSATU congress was a major event because it affirmed the will of the majority of the membership to chart a socialist course for South Africa. This is what the Western press failed to point out. The Freedom Charter was adopted as a document that fits into this overall perspective.

But I do think it is unfortunate that a trade-union federation was called upon to adopt a specific, narrow political platform.

There was, in fact, widespread opposition to this procedure among various union affiliates to COSATU—something the media also failed to point out.

In my view, it was a mistake to have imposed such a political program. As anyone can readily understand, particularly those who are fighting against apartheid and capitalist exploitation, there are diverse political currents within the liberation movement.

There is the ANC, but there are also the Pan-Africanists, the continuators of the Black Consciousness Movement, and the socialists who are regrouped around the Azanian Manifesto [the founding platform of AZAPO].

It is the right of all workers to discuss all of these political positions and to make up their minds on their own. It is not up to the leadership to hastily push through the approval of a particular program without any real discussion or debate...

But I think it would be wrong to conclude that COSATU has lined up behind a particular political organization. The problems that are contained in the decision to endorse the Freedom Charter will only become apparent in the months to come.

It would be unfortunate, however, if some time down the road, COSATU had to confront not only the apartheid state, but other sectors wishing to place obstacles in the path of its trade-union activity. ■

A year and a half after President-for-life Claude Duvalier fled the island, the people of Haiti are once more in the streets. They are demanding an end to a government that continues Duvalierist policies of oppression, corruption, and attacks against the living standards of the population.

Peasants in the countryside and workers and students in the cities are being drawn into an ever-widening struggle that threatens to topple the regime of Lt. Gen. Henri Namphy.

Disillusion with the National Council of Government (CNG) set in almost as soon as it assumed power following Duvalier's exit. This is quite understandable since the new government was selected by Duvalier with the consent of the American ambassador.

The government has alternated between brutal repression and reluctant concessions. In March 1987, a new constitution was drawn up, promising democratic elections. A big majority voted for the constitution. They expected to be able to vote freely for a new government in elections set for November.

But in June, the CNG declared that the election would be conducted by the junta itself instead of by the independent electoral commission the constitution called for.

Facing the prospect of a rigged election, the Haitian masses exploded at the end of June in a series of demonstrations, marches, and strikes that involved nearly all sections of the country. It is similar to the uprising that forced Duvalier to flee, but on a higher political level.

A new opposition

In the last 18 months, numerous political parties have been founded, and scores of leaders have emerged. Unions are functioning and peasant organizations have sprung up to demand land reform.

A coalition of parties and groups, known as the Organization of 57, has taken leadership of much of the anti-government activity. It calls for an end to the rule of the military junta and the establishment of a democratic, civilian-controlled government.

The coalition is dominated by leaders



Haitian workers and peasants have mobilized to destroy remnants of Duvalierism.

Haitian masses fight regime for democracy

who are moderate to conservative. Some of them demand no more than the addition of civilian members to the present CNG.

Lt. Gen. Henri Namphy, head of the CNG, responded to the first demonstrations with repression. He has \$400,000 worth of crowd-control equipment, tear gas, shotgun pellets, and other military hardware at his disposal—supplied by the United States. The army was ordered to break up all demonstrations before they got out of hand.

The troops carried out orders in a brutal fashion when demonstrators in a number of cities demanded honest elections. Soldiers fired directly into the crowds, killing 37 and wounding over 100.

Despite the shootings, workers and students continued to march and protest. The government was forced to retreat and

return responsibility for the election to the election committee.

Unions call general strike

When workers struck for a minimum wage of \$6 a day, Namphy dissolved the main union body, the Autonomous Confederation of Union Workers (CATH). The workers responded by calling a national general strike that lasted over a week. Namphy was again forced to retreat and restore the union.

One problem for the junta has been the role of the army for the last 30 years. Unlike most Latin American dictatorships, the army did not serve as the major power base for the Duvaliers. Francois Duvalier distrusted the army, and constructed an independent military force, the Tonton Macoutes. This semi-gangster militia numbered 300,000, compared with only 70,000 regular soldiers.

When Duvalier fled, Lt. Gen. Namphy was forced to disband the Macoutes and rely on the army. Not only was the army too small a force to control hundreds of thousands of restless Haitians, but in addition some soldiers were seen siding with the demonstrators.

Namphy has begun to stiffen the army as a repressive force by enlisting former Macoutes. They do not share the average soldier's reluctance to shoot into unarmed crowds.

In the countryside, the Macoutes have operated more openly. In Jean Rabel, about 100 miles from Port au Prince, peasants who had been robbed of their land set out to get it back. On the way, they were ambushed by agents of the landlords and chopped to death with machetes and axes. As many as 300 peasants are said to have been killed in the massacre.

Crackdown on opposition

At the end of July, the government went on a broad offensive. Men in uniform fired on six radio stations that had supported anti-government protests. They also made threats against leaders of the Organization of 57, firing into their homes.

In a particularly horrifying incident, government thugs lynched Louis Eugene Athis, a prominent mass leader, and two others. In typical Macoute fashion, the assassins yelled, "We don't want communism!"

Death threats, lynchings, and shootings have not smashed the organizations of struggle thrown up in the last 18 months. Living conditions have gotten worse since Duvalier fled. A long drought has led to famine conditions in parts of the countryside.

In the cities, the Organization of 57 and anti-government groups outside the coalition are debating means of continuing the struggle. There is unanimous agreement that the CNG must go. But many doubt that a new civilian government can solve the horrendous problems of Haiti.

The shantytown dwellers and the peasants call for uprooting the old order. They will not be satisfied with either the Catholic Church officials or the leaders of the coalition who are calling for restraint. Their strikes and protests will more than likely continue.

