

# TRUTH

## Achille Lauro — US rulers sharpen their knives

By DAVID MARK

The interdiction of the Egyptian airplane carrying four Palestinians by US fighters is being touted by Reagan administration officials as a major blow against terrorism. But is this really the case? Is it true that those who carried out the hijacking of the Achille Lauro were responsible for the murder of an American? Did Reagan have only the motives of protecting American citizens in ordering the "official hijacking" of an Egyptian airplane?

From the reports in the bourgeois press it is impossible to find a single aspect of the event that makes sense. The only thing that is clear is the official line of the Reagan administration: "a major blow against terrorism," "congratulations Mr. Reagan," and "a justifiable act," the newspapers say. But the facts do not hang together.

Initially, it was not clear if there was indeed anyone killed. Then it was reported an American might have been killed by the hijackers. The hijackers do not claim to have killed anyone. The first reports were contradictory, "two bullets in the chest" according to a passenger relating a conversation with the ship's bartender, who supposedly saw the shooting. But now the bartender himself claims to have seen nothing.

Then a body is found badly decomposed in Syria. A bullet in the head and one in the back say reports. Mohammed Abbas, the PLO representative who negotiated the release of the passengers, said

"if someone really died, which I doubt, then for sure it was a matter of a heart attack and the responsibility of the captain."

In the early days, there were all kinds of atrocities reported against Americans on board the boat. But now there seems to be no hard evidence that any atrocities took place at all.

We need to be very suspicious about all the reports in the press during these times. It would not be the first time that Reagan has deliberately lied and fabricated alleged "terrorist attacks" against Americans in order to further his own imperialist aims. In the destruction of a Korean airliner by Soviet warplanes, it was claimed by the US government that the commercial airliner was not being used by the US to spy on Russian military installations. The Soviets were "terrorists." Later, after the bourgeois scandal sheets had gotten all the circulation out of the affair they could, the matter was dropped. But later, it was reported in a prestigious British military publication, *Janes*, that the US government had indeed used the commercial Korean airline as a spy plane.

It is also clear that this event served to cover the October 1 Israeli bombing of the PLO complex in Tunisia, a neutral country. Fortunately for Reagan, the affair also led to the collapse of the Italian government, which had not been favorable to Reagan's NATO policies. Certainly, this gives the Reagan administration a new excuse to freeze the Palestinians out of

negotiations, which had been a thorn in Reagan's Middle East policies.

Just as with Grenada, and just as with the hostages taken in Lebanon, the Reagan administration has used every opportunity to whip up an hysterical attack on Nicaragua and the rebels of El Salvador, who had absolutely nothing to do with anything that happened.

Many questions remain unanswered as we go to press, but two things are clear. There is as yet not one shred of evidence to support the idea that the PLO ordered the hijacking, nor even that an American was executed by the Palestinians. The story put out by the Reagan administration that it was a terrorist attack by the PLO indeed served the interests of the Reagan administration very well. The Palestinians, who are decade-old victims of Israeli aggression, supported by the US, who have been robbed of their homelands with the collusion of every major capitalist power, are once again going to suffer the blows of imperialism.

As for the Reagan administration, this new adventure will be used not only against Palestinians, but against Nicaragua, the rebels of El Salvador, and against American working people as well.

Defend the Palestinian people!

Down with Reagan!

## Defend the Chrysler Strike

With several early walkouts at factories, the UAW officially struck Chrysler at midnight on Tuesday, October 15. More than 70,000 workers in the United States and 10,000 in Canada "hit the bricks."

We urge all our readers, and working people everywhere, to support in any way they can this strike against Chrysler. Chrysler is where the first concessions were granted to the bosses in 1979. Now it can be the place they are turned back.

This cannot be a "business-as-usual" strike if it is going to win. Like the Greyhound workers strike, and the AP Parts strike in Toledo, it must have the support of the working class community to win.

For this reason we also call on militant unionists and rank-and-file to reach out to working people by building action committees to organize strike support. The strike needs legal defense, aids at picket lines, publicity, and many other types of support. With this support it can win!



Strikers walk the line at Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant in Detroit.

## Detroit mayoral elections

The TO/USA has had the opportunity for its leadership to meet and discuss the results of the campaign of Barbara Putnam, TO/USA member, for mayor of Detroit. This discussion also served to review the efforts of the party in the past to construct an electoral alliance of working class parties.

The discussion focused on the importance of the fight for the Labor Party and the usefulness of the tactic of the united front for this campaign. Despite the failure of the SWP, and other organizations claiming to be for a Labor Party, to make a united front against the bourgeois parties in elections, the TO has at least been able to gain support for its proposition for an alliance among wider circles of workers and militants. This has now occurred in two mayoral elections in Detroit.

