

A Socialist ACTION



Tomas Borge Speaks
See pp. 14-15.

NOVEMBER 1987 VOL. 5, NO. 11 50 CENTS

Stock market crash: Workers will pay

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The unprecedentedly long period of world capitalist stability has been rocked by the most devastating stock market collapse in history. On Oct. 19, 1987—a day that was instantly characterized "Black Monday," in an allusion to the stock market crash that preceded the great depression of the

**More on economy,
See pp. 9-12.**

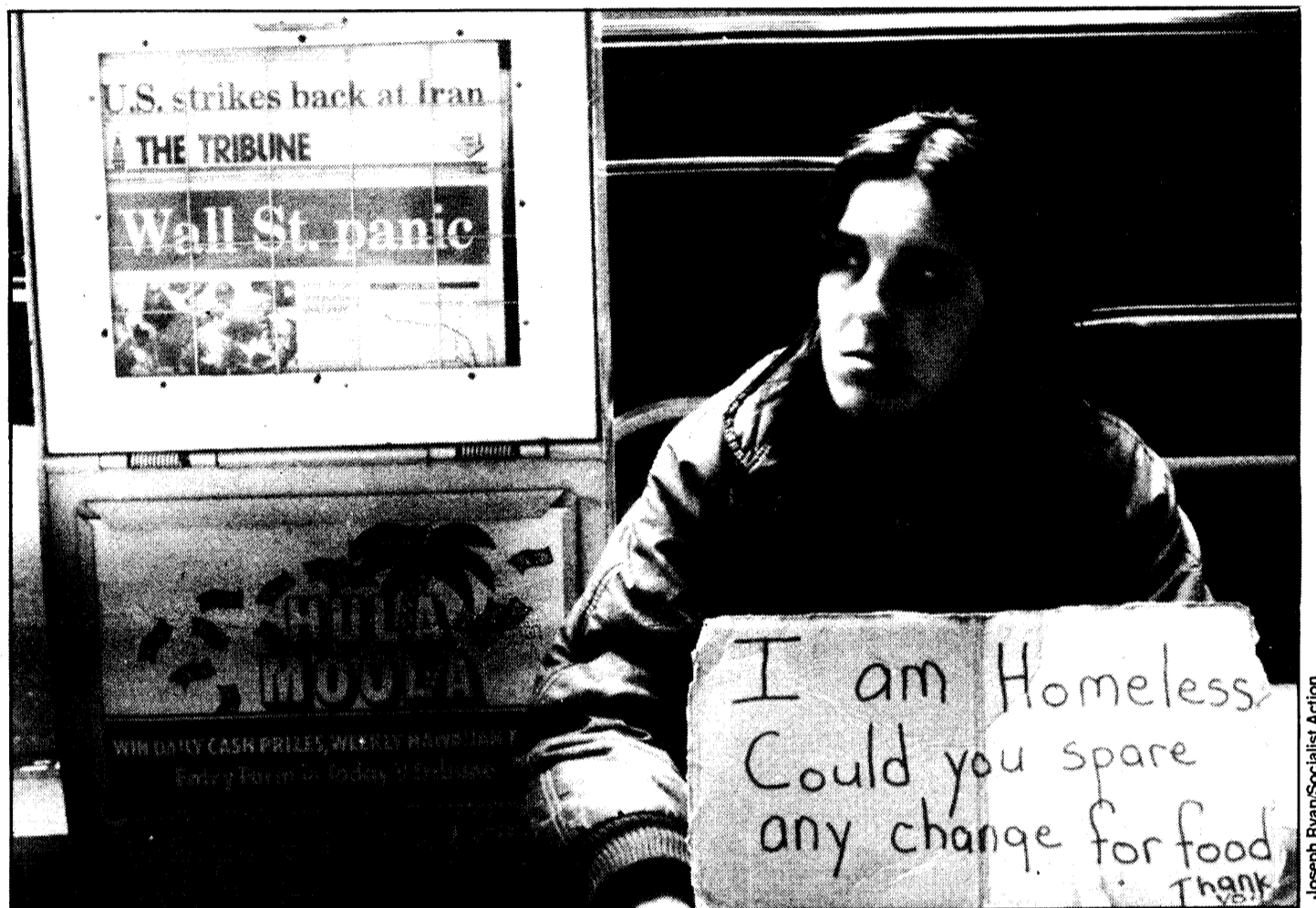
1930s—the Dow Jones industrial average plunged 508 points.

The 22.6-percent decline was the worst since 1914. It was far worse than the 12.80-percent drop on Black Monday, Oct. 28, 1929. Stock prices around the world plummeted, taking their cue from Wall Street. Panic selling swamped stock exchanges in Tokyo, Hong Kong, London, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and other world financial centers.

Economic "experts" in the major capitalist countries were at a loss to explain the market collapse. John J. Phelan Jr., chairman of the N.Y. Stock Exchange, was typical. At the end of "Black Monday's" trading session he expressed bewilderment at what caused, what he termed, "the closest thing to a meltdown."

In television interviews, usually suave

(continued on page 8)



Sign of the times: It's only a matter of time before the full impact of the Wall St. crash will be felt by working people.

U.S. presses unacceptable conditions on Nicaragua

An Editorial

After winning the Nobel Peace Prize in mid-October, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias issued a public call for the Sandinista government in Nicaragua to release all prisoners and to open cease-fire talks—direct or indirect—with the contras.

In so doing, Arias endorsed two of the key demands of the Reagan/Wright so-called peace plan. This announcement signaled Arias's clear intention to place the Esquipulas II peace agreement, which he drafted, at the service of U.S. imperialism's designs in the region. This peace agreement was signed by the five Central American presidents on Aug. 7.

The Sandinista government has consistently rejected negotiations with the contras. In his speech to the United Nations on Oct. 8, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega called on the U.S. government to open direct, bilateral talks with the Sandinistas 35 days after Nov. 5, when the implementation of the Central American peace plan is to begin.

"We have nothing to gain from talking

with the leaders of the counterrevolution," Ortega said, "and we shall not engage in a dialogue with them. If there is a real desire to take this matter up seriously, the dialogue must be between the United States and Nicaragua."

The Sandinista government responded to Arias's declaration by stating that his two new demands were not included in the Aug. 7 peace plan. Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramirez, speaking in Canada, said that the peace accord "does not

envision any kind of dialogue between irregular forces and legitimate governments such as the Constitutional government of Nicaragua."

Tomás Borge, Nicaragua's Minister of the Interior, explained the reason why the Sandinista government will not negotiate with the contras. Speaking at a rally of the Sandinista Defense Committees in April 1985, he said:

"To talk with them [the contras] means giving them legitimacy that they do not have and recognizing them as a political

(continued on page 13)



**Special:
70th
anniversary
of the
Russian
Revolution,
Pages 16, 17.**

We need a national health plan



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

Newspapers around the country had front-page stories on Nancy Reagan's breast cancer in their Oct. 17, 1987, issues. Breast cancer is a tragic affliction regardless of whom it strikes. But Nancy Reagan, unlike the poor of this nation, received the very best of care. She had a small army of doctors and surgeons looking after her.

For both Mr. and Mrs. Reagan,

medical care does not cost one red cent. Along with all elected and appointed government officials, they have "socialized medicine."

If a congressman gets wrinkles or a balding head, he can be renovated at the wink of an eye—all at taxpayers' expense. "Spare no expense" is the slogan of our glorious leaders when it comes to their own health or beauty.

But the working class is left at the mercy of millionaire hospital executives who run our country's health system like any other profit-making business.

For the rest of us, healthcare costs have jumped over 600 percent since 1966. This year alone, the government wants an increase of 38.5 percent for Medicare. This increase will be taken from the pockets of the elderly and disabled.

Declining access to care

Dr. Victor Sidel, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility and past president of the American Public Health Association, describes the appalling

state of healthcare in the Sept. 16 *San Francisco Chronicle*:

"In 1977, 25 million people in the United States lacked medical insurance. Today, more than 35 million people lack such coverage, and millions more have grossly inadequate plans."

In some states, fewer than 20 percent of those living in extreme poverty are eligible for Medicaid," Dr. Sidel states. "Declining access to care is also related to an increase in the number of people living in poverty."

"Today in the United States,"

he continues, "one in every four children below the age of six lives in poverty, with one of every two Black children in that age-span in that plight. The bottom 40 percent of our population receives 15.7 percent of the national income—the smallest percentage since the statistic was first collected in 1947. The U.S. infant mortality rate has stopped decreasing significantly, and in many areas the gap between rich and poor appears to be growing—even where infant mortality has declined."

Dr. Sidel goes on to urge a strong national health plan. "Such a program," he says, "would ensure that the poor have full access to health services."

AIDS epidemic

The government has denied proper funding to research to meet the grave threat that AIDS poses to everyone. Both Congress and the administration have turned a deaf ear to the needs of hundreds of thousands who have already been stricken. Our pious politicians prefer to blame the victims rather than promote practical education and serious research.

These hypocrites certainly don't "just say no" to the \$30 million an hour they spend on the military budget for death and destruction, or the hundreds of millions they give to the murderous contras.

When this country needed to invent the atomic bomb so that American imperialism could rule the world, they spared no expense. They spent billions on the Manhattan Project, which gathered together the cream of America's and the world's scientists and gave them all the material resources necessary to achieve this goal.

The challenge of AIDS

demands an effort on the same scale. Instead of 50 scientists working 100 years to find a cure, 5000 scientists could do it in closer to a year.

But the capitalist class, driven as it is toward maximizing profits by any means necessary, can be expected to resist such a life-loving course to the bitter end. Only the working class is capable of putting human needs before profits.

Piece-meal insurance

Unlike its European counterparts, the American labor bureaucracy gave up the fight for socialized medicine—or even the pretension of fighting for an independent workers' goal consistent with the needs of all humanity.

They accepted, instead, medical insurance plans on a piece-meal basis—each union adopting and paying for its own plan, exclusively for its own members. This left unorganized workers, for the most part, without any medical protection whatsoever.

Now, even workers with once-adequate medical plans are being forced to pay higher premiums for less coverage. Only a major political fight by the entire working class for full government-funded healthcare coverage can bring about the kind of healthcare service needed by everyone.

But to do this, labor needs to break with the Democratic Party and form its own political movement. Only a labor party based on the unions and independent of all capitalist politicians can lead the fight for working class needs like socialized medicine.

And only a resurgent rank and file determined to make their labor organizations serve their class interests can carry out such a successful struggle. ■



Never trust an 'honest' man

If it weren't so humorous, I'd almost feel sorry for the Democrats and Republicans. Maybe 1988 will be the year they'll have to forego electing a president because they can't find an honest candidate.

Candidates are being dropped like gunslingers in the old West. Every day you open up the paper, one of the leading candidates has been caught with his hand in the till or making out without benefit of wedlock. First Gary Hart, then Senator Biden.

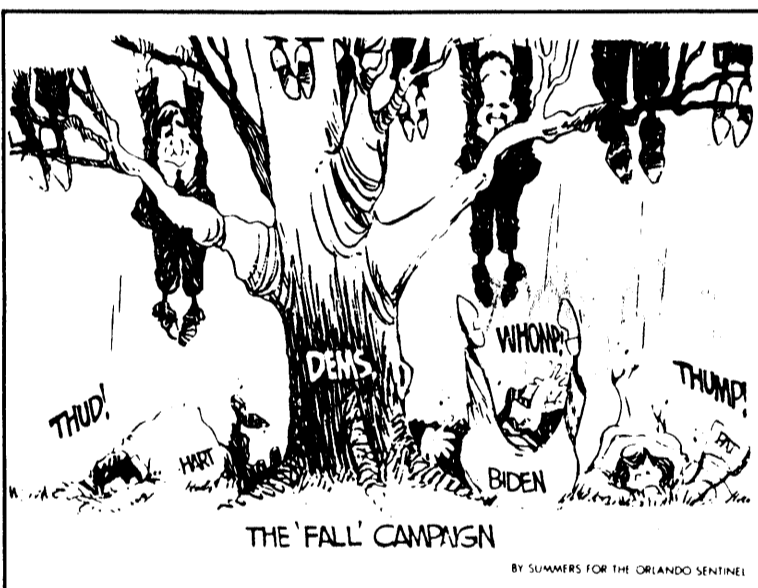
The latest is "honest" Pat Robertson. It seems that he lied on just about everything you could think of to lie about. He said he went to Oxford University as a graduate student. It turned out that he had only taken a summer art course in England.

Then he said he had received battle stars for his action during the Korean War. It turned out, however, that he had been nowhere near any fighting. He had done his duty in the officers quarters—far from any battles.

Couldn't "say no"

If that wasn't enough, he lied about his marriage and the birth of his first child. It seems that holier-than-thou Pat Robertson couldn't "say no." He and his wife actually got married only 10 weeks before the birth of his son.

Robertson explained that he had just gotten the date of his birthday and the date of his son's birth mixed up. It could happen to anyone, he said. Now his



income is under investigation. I can't wait to find out exactly how honest old honest Pat is.

When his wife, Adelia, was eight months pregnant with their second child, Pat Robertson took off to a rustic island in Canada to "commune with God." Adelia wept and begged, but good ol' Pat left her alone to manage her pregnancy, care for the couple's toddler, and move into a new home.

The story of this unforgiving moralist's hypocrisy was revealed by The Washington Post. One of the Rev. Robertson's supporters wrote an outraged letter to the newspaper saying that they should be ashamed of themselves for bringing up old incidents such as Robertson's first child being

born out of wedlock, since that happened before he became a Christian.

But all the lying honest Pat Robertson did, was done after his conversion.

"On the take"

The sound of falling candidates is reverberating through both the Democratic and Republican parties. The leading contenders have such sorry records that they have to try and clean them up.

It is not surprising to socialists that these capitalist politicians have feet of clay. It is impossible to make it up the ladder in either political party unless you are prepared to be on the "take."

The capitalist class, the real "kingmakers," want a candidate they can depend on—who is loyal to their class. That means the politician must be completely incorporated in, and dependent on that class. And in the last analysis, they welcome some outright dishonesty—so that when push comes to shove they can blackmail their political representatives if they get out of line.

And of course, the loyal politician is rewarded in many ways—including winding up on the boards of directors of large corporations after their tours of duty as public officials are over. It works every time.—S.W.

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Sunday, November 8, 1987, 2 p.m.

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Sponsored by: Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice

Socialist ACTION

Closing date: Oct. 25, 1987

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Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly for \$6 per year by Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110. Second-class postage is paid at San Francisco, Calif.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Socialist Action*, 3435 Army St., No. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

RATES: For one year (12 issues)—U.S. 2nd Class: \$6, 1st Class: \$9; Canada and Mexico 2nd Class: \$9, 1st Class: \$12; All other countries 2nd Class: \$12, 1st Class: \$24. (Canada money orders or checks should be in U.S. dollars.)

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U.S. intensifies Persian Gulf War

By GEORGE McCARRELL

On Oct. 23, 1987, the United States launched its third attack against Iran and destroyed two Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. According to the Pentagon, the attack was in response to a missile attack on a reflagged tanker in Kuwait.

The latest attack by U.S. forces occurred less than five weeks after the United States attacked an Iranian gunboat allegedly laying mines in the Persian Gulf. Three weeks later, U.S. helicopters attacked four Iranian gunboats which were protecting an offshore oil platform.

The rapid escalation of attacks in the Gulf shows that the U.S. military presence in the Gulf is not promoting peace as claimed by the Reagan administration. Rather, the U.S. presence is only destabilizing the entire region and threatening to intensify the Iran-Iraq war.

By agreeing to protect the Kuwaiti oil shipments, the U.S. government is serving notice that it will not allow the war to threaten the oil supply for the "free" world.

A war of attrition

Given the surplus of oil on the world market, the Iran-Iraq war does not pose a threat to the capitalist West as long as the war does not endanger other countries' oil exports.

Moreover, as long as the war continues, both Iran and Iraq grow increasingly dependent—both economically and militarily—on the advanced capitalist countries. Iran purchases most of its weapons from Israel (with the tacit approval of the United States), while Iraq purchases its weapons from France and the Soviet Union. Germany, Britain, and Italy sell weapons to both sides.

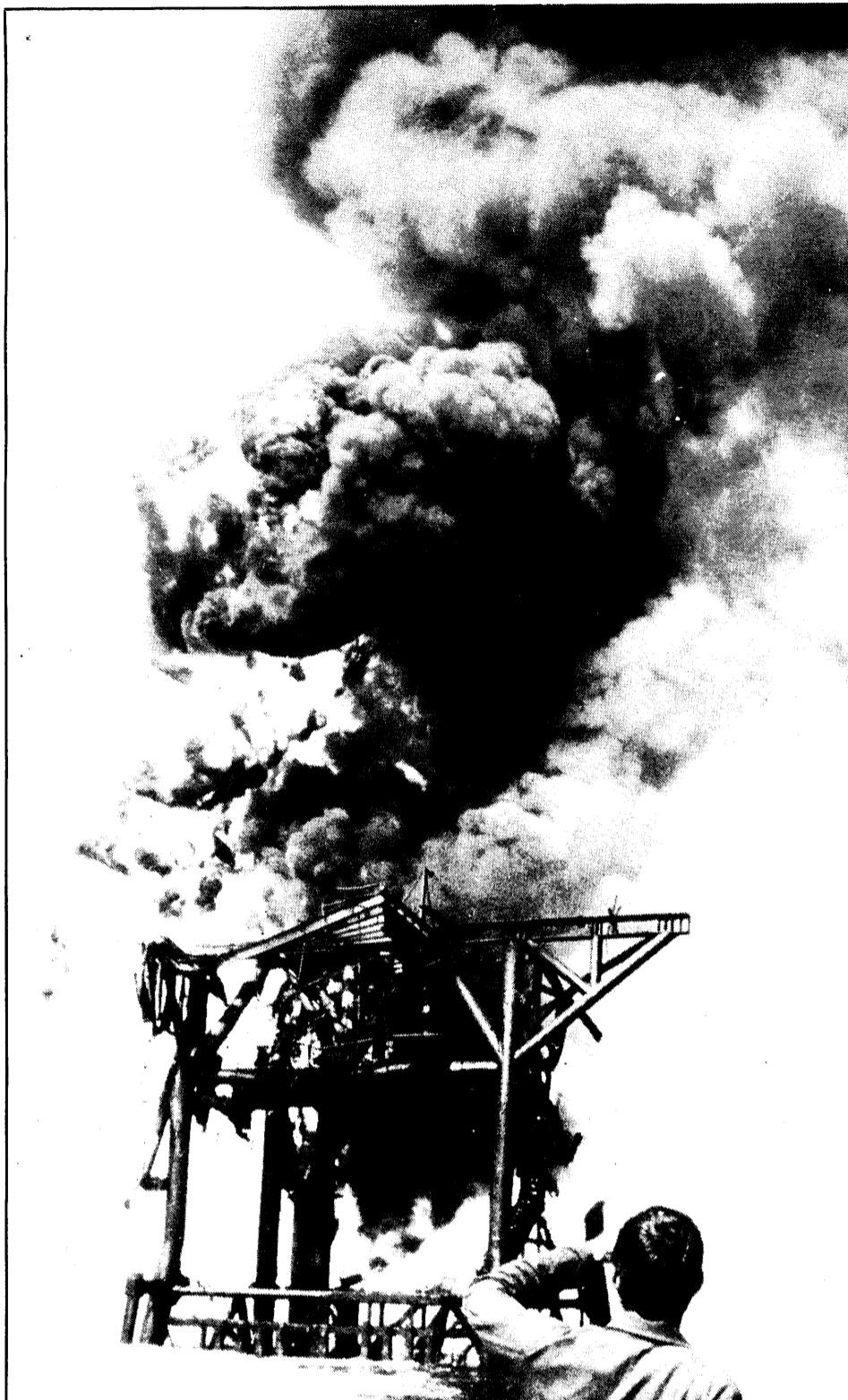
Because of the arms sales to both countries, the conflict has become a war of attrition. Neither side has the military strength or the international support needed to launch an all-out offensive which could win the war.

As a result, both sides have resorted to indiscriminate bombings of cities and other non-military targets. Estimates for the number of people killed during the six-year war range as high as 1 million!

The principal economic targets in the war are oil-production and export facilities. By attacking these targets, both Iran and Iraq have attempted to prevent the other side from using its oil income to purchase more weapons.

Since Iraq exports most of its oil through pipelines directly to Turkey and Saudi Arabia, Iran has not been able to reduce Iraq's oil production. Iran's oil production has been vulnerable to attack since it exports its oil through the Persian Gulf.

In fact, over two-thirds of the ships that had been attacked in the Persian Gulf were



U.S. warmakers benefit from continuation of Gulf War through intervention.

sailing either to or from Iran. As a result, Iran has retaliated by striking one of Iraq's most important allies—Kuwait.

Role of the Soviet Union

Kuwait initially sought protection from the United States in late 1986. Reagan, however, was in the middle of the Iran-Contragate scandal and could not get support for intervening in the Persian Gulf. As a result, Kuwait turned to the Soviet

Union for help.