... Mineworkers

(continued from page 1)

three years to build up our strength again."

Ramaphosa emphasized, "This was a dress rehearsal for further action; 1988 has already been set by our members as the year when the National Union of Mineworkers is going to move to win more significant gains."

"A living wage"

After two weeks of the strike, the companies conceded some fringe benefits. But the NUM was stymied in its drive for a substantial rise in wages.

The workers were forced to accept the employers' offer of a maximum 23-percent wage increase—virtually the same settlement obtained in negotiations in 1985 and 1986. Given the country's inflation rate of 17 percent, Black mineworkers, as a whole, will remain in poverty.

Blacks earn about one-fifth the wages of

white workers in the industry. But the contrast between their wages and the profits gleaned by the mine owners is even more startling. Every 30 seconds, the mining corporations gain in profits what Black mineworkers earn in a year.

The strike was part of this year's "campaign for a living wage," launched by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The campaign tears at the heart of the apartheid system, in which laws are used to hold down the majority of the population as a reserve of cheap labor for capitalism.

The living-wage campaign has helped to generate the largest strike wave in South Africa's history. During the first quarter of this year alone, businesses lost over 770,000 work days to strikes—more than the yearly total for any single year since 1980. Last month, COSATU threatened a massive general strike in solidarity with the mineworkers.

Business Week, voicing the concern of capitalists in the United States, warned that a victory by the mineworkers "would fuel Black union militancy throughout the economy and serve as a symbol of Black power." Faced with this prospect, the entire capitalist class closed ranks against the mineworkers.

"Liberals" lead the attack

The employers' attack was led by the giant Anglo America Corporation, which owns close to 70 percent of the total capital invested in South Africa's mining industry. Anglo America's top executives style themselves as being "anti-apartheid." The company bankrolls the "liberal" Progressive Federal Party, and it even sent a representative to Zambia to meet with the African National Congress.

But this so-called "progressive" corporation showed little hesitation in firing



NUM President Cyril Ramaphosa: "This was a dress rehearsal for further action."

36,000 of its employees. After the settlement, the company's industrial-relations director insisted that the dismissed strikers would only be rehired if their jobs were not already taken by scabs.

To sweeten the bitter medicine, he noted that the company's policies during the strike were "part of the painful transition to a modern, nonracial industrial society." In other words, the heads of the Anglo America Corporation will continue to advocate "an end to apartheid." They believe this course is the least troublesome for them to continue to make profits.

In South Africa, some 1360 families (less than 0.1 percent of the population) own and control 80 percent of the wealth. This ruling class and their stewards in the government, no matter how "progressive"

they may profess to be at a given moment, have *nothing* in common with the interests of the majority of the population—the Black working class.

What is most troublesome to the "liberal" mine owners is the power of the Black labor movement that was expressed in the miners' strike. That power showed the ability of the Black working class to lead the struggle not only against apartheid, but against the capitalist system which supports it.

As NUM President James Motlasi said at the union's conference last February, "Under capitalism, we will never find a solution to our problems. It is only with a democratic socialist South Africa that the working class and all the oppressed people will have the wealth which they produce under their control."

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Massive labor movement shakes up South Korea

In less than two months, the center of the South Korean struggle has shifted from the campus to the workplace.

Tens of thousands of workers have engaged in strikes and job actions following President Chun Doo Hwan's July 1 acceptance of major political reforms. These were won by massive demonstrations throughout the month of June.

Longshoremen, autoworkers, miners, and other workers have shaken the Korean economy and caused the total shutdown of major plants. By Aug. 13, four of the country's five major automakers had been forced to close. Container yards at the port city of Pusan were brought to a standstill.

By Aug. 29, workers at some 600 companies across the country were on strike for better pay, safer working conditions, and free trade unions. Over 2000 companies were affected by labor disputes throughout July and August.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry reported that labor actions had cost over \$1.4 billion in lost business from July 25 to Aug. 13.

Workers win major victories

On Aug. 28, a 19-day dispute at the giant Daewoo shipyard was settled when the strikers won a large wage increase. The settlement came a week after the Hyundai Motor Co. was compelled to come to terms with striking workers there.

Hyundai had locked out workers at six of its industrial plants to counter the formation of a new independent union. Over 50,000 workers held mass demonstrations following the lockout and virtually took over the southern city of Ulsan.

The unrest forced the government to send a negotiations team to Ulsan to draw up terms for a compromise. Although the Hyundai workers agreed to exclude any "outside elements" from their organization, they won their key demand of recognition of their new industrial union.

Demand for free unions

A great number of strikers in South Korea are not members of any trade union. Those workers who are unionized belong to the government-controlled Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU), the only labor organization allowed to function legally.

The FKTU has long been a supporter of the ruling Democratic Justice Party. Its primary function has been to police the Korean workforce rather than represent it.

The struggle against the FKTU has become a part of the struggle against the Korean capitalists, and the demand for independent, democratic trade unions has rung out alongside the demands over wages and working conditions.

Labor ministry officials said that between July 1 and July 27, 100 new labor unions were formed. Some of them were in the



Locked-out Hyundai workers stage largest demonstration in South Korean history.

Sandro Tucci

country's 10 largest corporations—which had been unorganized. The union recognition won by the workers at Hyundai Motor Co. should set the tone for other independent union activists.

The growing sentiment against the FKTU and the rise of independent union activity forced the federation's leadership to take a more militant stand on issues they had previously left untouched.

Min Yo Ki, the FKTU's general secretary, recently made statements against the government and the "imbalanced development between the employer and the employee."

However, Min went on to assert that the Federation will maintain its ties to the ruling party. He also confessed to the *Los Angeles Times* that his new aggressive posture is an attempt to "absorb a lot of these so-called radicals and their supporters" into the FKTU.

