

# Socialist Worker

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**RACIST ATTACKS CONTINUE**  
see page 4

NOVEMBER 1980



NUMBER 43

THIS  
TIME  
IT'S  
FOR  
REAL

# REAGAN GETS HIS GUNS

Ronald Reagan has won a landslide victory. Jimmy Carter has suffered a humiliating defeat.

Ronald Reagan is President of the United States. Ronald Reagan the second rate actor, the right-wing politician. Ronald Reagan, the man who thinks medicare is akin to communism, the man who wanted to "turn Vietnam into a parking lot."

## VICTORY

Jimmy Carter defeated himself. He gave us four years of record inflation and then massive unemployment. Many voters chose the candidate they despised the least.

But there is no point in pretending that the right has not won a victory. They are rejoicing and we should expect every fanatic—from the "moral majority" to the cross burners—to take confidence from Reagan's victory.

That is not the end of the story, however. Only 52% of the eligible voters even bothered to go to the polls, the lowest number in thirty years.

Millions of people were disgusted by the whole spectacle. The fact is that there is massive discontent in the United States, especially among ordinary people. The problem is to turn that discontent into a force for a positive alternative—a working class socialist alternative. □



**VICTORY AT J.P. STEVENS** see page 2

**ON  
STRIKE**  
SUN, MON, TUE  
SAND & GRAVEL  
**TEAMSTERS  
LOCAL 174**

**SEATTLE CEMENT  
DRIVERS STRIKE**  
see page 15



**HUNGER STRIKE IN  
H-BLOCK**  
see page 5

# Cook County Hospital bans abortions

October 20, 250 medical personnel at Cook County Hospital joined community activists and packed the Cook County Hospital Board meeting to protest a directive prohibiting abortions.

Dr. Pat Rush, acting director of the emergency room at Cook County Hospital, and a member of the reproductive rights group, Women Organized for Reproductive Choice (WORC), said that this decision, made by George Dunne, the president of the County Board, was outrageous and politically motivated.

"On October 9, Dunne, who is more or less in charge of the hospital, on his own and without consulting anyone on the medical staff, ruled that all abortions—elective and medically necessary—would no longer be performed at Cook County."

## POLITICAL

"This was an outrageous political decision. Dunne took this action because of the Supreme Court ruling on *McRae*, and also because of recent decisions which allow states to pass even more restrictive abortion laws.

"Dunne is not concerned about this hospital, he's not concerned about women, he's not concerned with any medical, community or legal body."

Dr. Martha Sonnenberg, chief resident of internal medicine explained that "Dunne used a legislative

*"This is an attack on poor, Black and Latino women."*

*—Dr. Martha Sonnenberg*

sleight of hand to imply that abortions that were not paid for directly by the patient were illegal.

"He also used the fact that there's a terrible nursing shortage to cut off abortions."

At a recent press conference explaining the arbitrary ruling, Dunne stated that "with the shortage of nurses at the hospital we should not have a staff of nurses for that purpose (abortion).

"We are experiencing problems in the Intensive Care areas because of the nurses shortage. The hospital should not be an abortion mill."

Dr. Sonnenberg refuted Dunne's charges. "The hospital is hardly a mill. There are 60 patients altogether in the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy Clinic a day, and this includes counselling. 18

abortions are performed a day.

"But there is a terrible nursing shortage, and it's more acute in intensive care. But this is because nurses are horribly underpaid and because the hospital does not hire new nurses when others are laid off or leave.

"This charge is obviously ridiculous. What this is is an attack on poor, Black and Latino women."

The medical staff of the hospital passed a strong resolution condemning Dunne's action and defending the hospital's policy of per-

forming abortions as a necessary service.

Other groups including WORC, NOW, NARAL, the National Lawyers Guild, Illinois Welfare Rights, got involved and on October 20 attended the County Board meeting.

The meeting was attended overwhelmingly by hospital personnel, dressed in their hospital gear.

Dr. Rush said: "It was a tremendous demonstration. Our main speakers were Dovie Thurman of Illinois Welfare Rights and Dr. Diana Grant, a

Black woman from fa practice. The anti-abortio in the Right-to-Life had a 35 people and Dunne w only call on them.

"So we started char "We Want to be Heard." totally disrupted the n ing."

"We also made the page of the Chicago Times and the first story of the news stations. Because this WORC is swamped organizing the fight back.

Dr. Rush continued: "A now, for the first time s abortions were legalized 1973, there is now way you obtain an abortion in Chic unless you have med insurance or \$300 in c Already the directive is h ing women. A young La already been admitted aft self induced abortion."

WORC, and other orgar tions in the coalition are p ning demonstrations actions in November.

## REVERSE

Whether or not they able to reverse this deci depend upon the strengtl the protest. But Rush is o mistic. "People see this a discriminatory, racist at on the hospital and community."

by BARBARA WINSLO



## Boeing machinists sold out by I.A.M leaders

SEATTLE, WA—On October 4, the Boeing Company of Seattle sighed a sigh of relief.

The company's only contract proposal to the membership of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers had passed by a margin of three to one.

Actually, it was no surprise to the company that things had gone so swimmingly. They had the assurance all along from the union leaders and negotiators that this would be a peaceful settlement.

## PREPARED

The labor bureaucrats had been preparing for many months to insure that the membership would be kept uninformed, isolated and powerless.

The result of thousands of contract suggestions submitted to rank and file committees in the spring had been totally ignored and then never reported back to the membership. The results of a mail-in survey, printed in the union paper (an exact duplicate of the 1977 survey) were also never reported to the membership.

It was a contract year ablaze with issues. But, there was no way to know that people outside your immediate work area felt as you did.

The bureaucracy saw to it that there was no way, organizationally, to discuss them. This isolation carried right up through the air-tight, top secret negotiations.

We had no hint what was to be in the contract proposal till we filed into the Seattle Kingdome and received a six page synopsis. Shouts of "strike" and "sellout" reverberated within

by STEVE McFADDEN

the stadium as we read of a 7%, 3%, 3% wage offer, won at the expense of new union members who are now subjected to a longer wage progression schedule.

There were some minor improvements in the health and retirement plans, a "modified" union shop provision, but little else. Worst of all there was no change in the language regarding forced overtime, the most important non-money issue.

Our negotiating committee had this to say about the demand: "This was a major disappointment to your negotiating committee and we are sure that you will share with us this disappointment."

You bet we will. To further insure that no one objected, there were no floor microphones.

In the end the membership accepted this "Chrysler" contract, not because it was the "best in the industry," but because we weren't organized to strike and fight back.

If the Machinist union bureaucrats were trying to demonstrate to Doug Fraser and the UAW that they could insure labor peace (the two unions are talking merger) then they succeeded.

## CONTROL

What has to be made clear is that what we, the members, have to win is our own union. If we are ever to be successful in fighting take-away contracts every three years and in waging a day-to-day struggle on the shop floor, we must control our own labor organizations. □

## VICTORY AT J.P STEVENS

With 21 citations of unfair labor practices to their name and 17 years of anti-labor struggle under their belt, the J.P. Stevens Company has finally signed a contract with the International Textile Workers Union.

The company has agreed to a bargaining unit to cover 3,000 workers at seven plants in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. Four hundred workers in three other southern mills have won union recognition and contracts as well.

This deal represents a marked defeat for the company, which vowed over the years that under no circumstances would it ever sign a union contract. But the battle is not over.

Whitney Stevens, the company's president, continues to pany's president maintains that Stevens will "continue to oppose the unions." This is particularly important because over 40,000 Stevens workers in 70-plus plants across the south are still without union rights.

As part of the deal, the company has agreed that any other plants which vote for union representation in the next year and a half will automatically be granted a contract like those just negotiated. The price for this deal, though, was very high.

The union has agreed to suspend its consumer boycott of the company's products and has forfeited its right to organize inside Stevens' plants. This means the company's free hand at its anti-union organizing will not be met head-on with a pro-union force.

In the short run, the company is determined to make sure that the benefits of unionism are not readily apparent. The deal includes back pay raises totaling \$3 million. But the company is emphasizing the fact that this is money which was withheld from the workers as a penalty for union



activity. The increases merely bring them in line with the bulk of the non-unionized workforce. Now everyone is making about \$140 a week, often for six-day weeks.

As important as the money provision are the matters of working conditions and dignity. With mandatory arbitration for the settlement of disputes, Stevens supervisors will be more limited in their dealings with workers. The high handed manner which is the style of J.P. Stevens will no longer be tolerated.

While the signing of a contract marks a definite victory for the union and Stevens' workers, that victory is not without its problems. Not only will the union have a difficult time organizing the 40,000 remaining Stevens work-

ers, having agreed to stay out the plants.

## UPHILL

Also the union will have struggle to keep the locals has won. The company v no doubt, do everything in power to undermine the u from within. And the comp has shown itself to be a r less fighter. The struggle rema an uphill one.

But the workers have pro themselves to be fighters as w Seventeen years, fighting aga all the odds, adds up to an pressive track record. workers united can buck trem dous odds. Solidarity with Stevens workers!

by CHRISTINA BERGMA

# THE REAL DANGER IS THE SYSTEM

Jimmy Carter defeated himself—politically and personally.

He chose a recession as the way to fight inflation—and millions were thrown out of work. He carried out a systematic attack on social services. He presided over the "energy" crisis which brought billions in profits to the oil monopolies and doubled the price of gasoline and home heating oil.

## SHAH

He even brought the deposed Shah into the country, sparking the whole hostage conflict in the first place. Then he cynically attempted to use the hostages to win votes.

There was no real alterna-

by CALVIN WILLIAMS

tive in the elections. Both Carter and Reagan offered conservative solutions to the nation's problems—on fiscal policy, social programs and international problems.

There was certainly no liberal alternative. The liberals had no alternative—and that explains the loss of Kennedy in the primaries, and helps to explain the liberal losses in the Senate—McGovern, Magnuson, Bayh, Holtzman, Church and Culver.

But there was also a conservative victory. And the election confirmed what has been asserted for some time—that



**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

the mood in the country is shifting to the right. There are dangers.

Reagan is a right-winger, personally much more conservative than Carter.

Reagan does believe that the theory of evolution is wrong. He does think that trees cause air pollution. He is against the minimum wage. He is a racist. And he is likely to bring Henry Kissinger back into the Cabinet.

But Reagan the individual will probably be controlled—as Nixon was—by Wall Street and the Republican ruling class establishment. They will see that there is continuity in policy, that there are no sharp shifts from the status quo.

The immediate danger is so much from Reagan the president, and not even from the new Republican Senate, nor new Reagan judges.

The immediate danger is more likely to be from the organized right-wing—the "Right-to-Lifers," the union busters, the racists and the Klan, all of whom will gain confidence from the Reagan victory.

## SYSTEM

The deeper dangers, however, are not to be found in the new president, the individual, but in the system itself, the

system which gave us the choice of Carter vs. Reagan.

Capitalism is in crisis worldwide. When it contracts, as it is now, the results range from mass starvation in the sub Sahara to millions of jobs lost in the industrial nations—the Youngstons and Detroit of the world.

Carter could not control the economic crisis and neither will Reagan be able to—the system is out of control, worldwide. It has its own logic and imperatives.

The cause of the threat of war is also to be found in the crisis.

The reasons are simple enough.