The Soviet Union took advantage of Reagan's crisis and offered to carry Kuwaiti oil through the straits of Hormuz in Soviet flagships. It even sent three Soviet tankers to Kuwait and offered to appease OPEC, the oil-producing nations' cartel, by cutting Soviet oil exports.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has signaled the Soviet bureaucracy's willingness to promote "peaceful coexistence"

with U.S. imperialism. *The New York Times* (May 24, 1987) explained that "since coming to power, Gorbachev has courted moderate Arab states and restored diplomatic relations with Oman and the Arab Emirates."

The *Times* article continues: "The Russians say that what they seek is not a new sphere of influence, but a partnership with the United States in pursuing peace and stability in the region. The Middle East conflict is a threat to Moscow's southern flank and a drain on its arms export budget."

"The Soviets are suddenly becoming very aggressive in the Middle East," a U.S. State Department official told *The New York Times*. "They hope that their performance with the Iran-Iraq war will demonstrate they can play a role in the Middle East peace process."

Even Secretary of State George Shultz had to acknowledge that "the Soviet Union's presence [in the Persian Gulf] could be constructive" and "that there have been some interesting developments recently." (*New York Times*, May 24, 1987)

Nonetheless, because Reagan considered the Persian Gulf to be "Western" property, the Soviet tankers were considered as an unwelcome intervention. By July, Reagan had the support needed to reflag 11 Kuwaiti tankers and protect them with the U.S. Fleet.

Negotiations to end war?

At the same time, the United Nations began negotiations to end the war. During these negotiations, both countries temporarily refrained from attacks. This unofficial cease-fire allowed Iran to increase its oil revenue as its exports sailed through the Gulf unimpeded. This new revenue allowed Iran to begin to quickly purchase more military supplies. Moreover, this extra income emboldened the Iranian government, which refused to accept the cease-fire.

On Aug. 29, Iraq, realizing that Iran was gaining military strength, broke the informal cease-fire and launched an attack. Since then, Iraq has attacked several Iranian cities as well as ships carrying oil from Iran. Iran, in turn, has launched missile attacks against Basra, as well as attacking several tankers carrying oil from Kuwait.

The other countries in the region—such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia—fearing that the war could spill over to their own borders, are also making more concessions to the United States and opening the countries to the U.S. military.

Not content with profits from arms sales, the United States is seeking to escalate the war. As long as the war continues, both countries will continue to weaken until such time as the United States is able to install more dependable governments.

By its presence in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. government has indicated its willingness to provoke crises to further destabilize the region and prolong the war. For this reason, we demand:

- The immediate withdrawal of the U.S. Navy from the Persian Gulf!
- U.S. Hands off Iran!
- An immediate and unconditional cease-fire!

By ROLAND SHEPPARD

Why NFL owners broke football players strike

Professional football players remain the highest-paid slaves in the history of the world. In their battle with the professional football monopoly, the players were unable to win the right to work and were humiliated and forced back to work on the owners' terms.

The NFL is basically a cartel of 28 teams owned by multi-millionaires who control all of the products produced and equal shares of TV revenues grossing more than \$35 million per year apiece. The games are the profitable sporting pastime of the idle rich leading up to the Super Bowl, which has become the winter pageant of the ruling class.

The players as a group are both the main product and the basic workforce at the same time. To the owners, the right to control the product supersedes the right of the players to their constitutional right to

work. Although the players' average salary is \$230,000 per year, basically no salary is guaranteed, and the players can be cut at any time along with their salary.

Injured players are discarded like worn-out machinery and replaced by new players produced by the colleges at no cost to the owners. The wear and tear of the games leave most of the players injured for life—which on the average only lasts 55 years. Most players only play three to four years.

Although the owners could well afford to pay the demands of the players, it was in their interests—as members of the ruling class—to maintain the overall offense against all workers and to make an example

out of the players.

With typical capitalist disregard for the quality of their products, they proceeded on a strikebreaking course and organized scab games. With full support of the mass media, they waged a massive propaganda campaign against the players.

In spite of the media blitz, huge losses in income, and the defection of some of the highest paid superstars (like Joe Montana, Danny White, and Tony Dorsett), the overwhelming majority of the players stood firm.

The ruling class had a united front in their support to the NFL. They knew that a victory for the players would give

confidence to the rest of the working class, and conversely, that a defeat would maintain the ruling class' austerity drive against the working class.

What was needed by the players was a united front to unite all workers and stop the scab games. A counter-offensive to the media blitz was necessary to point out that a victory for the players would have been a victory for the working class as a whole and set the stage for a reversal of the concessionary trend that started with the breaking of the PATCO air-traffic controllers strike of 1981.

Even a modest response—like the demonstrations in Philadelphia, called by the trade-union leadership, which closed the games down—would have greatly assisted the players if done on a nationwide basis.

Unfortunately, the national leaderships of both the union and the civil-rights organizations were far from equal to the task, and the players were forced to fight alone. ■

500,000 demonstrate for gay rights, AIDS funding

By CARRIE HEWITT

In a powerful testament to the strength and political potential of the gay-rights movement, an estimated crowd of 500,000 participated in the Oct. 11 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights.

The demonstration brought together hundreds of contingents, including AIDS victims and AIDS-support groups, gay campus groups, gay seniors, parents and friends of gays, and many other groups from across the country. Thousands of people marched behind banners simply identifying their home towns—many coming from places as distant as Texas,

Oregon, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Not since the first national March on Washington for gay rights drew some 100,000 participants in 1979, have gay and lesbian organizations sought to mobilize such a wide-scale and visible demonstration of their strength and self-organization.

The call for this second March on Washington clearly struck a chord deep in the heart of the gay community. It provided a welcome opportunity to protest the increasing backlash against gays and lesbians that has been hyped by the AIDS panic.

March organizers adopted the slogan "For love and for life, we're not going back."

They were able to rally support around a number of diverse demands—including calls for legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships, passage of a lesbian and gay bill of rights, and a demand for increased government funding for AIDS education, research, and patient care.

"Silence equals death"

T-shirts and placards bearing slogans such as "Silence equals death" and "Fight AIDS, not people with AIDS" provided a moving reminder of the devastating toll that the AIDS epidemic has taken.

But the mood of the crowd that marched down Pennsylvania Avenue past the White

House for a rally at the Capitol was far from down-trodden. It appeared that most participants came with a strong determination to demonstrate their pride as a community and to demand their right to equal treatment.

"We can no longer afford to stand idly by when fellow lesbians and gays are beaten or insulted," said John Bush, an activist with Black and White Men Together in Philadelphia. "We have to stand up and say 'We're gay and we're here.'"

March organizers and many of the speakers likened the march to the Black civil-rights mobilizations of the 1950s and '60s. "We are not just the sons and daughters of Harvey Milk," said lesbian activist Virginia Apuzzo, who addressed the rally. "We are the sons and daughters of Rosa Parks."

"You opened our eyes"

United Farm Workers President Cesar Chavez pointed out the need for solidarity between the labor and gay-rights movements. "We stand with you today in solidarity," Chavez stated, "never forgetting that you came to our aid, never forgetting that the support that you gave us opened our eyes to your problems."

"We want civil rights for lesbian and gay people," Chavez concluded, "and we want civil rights for farmworkers and all those who are denied their civil rights."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who march organizers say was invited to speak because of his role in the civil-rights movement rather than because of his presidential candidacy, addressed the rally late in the afternoon.

Jackson called for "equal protection for everyone in the real America." He also called for increased funding for AIDS research: "AIDS is an international, medical crisis that cannot be localized or nationalized or moralized. We must be willing to put up the money and put our minds together. We must and we can end the AIDS crisis as we have dealt with other diseases."

Nonetheless, Jackson took the opportunity to promote his campaign, telling the rally: "if you want a president who cares, let me serve. Today I stand with you, election day you stand with me."

"Funds for AIDS, not contras"

Actor Robert Blake perhaps put his finger most directly on the responsibility of the U.S. government for the situation facing the gays and lesbians. In his speech, he called on the government to stop funding the contras and to begin proper funding for the battle against AIDS.

The Oct. 11 march and rally were the highlights of a long weekend of activities that included the unveiling of a huge quilt covering the length of two football fields with the names of some 2000 people who have died of AIDS.

Other activities included a ceremonial wedding of gay and lesbian couples, the dedication of a memorial site for slain San Francisco gay rights activist Harvey Milk, and a civil-disobedience action at the Supreme Court to protest the 1986 decision upholding a Georgia sodomy law.

A number of the events during the weekend showed the progress that gays and lesbians have made in recent years in gaining recognition for their rights. A labor reception, for instance, held in the AFL-CIO's national headquarters, drew some 500 labor leaders and union members on the day preceding the march.

The task now is to build on the success of the 1987 March. Continuing mass actions must be held demanding more money for AIDS research and education, free medical care, and equal rights for gays and lesbians. The spirit of the march must be kept alive.



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

Skin heads in Cinn. make appeals to recruit racists

By LEAH SMITH

CINCINNATI—Recently, a local cable service aired a disturbing advertisement on a community-access television channel. It called for people to "join the American Nazis and smash Red, Jew, and Black power." The ad was placed by the White American Skin Heads (W.A.S.H.), one of several neo-Nazi groups recently formed in Cincinnati.

The ads run by these groups on the local cable service have stirred up a controversy. Community leaders are in a dilemma on how best to respond to the neo-Nazi groups.

W.A.S.H. claims that young, white, working-class males are becoming second-class citizens. The solution it offers is to "smash the present anti-white, Zionist (Jew), puppet-run government with a healthy, new, white man's order."

Of the three local neo-Nazi groups, W.A.S.H. has the largest membership, about 40 people. There are about 15 members in a group calling itself the SS Action Group, and 15 more in the National Socialist Skin Heads Alliance.

"It seems to me that when the content of a message is so offensive to community standards and threatens certain groups of people, it should not be protected by the First Amendment," said Mayor Charles Luken.

The Cincinnati Rainbow Coalition has called upon the city council to draft legislation "prohibiting the activity of fascist terrorist groups such as the Nazis and the Klan."

On the other hand, Nick Lewis, 19, co-founder of W.A.S.H., claims his group "is

a legal, political organization that deserves the same rights as any other organization."

If the government authorities are entrusted with the job of censoring or outlawing the activity of far-right groups, they will have been given the opportunity to also limit the activity of other "controversial" movements—such as antiwar, abortion-rights, gay and lesbian, or socialist organizations.

The First Amendment of the Constitution defends what we approve as well as what we disapprove. Our civil liberties must be protected.

At the same time, youth, trade-union,

civil-rights, Black, and Jewish organizations should join together with others to effectively counter-organize, out-mobilize, and loudly protest against the presence of W.A.S.H. and similar groups.

On Oct. 23, a rally protesting the neo-Nazis attracted 100 people, mainly students and young workers. W.A.S.H. counter-demonstrators had to be escorted away by the police for their own safety. On Oct. 24, a local bar, Sudsee Malone, held a Rock Against Racism all-afternoon concert.

Although these neo-Nazi groups are—at the present time—a pathetic parody of their historical cousins, they represent an incipient danger in our society. For this reason, it is necessary to develop an organized public repudiation of their poisonous ideas. We must be ready to answer and denounce skin heads/neo-Nazis wherever they are and wherever they go! ■

... Jackson

(continued from page 20)

the Rainbow, local activists will find that their real role will be to garner additional support for Democratic Party candidates.

Rather than building an independent mass movement in the streets, they will find themselves ringing doorbells and stuffing envelopes for a party that supports the profit system which causes the very problems they hope to remedy.

Just as Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern convinced thousands of antiwar activists that the most practical way to end the Vietnam War was to work for their election, Jackson will dupe thousands into believing that working for his nomination can help stop U.S. intervention in Central America, end apartheid, and win a decent standard of living for all Americans.

He will use his supporters as bargaining chips to increase his power within the Democratic Party. Just as the McCarthy and McGovern campaigns diverted attention from the real causes of war and the bipartisan support for U.S. foreign policy, the Jackson campaign will place the blame for society's ills on "Reaganism" and "misguided leadership."

Jackson's "new direction" is the same old direction of dependence on the Democratic Party and the capitalist state which has led to defeat after defeat for working people. The goals of peace, jobs, and justice, which many Rainbow supporters sincerely believe in, can never be advanced by following this old direction—no matter how bold the leadership.

Instead, working people need their own politically independent party—a labor party based on the trade unions—to represent the interests of all those who suffer from the injustices of capitalism. ■

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Teamsters dissidents set goals at TDU convention

Approximately 400 working Teamsters came together Oct. 10-11 in Windsor, Ontario, for the 12th annual Rank and File Convention of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). They met to discuss the past year's experiences, set priorities, plan contract campaigns, and educate themselves.

Recently, TDU has been getting a wider hearing from the 1.6-million members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), who are increasingly on the move—demanding better leadership, better contracts, and decent working conditions.

Over the past year, TDU has successfully challenged the international's imposition of drug testing on car haulers, gotten a wider hearing for its campaign for the right to vote for top officials, won some important elections for union office, and made an impact through its campaign for a better contract at United Parcel Service (UPS).

TDUers also believe that their existence as a national opposition helped deter IBT officials from successfully breaking the hard-fought Watsonville, Calif., cannery strike. Teamsters President Jackie Presser realized that the political cost would be too high to emulate the United Food and Commercial Workers leadership's strike-breaking at the Hormel company.

Majority rejected UPS pact

The optimism displayed at the convention followed soon after the August vote on the national UPS contract. For the first time, a 51-percent majority rejected the pact described in *Teamster* magazine as "one of the finest contracts the Teamsters have ever negotiated."

A majority voted "no" despite a 50-percent part-time workforce, major unfair labor practices by UPS management, and the international's sales effort.

TDU's organizing evidently made a difference. In areas where there was no TDU, people voted seven to one for the contract. Where the TDU was active, the vote was three to one against.

The TDU's contract bulletins enabled the members to see through all the hype about "no concessions." They saw that they would be making less real income in 1990 than in 1982 or 1987, and that there would be new concessions in lower new-hire rates and the introduction of part-time drivers.

UPS tried to buy votes through a series of bonus payments in lieu of higher wage increases, a practice decried by nearly all trade unionists but promoted by IBT officials. The key demand that the two-tier be eliminated was ignored. The scheme of paying new hires a lower wage was actually expanded in this contract.

UPS fight is not over

After the vote, rather than going back to the bargaining table to renegotiate, Presser invoked Article XII, the "two-thirds rule," and declared the contract ratified retroactive to Aug. 1, 1987.

This fight is not entirely over yet. UPS Local 804, the largest in New York City, is protesting Presser's ruling to the International Executive Board, and is also threatening court action. TDU has filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board against UPS for unfair labor practices—and is challenging ratification of the contract in court.

Angry UPS employees continue to join TDU in large numbers. Some activists are realizing that they under-estimated the readiness of UPS workers to fight.

Many understand that they should prepare for a possible strike to win a better contract. Both Presser and UPS management tried to play on the fear of the rank and file that a "no" vote would automatically mean a strike.

With the majority of TDU's membership concentrated in freight, especially in its strategic road-driver section, the organization is well situated to prepare the ranks for the freight negotiations set to begin in January. While the industry will continue to be unstable, the Master Freight contract (NMFA) still covers some 200,000 workers.

Particularly at the larger companies, the mood seems to be more combative than for some years now. IBT officials and the



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

"TDUers believe that their existence helped deter IBT officials from successfully breaking the hard-fought Watsonville, Ca., cannery workers strike."

major companies have been engaged in a joint propaganda campaign to convince freight teamsters that they must sacrifice to increase the industry's profitability.

Meanwhile, the companies are engaged in the worst rate war in their history. Profits are down 30 percent this year, despite increased freight tonnage and revenues.

This dog-eat-dog competition favors the large well-capitalized companies. The top three have nearly doubled their market share since 1980. The fourth largest carrier, P-I-E Nationwide, is about to go under or at least face radical surgery—costing many jobs. This is primarily due to incredible financial chicanery.

Consequently, the employers are trying to cut labor costs by using non-union brokers and subsidiaries, using railways to carry trailers, and using low-rate casual labor and below-rate teamsters.

The companies are also launching Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP) that cut wages. They hope in the coming contract to extend the two-tier, eliminate jobs through work-rule "flexibility," and introduce part-timers.

"Ready to strike!"

A shortage of qualified drivers in some areas improves the Teamsters' bargaining position, and gives the IBT an opportunity to organize non-union freight companies.

Freight activists at the convention met and made preliminary plans to launch an early campaign around a theme such as, "Ready to strike for equality, justice, and jobs!"

They plan to focus on a few demands like: "Bring all up to scale, end the two-tier and casual rates, dump drug testing, and assure job protection through preferential hiring for employees displaced by closures." A continuing issue is organizing the unorganized.

A national freight committee was launched to begin mobilizing the member-

ship early when they can make a positive difference.

RICO and trusteeship

Teamster activists also had to direct their attention to the new situation opened up by the threat of a possible federal government suit under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). This could result in a court-ordered "reorganization" of the IBT, including the replacement of its top officials by a court-appointed trusteeship.

The President's Commission on Organized Crime claims the IBT is one of four unions dominated or influenced by mobsters. Presser, although an FBI informant for many years, is facing a federal trial for embezzling \$700,000 in union funds.

The government has already taken RICO action against four local unions in the New York/New Jersey area: Teamsters Local 814, Cement and Concrete Workers Local 6A, UFCW Local 359, and Teamsters Local 560.

Even the threat of a RICO suit hurts the entire trade-union movement—in particular, the Teamsters' organizing and bargaining positions.

The Presser leadership has responded to the government attack by accusing the Reagan administration (of which the Teamsters have been the most craven supporters of any major labor organization) of "communist-fascist tactics." Meanwhile, the Teamsters political action committee is squandering its funds on trying to buy support from politicians of both big-business parties.

But no effort has been made to activate the IBT officialdom—let alone the membership—in the fight against RICO. The discredited Presser leadership fears mobilizations of the membership (although partial and controlled) even more than it fears RICO. Therefore, its approach is to

pressure the membership to fall in line behind Presser and the status quo—in the name of union loyalty.

For membership control

Nevertheless, with the threat of a RICO suit shattering the union bureaucracy's aura of invincibility, conditions may favor the growth of the rank-and-file movement.

Increased membership activity may depend on the TDU's ability to credibly advance its campaign against government and mob control. The TDU has long stood for measures to clean up the union, including the establishment of an IBT Ethics Committee. At the last Teamsters convention, TDU submitted a petition with 100,000 signatures demanding direct election of top officers.

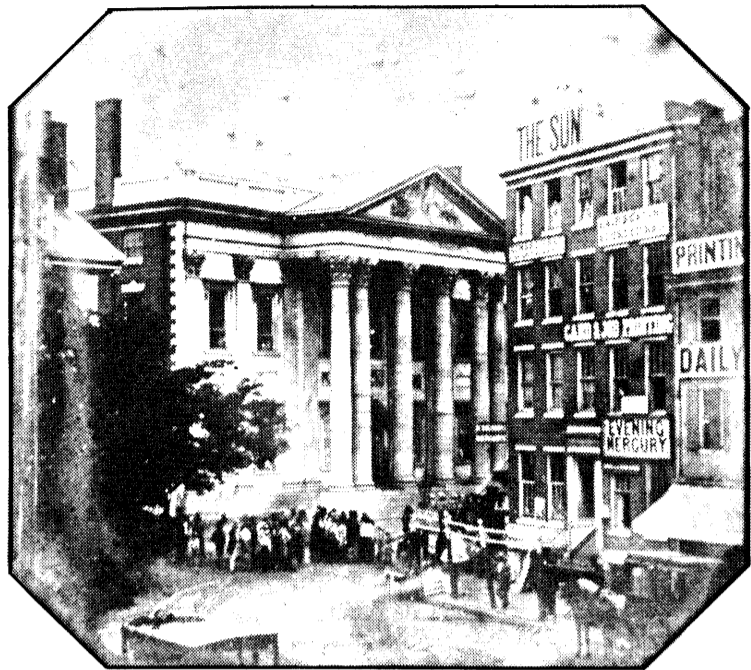
However, while the TDU convention took a clear position against a trusteeship and did not call for any form of RICO intervention, it still fudged on whether government action might help the membership win control of their union. This is reflected in a half-hearted letter-writing campaign to Congress asking that Teamsters "be given a right to elect our top officers" through the RICO lawsuit.

To look to the government to bring union democracy is like looking to put the fox in charge of the chicken coop. Only the rank and file can transform the union—especially by means of mobilizations against the employers. There are no short cuts.

After years of concessionary contracts and retreats by the union leaders, there is a new fight-back spirit developing in the rank and file. TDU's growth reflects this, as did the hearing its contract campaign got at UPS.

TDU's call to the membership to fight both government trusteeship and bureaucratic corruption by acting to reform the union from the bottom up should get a good response. After years of hard work in difficult circumstances, the rank-and-file movement seems poised to make significant breakthroughs. ■

U.S. Constitution: Basis of power for new aristocracy



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

"We the people, to form a union, to establish peace, equity, and order..."

So begins the Iroquois Treaty of 1520, written by American Indians a century before Europeans began their settlement of New England. More than 250 years later, this country's "Founding Fathers" borrowed the words of the Iroquois for the preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

But American Indians (who numbered over a million people) were not consulted on their wishes for the new nation. Nor were Black slaves (one-fifth of the non-Indian population) invited to take part in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Nor were any small farmers, mechanics, or laborers present among the delegates.