Roots of labor upsurge

The spark which ignited the current wave of strikes came from the successful June demonstrations against the government. These mass actions culminated in President Chun Doo Hwan's July 1 decision to enact major political reforms, including direct presidential elections before the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Workers participated in these demonstrations alongside students and other activists. This victory and the atmosphere of political liberalization which followed Chun's decision gave workers the confidence they needed to struggle for their own demands.

While these demonstrations pushed the labor movement into motion, the current strike wave has its roots in the enormous economic and political oppression the workers of South Korea have lived under for decades.

The FKTU states that the average workweek for a South Korean worker last year was 54.4 hours. This is the longest workweek in the world. The average monthly wage, however, is only \$370.

The "economic miracle" of South Korean productivity has also taken a devastating human toll. The United Nations International Labor Organization reported that 1718 workers were killed on the job last year and 141,809 were disabled. Like the workweek, the incidence of industrial accidents in South Korea ranks as the highest in the world.

A cautious approach

In the past, labor unrest led to major attacks on the workers by the military governments that have ruled the country. The massive scope of the current strike wave, however, has forced the ruling party

to take a more cautious approach.

A possible example of what this will mean in upcoming negotiations was seen at the recent Hyundai Motor Co. strike. Deputy Labor Minister Han Jin Hee flew to Ulsan on Aug. 18 to deal with the labor unrest which followed the Hyundai lockout.

After meeting with top Hyundai officials and representatives of the Ulsan police department, Han put a proposal before thousands of rallying workers in the Hyundai sports stadium. The strikers agreed to return to work under the banner of their new union and to begin negotiations for wage increases.

Is the government neutral?

The Labor Ministry portrayed itself as a neutral party intervening in the interest of social stability. But the new "winds of

that the government is a neutral party or a "friend of labor."

Reforms inadequate

Kim Young Sam, the head of the opposition Reunification Democratic Party (RDP), pleaded with striking workers on Aug. 10 not to give the government "an excuse to deter liberalization of political reforms that were undertaken in July after weeks of rioting in Seoul and other cities."

The workers have asked, however, what "political liberalization" and "democracy" can mean alongside the massive social inequality which exists in South Korea.

Unlike the leadership of the RDP, the students and activists who led the June demonstrations clearly see the connection between their struggle for political change and the workers' struggle for economic justice.

At a demonstration in downtown Seoul on Aug. 12, a new slogan was heard with the demands against U.S. imperialism and the government: "Overthrow the military dictatorship trampling on labor."

Opening of the campuses

In another important development, on Aug. 25, the South Korean government arrested six leaders of the Yonsei University student council. On Aug. 27, the government ordered a campaign to clamp down on "pro-communist" agitators.

Prime Minister Kim Chung Yul blamed outside "elements" for stirring up the labor movement, and vowed "to resolutely exterminate these forces from society." Justice Minister Chung Hae Chang reported that he is preparing charges against at least 60 "subversives" suspected of inciting labor unrest.

On Aug. 28, the government went beyond these limited measures against individuals and initiated the largest crackdown on opposition forces since June. Thousands of police broke up rallies by students and workers throughout the country.

The most massive confrontation occurred during the funeral procession for a worker killed by police at the Daewoo shipyard. Two thousand police turned back 28 buses of mourners and forced them to return home.

These repressive acts, many of them targeting student activists, are due to government apprehension over the possibility of united actions between students and workers this fall. The potential for another major explosion is high.

South Korea provides a stunning example of the power that working people can wield through mass action. International solidarity with their struggle is essential.

**" Like the
workweek, the
incidence of
accidents in South
Korea ranks as the
highest in the
world."**

democracy" in the ruling party had nothing to do with the government's apparently "benevolent" role.

The power and determination of the Hyundai strikers was the decisive factor in the Ulsan victory. The Labor Ministry's only interest was to put a lid on the massive strike and to prevent it from spreading. Undoubtedly, Han Jin Hee hopes he can pacify the Hyundai workers and launch an attack on them at some future date.

Although the government of South Korea has been largely discredited this summer in the eyes of most Koreans, there is still danger of confusion on its role as mediator between the workers and capitalists.

The Korean government and the ruling Democratic Justice Party have shown themselves time and again to be enemies of labor. President Chun Doo Hwan suspended all collective bargaining upon seizing power in 1980.

In future negotiations, the Korean workers must not be tricked into believing

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Bureaucracy silences Czech jazz musicians

By ADAM WOOD

Six months ago, on March 12, 1987, Karel Srp and Vladimir Kouril, two Czechoslovakian musicians, were sentenced to 16 months in prison—with the six months they had already served in pre-trial detention credited to their time.

Three others were given suspended sentences and placed on probation up to four years. Two remaining musicians who were too ill to stand trial will be put on trial in the near future. The charge against the defendants was "unauthorized commercial activities."

These seven men are all leaders of the now outlawed Jazz Section of the Czech musicians union. The Section was formed in 1971 and soon became an outlet for many artists seeking refuge from cultural repression.

The Jazz Section utilized the fact that musical publications were not as strictly censored as political journals. The Section's

" A petition demanding the immediate release of the musicians was signed by several thousand people."

magazine and literature contained writings rejected by official publications and materials which covered many subjects besides music.

The Section published uncensored works by two of Czechoslovakia's writers, Bohumio Habal, the novelist, and Jaroslav Seiffert, a Nobel Prize-winning poet. Seiffert's Nobel acceptance speech had not been published in Czechoslovakia until the

Jazz Section did so.

These writings and ideas had a large impact in Czechoslovakia, and the size and influence of the Jazz Section grew rapidly. The Section had 8000 members in the early '80s, and its publications had a circulation of 80,000 to 100,000.

