

DEBATE:
'Is the Rainbow Coalition an alternative?'
See pp. 8-9.

DECEMBER 1987 VOL. 5, No. 12 50 CENTS

Bipartisan budget cuts target working people

By NAT WEINSTEIN

President Reagan appeared on national television on Nov. 20 together with Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress to announce agreement on a plan for reducing the budget deficit.

The deficit-reduction plan, yet to be approved by Congress, calls for increases in revenues and cuts in spending that would

Why did the stock market crash?
See article p. 6

slice \$30 billion from this year's deficit and \$46 billion from next year's.

Deficit-reduction negotiations had been kicked off by the stock market plunge of Oct. 19. The four weeks of haggling was widely portrayed as a fight over which class would bear the brunt of tax increases and spending cuts.

Democrats were depicted as favoring tax increases and cuts in military spending, which, it is alleged, would fall mainly on the rich; while Republicans were described as opposing an income-tax raise and favoring cuts in spending on social services, which would affect the poor.

This presentation of the terms of the debate is pure hogwash intended to bolster the illusion that such differences really exist. The real reason for the wrangling over how to deal with the over \$160-billion budget deficit—one of the manifestations of a crisis which runs far deeper—is that differences exist over which measures will best serve the interests of capitalism and the capitalist class.

There are two main problems for the ruling capitalist policymakers to solve:

The first is how to forestall or at least minimize the collapse of production heralded by the market meltdown—without setting uncontrollable inflationary forces into motion.

Half of this medicine, measures lowering interest rates, was injected into the economy as a knee-jerk response to Black Monday. But this medicine feeds inflation. It contributed, for example, to a rapid decline in the value of the dollar as measured against the currencies of the United States' main industrial trading partners.

Reducing the budget deficit is the other half of the medicine. But such anti-inflationary measures have an opposite effect, countering those intended to keep economic activity from spiraling into a depression.

The real debate, then, is over which budget-deficit medicine will least defeat the main purpose of the doctor's treatment—to stimulate economic activity. This is the first part of today's capitalist dilemma.

The second main problem for American capitalists is how to compel their main trading partners, primarily West Germany and Japan, to stimulate their own econo-

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Striking New York Stock Exchange Workers on picket line on Nov. 11

Kirk Condyles/Impact Visuals

U.S. steps up campaign for further contra aid

On Nov. 5, the same day the Arias Central American "peace plan" went into effect, the U.S. House of Representatives—with its Democratic Party majority—voted a further \$3.2 million in "nonlethal aid" to the Nicaraguan contras. This vote consti-

tuted a direct violation of the peace accord.

Hardly a voice of protest was raised from the U.S. media or from the so-called Contadora nations of Latin America, which are being called upon to monitor the peace process. They all continued to echo the

Reagan administration theme that the Sandinista government remains the main obstacle to peace in the region.

After eight years of enduring a brutal contra war, and under pressure from Costa Rican President Oscar Arias—as well as from the Soviet bureaucracy—the Sandinista government reversed its long-held position and agreed to negotiate a cease-fire bid with the contras. This demand was not included in the document signed by the five Central American presidents.

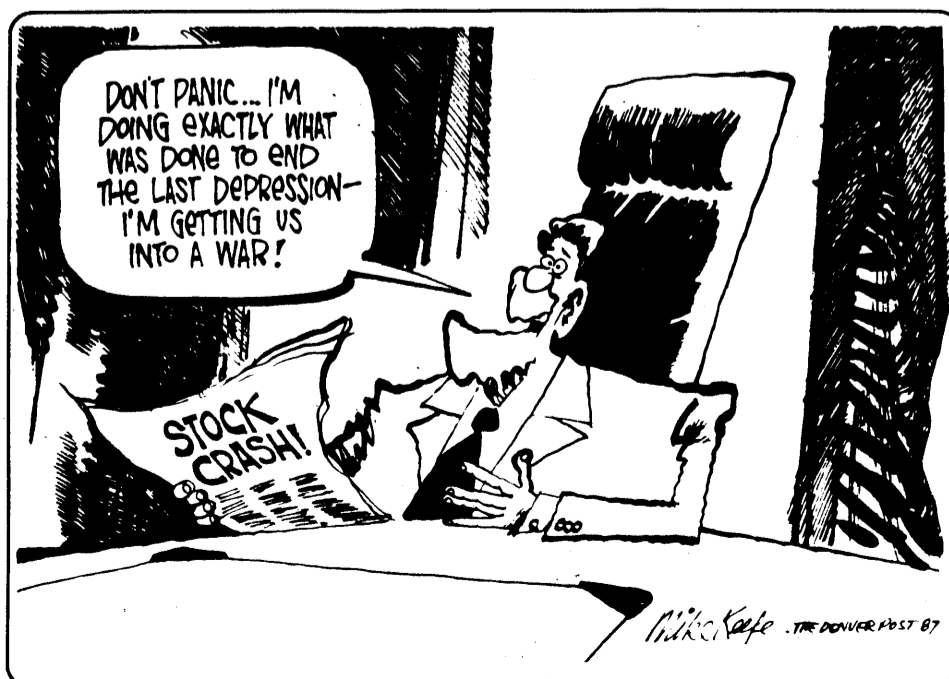
"They have won a crucial political battle in any guerrilla war: forcing the [Nicaraguan] government to recognize them as a belligerent force," the Nov. 8 *New York Times* stated. "This is a big gain for us," said Alfonso Robelo, a contra director.

Unrelenting pressure on FSLN

No sooner had the Nicaraguan government made this concession than the U.S. government and the contras began to demand greater concessions.

Alfredo Cesar, a member of the contra directorate, told NBC News on Nov. 13 that he fully agreed with the Arias Plan's call for democratization in Nicaragua, but stated that "the only genuine and acceptable meaning of 'democratization' is for the

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'I've never been a "card-carrying" Democrat!'



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Most people complain about receiving junk mail, especially at Christmas time. Not me. I love it. I read everything that comes along—all the catalogs, enticements to buy things I never wanted or needed, magazine subscriptions, cook books, and seed catalogs.

I even read letters from *Reader's Digest* that start off with, "You may already have won \$200,000 dollars!" It's probably because I've done so many mailings for socialist causes that I read anything that has a stamp and comes in an envelope.

Last week, however I received a letter that made me really angry. It was from the Democratic

National Committee, asking that I contribute money to elect a Democratic president in 1988.

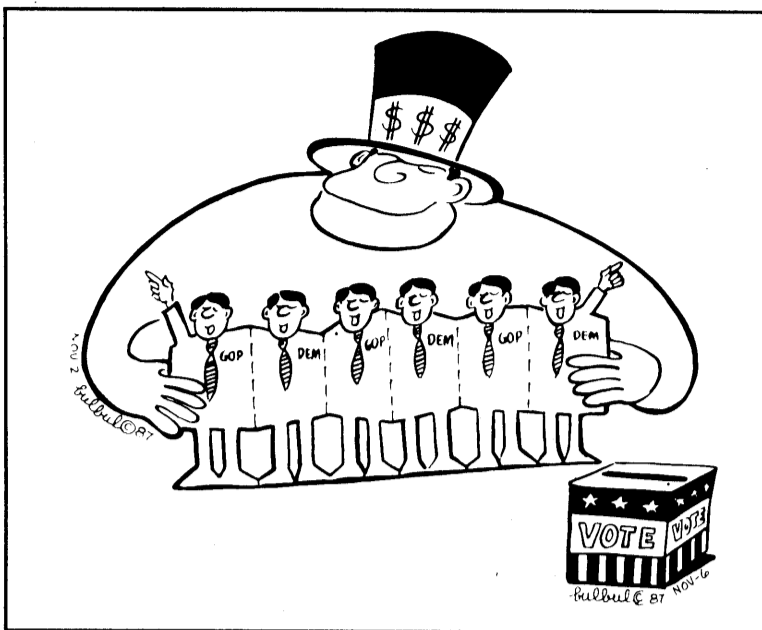
That, of course, is not unusual. All manner of useless organizations are always crying for contributions for worthless causes. But this time, there was a plastic card enclosed from the Democratic National Committee with my name on it as a "1988 Contributing Member" and a number—009231133—if I made a contribution.

You can imagine my disgust. I am not now, nor have I ever been, nor will I ever be a card-carrying member of the Democratic Party. On the contrary, I have been a hard-nosed opponent of capitalist politicians, a revolutionary socialist in good standing for the last 43 years, and am currently a paid-up member of Socialist Action.

Human needs, not war

Besides, the letter was an insult to the intelligence of a baby kangaroo. It pleaded the necessity of placing a Democrat in the White House in 1988, explaining:

"It will mean a president who understands that quality classroom education is more important to our national security than a \$700 billion Star Wars



weapons system."

Oh really! Actually, the Democrats have increased the defense budget at the expense of human needs under every Democratic presidency. Franklin D. Roosevelt started increasing the defense budget in 1935, and it hasn't stopped yet.

Harry S. Truman increased it for the Korean War and the "Cold War." John F. Kennedy raised it for the Vietnam War and for covert actions like the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

Johnson paid out more billions

for the U.S. murder machine during the Vietnam-Cambodian wars. Carter upped the war-spending ante even more while carrying out covert actions in the Middle East against the Palestinian and Iranian peoples and against innocent people in Central America.

And the witchhunt?

The letter also had the gall to claim that a Democratic president "will mean judges who will defend civil liberties at home and diplomats who will stand up for

human rights abroad."

Well, move over Alice in Wonderland. Remember Dirty Harry Truman's Cold War against "commies?" Remember the murder of the Rosenbergs, a direct result of the witchhunt initiated by this great Democrat? Remember the thousands of workers who were accused of being "commies" and lost their jobs?

Remember Kennedy's attempts to murder Fidel Castro? Remember the infiltration of labor, peace, student, civil-rights and women's groups by the FBI under all Presidencies—Republican and Democratic alike?

I remember. And I could go on. But we will soon be inundated with Democratic Party hypocrisy when the 1988 election really gets going, and I need to let my stomach settle down.

The Democratic Party needn't look for a contribution from me. I became a "card-carrying" socialist many years ago because I want real changes in the way this government is run. And those changes are coming.

If you want to be a part of building a better world, then join Socialist Action and get a membership card in an organization that intends to make those changes.

Socialist Action Forums

San Francisco: "The Central American Peace Plan & the Antiwar Movement"

Speakers: Mike Davis, Northwest Regional Director, CISPES; Leslie Simon, Nicaragua Information Center; Carl Finamore, Socialist Action. **Friday, Dec. 4, 8 p.m.** 3435 Army St., suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Call (415) 821-0458

New York: "Stock Market Crash: What it Means for Working People"

Speakers: Harry Magdoff, co-editor of *Monthly Review* magazine; Paul Siegel, author and *Socialist Action* staffwriter. **Friday, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m.** New School for Social Research, 66 W. 12th St., Rm. 610.

Boston: "New England Labor vs. Corporate Greed"

Speakers: Roger "Tex" Sewell, Pres., ATU Local 1205; Greg Guckenberger, member, Shipbuilders Local 6; Laurie Haapenen, organizer, UAW Region 9A; Mike Fliss, member, UAW Local 422. **Saturday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m.** Cambridge YWCA "Living Room", 7 Temple St. For more info. call (617) 497-0230.

Socialist Action branches meet with success

By ADAM WOOD

This fall has seen a heightened interest in socialist ideas. Socialist Action has been there to provide some answers for people looking for a way out of this corrupt society we live in.

Forums on Contragate, the Arias peace plan, and the stock-market crash have attracted audiences of 30 and more to Socialist Action branches in San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Socialist Action speakers have also given two extensive interviews on Los Angeles radio station KPFK.

Socialist Action members in Boston have held forums of 40 to 50 people on topics such as the economy and the current situation in El Salvador.

In New York, 40 people attended a debate between Irving Beinen, executive committee member of the National Coalition for Independent Political Action, and Nat Weinstein, co-national secretary of Socialist Action. The debate centered around Jesse Jackson and the role of the Democratic Party in American politics. [See excerpts on pages 8-9.]

Sixty students heard Carl Finamore, national antiwar director of Socialist Action, give a talk on the stock-market crash at a college campus in St. Paul, Minnesota. Thirty who attended signed up for classes on socialism, and 12 bought subscriptions to *Socialist Action* newspaper.

Socialist Action branches are also holding regular classes in Cincinnati, Baltimore, and Boston. Supporters of Socialist Action at the University of California Santa Cruz are currently planning out their winter and spring activities.

The response Socialist Action has been receiving to our ideas is an indication that events such as the Contragate scandal and the stock market crash are sinking into the American consciousness. Slowly, more and more people are questioning the irrational

private-profit system with its wars, racism, and economic crises.

The answer to these questions is socialism—a democratic society which would have no use for secret wars and economic anarchy. Socialist Action is fighting for this kind of a society. We want you to join us in our fight. Joining Socialist Action means becoming a conscious builder of your own future.

Eugene V. Debs, a great American socialist, once wrote:

"Oh, that all the working class could and would use their eyes and see; their ears and hear; their brains and think. How soon this earth could be transformed and by the alchemy of social order made to blossom with beauty and joy."

I believe it can be said safely that this process has begun.

Trotskyist Organization joins S.A.

A small group of revolutionary socialists based in Detroit, the Trotskyist Organization, has joined Socialist Action.

The Trotskyist Organization had been in the process of drawing similar conclusions on a number of important political questions with those held by Socialist Action. They decided that the differences they still held with Socialist Action in some areas did not justify separate organizations.

The Trotskyist Organization shares fundamental commitment with Socialist Action to the Trotskyist, i.e. revolutionary Marxist, program: the need for working-class political independence; opposition to Stalinism and all other variants of reformism in the workers' movement; and the need for a labor party based on the unions in this country.

The Trotskyist Organization played a leading role in building the March 29, 1987, antiwar protests in Detroit, which drew close to 5000 people. They are committed to a united-front, mass-action strategy for building the antiwar movement.

They are confident that as members they will have the opportunity to fully participate in all decision-making in line with the highest democratic traditions of the workers' movement, incorporated in the

constitution and organizational principles of Socialist Action.

A declaration adopted by the Trotskyist Organization states the following:

"We join Socialist Action, loyal and disciplined to its organization, determined to make our contribution on the level of program and in recruiting the new generation of workers and young fighters. We call on all of our supporters and sympathizers to likewise join Socialist Action, for we are moving forward on a solid and principled foundation."

The addition of these five new members means that a Socialist Action branch has been constituted in Detroit for the first time. The new branch is extremely optimistic and enthusiastic about the prospects for building Socialist Action into a party capable of leading American workers toward political power and socialism. This confidence is bolstered by modest, but solid, evidence that interest in Socialist Action has begun to grow in those cities where branches exist.

The Oct. 19 stock market crash has signaled the opening of a new period for world capitalism. It is clear that class conflict will sharpen as capitalism strives to save itself at the expense of reduced living standards for the working class and significant layers of the middle class.

The real change in conditions that will favor the growth of a fighting working class movement has been set into motion. And with it, the influence of revolutionary socialism, symbolized by the new Detroit branch of Socialist Action, will also grow.



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Editor: ALAN BENJAMIN

Asst. Editor: MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Staff: Paul Colvin, Suzanne Forsyth, May May Gong, David Kirschner, Hayden Perry, Joe Ryan, Kwame M.A. Somburu, Sylvia Weinstein.

Business Manager: DON MAHONEY

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Action*. These are expressed in editorials.

ASSAULT ON NICARAGUA:

The Untold Story of the U.S. 'Secret War'

Speeches by Daniel Sheehan and Daniel Ortega

Edited by Jeff Mackler and Nat Weinstein
Foreword with introduction by Rod Holt

New book reveals truth behind Conragate

Assault on Nicaragua: The Untold Story of the U.S. 'Secret War,' Speeches by Daniel Sheehan and Daniel Ortega, with an essay by Jeff Mackler and Nat Weinstein. Edited with an introduction by Rod Holt. Walnut Publishing Co., Inc., 115 pages, \$4.95. (Order from Walnut Publishing Co., 3435 Army St., Suite 308, S.F., CA 94110; include \$.97 for postage and tax.)

This book contains the facts of the most audacious legal action ever undertaken. The Christic Institute filed a civil lawsuit in

October 1986 claiming some \$20 million in damages. The suit named 29 people as defendants. They include such household names as Albert Hakim, Adolfo Calero, Maj. Gen. Theodore Shackley, Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, and Thomas Clines.

Daniel Sheehan's famous speech, "The Secret Team," delivered in Los Angeles on Feb. 1, 1987, is now in print here for the first time. Also included is an extended discussion with Daniel Sheehan and Sarah Nelson, executive director of the Christic Institute, on Sept. 4, 1987.