Most of the well-to-do merchants, bankers, planters, and merchants in the convention's secret sessions thought democracy "the government of the worst." Roger Sherman, a delegate from Connecticut, said, "The people should have as little as may be with the government."

Yet the Constitution claimed to speak for "the people." Its preamble promised to secure for them "the blessings of liberty."

True, the Constitution established a popularly elected House of Representatives and a system of appellate courts. It also guaranteed important democratic rights. But these concessions to the common people (including the Bill of Rights) were included primarily to ensure that the Constitution would be ratified.

At the same time, the Constitution maintained undemocratic voting restrictions and set up a labyrinth of governmental "checks and balances" that worked to dissipate the will of the people. The office of president, for example, was granted powers equivalent to those of a monarch, providing an effective counterbalance to Congress.

Divided interests

Nevertheless, the drafting of the Constitution was a revolutionary act. An independent republic, highly unified, was established at a time when Europe was still ruled by outright feudal monarchies.

America was transformed within a century from a colony based on agriculture and forestry into the world's first-ranked industrial power. The Constitution established the political foundations—on behalf of a new emerging capitalist class—that made this expansion possible.

In the early years of the republic, however, the mercantile capitalists, centered in the Northern cities, shared power with the slaveholding planters of the South. Their divided interests soon caused a wing of the planters to pull away from their former allies. This was the opening salvo of a struggle for power that would only be decided decades later in the Civil War.

To all appearances, the conflict began rather suddenly—if not entirely unexpectedly. After all, the gentry both North and South were linked by family ties as well as by joint investments in land and other commercial ventures. And the slave trade had brought riches to many a Yankee merchant or sea captain.

Disputes at the Constitutional Convention had been resolved in "gentlemanly" fashion. As Rufus King of Massachusetts declared, slavery was "the price" to be paid

The U.S. Constitution was, overall, an economic document, written in the interests of well-to-do merchants and slave-holding planters.

Soon after the Constitution was ratified, however, a division developed within the ruling-class coalition.

This final article of a three-part series examines the background of these events in the early years of the federal republic.

in order to keep the Southern states in the union.

Nevertheless, the planters harbored a long-standing fear that the central government, if it were dominated by the more populous Northern states, would pass taxes, duties, and trade restrictions weighing upon the agricultural economy of the South.

Indeed, the planters' anxiety seemed to be confirmed in the policies of the new secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton.

The public debt

Alexander Hamilton was the chief spokesperson of the Northern merchants and financiers. As early as 1780, he urged that a constitutional convention be held in order to establish a new national government as a "solid, coercive union" with "complete sovereignty" over the 13 states.

Hamilton hoped to bind the financial aristocracy to the

"Slavery was 'the price' to be paid to keep the Southern states in the union."

central government. Upon their continued prosperity, he argued, rested the fortunes of the nation. The "powerful cement of our union," Hamilton said, was to be the establishment of a national debt.

After the Constitution had been ratified, Hamilton began to put his program into effect. The government would assume the war debts owed by the states. Holders of old state and Continental securities could exchange them for new bonds bearing interest.

Hamilton's plan called for the federal government to guarantee payment of some \$60 million of war debts at face value. But the old securities had been bought up by speculators at 20 cents or less on the dollar. Thus, Hamilton's proposals amounted to a gift of millions of dollars to the "rich, the well-born, and the good."

"The prostration of agriculture"

Although the Northern states owed two-thirds of the state debts, Hamilton proposed taxing the entire country to finance the repayment. This was too much to stomach for James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution." His home state, Virginia, had already paid off its debt.

Madison turned away from Hamilton—his former close collaborator. He led a wing of the planters, centered in the Piedmont region of Virginia, against Hamilton's policies.

These "gentlemen farmers"—notably Thomas Jefferson—had been influenced by the egalitarian ideas of the nearby frontier. Most of them, had declared their abhorrence of slavery, for example, although few actually freed their slaves.

In 1790, Patrick Henry, also from the Piedmont, warned the Virginia Assembly of "the prostration of agriculture at the feet of commerce." Henry introduced a resolution, which the assembly adopted, opposing the federal government's assumption of the wartime debts of the states.

Thoroughly alarmed, Hamilton wrote to Supreme Court Chief Justice John Jay: "This is the first symptom

of a spirit which must either be killed, or it will kill the Constitution of the United States."

Hamilton attacked. He converted a semi-official government newspaper into a defense of his works and plans. Thomas Jefferson charged the paper with "disseminating the doctrines of monarchy, aristocracy, and the exclusion of the influence of the people." He soon replied with his own newspaper.

Two parties in the making

Two political parties were in the making. The Federalist Party, representing mercantile capitalism, identified with Hamilton's policies. The agrarian-based Republican Party (the antecedent of today's Democratic Party) identified with Jefferson's and Madison's demands for "states' rights."

The Republican Party appealed to the concerns of the backcountry small farmers—over one-third of the population—who had overwhelmingly rejected ratification of the Constitution. In their writings and speeches, the Republicans echoed the farmers' distrust of a "moneyed aristocracy" controlling the distant national government.

In 1794, the conflict verged on civil war. In order to finance the new public debt, Congress levied a tax on whiskey. The sale of this commodity, distilled from surplus grain, provided almost the only cash known in the backwoods regions. People in western Pennsylvania took up arms to protest the tax.

Hamilton soon set out for Pittsburgh to crush the "Whiskey Rebellion." His 15,000 troops pillaged their way westward; citizens were snatched from their homes and marched to concentration camps. All told, the action was an effective test of the Constitution, which provides the federal government the means to "suppress insurrections."

"Apostles of anarchy"

Meanwhile, in the cities, skilled workers were organizing the first independent trade unions and strikes for higher wages. The workers were attracted to the "Democratic Societies" and "Republican Clubs," which the Jeffersonians set up to campaign for reforms in public education and social welfare.

The societies also attempted to raise support for the revolutionaries in France.

"Ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia," exclaimed Vice President John Adams, "threatened to drag Washington out of his house and effect a revolution in the government, or compel it to declare war in favor of the French Revolution and against England."

As the elections of 1800 approached, the Federalists denounced their adversaries as "Jacobins" and "apostles of atheism and anarchy, bloodshed and plunder." Several Republican leaders were imprisoned under the Sedition Act, which outlawed any speech or writing "with intent to defame" the president or Congress.

Despite this early attempt at a "red scare," Jefferson and the Republicans won the presidency. In his inaugural address, Jefferson immediately offered his former opponents the olive branch. "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists!" he proclaimed.

The so-called "Revolution of 1800," transferred leadership of the country from a commercial aristocracy to a landed aristocracy. But the strong central government—set up by the Constitution and given shape by the Federalists—was left virtually intact.

Sixty years later, a second revolution—the Civil War—would be waged to reestablish the political and economic dominance of the Northern capitalist class once and for all. ■

Photo above: The First Bank of the United States in Philadelphia established by Alexander Hamilton in 1791. Photo circa 1844.

By HAYDEN PERRY

Law and Disorder by Bruce Jackson. University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1984. 324 pages.

The figure of the Blind Goddess of Justice with her evenly balanced scales stands atop many older courthouses across America. Frequently, the slogan "equal justice under the law" is chiseled over the doorway. All this would suggest that ascertaining the truth and rendering just verdicts is the chief business of those inside.

"Not so!" says Bruce Jackson, author of "Law and Disorder," a critique of America's justice system. A more appropriate slogan might be, "all the justice your money can buy." He buttresses his argument by taking us on a journey with a defendant through the system from the moment of arrest to ultimate parole.

Jackson's thesis is that all the elements of the justice system—the police, the district attorney, the public defender, and the judge—are linked together in a bureaucracy that has one overriding goal. That is, to move the cases as expeditiously as possible through the system.

As Jackson puts it, "Justice is not a basic concern of very many people in the criminal-justice system. Getting through the work load is what exhausts the imagination and consumes the days. Justice is an expensive luxury, it is time consuming."

Innocent people arrested

The citizen enters the justice system at the point of arrest. According to Jackson, the police are motivated to build a good arrest record. Bring in as many criminals and violators as possible: see later if the charges will hold up in court.

The result is that thousands of innocent people have to endure the humiliation of arrest only to have the charges dropped before their case comes to trial.

Jackson cites an example, "In New York in 1969, there were 2096 arrests for felonious gambling...which led to 281 indictments, 15 convictions, and one jail term." The nearly 2000 innocent citizens who were arrested and released got no compensation for their ordeal.

The police will deliver to the district attorney those cases they believe will result in convictions. The most sure-fire road to a conviction is to obtain a confession. Despite the advice of fictional movie lawyers to "never plead guilty," Jackson says, "About 90 percent of all guilty verdicts result from guilty pleas, not trials."

What leads such a large number of accused to plead guilty? Jackson points to some quite compelling reasons.

The accused risks a heavier sentence if he pleads innocent. One survey revealed that those pleading guilty in certain marijuana cases in New York received average

All the legal justice your money can buy



sentences of less than six months, while those going on trial received sentences eight times as severe—four to five years in prison. The right to be presumed innocent can carry a heavy price.

"Plea bargaining"

The Justice Department has an even more potent lever for extracting guilty pleas, says Jackson. This is the process of plea bargaining. The defendant who has been charged with a serious offense is persuaded to plead guilty to a lesser charge carrying a lesser penalty.

The district attorney may admit this process thwarts true justice, but to him it is more important to move the backlog of cases along. Too many lengthy court cases clog up the system.

The bail system exerts enormous pressure on a poor defendant to "cop a plea." It costs money to get out on bail. Here Jackson points out how rich and poor defendants fare very differently.

If bail is set at \$10,000, the wealthy person can usually post some sort of property bond and get it back after the trial. The poor person must go to a bail bondsman, who will charge \$1000, which will never be returned.

Unable to afford bail, the poor defendant must sit in jail, sometimes for months. Although legally presumed innocent, he is treated the same as any convicted prisoner.

The public defender

The indigent defendant cannot afford the legal defense the rich person can. He is

assigned a public defender who is paid by the state and is part of the courthouse bureaucracy. Getting a defendant acquitted is an ideal for the public defender, but speeding cases through the courts is a more immediate aim.

The public defender serves, actually, as a mediator between the court and the prisoner. Most public defenders assume their clients are guilty. "If he's not guilty of this one, he is guilty of one just like it," one public defender told Jackson.

They see their job as getting the lightest sentence possible for the defendants. A guilty plea to the smallest charge the district attorney will accept is the easiest way to go.

This contradicts the popular impression of a jury deliberating the fate of a fellow citizen. In 1981, only 12 out of 100 federal cases were decided by a jury. Over 24,000 out of 38,000 were settled by guilty pleas.

A plea bargain promises a defendant a smaller penalty, but the judge has the final say. There can be no appeal against a harsh sentence if it is within the law. Harsh sentences, however, are reserved for the poor rather than the rich, Jackson says.

White-collar and corporate crime costs the public more money than all the muggers on our city streets. But swindlers who appear in three-piece suits, with high-priced lawyers by their side, can usually persuade judges to be lenient. Almost no corporate executive has ever seen the inside of a jail.

After conviction, a paid lawyer will take the client's case through as many stages of appeal as money will pay for.

The poor person cannot afford this

luxury. He or she goes off to prison with only the hope that a lenient parole board will shorten the time left to serve. This is a body of appointed citizens who determine how much of his sentence the prisoner must serve.

The parole board

In theory, the parole board considers whether the prisoner has been rehabilitated by his experience in prison. Actually, Jackson says, few prison officials today even claim to rehabilitate their inmates.

The parole board can only guess whether a prisoner will now become "a productive member of society." Here the cards are stacked against the prisoner who comes from a broken home, is poorly educated, and has no job skills. The middle-class prisoner, from a "good family," who is assured of a job in his uncle's business will get out sooner.

Finally out on parole, the ex-prisoner must live under the rules of the parole board. The board decides how lenient these rules may be. For violating any regulation, the parolee can be sent back to prison to serve the remainder of his term. He might have two or three years left.

This means, Jackson points out, a parolee may be sent to prison for three years for just taking a drink or for being out of his house at night—a savage sentence for a minor violation. At the hearing to revoke parole, the accused has none of the rights guaranteed in a court trial—no lawyer, no process of appeal.

Do long sentences deter crime?

While demonstrating the inequity built into the American justice system, Jackson acknowledges the public concern with crime. Politicians react to public alarm, he says, by demanding ever longer sentences. One man was recently sentenced to 1086 years!

Jackson says attacking crime through longer sentences is like "a car manufacturer responding to concerns about safety by improving the rust resistance of hubcaps."

Jackson gets near the heart of the problem when he says, "The roots of crime lie almost entirely beyond the areas of activity of any justice agency...Much crime can be obliterated by abolishing the conditions that make it necessary or reasonable."

Socialists can join Jackson in that approach to the problem. His book offers a valuable insight into a problem that will only be solved by ending the system of exploitation that drives so many to despair and crime. ■

Latin American Feminist Conference draws 1200

By LITA BLANC

TAXCO, Mexico—From Oct. 19 to Oct. 24 more than 1200 women from all over Latin America gathered here to discuss the role of women in politics at the fourth Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Conference.

In previous years, similar conferences were held in Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, but the Mexican conference was the largest and the broadest. Central America was well represented, including 48 women from Nicaragua. For the first time Cuba sent a delegation, and there were even 50 Chilean women who came in spite of the repression of the Pinochet dictatorship.

The combative nature of the participants marked the kickoff rally. The role of women in the struggle for national liberation and against repression were unifying themes of the evening. The crowd rose to its feet again and again with chants such as: "Without the participation of women there can be no revolution,"

"Liberation for political prisoners," and "Without women there is no democracy."

The organizers of the event sought to define feminism as the theory and practice of the autonomous struggle for women's liberation. However, the presence of women from Central America—and the presence of peasant women, trade unionists, and "pobladoras" from shantytowns from all over Latin America—had a profound effect on the nature of the discussions which took place throughout the week.

The December issue of *Socialist Action* will feature excerpts from various workshops at the conference as well as special interviews with Luz Vasquez Martinez, a leader of the Mexican women's garment union, 19 de Septiembre; Rosario Ibarra, presidential candidate for the Mexican PRT; Dorotea Wilson, representative from the Atlantic Coast to the Nicaraguan National Assembly; and Olga Maria Pinosa, leader of the Nicaraguan Confederation of Agricultural Workers. ■

Socialist Action Forums

Los Angeles:

"The Arias Plan: Will it Bring Peace to Central America?"
Speaker: Alan Benjamin,
Editor, *Socialist Action*.
Friday, Nov. 13, 7 p.m.
ILGWU Hall, 675 S. Parkview
(1 block West of Alvarado)

Minneapolis:

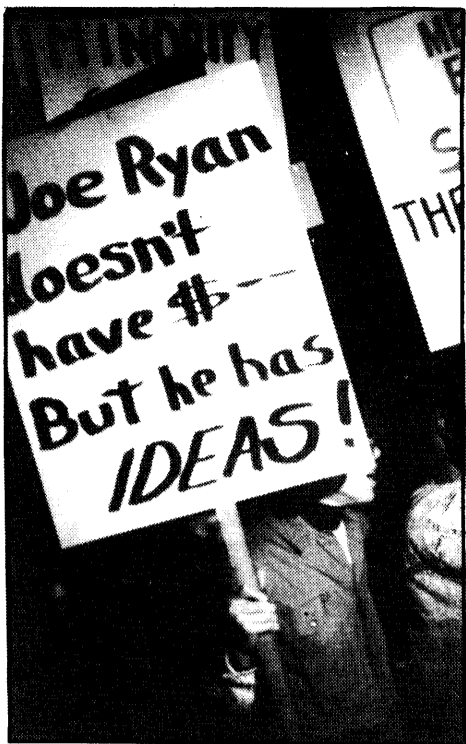
"Contragate/Nicaragua: The Untold Story of the Secret War"
Speaker: Jeff Mackler, co-Nat'l Secretary Socialist Action.
Tuesday, Nov. 17, 12 noon
Univ. of Minnesota
Time & place to be announced

New York:

"Election '88: Which Way Forward for Working People"
Speakers: Irving Beinen, exec. cttee. NCIPA & Nat Weinstein, co-Nat'l Secy Socialist Action
Friday, Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.
South Loeb Stud. Ctr. N.Y.U.

San Francisco:

"Stock Market Crash: Workers Will Pay"
Speakers to be announced
Friday, Nov. 13, 8 p.m.
3435 Army St., Room 308
For more info, call 821-0458



Alan Benjamin/Socialist Action

S.F. candidate fights exclusion from debate

LWV for their polls, have consistently refused to cover the Ryan campaign.

"The League's policy amounts to censorship," Ryan said. "It denies the voters the right to hear all viewpoints. The League caters to candidates with more money than ideas and ignores the democratic rights of all candidates."

When the LWV refused to back down from its exclusionary policy, outraged supporters of Ryan's right to speak picketed the event, calling for the LWV to open the debate to all candidates.

Ironically, the picketline garnered interviews for Ryan on two television and two radio stations. He was chosen as spokesperson for the other excluded candidates.

"A war against youth"

The Ryan for Mayor campaign also carried its program into high school auditoriums, union halls, and community groups last month. "I'm the socialist candidate," Ryan told the student body of Alamo High School, an alternative school where students finish their education while working and supporting families.

"The Vietnam War turned me into a socialist," Ryan said. "There's a war going on right now that's going to turn you into socialists. In San Francisco there's a war going on against youth."

"This system is based on racism and sexism," he continued. "Working people are getting poorer, and the rich are getting richer. We must mobilize ourselves independent of the politicians." The socialist candidate received a loud, enthusiastic round of applause from the students.

Ryan also got a friendly response from supporters of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association when he congratulated them in their efforts to stop developers from buying up nearby land for so-called affordable housing. The city government was "giving away" the land, originally reserved for a new library for S.F. City College, to real estate developers for a meager \$36,000.

"They'll put in one or two units of 'affordable' housing," said Ryan, "and make record profits by renting the rest of the

units for \$1000 to \$1500 a month. Housing is a basic right that should not be used to make profits."

Ryan pointed out to the meeting that "it's only when you organize yourselves independent of the Democrats and Republicans that you can win your basic rights."

"Only through struggle"

A meeting of members of the Postal Workers Union warmly received Ryan's comments about union busting and the role of police as strike breakers and scab herders.

"Unlike the other candidates before you tonight," Ryan told the unionists, "I believe everyone has the right to a job, that human needs come before profits, and that

the only people who are going to make things better for this city, this country, and this world are you—the working people."

"Unlike the other candidates, I say that electing an individual is not going to make a difference, even if you elect a socialist."

"Our rewards will only come through struggle," Ryan concluded. "But you're struggling right now. You're struggling to raise a family, pay your rent, and make a decent life for yourselves in this society. Only when we struggle together in an organized—and independent—political party can we win our basic human rights."

Ryan is scheduled to appear with the other mayoral candidates on the local educational channel on Oct. 28 at 9:00 p.m. ■

By JONI JACOBS

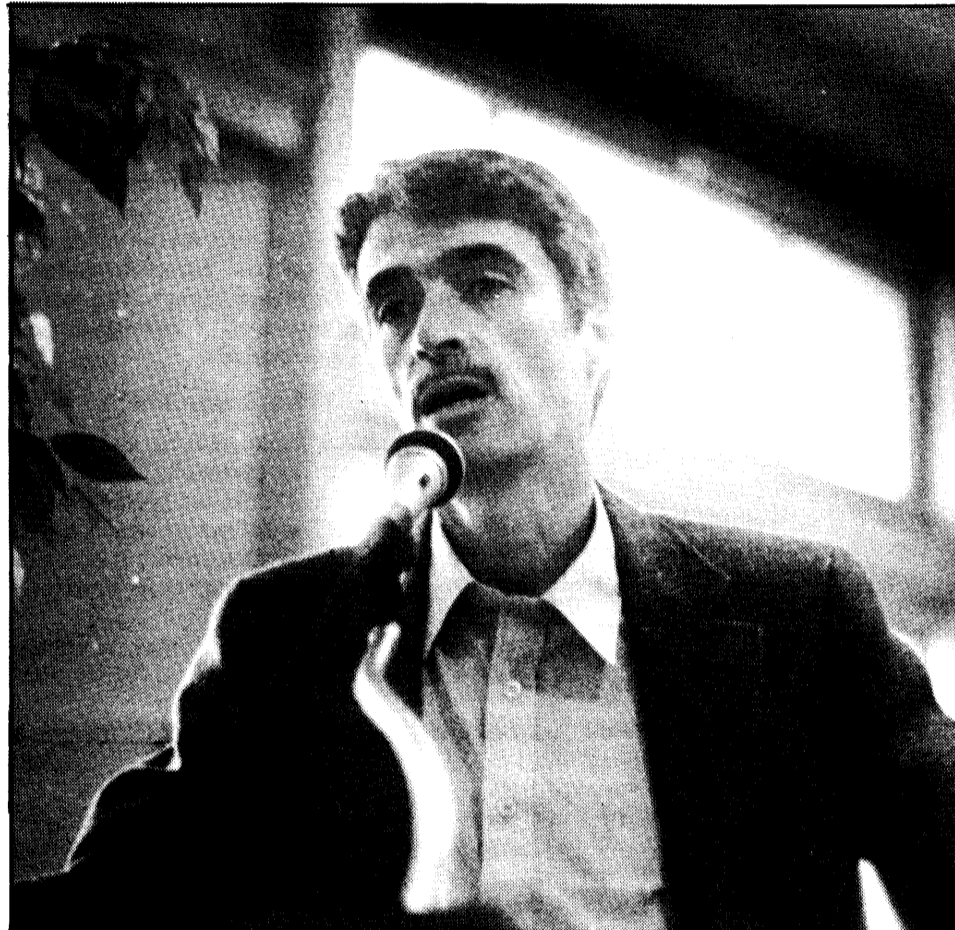
SAN FRANCISCO—"Joe Ryan doesn't have money but he has ideas!" "Let all the candidates debate!" These slogans summed up the theme on Oct. 14 as Socialist Action supporters brought their skills as picketline organizers to the electoral arena.