The Czech government began to feel threatened by the Section's activities and attempted to pressure the musicians' union

to dissolve the Jazz Section. In 1983 the union complied, but immediately took the Section into its Prague organization.

In July of 1984, the entire musicians' union was suspended with the ultimatum of expelling all Jazz Section members. Nonetheless, the union continued to give refuge to the Jazz Section, and the suspension was repealed.

Finally, the Czech authorities arrested the

seven leaders of the Section and had the Jazz Section's assets liquidated.

The Section's fans were outraged. A "Committee of Jazz Branch Activists" was formed. A petition demanding the immediate release of the musicians was signed by several thousand people.

About 150 people crowded the halls surrounding the courtroom where the trial was held. The crowd maintained syncopated clapping for 20 minutes during the judge's verdict.

Judge Stiborik called the Section's work commendable, but closed his presentation announcing that "social values must be regulated." The 16-month terms were only a fraction of the eight-year sentences the musicians were liable for.

Vaclav Havel, an award-winning Czech playwright, commented: "It's completely absurd to say that what these men contribute to culture is great but that he [Stiborik] must still send them to prison. The only right sentence would have been to free all the defendants."

Trotsky and artistic freedom

In 1924, Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution, outlined the relationship of the Soviet state to the various artistic groups and tendencies in the Soviet Union:

"While holding over them all the categorical criterion for the revolution or against the revolution, to give them complete freedom in the sphere of artistic self-determination."

This relationship existed with a government that still operated in the interest of the Soviet and world working class. The Stalinist bureaucracy which took control of the Soviet Union soon after 1924 and which still rules the Soviet Union and much of Eastern Europe must operate under different norms.

The ruling bureaucracy exists at the expense of the Czech workers. It maintains its privileges through austerity measures and Soviet military presence. The bureaucracy's cultural guidelines are based on: for or against the ruling bureaucracy. Of course, this narrows the field for artistic self-determination more than a bit.

In the midst of new political "reforms" emanating from the Soviet Union, the Jazz Section incident provides an interesting indication of the limits to how far the corrupt bureaucracies are capable of going.

The Jazz Section leaders must be released and allowed to exist and function legally. The only criminals in Czechoslovakia are the ruling bureaucrats who cannot allow genuine cultural freedom.

Czech dissident speaks on Gorbachev's reforms



By JIM RICHTER

In April 1987, shortly before Mikhail Gorbachev's state visit to Czechoslovakia, the Charter 77 democratic-rights organization sent a letter to the Soviet leader in which it urged that all Soviet troops and nuclear missiles be withdrawn from Czechoslovakia.

The letter stated: "If the Soviet Union eliminates the principal barrier that it has placed in the path of the development of democracy in Czechoslovakia, it will contribute to the acceleration of its own process of democratization and will simultaneously reinforce the confidence between our two peoples and states, without which even the best-intentioned initiatives are doomed to fail."

In an interview in the July 13, 1987,

issue of *Inprecor*, a magazine published in Paris by the Fourth International, Peter Uhl, one of the most prominent Czech dissidents, explains why he didn't sign the Charter 77 letter. Uhl was imprisoned from 1969 to 1973 and again from 1979 to 1984.

"I believe the purpose of Charter 77 is to promote human rights," Uhl said. "In that sense it is legitimate for the Charter 77 movement to demand that Gorbachev withdraw all Soviet troops stationed in Czechoslovakia."

"But what is not legitimate," Uhl said, "is for the Charter 77 people to take a political position on the so-called democratization in the Soviet Union, on the reforms, on *glasnost*. The Charter has a plurality of political views and opinions and should not take political positions on these matters."

"Moreover, it is profoundly incorrect," Uhl continued, "to express even the slightest sympathy for Gorbachev's program... In my opinion, the Soviet system is not reformable. Even if the Gorbachev reforms are progressive in the domain of censorship, culture, and other aspects of political life, these reforms do not in any manner propose to democratize the country in the pluralist sense of the term."

Clear the accused in the Moscow Trials

The following statement demanding that the names of the accused in the Moscow Trials be cleared was published in England earlier this year. Socialist Action, together with other organizations in the United States and Canada, is gathering signatures of prominent personalities to add to the list.

The signature campaign, which is expected to get underway in the coming months, has already produced the following names: Milton Wolpin, Ralph Schoenman, Mya Shone, Susan Weissman (U.S.); Carl Birchard, John Boyd, Ross Dowson, Cy Gonick, Harry Kopyto, Norman Penner, Rick Salutin, and Jesse Vorst (Canada).

If you'd like to add your name to this statement please contact Socialist Action, 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110; or the Moscow Trials Campaign, 46, Princes Way, London, SW19. Financial support to help promote this appeal should be sent directly to the Campaign in England.

It is now over 50 years since the infamous Moscow Show Trials. It is astounding that at a time when the Soviet government is at pains to emphasize its concern with "human rights" and proclaims

the need for *glasnost* (openness), the accused in these trials, with a few exceptions, are still considered guilty of being paid agents of Nazism, and other crimes.

Among these men were numbered several who played outstanding roles in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The reputations of founders of the Soviet state like Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky, and Bukharin were besmirched or expunged from the history books.

Today, no one doubts that the "confessions" at the trials—the sole basis for the prosecution—were utterly false. Seven defendants in the third trial, Krestinsky and others, have been both judicially rehabilitated and politically exonerated. So have the military leaders, Tukhachevsky and others, whose military trial in 1937 was held in secret. But the admittedly false evidence against these men was inseparable from the charges against all the other accused.

None of the accused, of course, is alive today. Many were executed immediately after their trials. Others died in prison or camps. Leon Trotsky, the chief accused in all three of the trials, was murdered in exile in 1940.