This book also contains the address to the United Nations General Assembly by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega on Oct. 9, 1987, as well as a brief exclusive interview with Ortega [see below] conducted during Ortega's stay in New York.

The final essay in this book, by Jeff Mackler and Nat Weinstein, co-national secretaries of Socialist Action, exposes the bipartisan character of the U.S. war against Nicaragua and provides a strategic orientation for building a broad, independent, mass antiwar movement in this country. ■

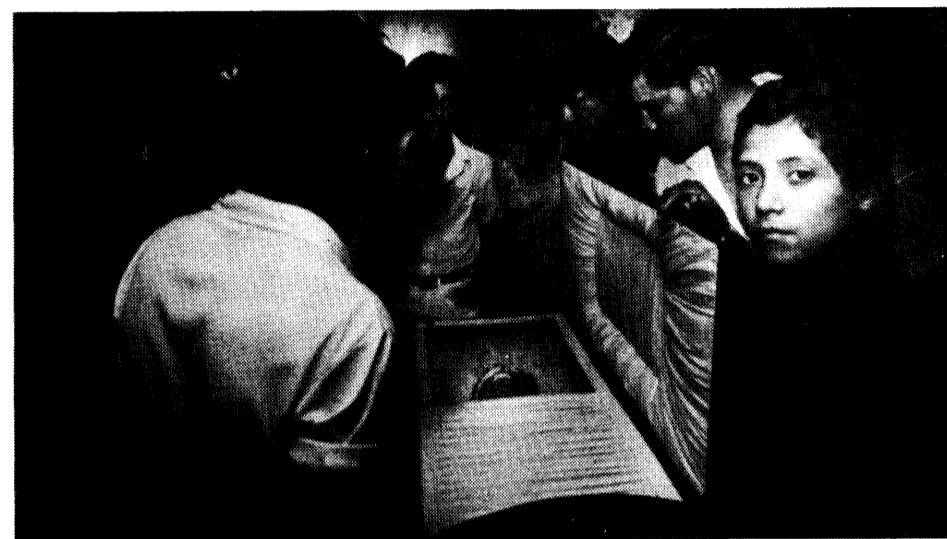
Daniel Ortega: 'We must stop shedding of more blood'

The following is a portion of the interview with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, which was conducted by Rod Holt and Alan Benjamin on Oct. 9, 1987, at the High Bridge Community Life Center in the South Bronx, N.Y. The text, which appears in "Assault on Nicaragua," is reprinted here with the permission of Walnut Publishing Co.

Question: We are publishing a book about the U.S. war in Nicaragua. One aspect of the book will deal with the tasks of the anti-intervention movement in this country.

As you may know, last April 25, an unprecedented coalition of labor and religious leaders organized a national march in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. Two hundred thousand people took to the streets. One of the two main demands was "No U.S. Intervention in Central America!"

What message do you bring to the antiwar movement in this country, and in particular to the trade unionists who



Over 9000 civilians have been killed by the contras in the last six years.

marched on April 25? What do you see as the tasks ahead for the antiwar movement?

Daniel Ortega: We've had the opportunity to welcome various delegations of North American trade unionists to Nicaragua. These unionists have shown a deep concern about our situation and a strong desire to help overcome the tensions that currently exist between the United States and Nicaragua.

The U.S. trade-union movement, because of its size and strength, can play a very important role in influencing policy. By engaging in protest actions and by expressing their views, trade unionists can

help change the policy of the U.S. government. In this sense, organizing and promoting coalitions and united actions for peace in Central America can be very valuable.

Working for peace in Central America is consistent with the moral and ethical principles of working people in the United States.

Because of the policies of the U.S. government, working people in Nicaragua are being killed. Workers in Nicaragua don't have the possibility of developing their potential. They are unable to make gains—or even to work productively—because they

are forced to defend themselves against military aggression and terrorist activities.

A basic spirit of solidarity therefore leads the North American workers to mobilize to demand an end to the U.S. war on Nicaragua.

But there's another aspect to this question which relates to the self-interests of North American workers. If this war is prolonged—and if the United States decides to intervene militarily with its own troops—those who will be killed in Nicaragua will be the young workers, or the sons of the older workers.

They will be the ones to get killed in Nicaragua in an unjust war, much in the same way young North American workers were the ones to die in Vietnam.

So our task is to prevent the shedding of more blood in Nicaragua. Our task is to prevent the shedding of the blood of North American youth.

The labor movement in the United States has a great responsibility to act promptly, energetically, and in unity to put a halt to the war policies of the U.S. government. This would be the greatest contribution that working people in the United States could make to peace in Central America—and to peace in the United States as well. The people of the United States cannot be at peace so long as their own government carries out war policies against Nicaragua which could lead the American youth to be killed in Central America. ■

Moses Mayekiso must be freed!

Moses Mayekiso, a leading South African trade unionist, is on trial for his life. He and four others have been charged with high treason and sedition—charges that could carry the death penalty.

Moses Mayekiso is general secretary of one of the largest Black unions in South Africa, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). He is also an executive board member of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

In 1978, Mayekiso joined the fledgling Metal And Allied Workers Union (MAWU) while working at the Toyota car plant. He soon became a key figure in building MAWU into one of the strongest and most democratic unions in South Africa.

By the end of 1985, MAWU became one of the founding unions of COSATU, South Africa's largest union federation. Mayekiso served on the committees which drew up the COSATU constitution and planned its inaugural congress.

The charges against Mayekiso stem from his political work in Alexandra Township, the community in which he lived with his wife Kola, also a MAWU organizer, and their seven children.

The residents of "Alex" rose up in the "Six Day War" in February 1986, expelling police and government administrators and taking over the running of the township. Mayekiso was elected chairman of the grassroots Alexandra Action Committee.

When the state of emergency was declared on June 12, 1986, Mayekiso was meeting

with Swedish metalworkers in Stockholm. In a transparent attempt to force him into exile, the Pretoria regime refused to renew his passport, due to expire June 14.

Two weeks later, on June 28, Mayekiso went home and was arrested along with Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, Obed Dapela, and Mzwanele Myekiso (Moses' younger brother). He was held without charge until the end of 1986 and then charged with "high treason."

When Mayekiso appeared in court in January 1987, there was a picket of 200 unionists, including COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo and National Union of Mineworkers leader Cyril Ramaphosa.

Last month, the trial went into recess until February 1988. The defendants will remain in jail until that time.

It is the task of anti-apartheid forces throughout the world to wage an unrelenting campaign to save Moses Mayekiso, his fellow defendants, and all the other union leaders who are currently rotting in South Africa's jails.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has issued a call which states: "We call for the international trade-union community to build a campaign for Mayekiso's release. In this regard, the union welcomes all forms of independent, responsible support initiatives in the international arena and hopes for the maximum possible cooperation between groups in seeking to achieve this end."

This call must be heeded. In the United

States, the United Auto Workers union has commissioned an independent panel of 10 prominent jurists to monitor the court proceedings when the trial resumes.

Letters demanding that the charges against Mayekiso and the other defendants

be dropped should be sent immediately to the Embassy of South Africa, 3051 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. Send copies to NUMSA at P.O. Box 9451, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa. ■



University of Cincinnati students demand divestment in Nov. 24 protest.

Despite inclement weather, over 150 students rallied at the University of Cincinnati on Nov. 24 to demand divestment of all university funds with firms that do business with South Africa. On the same day, over 2000 signatures demanding divestment were presented to a meeting of the university's Board of Trustees.

The Anti-Intervention Coalition (AIC), which called the rally, estimates that the university has \$23 million invested in South Africa-oriented companies. Diverse forces have rallied behind the coalition's slogan, "U.C. Divest Now!"

The rally was co-sponsored by the

Earth Co., and was supported by the United Black Association. Eleventh-hour attempts by the university administration and the College Republicans to stop the rally proved unsuccessful.

Summing up the day's activities, Leah Smith, co-chairperson of the AIC, said: "While in the middle of fighting to break the chains that bind U.C. to apartheid, we also find ourselves in the middle of a free-speech fight. Regardless, we will be vocal, and we will be heard. We will not let this movement fizzle out after this rally."

The AIC has demanded that the university give an accounting of its divestment in three months.

—BILL O'KAIN

30 year split ends

Teamsters union rejoins AFL-CIO

By CARL FINAMORE

At the October AFL-CIO convention in Miami, delegates from 89 unions mended a 30-year split with the Teamsters union. They unanimously approved the return of the 1.7 million-member Teamsters to the AFL-CIO.

The union federation expelled the Teamsters in 1957 for "unethical practices" and for refusing to answer charges of being under "corrupt influences." Since that time, the Teamsters have faced repeated criminal investigations by the government.

But these probes were never designed to clean up the Teamsters nor to rid the union of its heavily bureaucratized and undemocratic leadership. On the contrary, the Teamster rank-and-file membership was always the real target.

Handcuffing the Teamster membership's tremendous leverage in strikes is the purpose of government "investigations." Corrupt union officials simply provide a convenient pretext for government intervention.

Why merger now

Several months ago, the Justice Department announced an escalation of its attacks on the Teamsters. It was considering litigation which would result in government-appointed representatives taking control of the union.

This was undoubtedly the reason the Teamster leadership acted to rejoin the AFL-CIO. Weldon Mathis, Teamster secretary-treasurer, said that the prospect of a government takeover "was the dominant thing that brought us together."

Fortunately, the AFL-CIO has pledged to throw all its resources against the threatened government takeover. As a result, the government may be forced to rethink its



Teamsters' Jackie Presser rejoined AFL-CIO to avoid government take-over.

strategy of directly confronting the union.

But for many top AFL-CIO labor officials, it was not coming to the defense of the Teamsters that was uppermost in their mind. Reaffiliation means a substantial increase of the federation's political clout.

Millions of dollars in Teamster dues money will flow into the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education Fund (COPE). Unfortunately, these added resources will be misused to deepen labor's reliance on the capitalist Democratic Party.

Unity in action needed

Changes in the trucking industry over the last 30 years have resulted in a membership decline among the Teamsters' traditional base of over-the-road truck drivers.

A steady membership level has been

maintained, however, by expanding its organizing base beyond transportation. Teamsters can be found in manufacturing, oil refineries, warehouses, offices, and hospitals. Millions of these new members are women and minorities.

The infusion of these powerful forces into the AFL-CIO can boost labor's ability to vigorously resist the employers' next round of concession bargaining. But to accomplish this strengthening of the labor movement, organizational unity must be accompanied by unity in action.

Combining the Teamsters with the AFL-CIO can be a first step toward achieving unity on the picketlines. Unconstitutional legislative restrictions on mass picketing and other acts of labor solidarity can more easily be challenged by a united labor movement.

Solidarity of the Teamsters is essential, for example, in challenging the prohibition against expanding picketlines or "secondary boycotts" to locations which handle struck goods.

Competition between unions

The AFL-CIO and Teamsters unification may also mean an end to the disastrous policy of intruding into each other's jurisdictions. Teamster and AFL-CIO unions regularly compete for the same workers in organizing drives.

The worst example was the Teamster campaign in the 1970s to displace the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, from representing California farmworkers. This divisive battle permitted the powerful agri-business growers to extract more concessions from farmworkers.

It also resulted in weakening the militant UFW, which had to divert its few resources to defend itself from the Teamsters' attacks—some of which were physical.

While this particular dispute has cooled, the policy of AFL-CIO and Teamster unions competing with each other continues to this day. Recently, both the Teamsters and the International Association of Machinists, AFL-CIO, have declared intentions to organize the Coors brewery in Colorado.

The spectacle of a divisive union contest at the Coors Brewery contrasts sharply with the overwhelmingly successful united effort which sustained the Coors Boycott for so many years.

"One big union!"

A short-sighted policy of union competition in organizing drives offers a no-win situation. One union's gain is quickly nullified by the other union's gain the next time. These conflicts confuse unorganized workers. Inevitably, the employer benefits.

Under pressures of increased employer attacks, more unions will be compelled to search for ways to achieve labor solidarity. Ultimately, it will become clear that decent living conditions can only be won by challenging the numerous anti-union laws and regulations that make labor solidarity virtually illegal.

The right to strike, the right to mass picket, and the right of all unions to respect picketlines will be reclaimed by a revitalized labor movement. The unexpected unity of the Teamsters and the AFL-CIO suggests big changes in labor's future which will make these goals attainable. ■



By MIKE FLISS

FRAMINGHAM, Mass.—On Nov. 4, 1987, some 3700 General Motors workers here, members of United Auto Workers Local 422, were shocked by GM's announcement that their plant will shut down indefinitely on Nov. 30.

The announcement came days after the workers ratified a contract that had been touted for ensuring job security. They expressed bitterness over the layoffs just before the holidays, having recently weathered a number of shutdowns.

"We just signed a contract on the premise we had job security," said Russ Turner. "I think all they're doing is trying to bring us to our knees." Fran Nassi said, "I spend more time out of this place than I do in...my job is always insecure."

UAW Vice President Donald Ephlin asserted that GM did not break the new contract. He said, "General Motors has

GM workers face layoffs

provided a satisfactory accounting of the volume-related conditions leading to what we hope will be a short-term layoff." However, plant manager J. Russel McCarthy said, "It is possible that we will never open."

The attack against the Framingham autoworkers is facilitated by current economic conditions which have left the giant auto company producing more cars than it can sell. Company spokesman Mark Leddy said that GM was "responding to market conditions in an economic climate that all U.S. manufacturers are experiencing."

By 1990, plants in this country owned by U.S. automakers will have the capacity to produce 4 million more vehicles beyond market capacity, according to John O'Donnell, an industry specialist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Unruly militant kids"

The Framingham plant, however, was the only one closed in the United States out of six plants that make the same "A Body" cars. GM officials have admitted that labor relations played a part in this decision.

The Framingham UAW membership has had strained relationships with GM management throughout the history of the

plant. When the workers went out on strike in 1974 over local contract conditions, they were characterized by the plant manager as "unruly militant kids." And, in 1979, the Framingham autoworkers led all of GM's assembly plants in disciplinary layoffs and grievances filed.

The local's membership has rejected GM's "team concept," the company's tactic to change work rules and increase its profits at great expense to the workforce. Recently, Framingham apparently lost the chance to produce a new plastic minivan to the Terrytown, N.Y., assembly plant, which accepted the "team concept."

The Framingham plant closing will lead to an erosion of the living standards of the autoworkers. Benefits for the majority of workers will be reduced in a matter of months. And compensation will only be a fraction of that promised to the laid-off GM workers in their contract because the money in the national shutdown fund has already been depleted by over 45,000 GM workers thrown off their jobs.

According to Susan Ireland, managing attorney of the Massachusetts Office of United Auto Workers legal services: "These people are being told by lenders that they may have problems with their mortgage as a direct result of the shut down."

In literature for his Democratic Party presidential campaign, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis credits himself for saving Framingham autoworkers' jobs after a year-long shutdown in 1983. He also refuses blame for the 1987 plant closing.

Dukakis ducks the issue

But Dukakis is unable to offer any "economic-miracle" solutions. His press secretary merely states, "General Motors has closed its plant because of market pressure and oversupply."

Car production, characterized by auto executives as cyclical in nature, is, in fact, spiraling downward toward economic chaos. Workers cannot rely on lawmakers or labor leaders to preserve or enhance their standard of living, but must turn to themselves for solutions to plant closings.

Vehicles will have to be produced for the needs of the majority and not for the obscene and destructive profits of the auto bosses. ■

Distributors of Socialist Action in Canada:

Alliance for Socialist Action
229 College St., Rm. 208
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4
(416) 535-8779

Alliance for Socialist Action
Box 2728
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 4B3

Alliance for Socialist Action
P.O. Box 12082
Edmonton, Alberta

Alliance for Socialist Action
P.O. Box 76916 Station S
Vancouver, British Columbia
V5R 5T3

By GEORGE KEPLER

JAY, Maine—On Nov. 21, 4000 people participated in a rally here to support the paperworkers on strike against the International Paper Company (IP). The strike began on June 16 in response to IP's unjustified demands for concessions in overtime pay, plant shutdown times, and staffing schedules for paper machines.

The strike by Local 14, United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), and Local 246 Boilermakers is no closer to a settlement than it was at the beginning. The strike continues to occupy the center of the fight to oppose the corporate attack on the unions in New England.

Locals 14 and 246 have consistently reached out for public and union support throughout upper New England. They have a committee which contacts unions and public organizations to set up speaking engagements.

A centerpiece of union strategy has been regular Wednesday night meetings. Every week since the strike began, a crowd of at least 1000 has gathered to listen to news of the strike, hear supporters speak, and sing labor-solidarity songs.