The demonstration, which protested the exclusion of independent candidates from a televised debate sponsored by the League of Women Voters (LWV), was a centerpiece of the campaign of Joseph Ryan for mayor of San Francisco.

The LWV, a "non-partisan" community service group encouraging "the exercise of democratic rights through the election process," required that candidates gain support of 10 percent or more in published opinion polls before being allowed to speak from the stage.

This policy allowed only three out of the 11 candidates with ballot status to address the voters in the first televised debate of the race. The chosen three are all millionaires.

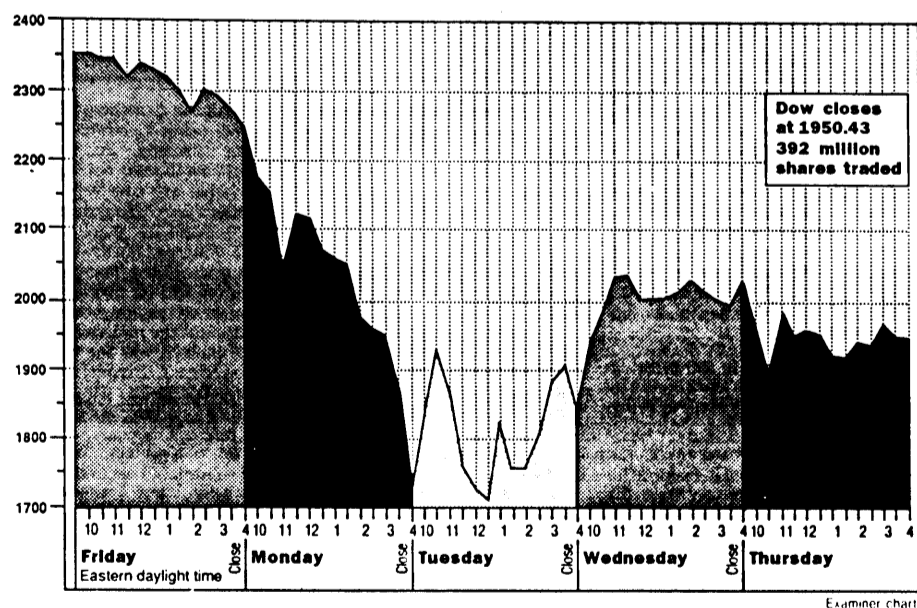
Ryan for Mayor campaign staffers negotiated with the LWV, pointing out that only rich candidates can afford the advertising which generates the name recognition measured in these polls. Besides, the two San Francisco daily newspapers, *The Chronicle* and *The Examiner*, which were relied upon by the



Joseph Ryan speaks to Alamo High School students

Adam Wood/Socialist Action

Wall St. crash cont'd



(continued from page 1)

and confident stock market "analysts"—hustlers, whose real purpose is largely to encourage investment—stumbled their way through with choked-up throats. Unable to hide their shock and dismay, they unconvincingly "assured" viewers that the collapse was "only a temporary correction."

"After all," they stuttered, as they vainly tried to be convincing, "the economy is in good condition."

President Ronald Reagan issued a similar assessment, asserting that consultations with investment leaders "confirm our view

that the underlying economy remains sound." The White House statement added: "We are in the longest peacetime expansion in history. Employment is at the highest level ever. Manufacturing output is up."

But when the market plunged in 1929, President Herbert Hoover issued a statement eerily similar to Reagan's: "The fundamental business of the country, that is, production and distribution of commodities, is on a sound and prosperous basis."

Small fish are big losers

The fateful day's events were followed by

television interviews with "experts" which went well into the night. Most of the financial wizards interviewed were unable to say what this means for the American people as a whole, and refused to answer the question all interviewers inevitably posed: "What should the small investor do now?"

The best they could come up with was: "If you are not compelled to sell, to pay off [speculative] debts, just stand pat—the market is certain to rebound." But there's the rub. Many of those who bought on margin were wiped out.

The long-term booming stock market had encouraged many, mostly smaller, investors to throw caution to the winds to reap bigger harvests from what appeared to be an unending rise in stock prices. Many of those that borrowed heavily to buy greater quantities of stocks than they could otherwise afford were unable to come up with more collateral to back up drastically devalued stocks, and were ruined.

This time mainly the small fish were caught on the bull market-hook, baited with the promise of quick riches. Some risked everything to gamble on a rising stock market, and lost.

This will have the effect of massively cooling off the economy. Capitalists will hedge investing, unemployment will grow, and many people will postpone major purchases. This will aggravate the already dangerously glutted world capitalist economy.

In their own way, the big investors, the banks, and the U.S. Treasury itself, are also caught in the vortex of an expanded world economy built on sand. And while no one can foreclose on Uncle Sam, he will, nevertheless, have to pay up. In the final

analysis, that means turning the printing presses loose.

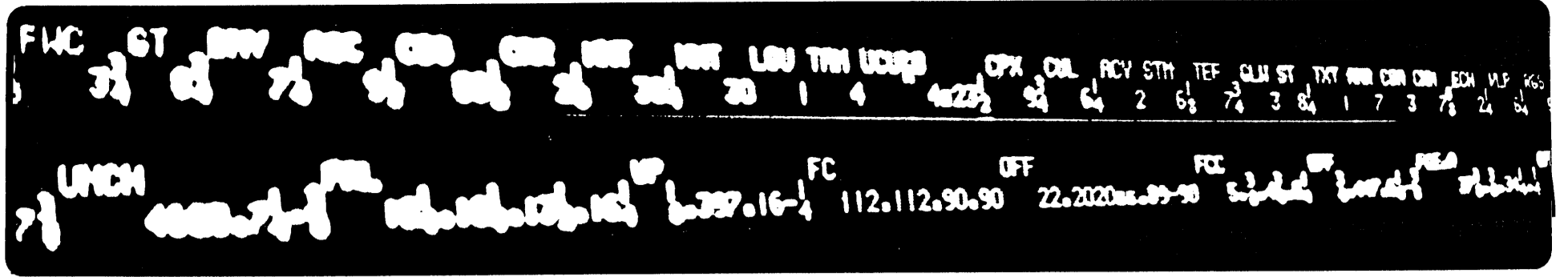
Every dollar the government prints to pay its debts—unsupported by new revenues—proportionately reduces the real value of every dollar in circulation. In other words, the debt guarantor of last resort—the toiling classes in the United States and in the world—will be targeted to pay for the bankruptcy of capitalism.

Inflation sure to follow

It is not possible to immediately know whether or not the stock market plunge of Black Monday 1987 will immediately be followed by a deep recession like that of the 1930s. Capitalism still has some options for buying a little more time. But they invariably involve paying for a temporary respite with the cruelest and most unfair form of taxation: inflation.

While recessions are deflationary, the period ahead will most certainly see an unprecedented rise in the rate of inflation, as capitalism attempts to bail itself out through increased deficit spending and other measures intended to spur a lagging economy.

This means the period of relative labor quiescence is about to come to an end. After the crash of 1929 it took nearly five years before a shocked and paralyzed working class was able to react against the massive cuts in living standards. But in the current crisis, inflation-caused reductions in living standards—as capitalism desperately strives to find new ground for restabilizing the economy—will force working people onto the field of class struggle much sooner. ■



The impending crisis of U.S. capitalism

Scientific socialism, Engels once explained, is based on Karl Marx's two great discoveries: The materialist conception of history and the secret of how the capitalist system of production works. It is necessary from time to time to analyze the current political situation not merely from the standpoint of the last few years' analyses, but from this longer historical perspective.

The Great Depression of the 1930s was a destabilization of world capitalism on a previously unseen scale. Marx and Engels's description of the periodic crises inherent in capitalist production was seen by many as prophesy realized. The process of overproduction was hidden until the 1929 crash set loose what "The Communist Manifesto" referred to as "an epidemic that in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction."

"The Communist Manifesto" suddenly came to life for tens of millions of workers. Society found itself "put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appear[ed] as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem[ed] to be destroyed; and why? Because there [was] too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce." (Ibid.)

This major economic destabilization provided the objective conditions for a worldwide revolutionary tide of proletarian revolution. Mass consciousness was conditioned by the living proof that capitalism had outlived itself. Capitalists, ruthlessly dumping millions onto the jobless scrap-heap while arbitrarily cutting wage levels of those still working down to the bone, brought into sharp relief the diametric opposition between them and the working class.

Socialism was seen by millions of workers as an imperative necessity, not merely as a better way to organize society. In response to the standard anti-socialist catch-phrase, "It sounds good on paper, but it won't work," socialists effectively responded, "But, we know capitalism doesn't work."

This belief translated into an explosive growth of socialist political organization on a world scale and with it, a cycle of ascending mass mobilizations in country after country.

Betrayals rescue capitalism

The reformists' class-collaborationist strategy, the "people's" or "popular" front, led to the defeat of promising revolutionary opportunities in Europe and Asia. This also opened the door to the mind-boggling slaughter of World War II. Having undermined the struggle for workers' power, the reformists extended their collaboration to supporting the imperialist aims of the "democratic" capitalist states in Europe and America.

The conflict between imperialist factions



Wall St. frenzy on Black Monday, Oct. 19, 1987.

Andrew Popper

Introduction

The following are major extracts from the Political Resolution adopted at the August, 1987, meeting of the Socialist Action National Committee—two months before the stock market crash. It is, essentially, a reaffirmation of the fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism upon which Socialist Action is based and challenges the widespread myth that capitalism has been so restructured that there cannot be another major crisis like 1929.

The historical period since the 1930s Depression is reviewed and analyzed from the vantage-point of the effect of the economic cycles upon the struggles between classes. The document describes the crisis that engulfed world capitalism after the 1929 stock market crash and the opening of two decades of wars and revolution.

It explains how the labor bureaucracy in the U.S. and their bureaucratic counterparts in reformist Socialist and Communist parties throughout the world have led the working classes into repeated defeats. It describes how these missed opportunities allowed world capitalism to establish the most prolonged period of relative economic stabilization that the modern world has experienced.

Black Monday, Oct. 19, 1987, however, will go down in history as the beginning of the end of the nearly 40-year period of world capitalist stability and the opening of a renewed struggle by working people for their liberation from the scourge of unemployment, inflation, and war.

over the right to exploit the semi-colonial world was falsely portrayed as a struggle between capitalist democracy and fascism. Under cover of this false counterposition, the reformists mobilized workers in support of their imperialist rulers' war aims, again through the medium of multi-class governments.

After the end of the war, the reformists, led by world Stalinism, maintained their

counterrevolutionary popular-front strategy. Again, the power, which lay in the streets of Europe—primarily France, Italy, and Greece—was handed back to the discredited capitalists of these countries, most of whom had profited from their shameful wartime collaboration with the fascists.

In France, the workers of Paris liberated their city from the Nazi power in 1944 and were in de-facto control of the nation. The

reformist parties joined a coalition government—a "people's front"—which disoriented the revolutionary workers with the myth of a capitalist class divided between "progressive" (democratic) and "reactionary" (fascist) wings.

The people's-front strategy required that workers subordinate their instinctive struggle for independent class power to goals acceptable to the "progressive" capitalists. This effectively blunted the workers' struggle for power and gave the clear-eyed capitalist politicians time to regain full control before discarding their reformist partners from the government.

In Italy, too, the workers had state power within their grasp after they hung Mussolini by his heels and were in de-facto control of the streets. Again the Communist and Socialist parties saved capitalism. Serving as ministers in the capitalist government, only these "workers' representatives" could pacify, discipline, and demobilize the insurgent masses.

In a larger sense, the great betrayals of the revolutionary opportunities which had been opened up by the 1929 collapse of capitalist economy gave world capitalism precious time to regain its balance. Hitler was able to revive the German economy by a massive rearmament program, which received discreet support from the "democratic" imperialists. (Seeing Hitler's conquest of political power as a dagger pointed at the Soviet Union, the "democracies" had assisted the rise of fascism in Germany.)

Later, Hitler believed he could ride his success beyond the goals he shared with world capitalism to force Germany's imperialist rivals to redivide the colonial world.

This precipitated a worldwide arms race which found the reformists in full support of their own bourgeoisies. The idle factories were reactivated, and the worldwide orgy of war and war production began to follow its grotesque logic. Stagnant economies were revived, profits again rolled in, the rich got richer, and new millionaires bloomed in soil fertilized with workers' blood.

Seeking to avoid another 1929

At the same time, the United States and its allies set in motion a long-term counter-cyclical strategy, especially for the period after the imperialist war. The strategy was intended to postpone for as long as possible another 1929. John Maynard Keynes, an English economist, became the main theoretician of the scheme. It was designed to flatten out the six- to 10-year cycles of production, postponing for as long as possible a major breakdown in capitalist economy.

Even though the scheme's monetary and other mechanisms for regulating the capitalist economy are intricately complex and beyond the scope of this report, the

(continued on page 10)

Socialist Action Special Supplement

... economic crisis



(continued from page 9)

basic idea can be simply described: When production begins to wind down because unsold commodities are beginning to pile up, regulations restricting credit are loosened, and government spending is increased. These and other inflationary measures put more money into the hands of consumers, helping to absorb some of the surplus commodities.

And, conversely, when the economy swings to the opposite pole—toward ever-increasing levels of production—credit is tightened and government expenditures are reduced. This tends to slow the pace and limit the extent of overproduction.

The other key component of the stabilization policy is to transfer ever-larger portions of productive industry to making tanks and bombers, rather than cars and airliners. This provides another lever for countering the tendency toward saturation of the market for consumer goods.

Manipulating the rate of taxation—primarily through more or less tax-breaks for the rich—also functions in the Keynesian scheme as one of the inflationary levers for regulating the cycles of production. The overall counter-cyclical effect is to cool an overheating economy before it reaches its height and to start reheating it when it begins its downward spiral. Restraining abrupt movement in either direction reduces the risk of losing control over market forces.

But for this simple idea to work, a maze of complex adjustments in the world capitalist economic mechanism was necessary. The most important adjustment was to begin a process of dethroning gold from its natural position as the regulator of value relations and the inflexible instrument for settling accounts between nations to make up for imbalances in trade.

Institutionalized inflation

The first big step was carried out by the U.S. government, which held the world's largest gold reserves: A fixed rate of international exchange between dollars and gold was decreed, together with a prohibition of conversion of dollars into gold by American citizens. So long as there was worldwide confidence in the dollar, the gold safely remained in Fort Knox, Ky., and the dollar functioned as the basis of the world monetary system.

A more flexible monetary system based on dollars (backed by the mass of commodities produced by the U.S. economy), not gold, also made it easier to open and close the flow of purchasing power into the economy without the inflationary effect being immediately felt.

The counter-cyclical strategy meant, in the last analysis, that dollars were printed when necessary to sop up the excess product. (Regularized government borrowing only masks and slows down the classic

inflationary effect of this deficit-spending policy.) With ever-more paper dollars chasing after the given amount of commodities, long-term inflation becomes endemic.

This mechanism gives capitalism some measure of "control" over its basically anarchic system but it also guarantees that a world monetary system primarily based on the dollar and other strong currencies institutionalizes inflation on a world scale.

The first warning of impending doom came at the end of the 1960s with the eruption of a world monetary crisis caused by a well-founded decline of confidence in the dollar. President Nixon was forced to decree that dollars were no longer convertible into gold.

The heavy costs of the Vietnam War undermined the previous level of stability. The gap between tax income and other revenues and expenditures was significantly widened. This meant that another barrier to vastly increased deficits—the convertibility of foreign-held dollars into gold—was removed.

The interest on the growing public debt further increases the gap between tax revenues and government spending. This debt now stands at over \$2 trillion and is expected to double in the next five years—as it has in the last five. And private debt had grown to \$6.7 trillion by the end of 1986, further aggravating the credit/deficit foundation for long-term stability.

A sword of Damocles

But a time must come when it becomes clear that the public debt is unpayable and, what adds up to the same thing, increasing private debt is not backed by the growth of real wealth.

Expanding government debt to keep the world economy afloat is not just an American sword of Damocles. It is a threat to the entire capitalist world. Some of the biggest debtors to U.S. banks—Brazil, Mexico, and other dependent countries—have long since halted payment of principle to U.S. banks. In recent months, many have halted or reduced interest payments as well. These defaults would have already set off a chain reaction of bank failures were it not for government intervention.

The immediate impact on the weaker economies of dependent countries, however, has triggered uncontrolled increased rates of inflation. Bolivia's inflation rate, for instance, rose for a few months to 50,000 percent annually a couple of years ago. Double- and triple-digit inflation rates elsewhere have become the norm. Even those deformed workers' states, which have borrowed heavily from imperialist bankers, are suffering from rising rates of inflation.

Only the continued relative stability of the major industrial powers prevented the colonial world from falling into complete economic, and therefore political, collapse. But they can keep these countries' heads

above water only as long as the major imperialist powers maintain an overall economic equilibrium.

When the powerhouses of the capitalist economy break down, there will be little reserves available for rescuing bankrupt countries. The resulting qualitative reduction in living standards—extending deeply into the ranks of the middle class—will inexorably lead to revolutionary social explosions.

Putting such a longer leash on the demons of inflation and public debt is the closest capitalism can come to control over its anarchic economic system. This is a "control" that is not unlike feeding the engines of a steamship, chronically short on fuel, with pieces of its superstructure.

Social welfare "safety net"

The enormous government spending required to absorb excess productive capacity and maintain purchasing power mostly goes to feed the war machine. But an important share of national surpluses also goes to finance a variety of social welfare programs. (European workers, independently organized into class political parties, were able to extract a level of social security never before seen.)

Even in the United States, where the working class remains politically atomized, the so-called "safety net" of social welfare programs has made profound changes in the lives of the nation's poorest. Unemployment insurance, social-security pensions, medical assistance, aid to dependent

children, and other forms of aid to the poorest families serve to buffer the harshest effects of capitalist injustice.

This, parenthetically, is the material basis for the changing form of the family as the basic economic unit of capitalist society. Not too long ago, before the introduction of the social security system, a more extended family was required to care for the very young and the very old and other helpless family members. The nostalgia for the close human relations of the past within the extended family, however, is far outweighed by the overwhelming acceptance and demand for the extension of the social-security system.

This profound rise in social consciousness, muddled as it certainly is, has tremendous significance for the future.

Despite this safety net, however, the number of families below the poverty level continues to increase. The U.S. Census Bureau has just revealed that the "overall inequality between the richest and poorest has worsened." Census figures show the gap between rich and poor widening steadily since 1969. Moreover, it has accelerated rapidly during the 1980s.

In 1969, for example, the bottom 40 percent of American families had 18 percent of national income, and the richest 20 percent had 40.6 percent. By 1980 the gulf widened to 16.7 percent for the lowest 40 percent of families to 41.6 percent for the highest 20 percent. And one economist, using figures published by the Federal Reserve Board, calculates that 1 percent of



Joseph Ryan/Socialist Action

"The ruling class prefers to postpone a showdown with labor while they continue gaining concessions..."

the population owns 36 percent of the nation's wealth.

And, as is to be expected, Blacks and women lead the descent into poverty.

Karl Marx warned of the tendency toward pauperization of the working class. He concluded that the bourgeoisie "is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him instead of being fed by him."

Capitalism, of course, never gives anything away if it can possibly help it. The tax structure was adjusted and readjusted so that the working classes in Europe and America pay an increasingly larger share to maintain the equilibrium of capitalism.

Furthermore, this growing shift of the tax burden onto the backs of the working class is used to cool enthusiasm for social programs and divert the ire of overtaxed workers from capitalist profiteers to the most hapless victims of the system. In the meantime, the welfare network provides just enough sustenance to forestall an explosive reaction by capitalism's most abused victims against their misery.

Limits to the political crises

The counter-cyclical strategy was effective. It significantly postponed the day of reckoning. There has not been a major economic crisis in the imperialist centers since shortly after the end of the Second World War. And political crises, of which there have certainly been more than a few, have been objectively delimited by essentially uninterrupted economic stability. Capitalism was made secure in the strategic home-bases of imperialist nations for an unprecedented period.

This is the material basis for capitalism's post-war economic success. And, given the unsolved problem of revolutionary proletarian leadership, it explains why there has been no truly revolutionary crises in the imperialist centers since the missed opportunities following World War II.

The student-triggered French political crisis of 1968, for example, was deep enough to impel the working class toward a general strike during which workers occupied all major workplaces. But the reformist misleadership was able to block the revolutionary possibilities from following their logic and was able to relatively swiftly drag the workers from the field of class confrontation.