The crisis makes competition sharper, including competition between the superpowers. The crisis makes survival an immediate task for the ruling classes of the poorer countries. And both of these things raise the possibility of war—as we see now in the conflict between Iraq and Iran.

Both the U.S. and Russia are finding it more and more

difficult to control their own economic problems, let alone control the dissent and competition amongs their allies, their clients and semi-colonies.

Both fear the other side will exploit these problems to its own advantage. So both sides make the preparations for war—they increase the warheads, refine their accuracy, threaten limited wars and interventions.

We have to argue against this system, the system which is the cause of the problems we face—both in the economy, at the root of racism and sexism, and the cause of international competition and war.

## IMMEDIATE

Now is no time to despair. There are immediate tasks of defending the rights of women, stopping the union-busters, and fighting the racists and the Klan.

And just as importantly there is the long term job of providing a real alternative—a socialist alternative.

## THE HOSTAGES AND THE U.S. ELECTIONS

The issue of the American hostages in Iran continues to expose the total hypocrisy of those who hold power in this country.

Jimmy Carter deliberately raised the possibility of an early release for the hostages in a completely transparent attempt to maintain his position in the White House.

## CONDITIONS

What else could possibly explain his action? The conditions set by the Iranians for the release of the hostages have not fundamentally changed in a year—send back the Shah (and then his wealth); promise non-interference in Iran; unfreeze Iranian assets.

Carter, if he actually cared about the fate of the individual hostages, could have met, or attempted to have met these demands at any time over the past year.

Instead he chose economic sanctions and military threats.

He did this for the same reason that he invited the deposed Shah into the country in the first place. He is committed to defending the legacy of the Shah and to showing all the other Shahs of this world that the United States will not forsake them. And is committed to U.S.

control of the vast oil resources of the Persian Gulf.

As for Khomeini and the students who took the American hostages, the timing of the latest negotiations also shows their desperation.

Taking the hostages may have temporarily focused attention on the reactionary role of American imperialism in Iran.

But it has not led to the return of the Shah's wealth, nor has it strengthened Iran's independence, let alone taken the revolution forward. On the contrary, the Iranian rulers must now return to the United States to beg for spare parts and military equipment for the war with Iraq.

But the story is not over. The United States is still scrambling to reestablish its power on the Persian Gulf and Reagan will continue this policy.

## SUPPORT

Our job is to continue to oppose U.S. interference of any kind in the Middle East and to support those socialists and workers in Iran who are still fighting to see that the achievements of the Iranian revolution are not destroyed either by imperialism—or by Khomeini and his supporters now in power in Tehran. □

## FIGHTING WORDS

*We the people are not free. Our democracy is but a name. We vote? What does that mean? It means we choose between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. We elect expensive masters to do our work for us, and then blame them because they work for themselves and for their class.*

Helen Keller, 1911

## THE GULF WAR CONTINUES

When the Iran-Iraq war began seven weeks ago, it was widely assumed it would only last a few days. But both sides have dug in.

Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein wants to establish himself as the dominant force in the region. The other Arab states, especially Jordan and Saudi Arabia, are backing him. The Iranian revolution spread instability in the Gulf. It overthrew the Gulf's chief policeman—the Shah. Hussein wants to fill his shoes.

## POWER

Khomeini and his followers are using the war to whip up support for his regime. At the same time, the Iranian generals hope the war will give them an opportunity to restore

the power they had under the Shah.

But the real winner will probably be U.S. imperialism. The United States used the war as an excuse to beat the war drum at home, and to strengthen its military presence in the Gulf. It hopes the war will deal a severe blow to the Iranian revolution and either result in Khomeini's overthrow, or result in his coming back into the U.S. camp. The U.S. prefers that the Iraqis do not win too overwhelmingly. A united pro-Western Iran is still in U.S. interests. A fractured Iran removes a buffer against Russia. As one official in the state department put it: "Things will become much more difficult if Iran disintegrates and the Soviets are in Bandar Abbas (a port on the

Straits of Hormuz) or even Tabriz."

A limited Iraqi victory will be a boost to all the conservative Arab regimes and must be opposed. It would stabilize capitalism in the Gulf. Iraq would become the watchdog—Hussein the new Shah. □

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# PRISONERS UNION STAGES HUNGER STRIKE

For over a month and a half, 5 members of the Prisoners Union at the Dallas, PA, State Correctional Institute have been on near total hunger strike.

## POLICIES

They are protesting specific repressive policies around the use of long-term solitary confinement to harass those inmates labelled as "trouble-

makers" and militants by the prison administration. Since the strike began in September, they've been subsisting on a diet consisting only of sugar and water.

The strikers are demanding: 1) The release of every prisoner in the state who has been in involuntary confinement over 30 days back into the general population. 2) The establishment of a meaningful

review system, including individuals and groups outside the prison bureaucracy. 3) That in the future, the sole criteria for the release of an inmate be that prisoners' displayed ability during that 30 days to adhere to prison rules.

## REFLECT

The demands are important not just because of their relevance to the situation at the

Dallas penitentiary, but also because they sadly reflect a state of conditions being experienced by many prisons across the nation—despite the talk of "liberalization" and "country club atmospheres" being thrown about.

The strikers are asking people on the outside to write the following officials to express support for their demands.

● Governor Richard Thornburgh, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

● Attorney General Harvey Bartle III, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

● Ronald Marks, Commission of Corrections, Box 598, Camp Hill, PA 17011.

For more information write David Brudell/Da'ud, F-6842, Drawer K, Dallas, PA 18612.

by CURTIS PRICE

## BLACK POLITICS IN AMERICA BY TONY BOGUES

Over the past year, a drastic upsurge in violent and vicious murders and kidnappings of Black people has swept the country.

With each new victim that is found, public officials are quick to point out that there is no evidence that the murders are "racially motivated." Yet all the victims are Black.

Since July 1979, 12 Black boys and two Black girls aged 7-15 have been kidnapped in Atlanta, Georgia—10 are known dead and 4 are still missing.

Jim Wintersmith, a community activist in Atlanta, said: "The mood is extremely tense. If one more kid is snatched, this town could blow up." On November 3 another murdered child's body was found.

In Buffalo, New York, a series of six murders has plagued the Black community since September 22.

On that day, 14 year-old Glen Dunn was shot and killed as he waited in a supermarket parking lot. The weapon used was a .22 caliber sawed-off rifle.

Over the next two nights, 3 more Black men were killed in the Buffalo area—all with the same .22 caliber rifle.

## MUTILATIONS

In early October, on 2 consecutive nights, the bodies of 2 Black cabdrivers were found—both with their hearts ripped out, their bodies mutilated.

The next afternoon, a white man fitting the description of the ".22 caliber killer" entered the hospital room of a Black patient, and attempted to choke him, muttering "I hate niggers."

The District Attorney of Buffalo will not admit the murders are racially motivated. Buffalo city officials have claimed that the KKK is not active in the city.

But in the words of Reverend Charley Fisher of BUILD (Blacks United for Unity, Independence, Liberty and Dignity), a local civil rights group: "When they (KKK) come into city hall and parade

# DEATH TOLL MOUNTS; ALL THE VICTIMS ARE BLACK



around in their robes, how can law enforcement officials say the KKK is not active in the Buffalo area?"

In a T.V. news survey of the Black community 60% of the respondents expressed fear for their personal safety.

The KKK continues to operate openly. They have now set up 6 military training camps in 6 states to prepare for a "race war" which they would like to initiate. One such camp is called "My Lai" in honor of Lt. William

Calley—who massacred the Vietnamese village.

Now a former Nazi and KKK member, Joseph Paul Franklin has been arrested in connection with 10 sniper killings of Black people in 5 states, as well as the shooting of Vernon Jordan this past summer.

## RACIST

Franklin describes himself as a racist who is against "race mixing." He is wanted for questioning in Salt Lake

City in connection with the killing of two Black men on August 29—Theodore Fields and David Martin were shot by a sniper as they jogged through the city's Liberty Park with two white women.

He is wanted in connection with the June 19 murder of a Black man and white woman—gunned down as they loaded groceries into their car in a supermarket parking lot in Oklahoma City.

Franklin is thought to be linked to the murder of two Black men in January, in Indianapolis. He is suspected in the murder of two Black teenagers, shot to death from an overpass, as they walked along railroad tracks on June 8, in Cincinnati.

He is wanted for questioning in Johnston, PA, where a Black man and white woman were murdered as they walked across a bridge on June 15.

Franklin is also wanted for questioning in the shooting of Urban League president, Vernon Jordan, as he returned to his Fort Wayne motel on May 29th, accompanied by a white woman.

Franklin was arrested outside of a blood bank in Lakeland, Florida, carrying

two high-powered rifles in his car.

Before he graduated from high-school, Franklin was an active member of the American Nazi Party. He has been connected with numerous right wing racist organizations since then, including the KKK.

In 1976, Franklin petitioned to emigrate and "join the (white) armed forces of Rhodesia," but was refused because he had a criminal record.

He'd been arrested a few days earlier for spraying mace on a Black man and his white girlfriend in a Maryland suburb.

We have argued all along that the KKK and Nazis have no right to exist. Is any more evidence needed?

But the spate of murders and attacks on Black people are not the result of one man's racist lunacy.

The right wing shift over the last year is a breeding ground for racist groups like the Klan. They are more confident, visible and brazen. The same is true of racist lunatics intent on terrorizing Black people. □

by SHARON SMITH

An Atlanta mother holds her child





**WORLD IN STRUGGLE**

## IRELAND'S H-BLOCK PRISONERS:

# 'A fast to the death...'



*Protesters from the Relatives Committee*

## RIGHT WINS IN JAMAICA

The right wing Jamaican Labor Party (JLP) has won the general election.

The party led by Edward Seaga—who was recently described by the United States state department as an "intelligence source"—has won.

At the time of writing the JLP seems to have won 50 of the 60 available seats in the Jamaican parliament. The size of the victory has shocked many Jamaicans.

The scene is unlike that which followed the jubilant victory of the Peoples National Party (PNP) in the 1972 and 1976 general elections.

### ADVANTAGE

Why has the JLP won the election? It is a combination of reasons: There is no doubt that the new electoral system was used to the advantage of the JLP.

There are numerous reports that the security forces—who have terrorized progressive communities, locked up members of the Communist Party, and attempted a coup in June of this year—were put in charge of the process.

The ballot boxes were placed in the hands of the security forces after voting was completed, and there are many reports of new ballot boxes being placed by the security forces replacing the originals.

There is also no doubt that the masses of Jamaican people were hard hit by the economic crisis and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). When in 1972, the masses of Jamaican people decided in favor of an anti-imperialist path of development, the PNP went for the IMF. But for the last two years the PNP carried out the programs of the IMF. This meant a rise in inflation, lay-offs and the erosion of social reforms that had been made by the same government over the last five years.

### VIOLENCE

Along with the IMF, the CIA and local reactionaries created terror in the island. Nearly 2,000 people died in political violence in the last few years.

All these things combined have created an electoral coup for the CIA and United States imperialism. And hours after the victory of the right, repressive terror has started.

Three PNP constituency offices have been burned down. Areas where the PNP are strong have been attacked by soldiers and right wing terrorists.