The union has also proved that they, not IP, are the recipients of public support. The town of Jay passed several resolutions designed to restrict IP's use of scabs. Unfortunately, these laws are still unenforced because the union has not forced the town to follow up.

Coordinated bargaining

Local 14 is one of four UPIU locals locked out or on strike against IP. DePere, Wisc.; Lock Haven, Pa.; and Mobile, Ala., mills are also out. But the Jay strikers have taken the lead in pressing for a coordinated bargaining strategy for IP, urging that all locals settle before any one does.

Leaders of Local 14 have been crisscrossing the country, imparting what they have learned in strike strategy and winning public support for other locals. In this they have played the role of coordinator for all the strikes.

The call for public rallies has played an important role in buoying the spirits of the strikers while showing the depth of the support they have gathered. A rally in Jay on Aug. 1 drew more than 8000, and a Labor Day March in September in Waterville, Maine, drew about 5000.

A massive publicity campaign by IP and its allies in the media—designed to intimidate and demoralize the strikers and their supporters—has failed to bring the union to accept the company's demands. Only a couple more union members have crossed the picket line in the last month. This makes only about 50 scabs from the

Struggle enters sixth month

Jay paperworkers build support for strike battle



Liz Green/Impact Visuals

Largest labor demonstration in Maine's history was organized by Paperworkers on Aug. 1, 1987.

unions, out of 1250 union members.

However, the company's campaign has had an effect on supporters who are not close to the strike, and has dampened support activities throughout the state.

Scabs run the mill

Nevertheless, the mill continues to operate with management personnel. Working in the plant are about 50 union scabs, about 250 scabs from B.E. & K. (an Alabama strike-breaking outfit) and, probably, about 250 scabs hired from all over the country.

Although the activities of Locals 14 and 246 have far surpassed any other strike-support activities in the recent period in New England, they keep themselves at a disadvantage as long as they allow the mills to operate.

The failure of the unions to confront the

company at the point of production—that is, the operation of the mill itself—is the basic flaw in the Jay strike. In fact, the longer the strike goes on, the harder it is to raise the issue because much of the membership is demoralized and support is dispersed.

The union recently hired Ray Rogers, a key figure in the Hormel packinghouse workers' strike in Austin, Minn. But the "corporate campaign" that Rogers proposes will not compensate for the scabs working and the continued operation of IP's mills.

A mounting confrontation

American business has shown, over the past decade, that they are willing to go to any lengths to confront and defeat the unions. The leadership of the union movement has not faced confrontations like

those of today for generations.

The union movement, however, has depended so long on the Democratic Party and the rule of the American legal system that they are unable to organize and mobilize to confront the corporations.

It is obvious, in strike after strike, that the membership believes in militant action—in doing whatever is necessary to win their battles. But time after time, union leaders counsel the workers to depend on lawyers and politicians instead of organizing themselves to confront the system that binds them.

It is clear that the courts and the politicians of both the Republican and Democratic parties are not on the side of the workers. It is time for workers to organize themselves independently if they are going to successfully beat back the corporations. ■

By HAYDEN PERRY

When Mrs. Reagan had her mastectomy recently, it was reported that 20 doctors were in attendance. Some may wonder how a physician could reach through the crowd around the bedside to lay a healing hand on the patient.

Others may shudder to think of 20 doctors' bills being added to operating-room costs, intensive-care expenses, and all the other charges involved in even a routine operation. Such a medical bill can put a dent in even a president's income.

In Mrs. Reagan's case, such alarm is quite unfounded. Long ago, Congress legislated "socialized medicine" for themselves and high-ranking government officials.

However, average citizens can only wish their medical bills could be met so easily. Even a minor injury that calls for no more than out-patient care can cost hundreds of dollars.

I personally discovered this fact in a doubly painful way recently.

Forgetting my 73 years, I took a shortcut to our Socialist Action editorial office. Being less agile than formerly, I slipped and banged my leg on the sharp edge of a loading dock. The result was a nasty cut that would take some stitches to repair.

Solicitous friends called a city ambulance, which normally takes its patients to the municipal hospital. Unfortunately, we were told, San Francisco

Healthcare for profit: a personal experience

General was "diverting." That is, they were so overloaded, they could take no more patients.

As a veteran, I was entitled to treatment at a Veterans Administration (V.A.) hospital. But the ambulance could not take me there. They would take me to the nearest hospital, which happened to be just across the street.

So, after the shortest possible ambulance ride, I was deposited in the emergency room of St Lukes hospital. After a wait, a doctor sewed up the cut with 15 stitches, bandaged the wound, and sent me on my way.

In two weeks, I returned and had the stitches taken out by a second physician—who suggested another visit, as there were signs of infection. About 20 antibiotic pills costing \$25 seemed to clear that up, so I was turned over to the billing department.

Having survived the physical trauma of an injured leg, I was now to endure a period of psychic trauma as the postman brought me a series of bills for various aspects of my medical care. For the sterile bandage, \$33.25. For the use of the emergency room (most of the time waiting), \$120. For the 20 minutes the doctor took to sew up the

wound, \$273.

A different doctor took out the stitches. His bill for four visits, lasting about five minutes each, was \$280. Then the city ambulance put in their claim, \$212. Interspersed among these bills were enigmatic little statements for \$25 and \$45, with no explanation.

Clobbered on all sides

The billing department could not explain the charges, but waved them aside by assuring me that Medicare would pay a large part of them. Their attitude suggested that so long as the government or an insurance company paid, the patient should not care if the charges are excessive.

Patients must be concerned, however. They are in the middle and being clobbered on all sides by the government, the medical industry, and the insurance companies.

The government raises the cost of Medicare. Next January, it will rise from \$18 to \$24 a month. At the same time, Medicare declares they will pay less to doctors and hospitals. This in turn will leave patients with larger co-payments.

Private insurance companies are glad to cover the "gap" for a hefty premium. This

can run to \$40 or more a month. So we find elderly citizens and the disabled, living on \$500 a month, trying to scrape up \$65 a month for minimum health care.

Not considered for the moment are the millions of younger workers and their families who cannot afford the even greater cost of private health insurance.

Free healthcare for all!

My odyssey in the health-for-profit system has a sequel. Shortly after being discharged as healed, my leg became infected again. This time I carefully avoided St. Lukes and made my way to a V.A. facility.

Here I was hospitalized for a week, given scans and tests of every description, treated with the latest antibiotics, and cured—all at no cost to me.

Of course I had to serve in one of America's imperialist wars to qualify for V.A. healthcare, and there are rumbles from Washington that we can no longer afford this "luxury."

However, the healthcare offered only to veterans here is given to every citizen in every industrialized nation except South Africa and the United States.

If my experience with the health-for-profit system is typical, the medical crisis in America has reached the acute terminal stage. Only through a nationalized health plan with guaranteed free medical care for everyone can the financial agony of being sick in America come to an end. ■

Root of stock market crash: Crisis of overproduction

By W.I. MOHAREB

Someone from outer space could easily come to the conclusion that the stock market is an animal with an independent life of its own. "The stock market jumped yesterday," *The Wall Street Journal* states. "The stock market roared yesterday."

But there's a reason why the bosses' press depicts the stock market that way (especially when prices are going up). They have a compelling interest in concealing the source of profit.

They would like you to think that "money begets money," that "capital is the source of profit." Karl Marx, however, methodically showed that the only source of the bosses' profit is the *exploitation of human labor*.

Stock markets have evolved into a basic instrument of the capitalist system. Capitalists need the ability to buy and sell, to trade their private property. The stock market is a way to effect such a trade.

Stock markets are like barometers of the capitalists' all-round evaluation of the future. The price of a share of stock reflects investors' *expectation* of future levels of profit.

Obviously, there is a subjective element here, and this permits the factor of speculation to enter. To give an example, the price of one company's stock might climb because it holds title to a marketable technological advance that will possibly bring in extra profits in coming years.

But the stock market as a whole can likewise rise or fall. To understand why, it is necessary to look at the broad underlying social conditions.

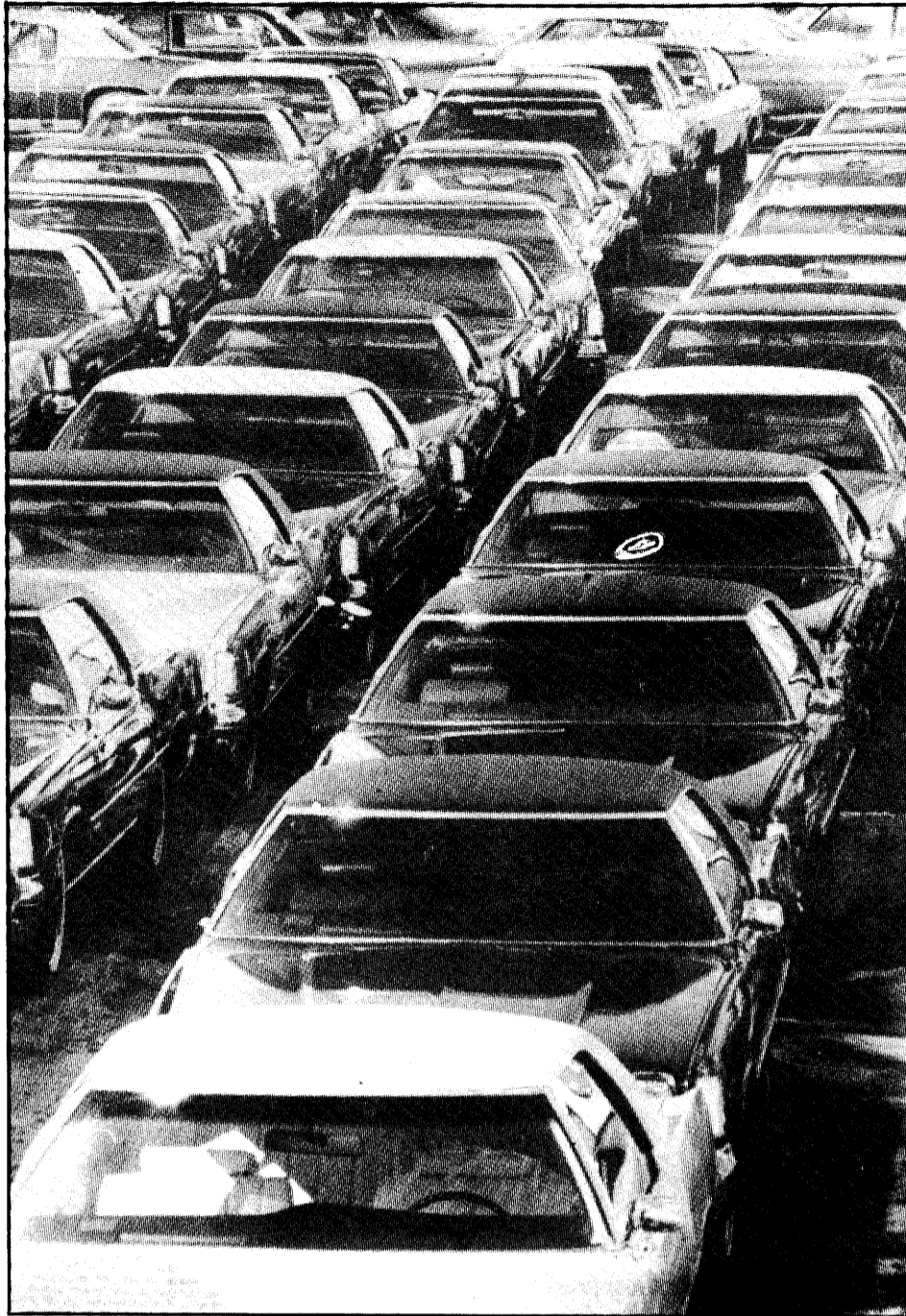
The market skyrockets

In August 1982, the New York stock market began to rise. The Dow Jones Industrials Index jumped, in fits and starts, from a low of 770 to a high of 2720 five years later. The greater part of the rise took place in the past two years.

While no one development can be singled out for the entire climb, we can still point to definite contributing factors. By the summer of 1982, there were signs that the U.S. economy was about to climb out of a recession. Another factor was the beating down of wages of industrial workers here and in other countries.

Over 5 million industrial workers have been "displaced" in the United States since the start of this decade. In the steel industry alone, thousands of workers were laid off. Workers who had been earning from \$10 to \$20 an hour were replaced by unorganized workers earning \$6 or less in the new mini-mills.

Other elements being equal, profits will rise when wages fall. For example, the combined profits of General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler amounted to some \$6.3 billion in 1983, more than 13 times their profits the previous year. Profits went up again in 1984.



Another factor behind the stock market's rise in 1982 and again beginning in early 1985 was the defeat of the PATCO air-controllers strike (1981-82) and the British miners' strike (1984-85).

With these strikes, the respective capitalist states took direct, unashamed intervention on the side of the employing class—acting to break the unions. Even more important, the leadership of the working class, both nationally and internationally, proved unable to effectively defend the workers' interests in these two watershed struggles.

There was no one-to-one relation between the stock market's rise and the outcome of such struggles. But the bosses took them into account in their overall investment decisions.

Business failures precede crash

But the stock market crashed anyway.

For some time, capitalists have been aware that the economy is not doing as well as formerly. For most of the last year, for example, industrial production has declined in France, Western Germany, Japan, and Belgium.

In the United States, *two years ago*, non-banking business failures stood at the highest levels since 1931. There is reason to believe they have gotten worse since. In the second quarter of 1987, U.S. corporate profits went down 21 percent—the biggest drop in four-and-a-half years.

Bank failures, a general indicator of economic health, have been rising without interruption in the U.S. in every year since 1981. In 1986, some 130 banks failed, a post-Depression high. Even more banks have failed this year.

Most economic "experts" are unable to explain what is going on. Let's see if Marxist theory can help us understand.

Capitalism's fundamental contradiction is that between the growth of the productive forces and the restrictive forms of capitalist property relations. That contradiction expresses itself in the economic sphere through what Marx called *overproduction*—more is produced than can be sold at a profit (but not more than is necessary to meet human needs).

Crises of overproduction

Marx wrote in the "Communist Manifesto" that one way the capitalist class "gets over" its crises of overproduction is by "the enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces." You need only think of recent pictures of steel mills in Pennsylvania coming under the wrecker's ball, auto plants being scrapped, and oil refineries being blown up to see how applicable those words are today.

The social expression of capitalist overproduction is unemployment. The full-time equivalent of at least half-a-billion people are unemployed in the world today.

There is no shortage of statistics to document the existence of overproduction. From 1974 to 1981, for example, an average of 30 percent of the entire practical industrial capacity of the United States was idle. From 1982 to 1985, the figure was 35 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"Too much" food and housing?

Although some 20 million people in the United States are suffering from hunger (according to a recent study), the problem for the capitalists is too much food!

The food-production monopolies have been operating at only 70 percent of practical capacity during the last four years. This year alone, the U.S. government is spending \$25 billion to keep food off the market, in an effort to keep prices up.

The National Union of the Homeless estimates that some 3 million people will suffer from homelessness at some point this year. But as far as the sales and rental business is concerned, there are too many homes! Some 10.3 million houses or apartments in the United States are empty, awaiting the "right" rent or sales price.

The reason that so many "energy loans," "farm loans," and "real-estate loans" are not "performing" is that these industries are drowning in overproduction. Without sales, profits cannot be realized, and repayments of debts are endangered.

Brazil or Mexico cannot pay their debts because their industries cannot find markets for the goods they were lent money to produce. Overproduction makes payment of the \$8-trillion capitalist debt virtually impossible.

The capitalists have a "solution" for their problems. They hope to make the workers and oppressed pay—to raise taxes and to cut down even more on education, healthcare, and social security. Their "solution" to overproduction is to dismantle the world's "excess" productive capacity while increasing war production.

But working people can offer our own solution. Ultimately, we will replace this irrational economic system. Capitalism will be superseded by a revolutionary new society oriented to peoples' needs instead of the profits of a few.



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... Budget cuts

(continued from page 1)

mies and take other measures—all inflationary—to absorb a larger proportion of the world's growing unsold surplus product. They hope in this way to at least postpone the outbreak of an uncontrollable crisis from which capitalism itself may not recover.

The fates of each capitalist economy are intertwined. If a major capitalist nation goes under in the current generalized world crisis, all could be dragged into a global depression. This drives them toward close collaboration in their mutual interests. But each capitalist class, primarily concerned with maintaining the stability of its own economy, resists such measures for fear of disrupting its domestic economic base.