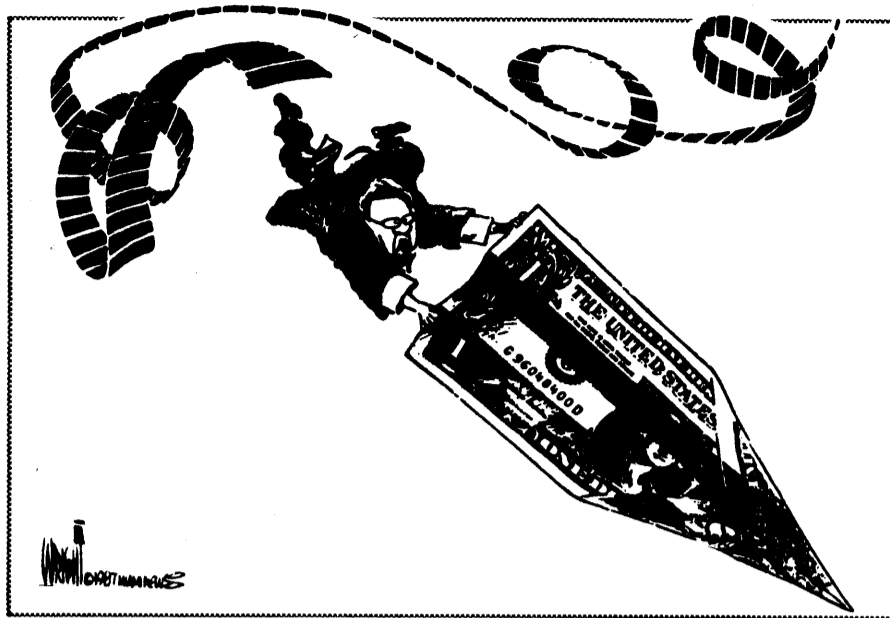
The objective pressures that led to the explosive strike did not run deep enough to provide the objective conditions necessary for solving the problem of leadership. A fighting proletarian leadership can be forged only in the course of a prolonged social, economic, and political crisis during which leadership is tested and retested during wave after wave of mass mobilizations and class confrontations.

Only the mass of radicalized students continued to engage in waves of mobilizations. This gave our French co-thinkers time to gain considerable influence and adherents among student activists. But French capitalism was able to grant enough concessions to its aroused workforce to forestall a cycle of mobilizations in which the revolutionary party of the workers could have made big strides forward.

Perhaps the most glaring example is the United States itself during the 1960s. Despite the political turmoil—the Black and women's struggles for equal rights, the anti-Vietnam War upsurge and student radicalization, the struggle by gays and lesbians for basic democratic rights—employment and living standards were maintained and even made modest gains. And while inflation received a big war-spurred impetus, most wages were able to keep pace—often, most effectively, through escalator clauses in union contracts.

American capitalism's ability to maintain its superficially benign stance toward workers' economic needs set an important limit on the depth of the radicalization. Unlike the radicalization of the 1930s, the one in the 1960s was not accompanied by a rise in class consciousness. This is only a measure of the limit placed by world

How capitalism works:



Boom or Bust

Karl Marx was the first to solve the mysteries of capitalist production which had eluded brilliant thinkers who came before him. While others, from Aristotle to Adam Smith to Benjamin Franklin, had grasped that labor-time was the source of value, it was Marx who discovered the secret of capitalist production. He proved conclusively, in his historic critical analysis "Capital," that all surplus value (profit) was derived from the unpaid labor-time extracted by capitalists from workers.

Marx showed how this relationship creates an irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and capital. What's good for the capitalists as a class is bad for the workers as a class—and vice versa. When workers are able to force a higher wage or better working conditions, it tends to depress profit. And when capitalists can force workers' standards down, profits tend to rise.

Marx showed how the cycle of boom and bust is intrinsic to the capitalist system of production. The Oct. 19, 1987, stock market crash is not, as many capitalist economic experts argue, caused by psychological factors or by mistaken policies at the highest levels of government, finance and industry.

While these factors may contribute

to the timing or the depth of the developing crisis, it is determined by inherent contradictions in the system itself. The cause of periodic crises of overproduction derives from an economic system in which wages are necessarily less than the new values incorporated in the products produced by working people.

This means that the product of society cannot be profitably absorbed. Workers cannot buy back all the goods they produce. And while capitalists certainly can buy the entire surplus product, they can eat only so many steaks, use only so many cars and live only in so many houses. Unsold surpluses must accumulate.

War is inherent to capitalism. The huge military budget (over \$30 billion an hour today goes to feed the war machine) has two purposes. Its first function for each capitalist nation is as a tool for dominating world markets and enslaving the most helpless peoples...or, for weaker capitalist states, a means for defending themselves against other predator nations.

The second function of military spending is to absorb the excess capacity of industry in an effort to slow down the saturation of the market with surplus goods.

A point is reached, nevertheless,

capitalist economic stability upon the social and political crises that erupted in that period.

The United States today

In the United States today, the workers have been experiencing a gradual decline in living standards. The main barrier to

and intensifies.

The invidious role of bureaucratic treachery is the main obstacle to a mass fightback. The central labor bodies—starting with the highest echelons of the AFL-CIO union bureaucracy—systematically allow each embattled sector, in turn, to stand alone against the full power of the

"The record is replete with acts of betrayal by the American labor bureaucracy."

effective class struggle is no longer a perception in the class of a modest but gradual improvement in living standards. The major blocks to a mass fightback are the labor bureaucracy's stubborn commitment to class peace and the perception among workers that their current setbacks are only temporary. This is what has slowed the rise of class consciousness.

But hopes that the cycle of concessions and takebacks is only temporary are dimming as the anti-labor offensive endures

capitalist state. And even when, from time to time, a particular group of workers and their leaders attempt a serious fightback, solidarity action is suppressed or blocked by the top bureaucrats. (This is their way of proving to the ruling class their genuine commitment to the "partnership between capital and labor.")

Two examples stand out:

• The miners' strike in 1978-79, which defied President Carter's threat to call out federal troops to crush their strike: George

when warehouses bulging with unsold commodities force a halt in production. Workers are dismissed. Unemployed workers, without income or with greatly reduced income, contribute further to the crisis of overproduction—having been made even less able to absorb the surpluses.

The logic of this productive system creates competition between capitalists within and between nations for access to finite markets. The weaker capitalists unable to find markets for their products are ruined and absorbed by the stronger.

But the main victims are working people of every nation. Factories closed by this irrepressible competition mean increasing impoverishment for ever-larger portions of the working class everywhere.

This means that major breakdowns in the system such as we now see developing will accelerate the pauperization of the working class. The army of permanent jobless, already numbering in the tens of millions, will grow.

Working people cannot and will not take this laying down. They will not accept mass unemployment and/or reduced living standards without a fight.

We can be certain that as the class struggle sharpens, a new generation of working-class fighters will emerge. A left wing will form in the unions in the course of the confrontations between labor and capital. The logic of this course of events, we can also be certain, will lead many of these militants toward socialist conclusions and a struggle which will be resolved only by a fundamental political, economic, and social transformation of society.

The economic theory of Karl Marx has been declared "dead," and ceremoniously buried many times over the last 125 years. But his ideas are alive and well. And we can be sure that as world capitalism stumbles along into its deepest crisis ever, Marx's scientific socialism will win countless new adherents.

Marx warned over a hundred years ago, the choice for humanity is socialism or barbarism. This grave, and all too real, choice in this age of potential nuclear holocaust will ultimately galvanize tens of millions into revolutionary action.

Meany, the AFL-CIO president at the time, sanctioned Carter's strikebreaking. Worse yet, Meany and Co. did everything they could to block local and regional units of the AFL-CIO from giving support to the miners' struggle. The miners won despite the treason of the top bureaucrats.

Leaders of Socialist Action, at that time among the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, played a significant role in helping to tip the balance in favor of the embattled coal miners. This example illustrates how a small group armed with a tested revolutionary program is able to merge with new layers of class fighters, impelled into action by events, and to have a real effect on the outcome of the struggle.

• The strike of the Local P-9 Hormel workers: During this strike, we witnessed the shameless strikebreaking role of the UFCW International bureaucrats—with the active collaboration of the top AFL-CIO officialdom—against their own Local P-9.

The record is replete with similar, although perhaps less crass, acts of betrayal by the American labor bureaucracy.

Why no new leadership?

Why has there not yet arisen a class-struggle opposition to the official labor strategy of betrayal? Why has no serious movement yet surfaced to replace the

(continued on page 12)

... crisis

(continued from page 11)

bankrupt union bureaucrats with class-struggle fighters?

The labor bureaucracy and its apologists have a pat answer. They claim the workers have the leadership they want. This would appear to be the case only if one examines the problem of leadership-selection—which remains essentially democratic—isolated and apart from the class struggle as a whole.

The real reason there has not yet emerged a class-struggle left wing, challenging the bureaucrats for leadership, is two-sided:

First, every concession granted without a fight by the bureaucracy contributes to the workers' perception of the unending retreat as objectively determined. The unions are made to appear to be more and more incapable of resistance. This defeatist mood feeds on itself, further undermining class self-confidence.

Second, the takebacks have not yet qualitatively affected the living standards of the heavy battalions of industrial workers. Except for those workers in steel and other industries dumped on the scrap-heap, the reduction in living standards has been slowed by the increasing number of two-income families, overtime, and moon-lighting in a still relatively stable economy.

The ruling class knows it can't push too far, too fast, without precipitating an upheaval. More important, they are not yet driven by necessity to risk the rebellion that would, and will, come with more drastic reductions in wages and benefits.

The ruling class prefers to postpone a showdown with labor while they continue gaining steady concessions and while profits remain high and go even higher. The fact is that paper profits, as registered on the stock market, keep climbing to new heights, breaking records almost as fast as new ones are established. Since August 1982, alone, all stocks rose in value by \$1.8 trillion—at the rate of about \$1 billion a day. And the dizzying climb of the stock market, defying the gravitational force of economic realities, accelerates as this report is being written!

The capitalists are in no rush. It is to their advantage to go slow, to allow the illusion of a changing objective relation of forces to sink in and further erode workers' will to resist. Meanwhile, the labor bureaucracy strains every muscle to divert the natural inclinations of workers to fight back toward their suicidal form of political action—support to the Democratic wing of the capitalist two-party system.

The labor party slogan

Political action has indeed long been on the order of the day. But effective political action can only be mounted independently and in opposition to the capitalist parties. This independent political road, the formation of a labor party based on the unions for the purpose of mounting a struggle for political power, would change



Solidarity Day showed tremendous potential for labor to mobilize its political power—millions of workers in the streets.

the relation of class forces in short order.

But the labor bureaucracy fears the consequences of this course of action. Independent political action implies class struggle. Moreover, to set such a labor party into motion would require an inspiring motivation which could only be based on the need to defend workers' interests against the bosses.

This would objectively serve to inspire class-struggle tactics on the picket lines and in the streets, even before a mass workers' party can begin to assemble itself on the political fields of battle. The bureaucracy no doubt is convinced that this dynamic would be difficult, if not impossible, to control.

A labor party coming into existence as a bureaucratized institution (such as the unions have become) is not in the cards. It could only become real if the workers are moved into action by appeals to their class interests. And just as the industrial unions could not conquer their right to existence without class-struggle methods, neither can a mass party of labor.

Neither is a bureaucratically controlled labor party realistic if the same bureaucracy continues to interpose itself between an aroused union rank and file and the bosses. The workers will run head on into conflict with the bureaucratic obstacle to effective struggle in the unions. This tendency would inevitably be reflected in the labor party as well.

In short, a British-style fully bureaucratized labor party cannot spring full-blown from the heads of the lords of labor—and what's more, they know it. They know that a safe, uninspiring, insipid, highly controlled, exclusively electoral movement will not win many elections. This will not strengthen them vis-a-vis the bosses. And conversely, a dynamic, independent political movement, not restricted to electoralism, cannot be

controlled. It would, in fact, set in motion—even before a major economic crisis—a class struggle left wing that would sweep the bureaucrats aside and bury them.

Only a resurgence of a new wave of class-struggle fighters is likely to set in motion the construction of a mass workers' party. It would be intimately connected with a rank-and-file struggle to regain control over their unions as well as its political extension.

But this only reinforces the viability of the labor party slogan. At present, it remains a propaganda slogan mainly intended to help raise the understanding of the few workers whose ears we are able to reach. It will become an agitational and action slogan only after objective conditions have generated enough pressure to impel workers into class-struggle action, despite the bureaucratic obstruction. Effective action on the picket lines, then, will go hand in hand with effective political action in the streets and in the electoral arena.

We do not exclude, however, the possibility that a section of the bureaucracy which has not been badly compromised might break with its most conservative wing and take real initiatives toward forming a labor party. This is possible even before a major economic collapse shakes things up. We would, of course, leap in and help advance such a development.

A wait-and-see mood

The combination of bureaucratic betrayal and the ruling class offensive—both relentless and cautious—has created the current wait-and-see mood in labor ranks that contravenes, for the time being, the emergence of a class-struggle left wing current. While a small class-struggle

vanguard does exist and gathered strength in the course of Local P-9's battle, the defeat of the Austin packinghouse workers has temporarily set this development back.

Meanwhile, to rationalize their strategy of subordination to capitalism, the labor bureaucrats hammer away on the theme: "You, the workers, are too weak; they, the bosses, are too strong." And every betrayal, every cowardly retreat, every capitulation, serves as a self-fulfillment of bureaucratic prophecy.

Not the least of the negative effects of bureaucratic policy is the fruits of their electoral "victories." Democratic Party politicians in power rapidly show their true colors, demoralizing those workers taken in by pro-labor campaign rhetoric.

This is the objective/subjective background dynamic explaining the continued tolerance, thus far, of the badly discredited labor bureaucracy.

But it would be dead wrong to draw any pessimistic conclusions from these facts of life. It is only a small part of the molecular movement of capitalist society as it relentlessly exhausts all its possibilities, discredits its labor lieutenants, and shatters illusions in capitalism itself.

History is doing its work. It finds its way toward raising mass political consciousness like water seeking its level. While the labor bureaucracy has kept its stranglehold over the fighting institutions of the workers, the masses are finding their way to higher levels of understanding.

Vietnam, Watergate, and now Contragate merely punctuate the deepening awareness of the decay of American society. A word-association test given to an average worker would probably record a high proportion of connections like: politician-crook, patriot-profiteer, and freedom fighter-murderer.

When the inevitable economic crisis strikes, the American workers will be on a far higher political level than were their forebears in 1929. ■

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...Nicaraguan peace plan

(continued from page 1)

force... If we were to agree to a dialogue, it would mean agreeing to a return of the National Guard. It would be the beginning of a series of concessions that would ultimately lead to handing over the revolutionary power, the people's power."

Hard cop, soft cop

President Reagan has vowed to continue his fight for an additional \$270 million in contra aid—in defiance of the Esquipulas II peace plan, which calls for an end to all aid to "irregular forces in the region." Reagan insists that his hard stance in support of the contras is what made "the signing of the Guatemala accord" possible in the first place.

Speaking to the Organization of American States on Oct. 7, Reagan said: "Without the freedom fighters [contras], the Sandinistas never would have signed the Guatemala accord, and there would be no pressure on the Sandinistas to reform."

According to James F. Clarity, a *New York Times* staff-writer, "Reagan administration officials said they are basing their strategy on the expectation that the Sandinistas will not negotiate the cease-fire with the contra leadership. Then, if the new [\$270 million contra] aid was approved by Congress, the contras could resume fighting toward their goal of overthrowing the Sandinista government."

Another wing of the U.S. capitalist class, however, is pushing for a more flexible anti-Sandinista policy. *The New York Times*, for example, in an editorial dated Oct. 9, 1987, sharply criticized President Reagan's request for \$270 million in renewed aid for the contras. "It's hard to imagine a message more destructive to all interests, including that of the contras," the *Times* editorialists stated.

The *Times* continued: "Negotiation might better achieve America's goals in Central America... The Sandinistas have a dreadful track record, and there's every reason to fear they will betray their word, revert to repression, and stifle debate once the pressure is off. The question is, does pressure from the contra army work? Could not the peace plan be made to work more surely?"

Making the plan "work"

The *New York Times* argues that the Reagan administration should hold off on requesting more aid to the contras until at least next January, when an international Verification Commission would determine whether the Sandinista government had complied with the peace accord. At that point, the *Times* continues, if the Commission found that Nicaragua had not lived up to the agreement, renewed aid to the contras would be fully justified.

The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Costa Rican President Arias fits into this imperialist strategy of seeking to wrench concessions from the Sandinistas.

"Being the Nobel Prize winner, Oscar Arias now has tremendous moral authority in Central America and around the world," said Carlos Huembes, leader of Nicaragua's principal opposition coalition. "If Arias decides to condemn the Sandinistas and say they broke their promises, it will be disastrous for them."

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, in a speech in mid-September 1987 to the Association of Nicaraguan Women, was sharply critical of this hard cop/soft cop strategy employed by the different wings of the U.S. capitalist class.

After lambasting the decision by the U.S. Congress to authorize an additional \$3.5 million in humanitarian aid to the contras, Ortega was quoted in the Mexican daily *La Jornada* (Sept. 27, 1987) as follows:

"The U.S. Congress is incapable of ending contra aid and the United States' interventionist policy because Democrats as well as Republicans remain attached to the goal of liquidating the Sandinista Revolution. The Republicans wish to do this

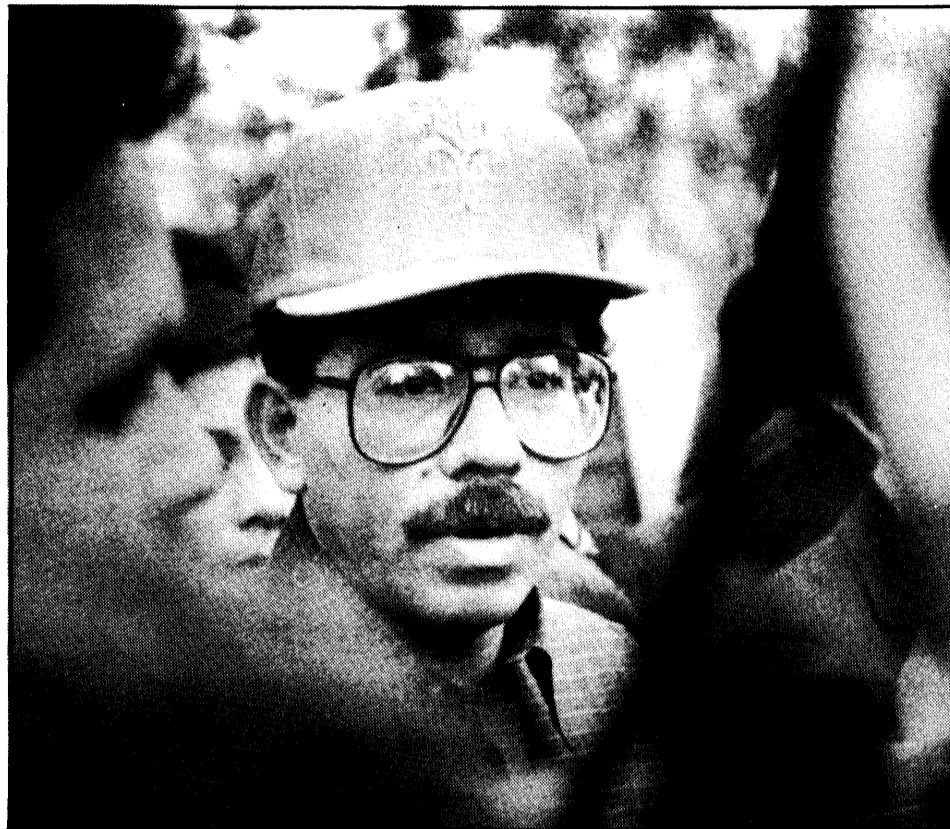
through military force, whereas the Democrats seek to undo the revolutionary process through the medium of concessions."

Ortega calls for referendum

Speaking at a public reception in the South Bronx on Oct. 9, President Ortega

war should be waged with their tax money and in their name.

Speaking shortly after Ortega at the South Bronx rally, however, a spokesperson for a local anti-intervention coalition responded to Ortega, stating that a referendum on war was not necessary because the American people had already



Alan Benjamin/Socialist Action

"... Ortega stated that the U.S. government had decided 'to declare war on Nicaragua without consulting the American people.'"

stated that the U.S. government had decided "to declare war on Nicaragua without consulting the American people." He continued: "If the president of the United States respects democracy, the most logical thing would be for him to call a public referendum so that the American people could state clearly whether they agree or not with his policies toward Nicaragua."

Ortega's call for a national referendum on the U.S. government's war on Nicaragua is a good one and should be taken up by the anti-intervention movement. Working people should have a say in whether or not

expressed their desire for peace in Central America.

This coalition spokesperson backed up this statement, explaining that on one day, Sept. 12, over 27,000 signatures had been gathered in over 125 sites in New York City urging the U.S. government to support the Esquipulas II peace plan.