In 1981, the first election campaign in which the TO obtained ballot status, our candidate fought for a workers candidate and received 1300 votes against 1500 votes for the SWP candidate. True, Mayor Young received tens of thousands of votes, this shows the value of making an alliance against the bourgeois parties.

But we received more support for our proposition for an alliance, also. In the recent Detroit elections we received 600 votes against the SWP's 150. This time, at least among those who voted for working class parties, our proposition for a united front won a clear victory.

The political report also assessed the areas where the TO received its strongest support.

"Precinct by precinct results show that the TO achieved high votes where the other working class parties received high votes. Out of some 25 voting districts, we beat the other parties in 23 of them." In the other two precincts the votes were very close. The results showed both the fact that the majority of our votes were working class votes, and the fact that the support for all working class parties taken together tended to come from the major working class districts in Detroit. This was also the case in the 1981 elections.

The Political Report concludes:

"In general, it is once again clear that an alliance behind one working class candidate, no matter who that candidate was, would have in fact not only developed a larger mobilization and a larger overall working class vote (probably enabling the working class candidate to finish at least third) but also would have greatly favored our party."

"The extremely poor results of the SWP

suggest that the confrontation with this party in a public arena around the proposal for an alliance was probably fatal for this campaign. This despite the fact that they sunk a great deal of effort into the campaign in the beginning."

"If one estimates the militant resources available to each of the working class parties in the elections, counting the experienced organizers of each organization versus votes obtained, the results of our election campaign are even more astonishing..." in this case, the report stated, our organization even though smaller than the SWP's received many more votes.

On the basis of these favorable results, we have decided to continue with the tactic of a united front in bourgeois elections, and in particular, to put forward a campaign for a workers electoral alliance in the 1986 Congressional elections. We urge all those who favor such a campaign to begin now to build this alliance.  
D.M.

## Where do we go from October actions?

Across the country, and locally in Detroit, there have been militant demonstrations against apartheid and US intervention in Central America. These actions were all of a local character, but they are reminiscent of the early days of the sixties — many new faces have appeared in the streets to protest against imperialism. But the movement requires a whole new direction.

The struggle that has been going on in the local Detroit coalition to build the October 26 demonstration shows what the problem is.

From beginning to end our efforts in and out of the coalition have simply been to maximize support and active participation of working people, and high school students from Detroit's largely working class areas.

As a part of this work we put forward early in the preparatory work of the coalition a proposal for Crystal Lee Sutton, the real life figure whom the movie "Norma

### The Trotskyist Organization, a Working Class Organization

The Trotskyist Organization is a working class organization that in all cases defends the interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie and its agents (the banks, big businessmen; bosses; the army, police courts; the Republican and Democratic Parties).

The Trotskyist Organization is fighting to build an independent working class party, a Labor Party, to fight for the demands of the working class against the bourgeoisie and its agents — for jobs, wages, decent working conditions, schools, housing; for freedom for Blacks, women all oppressed; an end to US intervention; for union rights.

We are fighting to build a revolutionary working class leadership prepared to lead the working class in securing its demands by any means necessary — the occupation of the factories, the formation of a working class militia, the seizure of power through a popular uprising, the establishment of a workers government based on workers councils, and the expropriation of the banks and big business; in other words... socialist revolution.

The Trotskyist Organization supports the struggle of Black people, the Nicaraguan people and all oppressed peoples against US imperialism without conditions. We fight to mobilize the entirety of the working class in solidarity with them and to build working class parties to lead this fight.

We support the struggle of the Polish workers against the Kremlin bureaucracy, which oppresses the workers and collaborates with US imperialism in restoring imperialist exploitation. We fight to mobilize all workers in solidarity with them and to build working class parties to lead this fight.

The Trotskyist Organization is fighting to build an open Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the US Section of the Fourth International, World Party of the Socialist Revolution, to lead the working class. We aim to do this by fighting for the interests of the working class in the mass working class movement and by training working class youth as working class leaders. This is the meaning of Trotskyism and why we call ourselves Trotskyists.

The Trotskyist Organization urges all groups of working class youth, working class women and working class men that want to collaborate in this struggle, to join the Trotskyist Organization and form Committees to lead the fight in the neighborhoods, schools, factories and unions. Those who want to do this should write the Trotskyist Organization.

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# For an open Trotskyist Congress

to rebuild the US section of the Fourth International

Rae" was based on, to be a speaker at the demonstration. Crystal Lee agreed to be a speaker. She advocates a labor party based on her experiences with trying to organize textile workers in the South.

Initially, all were agreed to this proposal in the coalition. Then a local bureaucrat of the ACTWU, Bernie Firestone, opposed Crystal Lee's presence. It seems that Crystal Lee found it necessary to wage a struggle against the policies of the bureaucrats in ACTWU. This, in fact, should be commended because as anyone who is familiar with the attempts to organize the textile workers of the South knows, these struggles are permeated with betrayals by the union bosses. Crystal Lee's calls for a Labor Party undoubtedly also infuriated union officials who support the bosses' Democratic Party.