The deficit-cutting, thus, is primarily a gesture of American capitalism's willing-

ness to take its share of the risks. At the same time the American rulers threaten to allow the dollar to fall even further. This causes American goods to be relatively cheaper, making inroads for their surplus product into world markets at the expense of U.S. capitalism's competitors.

But this policy can boomerang, as higher-valued foreign currencies permit an accelerated buy-out of basic U.S. economic institutions by European and Japanese capitalists.

This is a dangerous game, both for America's capitalists and their competitors. What the world's capitalists fear most is a breakdown of collaboration that occurs when one of the major imperialist powers loses control over its economy and acts in self-preservation without regard to its effect on their world system.

This is the other side of capitalism's present dilemma, which will prove in the end to be insoluble.

By JONI JACOBS

The Joseph Ryan for Mayor campaign concluded successfully in San Francisco on Election Day, Nov. 3, 1987. The socialist campaign was considered a success because of the number of people it reached. But its actual vote total was small. Ryan received 359 votes.

While socialist candidate Ryan could "whip" all the Democratic Party candidates in any one-on-one debate, and always got a better response from audiences when allowed to speak, his campaign never expected to override illusions. Many people still erroneously believe in the ability of the Democratic Party to provide solutions to today's social problems.

All three of the socialist candidates for mayor of San Francisco—Melissa Ehman of the Peace and Freedom Party/International Workers Party; Peter Anestos of the Socialist Workers Party; and Joseph Ryan of Socialist Action—garnered a total vote slightly less than 1 percent of all votes cast. This amounted to approximately 1300 of the 190,000 total vote. Only 49 percent of eligible voters went to the polls.

Calif. State Assemblyman Art Agnos came within percentage points of accumulating the majority (50 percent plus 1) of the vote that was necessary to win the election outright. He will have to face Supervisor John Molinari, the runner-up, in a special run-off election on Dec. 8. Agnos's lead is so commanding, however, he is practically a shoo-in to win the run-off election.

"Lesser-evilism" prevails

The mayoral campaign took place in the context of increasing cutbacks in social services for working people in San Francisco. The issues of AIDS funding, housing, education and jobs, were uppermost in the minds of people. They got no answers, however, from the Democratic Party candidates—only false promises and shifty evasions.

Agnos eventually came out on top by posing as a friend of working people and small business people. Once in office, however, his true class allegiance will become apparent when he starts slashing social services even further because of a \$76-billion budget deficit. [See box on this page.]

In contrast, Ryan told working people that they must organize themselves independently to protect their rights; and this organizing effort must point toward the formation of a labor party based on the trade unions.

The absence of a labor party, Ryan explained, makes it harder for voters to break away from the illusions they have in "lesser-evil" capitalist candidates. In the San Francisco mayoral race this translated into support for Art Agnos.

Modest goals

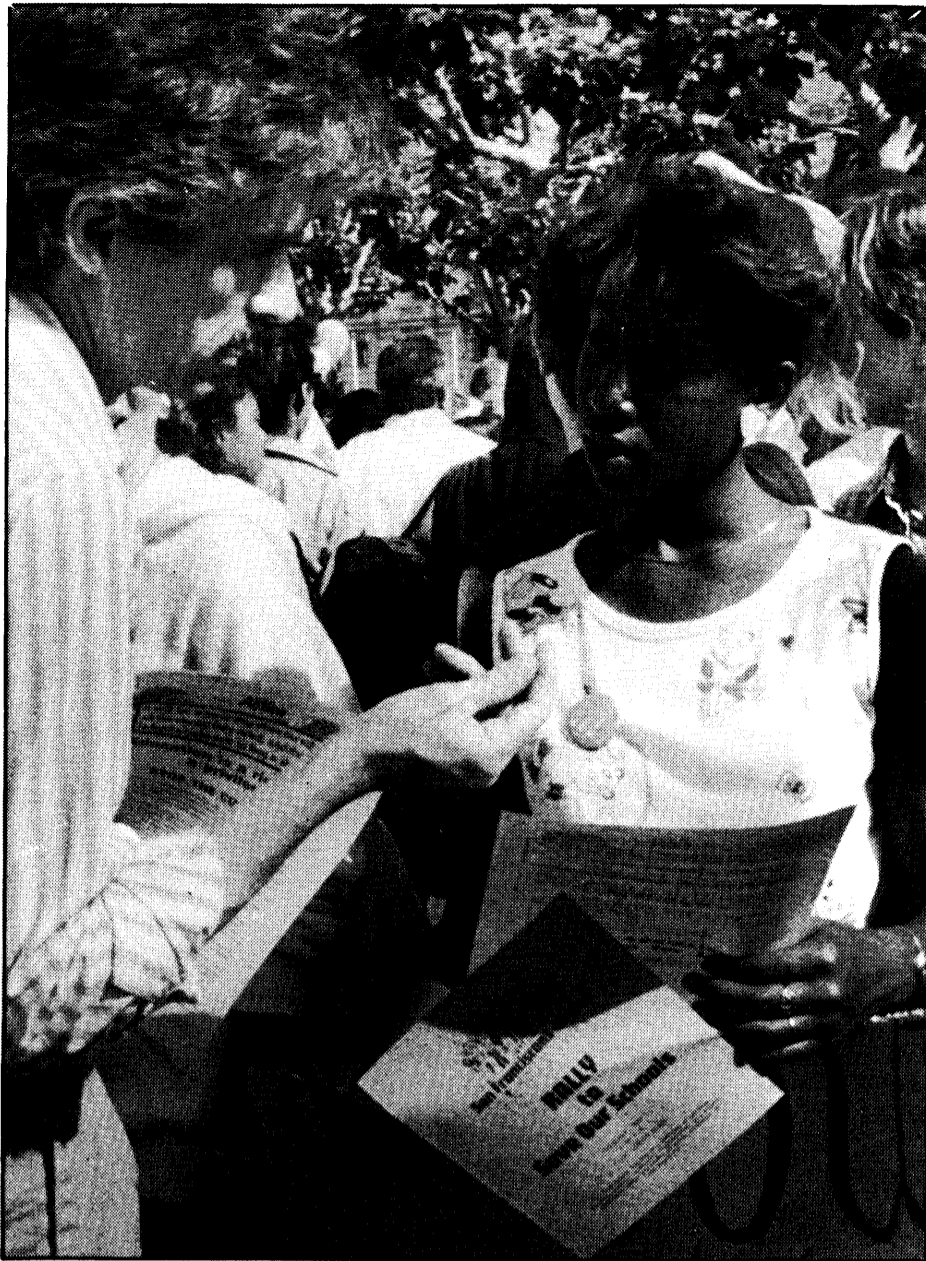
From the beginning, the Ryan campaign's goal was to popularize certain

Assemblyman Art Agnos is a liberal Democrat who had no problem working with conservative legislators to author GAIN—Greater Avenues for Independence—known as "workfare." GAIN, a so-called "reform," was designed to get women off welfare by providing them with job skills. However, most jobs pay below \$5.00 per hour and don't train women for better-paying positions. Many women do better financially on welfare than on workfare.

While GAIN is supposed to be voluntary, Agnos defends the use of sanctions against women who balk at "workfare." A woman who fails to participate, Agnos says, "will lose her adult right to spend her [welfare] check as she chooses. The state will handle all her money."

In the December issue of *the Progressive*, Agnos is quoted as comparing welfare mothers to children. He believes these women must be forced into GAIN "just as we do with children in public education."

These are the types of "enlightened" solutions Agnos will offer to San Franciscans. ■



Ryan campaign used mayoral election to reach thousands with socialist program.

Socialists assess S.F. mayoral campaign

basic ideas: (1) working people should run the city; (2) human needs should come before profits; and (3) the corporations should be taxed to pay for needed social services.

While spreading these ideas, the Ryan campaign was able to break new ground by appearing on radio talk shows, by being a guest columnist in a large San Francisco newspaper, and by intervening in important public meetings.

These modest—but important—accomplishments, however, are dwarfed by the multimillion dollar campaigns waged by Agnos, Molinari, et al. Indeed, this will always be the case when workers don't have a mass party of their own.

TV debate

Ryan's final media appearance was a televised debate with all 11 candidates on the local public TV station. As was typical throughout the campaign, Ryan and the other socialist candidates got to answer only two questions while the Democratic Party "major" candidates were allowed to

respond to five questions.

The first question the moderator asked Ryan was why there were three socialist candidates running in the election? Ryan responded by asking the moderator why he didn't ask the same question of the four Democrats on the panel.

"They all represent the rich," Ryan said. "They're all for big business, they're all for the corporations. Why don't you ask them [the Democrats] why they don't run just one candidate?"

Ryan continued: "The kind of unity I'm for is working-class unity inside a labor party. The rich already have their unity in the Democratic and Republican parties."

In his 30-second summary, Ryan told the TV audience that it was time for the rich—the gilded minority—to take cutbacks, not the working-class majority. "Things will only change," he concluded, "when working people take their fate into their own hands."

The opportunity presented by the elections to get that message across was utilized well by the socialist alternative. They planted seeds for the future. ■

Pro-choice speak-out prepares fightback

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—One hundred people gathered here on Nov. 21 at the Women's Building to hear firsthand testimony about why women must fight to protect the right to safe and legal abortion.

Billed as a "Speak-out in Defense of Women's Right to Choose," the meeting was initiated by the Coalition of Labor Union Women and organized under the auspices of the Northern California Pro-Choice Coalition, an umbrella organization made up of all the main pro-choice groups in the Northern California Bay Area. Ten women told their personal stories, and other testimony was read by the chairwomen.

Highlights of the meeting were the first-person reports of several older women who had endured illegal abortions prior to the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision which ruled that anti-abortion laws are an invasion of privacy. These women spoke of abortions performed by non-medical profiteers in abandoned buildings and hotel rooms. They felt lucky to have survived.

The meeting was co-chaired by Nan Bostick of the Pro-Choice Coalition, Pat Norman, one of the main organizers of the recent March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights, and April Grant of the National Organization for Women.

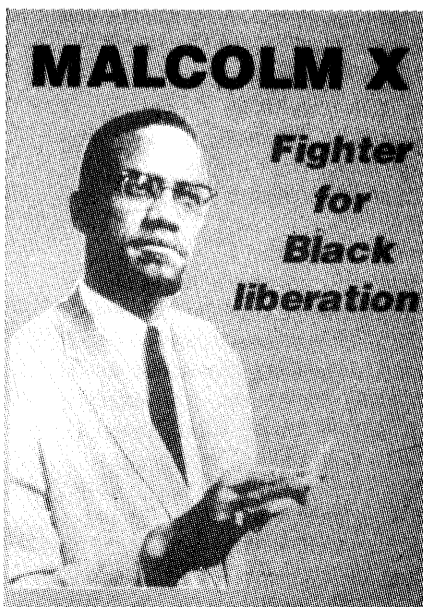
As a response to the new California law, which will require women under the age of 18 to win the consent of their parents before getting an abortion, and to renewed attempts to cut off all state funding for abortion for low-income women, many saw this meeting as an important step toward involving the labor movement in the fight for women's reproductive rights.

One woman's testimony ended with a theme that the audience applauded: "There are many of us...here in America, who are being denied and refused this basic right to take control of our bodies and lives. I now know that we cannot expect the government to make laws which protect us. As women, we have to fight for our rights. And as women, we will." ■



Myesha Jenkins (at podium) and Pat Norman, chairwoman of speak-out

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The meaning of Gorbachev's Reforms



Socialist Action Forum/Debate: Is the Rainbow Coalition an alternative in '88 election?

The following are excerpts from a Socialist Action forum/debate in New York City on Nov. 6 titled, "Election 1988: Which Way Forward for Working People." The two speakers were Irving Beinen, executive committee member of the National Committee for Independent Political Action (NCIPA), and Nat Weinstein, national secretary of Socialist Action.

Irving Beinen: In 1984 Jesse Jackson gave what I believe is a fair description of how he views the Rainbow Coalition. He said at that time:

"My commitment as a presidential candidate is to focus on and lift those votes stuck on the bottom full of unpolished pearls, so if those votes on the bottom rise, all votes will rise."

The Rainbow campaign has stirred a deep response from the Black communities across the country. This is shown by the jump in voter registration. It's shown by the excitement and enthusiasm the campaign has aroused. The old politics are discredited, and the Jackson campaign is seen as the best chance—the only chance that has appeared for a long time—for the downtrodden to get what they want out of life.

It is not good enough to repeat old slogans and preconceived scenarios. One has to relate to the ongoing context of what's happening in the country today—as well as what's not happening, where the labor union movement is *not* playing a leading role and has not played a leading role for almost 50 years.

Now the National Rainbow Coalition is not a labor party and it is institutionally related to the Democratic Party, even though it is not part of the Democratic Party as such. But its basic thrust and program and its constituency makes it come closer to a labor party than anything we have seen in 50 years.

I want to say something else that is very important. The factor which has most led to the weakness and division within the labor movement is racism. The Jackson campaign, by asking people to recognize a Black as their leader, as their spokesperson, is an historic change.

I also want to say something about the internal contradictions in the Rainbow. Because it is a coalition and because it derives its energy from so many different directions and has support from so many different sections of the country and classes, they're bound to be serious and severe contradictions within the Rainbow structure.

There are fierce struggles being waged in the Rainbow Coalition. It is essentially a struggle for its future. Will the Rainbow be part of the Democratic Party or will it be an independent party? This is a struggle which has not been resolved.

There are many forces within the Rainbow pushing it in the direction of an independent party. There are others who want to use the Rainbow in order to have a little more strength for their campaigns. These are the people who want to keep the Rainbow within the Democratic Party.

The second struggle is over who controls the Rainbow? Is it going to be the officers—a handful of elected or appointed people who decide what happens—or is it going to be the people who built the Rainbow, who go out and get the votes and do the voter registration and do all the work that is necessary to build a party? This struggle also has not been resolved. These issues which emerged right at the start are still with us.

Nat Weinstein: The problem of the American working class is only partially touched on by the discussion before us tonight. There is a bigger question involved than electoralism and what to do in the 1988 election, and that is the basic problem of independent working-class action both on the plant level and on the political level. They are intimately connected.

The biggest problem that we have is to break workers from the idea that some kind of partnership exists between the working class and sections of the capitalist class. Socialist Action is an organization that is based upon the classical Marxist conception that the interests of the workers as a class and those of the capitalists as a class are fundamentally and irreconcilably opposed.

The biggest problem that we have is to break through the myth that has prevented working people in the United States from developing a consciousness of themselves as a class.

I am convinced that the crisis that occurred on the stock market on Oct. 19 is a sign of big changes that



Jill Freedman

are taking place down the road. We are going to see a destabilization that will be at least as profound as the destabilization of world capitalism that took place after the 1929 stock market crash. It is important to take this perspective to discuss this question before us tonight.

One of the reasons that the working class is in retreat now is because the long-term stability of capitalism has permitted the labor bureaucracy and other misleaders within the ranks of the working class to orient working people toward placing confidence in this or that section of the capitalist class.

Working people in the United States have been led to accept the mistaken strategic approach that it is not possible to solve their problems outside the framework of the profitability of the business enterprises that they work for. That's the policy of the labor bureaucracy, and it's also expressed politically in the idea that it is not possible for workers to advance their interests independent of the Democratic and Republican parties.

I have read and listened very carefully to the speeches and positions given by Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition, which he represents. It is clear to me that it's probably one of the more left wing, more radical

platforms that have emerged within the framework of the Democratic Party.

Here's the rub. It is a platform that redirects working people and all of the oppressed in exactly the wrong direction; into the direction which has led to the decline of the power of the labor movement in the United States.

The big struggles that took place in the 1930s on the economic plane were independent of capitalism and in opposition to the capitalist class. It is for that reason that the working class made the gains that it did; gains that have lasted for such an unprecedented period of time.

Even if Jesse Jackson had a program that fitted the needs of the working class, the fact that he orients the workers toward the Democratic Party is a major disservice to the working class. Such an orientation is an obstacle to the need to develop an independent class approach to politics and to all the problems that exist in this society.

The result of supporting capitalist candidates like Jesse Jackson is that he inevitably must make compromises. Whoever leads workers in this direction must make compromises with sections of the capitalist class on very important questions that relate to the unity and interests

of the working class.

In order to win the battles that are to come, working people have to see their interests as they are; that is, in sharp contradiction to the interests of the ruling capitalist class in the United States. And everything that points workers away from this perspective slows down the development of the consciousness that's necessary for the struggles to come.

Jesse Jackson has called for an economic Camp David to forge a national consensus among business, labor, and Wall Street on cutting the military budget, raising taxes, and reducing the budget and trade deficits. "We are all in the economic trenches now even if on Wall Street the trenches are mahogany lined," he said. "Wall Street cannot escape Main Street. We are one."