The strategy of obtaining signatures for the peace plan is incorrect. The Sandinista government, which is under the imperialist gun, has every right to negotiate with whomever it chooses to gain a reprieve against the continued contra war.

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

"Out Now" vs. "Negotiate Now!"

Self-determination means that the people of an oppressed nation should have the right to decide their own future. But the United States, which has subjected Central America to economic exploitation and military oppression, has no business helping decide the fate of these nations.

When a people are being held at gunpoint by international bandits, they may be compelled to make sacrifices to gain a reprieve. It is the *duty* of concerned witnesses to the crime, however, to denounce both the deadly vandalism of the bandits and the political ransom extorted.

The "negotiations" position is inherently and fatally flawed. It implicitly accepts the "right" of the U.S. government to limit the right of the Nicaraguan people to determine and regulate their own affairs.

The "Negotiate Now" demand also leads to an adaptation to liberal Democratic Party politicians—so-called "peace candidates"—who hide their pro-war voting record in Congress behind advocacy of "a negotiated end to the war."

Referendum on war!

Opposition to the U.S. war against Nicaragua runs deep among the American people.

In this respect, Daniel Ortega's call to allow the American people to vote on the question of contra aid—and war!—is profoundly progressive. This demand paves the way for mobilizing the American people to inject their *own* foreign policy of peace and self-determination for Central America, in general, and Nicaragua, in particular. This demand also exposes the bipartisan secret war policies of the U.S. government.

On April 25, 1987, more than 200,000 people marched in the streets of Washington, D.C., and San Francisco to demand an end to U.S. intervention in Central America and an end to U.S. support to South African apartheid. This national march was initiated by 19 union presidents, representing a majority of the organized labor movement, and by scores of the nation's prominent religious leaders.

The success of the April 25 protests means that the movement should set even higher goals for itself in the future. More unions, more working people, more churches, and more community groups should be involved.

April 25 proved that it is possible to build a majority movement in this country against the U.S. war in Central America. It is possible to defeat the warmakers and allow the Nicaraguan people to live in peace. ■

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An interview with Tomas Borge



After six years of fighting to beat back the U.S.-funded contra war against Nicaragua, Tomas Borge, a member of the central leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and the sole surviving founding leader of the FSLN, gives his analysis of the recently signed Central American peace plan.

The interview was given to Eric Toussaint, Managua correspondent for *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly magazine published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It is reprinted here from the Sept. 28, 1987, issue of *International Viewpoint*.

Toussaint: After the signing of the peace accord in Guatemala, do you think that there are real prospects for peace in Central America?

Borge: Nicaragua is a country with a great interest in achieving peace, both for principled reasons and because of immediate needs. We want peace for reasons of principle because the revolution was made to win lasting peace. We are champions of peace out of necessity. We cannot continue to live with a situation of endless war.

In reality, war means a lack of oxygen for us. While it is true that the moral and political reserves of a people involved in a revolution are inexhaustible, the fact is that a certain anxiety has arisen among the people over the question of peace.

The people have not yet become tired. Even when its dynamism seems exhausted, a people engaged in a revolution finds new sources of energy. I think that I represent the feeling of the Nicaraguan people when I say that they are in favor of peace, inasmuch as over these last years they have sacrificed a lot of their blood in the struggle. Nicaragua's biggest and most torrential river is neither the Rio Coco nor the Rio Matagalpa, but the river of our blood.

Toussaint: In June, President Daniel Ortega said that he would not negotiate questions of domestic policy outside the country. Isn't that what he has just done in Guatemala?

Borge: This accord does not concern domestic policy. It describes our point of view on democracy, and this point does not pose any problems for us, because it says, "The governments pledge to give impetus to an authentic democratic, pluralist, and participationist process, which involves advancing social justice and respect for human rights, national sovereignty, the territorial integrity of states and the right of all nations to determine their economic, political and social blueprints freely and without foreign interference of any kind." (Esquipulas Accord, No. 3.)

We have nothing to add to this document. It is easier for us to sign this document with Guatemala than with any other government in Central America. So, Daniel Ortega was not in contradiction with what he said in June.

Toussaint: Despite the peace accords, it is likely that the United States will not withdraw their support from the contras. And so, it seems difficult to foresee a cease-fire. What is Nicaragua going to do then?

Borge: I think indeed that the United States in practice holds a veto over the Guatemala accords. Reagan's intent is to continue his aggression against our country and to block the peace process in Central America. However, there are a series of important factors that make it difficult for him to carry out his plans. The United States had decided to intervene directly in

"We must find a means for coexistence... But our national sovereignty and the revolution are not negotiable."

Nicaragua. But then there was the Irangate scandal, the shooting down of Hasenfus's airplane and other elements that prevented such an intervention.

In the same way, I think that a series of factors are going to emerge that will force the government of the United States to accept the reality of the Guatemala accords. The American government's wish is to liquidate the Nicaraguan revolutionary process. But it has not succeeded in doing this. The fact that this intention has been implicit shows the extent of the difficulties that it faces in trying to prevent the implementation of the Guatemala peace accords.

Moreover, if Reagan intervened with his own peace plan a few days before the meeting of the five Central American presidents, that shows that he was in a difficult situation that forced him to give ground to a certain extent. Even though the way the plan is formulated is unacceptable to us, we would be prepared to open a discussion on it. In fact, this plan reflects a certain flexibility on Reagan's part. What is more, one might suppose that Reagan will encounter certain difficulties in retreating from it.

Toussaint: Do you think this peace accord is a victory for Nicaragua?

Borge: I think that it is a victory for all the Central American countries and most especially for ours, which

is undoubtedly the one with the greatest interest at stake in these accords. It is not surprising that we have already started to implement it. We take account of the fact that we face a real danger of an invasion by the United States.

The signing of this peace accord puts difficulties in the way of Reagan getting congressional approval for new subsidies to the contras. Rejecting new subsidies to the contras would be the best contribution American members of Congress could make to the implementation of the Guatemala peace accords. In this way also, they would open up an honorable way out for the Reagan administration. Moreover, the very fact that the United States agreed to accept dialogue, even if the starting points were unacceptable to us, represents a step forward.

After long internal discussions, the Sandinista leadership decided to open a dialogue on the basis of the American proposition, knowing full well that the United States would defend a position completely contrary to our interests.

It has to be understood that in any negotiation, the parties involved begin by taking the most intransigent positions. Should we think for example that the United States is going to say to us: "Gentlemen, we recognize your existence. We are going to stop our aid to the contras. We agree to say that you are a legitimate government. We support the autonomy plan for the Atlantic coast. We think you are respecting human rights." Obviously, that would not be negotiating; it is a total utopia.

Regardless of negotiations, the Reagan administration's point of view will always [be] in conflict with ours. Nonetheless, we must find a means for coexistence. We take the interests of the United States into consideration, even if they see them in a way that is quite out of line with reality.

They are afraid that Soviet bases will be established in Nicaragua. Alright, that is a concrete point on which we can come to an agreement. We can offer a pledge about that. However, they feel perfectly free to set up American bases everywhere it suits them and to station troops everywhere in the world. But it is totally intolerable to them that other countries station troops abroad.

Well, we are realists. We recognize that American imperialism exists, and we consider that we could reach an agreement that would put an end to some of the United States' worries.

What is not negotiable is our national sovereignty and the existence of revolution. But it is precisely these things that are being challenged by the United States. Now, they are terribly worried because the Persian Gulf has been partially mined. But they themselves mined the

port of Corinto, that is, "right under our nose"! That is the way they are! That is how unjustly they treat the rest of the world, and not just the poor countries.

Toussaint: What is the situation of the contras?

Borge: To gauge the strength of an army, you have to look at its morale in combat and not only just its armaments. For example, shortly before the triumph of the revolution, the forces and equipment of Somoza's National Guard were intact. But a series of politico-military factors led to its defeat. On this level, the morale of our armed forces is excellent, and the same cannot be said for the contras.

The contras adopted a strategic perspective of inflicting a military defeat on the armed forces of the revolution and of taking power. They have given up this objective and adopted another—to create ideal conditions for American military intervention.

Before adopting this new strategic objective, they tried to take a stretch of Nicaraguan territory in order to set up a government, they tried unsuccessfully to occupy a city, to stabilize a contra zone in order to establish a strategic bastion. They did not achieve these objectives, evidently, since their zone of influence is in the north near Honduras. That is the real theater of the war, regardless

(continued on page 15)

(continued from page 14)

of the fact they have been able to penetrate as far as they have into the interior of the country.

It has been very important to us to understand the enemy's strategy in order to establish our own priorities.

Since the contras did not manage to stabilize large compact military units, since they did not manage to get enough military personnel to form such big units and since we had more fire-power, they decided to disperse their forces. This was a temporary, tactical decision and not a strategic one.

I think that to a certain extent they succeeded in carrying off this tactical dispersal of their forces. That has led concretely to an increasing number of small armed actions in the recent period. Small armed actions reflect strategic weakness. So far this strategic weakness has not been definitive, and our immediate response has been to transform their tactical dispersal into a strategic dispersal. This means keeping [them] from exercising centralized control over their dispersed forces.

Through our military offensive and new tactical deployments of our army, our intelligence and other forces of the Ministry of the Interior, we have succeeded in inflicting impressive human losses on the contras. For every one of our people who falls, three to four contras are made harmless. Our capacity for replacing our forces is much greater than that of the contras. Over the

"Reagan's intent is to continue his aggression against our country and to block the peace process in Central America."

past two years, their military forces have decreased by more or less 50 percent.

Nonetheless, it has to be said that they have achieved a certain capacity for renewing their forces. That is, they have recruited. They recruit essentially backward peasants, either through shang-haiing people or through standard propaganda and relying on large financial resources.

However, if you remember that before their last offensive, they had a large part of their forces trained in Honduras and in the United States (training that included preparation for anti-aircraft warfare with very sophisticated weapons, such as "red eyes", and for using considerable communications equipment and decoding devices to intercept our army's messages), you can understand that the major losses we inflicted on them have had a particular effect on these militarily best prepared troops. Naturally, the new forces that they have incorporated, which are made up to a greater extent of children of 12 and 13 years of age and women, are militarily much less effective.

So, their best trained forces have considerably shrunk. This reflects a very great decline which will be aggravated by the signing of the Guatemala peace plan. Their weakening is also reflected in the extent to which members of their forces have expressed their satisfaction at the peace plan and their wish to go home.

We, for our part, have demonstrated our seriousness in welcoming men and women who break from the contras. We welcome them in a humanitarian way, and we offer them jobs or other means of reintegrating themselves into social and civilian life.

Toussaint: Do you think that the right opposition could win elections?

Borge: There is always that possibility, and the constitution provides for respecting an election victory by forces other than the Sandinista front. But I think that it is hard to imagine the Nicaraguan people turning their backs on history. Such a thing has never happened. To encourage everyone to be more realistic, I would say that it is virtually impossible that the people would decide to return to the road of the past. But, if that were to happen, we would have to yield power, and I would stop believing in humanity.

Toussaint: The right opposition says that in order to apply the peace accord it is necessary to lift the state of emergency, and to permit the reopening of *La Prensa* and *Radio Catolica*. What do you think about that?

Borge: I am reading the accord signed in Guatemala, and it says exactly the opposite. This accord implies that the state of emergency will be lifted when the war ends. When somebody is pointing a pistol at us, it would be crazy to put down the one that we are holding. I think that negotiation could lead to suspending the state of emergency. For our part, we will move ahead very quickly in implementing the peace plan. We are setting up the National Reconciliation Commission.

However, until we reach an overall and simultaneous accord in Central America, nothing requires us to suspend the state of emergency. Before such an accord, we can decide to suspend the state of emergency only if we think that the conditions have been assembled for this. The state of emergency is not an end in itself. It is a temporary measure designed to meet the needs of a war situation.

Now, in the present conditions, we cannot lay down our military or our political weapons or the legal weapons authorized by the constitution. But we would be ready to stop shooting if there were no longer any enemies that we had to shoot at. And likewise we would be ready to stop using the state of emergency, the legal means provided by the constitution, if that were no longer necessary. If we were not ready to do that, we would fall into an illegal and dictatorial state of affairs.

Toussaint: Since 1979, a revolutionary regime has existed in Nicaragua in which political pluralism and real trade unionism has survived. What balance sheet do you draw from this situation?

Borge: Pluralism and the mixed economy in



"... a people engaged in a revolution finds new sources of energy."

Nicaragua are the natural results of our revolutionary process. This is not a trick or a tactic for gaining time. The problem is not whether this is positive or negative. It is a fact that cannot be gone around. It has not been easy to establish political pluralism, because in order to maintain this pluralism and mixed economy, the state has had to make major concessions to the employers.

We have encountered difficulties because the political factor took precedence over economics. That is, the class interests of those sectors excluded from political power (those who retain political options without holding political power) have created blockages in production and in the economy in general. In other words, ideally, if we could separate the political aspect from the economic one and solve the problems in each of these areas separately, things would be much easier. The problem is that politics and economics are tightly intertwined.

The fundamental aspect has been politics. More than an instrument of producers, the COSEP [employers' organization] is a sort of political party. Moreover, concretely, it is part of the Acasa coordinating body, which is a political instrument opposed to the revolution. It is clear that the room for political pluralism will increase to the extent that the provisions of the Guatemala peace accord are applied, because it has to be said that the state of emergency has restricted the activities of the opposition parties to a certain extent.

Toussaint: In this stage of the Sandinista revolution, what is the role of the Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS)?

Borge: The mass organizations have developed considerably since the revolution. Before the victory, they were underground, while now they are part of the revolutionary power.

The CDS are a special form of representing the inhabitants of a neighborhood. They have been going through a process of finding ways to act and function. In the last analysis, the CDS can be the road to follow to consolidate mass participation in the revolutionary power. Now, the CDS are no longer essentially devoted

to revolutionary vigilance, in any case not in the form that was practiced a few years ago.

The CDS are the trustees and interpreters of the demands of the people in the neighborhood. Thus, these people have a channel for advancing their immediate demands—demands that are not outside the political

"For every one of our people who falls, three to four contras are made harmless."

context. Within the CDS, elections are genuinely democratic; they take place by means of secret ballots. I have witnessed a series of elections in various parts of the country. The CDS do not necessarily elect those who are recommended by the Sandinista Front, even though the majority in the CDS agree with the positions of the FSLN and recognize it as the revolutionary vanguard.

Toussaint: What remedies are there to bureaucracy, taking account of the fact that at the moment the main danger comes from imperialist aggression?

Borge: I would like to know what chemical formula is effective in fighting bureaucracy. But I think that they will find a cure for AIDS first. I think that we really have to find mechanisms for fighting bureaucracy. But often this is very difficult because the forms that bureaucracy takes are so incredible that I am not surprised at the capacity it shows for survival.

I said to a friend a little while ago in a discussion on human rights and bureaucracy: "If people commit the folly of launching a nuclear world war, humanity will disappear from the surface of the earth, but the bureaucratic cockroaches will survive."

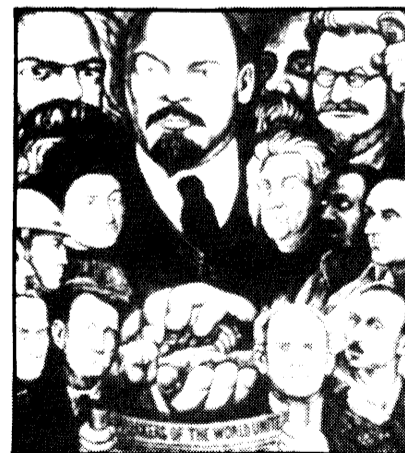
That is a way of describing the difficulty of dealing with bureaucracy. Nonetheless, you have to deal with it, and I think that the main means for fighting it is for the leaders, the revolutionists, to maintain a direct contact with reality. And you cannot get to know the reality in an office except through direct contact on the ground with the masses, the working people, the people in the neighborhoods and so forth.

To make myself understood, I am going to give you an example. A document arrives in an office describing the problems in a factory, where the workers are complaining about noise. Reading this paper is no substitute for visiting the factory. I went, and I realized that the problem was not that there was a lot of noise, but that the noise was intolerable, and that unless technical means were found to remedy this the workers were going to go deaf.

If the functionaries or minister responsible for this factory did not confront the facts, the problem would not be solved. Reports never describe the facts exactly. They give you only a distorted view.

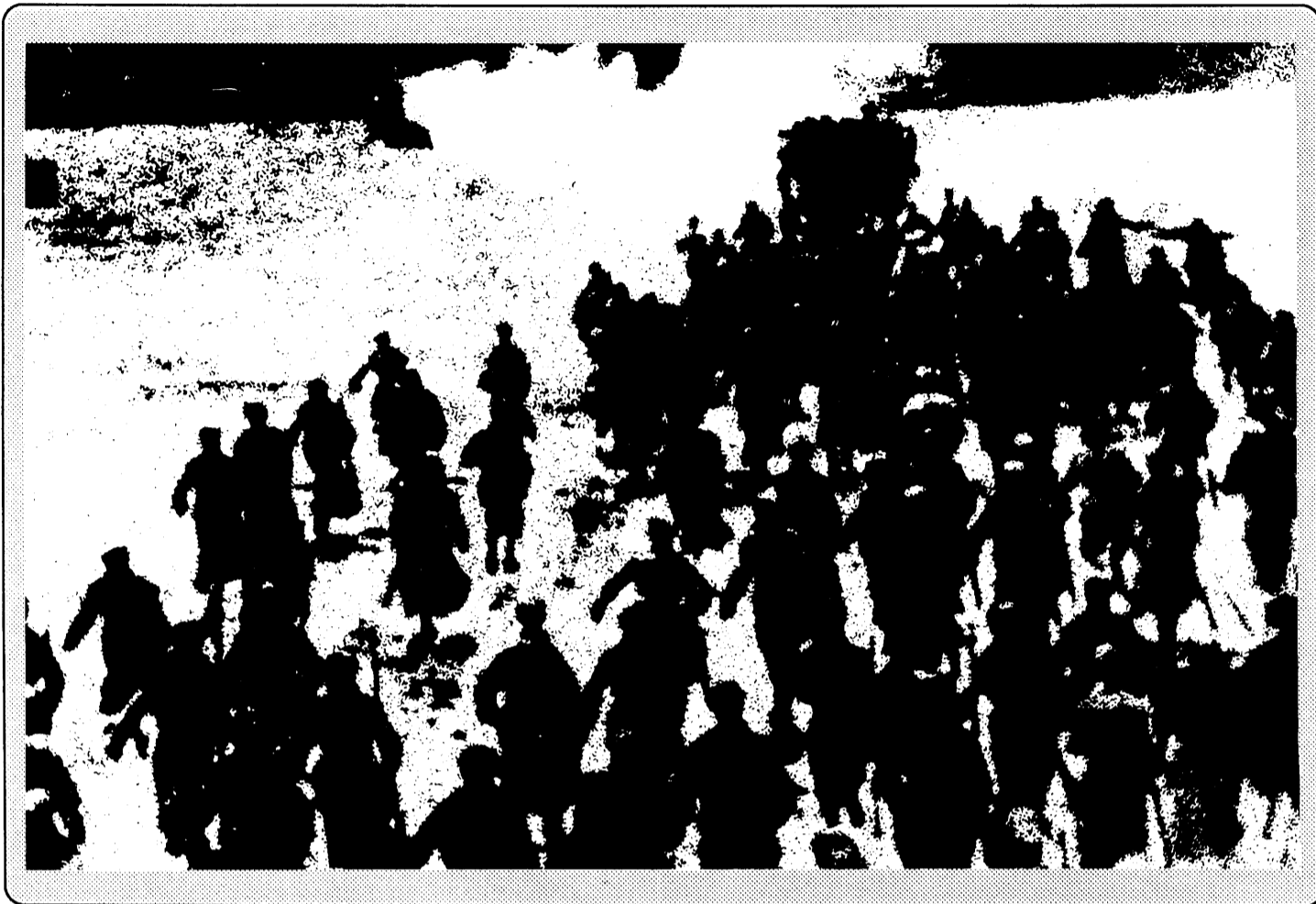
Today, imperialism and bureaucracy are our main enemies, and it is harder to fight bureaucracy than it is to fight imperialism. ■

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Lessons of the Russian Revolution



Seventy years ago, on Nov. 7, 1917, the workers of Russia, supported by the peasantry and led by the Bolshevik Party, succeeded in overthrowing the state of the capitalists and landlords. In so doing, the Russian workers opened up a new historical epoch, the epoch of the socialist revolution.

The Soviet Union today is a far cry from the Soviet Russia of 1917. Soviet democracy, which is described in Ann Robertson's article below, withered under the concentrated fire of invasion and civil war. The blockade of Russia shut down the factories at the same time that thousands of workers fell at the front defending their revolution.

In this environment, the workers' councils ceased to be the representative bodies they once were. The defeat of the German revolution of 1918 ended the possibility of any short-term succor to the beleaguered revolution.

And the result of the prolonged isolation of this predominantly peasant country was the rise of a bureaucratic ruling caste, intent on preserving its own material privileges, not only from capitalism, but from the workers themselves.

Self-preservation of the bureaucracy became more important than the liberation of the workers and peasants of the world. "Workers' democracy" disappeared from the lexicon of the official "communist" movement.