No sooner did this little union boss peep than the SWP, the Freeze CASC and a few others on and off the steering committee jump to his side. Crystal Lee must go, they said, to maintain the "unity" of the coalition and the support of Bernie Firestone. They overruled the entire local coalition and rescinded the invitation to Crystal Lee Sutton to speak.

Twice the coalition as a body overturned the steering committee, but still the steering committee refused to respect the intent of the majority.

This little battle is symptomatic of a struggle that is going on in many coalitions across the country. Some have disbanded, others like in Detroit are regrouping. The meaning of this situation is not a mystery. The most militant forces, those who represent you and fresh forces of students, young workers, and the ranks of the unions are asserting their presence against the opportunist elements, the wavering, and those who are tied by ideology or greed to the bosses and bureaucrats. The Norma Raes against the Bernie Firestones.

We have taken a side. We want the movement against US intervention in Central America and against apartheid to grow. We want it to but all its effort into mobilizing the union worker, the unemployed, the youth, the Black and Brown — all those who have so much in common against Reagan and the ruling class he represents. We want a large national action based on this kind of preparatory work.

Unionists, workers, all those who defend the Blacks of South Africa and the people of Central America against their

oppressors! Defend the right of Crystal Lee Sutton to speak against the union bosses. Build a large, national working class mobilization for the Spring of '86.

## FIT re-evaluates position

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) is currently re-evaluating its tactic of acting as an external tendency of the SWP in light of the refusal of the SWP to readmit any of the expelled oppositionists.

In a related development, a split of a minority tendency from Socialist Action, Socialist Unity, has occurred and it is in the process of fusing with Shachtmanite remnants called Workers Power and the International Socialists.

*The Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* of the FIT No. 23 states that there are three positions on its National Organizing Committee on what to do next. The FIT will be holding a national conference in February.

In the same issue, the FIT publishes a call to former SWP militants from an ex-SWPer who resigned in 1979 — "It's Time to Come Back and Fight" by Tom Barrett. In this call he develops criticism of the SWP's "turn" to industry of 1975-76.

Also in this issue, the FIT discusses the policies of Socialist Unity. Socialist Unity apparently draws the conclusion that it is wrong for organizations to be "setting up shop as Bolsheviks." Its fusion with the Shachtmanites is based on an amalgam-type organization.

It is clear that there is a crisis in the SWP, the SA and SU, and the FIT. And it is good that a discussion is developing over why there is a crisis and what to do about it.

From our point of view, the reason for these splits, for those claiming Trotskyism to unite with moribund Shachtmanites, for crises in perspectives, is that all these organizations have broken with the continuity of the Fourth International. The struggle of the Fourth International from 1938 to the present provides the lessons to overcome these crises. And we propose a means to develop this discussion towards a positive resolution: a Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the US section of the Fourth International.

There are three fundamental lessons of the Fourth International's struggle that apply to the current situation in the SWP oppositions.

First, only with a line of working class

independence is it possible to build a working class party.

The SWP failed to grow in the 1960s and 1970s as a working class party because it refused to develop any efforts toward involving the workers. When the class moved on its own, the SWP was incapable of finding a road to it because without an independent working class line, it had nothing to offer.

This policy is repeated by the oppositions. They fail to develop an independent working class line in the anti-intervention coalitions. Thus, there is little effort nationally to reach out to the workers.

Second, a working class party can be built only by differentiating its line from opportunism and Stalinism.

The oppositions maintain the method of party building of the SWP in the 60s and 70s. But the SWP did not build a working class party in the midst of a great working class upsurge. It developed a line of adaptation to the class collaborators and Stalinists, especially around its adaptation to Castroism.

And so today, the FIT and Socialist Action find themselves unable to put into practice in one city, in one election, their support for Labor candidates. Instead, it remains, as in the SWP, a programmatic point devoid of struggle because of the fear of alienating class collaborators that they are allied with in the anti-intervention coalitions.

Third, only with a democratic centralist party is it possible to lead the workers. The SWP abandoned this long ago becoming a clique-ridden organization where any opposition means expulsion.

On the other hand, Socialist Action does not even claim to be a league, or a working class organization — it calls itself a "group of activists." The FIT sees itself as an expelled tendency. Soon it will have to confront the dead-end that this form has become. Only a party with a single line in action, arrived at by democratic means, a combat party, can develop the party line and lead the workers against the capitalists and their agents.

To overcome the crises in the oppositions, in the SWP itself, it is necessary to re-establish the link with the continuity of the Fourth International. To accomplish this goal, we propose a Trotskyist Congress to rebuild the US section of the Fourth International. We urge the the FIT to consider this at its February conference. F.M.