Leon Trotsky: Chief organizer of the October insurrection; chief defendant, in absentia, at the Moscow Trials.

However, families of some of the defendants are still living in the Soviet Union. Some have also suffered imprisonment and exile. It is worth recalling that a review of all these cases was promised by Khrushchev, but this promise was broken.

We the undersigned therefore call on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice, as took place with Krestinsky. We are confident that all those accused in the Trials of 1936-38 will be shown to have been innocent. They should immediately be rehabilitated, their honor

restored, their families compensated, and their graves marked.

Signed by: Tariq Ali; Sydney Bidwell, member of Parliament/MP; Paul Boateng; Sam Bornstein; Fenner Brockway; Raymond Challinor; Jeremy Corbyn, MP; Terry Davis, MP; Meghnad Desai; Tamara Deutscher; Linda Douglas; Peter Fryer; Mildred Gordon; Reg Groves; Eric Heffer, MP; Tom Kemp; Walter Kendall; George Krasso; Eddie Loyden, MP; Oliver MacDonald; Ian Mikardo, MP; Stan Newens, MP; Brian Pearce; Felix Pirani; Al Richardson; Frank Ridley; Cyril Smith; Harry Wicks; David Winnick, MP; Charlie van Gelderen.

Pivotal role played by workers and farmers in American Revolution

The hoopla surrounding the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution will undoubtedly neglect to mention the class antagonisms within the revolutionary forces.

In this first of a two-part series, the revolutionary initiative of the workers and farmers is examined—both for its effectiveness against the English throne and the fear it inspired among merchants, plantation owners, and businessmen within the revolutionary camp.

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Working people fought the American Revolution. Mechanics and tradesmen organized and led the early stages of the struggle. Workers and small farmers were the troops that carried the revolution to victory.

But no working people attended the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The great majority of delegates were large landowners, merchant capitalists, and lawyers who built personal fortunes serving the wealthy.

Their deliberations were held in secret. An armed sentry was posted at the door. The majority of the population was left out. "We the People" were betrayed.

The American Revolution came about through the convergence of two movements. One was the effort of the landowning and merchant classes to rule without the repressive control of Britain. The second was the struggle of the workers and small farmers for land, democracy, and the means to make a living.

The first movement was triumphant. The second was only partly successful.

These movements were not always complementary. Especially in the back-country subsistence-farming regions, many people saw the major source of their oppression in the control exercised by a handful of wealthy colonial families. The

policies of the British government seemed more remote.

The small farmers rebel

New York, for example, still bore the heritage of the Dutch feudal landowners. Their descendants ruled domains of millions of acres. Property qualifications were so high in New York that only half the white male population could vote.

In northeastern New York in the 1760s, Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys led a rebellion against the "attorneys and other gentlemen" who oppressed the people. They asked the British to support their cause, which eventually split off the territory of Vermont.

Land-hungry tenant farmers in the Hudson Valley also rebelled, turning to the British for aid against the landlords.

The small farmers and agricultural workers of North Carolina, centered in the mountainous western counties, formed a movement of "Regulators" in opposition to the merchants, large slave-owning planters, and colonial officials. In the 1760s, the North Carolina farmers organized armed detachments to prevent the collection of taxes and the confiscation of tax delinquents' property.

Finally, in 1771, several thousand Regulators were defeated by an army using cannon. The battle had further consequences five years later when the North Carolina merchants and planters opted to join the



Enraged Pennsylvania troops mutiny against officers in 1781. Such incidents were not infrequent because American rich tried to renege on promises of land, money, and discharges.

struggle for independence from Britain. Most of the small farmers of the region chose to side with the British or remain neutral.

Black slaves were likewise divided in their loyalties. Thousands of slaves joined the imperial armies when the British commander in Virginia offered them freedom. The Continental Army was forced to lift its ban on Black enlistment; the Black soldiers were offered freedom "after independence." By the end of the war, some 5000 Blacks had joined the revolutionary troops.

"The mob" takes on the British

Anti-British feeling was strongest in the towns and in the coastal regions where crops were grown for export. These areas were most affected by the duties and restrictions on trade that Parliament passed beginning in the 1760s.

Working people took the initiative in organizing the struggle against the British. They called themselves Regulators, Associators, or (more commonly) Sons of Liberty and Daughters of Liberty.

These groups, which became the radical wing of the movement, were usually led by middle-class tradesmen and politicians—and occasionally by people of means. But to most of the privileged classes, these revolutionaries were known as "the mob."

"The merchants in Boston," an aristocrat complained in 1770, "are now out of the question in all debates at their town meeting—which is carried on by a mob of the lowest sort of people!"

During the 1760s, the merchants and planters successfully encouraged the lower classes to build mass demonstrations against the Stamp Act, which placed a tax on business documents and public records.

In 1765, however, a group of workers and sailors in New York City went "too far." They threw bricks at the fort and hung the lieutenant governor in effigy. That summer, a procession of several thousand shipworkers, mechanics, and apprentices in Boston also went "out of bounds." The workers burnt down the house of the British stamp agent.

These events alarmed wealthy people throughout the colonies. If the workers are allowed to attack property, they asked, where will they stop? "No taxation without representation" was a potentially dangerous demand to which the American ruling classes were as vulnerable as the British.

Merchants urge moderation

New York landowner and merchant Gouverneur Morris pointed out that if agitation should continue against the British, "we shall be under the domination of a riotous mob. It is to the interest of all men, therefore, to seek for reunion with the parent state."

At the time, a boycott on British goods was in place against Parliament's efforts to place a tax on tea and other commodities. In 1770, after the British offered some

concessions, the New York merchants were able to break the boycott in their city. As a result, they lost influence in the popular movement.