And in one area in the capital city the police have set up a commando squad. Socialists have had their houses burned down and many have been stabbed and shot by right wing terrorists. □

by TONY BOGUES

by BRIAN KELLY

About 150 political prisoners in the infamous H-Block of Long Kesh Prison started a long-expected hunger strike October 27. It is considered the last resort in their four year fight against unspeakable brutality and repression.

"Attempts (by the British government) to criminalize us," says a communicacae smuggled out of the prison, "were designed to de-politicize the Irish national struggle."

### CYNICAL

In the U.S. press reports tell us the British government has conceded to the demands of the prisoners. These reports are untrue.

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey told *Socialist Worker*, "In a cynical 11th hour move, the government deliberately leaked to the press that they would make concessions. Then they issued a formal statement in which it was clear that the government was just modernizing the prison uniform."

With the abolition of special status for political prisoners in 1976, a new stage in the struggle of Irish nationals incarcerated by British authorities began.

Before 1976, prisoners had the right to "political" status, which gave them the right to wear civilian clothes and certain other privileges.

The prisoners refused to wear prison uniforms, so they went naked. They have endured four years of solitary confinement, they have been tortured, and even reading material is denied them.

There are no toilets for these prisoners. They live amid their own excrement, and their cells are hosed down once a month.

Characteristic is the comment of one British official. When asked about the hunger strike, he said the prisoners "may well die. If they do, so be it."

The prisoners call their hunger strike a "fast to death," and it is certainly this. One of the prisoners, 19-year-old Polly McLaughlin, now weighs less than 65 pounds. In that condition she was forced to sign a confession. Her sentence is listed as "indefinite" by prison officials.

The prisoners' communicacae continues: "Bearing in mind the serious implications of our final step, not only for us but for our people, we wish to make it clear that every channel has now been exhausted."

But the prisoners of H-Block and Armagh (where the women are being held) are not alone. On October 26th 30,000 people marched in Belfast in support. It was the largest demonstration there in a decade.

"One thing is certain," McAliskey says. "If the prisoners demands are not granted in sixty days, the prisoners will die. And they will be replaced by more prisoners equally determined."

"If Britain lets these prisoners die, she may just light the fire for the socialist revolution." □

## ...while U.S. silences Irish oppositionists

We can expect that there will be little said in the American media about the Irish prisoners' hunger strike.

Events of the last few weeks tell us that the State Department plans to go to great lengths to ensure that H-Block remains "out of sight and out of mind" as far as Americans are concerned.

Several months ago three ex-prisoners applied for visas to enter the U.S. to speak about the conditions in H-Block. In accordance with long standing State Department policy, the visas were denied. So they entered the country illegally, speaking in many major American cities.

### SILENCE

As publicity for their visit began building, the government moved to silence them. On October 31st, Fra McCann and Des Mackin (the tour organizer) were arrested in New York by a small army of immigration officials.

They were charged with entering the country illegally. Fra McCann, free on \$30,000

bail, has been told that the charges against him will be dropped if he agrees to pack up and go home. But in an interview with *Socialist Worker*, McCann said he will fight the deportation. Having spent seven of the last nine years in prisons in Ireland (3½ of them in H-Block), McCann is not overly concerned at the prospect of going to jail.

"I've done time in Irish jails and I've never sat quiet. The threat of an American jail is not going to quiet me now."

Des Mackin, who himself spent three years in Long Kesh, is now being held in solitary confinement in New York. He faces extradition to the north of Ireland for the false charge of "shooting a British soldier." Mackin and a friend, Bobby Gamble, were fired on by a British Army foot patrol in Belfast. A soldier was killed in the incident, but it was later revealed at Gamble's trial that he was shot mistakenly by a fellow soldier.

In the incident, Mackin was struck by three bullets and Gamble hit eight times. As

Mackin awaited trial, two attempts were made to assassinate him. Fearing for his life, he left Northern Ireland.

It is felt that his extradition would mean certain imprisonment, and possibly death.

The arrest of Fra McCann and Des Mackin just a week before a hunger strike was declared by the H-Block prisoners tells us exactly where the U.S. government stands on this issue.

As they say, birds of a feather flock together.

It is no surprise to socialists in this country that American imperialism is willing to rush to the aid of Britain's war against the Irish people.

Their actions have shown that they will do their best to keep news of the hunger strike from reaching this country.

Our job is to make sure they fail! □

## BRITISH WORKERS SIT-IN TO SAVE JOBS

2,000 workers at the Gardner diesel factory in Manchester, England are fighting to save their jobs.

The company, Hawkers, wanted to axe 590 jobs. But the workers stood firm.

On Thursday, October 2, they voted to take action—they had a sit-in. After two weeks, their union, the AUEW, made the strike official. They fight on.

As Mick Brightman, a steward

in the milling department and a member of our sister group the Socialist Workers Party explains: "We've argued that it's vital to defend the principles of trade unionism, like supporting workers on strike."

Gardner's workers have an excellent record of solidarity—now it's their turn to call in some of the solidarity they've given out in the past.

The Gardner's fight is very

important. They are not only taking on the company, but the British Tory government, which is attacking the living standards of workers all over the country.

Their action shows how jobs can be saved—both in England and in the U.S.—not by the courts, not the union officials—but by the direct action of the rank and file.

Victory to the Gardner's workers! □

# Graffiti

by PATRICIA GOLDSMITH

## THE THOUGHTS OF JOHN PAUL

"Adultery in your heart is committed not only when you look with concupiscence (strong sexual desire) at a woman who is not your wife, but also if you look in the same manner at your wife."

"The husband must not use his wife, her femininity, to fulfill his instinctive desire."

"Concupiscence diminishes the richness of the perennial attraction of a person for interpersonal communion. Through such reduction, the other person becomes the mere object for satisfying a sexual need and touches the dignity of the person (wife)."

These points are part of an important chapter in Pope John Paul's forthcoming book, "The Thoughts of Chairman Pope John Paul on Sex and the Family."

The Pope also celebrated a mass for married couples who didn't "lust" after each other. "In the midst of so many voices in our permissive society that exalt (so-called) liberty as part of human fulfillment, it's right for those to raise their voices who, in their day to day experience of a serene and generous self-control, have been able to discover a new sense of reciprocal acquaintance, deeper understanding and authentic liberty."

### ABSTAIN

At the end of the Synod of Bishops Pope John Paul said divorced Catholics who remarried could receive communion only if they never had sexual relations. Married couples must "live in complete continence, that is, by abstinence from acts which only married couples can engage."

The Pontiff and his Bishops said they "were not removed in mind and heart" from understanding the difficulties most Catholic couples would have in following the rules banning the use of any kind of contraception.

But the Synod proposed a charter of "family rights" because the "integrity of the home is violated." "Families are compelled—and this we oppose vehemently—to use such immoral means for the solution of economic, social and demographic problems as contraception, or even worse, abortion, sterilization and euthenasia."

Watch this column for the next installment of Pope John Paul's Thoughts... □

# METRO DRIVERS VOTE TO STRIKE

SEATTLE, WA—Seattle's Metro Transit workers, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587, voted to strike Monday, October 27, 1980. They rejected the company's first and only offer.

This offer attacks the cost of living, working conditions and benefits.

Metro claims these attacks are necessary to improve productivity.

### COSTS

However, Metro employees are already subsidizing an unfair percent of transit cost, through the cost effective "pay and work rule" which Metro won in the 1977 contract.

Management was very pleased that there was no strike three years ago, and that they were able to get a 54% approval on an

agreement which included part-timers with no benefits, no holidays, an hour and a half per day guaranteed 90% wage, and a probationary period of up to two years.

### PUSH

Metro has been in the forefront of the national push to make transit more productive.

In the mid-70s UMTA (Urban Mass Transportation Authority) accused transit systems of lagging behind other industries in productivity growth since World War II. If this is true, it reflects the fact that Transit has been considered a public responsibility and extensive service has been maintained even as ridership declined because it was seen as a social necessity.

by JUDY FISHER

Now transit is supposed to be profitable, and federal money will be tied to improvements in productivity.

Seattle Metro took on the challenge with a vengeance. Lined to the obvious cost savings of dismantling the top heavy overpaid management system, they focussed on their workers and on service cuts.

Hours were cut from night, weekend and even some crowded middle of the day services and were added to commuter rush hour services to the suburbs.

This meant part-time workers were desirable to fill those rush hour trips as cheaply as possible.

Also, bending, articulated coaches were purchased so the drivers could carry an extra half load. Add an incredibly harsh discipline policy and a sick leave

that makes it easier to work sick than deal with the paper work and doctor's visits necessary for most visits, and you've got a very cost effective contract.

They also saved money by hiring as few new employees as possible, while the ridership is growing enormously. This keeps the information, clerical and mechanical departments all stretched to the limit of productivity.

### EXPERIENCE

With these losses and the recent control in these negotiations. The inexperienced local leadership has been relying on legal strategy in the battles with Metro until now. But it will take the power of an organized rank and file to beat Metro.

It may take a strike or an organized job to rebuild the strength of the union. □

## TALKING ABOUT SOCIALISM

Why are millions of workers conned every four years by the elections?

# Elections and the myth of democracy

by DEBORAH ROBERTS

The national election had one positive effect: it challenged socialists to really think and argue about "democratic" institutions in capitalist society.

Of course, the working class was nowhere represented in the contests between candidates. It was not represented because it is not yet organized as a class.

That's why millions of workers are conned every election year into giving their rulers permission to continue running society for them. Many workers held their noses when they voted this year, but they voted anyway because they've been taught that this act is their democratic right and duty.

### CONTRADICTION

But what if the candidates hadn't been so repugnant to

so many people? What if there were even a party which could claim to represent workers as a class? So long as capitalist property relations remain, the electoral process will be a contradictory one.

Lenin argued that "only scoundrels and simpletons can think that the proletariat must first win elections carried out under the yoke of wage slavery, and must then win power. This is the height of stupidity or hypocrisy."

But didn't Marx say that socialism was essentially democratic, "the rule of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority"? And aren't elections really about majority rule?

The literal meaning of the word "democracy" is "rule of

the people." It was originally used by the Greeks to mean the opposite of monarchy, rule by the nobility.

To the Greeks, "the people" meant the free citizens—artisans and small traders—who often were themselves slaveholders. So democracy was by definition the rule of one class over two others, that is, the rule of citizens over kings and slaves.

### FORCE

It was maintained by force, by depriving the aristocrats of political rights. Democracy had nothing to do with the idea that if the aristocratic party collected more votes than the "democratic" party, then it was entitled to rule.

An aristocratic victory—or,

as in America, the victory of one ruling class party over another—was *undemocratic by definition*.

Since the rise of capitalism and the extension of suffrage to the majority of people, the whole content of the word "democracy" has been changed in the interests of the rich. Instead of a clear system of class rule, it has come to mean a mechanical process by which elements of the U.S. ruling class succeed each other in the running of society.

Now, there are advantages for ordinary people in bourgeois democracy compared to the systems that came before it. Among these is the right to organize, which was won by workers' struggling against the owning and ruling class, and which can only be kept in the same way.

Nonetheless, "democracy" in this country is in reality just as much a form of class rule as it was in Greece. The main difference is that this ruling class is a much tinier proportion of the population than that one was.

In the future, when socialists are organized as a significant force within the working class, elections will provide a means by which we can spread our ideas and build the movement.