# The South African working class

By FRED MICHAELS

The African National Congress is clearly one of the major, if not the major, organization leading the struggle of South African Blacks against the apartheid regime. It has been in existence since the early 1900's and is one of the longest continuing organizations in the struggle of Black South Africans.

In this first of a series of articles on South Africa, we will present a framework for understanding the class struggle there.

## The Working Class

The only way to understand the place of the African National Congress is to understand the struggle between the Blacks and whites in South Africa.

The Black people of South Africa in the 1700's were analogous to the American Indians. South Africa was their home and it was invaded and seized by the white European settlers. Furthermore, these settlers brought slaves from all over Africa to work in South Africa.

Unlike the United States, however, the immigration stopped; the Blacks fought back and were not eliminated; the country entered the twentieth century with a huge Black majority without rights and a small minority of white Boers and British rulers.

Since the 1900s, there has been the growth of a Black working class in South Africa, in the factories and mines, as well as the service sector. It has a history as rich as any large working class with heroic strikes, mass organizations, selfless militants and strong working class parties.

In addition, a large rural proletariat that has worked on the farms of the racists has also emerged. And, due to the forced "homeland" policy and the racist laws preventing property ownership by Blacks, there are large groupings of impoverished peasants and herds people in the countryside.

The capitalists have denied all democratic rights to the Blacks and so-called Colored from the early 1700s, but these laws and restrictions became qualitatively worse with the imposition of apartheid in 1948.

## The Constituent Assembly

The struggle of Blacks in South Africa in this century has had a mixed character to it. The struggle of all Blacks for their democratic rights has been interwoven with the struggle of the Black workers for their working class rights and demands.

Thus, for the Trotskyists, the task posed in South Africa is establishing a Constituent Assembly, that is, the open and free

election of representatives of the people to decide the fate and course of the nation. And the history of South Africa convinces us that this course can be opened up only by a powerful movement of the South African working class in terms of strikes, boycotts, etc.

Just as in Iran and Nicaragua, it will be the entrance of the working class on the scene which will signal the end of the oppressive regime.

## What is the ANC?

The ANC, a cosigner along with the Indian National Congress and other organizations, of the Freedom Charter of 1955 is committed to such a government. The Charter states: "Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws; all people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country; the rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex."

The ANC never conceived of itself as a working class organization.

Because no imperialist government ever cared to support the Blacks, all the different Black organizations that developed in the struggle for freedom were trained and

## Brigades for Nicaragua!

As many of our readers know, the Trotskyist Organization has waged a campaign for open brigades to defend Nicaragua as a means to build a large working class mobilization in defense of Nicaragua.

The cowardice and viciousness of the US attacks on Nicaragua have increased, forcing the Sandinistas to extend the state of emergency in Nicaragua in order to better deal with this US war.

Militants of the Trotskyist Organization applied to go to Nicaragua on work brigades organized by the Nicaragua Exchange in December 1984. After our applications were turned down because of the organizers' opposition to our politics, we appealed the decision to the Nicaraguan Embassy.

Luis Mendez, the embassy representative in charge of solidarity projects with Nicaragua, explained this summer that the Nicaragua Exchange was a separate voluntary organization that requested the right to enter Nicaragua from the embassy. He did not defend its decision; he said it was not the policy of the Nicaraguan government to dictate any particular policy to those who wish to help

schooled by revolutionaries and Marxists.

It is not surprising then that the African National Congress is an organization that is permeated in its ideology, in its history and in its current policy, by Communists, specifically, by supporters of the outlawed Communist Party of South Africa.

And its commitment is to the construction of a free South African state. As the Communist Party describes the Freedom Charter (*Fifty Fighting Years* by A. Lerumo): "The South African Freedom Charter stems from the tradition of the proclamation of rights of the French and American revolutions and echoed in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. . . . It is not a socialist manifesto."

Our attitude as working class militants is clear: support to the struggle of the South African Black people for a Constituent Assembly (or any other name as long as it has the same content); defense of the African National Congress and any other organization to the extent that it pursues this goal; and third, the construction of a party or organization to lead the Black South African workers into this battle.

*Next: the Trotskyists in South Africa*

Nicaragua. He suggested that we develop our own project which he would be more than happy to work with us on.

The Trotskyist Organization feels that Luis Mendez's remarks overturns the political objections raised by the Nicaragua Exchange to Trotskyists going to Nicaragua. He has opened the door to the possibility that Trotskyists can defend the Nicaraguan Revolution in Nicaragua.

This is a victory.

We intend to pursue the practicality of developing such a project. And, of course, we will continue our political fight for brigades to defend Nicaragua.

Any of our readers wishing to participate in any of the projects currently going on or in a future project, should contact the Trotskyist Organization.

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