This is the message of the Jackson campaign. This is the message of a united campaign on the part of all classes in American society. A united campaign to meet the "common threat to everybody's interests in the United States," and this, in my opinion, is the road to disaster.

The policy of supporting Democrats forces the leaders of the working class to subordinate the interests of workers to the support of the capitalist politicians. That's the logic of your policy, Irving.

Irving Beinen: First, let me say something about the Democratic Party. There's no question that Jesse Jackson, running in the Democratic primary, is running in the Democratic Party. What I also said is that there's a struggle to change that situation.

We're not only talking about Jesse Jackson, we're talking about a mass movement. There are people who respond to Jackson personally, to the Rainbow Coalition, who are involved in struggles and who have the power to change this country around.

The issue is not Jesse Jackson. The issue is a mass movement that is being built with his leadership, but will also be built without his leadership if that ever becomes necessary. You say he wouldn't call for a cut in hours without a cut in pay. Of course he would. He has.

He's against plant closings. Is that in the interest of the capitalist class? He's marched on picket lines supporting workers in the most important strikes of the country. Is that in the interest of the capitalists? Are those good pro-capitalist statements? You're not dealing with reality. You've got yourself locked up in a little box with an old ideology. This is a canned speech I heard from my friend Nat. It simply doesn't deal with the world we live in.

Nat Weinstein: You point out that we're not connected with reality. I didn't propose that all Jesse Jackson has to say is "socialist revolution" and he's got my vote. That's not the point. Even if he did say he was for a socialist revolution I wouldn't believe him. It isn't so much what he says.

For me, what's decisive is who he's marching with. He's marching with the Democratic Party. And everything that he says is very radical, but it's a very radical defense of capitalism. What's important to me is that the people who listen to what I have to say will be prepared for the fact that these promises will be betrayed. But the people who listen to Irving, I'm afraid, will be shocked and dismayed and demoralized.

In order to predict what's going to happen, you have to know what has happened in the past. Otherwise you have to be a mind reader and have a crystal ball. I'm not a mind reader and I don't have a crystal ball. I don't know what's in Jesse Jackson's mind, but I don't have to know. I know what he can't do because of who he's tied up with. He can't carry out any of the promises he's talking about, and he will not—and he won't get elected.

Question: I'd like to address this issue of a mass movement. Irving has said that a mass movement has been created around the Rainbow Coalition. I've run into Irving over the last 20 years. I know he knows something about mass movements.

But I also know that Irving must have seen or at least figured out by now that one of the things that really demobilizes the mass movements that have occurred in the United States have been precisely the kind of electoral campaigns that we have seen develop around the Rainbow Coalition. We saw it in 1984 when there was a period of intense escalation in Central America, the mining of Nicaraguan harbors. There wasn't any kind of organized response to that because people were buried in the Democratic Party ringing doorbells.

This is a recurring problem that we have in the mass movement. These election campaigns—the Rainbow Coalition—do not build mass movements. They do precisely the opposite by taking people out of the streets, taking people out of real struggles that can accomplish something, and turning them into an exercise in futility in the electoral arena.

The fundamental changes that we need in society are not going to be accomplished through elections. We have to figure out how to intervene in elections, but the important thing is building a mass movement around the unions, around demonstrations, the civil rights movement, women's liberation movement and other movements for social change—and that's the big



Cliff Conner/Socialist Action

"Which section of the capitalist class does Jesse Jackson represent? He doesn't represent any of it."

—Irving Beinen

disservice I think that the Rainbow Coalition has done.

Irving Beinen: I'm not impressed by prognostications. What I do know is that you don't wait for events to unfold. You need an organization to move with. If there were a labor party or if the trade unions were to call for the kind of leadership that's been talked about, that would be one situation. That is not the way it is.

The way it is, is that the Rainbow Coalition, essentially a Black-led movement that's becoming more and more of a rainbow, has taken the leadership. And there are some trade unionists, not many, who are joining those ranks and who will help give a working-class character to the Rainbow Coalition. I think that when the die is cast, Jesse Jackson will be on our side.

Where will you get a better expression of what should happen in Central America? Where will you get a better expression of what should happen with the plants that have been closed? He has provided leadership in a number of areas.

Which section of the capitalist class does Jesse Jackson represent? Is it industry? The Democratic Party is not a section of the capitalist class. It's a capitalist party but it's not a section of the capitalist class. The Democratic Party consists in its main not of capitalists. Which section of the capitalist class does Jesse Jackson represent? He doesn't represent any of it.

Jackson is running in a capitalist party, that's what's happening. But he's running in a capitalist party with a program that favors the working class and the people as a whole. He's running in a capitalist party with the support of the most oppressed people in this country.

It's not true either that electoral campaigns weaken movements. Sometimes that could happen and that has happened. But the fact is that leaders of the non-intervention movements in Central America and South Africa, leaders of the gay and lesbian movement, leaders of the peace movement are all supporting Jesse Jackson. Now does that mean that they would do this if they thought their movements were being torn apart by his campaign? I don't think so. They see his campaign as building those movements.

Question: I don't think the question of the Democratic Party is the dividing line between revolutionaries and progressives or whatever. I happen to agree with Irving. Who before a national audience on TV speaks about South Africa? Who went to Nicaragua? Who went to Cuba? Who is coming before trade-union meetings all across the country and saying this?

Now it's true he's campaigning in the Democratic Party, but for now, that's the only party that exists to campaign in. The dividing line is what you do in the real world and what struggles you're for, what struggles you're against, and what struggles you participate in.

Question: You say Jesse Jackson went to Cuba. Jesse Jackson went to Nicaragua. But then, Jesse Jackson supported Mondale who made the racist speech, who called for sanctions against Nicaragua. This is what happens when you seek to build a mass movement within the Democratic Party. He walks on picket lines but he also talks more than ever of the need for sticking to the Democratic Party.

One of Jackson's more eloquent statements was, "The Democratic Party has a right wing, and it has a left wing, and everybody knows that you need two wings to

fly." That means, if you're going any place, stick with the Democratic Party. The right wing is necessary, and fly, direction unknown.

Irving Beinen: The Jackson campaign is the left wing of the Democratic Party, no question about it. And whatever we think about two wings, the fact of the matter is that in this case the left wing is fighting the right wing.

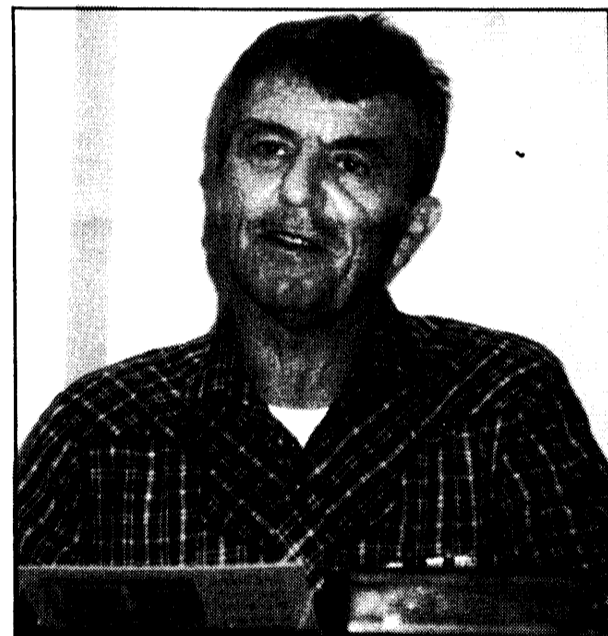
Now, as far as the last question about the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party is a capitalist party. I personally think you should not support capitalist parties. I can see that the most effective thing that I can do today is to support a mass movement which believes that it can win over a large section of the party, perhaps later to create an independent party.

So that one can't be so rigid in these political constructions. The Democratic Party, in fact, is not just a capitalist party. It's a capitalist party whose main base consists of workers, Blacks, Latinos, poor people, even unemployed people. It is controlled lock, stock, and barrel by big business and by capitalists, without any question. What Jackson is trying to do is to change that situation, to weaken that control.

Nat Weinstein: The term "section of the capitalist class" is the rationalization that most of the bureaucrats in the labor movement and many reformist socialists use to justify their support for this or that candidate who seems to be somewhat to the left inside the Democratic Party. They argue that there are divisions inside the capitalist class, and that therefore it is correct to take advantage of these divisions and to support one wing or another.

Now Irving and others point to the fact that there are many who support the Rainbow who come from the working class. There are women; there are gay activists; there are antiwar activists, and so on. And all these people are certainly not part of the capitalist class. Well that is true.

But you don't determine the nature of a political organization by the fact that workers support it. Because I can show more workers supporting the Republican Party, for that matter, than support Jesse Jackson. It



Cliff Conner/Socialist Action

"The result of supporting capitalist candidates like Jesse Jackson is that he inevitably must make compromises."

—Nat Weinstein

doesn't change the nature of the Republican or Democratic parties by the fact that workers have been swindled and suckered into supporting these parties.

As I mentioned earlier, it is the internal contradictions of capitalism that will open the door to new solutions for working people. And the new solutions will go in the direction of socialism, we believe. That's an objective reality. We will get our chance. Capitalism will bring about the objective conditions for a socialist movement to develop, very broadly, very powerfully. But it needs leadership.

You can't fool the capitalists. They don't have misleaders telling them to place their confidence in the workers, like the workers have misleaders telling them to place their confidence in the capitalists.

It's a question of the lessons of history. What we in Socialist Action are trying to do is to preserve these lessons of history, to keep them alive, to keep pointing to them, to show that this Jesse Jackson campaign is not new. ■



Glasnost doesn't apply to role of Leon Trotsky

The following is a statement by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International dated Nov. 6, 1987. It is reprinted from the Nov. 23, 1987, issue of *International Viewpoint* magazine.

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech on Nov. 2, 1987, on the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution contained serious accusations against Leon Trotsky, who was chair of the Petrograd Soviet at the time of the revolution, chair of its Revolutionary Military Committee, responsible for the technical organization of the October 1917 insurrection, founder and leader of the Red Army, leading member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR and of the Council of the People's Commissars for many years.

Of course, we do not challenge anybody's right to make an extremely critical judgment on the theoretical conceptions, the political opinions, and the organizational behavior of Leon Trotsky at different periods of his life. History will make the final judgment in this respect. No one—not even Stalin—could prevent this debate from taking place.

Stalin school of falsification

Gorbachev's judgment on Leon Trotsky, however, uses well-known methods (curtailed quotations, untruths, and accusations flung out without a shadow of proof, etc.) from the school of historical falsification founded by Stalin.

These methods become obvious as soon as the statements are contrasted with the relevant documents.

Gorbachev says, "Trotsky... displayed excessive pretensions to top leadership in the party, thus fully confirming Lenin's opinion of him as an excessively self-assured politician who always vacillated and cheated."

Lenin's testament

This is obviously a reference—although not explicit, and we understand why not—to Lenin's letters to the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, considered to be the testament of the founder of Bolshevism. Gorbachev refers to the same document in his judgment on Bukharin.

This testament, while it does reproach Trotsky for "excessive self-assurance and excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work," does not contain any of the other judgments evoked by Gorbachev. In fact, if one member of the party leadership could be accused by Lenin of having "excessive pretensions to top leadership" and "vacillating and cheating," it is Joseph Stalin himself, whom the testament proposed should be removed from his post of General Secretary.

Not only does Gorbachev hide this incontestable truth—he who considers, and this says everything, that Leninism triumphed in the party under the leadership of Stalin—but he also passes over the testament's judgment of Trotsky ("the most capable man in the central

committee"). He thus makes totally incomprehensible the proposals made by Lenin to Trotsky in his last letters of a joint political fight at the 10th Congress of the Soviets and at the 12th Congress of the party.

Gorbachev adds, "Trotskyism was a political current whose ideologists took cover behind leftist pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric, and in effect assumed a defeatist posture."

Accused of defeatism

This excommunication is pronounced without a single example of a "defeatist" position of Trotsky and Trotskyists. There is a very simple reason for this: there is none.

Was it "defeatist" to propose in 1923 a new course of democratization of the party and state, in terms which Gorbachev himself seems to be using in his present campaign for "democratization and glasnost in the USSR?"

Was it "defeatist" to propose in 1923 a gradual industrialization of the Soviet Union which would have made it possible to spread over 10 years the effort of "socialist accumulation" that the country had to make in a rushed and bloody way (forced collectivization) between 1928 and 1933, at the cost of immense sacrifices inflicted on the population and terrible social and political tensions?

Was it "defeatist" to sound a warning in 1930 [after being exiled by Stalin] about the mortal danger represented by the rise of Nazism in Germany for the German working class, the USSR and for the world proletariat?

Was it "defeatist" to call insistently on the German Communist Party (KPD), the Communist International, and the workers to prevent Hitler from taking power through a correct united-front policy from top to bottom between the German Communist Party, the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD), and the trade unions?

Was it "defeatist" to denounce the terrible consequences of the 1937 purges for weakening the Red Army's capacity for action? To warn against Stalin's criminal confidence in the non-aggression pact signed with Hitler's Germany in 1939, which explains the lack of political and military preparation of the USSR for the Wehrmacht's invasion on June 22, 1941?

Gorbachev concluded, "It was essential to disprove Trotskyism before the whole people, and to lay bare its anti-socialist essence."

Once again an excommunication without being able to cite a single "anti-socialist" act or idea of Leon Trotsky. And for good reason: Trotsky remained until the last day of his life, despite everything, faithful to his convictions as a revolutionary Marxist, as a communist. Just as, despite everything, he maintained his position of unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism.

On the subject of Stalinist repression, Gorbachev states: "There are still attempts to turn away from painful matters in our history, to hush them up, to make

believe that nothing special happened. We cannot agree to this. This would be a disregard for the historical truth, disrespect for the memory of those who were innocent victims of lawless and arbitrary actions."

However, while anathematizing the political positions of Leon Trotsky, Gorbachev kept silent on the completely false and slanderous accusations which have been made over the last 50 years in the USSR and elsewhere against the founder of the Red Army, his supporters, and his allies. These accusations are still echoed today in the Soviet Union; that he was an agent of Hitler and the Mikado [Japan]; that he met [Nazi official] Rudolf Hess; that he plotted with foreign powers to break up the territory of the Soviet Union.

Trotsky is alleged to have plotted and organized terrorist acts against the leaders of the party and the Soviet state, and so on. These calumnies have been judged as "proved" by Soviet tribunals, in particular those of the three notorious "Moscow Trials" (1936-1938). Everybody now knows what these truths are worth.

A tissue of lies

But, on the other hand, what is really proved is that the assassination of Leon Trotsky on Aug. 20, 1940, in Mexico was the work of a GPU [KGB] agent. The accusations of the "Moscow Trials" were a tissue of lies, and the assassination of Leon Trotsky a vile crime: This is the only real "historical truth."

Gorbachev announced in his speech that a commission would be formed for "examining new facts and documents pertaining to these matters." But why is a commission necessary to seek out the "historical truth?"

Do not the whole Soviet people have the right of access to the same documents? Do they not have the right to judge on the basis of evidence and not on the basis of "truths" revealed by an official commission? Do they not have the right to see all the documents which support the different judgments on Trotsky and Stalin and the other party leaders in the period concerned?

Judge for themselves

If Gorbachev and the leadership of the Soviet CP are so sure that their positions are right, let them allow the mass publication of the works of leaders of the Bolshevik Party such as Trotsky, Bukharin, Preobrazhensky, and others! Let them give Soviet citizens the right of access to their own history!

Let them have the courage to accept a public debate in the USSR between historians of the October Revolution and of the Soviet state from the entire world! Let them publish for all their citizens Khrushchev's report to the 20th Congress, a report that to this day has remained "secret" in the USSR!

As the Soviet historian Yuri Afanasyev stated, "We are entirely dependent on the past, because it is on this past that our society, all its structures and ourselves were formed."

So, without *glasnost* on the past there can be no real *glasnost* on the present! ■

What Lenin's testament said:

Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution.

On the other hand, comrade Trotsky... is distinguished not only by his exceptional ability—personally, he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee—but also by his far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split, and if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might rise unexpectedly...

Postscript: Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us communists, becomes unsupportable in the office of General Secretary.

Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite, and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc...

LENIN
Jan. 4, 1923

Rosario Ibarra kicks off Mexico election campaign



Lita Blanc/Socialist Action

The following interview with Rosario Ibarra, renowned human rights activist and presidential candidate of the Unidad Popular coalition in Mexico, was conducted in Mexico City on Oct. 24 by Socialist Action staffwriter Lita Blanc.