In 1773, however, the British passed a new act giving a monopoly on tea to the East India Company. Tea was to be dumped onto the American market at a lower price than that paid for smuggled tea. The Tea Act angered the American merchants, who had grown rich from smuggling.

Many merchants felt newly compelled to make common cause with the radicals. Some participated in the boycott movement for the time being, but hoped to steer the course of the struggle toward more moderate ends—including a compromise with the British.

In New York, in 1774, the merchants set up a group to try to capture leadership of the movement. But the workers countered by organizing their own Committee of Mechanics.

The committee called for "equal rights for the classes hitherto excluded from voting" as well as for complete non-cooperation with the British. This call for a combined struggle won a large following.

Workers organize militia

In the same year, workers led by the Mechanics Association of Philadelphia organized an armed militia to fight for "our just rights and privileges." A united front with the back-country farmers was formed. These "Associators" soon helped to form a new Pennsylvania government "on the authority of the people alone."

When the First Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia, many of the merchants and planters still hoped the spirit of compromise would prevail. To their dismay, the majority of delegates were radicals, often elected with the support of the mechanics' associations. Symbolically, the congress was held in Carpenter's Hall instead of in the more regal Statehouse.

But a shift began to take place. On the one hand, the British hardened their position. Boston was placed under virtual military rule. After the British attacked the militia at Lexington and Concord, Mass., those merchants and planters who were still wavering were forced to take sides. Most of them turned toward a pro-independence position.

On the other hand, the workers and small farmers were not strong enough to lead the revolution for any length of time. Their day had not yet come. The early organizers of the revolution—the mechanics, the Sons and Daughters of Liberty—were relegated to a subordinate place behind the periwigged "Founding Fathers" of the history books.

But the working classes continued to make themselves heard—not only in the war against the British but in rebellions against their new "republican" leaders. These events, which led up to the writing of the Constitution, will be described in next month's *Socialist Action*. ■



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The U.S. Constitution: 'Coup d'état by the rich'

This month marks the 200th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. In previous issues, *Socialist Action* has printed several articles related to this event, and several readers and supporters have sent us their own commentaries.

The following contribution is by Victor Saxe, a writer in the San Francisco Bay Area and a former college professor who has specialized in American history in recent years.

By VICTOR SAXE

One of the greatest secrets of United States history is that George Washington and his Society of Cincinnati (composed of army officers who had served under him in the War for Independence), James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, and other "great heroes" of the time were traitors who overthrew the legal U.S. government in a coup d'état.

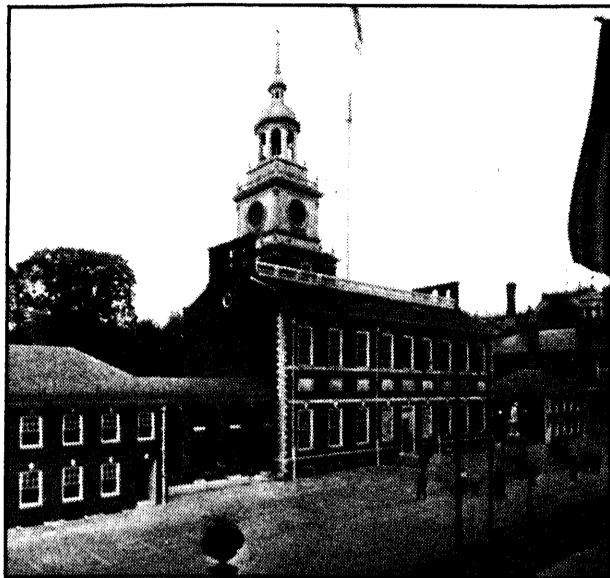
Who were the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787? At least 16 could be classed as aristocrats—including Washington. Ten were extremely wealthy and about 10 others either had been very rich or were well on the way. About the same number again could be classed as "well-to-do," and about 16 others as "comfortable."

Merrill Jensen, an expert on the period of the first constitution, the Articles of Confederation, was the first historian to consistently use the terms "coup d'état" and "treason."

Jensen believed that the Articles of Confederation were a constitutional expression of the Declaration of Independence, which had done away with centralized government.

In his book "The Articles of Confederation" (University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), Jensen wrote: "This government, the product of the forces which brought about the American Revolution, failed not because it was inadequate but because the radicals failed to maintain the organization they had created to bring about the American Revolution."

On the other hand, Jensen stated, the conservatives who dominated the Constitutional Convention "wanted



Site of Philadelphia convention in 1787.

the essence of the British imperial system restored in the American states."

Rebellion in Massachusetts

How did it all begin? What prompted the men of wealth and privilege to take the initial steps toward treason? Only six months earlier, an event occurred in Massachusetts. Farmers in the western part of the state complained of heavy taxes, the shortage of money, private debts, and the high fees incident to court suits.

The courts had also been sending many to debtors' prison, so the farmers got a large group together and prevented the courts from sitting. But the governor called out the militia to disperse them. The farmers were led by Daniel Shays, who had distinguished himself as a captain during the Revolutionary War.

After a single volley of fire from the militia, the farmers turned and ran. Shays' Rebellion, as it was called, was over.

But Shays' Rebellion caused concern among people of means: "Our affairs seem to lead to some crisis, some revolution, something I cannot foresee or conjecture,"

wrote John Jay to Washington. "I am uneasy and apprehensive; more so than during the war."

Let us look briefly at some of the democratic parts of the constitution that these delegates wanted to change. Article Five, in referring to Congress, states that "no person shall be capable of being a delegate for more than three years in any term of six years."

Nor could anyone be president of Congress for more than one year out of any three; thus no individual would be likely to acquire much prestige as head of the central government. The delegates (congressmen) were subject to recall at any time by state governments that had selected them. Each state had only one vote.