### CHANGE

But it is only through activity and struggle that consciousness changes significantly, and workers lose the habits of acceptance and indifference imposed on them by class rule.

Even with real political and social organization among workers, elections in capitalist society can at best change attitudes. Voting can in no way substitute for workers' collective struggle to control society. □



Real democracy in action

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# Solidarity

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*Socialist Worker Special*

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## POLAND AT THE TURNING POINT

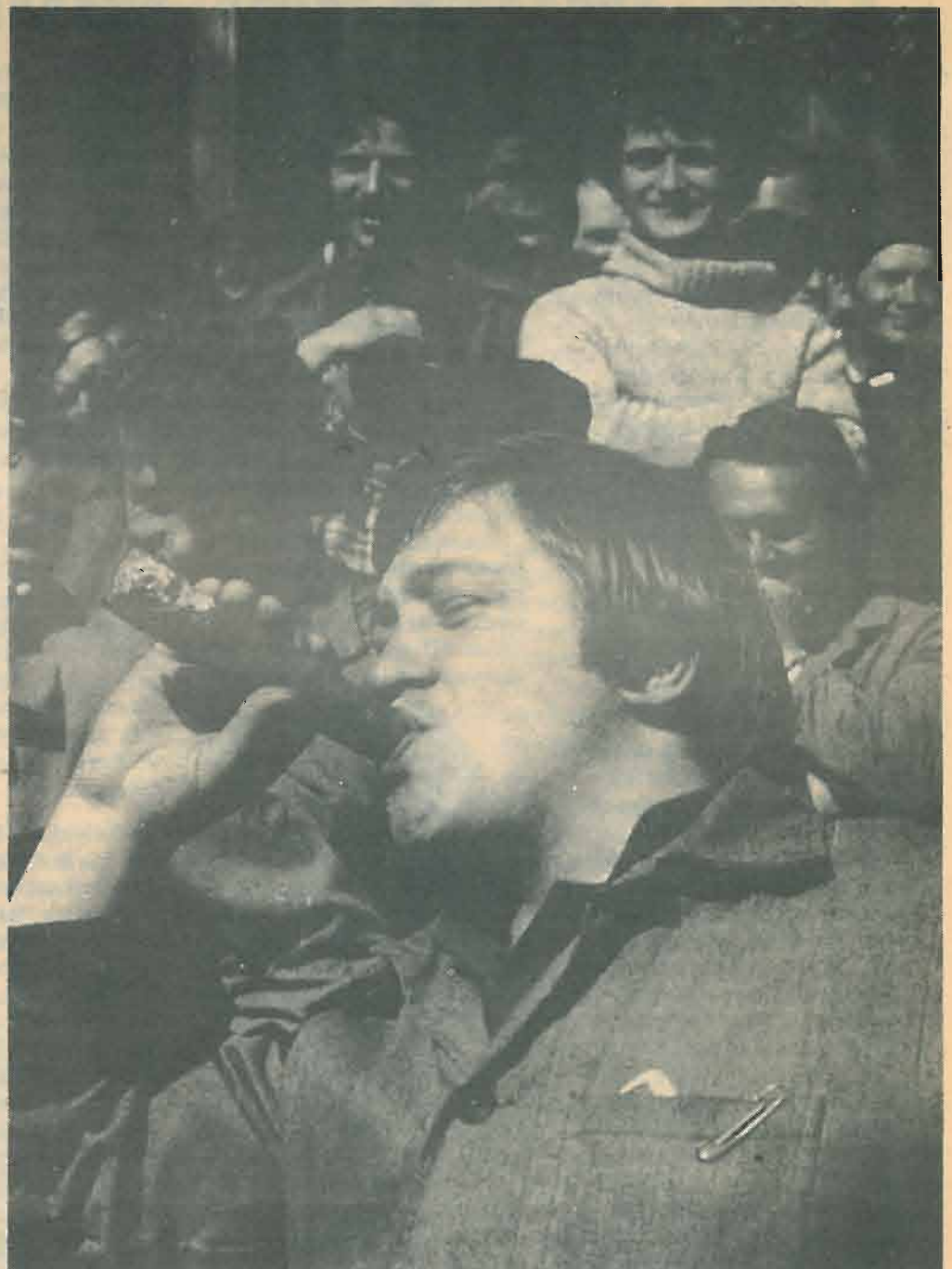
**The Gdansk Soviet which existed during the seventeen day revolt was a vivid display of workers power.**

A 'dual power' situation arose between this body representing thousands of workers in a direct form of participatory democracy in opposition to a self-appointed Communist regime based in Warsaw.

Ralph Darlington and Eva Barker, two British revolutionary socialists, have just returned from a two week tour of turbulent Poland.

They interviewed three leading KOR oppositionists, visited four major centers of the new union organization, Solidarity, and spoke to many of the leading participants of the strike wave that shook the country.

Socialist Worker is printing their report in full—for as recent events show the struggle for workers' power in Poland is far from over.



*A victorious Polish worker imitates his boss*

# Workers against the

The national headquarters of Solidarity—the new, and independent trade union movement in Poland—lies on the fourth floor of a building that spans the main street in the Baltic coastal town of Gdansk.

Outside tramway lines straddle the contours through the middle of the wide open road lanes. Hanging down from the balcony of the 'Solidarity' offices is a huge red and white banner proclaiming that the new union is here and here to stay.

Groups of workers flood through the foyer arriving from factories and workplaces in the area requesting help, collecting union literature and handing over donations.

The noticeboards are packed tight with proclamations, useful addresses and general union information. A permanent crowd is gathered. Stretching their necks to look over the shoulder of the person in front so as to catch a glimpse of oppositional news and examine the selection of photographs taken during the strikes.

Knots of workers stand around in small corners exchanging horror stories and experiences of establishing

union organization in their workplaces.

At our arrival we are treated like close friends and given a conducted tour of this new found power. Our first interview commences in the Press Room. Two extremely young workers are concerned with getting details of 'Solidarity's' activities into the Communist Party controlled local Baltic daily newspaper.

## WEAPON

Every attempt so far has been met with stormy arguments and battles over content with both the editor and the local CP Vice-Secretary. The Communist Party chiefs want overriding control to distort accounts of the new union for their own purposes.

As our two new activists inform us, control of the written word, of the press, is the most dangerous weapon in Poland today. Words can be a much more powerful weapon than guns. Ideas change consciousness and can influence thousands.

Next we are huddled into the printing room of the 'Solidarity' HQ where their proliferating literature is being banged out. The scene is at

once both tragic and wonderful.

Three men stand arched over tables pushing metal rollers to and fro. Underneath are ink-soaked pieces of felt with duplicating skins plastered on top. It is a primitive process and almost broke our hearts when we remembered the access British workers have to offset litho machines.

Yet at the same time these people have not the luxury of waiting to see if printing machinery held up at the Polish border ever gets through into their hands. Workers need news now and fast. Teams of volunteers work virtually day and night to rush the material out. There is no other way.

## DONATION

We are also taken around the donations room and another that houses workers involved in editing the bulletin 'Solidarity' for widespread distribution.

Later that evening Anna Walentinowicz invites us to sit in on a four hour meeting of the Gdansk Presidium of the new union organization.

Present are all the leading figures of the mass strikes of a few weeks ago. Lech Walesa



greet us as we sit down to observe first-hand the inner working of this all-powerful body of working class leaders.

Amongst the delegates are representatives of shipyards, dockers, tram drivers, engineering workers and oil refineries and the health service. There are about 25 men and 5 women. Overwhelmingly the composition is skilled manual workers.

Not accustomed to formal procedure the discussion usually jumps from one item to another.

First a report about the

obstruction of the local national press. Then details of a proposed structure of the new union organization.

## POWERS

A single union body been created modelled on draft worked out in Gdansk. The agreement in favor of a centralized body to coordinate activities was strong, especially on the part of smaller factories. But there are to be strong regional committees with wide powers of autonomy. A national strike

# The working woman who lit the

The spark for the revolt of Gdansk in Poland was lit by a woman shipyard worker. A mother, a housewife, a skilled crane operator and a woman of unyielding courage—her name is Anna Walentinowicz.

For some thirteen years she has been a constant irritant to the Communist officials and their trade union chiefs. When she was fired, her fellow workers threw out the bosses and occupied the shipyards.

Anna became a leading member of the 200-strong strike committee and she now sits on the Presidium of the Gdansk Solidarity union movement.

We met Anna in her small flat in the Baltic town.

She had pointedly asked us to interview her in her home "so that you can see for yourself what a simple life I lead and what an ordinary person I am." Her room is extremely neat. A picture of the Pope adorns one of the walls. Enthusiastically she shows us her photographs of workers inside the shipyard during the occupation.

Anna told us she chose to train to be a skilled welder—"It was more exciting."

Yet in 1965 her doctor gave her the startling news that she had developed cancer and would only live for another five years. She

was instructed to immediately rest. "But I thought, if I am going to die, I'm not going to sit back and wait for it." Anna reluctantly decided to change her job to become a crane operator which was less arduous.

Anna became involved in the social section of the official trade union in the shipyards. Workers were obliged to pay part of their monthly salary into a union aid fund. Money from this would help members in financial trouble.

Anna discovered that these funds were being siphoned off into the pockets of senior trade union officials. For months she worked through official



channels to expose the corruption. At every stage she was blocked and threatened. Finally Anna was fired and had to take a less well paid job in the yards.

Working through procedure had produced nothing. Outraged she joined with others to try to

start a Free Trade Union Movement. Then in 1970 sixty strikers were shot dead by government tanks outside the Lenin shipyard to crush a developing revolt over meat price increases.

The effect on Anna's life was shattering. The brutality of the Polish regime knew no bounds.

Shortly after, her husband died. For a whole year she broke down and dropped out of political activity.

Slowly she became involved again in illegal trade union activity. A friend once handed her a copy of the workers factory bulletin 'Robotnik'. Anna agreed to allow her flat to be used for a secret meeting of the workers bulletin 'Robotnik'. Soon she was co-opted to the editorial team of 'Robotnik'.

One of her first articles for the bulletin was a marvellous scoop on the visit of ex-Polish chief Edward Gierk to the Lenin shipyard with an entourage of 300 people. Anna exposed how these 'guests' waited on by 50 cooks ate a lavish and highly expensive feast with caviar and vodka. She contrasted such splendor with the supposed ideals of her Communist rulers.

The party apparatus in the Lenin shipyards put the screws back on her. Two years ago she was moved

into an isolated job away from her fellow workers. When Anna protested, the Communist authorities used the time-honored method of quelling dissent in Russia—and declared her "mentally ill".

Again Anna was forced to appeal through the official courts. This time they judged in her favor declaring her "not mentally ill" at all and advising she had the right to her old job back as a crane operator on the Lenin wharf. Yet neither management nor the Communist Party controlled union could accept this. They now tried to force her home on sick leave. It was as a result of this blatant victimization that the Gdansk revolt erupted.

## CENTRAL

During those eventful seventeen days Anna played a central role in what rapidly became the Gdansk Soviet—addressing massive meetings in the shipyards, organizing delegations to other factories and involved in the top-level negotiations with the Polish government that finally extracted the formidable concession for the right to form independent trade unions.

Her life had turned almost full circle. From an ordinary shipyard worker

she had been transformed into a mass leader—whose face and name was familiar to millions of Polish workers.