This interview constitutes the first of a four-part series by Lita Blanc on women in Latin America. Blanc attended the Fourth Latin American Feminist Conference in Taxco, Mexico, on Oct. 19-24.

Part 2 of this series is devoted to the Mexican 19th of September Women's Garment Union, which was formed shortly after the September 1985 earthquake. It includes a special interview with Luz Vásquez Martínez, a leader of that union.

Socialist Action: The ruling PRI [Revolutionary Institutional Party] has just selected Carlos Salinas de Gortari as the PRI candidate in next July's presidential elections—which means Salinas will be Mexico's next president. What is the significance of his candidacy from the point of view of the ruling class?

Rosario Ibarra: He is their best representative. He is a very good friend of Miguel de la Madrid [Mexico's current president]. He studied in the United States. He's a technocrat. He will carry on the policy of selling out this country to foreign—mainly U.S.—interests.

S.A.: You are the presidential candidate of Unidad Popular (Popular Unity), a revolutionary-left coalition of which the PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth Internation-

al) is the main component. What are the main planks of your platform?

Ibarra: One of the main planks is the question of democracy. Democracy, as I and the comrades of the PRT see it, means a country without political prisoners, without "disappeared," without electoral fraud, without inequality. It means a country with decent wages, working conditions, education, and housing.

But you can't have the false dream that we will change the country through

elections. We have to say this to the people. We have to fight for a series of demands, but we have to explain that these will only be won through our struggles and by organizing ourselves.

We are not going to trick anybody by telling them that if we are elected we'll be able to make all these changes. That just won't happen within a corrupt political apparatus such as exists in Mexico.

Take a look at what happened to Salvador Allende in Chile, for example. How could it be that a man like Salvador Allende, who had such a great vision, was unable to make any real changes? He couldn't because although he headed up the government, he didn't really have political power.

So we don't want to trick people as the other left candidates do. Some of the parties of the left are even proposing an electoral front with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a man who is part of the ruling PRI repressive apparatus and who shares responsibility for the current crisis in Mexico.

S.A.: So in your opinion Cárdenas's "Democratic Current" does not represent a break with the PRI?

Ibarra: That is correct. Cárdenas is the candidate of the PARM (Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution), but the PARM is a party which for decades has been kept alive artificially by the PRI itself in order to have it as a political "card" to play in times of crisis. To put it simply, we don't want to have anything to do with the PRI or with any current or party that is in cahoots with the PRI.

S.A.: In September of this year a number of left parties formed the Partido Mexicano Socialista (Mexican Socialist Party/PMS). Soon after, the PMS held its own primary elections and voted to run Heberto Castillo as their presidential candi-

date. I have recently heard that Martínez Verdugo [leader of the PSUM, the pro-Moscow Stalinist party that dissolved into the PMS] and a large component of the PMS is now in favor of supporting Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas for president?

Ibarra: This is true. A major crisis has erupted in the PMS because there is a strong current within that party that is pushing for the PMS to support Cárdenas.

S.A.: Was it ever proposed to you that you run in a primary election against Castillo?

Ibarra: No. The PMS was not interested in a primary election with the PRT to determine a presidential candidate of the left. They held their own primary and later said they had already decided on their own candidate. Now a wing of the PMS is pushing for new primary elections with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

S.A.: What is the status of Unidad Popular, the electoral front that is running you for president?

Ibarra: Unidad Popular is currently fleshing out its political program. Its program needs to be absolutely clear. Only those who belong there should participate—and nobody else. I'm planning on making my views perfectly clear on this matter.

S.A.: Who do you think doesn't belong in Unidad Popular?

Ibarra: Those who have a pro-government position or who support the "Democratic Current" of the PRI.

S.A.: Are there organizations or individuals within Unidad Popular that support the PRI or Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas?

Ibarra: Yes, the Organización de Izquierda Revolucionaria-Línea de Masas (Organization of the Revolutionary Left-Line of March/OIR)—does. Some of their leaders in the north of Mexico, in Monterrey, even went so far as to greet the ruling PRI's official candidate, Salinas de Gortari, stating that he is a presidential candidate who will govern for the good of all Mexicans.

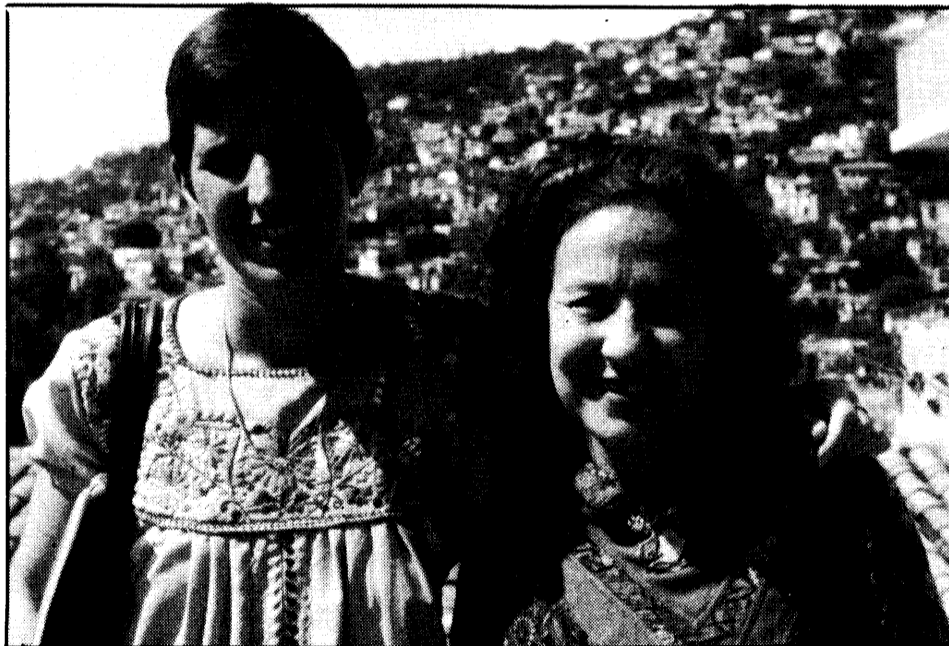
That's why we've got to talk about the need for a clear program. I will not go along with anyone who is supporting Cárdenas. I will only run on the clear political platform that the PRT has put forth, a platform which excludes the possibility of supporting the "Democratic Current."

S.A.: When are you launching your campaign?

Ibarra: On Nov. 22. Here in Mexico City there will be an electoral rally to kick off the campaign.

S.A.: In 1982, when you were the presidential candidate of the PRT, you had tremendous support among the most oppressed sectors of society, including working-class women. How many votes did you get in the last election?

Ibarra: The government said we got 400,000 votes but we have reason to believe that we actually got more. This time around, with a campaign that is not mixed up with the right wing and does not flirt with reformist parties of the left, I think that growing numbers of poor and working-class people will have confidence in our campaign. They will know exactly what we stand for. ■



Socialist Action reporter Lita Blanc (left) and Rosario Ibarra in Taxco, Mexico. Blanc begins a four-part feature on women in Latin America with this issue.

The following are excerpts from Rosario Ibarra's comments to the workshop on human rights at the Fourth Latin American Feminist Conference held in Taxco, Mexico, on Oct. 19-24.

Question: What is the human rights situation in Mexico today?

Ibarra: Right now there are 543 disappeared. These are well-documented cases. We have been able to obtain the release of another 148 people who had been disappeared. We also know that many of those still missing are still alive. Our struggle is very difficult because internationally the Mexican government has a democratic image. It makes it harder for us to explain the reality of political repression in Mexico.

Question: How were you able to free the 148?

Ibarra: When someone is taken away, we immediately let everybody in our network know. Right away, the gov-

ernment is flooded with letters and telegrams.

Question: Have you been able to get international support?

Ibarra: Yes, we've been publicizing the situation in Mexico for many years, with tours to the United States, Canada, and Europe.

In 1977, exactly 10 years ago, we formed the Committee of the Relatives of the Disappeared and Political Prisoners. Our view is that the question of human rights does not just mean an end to repression but also the right to a decent life. I am also a member of FEDEFAM [Latin American Federation of Relatives of the Disappeared].

Rosario Ibarra: 'We need an international network against repression'

Question: What is your assessment of FEDEFAM and of the state of political repression in Latin America today?

Ibarra: At the last meeting of FEDEFAM, we analyzed the situation of widespread repression throughout Latin America. We noted that we are no longer just a group of mothers who cry; we fight back. We also discovered something very interesting. When we founded FEDEFAM in 1980, there were a whole series of military dictatorships in Latin America. Mexico at the time was considered one of the few "democracies."

Now, in 1987, we find that there are no longer dictatorships in Guatemala,

Argentina, Peru, and Uruguay. We've invented a term to explain this phenomenon: the "Mexicanization" of Latin America. What this means is that it is less costly politically for governments to have a "democratic" government than a military dictatorship.

But these "democratic" regimes are often no less repressive. They are the Dorian Grays of Latin America. Beneath their pretty faces and hypocritical statements, they hide the ugly reality of assassinations and torture.

It's important to understand this. Our fight for human rights doesn't stop at our national borders. How many Uruguayans were taken prisoners in Argentina, for example? So we can't pay attention to borders. We need to create an international network against repression. In 1980, when we formed FEDEFAM, there were just a few of us. Today, our numbers have swelled. But compañeras, we need to be millions. ■



Larry Boyd/Impact Visuals

Peace march in Nicaragua on Sept. 29, 1987. Signs oppose amnesty for jailed contras and ex-National Guardsmen.

'We must not be caught off guard by peace plan'

The following are excerpts from an op-ed article titled "Beware the Arias Plan" that appeared in the November 1987 issue of *Central America Report*, the monthly newspaper of the Boston-based Central American Solidarity Association (CASA). The article was written by the El Salvador Committee of CASA. Copies of the Report can be obtained from CASA, 1151 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138.

The rise of peace plans has followed the defeat of the contras as a military force and the exposure of the Reagan administration in the Iran-Contra scandal.

Less adventurous elements in Washington, especially the Democrats who are interested in posing as pro-peace for the elections, see the need for a change of tactics without losing sight of their goal, which is the destruction of the gains of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the positive example that it gives for the rest of Central and Latin America.

They hope that a "political settlement" will force more concessions from the Nicaraguans than the contras have been able to win on the battlefield. While formally a plan of Central American nations, the Arias Plan clearly shows the influence of the United States. The United States will also try to use it for its own ends.

The successes of the anti-intervention movement have helped restrain the United States. Part of the aim of the United States in pushing peace plans is the confusion and demobilization of our movement.

We must not be caught off guard. Whatever our assessment of the Arias Plan, we should not depart from our basic principles that Nicaragua has the right to self-determination and that the United States has no right to interfere whatsoever.

We in the solidarity movement must remember that this is the best way to defend the revolution. It is especially important that we stick to this basic approach as we near election time, when people lose sight of basic principles in the search for "viable alternatives."

We must continue, then, on building a broad, powerful, independent movement against intervention.

The vast majority of U.S. people oppose aid to the contras. The more we can help bring out an understanding of the reality of Central America and the intentions of the U.S. government, the more anti-contra sentiment will be maintained as a general anti-intervention position.

... U.S. steps up campaign

(continued from page 1)

FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] to disband its ruling National Directorate."

The U.S. government, likewise, has pressed the Nicaraguan government to broaden the agenda of the cease-fire talks to include political questions such as power-sharing with the contras.

Top U.S. officials have also demanded that the Sandinistas release all political prisoners—including all the ex-Somoza National Guardsmen—and that they lift the state-of-siege law. Only then, government officials say, will they consider withdrawing their support to the contras.

In the meantime, the Reagan administration is asking Congress to provide an additional \$30 million in "nonlethal aid" to the contras. The funds, which would be

disbursed after Dec. 16., would be used for the "maintenance of the contras in the field," according to National Security Advisor Lieut. Gen. Colin Powell. These funds, administration officials openly admit, would be earmarked for *continued military training and helicopters.*

End all contra aid!

The U.S. government is anxiously seeking to put the onus on the Nicaraguan government for failing to comply with the peace plan. If the International Verification Committee, which meets in January, determines that Nicaragua has not complied with the treaty, the Reagan administration will have the justification to demand an additional \$270 million in aid to the contras.

In this effort, the administration knows it

can count on the Democratic Party. Even liberal Senator Alan Cranston (D.-Calif) told NBC News on Nov. 13 that "if Nicaragua fails to comply with the provisions of the [Arias] plan, I will be the first to vote for contra aid."

But until the vote to condemn Nicaragua for allegedly sabotaging the peace plan can be secured—or as long as it can wrench further concessions from the Sandinista government—the U.S. government will continue to finance the contras through temporary stop-gap packages. As *The New York Times* (Nov. 29) put it: "The Congress is unwilling to abandon the contras."

More than ever, it is necessary to organize mass demonstrations to demand an end to all forms of contra aid and an end to U.S. intervention in Central America. National and international protests in the spring of 1988 against contra aid are urgently needed to allow the Nicaraguan people to live in peace.

—The Editors

Gorbachev supports C. America status-quo

By ALAN BENJAMIN

While world attention is focusing on the Reagan-Gorbachev arms negotiations, one aspect of U.S.-Soviet relations that has received relatively little media coverage is the issue of Central America. This does not mean, however, that top U.S. and Soviet policymakers are not attributing major importance to this topic.

On Oct. 29, for example, Elliot Abrams, the assistant secretary of State in charge of Latin American affairs, met in London with Yuri Pavlov, his Soviet counterpart, to "explore possibilities for seeking a settlement to the conflict in Central America." (*La Jornada*, Mexico City, Oct. 31)

What kind of settlement? Robert White, former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, offers an answer.

Speaking at a meeting of the Common-

wealth Club in San Francisco in early November, White said that the Soviet Union "supports the status-quo in Central America and does not want to make Nicaragua into another Cuba." White's assessment is based on his talks with top-ranking Soviet officials during his recent trip to the Soviet Union. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 5, 1987)

At the very moment White was speaking, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega was in Moscow to attend the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution. The Esquipulas II Central American "peace plan" was about to go into effect, and news commentators throughout the world wondered what Mikhail Gorbachev's message to Ortega would be.

This question was soon answered. On Nov. 7, House Speaker Jim Wright told national TV that "Gorbachev [had] made it clear to Ortega that Moscow is not interested in financing a war in Central America." Wright offered no further details, explaining only that he had this information from "reliable sources."

The following week, on Nov. 12, Ortega was asked directly by a U.S. journalist at a nationally televised press conference in Washington, D.C., what the Soviet premier's advice had been.

The reporter's question was as interesting as the answer. "A top U.S. official has stated that Gorbachev told you to negotiate with the contras and even seek some form of power-sharing with them. Is this true?" the reporter asked.

Ortega did not confirm or deny this statement, preferring to dodge the question altogether. "The Soviet Union understands our situation and agrees with what we are doing," Ortega said.

But when a leader of the contra directorate, Alfredo Cesar, was asked by *The New York Times* (Nov. 8) why the Sandinistas had shifted their position and

finally agreed to negotiate with the contras, he replied: "Ortega was told by Mikhail Gorbachev that he had to negotiate."

At any rate, the Sandinista government was pressured into indirect cease-fire negotiations with the contras, which the Sandinistas had vowed they would never do. The Soviet bureaucracy's role in pressuring the Sandinistas into granting political legitimacy to the contras was decisive.

These events give full meaning to what Gorbachev said in February, when he pledged to seek "world stability" and "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism.

Barricada Internacional editor promotes paper

Miranda Collet, international editor of *Barricada Internacional*, the English-language weekly of the Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), recently visited the San Francisco offices of Socialist Action as part of her U.S. tour to promote *Barricada Internacional*.

Collet outlined the Nicaraguan government's views on the current peace plan in a discussion with Jeff Mackler, national secretary of *Socialist Action*.

"Hopefully," she said, "the U.S. government will be willing to understand what self-determination really means and will have some respect for a country which has taken its destiny into its own hands."



Miranda Collet and Jeff Mackler

Collet called on the radical movement in the United States to help promote *Barricada Internacional*, which "is one of the few direct sources of news and analysis about developments in Nicaragua and the region." She stated that as of next April the weekly will be published in Canada. "This means that

Barricada Internacional will arrive in a more timely manner to U.S. readers," she said.