Yet the privileged status of the bureaucracy is rooted in the continued existence of state property in the economy, a planned economy which does not follow the dictates of private profit. State property remains the legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution, a legacy which still poses the possibility of the transition to socialism.

This possibility remains shackled by the bureaucratic caste, and only a new revolution, overthrowing the bureaucracy, can release the potential of the collectivized economy. But only the workers themselves can overthrow the parasites and re-establish democratic self-rule.

By ANN ROBERTSON

By February 1917, the people of Russia were starving due to food shortages, freezing due to coal shortages and exhausted from the war effort. The czar had led the country into another war of aggression where workers and peasants fought on the battlefield only to help realize the imperialist dreams nursed by the Russian bourgeoisie.

Turning despair into hope, the workers in Petrograd translated their protests from general individual strikes into one individual general strike and brought the government to its knees.

Soviets soon sprang up all over the country, nourished by the revolutionary fever, and linked up into a single, powerful "All-Russian Congress of Soviets." Spontaneously created by the Russian workers and peasants during the 1905

revolution, the soviets again consisted of elected representatives from factories and work places.

But while the February revolution, which drove the czar from power, was executed by the Russian working class, the conviction that this was a bourgeois revolution persuaded them to transfer power to the capitalists who in turn formed a Provisional Government.

But great expectations were met with cruel disappointments. The Provisional Government failed to decree an eight-hour day despite demands by the nationally organized Soviet.

The Provisional Government did nothing to redistribute the land and condemned those peasants who nevertheless seized it. And it kept postponing elections for the promised Constituent Assembly. But perhaps worst of all the Provisional Government could not declare a peace:

capitalists simply had too much at stake in the imperialist war effort.

Led by the Bolsheviks, the October Revolution, eight months later, swept aside the capitalists' Provisional Government and ushered in a new era: the workers took control of the bourgeois state, smashed it and erected an entirely new structure in its place, a workers' state. The Soviets, which had supreme authority, constituted the essence of this new state.

"Vanguard of working people"

Lenin's description underlines the workers' state's revolutionary departure from any capitalist variety:

"...Soviet power is a new type of state without a bureaucracy, without police, without a regular army, a state in which bourgeois democracy has been replaced with a new democracy, a democracy which brings to the fore the vanguard of the working people, gives them legislative and executive authority, makes them responsible for military defense and creates state machinery that can re-educate the masses."

Soviet representatives could be recalled at any time, and the ministers of the new government, called "commissars" to signal a new type of governmental official, were paid the equivalent of a skilled worker's salary with small additional increments for each of their children.

Immediately this new government abolished all private ownership of the land without compensation. Landowners' estates and those of the Crown and Church were transferred to the local Soviets for equal distribution among the peasants.

The Bolsheviks ideally would have favored the formation of large agricultural collectives in order to increase productivity but realized that such a proposal would have directly collided with the aspirations of millions of poor peasants.

Thus Lenin argued: "We as a democratic government, cannot evade the decision of the rank and file of the people, even if we do not agree with it. In the fire of life, by applying it in practice, by carrying it out on the spot, the peasants themselves will come to understand what is right..."

Hence, of the confiscated land 86 percent went to the peasants and only 3 percent to

agricultural collectives.

Workers' control was immediately implemented. Here workers had access to all accounting books. No decisions could be made by the owners without the approval of the workers. This implied that while workers neither owned nor managed a business (management frequently required an expertise that workers had yet to master), they nevertheless had control in the form of veto power over all decisions, ranging from the hiring and firing of workers to an owner's attempt to decapitalize.

All-embracing control

During the first few months, only a few hundred businesses were nationalized—often in response to provocations by an owner who was determined to decapitalize. Or sometimes, in spite of a more cautious Bolshevik policy, workers simply took over a factory or business so that it too was added to the list of nationalizations.

Some have consequently argued that the Soviet Union did not become a workers' state until June 1918, when nationalizations occurred on a systematic and extensive basis.

But Lenin insisted that "the important thing will not be even the confiscation of the capitalists' property, but the country-wide, all embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their supporters. Confiscation alone leads nowhere, as it does not contain the element of organization, of accounting for proper distribution."

Four days after the revolution, the eight-hour day was decreed and no children under 14 were allowed to work. Soon afterwards social insurance against unemployment and sickness was established and the equality of women was decreed. Divorce was simplified and civil marriages were legalized.

The old court system, which survived the February revolution, was immediately discarded and replaced by workers' and peasants' courts. Later Lenin commented: "Here our task was easier; we did not have to create a new apparatus, because anybody can act as a judge basing himself on the revolutionary sense of justice of the working classes."

The October Revolution dissolved the czar's entire army at once and the Red Army marched in to replace it with the following objective stipulated at its inception:

"With the transfer of power to the toiling and exploited classes, there has risen the necessity to create a new army which shall be the bulwark of Soviet power...and will serve as a support for the coming socialist revolutions in Europe."

This was a revolutionary army built on a revolutionary structure: officer ranks were abolished and replaced simply by a commanding staff elected by the soldiers themselves.

Socialism—the country's goal

The banks were nationalized and all debts contracted by the czar were annulled, except those to small bond-holders.

Church and state were officially separated so that religion, for example, could no longer be taught in public schools.

Finland was given independence, and all national minorities were granted self-determination along with the right to secede from the nation.

Finally, socialism was officially proclaimed the country's goal.

And all of the above happened only within the first few months of the revolution.

In short, the country was turned upside down: those who had been on the bottom now ruled. And the people were intoxicated with this new freedom.

During the first weeks of the revolution, they organized themselves incessantly into committees. There were workers' committees, peasant committees, housewife committees, all intensely debating the decisions of the day.

One witness testifies to a train ride from Petrograd to Moscow where the people organized themselves into a traveling committee before reaching their destination.

Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, mentions a daytime encounter with a woman worker who, when asked what shift she worked, responded: "None of us are working today. We had a meeting yesterday evening, everyone was behind with her domestic work at home, so we voted to knock off today. We're the bosses now you know." ■

The April Theses:

Lenin's strategy for socialist revolution

Only six months before the successful October insurrection, Lenin had to theoretically re-arm the Bolshevik Party. When Lenin argued that only the working class could rule Russia in the interests of all the toilers, he was accused by the party "tops" of adopting Trotsky's theory of "Permanent Revolution."

By ANN ROBERTSON

At the beginning of April 1917, the Bolshevik leaders in Petrograd were eagerly awaiting V.I. Lenin's historic return to Russia after the many painfully isolated years he had spent in exile. The February revolution, which overthrew the czar and instituted a bourgeois government, opened the door to freedom just enough for Lenin to slip legally back into the country.

In his absence other party leaders such as Joseph Stalin and Lev Kamenev were forced to implement the Bolshevik program alone, but they were proud of their performance and confidently expected Lenin's praise.

Convinced that the laws of history sentenced Russia to undergo a fairly extended stage of capitalism, they had been offering implicit support to the new capitalist Provisional Government. They were open to initiatives to reunite with the Mensheviks, whose program essentially aimed at the establishment of a capitalist state. And they contented themselves with demanding that the new government withdraw from the war immediately.

Hence, to these leaders, it was like a bolt of lightning from a clear blue sky when Lenin condemned their leading strategical ideas as something to be "consigned to the archive of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary antiques" and outlined an entirely new direction in what has come to be known as his "April Theses."

Some simply responded with ridicule. But by the April Conference, Lenin had succeeded in winning a majority of the members of his party to this new strategy, and the Bolsheviks turned a historic corner.

To fully understand this new direction and its significance, however, we must return not only to the beginning of the 20th century, when the original Bolshevik strategic framework was established, but back to Marxist theory itself.

A theoretical problem

A large theoretical problem confronted and confounded Marxists in Russia at the beginning of this century. While Russia had the largest capitalist factories in the world, the vast majority of the country lay submerged in feudal relations.

Hence in Russia the proletariat, far from constituting the majority of the population, as Marx envisaged, in fact represented only a small minority. And along with this underdeveloped economy sat the czar who, in an equally primitive way, autocratically and brutally governed the country. Despite the pockets of capitalism within the cities, Russia seemed to live in the Middle Ages.

Accordingly, Georgi Plekhanov, who was one of the most esteemed Russian Marxists at this time, calculated that socialism was completely unthinkable in Russia—that instead a bourgeois revolution was the goal to rally around. Once capitalism was allowed to develop so that the majority of the population would be proletarianized, then socialism would be a genuine possibility.

Having been won over to an historical perspective by Marx, Plekhanov was convinced of the impossibility of leaping over historical stages. The logical conclusion that flowed from this analysis, he reasoned, was that the revolutionary workers must take their lead from the liberal capitalist

bourgeoisie since, after all, it was their revolution. In other words, the working class must renounce its political independence.

Lenin's views

Lenin, who at this time was a mere youth compared to Plekhanov, argued, however, that his mentor's analysis was hopelessly flawed.

While agreeing with Plekhanov that only a bourgeois revolution was on the agenda, since this seemed an elementary point of Marxism, Lenin insisted that the bourgeoisie itself was incapable of executing it—that is, if the bourgeoisie took power it would be unable to remove the feudal

candidates, continued Lenin, were the workers and peasants. Taken together they were the most oppressed and constituted the vast majority of the population and hence could overthrow the czar, establish a parliamentary democracy, confiscate the land from the feudal aristocracy, and allow capitalism at last to develop freely in Russia.

As to whether the workers or peasants would play a leading role within this coalition, Lenin remained ambiguous until April 1917, when he drafted his famous "April Theses."

Prior to this time, Lenin had designated the proletariat and the peasants as a whole (including both rich and poor peasants) as



"To urge that government to conclude a democratic peace is like preaching virtue to brothel-keepers."

manacles from the countryside and appropriate the land of the feudal aristocracy, which would then clear the way for an unfettered capitalist development.

He cited two reasons for this appraisal: First, the bourgeoisie would not allow the expropriation of the property of the aristocracy for fear that the spirit of expropriation might surge out of control and, at the workers' insistence, be directed at bourgeois property as well.

Second, many of the landed estates were mortgaged to the banks of the bourgeoisie and hence confiscation would imply a direct attack on bourgeois property itself.

Ironically the bourgeoisie could not lead its own revolution. The only possible

the leading force, a coalition which he termed "the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

Leadership of the proletariat

Leon Trotsky was one of the few to question this strategical framework. As early as 1904 he reiterated Marx's argument that the peasantry is never capable of leading a revolution. First, it is scattered throughout the countryside with little means of communication, which is vital for the solidification of class interests.

Second, the peasantry itself is comprised of deep class divisions; it includes the very rich who hire others to work for them and the very poor who are forced to sell their

labor in order to exist. These divisions similarly prohibit the congealing of a single class interest.

But Trotsky's theoretical clarification of the leading role of the working class contained explosive implications that shattered the capitalist framework that everyone was taking for granted.

It follows from the economic analysis of capitalism itself that whenever the working class becomes revolutionary, the bourgeoisie becomes counterrevolutionary. The bourgeoisie understands all too well that its interests stand in direct opposition to those of the workers.

Hence in order to complete the bourgeois revolution, the workers will be forced ironically to battle the bourgeoisie itself. And in order to undercut the bourgeois counterrevolution, the proletariat will necessarily be forced to begin an immediate transition to socialism—in other words, hack away at the economic power that underlies the political power of its reactionary opponent.

Hence, in the final analysis, the bourgeois revolution results, not as a separate stage, but as a by-product of an on-going movement toward socialism.

If we analyze the conditions present in backward countries as Marxists, this scenario that Trotsky outlined is the only one that makes sense.

All backward countries are never purely feudalistic; they represent combined economies where feudalism and capitalism coexist. But they do not coexist in isolation, feudalism dominating the countryside, for example, while capitalism is reserved for the cities.

Capitalism's nature forces it to expand and fill every vacuum. Hence, like two vines growing together, capitalism and feudalism become intertwined so that it is impossible to remove the feudal relations without doing damage to the capitalist ones as well.

Since the economy itself is a combination of two formations, the corresponding political upheaval must similarly represent a combination of two revolutionary processes: the bourgeois and socialist revolutions must be waged simultaneously.

How far along the road to socialism a backward country can progress is, of course, dependent on many variables, including not only the resolution and determination of the working class leading the struggle but on the international context as well.

If the Russian Revolution had succeeded in sparking a socialist revolution in Germany, for example, it would have been a tremendous aid to an isolated and beleaguered Soviet Union. And the Bolsheviks did everything they could to promote such a revolution.

"Theses" adopt Trotsky's view

The "April Theses" in essence adopted Trotsky's strategy. Lenin smashed the idea of a prolonged capitalist stage, announcing the immediate commencement of the transition to socialism. The defense of the capitalist Provisional Government was denounced as a "betrayal of socialism," as were the proposals of reunification with the Mensheviks.

The demand for peace that the Bolshevik leaders directed to the Provisional Government was mocked: "To urge that government to conclude a democratic peace is like preaching virtue to brothel-keepers."

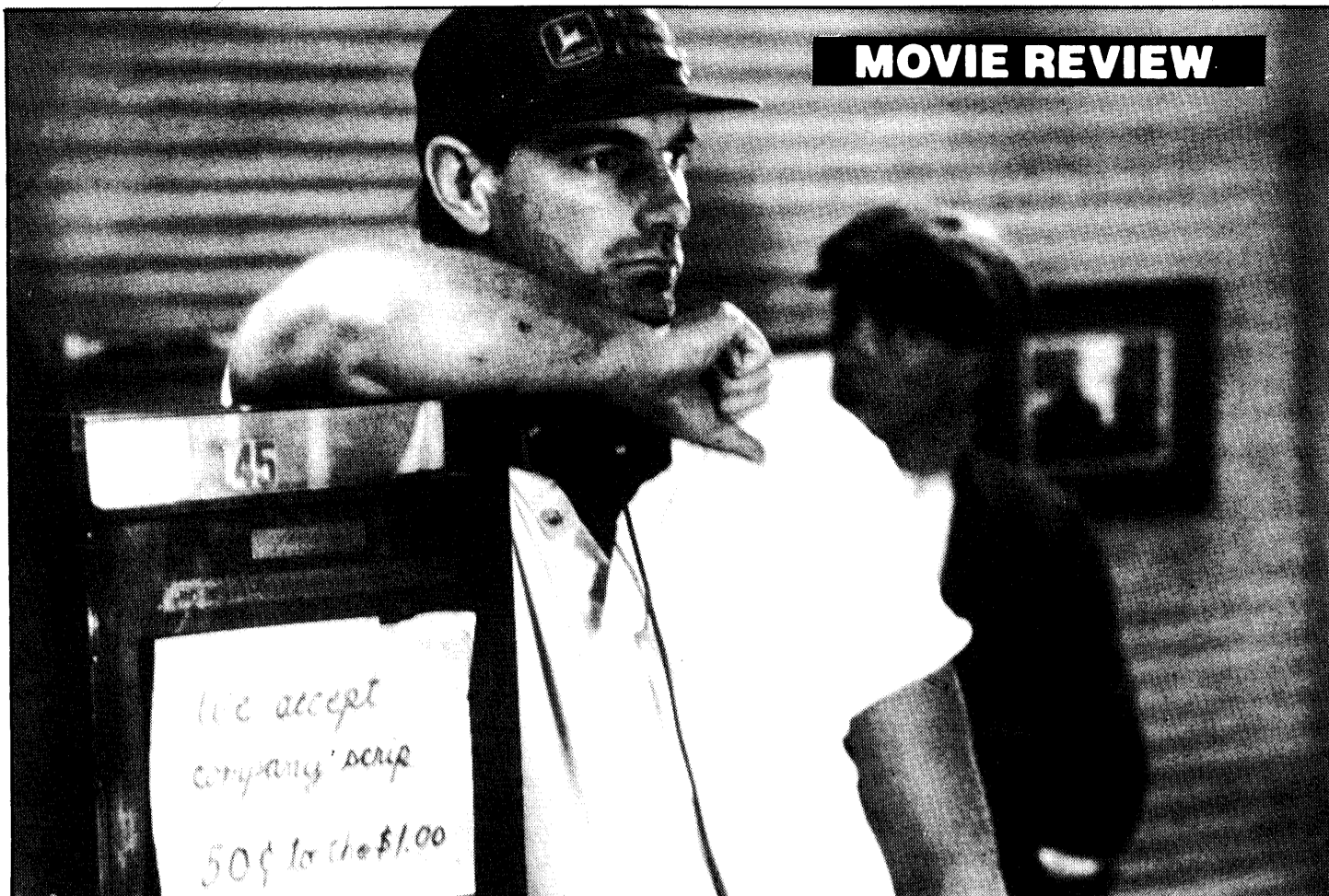
Finally, the "Theses" called for a government of Soviets, i.e., a government of workers and poor peasants.

Seventy years ago, Lenin steered the Bolshevik Party into a new theoretical framework, which unfortunately has yet to be absorbed by many who today confront the task of revolution in semicolonial countries.

Unfortunately, many people who consider themselves revolutionists have failed to grasp the implication of Lenin's analysis, hammered out in light of the concrete experience in Russia:

"There is no middle course anywhere in the world. Either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie...or the dictatorship of the proletariat. He who has not learned this from the whole history of the 19th century is a hopeless idiot."

Aside from the hyperbole, the point remains valid. ■



Director John Sayles on the set of "Matewan."

'Matewan': Class struggle in the W. Va. coal mines

By MARK SCHNEIDER

As a young man, John Sayles hitchhiked around the country, and while traveling through West Virginia he heard the story of the bloody 1920 strike in the coal mines. The strike battles led to the recognition of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as the bargaining agent for tens of thousands of unorganized, poorly paid workers.

Sayles decided to make a movie about this chapter of hidden labor history, and "Matewan" is that film. This is a gripping, tense story of rural workers fighting for their lives against a ruthless company intent on keeping a union off its property.

In the very first scene, we see a coal miner working in a dark shaft, coughing and setting a charge of dynamite, and without a word of dialogue our sympathies are engaged. We have been exposed to two of the deadly hazards of this job: black lung and cave-in. Immediately, we know that these workers must organize or die before their time.

Workers given center stage

The story focuses on Joe Kenehan, a traveling UMWA organizer with experience in the Industrial Workers of the World, the early radical union which sought to unite all workers into One Big Union. Among the local people Joe meets is a teenaged miner, whose father has perished underground, and the youth's widowed mother, who must endure the presence of bullying

company goons in her boarding house.

We also see a wide array of local characters—including the sheriff who backs the miners against the company gunmen, a traitor, the miners' wives, and Black and Italian workers who are brought in to bust the strike. Their screen time is well balanced, effectively giving the rank and file center stage.

The Black workers quickly realize that they are being used by the company as scabs and are being worked in slave-like conditions. They reach out to the white local miners, but are initially rebuffed. The Italian workers are torn by their contradictory situation, and also face a

language barrier.

The local miners vow to use force to stop the scabs, but at Kenehan's urging, turn to persuasion. Each individual miner must examine his own weaknesses and prejudices in this charged situation.

Sayles uses a musical motif to accentuate the process of coming together. The local miners, playing country fiddle, complain about the Italians' mandolin and the Blacks' bluesy harmonica. Ultimately, the instruments blend in harmony.

In a dramatic nocturnal scene the strike-breakers throw their tools at the feet of the armed company men and march off,

'Tribute to George Breitman' A book well worth reading

By ASHER HARER

A Tribute to George Breitman—Writer, Organizer, Revolutionary, edited by Naomi Allen and Sarah Lovell, 1987. Published by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, P.O. Box 1947, New York, N.Y., 10009. \$5 paperback.

This book adds up to a political and personal biography of a leading American Trotskyist, George Breitman, who died April 19, 1986. The story of his life is told in the form of speeches and messages from 49 individuals and 15 political organizations on the occasion of memorial meetings held in June 1987.

It is a very different kind of biography, but it works. Because of its form, one may open this book anywhere and find another facet of this remarkable man: his talents as a writer, editor, theoretician, organizer, or teacher, and his selfless dedication to the cause of socialism.

Then, there is the personality that kept him on course for over 50 years—his love for other people, his wry sense of humor, and his almost incredible courage in the face of adversity.

Breitman, as depicted in this book, educated and deeply influenced many, many people both within and outside of his organization. His "Malcolm X Speaks" sits on the shelves of the best Black militants. His "Writings of Leon Trotsky" (which he edited) is the definitive edition.

For many of us, the most valuable item in the book is "George Breitman's Appeal of Expulsion," his letter to the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Everyone interested in revolutionary politics should study this letter. It nails to the wall the Jack Barnes leadership of the SWP as bureaucratic usurpers.

A component part of revolutionary socialism is democratic decision-making. But the Barnes clique, surreptitiously engaged in revising the historic Leninist-Trotskyist program of the party, had to destroy democracy and frame up and expel its critics—exactly as Stalin did.

Breitman, and more than 100 of us, were expelled from the SWP for "disloyalty." A poignant note is struck when he writes, "I feel embarrassed at the thought of having to prove my loyalty to the party—my record speaks for itself." And that it does. This letter is worth the price of the book. ■

defiantly singing "Bandera Rossa," the Italian workers' anthem.

Rooted in reality

When this strategy of dividing the workers fails, the bosses bring their economic power to bear as well. The company owns everything in town, and they gradually begin evicting miners from their homes, and then from a tent encampment. Finally they rely on violence.