Anna hopes to return to the shipyards to be amongst her friends. "I would like to form a womens commission to fight for equal opportunities and to raise the dignity and esteem of women in Polish society."

## STORY

For the moment Anna is happy to sit on the Gdansk Solidarity Presidium helping to organize the rapidly growing movement for freedom. She has no illusions about the dangers involved. In her calm way she recounts us a story has deeply hurt her gentle and warm personality.

She tells us of a seventy-year old man who had been a partisan during the Second World War and made a last ditch attempt to resist the Germans. Like Anna, over the years he had become very outspoken against the Polish government. As a result he had been arrested several times. And his son had spent seven years in prison for oppositional activity.

In an attempt to further silence their activity the police a few weeks ago raided the boy at his home and informed him his father had died in police custody. Dis



# The 'red' ruling class



ing committee will be set up to meet once a month with a Congress of the new unions to be organized in the coming weeks.

Next on the chaotic agenda is the construction of the giant monument to be built in memory of the shipyard workers shot by the Polish regime's tanks in 1970. The pylons have already been sunk into the site. Planning teams are working on the design. It will be 140 feet high and cost a fortune. Yet most delegates strongly believe that it is fitting to erect such a monument

## Dark

They want to collect his body or should they bury him?

The boy naturally demanded to have his father's body immediately handed over to him. To his horror he found his dad had had his tongue ripped out.

An eye had been pushed into its socket and there were bruises all around his face. He had broken ribs. His bladder was black from beatings. He had a ruptured spleen and severe beatings on the back of his legs and buttocks. On the death certificate it was marked—'circulation failure'.

Tears come to Anna's eyes as she explains how the object of such police error in present day Poland is to frighten people like her into passivity. But, as she explains, such incidents only further strengthen their will to resist.

## ANGER

Quickly she changes the subject and the mood of the interview. Her voice lifts as she angrily compares the living of leading Communist Party officials accumulating riches for themselves. "It is all at our expense. Appropriating our income. Changing things will be difficult. But we are struggling." As we left we knew she meant it.

'to ensure such incidents do not occur again.'

One delegate who tries to argue that a better way to ensure that would be to pour all their funds into strengthening their new union organization is overruled.

Two days later we are invited to attend a full national 'Solidarity' delegate meeting of workers engaged in constructing the new union across Poland. 150 delegates crowd into the Baltic port HQ. The Gdansk Presidium sit at the head of the gathering on a raised platform with Lech Walesa at the helm. Virtually all the workers who approach the microphone have never before been involved in trade union or political activity. Yet in the last few weeks they have emerged as shopfloor leaders. There are 53 different reports from inter-factory committees. This meeting ratifies the national one-hour strike that shook Poland two weeks ago.

## SILENCE

Walesa, wary of comments flying around the room, commands silence to explain why Bogdan Borusewicz a member of KOR, has been coopted onto the Gdansk Presidium, which for the moment is operating as the national executive of 'Solidarity'.

A heated discussion blows up as a number of delegates protest. They acknowledge KOR's role in the past defending victimized workers, yet believe they should not be included on such an important body. We must not get involved in politics, some workers explain.

Other delegates storm to the platform. How dare people question KOR. Their services in the past were indispensable to the emergence of the new union. How can we exclude them now? Even a Communist Party member defends Borusewicz. At that the meeting, without a formal decision, accepts the status quo.

Yet this argument in various forms was to recur wherever we went. Both Russia and the Polish authorities have attempted to split the movement in Poland with smears of 'anti-socialist elements'.

Workers are under tremendous pressure to dissociate themselves from KOR and 'Robotnik'.

The center of the new union organization in Katowice in lower Silesia is the steelworks—one of the largest in Western Europe. The steel plants in that region alone employ 40,000 workers. As we approach the gigantic complex, huge Communist Party billboard posters scattered everywhere stare down at you. Pictures of Lenin, calls for greater production and assertions that the decisions of the last Party Congress are being fulfilled to the letter dominate the scene. It is a grotesque abortion of socialism.

## PRISON

We are received by the secretary of the union in the plant Kazimierz Switon. He has been imprisoned on 25 different occasions for a period of 24 hours, once for five weeks and once for 4½ months. His flat has been raided 13 times and 6 typewriters confiscated. His crime? Trying to organize a free trade union.

The strike at the Katowice steel plant was a decisive factor in forcing the Gdansk agreement. 40,000 copies of their new union bulletin are distributed in over 100 different workplaces. The local Presidium has just voted 38-17 against being involved in negotiations with local Party chiefs. They fear it would be one step to absorption.

## FESTIVAL

In many respects Gdansk is a festival of organization. Yet the real belly of Poland's working class lies in the south in Silesia, where there is a massive concentration of large industries. Jastrzembie is a town, next to the Czech border, where the new union organization for the area's miners is situated.

Already 91 mines are affiliated to 'Solidarity'. The average number of miners in each pit is 8,000. In some of them everyone has joined the new union except the secretary of the Communist Party and the foremen! □

## AN IRRESISTIBLE AND POWERFUL FORCE

The strikes rammed home the message that modern Poland can by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as 'communism'. Poland is a class society—a state capitalist regime. And the crisis there is a symptom of the crisis afflicting private capitalism in the West.

At rank and file level the Communist Party—one of the largest in the world with 3 million members—is beginning to crumble under the impact of the new workers' organization.

## MEETING

At Gdansk shipyard a young worker tells us: "The Communist Party has disintegrated at shopfloor level. They aren't call a meeting of Party members because it would offer an opportunity for people to hand in their cards. The membership of the Party is drastically reduced. And the best communists are demanding its reform and joining the new union."

The ruling Communist Party has no ideology of its own. They spend all their resources crushing independent political thought. With the slogans of communism appearing so empty a wide abyss was opened up for the Church to step in and fill. Particularly as the Church has been a traditional opponent of the regime for many years.

In the Jastrzembie in Silesia union HQ crucifixes and photographs of the Pope are everywhere. For socialists in the West these symbols can be offensive. Yet it was here we really learnt of the immense authority held by the Church.

The atmosphere of terror and tension during the strike was severe. The looming prospect of Russian tanks on the horizon sends shudders

down everyone's backs. In such an atmosphere it is easy to see how the Church provides a powerful spiritual uplift that inspired many workers.

Although Polish workers still hold tremendous power in their hands they have pulled back from a revolutionary overthrow of the old order. The fear of Russian military intervention is all-pervading, creating an influential mood of steering clear of 'politics'.

Yet the formation of an independent national union organization is at once both political and highly revolutionary. As in many periods of swift social change workers' activity far exceeds their own consciousness.

Without overestimating the significance of the bulletin 'Robotnik'—the fact remains that as a result of the role it played in the preceding period it was decisive for the outcome of events that shook Poland.

Hopefully in the coming weeks 'Robotnik' can forge together militant workers across many different workplaces into some kind of national political organization that could further challenge Polish-style communism.

## ASSAULT

Communist Party leaders from Berlin to Bucharest are leading the assault on the 'anti-socialist forces' in Poland in order to prevent similar outbreaks at home. Workers in other Eastern European countries have heard of the Polish strikes and would like to know more. Polish visitors to Russia have been mobbed and trade union literature smuggled in.

A working class revolution in Poland that linked its fate to other workers across its border would be an irresistible and powerful force. □

# The worker's paper

**'ROBOTNIK':  
THE WORKER**

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Polish revolt has been the significance of the bulletin 'Robotnik' (The Worker)—a two-sided leaflet started by some members of KOR. It has appeared regularly ever since and is intensely political and directed at workers in the factories.

Although written and produced in Warsaw a number of dissidents in Gdansk decided to develop their own local variety called 'Robotnik Wybrzera' (Seaboard Worker). In the headquarters of the Gdansk new union we spoke to Bogdan Borusewicz, a historian and founding member of the local newsheet.

## SUPPLY

The Gdansk 'Robotnik' began production in early 1978. With scant access to printing equipment the material for the bulletin was copied over and over again on typewriters with 7 or 8 carbons underneath. Only a few hundred copies of each issue were produced. They were distributed from hand to hand inside the factories. Yet copies were always in short supply and sheer practical resources prevented the activists around 'Robotnik' printing as many copies as worker's insatiable demands required.

Individuals involved with the bulletin made strenuous efforts to establish firm contacts with workers. In one factory they managed to get 200 workers to sign a letter to protest over the victimizations of those distributing 'Robotnik.'

Conditions were extremely dangerous. Small meetings of workers were held in flats. At first 10-12 people attended. Often they were conducted by passing little scraps of paper across the room for fear of police bugging. Flats of supporters were also bugged and sometimes raided. Yet as more and more of those workers associated with 'Robotnik' were arrested—extra names would be added to the list of signatories to their literature. The editorial board consisted of people like Borusewicz, Lech Walesa and Anna Walentinowicz. Hard, consistent agitational activity combined with a very sympathetic response from shipyard workers helped to shape a hard core of activists. And on 29 April the founding committee of the Free Trade Unions was formed. 'Robotnik' was a very aggressive bulletin and because of their

close contact with workers it became a very important building brick in the whole edifice of the revolt.

The content of 'Robotnik' was varied. One issue has an extract from documents of the International Convention of Organization at Work (ratified in 1956 by the Communist regime). They quote Polish workers 'right to strike', to 'organize independently', 'to determine their own statutes' and contrast this with reality under present day Polish society.

An article on elections in the trade unions and other institutions spells out how they are conducted with only one list of candidates, with extra names tacked on at the end for show. Such lists are compiled secretly by unknown and unaccountable committees.

Other issues deal with the degrading effects of piece work and health and safety. For a period the bulletin led a campaign against overtime arguing that workers should have a good enough wage without having to rely on extra working.

And the 'Robotnik' group were very imaginative with a steady stream of ideas about activities. The idea for a monument to the workers shot at the Lenin shipyards in 1970 was one they plugged for years. They began organizing ceremonies at the site which last year developed into a demonstration involving many thousands. And their 'Charter of Workers' Rights'—the first of which was for independent trade unions—was to lay the basis for the Gdansk 21 demands this year.

All the leading participants in 'Robotnik' were to be thrust into organizing the occupation of the Lenin shipyards. Their previous work naturally led them to such an influential role.

## GROUNDWORK

Almost inevitably copies of 'Robotnik' came to a halt as a result. Nevertheless the bulletin had laid the groundwork for the shipyard information bulletin 'Solidarity' which is now likely to emerge as a national paper for the new unions. And everyone hopes the Gdansk 'Robotnik' will be appearing again soon.

In Warsaw we visited the

home of KOR member Henryk Wujec involved in producing another issue of 'Robotnik' in the capital.

Wujec is another extremely courageous Polish oppositionist who is hounded by the secret police. He was one of the 20-odd people arrested during the 17 day strikes and subsequently sprung from prison by the Gdansk strikers as part of their conditions for returning to work.

The Warsaw 'Robotnik' is produced in far greater numbers and has a much wider circulation than the Baltic edition. Individually printed using hand silk-screen equipment their distribution reached 20,000 copies before the summer strikes.

The bulletin's content is similar to Gdansk. Articles concentrate on immediate problems of concern for workers on the shopfloor that are developed into general political opposition to the regime.

## GATES

When they heard of a sectional strike at a factory in Kasprzak somebody was sent to the factory gates to ask workers on their way to work for details. Contacts were made and the next issue of 'Robotnik' carried an 'inside story' detailing the workers' demands.