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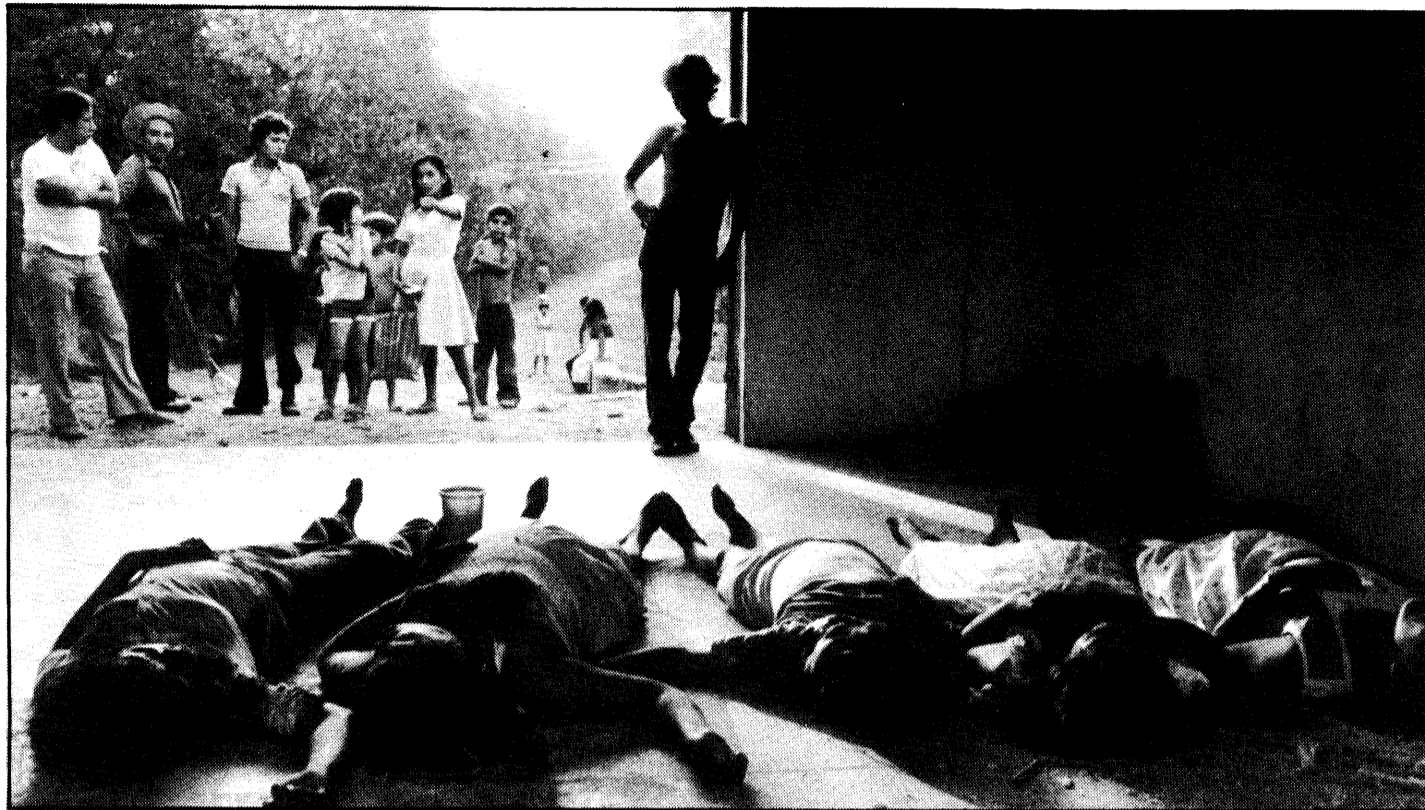
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El Salvador war continues in spite of 'peace plan'



"Death Squads" are still active in El Salvador, selectively murdering labor and human rights activists.

Chris Steele-Perkins/Magnum

By JIM HENLE

On Oct. 26, in a death squad-style assault, gunmen murdered Herbert Ernesto Anaya as he was preparing to take his children to school. Anaya, president of El Salvador's non-governmental Human Rights Commission (CDHES), had been repeatedly subjected to death threats.

In May 1986, Anaya had been thrown into Mariona prison for "suspicion of secretly collaborating with the rebels." An accusation of association with the FMLN/FDR opposition is tantamount to a death sentence in El Salvador, but Anaya had chosen to continue his investigation of human-rights abuses.

Anaya's assassination sparked angry protests in El Salvador, where the labor movement has been on the rise. The large labor federation, the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), played a central role, organizing a "day of national indignation" on Oct. 28.

Blaming the murder on "the military high command and the Duarte government, financed and directed by the United States," the UNTS marched in the 5000-10,000 strong funeral procession. There were reports of rotating work stoppages in the capital.

Death squads act "discreetly"

It is a well-established fact that the Salvadoran death squads are an extra-legal arm of the military. Contrary to reports in the U.S. press, there has been a steady increase in their activity in conjunction with the rise in the popular movement.

The death squads have learned to intimidate more "discreetly," kidnapping and torturing instead of killing, or murdering "only" selected leaders instead of

random workers or peasants.

This "self-restraint" won high praises for the Duarte regime in Washington, and helped win the Salvadoran government human-rights certifications and \$1.5 million a day from Congress.

President Duarte's own reaction to Anaya's killing, which culminated what Amnesty International called "a wave of threats and abuses directed against human-rights workers in recent months," was hardly what one would expect from a man who (according to Reagan) "created a climate of respect for human rights and the rule of law."

Duarte stated that "the left has been looking for a martyr for a year. And they have one, whether they did it themselves or someone did it for them. They've been parading the body through the streets to create terror."

It is a grim joke to say that a movement that has seen over 60,000 civilians murdered since 1980 would be looking for a martyr or that an unarmed funeral procession facing army units is "creating terror."

The courage of the protestors in the face of such threatening rhetoric can be measured by the fact that it was at Archbishop Romero's funeral in 1980 that a crowd was fired upon, an act which launched a wave of terror.

The FMLN and the Arias Plan

The FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) responded sharply to Anaya's killing. A transportation stoppage paralyzed traffic in the entire country, forcing the military to organize convoys. The largest campaign ever of electrical-power sabotage left half the capital blacked out. This did not affect the vast majority of

urban dwellers, who are without electricity anyway.

In view of these actions and the independently organized labor protests and strikes, it can be seen that broad strata of the population are defiantly standing up in an hour of crisis. This was also evident in the large rally organized explicitly for the FDR (Revolutionary Democratic Front) and the FMLN at the onset of the latest peace negotiations.

These negotiations began in conjunction with the Arias Plan. This accord, signed by presidents of five Central American nations, calls for talks with opposition groups, steps toward a cease-fire, amnesty for political offenders, an end to outside aid to insurgents, and increased democracy by means of "an authentic, democratic, pluralistic, participatory process."

Designed primarily for Nicaragua, the Arias Plan is being used by Duarte to polish his tarnished image and delegitimize the opposition. But Duarte and the military, despite friction over tactics, have jointly insisted that the FMLN lay down its arms as a precondition of negotiations and that the unions and mass organizations be excluded from talks.

The talks were already stalled when Anaya was murdered. The FMLN/FDR then refused to continue the negotiations, noting in a communique: "It makes no sense to talk about democratization, cease-fire, political participation, etc. when it is the government which continues to implement its dirty war against unarmed civilians through its death squads."

Later, on Nov. 12, eight opposition parties of varied political positions withdrew from the Reconciliation Commission created under the Arias plan, claiming the

government was unserious about political reforms.

Duarte's peace-plan initiatives

President Duarte's two main initiatives in conjunction with the regional peace plan have been smokescreens to strengthen the hand of the government and military.

First, Duarte declared a unilateral "cease-fire." While ceasing its "offensives," however, the army continued to patrol and to occupy new areas. More than a week before the Nov. 20 deadline for the "cease-fire," bombing raids and battles were reported.

The second Duarte initiative concerned amnesty for political prisoners. Several hundred victims of repression have been released, but many more will not be affected.

In El Salvador, authorities are allowed two weeks after making an arrest before charges must be lodged and the prisoner's whereabouts made known. Any confession obtained before that is considered valid testimony.

As a consequence, before they reach the prisons, many are tortured. Some simply are held indefinitely elsewhere. Those who have not been placed in the observable prisons will not be released in this amnesty.

The prisons have been a focus of great political struggle and several key right-wing attacks have occurred there recently. On Aug. 28, National Guard and Army troops opened fire on political prisoners at Mariona prison. They wounded three, including Jose Vladimir Centeno, son of the telephone workers' leader and a prison activist.

Amnesty favors armed forces

But the truly grotesque aspect of the amnesty is that it absolves all soldiers who participated in any of the killings or massacres of civilians committed before Oct. 22, 1987. Among those eligible would be the killers of four U.S. churchwomen, those responsible for the 1983 massacre of 70 at Las Hojas, and many other murders, rapes, torturings, and acts of brutality.

As to why the amnesty so favored the armed forces, one government spokesman commented, "if we did not include the military, there would have been a coup or at least the effective end of the Duarte presidency."

Duarte is ultimately loyal to the military and to the United States, which sustains him in power. The most dramatic expression of this subservience was in Washington, D.C., in October, when Duarte literally kissed the stars and stripes at a White House welcoming ceremony.

On the other hand, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega paid a visit to the Vietnam War Memorial during his trip to Washington, D.C., last month. Ortega was not invited to the White House.

The contrasts between the two regimes, one degrading itself in U.S. jingoist "free world" rhetoric, the other sharing the harsh memories of war with people here could not be clearer.

It is the responsibility of the anti-intervention and labor movements in this country to create the widest publicity about the real conditions in El Salvador and to defend embattled human-rights workers and labor activists there. We must rally to stop all U.S. intervention in Central America. ■

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'Cry Freedom:' Patronizing and shallow

By MILLIE B. GONZALEZ

Cry Freedom, a new film directed by Sir Richard Attenborough (recipient of an Oscar award for "Gandhi" in 1982).

"Cry Freedom" is billed as a dramatization of the murder of Steve Biko, who died in police custody in 1977. The film's narrative, however, seems far more devoted to Donald Woods, the liberal South

Movement in the early 1970s. He defined Black Consciousness as "in essence, the realization by the Black man of the need to

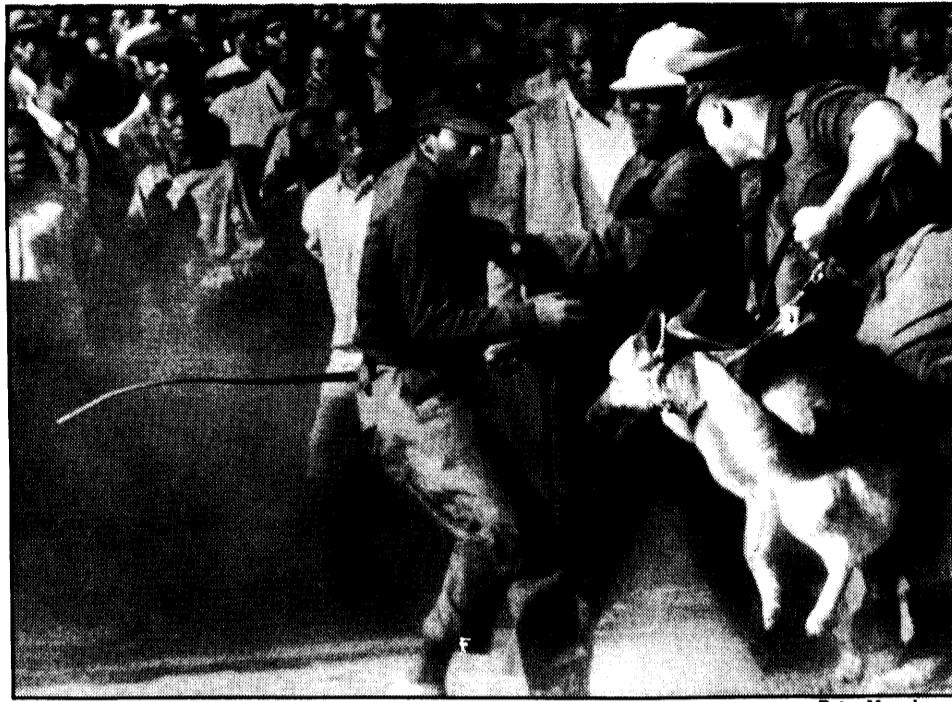
rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression—the blackness of their skin—and to operate as a group in

order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude."

Empowering and reclaiming pride was one aspect of the movement. For example, one of the projects the movement took on was the creation of the Zanempilo Community Health Clinic, which was staffed by Black doctors and nurses. The clinic is shown in the film, but the full political significance of Black Consciousness is not explored.

Biko's death earned five to 10 minutes of the film in comparison to Woods's escape from South Africa—which occupies the remaining half of the film. For a film that was allegedly billed as a dramatization of Biko, it seems somewhat patronizing that his death appears almost as an afterthought.

It is a pity that Attenborough felt compelled to present the issue of apartheid through the eyes of Donald Woods. By doing this, Attenborough only dilutes the rich life of Steve Biko and modifies the powerful ideas of the Black Consciousness Movement. At the most, "Cry Freedom" succeeds in introducing Biko to the general public. ■



Peter Magubane

MOVIE REVIEW

African newspaper editor who befriended Biko.

Biko comes across as a caricature—a walking cliché. He seems to have the correct political rhetoric in response to Woods's questions about the nature of Black Consciousness. But despite some promising moments in their discourse, we don't get a sense of a live person and a real political movement.

Steve Biko was considered the leading spokesperson for the Black Consciousness

Saths Cooper was one of the founders, with Steve Biko, of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. His close collaboration with Biko began in 1968. He was one of nine prominent Black Consciousness leaders charged with sedition and sentenced to lengthy prison terms in one of the scenes depicted in "Cry Freedom." Cooper served a nine-year term on Robben Island. He is the past president of the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO). Socialist Action contacted Cooper to get his impressions of "Cry Freedom."

Socialist Action: What did you think of "Cry Freedom?" Was it an accurate portrayal of Steve Biko?

Cooper: I think the movie is going to have a certain impact on the uninitiated, on the people who don't know about the situation back home. But it is a movie that has been done under extremely false pretenses, and because of this it is the ultimate "dis-tribute" to Steve Biko.

Attenborough presents Steve through the liberal eyes of Donald Woods, whose knowledge of the situation is restricted and who is out of his depth. Woods's friendship

'A distortion of life and legacy of Steve Biko'

with Steve is inaccurate and romanticized.

In one scene, Steve's widow invites Woods to Steve's funeral. In our culture, he wouldn't have needed an invitation if he were that intimate.

In another scene, the director has Steve tell Woods over the phone about his upcoming trip to the students' conference. Steve was on a secret mission of unifying the main liberation forces. Steve could not have possibly told Woods about his mission.

One colossal mistake in the movie is that it shows Steve being detained on his way to Capetown. In fact, he was on his way back to King William's Town from his mission of unification. The Boers had to kill him because he was on the verge of achieving the unification of the liberation forces.

S.A.: Have any reviewers pointed out these inaccuracies?

Cooper: Yes. In fact, Attenborough has

had to acknowledge many of the inaccuracies. But he explains them away, saying that people wouldn't have believed the horror of the situation under apartheid.

But it's not the artist's job to reduce the starkness of the horror, to "chocolate coat." Yet this is what Attenborough has done. For example, in the scene of Soweto 1976, he shows the police giving a few minutes' warning for the crowd to disperse before shooting. In fact, there was no such warning.

In another scene, he shows Wendy Woods in the court gallery in the trial of SASO-BPC [the South African Students Organization-Black People's Convention]. I was on trial in that court. Steve was one of our main witnesses. But Wendy Woods was never in the courtroom. This was put there to bolster the theme of the movie—that of a liberal befriending a Black activist. In my view, this is just shameful paternalism.

Attenborough has a fixation about filming epics of the demise of the old British Empire. But he presents stuff in his own fashion because this is what he wants people to see. In his epic on Gandhi, for instance, he even makes a martyr out of someone who was vehemently anti-struggle. This demonstrates the incorrigibility of the liberal.

S.A.: So Attenborough has therefore distorted the life and legacy of Steve Biko...

Cooper: Yes. Attenborough went so far as to tell the *Boston Phoenix* that Biko had lived a dull life. This is why he puts simple shibboleths, simple cracker-cookie sayings, in Steve's mouth. He is incapable of getting at the heart of what Steve represented, his role, the context of his struggle, and most important, his political legacy.

But Steve's legacy is very much alive today. It's alive in what's happening everyday in the streets back home. Steve more than anyone else embodies this struggle.

Still, I think people will be struck by the power of Steve—even in the distorted way he is portrayed. The movie will undoubtedly resuscitate interest in the whole issue of apartheid. ■

By SUZANNE FORSYTH

SAN FRANCISCO—20,000 fans crowded into San Francisco's Justin Herman Plaza on Nov. 11 to hear a surprise free concert by the Irish rock band U2. News of the show was spread through rumors and radio announcements just one hour before the show began.