The goons carefully orchestrate a terrifying crescendo of threats, provocations, beatings, torture, and killings. They intend to provoke a bloodbath, and the miners debate among themselves how to respond.

Part of the answer lies in spreading support among other workers. "Matewan" is rich in practical lessons for labor activists today, but films are not to be judged on this basis. The movie succeeds brilliantly because it is rooted in reality. It shows us the courage and nobility of ordinary mortals, who, like us, are fearful, sometimes selfish, and sometimes easily misled.

This is a wonderful story, and it works even though there are no great moral complexities in the tale. The workers are portrayed as profoundly human—with strengths and weaknesses—and the bosses' men are pure evil. This could be a formula for stale lecturing, but Sayles avoids this pitfall.

A time of turmoil

"Matewan" focuses entirely on the local situation and there are only a few references to life outside the town and the mine. Some of the talk is about World War I. Sayles counterposes the experience of Kenehan, imprisoned for his opposition to a war amongst the rich for territory, and the experience of a company man, who used the war to vent his sadism.

Sayles also gives himself a spooky cameo role as a fundamentalist preacher declaiming against Bolshevism and the Devil, a reminder of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

This intense, profoundly radical film would have been more powerful if we had some sense, even from dialogue, of the turmoil gripping the country in the aftermath of World War I and the Russian Revolution. The year 1919 saw the Seattle general strike, a steelworkers strike of 376,000, and a campaign for the eight-hour day in the garment and textile industry.

The conflict at Matewan served as a prelude to the coal wars of 1921 and 1922, when thousands of armed miners confronted the private armies of the bosses. This battle ended only when President Harding called in Federal troops against the miners.

The historical events at Matewan occurred during a crest in the labor movement, just as President Wilson initiated a reaction in the form of the Palmer raids, which sent militant workers to jail or deported them for legitimate organizing activity.

"Matewan" establishes John Sayles as one of the most important cultural figures on the left today. All his work is genuinely realistic and radical, and much of it is funny. His other films tackle such subjects as a cross-class high school romance, a lesbian love affair, and life in Harlem as seen through the eyes of a Black extra-terrestrial.

His best known film is "Return of the Secaucus Seven," in which '60s radicals try to maintain their idealism later in life. He has published a novel, "Union Dues," and a book of short stories titled after a hilarious piece called "The Anarchist Convention."

Reportedly, his next film is about the baseball fixing scandal of 1919, and it's a safe bet that it will be a winner. ■

Correction

In the article by Nat Weinstein, "Ford Contract, another milestone on the giveback trail," printed in our October issue, the words "South African" were incorrectly added by the editors to a sentence referring to the intention of General Motors to "divest" itself of parts of its product in this country.

The paragraph should have read: "General Motors workers will be at a distinct bargaining disadvantage, especially since this company has not yet carried out its divestment plan. The decision has already been made by GM to cut production costs by contracting out portions of its product."—The Editors

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By PAUL SIEGEL

I recently returned from a three-week tour of the Soviet Union, during which I visited Moscow, Volgograd, Odessa, Kiev, and Leningrad.

Though my stay was short, I was nonetheless able to return with a better understanding of the ruling Soviet bureaucracy and of the character and scope of Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* campaign.

The bureaucracy's distortion of history for its own purposes, for example, was noticeable in the Moscow Museum of the History of the Revolution, which has many exciting exhibits but significant gaps.

When, in pretended ignorance, I asked the museum official showing us about who were Lenin's chief associates in the leadership of the revolution, she replied, "Kollantai and Lunacharsky." She did not say anything about the historical fact that Lenin's and Trotsky's names were so frequently linked during the revolution that many peasants thought that there was a single person named Lenin-Trotsky.

Nor did she say that of the 31 members and alternates of the October 1917 Central Committee, most were killed in the purges of the 1930s by Stalin; only Kollantai and Stalin himself surviving this period.

The museum official did not mention the Hitler-Stalin pact in discussing the outbreak of World War II, but said only that Hitler was going to attack the Soviet Union and Stalin was preparing for it. Unfortunately, however, Hitler struck before the Soviet Union was completely ready. She thus glided over the Soviet Union's woeful lack of preparedness as a result of Stalin's purges, particularly in the Red Army.

However, among the material printed during the revolution that was on exhibit was a newspaper showing the picture and name of Antonov-Ovseenko, who commanded military operations during the insurrection and led the assault on the Winter Palace but who was executed during the purges. This surely would not have been shown a couple of years ago.

Scientists rehabilitated

In general, I was surprised at the extent to which *glasnost* had proceeded. The English-language *Moscow News*, which is made available in places where there are tourists, had an article telling of the rehabilitation of 15 scientists who had been sentenced to death in the 1930s. It did not refer to other trials, but such exoneration can only raise questions about them.

During the tour our group had discussions with two academicians: Professor



Tourist's impression: A view of 'Glasnost' in the Soviet Union

Kukhareno in Odessa and Professor Matveyev in Leningrad. Both were very frank in speaking of the shortcomings in Soviet society and established an excellent rapport with their tourist audiences.

At times, however, they echoed an official ideology that did not conform to life. This, I believe, was not through an intent to deceive but through a thoughtless repetition of clichés, just as in the United States people will extoll its freedom of the press without mentioning that the major media are controlled by big business.

Professor Kukhareno made a scathing criticism of Soviet education, saying that it

was being improved through such measures as better pay for teachers and better textbooks, but that the process would take a long time. She asserted that the middle layers of the bureaucracy were resistant to *perestroika* (restructuring) and were holding it up.

Professor Matveyev spoke with equal forthrightness about the problem of cynicism among the youth. He did not, however, explain the origin of this cynism except by saying that many of them were following Western fashions in punk, motorcycle gangs, and devotion to soccer.

In response to a question from me about

the prospects of the exoneration of the victims of the Moscow trials, in which I cited the *Moscow News* article, he replied that the *Moscow News* is the boldest of the Soviet newspapers and that the Russian-language edition is always snapped up. As for exoneration, he neither held out any prospect of it nor rejected the idea. He said that there is a continuing process of rehabilitation but that announcements are made sporadically and without explanation.

In response to a question from the audience about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, he replied that Soviet law makes the promulgation of racial prejudice a criminal offense. I asked why, if this is so, Pamyat, an ultra-nationalist organization which has stated that Jews, together with Masons, are engaged in a conspiracy to control the world, is not prosecuted. He knew of Pamyat but did not know of its statement. (The *Moscow News* referred to the charge about the Masons but not about the Jews, although in another article it denounced the anti-Semitism of the French racist Le Pen.)

One-party rule unchallenged

In response to a question by me about the prospects of more democracy within the Communist Party and the legalization of other parties, he did not foresee other parties being permitted. He did point out that there is a multi-party system in other Eastern European workers' states, but did not mention that the other parties are merely shadows of the ruling Communist parties.

Nor did he mention that the Soviet Communist Party has 19 million members and that it is becoming more tolerant of other organizations participating in Soviet life—though not of other parties doing so. He did concede that there is too much bureaucracy in the Soviet Communist Party and that what the country needs is more socialist democracy and more popular participation in politics.

My own over-all impression is that immense changes are under way and will continue, but that one cannot be sure in which direction they will go since different forces are at work. A genuine deep-going democracy will not be achieved, however, through a beneficent General Secretary who knows that change is necessary if the country is to move again.

A return to workers' self-management such as existed in the early Soviets [see article on p. 16] will come only through struggle from below—through a revolutionary struggle of the Soviet workers against all wings of the parasitic bureaucracy. ■

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Chen Bilan (1902-1987) Chinese Trotskyist

Chen Bilan, an early leader of the Communist Party of China and a Trotskyist militant, died on Sept. 7 at the age of 85. For over 60 years—like her life-companion Peng Shuzhi—she committed herself to the cause of the liberation of humanity.

Chen Bilan was converted to socialism soon after the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Three years later, she joined the Communist Party of China. In July 1926, she became acting secretary of the Department of Women of the Party Central.

After the strangling of the 1927 revolution by the Kuomintang, Chen Bilan and many other comrades came to learn of the differences between Trotsky and Stalin on the strategy for the Chinese Revolution. From their own experiences, they believed that Trotsky was correct in opposing the putschist adventurism of the time.

They requested that the Communist Party leadership initiate a review throughout the party of the reasons for the failure of the revolution. Not only was their proposal flatly rejected; they were also expelled from the party.

From 1929 onwards, Chen participated in the Chinese Trotskyist movement. During the resistance war against Japan, Chen Bilan and Peng Shuzhi remained in

Shanghai to lead underground revolutionary work.

But the Communist Party persisted in a campaign of slander against the Trotskyists. At the end of 1948, when the Communist Party was about to take power, Chen and Peng felt compelled to go into exile.

Chen and Peng first went to Vietnam. After a comrade was murdered by the Vietnamese Stalinists, they feared for their lives and so went on to Europe.

In the 1960s, they lived in the United States.

The life of Chen Bilan was one of a proletarian revolutionary and a militant for women's liberation. Chen has left us, three years after her partner Peng Shuzhi. Yet, her example will inspire later generations, and her deeds will go down in history.—
Statement abridged from the *October Review*, Hong Kong

U.S. Postal Service Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685).

1A. Title of publication: Socialist Action.
1B. Publication no. 721090.
2. Date of filing: Sept. 28, 1987
3. Frequency of issue: Monthly. A) No. of issues published annually: 12. B) Annual subscription price: \$6.00.
4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543.
5. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543.
6. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor. Publisher: Socialist Action Publishing Association, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543. Editor: Alan Benjamin, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543. Managing Editor: Don Mahoney, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110-4543.
7. Owner (if owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.): Socialist Action Publishing Association (unincorporated), 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110, Nat Weinstein and Carl Finamore, 3435 Army St., Suite 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities (if there are none, so state: None).
9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates (Section 423.12 DMM only): Does not apply.
10. Extent and nature of circulation. Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: A. Total no. copies printed (net press run): 2,583. B. Paid and/or requested circulation (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 1076. (2) Mail subscriptions (Paid and/or requested: 715. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (sum of 10B1 and 10B2): 1,791. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 93. E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D): 1,884. F. Copies not distributed (1) Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 663. (2) Return from news agents: 36. G. Total (Sum of E, F1, and 2—should equal net press run shown in A): 2,583.
Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date. A. Total no. copies printed (net press run): 2,500. B. Paid and/or requested circulation (1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: 990. (2) Mail subscription (Paid and/or requested): 753. C. Total paid and/or requested circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2): 1,743. D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 14. E. Total distribution (Sum of C and D) 1,757. F. Copies not distributed (1) Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 743. (2) Return from news agents: 0. G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A): 2,500.
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Jesse Jackson announces candidacy: He'll use presidential campaign to 'expand' Democratic Party

By SHIRLEY PASHOLK

RALEIGH, N.C.—On Oct. 10, 1987, in an atmosphere of tumultuous applause and chants of "Win, Jesse, Win" from nearly 4000 supporters in the packed Raleigh Civic Center, the Rev. Jesse Jackson officially announced his candidacy for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. A banner behind the stage proclaiming "Bold Leadership...New Direction" captured the mood of the crowd.

The rally was the highpoint of the three-day Biennial Convention of the National Rainbow Coalition.

People came from 38 states to participate. Leslie Cagan, co-chair of the National Committee for Independent Political Action (NCIPA), wrote in *The Guardian* newspaper that the purpose was to "map out plans for building a permanent progressive political (and not only electoral) organization."

Democratic Party rally

The rally, however, contained many of the trappings of a traditional Democratic Party fete, including red, white, and blue balloons. It also had elements of a religious revival, with gospel music and such banners as "Red, Brown, Black or White, We're All Precious in God's Sight."

There was also an attempt to project this as a gathering of all the dispossessed, joining their individual concerns into one. Accordingly, the speakers' list included Blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Arab Americans. It included a disabled man, an environmentalist, and a farm leader. Noticeably absent were leaders of the peace movement and the various "radicals" who've lent their support to the Jackson campaign.

Despite the crowd's enthusiastic response, Jackson offered neither a new direction, nor bold leadership. Instead he offered the old direction of working within the Democratic Party. Although some participants still expressed hope that on a local level Rainbow chapters could be independent, Jackson's speech should have erased any doubts that this is a Democratic Party campaign designed, as he explained, to "challenge the cynicism and despair which led 83 million Americans to surrender their right to vote in '84."

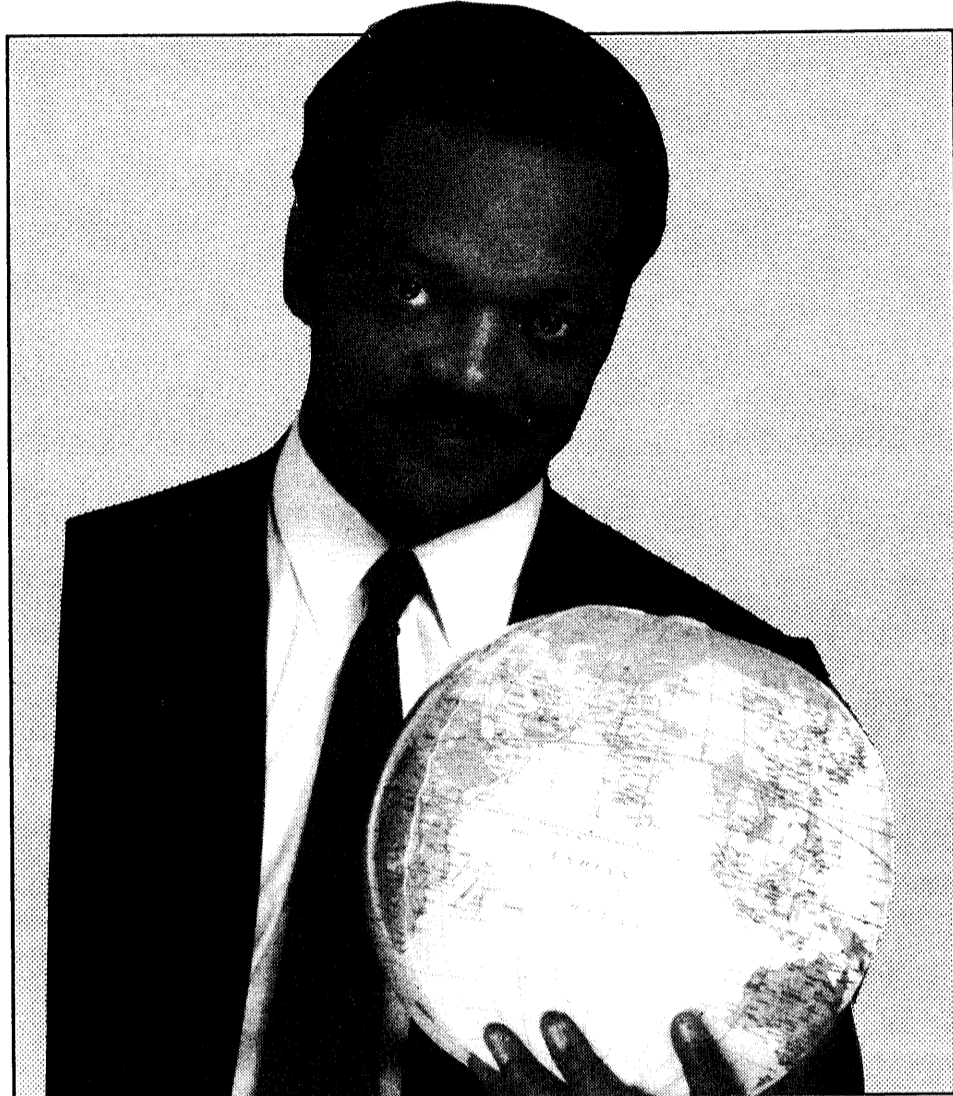
Jackson elaborates

In his speech, Jackson elaborated on how he intends to serve the ruling rich by restoring faith in the Democratic Party. He said his '84 campaign was responsible for getting 2 million people to register and vote Democratic. He added that the work of his supporters was responsible for several Democratic Senate victories last fall.

He explained, "We've expanded and renewed the Democratic Party. We are why Joe Biden, and not Strom Thurmond, chaired the Bork hearings. We are why Bork is soon to become the answer to a trivia question instead of a threat to our rights."

During the three-hour show preceding Jackson's announcement, members of Congress, and state and local elected officials, were introduced and applauded. Chaired part of the rally, California State Assemblywoman Maxine Waters introduced Gary, Ind., Mayor Richard Hatcher as "a shining example of what an elected official can and should be."

Former Indiana Senator Vance Hartke said, "I'm a Democrat. Jesse's a Democrat. We belong to the Democratic Party which



E.J. Camp

'... a Jackson presidency will be characterized by a strong leadership and a strong military.'

—Rev. Jesse Jackson

gave us the greatest president we've ever had—Franklin Delano Roosevelt... I'm proud of the Democratic Party and I'm proud of Jesse Jackson."

Hartke added, "There is a difference in political candidates. Some people would say they want to keep the status quo. Jesse Jackson wants to change that status quo. Some people would say they want law and order. Jesse Jackson wants justice. Some people would say they want information. Jesse Jackson wants understanding... I want this country to continue to be great and I want Jesse Jackson to be at the helm and lead us to that greatness."

Jackson began his announcement speech by addressing the hopes of the crowd: "You're here to give witness to your desire for a new direction in America—an America of jobs, an America of peace, an America of justice. Just as we replaced racial violence with racial justice, we must replace economic violence with economic justice."

But, as Sen. Hartke had echoed earlier, such fine words fall well within traditional Democratic Party campaign promises of "new deals, fair deals, new frontiers, and great societies."

Platitudes about jobs

Just as John F. Kennedy built much of his 1960 campaign around the so-called missile gap, Jackson criticized Reagan's military policy for its ineffectiveness. Jackson said, "We have guided missiles and

misguided leadership. That's why President Reagan invaded Grenada, a country of 100,000 people with no standing army when he was really mad at Cuba and wanted to divert attention from the 250 American boys killed in Lebanon. A strong military but a weak leadership left our boys vulnerable. A Jackson presidency will be characterized by a strong leadership and a strong military."

Jackson takeover

Jackson stated that the greatest challenge today is to protect the American family "from drugs flowing in and jobs flowing out." Accusing Reagan of cutting back on funds for drug law enforcement, Jackson declared, "We must declare war on drugs. A nation's first duty is to defend its borders. There's no greater threat today than the flow of drugs across our borders. We need to strengthen the Coast Guard and all interdiction programs. We have minesweepers in the Persian Gulf, but there's a great need for drugsweepers in the Gulf of Mexico."

While coming up with specific proposals to keep drugs out, Jackson's proposals to keep jobs in were limited to platitudes about the "need to put America back to work at living wages." Without explaining how, he said bold leadership would be able to achieve this goal.

Most of the 1200 convention participants regarded Jackson's candidacy announcement as the high point of the three-day

convention. Others viewed it as an unwelcome diversion from the task of building a viable grassroots movement. The latter commented on the "Jackson takeover" of the convention by saying, "We came for a Rainbow Coalition convention, but it looks like all we got was a Jackson rally."

Many delegates sincerely believed that the Rainbow Coalition is a democratic grassroots movement and that their convention would establish the program for the national campaign.

During the opening session Friday, delegates reacted angrily to several proposed procedural rules limiting the rights of individual delegates and strengthening the rights of officially chartered state delegations. Despite the efforts of the convention chairperson to limit discussion and win quick adoption of all the proposed rules, delegates were able to overturn three of these proposed rules. Some local activists pointed to this procedural victory as a sign of the vitality of the Rainbow and the power of the grassroots organization.

"Common ground" = Democrats

In explaining their involvement in the Rainbow Coalition, many activists echoed the sentiments expressed in an open letter from Jackson to the convention: "We have also expanded the process of building a broadly based coalition. Today this coalition stands in opposition to the export of capital, our jobs and our tax base, by multinational corporations who act out of greed and act as if they are beyond government control. As a result, many diverse sectors of our U.S. population are finding a common ground for action, through their involvement in the Rainbow Coalition."

"Displaced workers from Cudahy, Wis., and Cicero, Ill., and displaced farmers from Chillicothe, Mo., are finding common ground. The movements for disarmament, ending apartheid, and stopping U.S. military intervention in Central America, are finding common ground. Urban Blacks, women, Hispanics, and Native Americans are finding common ground."

Rainbow delegates argued that the Rainbow would provide the best framework for forging alliances among various oppressed sectors of society. They pointed to the Friday session on economic issues, the student conference organized in conjunction with the convention, and workshop topics ranging from health care for all, to building the movements against contra aid and domestic racism, as examples of the concerns such a coalition could address.

American Federation of Government Employees President Ken Blaylock chaired the economics session. He assured the delegates, "We're in the process of building a political program for the Rainbow." After the conclusion of panels on plant closings, the farm crisis, and housing, Blaylock stated, "Normally when you go to a convention, you have all kinds of experts and economists. Here what we're having is people who've experienced the results."

No independent mass movement

Despite the best intentions of the sincere activists who believe that they can utilize the Jackson campaign to advance the concerns of working people, the opposite will inevitably occur. Just as some astute observers at Jackson's rally noticed that their convention and workshops were not determining the program and direction of

(continued on page 4)