Its influence is uneven, yet it reaches workplaces across Poland. For the last two years it has always been possible when strikes have occurred to determine whether the workers receive 'Robotnik' regularly by the kind of demands they raise. And during the 17 day revolt production of the bulletin reached 70,000 copies which were snatched up seconds after being printed.

And unlike its Gdansk counterpart the Warsaw 'Robotnik' has continued to appear since those heady days. Wujec was keen to emphasize that 'Robotnik' will remain politically independent from the new union, although closely working alongside it. The latest issue has an article warning of the dangers of developing a bureaucracy in the union—suggesting Presidium members should remain on the shopfloor. □

**Virtually all the workers who approach the microphone have never been involved in trade union or political activity. Yet in the past few weeks they have emerged as shop floor leaders.**



Eva Barker and Ralph Darlington, the authors of this special supplement, are members of British Socialist Workers Party, the sister organization of the International Socialist Organization.

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# "no power greater"

by BARBARA WINSLOW



# The war on Coal Creek

## HOW THE COAL MINERS DEFEATED CONVICT LABOR

On July 10, 1891, the Louisville Times ran the headline: "Anarchy! Laws of Tennessee set to Nought. Organized Mob of Miners Defy and Override the Power of the State!"

The subject of this hysteria was the Coal Creek rebellion, the great battle in eastern Tennessee against convict labor.

It was a two-year armed struggle against a vicious system under which the state of Tennessee rented out convicts to businessmen—plantation owners, mineowners and construction contractors.

Convict leasing was so profitable that thousands of innocent men—mainly Blacks—were railroaded into chain gangs solely to provide convict labor.

### UPRISING

Since 1871 workers fought against the convict lease system. It was used to break strikes and labor unions. It was a system used to keep wages abysmally low. Since most of the convicts were Black, it was used to whip up race hatred.

In short, it was directed against the working class, to keep it divided and poor.

By 1891 most states had abolished this wretched practice—the exceptions were southern states like Texas, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

The great uprising began in

April, 1891, when miners in Briceville, near Coal Creek, went out on strike against the Tennessee Coal and Mining Company.

The strike was solid for several months, but on July 4, Tennessee Coal announced it was bringing in convicts to break the strike.

Immediately, the miners called a mass meeting, and that evening, armed with rifles, shot guns and muskets, 300 marched to the Coal Creek stockade.

Outnumbered, the guards released the convicts, who were then put on a train to Knoxville where they were set free.

Tennessee Coal and governor Buchanan were enraged.

Three companies of the state militia were called up to protect the remaining convicts. However, they were little match for the 7,500 armed men, Blacks and whites "standing shoulder to shoulder," who had joined the miners militia to support their struggle.

Another 125 convicts were released and set free.

The miners, allied with farmers and other workers then called upon the state

legislature to outlaw the convict lease system.

But the politicians were in debt and in league with Tennessee Coal, and they refused to take action. Worse, it passed a law which encouraged convict labor.

Samuel Gompers bitterly remarked that "the state of Tennessee really converted itself into a bureau to supply scab labor."

The action of the governor and the state legislature convinced the miners that convict labor would only end through direct action.

So on Halloween night, 1,500 miners stormed the Coal Creek stockade, gave each convict civilian clothing and set them free. Then they burned the stockade to the ground.

### BASTILLE

Sympathizers compared this act to the storming of the Bastille during the French revolution of 1789.

The Chattanooga Republican defended the miners: "They are not ruffians and they are not cutthroats. 'Rather call the legislature robbers . . . Rather call the legislature inhuman because

they refused to listen to the appeals of the miners."

After the storming of the stockade, most of the companies gave in to the miners. Convicts were never used again in Briceville.

A year after the first struggle, the miners held a huge celebration. "It's funny what a little organization will do," cheered Billy Webb, president of the United Mine-workers.

However, the celebration was premature.

Another company, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railway was determined that the state of Tennessee would use convicts to mine coal.

Tennessee Coal bought out companies who refused to use convict labor, built new stockades and brought in convicts and armed guards.

In their mines convicts worked full time, while union men worked only two days. Miners active in the earlier struggle were blacklisted and fired.

Trouble was in the air. The miners started holding meetings.

The final battles took place in Tracy City, in the southeastern part of Tennessee. Tennessee Coal and Iron had refused the miners' demand that convicts not be hired.

The company brought in more convicts and armed guards, including Pinkertons, and built a stockade in Oliver Springs, just north of Tracy City.

A miners' militia appeared and burned down the stockade. This time, however, the state was more prepared.

the miners were eventually driven away by huge numbers of soldiers using field artillery and gatling guns.

A Black miner, Jake Witson, a leader of the union, was one of the first casualties. He was murdered by the troops.

Two thousand workers—Black and white—attended his funeral.

300 other miners were arrested, indicted and jailed for conspiracy and other "crimes." Some served up to ten years in jail.

In spite of the attempted "reign of terror", the miners kept fighting. Two more stockades were burned down in Tracy City before the war ended.

### BARRIERS

In 1896, after two years of bloody warfare, and 25 years of struggle, the miners finally rid themselves of the convict yoke system in Tennessee. Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railway gave in.

The miners had overcome great barriers, not just the armed force of the state, but of racism, which was used to keep them divided and weak.

The workers defeated the barbaric convict lease system, and this victory, won by ordinary miners and their families should never be forgotten. □



Caged convict labor



A Tennessee coal miner

# WHERE WE STAND



## • Workers' Control

Workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A socialist society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution according to human needs instead of profit.

The working class is the key to the fight for socialism. Freedom and liberation will only be achieved through the struggles of workers themselves, organizing and fighting for real workers' power.

## • Revolution Not Reform

The capitalist system cannot be patched up or reformed as some union leaders and liberal politicians say. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of workers. No reforms can do away with this exploitation. The only way workers can come to control society and create a system based on freedom and a decent life for all is by overthrowing capitalism and replacing it with revolutionary, democratic socialism.

## • A Workers' Government

The present state apparatus (federal and state governments, the courts, army and police) was developed to maintain the capitalist system. This apparatus cannot be taken over as it stands and converted to serve workers. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state based upon mass democratic councils of workers' delegates.

Supporting the present state apparatus is a vast network of propaganda — newspapers, radio, television, movies, the education system. Workers are bombarded daily from all directions with capitalism's point of view. The working class needs its own sources of information. To help meet this need, we are dedicated to building a newspaper that the working class can trust and use in the fight against the present system.

## • Fight Oppression

Capitalism divides the working class — pitting men against women, whites against blacks. Capitalism fosters and uses these divisions to block the unity necessary for its destruction. As capitalism moves into crisis, oppressed groups — blacks, women, latins, Native Americans, gays, youth — suffer most. We support the struggles of these oppressed groups.

We oppose racism in all its forms. We fight segregation in the schools and housing, and against racist firings and harassment. We demand freedom for all political prisoners.

We fight for women's liberation, supporting equal pay for all women workers. We fight for free abortion and an end to forced sterilization. There should be free quality child care for all who need it. We fight for equal hiring opportunities for women and an end to sexual harassment and hirings. Discrimination and harassment of sexual minorities must be fought.

We support the independent organization and struggles of oppressed people to strengthen the working class struggle for socialism.

## • Rank and File Organization

The unions today are largely business machines that long ago stopped truly fighting for the interests of the working class. Business union leaders act either as brakes on workers' struggles, or as cops, delivering workers into the hands of the bosses. We fight in the unions to put an end to this.

To make the unions fight for workers' interests, workers must organize their power on the shop floor. This can only happen if the rank and file organize themselves independently of the union bureaucrats. We work to build rank and file organizations in unions and companies wherever we are employed.

## • Internationalism

The working class has no nation. Capitalism is international, so the struggle for socialism must be world-wide. A socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation.

We champion workers' struggles in all countries, from Portugal and Spain to Chile and Puerto Rico — from Palestine and Eastern Europe to China and India. We support all genuine national liberation struggles. We call for victory of the black freedom fighters in Zimbabwe and South Africa. We oppose all forms of imperialism and oppose sending U.S. troops anywhere in the world to impose U.S. interests.

Russia, China, Cuba and Eastern Europe are not socialist countries. They are state capitalist and part of one world capitalist system. We support the struggles of workers in these countries against the bureaucratic ruling class.

## • Revolutionary Party

The activity of the ISO is directed at taking the initial steps toward building a revolutionary party in a working class fragmented and cut off from socialist ideas. Revolutionaries must be involved in the daily struggles of workers and oppressed groups at the workplace, in the unions and in the communities. We build every struggle that strengthens the self-confidence, organization and socialist consciousness of workers and the oppressed.

As the working class movement gathers strength, the need for revolutionary leadership becomes crucial. We are part of the long process of building a democratic revolutionary party rooted in the working class. Those who agree with our stand and are prepared to help us build toward revolutionary socialism are urged to join us now.

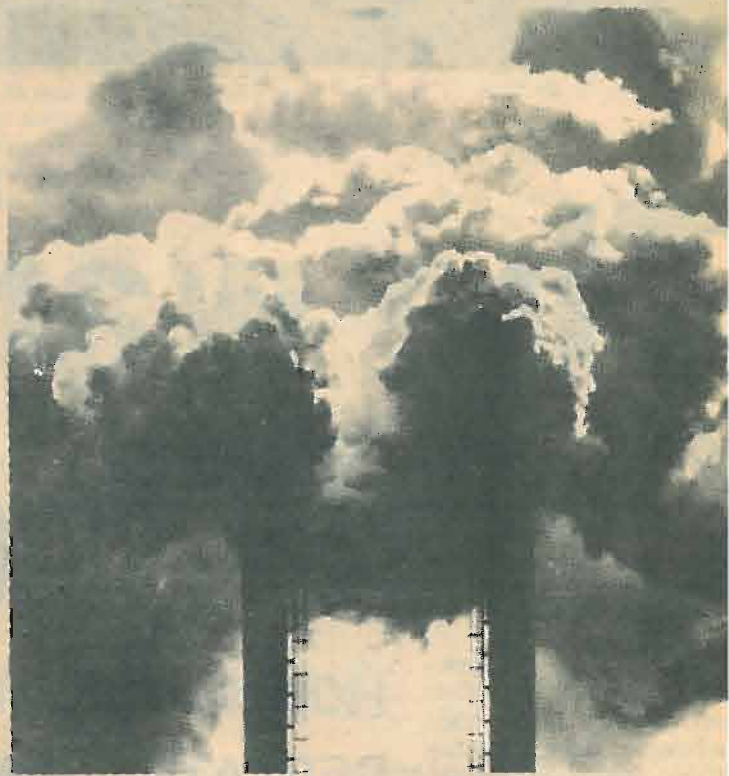
# Join the International Socialist Organization

For more information about the International Socialist Organization (ISO), please write to Box 18037, Cleveland, Ohio 44118.

## ISO NEWS

# What's ON

## ISO REGIONAL CONFERENCE SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE FOR THE EIGHTIES



### BOSTON

Barbara Winslow on **Women and the Paris Commune**. November 9, 7:30 pm, 595 Mass Ave, Cambridge. Call 282-6711 for details.