Particularly obnoxious to the opponents of the new illegal Constitution was the power it granted Congress to levy unspecified direct taxes. Second among their objections was the control that Congress was given to raise an army even when the country was at peace.

The two went together: Congress would levy the tax that would be collected by the army, which in turn would be supported by taxes.

How did the people lose?

Jackson Turner Main, an expert historian on the subject, was convinced that the opposition to the new Constitution had a clear majority throughout the country. Antifederalists (opponents) outnumbered the Federalists (proponents) by four to one in Rhode Island and South Carolina and by perhaps three to one in New York and North Carolina.

So how did the people lose? Liberal bribes were offered and accepted. Mail addressed to prominent Antifederalists was delayed intentionally by pro-Federalist postal authorities. Nearly all the newspapers supported the coup d'état. The Federalist leaders were better known, and therefore carried greater weight with voters.

Nevertheless, the Federalists knew they did not stand a chance to get their Constitution ratified according to law. Article Thirteen of the Articles of Confederation specifies that all 13 state legislatures must ratify any changes to the legal constitution.

So, as part of their coup d'état, the Federalists organized "conventions" in the states in order to "ratify" the new Constitution. And knowing that even this tactic had problems, they declared that only nine of these conventions had to approve the new document for it to become legal.

The second revolution, a counter-revolution—a movement of the aristocrats and the wealthy—was a peaceful one and it succeeded. It gave the American people a president who has more power than any king that ever lived. The time has come to tell the truth about the illegal government in Washington, D.C. ■

Our readers speak out

Solidarity

Dear editor,

A national call has been put out by solidarity groups such as CISPES for demonstrations on or around Sept. 15. This is the date of Congress' vote on the contra aid.

Although the main thrust of the call appears to be around the lobbying of Congress to not vote for any more aid, different cities receiving the call have been left to develop their own strategies; strategies that could include mass actions.

In the Twin Cities, for example, a family member of Ben Linder will be holding a demonstration and publicizing his speech in the mainstream media. Linder was killed last July by the U.S.-backed contras while working on a brigade in Nicaragua.

Linda Kellam,
Minneapolis

Trotsky

Dear editor,

On Jan. 9, 1937, Leon Trotsky and his companion, Natalia Sedova, arrived in Mexico after many years of persecution in Europe.

To commemorate this arrival, a conference titled "Leon Trotsky and the Cárdenas Years" was organized by the Political Science Department of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) on May 18-22,

1987. Lázaro Cárdenas, then president of Mexico, had granted exile to Trotsky at the request of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

From all accounts I've received, the conference was a tremendous success. The major university auditorium was packed the entire five days, and the coverage in the local press was extensive.

Adolfo Gilly, a leader of the Mexican PRT, opened the conference with a presentation on the political situation in Mexico at the time of Trotsky's arrival. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of the former president, spoke about Trotsky's impact on Mexico.

Other conference speakers included Esteban Volkov (Sieva), Trotsky's grandson; Vlady, Victor Serge's son; George Novack, who welcomed Trotsky as he got off the boat in Veracruz; Pierre Broué, director of the Leon Trotsky Institute; Olivia Gall, professor of political science and the conference organizer; Manuel Aguilar Mora, a leader of the PRT; Barry Carr, an Australian historian; Charlie Curtiss, who was one of Trotsky's guards; and Evelyne Laroche, an old friend of Trotsky's and of painter André Breton.

Dave Weiss, a longtime member of the U.S. Trotskyist movement, showed excerpts from his yet-to-be-completed documentary film on Trotsky.

Unfortunately, I have seen no coverage of this very important conference in the U.S. press.

Bill Wilner,
Los Angeles

Repent!

Dear editor,

On Aug. 15, Planned Parenthood of San Francisco, where I volunteer as a guard, had a most unwelcome visitor. A man named Bob drove up in a van decorated with religious signs and crosses, partly painted to demonstrate the flames of hell.

While holding up his sign, he shouted his slogans: "Repent, Repent, Repent! How can you kill babies? Who is going to stand up for babies? Jerry Falwell is the only one who stands up for

them!"

"Members of N.O.W. are modern-day witches," he shouted. "Oh, for the good old days in Salem, when witches were burned at the stake!"

When the police were called, he wanted them to arrest Planned Parenthood for murder. When that didn't work, he left saying that he had to get away from that "awful place" before he threw up all over his "Christian van."

I call his "Christian van" the "Hate-mobile." It is aimed at destroying the right of women to make choices over their bodies.

These right-wing nuts have

been encouraged by the U.S. government. When one of them was arrested after bombing a clinic, Reagan said that he understood how this terrorist felt!

Christine Vaughn,
San Francisco

Correction

In our August 1987 issue, we did not properly credit the front-page photograph of a boy crying over the coffin of an FSLN fighter. The credit should have read: "Larry Boyd/Impact Visuals." — The editors

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NYPD charged with illegal spying on Black community

By CHRIS BUTTERS

NEW YORK—In March of this year, Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward warned of a "long hot summer" based on growing anger and mobilizations by Black people against racist violence.

But it is the New York Police Department (NYPD) that has turned on the "heat." Several news publications have implicated the department in an illegal spying campaign aimed at the new generation of Black organizations and leaders who have emerged since last December, when a white mob attacked three Black men in Howard Beach.

On July 1, *Newsday*, a daily newspaper published in suburban New York, revealed the establishment of a "Black Desk" within the Special Services Bureau of the NYPD.

The Black Desk has been assigned the work of photographing, taping, and videotaping events attended by Black activists. Undercover officers have routinely attended demonstrations and meetings, ostensibly to "monitor" developments in the Black neighborhoods.

A New York *Daily News* article on July 5 revealed the holding of secret NYPD riot-training sessions, complete with riot primers, mock disturbances, and crowd-control demonstrations by both mounted and motorcycle police in riot gear.