Bandleader Bono Hewson opened the show by announcing sarcastically that the band had decided to play in San Francisco's financial district as a charity performance for big business and a hat would be passed around afterwards.

Things turned ugly, though, when Bono stopped in the middle of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" to chastise fans holding up a banner reading "U2—S.F."

"Sunday Bloody Sunday," one of U2's most popular songs, is a protest against the violence in Northern Ireland. Bloody Sunday occurred on Jan. 30, 1972, when the British Parachute Regiment shot dead 13 unarmed civil-rights demonstrators during a march in Derry.

Bono shames the fans

Bono, claiming the banner's initials "S.F." stood for Sinn Fein (the political party associated with the Irish Republican Army), took the opportunity to blast Sinn Fein and the I.R.A. for the Nov. 8 bombing which accidentally killed 11 civi-

U2 blasts I.R.A. at S.F. rock concert

lians and resulted in retaliatory shootings of five Catholics.

Bono tried to shame the fans for making the banner, and he called Sinn Fein "bastards." He went on to say that the violence in Ireland would be ended someday and the country united—but not by bullets.

The audience reaction was one of shock. It was pretty obvious that the "S.F." on the banner had stood for San Francisco, and that Bono had an ax to grind and was just looking for any excuse to voice his opinions.

Singling out the fans with the banner and directing all his comments to them seemed particularly obnoxious.

Hysteria against "terrorism"

Killings of innocent civilians don't accomplish anything and only give ammunition to the British and their Unionist supporters.

When the I.R.A. employs these methods, it gives credibility to the argument that legitimate armed self-defense by the Catholic minority in the North is on the same

level as both the official and unofficial British terrorism.

Nevertheless, although it wasn't wrong of Bono as a supporter of a united Ireland to criticize the I.R.A. action, the essence of his remarks was reactionary.

With Bono's popularity, his diatribe only added to the media hysteria against "terrorism." Unity is needed even more in the face of increasing attacks against civil rights.

Bono's tirade was particularly unforgivable in the current climate when the British are beginning a wave of arrests (not only of suspected I.R.A. partisans, but Sinn Fein

supporters as well) and pressuring the Irish Republic for an extradition agreement.

"Silver and Gold"

After the song was over, the concert returned to a friendly tone, and the band played "Helter Skelter" and a sing-along version of "Help" by the Beatles.

But politics returned to the scene when they played "Silver and Gold," an anti-apartheid song written by Bono for the Artists Against Apartheid album "Sun City" two years ago. Bono again interrupted the show to explain the song and his opposition to apartheid.

He went on to explain that "silver and gold" were the reason behind apartheid and U.S. support for the South African government.

The concert left me with mixed feelings. The band gave an exhilarating performance. But Bono's confused outburst against Sinn Fein left me cold. ■

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British unionist recounts path toward Trotskyism

By ADAM SHILS

From Militancy to Marxism, by Alan Thornett, Leftview Books, London, 1987. 280 pp. \$16.95 paperback.

These are hard times for labor militants. Every day we see events such as the defeat of the National Football League strike and the physical attack organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers bureaucracy against Hormel strike leader Jim Guyette at the recent AFL-CIO convention.

This holds particularly true for those labor militants who see the need for building an organization that can organize and lead the struggle against the bosses—a revolutionary party. A book that describes the daily work of a dedicated group of socialists up to their elbows in the fight with management is therefore to be warmly welcomed.

Such a book is "From Militancy to Marxism," the first volume in Alan Thornett's trilogy on the development of the trade-union movement among auto workers at the large Cowley, Oxford, factory in Britain.

Thornett was centrally involved in this activity, serving as chair of the Transport and General Workers Union branch and of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee. He also was a leader of the Socialist Labour League (SLL, a predecessor of the Workers Revolutionary Party), a Trotskyist organization at the time deeply involved in the trade-union movement.

This book, therefore, combines a history of the Cowley factory with an account of the work of the SLL.

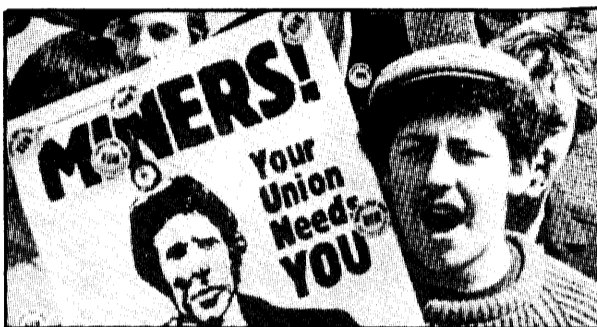
An uphill struggle

The Cowley plant was infamous in the British press as a hotbed of "trade-union pigheaded obstinacy" and "extremist militancy" that was meant to be "destroying the British car industry."

"From Militancy to Marxism" begins with the first attempts to build up a strong trade-union organization at the Morris plant in the 1950s. The militants faced an uphill struggle just to construct the rudiments of a



(Above) Autoworkers challenge strikebreaker in 1950s. (Below) "Mineworkers struggles were high on the agenda."



union. They faced employer hostility every step of the way.

Thornett takes us through all the big battles at the factory. Of course, Cowley was not an island, and the Cowley workers took their place in all the major

struggles that the British working class was waging during the 1960s and 1970s.

Solidarity with other workers' struggles was a constant preoccupation for Thornett and his comrades. In particular, the book takes up the actions supporting low-paid women college cleaners, hospital workers, and workers at the British Leyland transmission plant in Basingstoke. Obviously, supporting the epic struggles of the coal miners was also high on the agenda.

Readers used to "labor-management relations" in America today will find parts of this book extraordinary and invigorating. In the central assembly plant, during the late 1960s, there were between 300 and 600 strikes per year!

In August 1972, a sizeable group of workers opposed the decision of the union to have a sympathy strike with the workers' occupation of the British Leyland factory in Basingstoke. Encouraged by management, this group went on a violent rampage throughout the factory. The bosses lost control of the situation and called upon union leader Tim O'Sullivan to calm things down.

Standing on a table, O'Sullivan addressed the crowd. He offered a detailed explanation for the union's action, basing himself on the Marxist concept of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. His intervention calmed the situation down.

"Keep on keeping on"

The book does not only look at these incredible high points. It also examines the hard routine that makes up daily trade-union activity. Here, Alan Thornett's semi-autobiographical history is profoundly human.

Every active trade unionist can completely solidarize with the emotions of one militant whom Thornett describes. This worker would go to bed each night hoping he would get sick during the night and therefore not have the prospect of yet another confrontation with the employer as the workday began at 7:15 the next morning.

To "keep on keeping on" in a situation like this, Thornett and his comrades needed a political perspective and an organization that gave them the understanding necessary to navigate through the problems they faced.

They found this perspective in Trotskyism. Therefore, a considerable portion of the book is devoted to a critical history of the SLL and its Cowley work. There is a wealth of experience here for those who share Alan Thornett's goal of building a Marxist current in the labor movement.

We should eagerly await the publication of volumes two and three of this series, which will deal with the struggle in the Cowley plants from 1974 onwards. ■

Our readers speak out

Senegal

Dear editor,

From Africa, receive our message of solidarity and support. I'm a militant of the Fourth International Senegalese Section (O.S.T.). Despite the distance and difficulties we meet here, I sometimes get issues of *Socialist Action*.

Socialist Action covers a wide range of analysis. The class point of view is a solid bedrock that makes it useful and important in training people towards class independence. I liked your analysis of Black nationalism and of the workers' fight in the United States. Latin America's struggles and the Central American revolution are well described too.

I want to receive your newspaper regularly, but imperialist domination and I.M.F. measures are more and more lessening my small wage. Thanks to all of you.

Moussa,
Dakar, Senegal,
West Africa

Grieved

Dear editor,

I was saddened to learn of the death of Chen Bilan. I had hoped to get back in touch with her, since we had become friends while I was interviewing Shuzhi [her companion] for my thesis during the mid and late 1970s.

The last time we talked was when I visited them both in March of 1981.

The loss of Shuzhi in 1983 and, now Bilan, is a great loss to people in struggle around the world. Their lives will continue to be inspirational.

Joe Miller,
Cedar Falls, Iowa

Lawsuit

Dear editor,

A sweeping class-action lawsuit which seeks to hold San Francisco officials responsible for false arrests and injuries during the 1984 Democratic National Convention has reached a critical stage.

The city attorney's office has filed a motion for "summary judgment" (dismissal) of the suit in Federal District Court. Arguments will be heard Dec. 11. Lawyers for the plaintiffs will argue that the suit they have been working on for three years should be heard.

The suit is complex, with 17 named plaintiffs representing over 600 people who were arrested or harmed on seven different occasions. They are seeking money damages and an injunction against future police repression.

The plaintiffs claim that a policy was developed in advance—and vigorously carried out—to suppress their First Amendment freedoms. Press clippings from 1984 bear ample support for this analysis.

If *Berezin v. Feinstein* is brought before a jury, the public will be treated to a rigorous and much-needed examination of First Amendment rights—and authoritarian wrongs.

The plaintiffs ask that arrestees, witnesses, or anyone with pertinent information call (415) 658-8917.

Mark Cook,
San Francisco

Jesse

Dear editor,

I am writing regarding your article on the "Jackson Campaign" in the October edition of *Socialist Action*.

The decline of Black living standards at the same time Black elected officials increased in number was not a product of irony but of neo-colonialism. The liberal/democratic bourgeoisie made a coalition with the Black primitive petty bourgeoisie led by Martin Luther King in order to capture and neutralize the Black revolution of the '60s and the Black power movement.

It's true the Democratic Party led the demobilization of the Black Liberation Movement (BLM), but this could only succeed in conjunction with the armed attack on Black Panther Party headquarters by the police, police murder of the leadership of the BLM, the COINTELPRO program, and finally, the col-

lusion and capitulation of the white-led left.

I think your analysis becomes vague at this point because your line is vague. Are you for Black self-determination or not? If there was a Black liberation movement then—then there must be one now.

Things are not just demobilized or don't just decline. Things are a product of the class and anti-imperialist struggle—then and now.

Your article on Jesse Jackson is a good one. If you are honest about the Black Liberation Movement and about self-determination then you have to study the *Burning Spear* newspaper.

Jane Reardon,
San Francisco, Calif.

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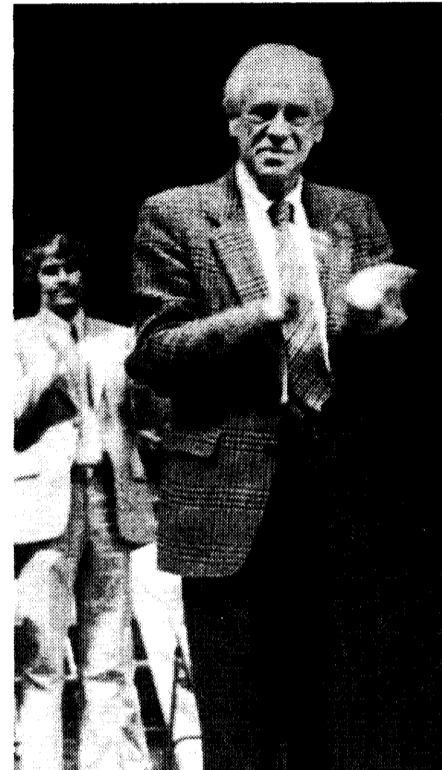
S.F. rally exposes U.S. 'secret government' of war and terror



Martha Honey



Daniel Sheehan, chief counsel for the Christic Institute, speaks to 2700 people at the Nov. 8 rally.



Dr. David Linder

Photos by Joe Ryan/Socialist Action

By ADAM WOOD

SAN FRANCISCO—Rarely has an audience been as enthusiastic as the 2700 people who attended an indoor presentation here on Nov. 8 against the "Secret Government/Secret War." The event was sponsored by the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice.

Standing ovations greeted every speaker. Repeated cheers—and further ovations—punctuated each dramatic and inspiring presentation denouncing the U.S. war in Central America.

The Mobilization organized the meeting to further expose U.S. foreign policy initiatives which occur behind the backs and against the will of the majority of the American people. A "Secret Team" of operatives has functioned clandestinely over the past 27 years with the consent and support of top U.S. government officials.

[See July *Socialist Action*.]

Dr. David Linder, father of U.S. volunteer Ben Linder who was killed in Nicaragua by the contras, opened the meeting by demanding that "the U.S. contra war must stop and it must stop now." Chants of "No Contra Aid" filled the auditorium.

Paul Kantner, a founder of the 1960s rock group Jefferson Airplane, sang a Nicaraguan song honoring martyred FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca. Kantner had just returned from Nicaragua and written a book about his favorable impressions of Nicaragua's rich cultural life.

Martha Honey, a plaintiff in the Christic Institute lawsuit against the "Secret Team" and a U.S. journalist based in Costa Rica, spoke with great detail about her groundbreaking investigative reporting which uncovered the CIA's role in organizing the contra war from Costa Rica.

Honey and her co-plaintiff and husband, Tony Avirgan, have been the targets of severe forms of harassment while in Costa Rica. At a certain point, several death threats forced them to send their two children abroad.

Holley Rauen, an activist with the Nuremberg Action Committee, described the committee's 40-mile "witness for peace" walk through war-torn areas of Nicaragua. Rauen also reported on recent protests at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, including one during which her husband, Brian Willson, a Vietnam veteran, was severely injured.

Willson followed and was given a thunderous reception. It was his first major public appearance since the day he was struck by a government ammunition train, requiring the amputation of both his legs.

Daniel Sheehan, chief counsel of the Christic Institute, detailed the revelations of his landmark suit against the "Secret Team." He also blasted the Congressional Contragate hearings as an "embarrassing, inadequate, and a basic self-conscious concealment and cover-up of this operation."

"The Republicans and the Democrats, and their leaderships," Sheehan said, "are trying to tell us that they have dealt with the problem that has brought pain and suffering to the people you see before you tonight and those who are not with us."

Sheehan continued, "But they are not telling the truth. They have not dealt with

the situation. They have had some weeks of televised investigations where the questions were not asked, where the answers were not demanded, where the evidence was not supplied."

The audience listened attentively for three hours, contributed over \$20,000, and later browsed through a hall crowded with literature tables from 80 religious, labor, and political organizations. Several hundred people also attended a reception featuring informal discussion with the rally speakers. [See accompanying excerpts of Ralph

Schoenman's talk to the Mobilization's reception.]

The Mobilization donated over 75 percent of the proceeds to the Christic Institute. The remaining share may be used by the Mobilization to successfully launch the 1988 Spring Mobilization demonstrations against the U.S. war in Central America; against U.S. support to the apartheid regime in South Africa; for a nuclear weapons freeze; and for jobs and justice in this country. Discussions of this project are now taking place within the coalition. ■

'Secret wars are bipartisan efforts'

The following are excerpts from the talk by Ralph Schoenman to the Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice reception on Nov. 8. Schoenman was the director of the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal, which exposed the crimes of the U.S. government during the Vietnam War.

I want to take a brief moment to discuss the linkage between what Dan Sheehan has so ably documented here today and a prior investigation which we undertook to disclose the dynamics of U.S. crimes in Indochina; crimes which entailed saturation bombing on a scale such that every nine months a bomb equivalent to that of Hiroshima devastated that agrarian country.

I would like to suggest that the "team" that carried out this operation was not entirely secret, though it did in large measure consist of hired hands.

Although the task of documenting the crimes of these hired hands was indisputably important, I think that we also have to look at that other "secret team," that is, that handful of people who hold power in this country.

This is how Robert Townsend, the president of American Express and of Avis Corp., put it in his book, "Up the Organization": "America is run largely

by and for about 5000 people. The 5000 appoint their own successors and are responsible to nobody."

It is worth noting that since 1945, 15 million people have died in colonial wars, a direct consequence of the interference of the United States. The Democratic Party has controlled the presidency or the Congress for 44 of these 50 years.

Professor William Domhoff, in "Fat Cats and Democrats," said: "A property party with two branches is one of the neatest devices ever stumbled upon by rich men determined to stay on top."

This Contragate crisis is not new. There is a "secret team" in North America. It is a handful of people who control the political process that dictates our lives and who hire the contract killers who carry out, on their behalf, the assassinations and the kind of criminal activity that Daniel Sheehan has explained and documented for us this afternoon.

Our task is to move ahead and to build a political movement not dependent on either of the capitalist parties, which are one big property party, until we sweep this handful of criminals into the dustbin of history, where they belong. ■



Brian Willson and Holley Rauen