Barbara Winslow on **Revolutionary Feminism**. November 10, 2:30 pm, Bldg. 2, first floor, Rm 213, U Mass Harbor Campus.

**Fighting Racism**. November 21, 7:30, 595 Mass. Ave.

**"The Patriot Game."** Film of the Irish Resistance. November 13, 2:30 pm, Co-sponsor U Mass Anti-War Committee.

### BLOOMINGTON

Bruce Ricklin on **The Electoral Farce: What's Wrong with American Politics**. November 7, 7:00 pm

Christy Brown on **The Moral Majority: What's Wrong with American Morality**. November 14, 7:00 pm.

Milton Fisk on **Unemployment and Inflation: What's Wrong with the American Economy**. November 21, 7:00 pm. Call 336-7354 for details. All meetings to be held at Rapp's Deli, 126 E. Sixth.

### CINCINNATI

John Mason on **Slavery and Capitalism**. November 22, 7:30 pm, call 871-1371 for details.

### CLEVELAND

Anna Paczuska on **Women in Eastern Europe**. November 6, 7:30 pm. Call 371-7648 or 321-6143 for details.

Rev. Charley Fisher on **The Buffalo Killings**. November 14, 7:30 pm. Call 371-7648 or 321-6143 for details.

### DETROIT

John Anderson on **The Great Depression**. November 7, 7:30, 46a Elmhurst. Call 868-2932 or 869-0109 for details.

**PROVIDENCE**  
Barbara Winslow on **Revolutionary Feminism**. Monday, November 10, 7:30 pm, Brown University Wilson 102. Call 521-92 for details.



**"The philosophers have merely interpreted the world. The point is to change it."**

— Karl Marx

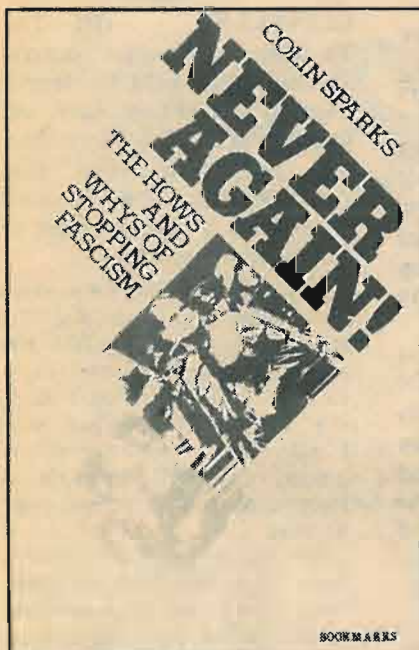
*If you want to help us change the world and build socialism, join us. There are ISO members and branches in the following cities:*

- Baltimore, MD
- Dayton, OH
- Northampton, MA
- Berkeley, CA
- Detroit, MI
- Philadelphia, PA
- Bloomington, IN
- Fort Wayne, IN
- Providence, RI
- Boston, MA
- Indianapolis, IN
- Rochester, NY
- Charleston, WV
- Kent, OH
- San Diego, CA
- Chicago, IL
- Los Angeles, CA
- Seattle, WA
- Cincinnati, OH
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# reviews

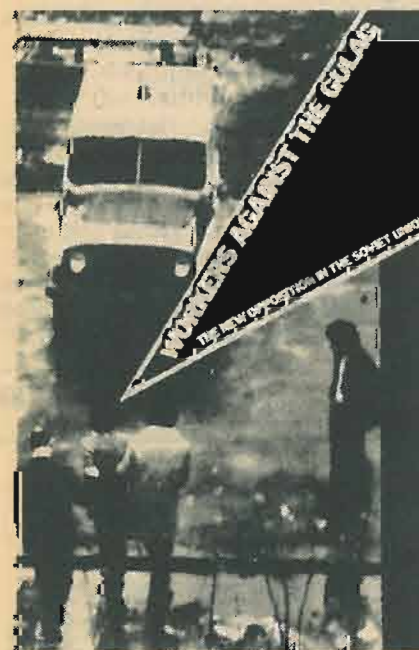
# BOOKS ARE WEAPONS



*Never Again* by Colin Sparks, 96 pages, Bookmarks, \$4.95



*Rosa Luxemburg* by Tony Cliff, 92 pages, Bookmarks, \$4.95



*Workers Against the Gulag*, edited by Viktor Haynes and Olga Semyonova, 134 pages, Pluto Press, \$3.95

A complete catalogue is available from Hera Press on request. Write to Box 18037, Cleveland, Ohio 44118

I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary's next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding



## The Autobiography of MALCOLM X

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley*, 460 pages, Grove Press, \$2.25

page, I also learned of people and places and events in history. Actually the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary's A section had filled a whole tablet—and I went on into the B's. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary.

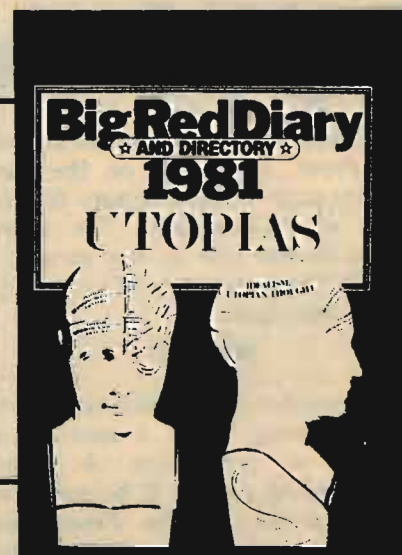
It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.


I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left that prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk. You couldn't have gotten me out of books with a wedge.

Between Mr. Muhammad's teachings, my correspondence, my visitors—usually Ella and Reginald—and my reading of books, months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life.

—Malcolm X, *Autobiography*

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## on the picket line

# Rank and file solid at General Electric

BLOOMINGTON, IN—International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 2249's three week strike against General Electric ended on Saturday, October 18.

The strike was called when GE refused to reinstate long

term employee Thomas Upton, who was fired for taking a coffee break without permission from his foreman.

Upton had been working continuously for a number of hours and had been repeatedly refused a break.

Upton's dismissal was seen as a threat to the job security of every worker. The rank and file voted to go out in a tremendous show of solidarity.

GE tried hard to defeat the strike using time worn methods: threatening to hire scabs,

monitoring the pickets with several cameras and sending out letters that promised so-called "special working conditions" for those who would cross the picket line.

Despite these efforts the strike was supported by 85-90% of the union members and 150 non-union members.

Steve Norman, president of Local 2249, was convinced that the company was dragging its feet in reaching a settlement in order to demoralize union members and defeat the union. It didn't work.

The strike was an unusual one for GE. It wasn't the ritual that traditionally occurs at contract time, and the union rank and file responded enthusiastically. Many workers told *Socialist Worker* that rank and file solidarity was significantly strengthened by the strike.

But the settlement did not reflect this strength. The only victory the union scored was to get "expedited arbitration" on the Upton case—besides a management promise to investigate the injury of a picket by a scab on the picket line.

GE had originally offered to arbitrate, a fact that considerably pales the "victory."

by BY CHRISTINA BROWN & ED MOOR

## TEAMSTER REFORMERS MEET

CLEVELAND, OH—The Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) held its fourth annual convention here on October 11 and 12. More than 400 people attended this year—roughly the same number as last year—most of whom were teamsters.

In a difficult period for workers in general and rank and file members in particular, TDU has maintained, and in some cases extended its organization. Following last year's merger with PROD, another teamster reform group, the TDU now claims forty chapters in states from coast to coast.

But the recession and lay-offs have taken their toll on TDU. Most notably, the large number of car-haulers and steel-haulers that dominated earlier conventions were not to be seen.

TDU has, however, managed to increase its numbers in the war housing and manufacturing sections of the union. It plans to continue this effort.

TDU's main campaign over the next year will be directed at the IBT's 1981 convention. It is seeing several changes in the IBT constitution. Part of the campaign will be an attempt to move the convention site from Las Vegas, Nevada—a right-to-work state which has not ratified the ERA.

TDU also faces a number of problems. There is an unwillingness, for example, on the part of the TDU leadership to take on important political issues. There was no discussion of the IBT endorsement of Ronald Reagan at this year's presidential election.

The narrow approach of TDU was also highlighted during the final session of the convention.

A motion from a Chicago based group, Teamsters Against Racism, was squelched by the TDU leadership.

The motion asked TDU's support in condemning a Chicago Teamsters local for giving to cops jobs after they had been accused of murdering a Black man, Charles Ramey.

### DRIFT

With the rightward drift evident in the country, TDU strength will be a strong, militant rank and file base—willing to take firm stands on racism and other political issues that arise. Simply reforming the union will not be enough. The growth of an open socialist current within the TDU can only help in that process.

by AHMED SHAW

A personal history by a rank and file worker

## THE DEPRESSION OF THE THIRTIES



BY JOHN ANDERSON

Available from Hera Press, PO Box 18037, Cleveland, 44118. 50¢.



CINCINNATI, OH—Seventy five members of AFSCME Local 217 rallied here on October 8 to protest bad faith bargaining by University of Cincinnati administrators.

### HEALTH

Kevin Jackson, a union member who works in the transportation department told *Socialist Worker*, "All we want is two cents. If I was on welfare I'd get better medical care—I'd be able to get my teeth fixed. This university can spend money on flowers and a fancy house for the president, but it can't spend two cents for our health."

The picket line marched through the administration building, chanting, "We're not worth two cents" and "Ready to Strike."



## TALKIN' UNION BY JOHN ANDERSON

# DETROIT: BLEAK PICTURE FOR FUTURE OF AUTO INDUSTRY

In a series of articles in the *Detroit Free Press*, authorities on the auto industry paint a bleak picture for the future of the industry. The sharp decline in the sale of big cars and trucks is the major cause of unemployment in Michigan.

### SHARE

The switch to the small fuel efficient car will bring about a number of changes in production. A larger percentage of parts will be made by foreign producers. The *Free Press* article says: "... the use of new materials and foreign parts for the new "world cars" suggests a major reshuffling of supply sources, in which other parts of the country and the world will capture a larger share of job."

Donald Smith, director of the University of Michigan Industrial Development Division says the mass installation of computer-assisted machines will enable the industry to

produce the same number of cars with 20 to 25 per cent fewer workers.

Harley Shaiken, a consultant for the UAW and an authority on advanced technology, predicts a loss of 200,000 hourly jobs that now exist among the Big Three and major suppliers. They will disappear over the next ten years.

The switch from steel to aluminium and plastics is a major threat to jobs in Michigan and the Midwest. These will be produced in the sunbelt where oil and gas are produced. They may even be produced by some of the OPEC countries.

The "world car" looms as a major threat, not only to American auto workers, but to auto workers in all of the industrialized nations. Bargaining with the multinational corporations will take on a world-wide dimension. Unless the unions adapt themselves to world wide bargaining the employers will exploit nationalist loyalties as well as corporation rivalries.

The UAW is bound by three year



John Anderson is a lifelong militant and socialist. He was formerly president of UAW local 15 in Detroit.

contracts until 1982. The leadership must begin now to communicate with the leadership of the Japanese, the European and the British trade unions to work out a strategy for future bargaining with the multinational corporations.

### RESULT

Their failure to do so could result in an ever growing number of cars and their parts being made in low wage countries under the worst conditions.