Black leaders targeted

The riot-training sessions included briefings on the biographies of leaders "most likely to be involved in civil disturbances this summer," according to another report.

Among those listed were Vernon Mason and Alton Maddox, the two attorneys for the victims of the Howard Beach incident. Also listed were the Rev. Calvin Butts of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church and the Rev. Al Sharpton, head of the National Youth Movement. The New York Eight, long-standing Black activists previously acquitted of conspiracy charges, were also mentioned.

"Are we living in Johannesburg, where any gathering of Blacks is seen as a threat to the city?" the Rev. Sharpton asked in an interview on WLIB radio.

A week earlier, in *Newsday*, it was revealed that the "Black Desk" had secretly taped WLIB call-in shows. WLIB is one of the few Black-owned radio stations in the New York area. It frequently provides air time for Black leaders and organizations who do not get a hearing in the big-business media.

Such spying is a violation of the ruling class's own laws. Specifically, it violates the Handschu agreement—the result of a 16-year lawsuit by the Black Panther Party and other victims of police spying.

The Handschu agreement requires the NYPD to get permission from a three-person panel (consisting of two police and a retired judge) before investigating groups or individuals. In addition, criminality must be shown to be involved.

The New York Eight

In a press conference soon after the revelations, Commissioner Ward argued that the surveillance was legal, since it had been approved by the panel concerning the New York Eight. Ward could not say what criminal acts were involved, however.

As if to buttress a sagging argument, several of the New York Eight were arrested a few days later on gun-possession charges, which many activists believe to be fabricated.

But later in the same press conference, Ward admitted that surveillance was not confined to the New York Eight.



(left to right) C. Vernon Mason, the Rev. Alfred Sharpton, and Alton H. Maddox Jr. are but three of the Black activists targeted by NYPD "Black Desk" for spying and harassment.

Photographs and videotapes were taken by undercover police officers of other Black activists when the New York Eight were not present.

The New York Eight has taken the opportunity to present a slide show in Black neighborhoods documenting systematic NYPD surveillance. The NAACP has also promised to provide evidence of police surveillance, both against themselves and other Black organizations. A law suit is

being considered.

All working people have a stake in the defense of the Black organizations and leaders involved. At issue is not just the New York Eight (however much they deserve the defense of all who care about democratic rights), but the New York *millions*—particularly the millions of Latinos, Blacks, and Asians.

The rights of this majority to speak out, organize, and even think politically are

under attack.

Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward, the highest ranking Black man in the Koch administration, has come to symbolize for many Black people all that is wrong with the accommodationist current predominant today in Black political life.

A "house Negro" in the NYPD

All hopes that a Black man presiding over the NYPD would lead to a change in its racist policies have been quickly shattered.

Under Ward's tenure, racist attacks have increased, not lessened. The cases of Eleanor Bumpurs (killed by police who were trying to evict her from her apartment), Michael Stewart (died from injuries sustained after arrest by transit police), and Nicholas Bartlett (a student killed by police in Harlem) are but the most publicized examples.

In fact, the presence of a Black man heading the police officialdom has allowed the Koch administration to argue that advances have been made for Black people—even as decisions to institute a "Black desk" are made behind closed doors.

At a press conference soon after the revelations, attorney Vernon Mason likened Ward's relationship to Democratic Mayor Koch to that of "a house Negro, in the tradition of slavery, whose basic concern is for his slavemaster."

"Our dirty little secret"

Unfortunately, Mason and the emerging new Black leadership, despite courageous stands on many questions, have not extended their analysis of the Koch administration to the racist Democratic Party as a whole.

In 1985, Mason ran in the Democratic Party primary for district attorney. The Rev. Calvin Butts has frequently been mentioned as a Democratic Party candidate against Koch in the 1989 primary.

Commissioner Ward, in an obvious attempt to deflect criticism from Black leaders, has recently taken to lecturing Black audiences about "our dirty little secret, Black crime."

But the "dirty little secret" is not Black crime, however much Ward might like it to be. It is the fact that the banks and corporations run New York, the police department, and the Democratic Party machine—both in Harlem and elsewhere.

The Democratic Party holds back the struggles of the Black people today just as it did in the 19th century, when it was the party of the slaveholders. Malcolm X described the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats as the difference "between the wolf and the fox. No matter what, they both eat you."

A giant step toward putting an end to racism will come when the Black masses are organized in a political party independent of the capitalist class and the Democratic and Republican parties that it controls.



Leonard Freed

"We wiretapped, infiltrated, bugged ..."

This is not the first time the NYPD has spied on Black people and their organizations. Its Bureau of Special Services and Investigation—often known as "BOSSI" or the "Red Squad"—has a history of spying on left, labor, and Black organizations that extends back to 1920.

In the words of Anthony Bouza, a former BOSSI agent: "We wiretapped, infiltrated, bugged, photographed, surveyed, investigated, spied, and unashamedly undertook any strategy that enabled it to do its job effectively."

Especially active in the 1960s and early 1970s, BOSSI targeted such organizations as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and numerous Puerto Rican nationalist

organizations. Antiwar organizations were also monitored.

Sometime in 1965, BOSSI successfully placed an agent named Gene Roberts among Malcolm X's bodyguards.

According to Murray Kempton in the July 3 issue of *Newsday*: "All Roberts could report of interest to the police was the existence of a plot to kill him [Malcolm], a piece of news that BOSSI took with such frozen tranquility that, when the assassins rose up on schedule that Sunday, there was not a cop in or near the Audubon Ballroom to inhibit them."

Today, a new generation of militants is struggling for a better life for Black people. A program for victory for Black liberation will include important lessons of Malcolm X's life and death.