We must lend our support to the Mexican, the Korean, the Brazilian and the workers of other third world countries where new plants are being built. We must support those workers in their struggles to improve their standard of living.



## SUPPORT THE STRIKE AT PLYMOUTH STAMPING!

PLYMOUTH, MI—When the Plymouth Stamping company asked its workers to take a \$1.50 hourly wage cut, these members of UAW Local 985 went on strike.

Employment in this plant has declined in recent years from 200 to the present 30.

The company has opened a plant in Wauseon, Ohio—population 4,932. It is reported they are paying the workers there the minimum wage. In Plymouth they had been receiving \$9.00 plus.

### SCABS

The strike was no sooner called than the company began recruiting scabs. Supervision and the Wayne County Sheriff's deputies have been herding scabs through the picket lines.

I was told they have the normal work force employed. The strikers have been threatened with an injunction.

The workers in this plant have a limited understanding of the importance of their strike to the UAW membership as a whole.

The chairperson at the plant was not receptive to criticism of John Ellis, president of Local 985. Any criticism of the UAW leader-

## CONTAINER WORKERS WALK OUT

JAMESBURG, NJ—On October 31, 1980, after two and a half months of negotiations with a stonewalling company, USWA 6405 here walked out on strike.

The workers at Container Corporation of America decided that they could no longer allow the company to step on them.

### PICKET

The first picket ever to be set up in the seventeen year history of CCA was started at 12:01 am Friday morning. That picket—a group of 25 members of our local—showed the strength and determination that few of us thought we ever had.

Some of the major issues include contract language changes, hospitalization and pension benefits and a substantial wage increase. These demands, being the basics we are always denied no matter where we work, must be met at least in part.

The company, in an effort to break our spirit early, accused us of scattering debris across the entrance of the factory, intimidating management personnel and truck drivers, and also of stealing wooden pellets to be used for firewood.

The union was summoned to court on Saturday November 1, and a court injunction limiting the number of pickets was sought by the company. However, the judge ruled in our favor, no injunction was ordered. The judge did give us a warning, telling us not to interfere with the trucking operations—and told us that if we did an injunction would be placed against us.

Within two hours of the court adjournment, the company had set up cameras and called a truck to cross our picket lines—this being a device to catch us ignoring the judge's orders. Knowing that we would be in court again on Monday, we stopped the truck and sent the driver on his way. □

by C. RENAUD

by JOHN ANDERSON

ship might jeopardize their strike benefits of \$65.00 per week.

It is important the UAW membership be informed should the company be successful in cutting wages or in replacing the strikers with scabs. They strike should have our support.

The UAW leadership has the attitude that small plants are expendable. They feel the amount of dues collected from these plants doesn't warrant the cost of servicing them.

The small plants are suppliers for the Big Three auto manufacturers. These plants threaten the job security as well as the wages and working conditions of all UAW members.

There are a number of reasons why the UAW leadership are opposed to the mass picketing of these plants.

They know such picketing would introduce workers to the ideas of the class struggle. Workers might be exposed to socialist ideas. Mass picketing will demonstrate the power of the workers. It would jeopardize the bureaucrats control of the workers.

In their struggles the workers would become aware of the role of the police, the courts and other government agencies. Their subservience to the employers would become clear.

### COLLUSION

When workers adopt class struggle ideas they expose the collusion of the Labor bureaucrats and the enemies of labor—the employers, the government and its agencies.

The UAW and other unions were built by mass picketing—by the class struggle.

The breaking of the Plymouth Stamping strike would be an injury to the UAW and its membership. Let's bring back the spirit of 1937. An injury to one is an injury to all! □

## ANTI-NUKE LABOR CONFERENCE

PITTSBURGH, PA—Nearly 1,000 trade unionists and environmentalists attended the first national conference of the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment.

### SPEAKERS

The keynote speakers at the conference were Sam Church, the president of the United Mine Workers, and William Winpinger, the president of the Machinists.

The conference met to encourage safe alternatives to nuclear power and to protect the jobs of workers in the nuclear industry and to promote jobs for workers in the transition from nuclear power to non-nuclear power.

Sam Church used the opportunity to promote the use of coal. The largest contingent at the conference was that of the miners.

The conference marks an important step in the fight against nuclear power. The problem is seeing that many resolutions passed by the conference are fought for and put into practice.

The conference did endorse a nationwide observance of the anniversary of Karen Silkwood's death the week of November 8-16. □

## Seattle cement drivers: confidence is contagious

SEATTLE, WA—Cement drivers struck their companies on September 11. The companies "last and final offer" would have meant a loss in real wages and conditions.

The strikers virtually shut down all major construction in Seattle and most of King County.

The strike lasted for more than a month and was settled on October 21. Frank Spracklin, a member of the elected strike committee, talked to *Socialist Worker* about the organization of the strike and its outcome.

"The contract was up August 1—we started getting ready in March. Every shop had a meeting to discuss demands. These were organized by the shop stewards.

"An offer was presented to the drivers by the union on August 23 at a special contract meeting. Acceptance was recommended by Bob Cooper, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 174.

"But the offer gave us nothing new and had some take-aways. It was voted down unanimously and a strike authorization vote passed 172 to 11.

### COMMITTEE

"We set up an elected drivers' committee. Two drivers from each plant were elected. Prior to this, there was informal communication between shop stewards and active drivers at different companies.

"Between August 23 and September 9, all the shops met to develop counter proposals. The drivers' committee met after this and formalized 9 demands that were strike issues. These were presented to the companies and the union September 9.

"When the companies refused our counter offer, we struck September 11. The vote was 210 to 27."

Spracklin emphasized the importance of rank and file organization during the strike.

"It was the only cohesive democratic leadership for the strike. It met throughout the strike twice a week and also kept in contact by phone. It provided an organization that worked between the union and the drivers. It also supplied a uniform view of the strike. If



Frank Spracklin

one company was down, they could call on other shops to help on their pickets. It organized support.

"The union didn't like the committee acting in its own right. They tried to keep us in the dark about what was going on between them and the companies.

"Several times they tried to pit the drivers against the committee. This always backfired. We forced the union to go after more than they wanted to."

### SUCCESS

The committee will continue after the strike. "We'll share grievances—so that grievances won at one shop will be instituted at other shops. This will create more continuity between workplaces."

The strike was successful in two respects. As Spracklin put it: "We were fairly successful in terms of our demands. It was a big success in terms of creating an effective workers organization in sand and gravel. People saw there was

nothing wrong in fighting for what they believed in, in spite of threats from the companies and the union.

"Lots of people feel that they were deserted at the end by other unions and the union leadership. But substantial gains were made over the so-called "last and final offer" and they feel good about that."

Spracklin talked about some of the lessons of the strike: "In the fight between companies and workers, no one group of workers can win the war. But each group of workers has to take its stand and fight its particular battle with the strength they can muster and not hold back like the union always wants to do.

### UNITY

"I know that if we don't fight back, whenever and wherever we can, the system will slowly just take everything we have and reduce our standard of living to a dismal level.

"These strikes also tend to unify groups of workers and set examples to the next group of strikers. Other truck drivers will take our example and use the good things we've developed, thus making their struggle more effective.

"Meanwhile the idea of struggling itself becomes more and more legitimate. When you strike once, you're more confident. Confidence comes from strength. Confidence is contagious." □

by STEVE LEIGH



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# Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION

DECATUR, ALABAMA MAINTENANCE MAN APPEALS FOR HELP

## BLACK WORKER

## FRAMED IN KLAN ATTACK



One of the Decatur Klansmen attacking a Black protest march. No Klansmen have been charged—but Curtis Robinson has.

DECATUR, AL—Curtis Robinson, a Decatur, Alabama, city hall maintenance man, has been charged with assault-with-intent-to-murder a Ku Klux Klansman.

The charge comes after a gun battle erupted when a peaceful march by about 60 Blacks was stopped by more than 100 club-swinging Klansmen, some of whom broke through police lines and attacked the marchers.

The marchers were marching to the Morgan County Courthouse to protest the conviction last year of Tommy Lee Hines, a 26 year-old retarded Black man, for the rape of a white woman.

### CRIMES

Three Black marchers were shot but no Klansman has been charged with these crimes.

Robinson, his wife, and five children were in their car following the behind the marchers.

Four blocks from the courthouse the Klan waited, armed with guns, knives, clubs, baseball bats, iron rods, sharpened sticks, dogs, and chains.

As the march reached the point where the Klan had massed, it stopped, or more precisely, was stopped.

Fighting and pushing with police, a number of Klansmen had moved into the streets and blocked the marchers' path.

With the march at a standstill and caught between the Klan and police, Robinson got out of his car, leaving his family inside.

Around him Klansmen were fighting both police and marchers, while other Klans-

men beat on some of the cars in the march, including Robinson's.

Then gunfire broke out from an undetermined direction. The front tire of Robinson's car was shot out. Robinson, who has had a licensed pistol for five years, drew it from his pants pocket for protection, and in the melee it discharged.

Many Blacks in Decatur have armed themselves for self-protection since racial trouble began last year. Robinson has carried his gun to work at city hall with the knowledge of the police.

As the street cleared of marchers and Klansmen, because of the shooting, Mrs. Robinson drove away in the disabled car with their children, and Robinson ran for cover.

On Monday, two days after the clash, a detective came to Robinson's house and arrested him for assault-with-intent-to-murder one of the wounded Klan members. The

### CURTIS ROBINSON AND THE COASTERS

From 1951 to 1960, Curtis Robinson was a member of the famous singing group, The Coasters, known for the popular song "Charlie Brown" ("Why's everybody always picking on me?"—Curtis sang the base).

But the entertainment business is unpredictable, and Curtis had to quit singing. He left Cleveland and returned home to his native Alabama. He has found it painful to suffer humiliating racial discrimination back home, especially after being accepted worldwide while a famous singer.

Contributions and messages of support can be sent to Curtis Robinson, C/O Southern Poverty Law Center, 1001 South Hull Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36101.

charge carries a maximum of 20 years.

Attorneys think it would be impossible for Robinson to get a fair trial in Decatur. After they subpoenaed 70 witnesses for Robinson's preliminary hearing, which had been on the court docket for over a month, the district attorney hastily convened a special grand jury and indicted him, thereby stopping the hearing and denying Robinson the chance to learn the facts of the state's case against him before trial.

"This was an attempt to undercut Mr. Robinson's constitutional rights," Morris Dees, the attorney handling the case, said.

### MOVE

Dees has asked that the trial be moved to another city because sympathy for the Klan is so strong in this industrialized town of 45,000. One KKK rally on the outskirts of the city last fall drew 10,000 persons; 5,000 attended another. The courts refused to move the trial, now scheduled for fall. □

### BOSTON BUS DRIVERS WIN!



BOSTON, MA—Some 500 school bus drivers have agreed to return to work here after three weeks on strike.

The strike was the most dramatic Boston union confrontations in recent years.

The drivers, members of United Steel Workers Local 8751, faced the arrest of 19 strike leaders, the jailing of six picketers, 200 out-of-state strike breakers, and a Federal court injunction against the strike.

The strikers voted 108 to 13 to return to work after ARA Services, a multinational corporation which runs the buses, agreed to rehire 19 union leaders fired when the wildcat strike began October 9.

Tess Ewing, the union president, called the strike an important victory. "This is a significant victory that 500 bus drivers have won against a major corporation." □