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Blacks in South Africa call national 'stayaway' protest



South African women mourn killings by police in Soweto in 1976.

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Rallies and marches will take place around the world this month to commemorate the 1976 rebellion in South Africa. June 16 is the 10th anniversary of the date on which police opened fire on a protest march headed by the high school students of Soweto—killing at least 25 people.

Trade union, student, and community groups in South Africa have called for a three-day general strike against apartheid to mark the event. The African National Congress (ANC) has also offered its support for the nationwide "stayaway" planned for June 16-18.

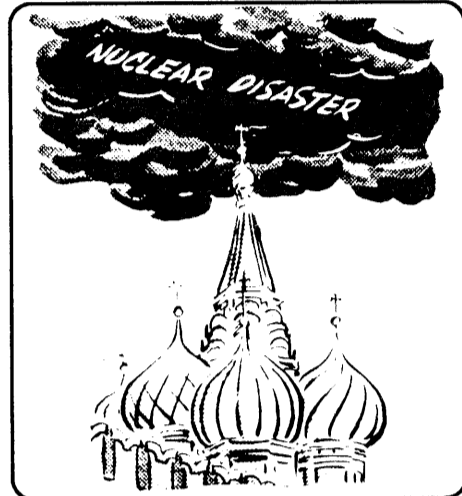
"Let every university and school be emptied of its youth," said ANC President Oliver Tambo in a radio address last month. "Let every mine, factory, farm, and white home be without labor. Let every shop close its doors. Let every community strike a blow for freedom."

The June action comes on the heels of the general strike that took place on May 1—in which about 2.5 million workers and 1 million students participated. But May Day—the largest work stoppage in South African history to date—was seen as merely a practice run for June 16-18.

The stayaway will coincide with a National Youth Day on June 16 and with other protest actions against the racist system of Bantu education. The protests were first proposed by the National Education Crisis Committee Conference, which met in Durban at the end of March.

The conference reaffirmed an earlier decision that students who were boycotting

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Nuclear power industry reels in Chernobyl aftermath

By MARK HARRIS

The disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Soviet Union underscores one paramount fact—nuclear power is a menace that threatens the entire world.

In the Soviet Union, the disaster has left 21 people dead so far, 300 hospitalized, and an estimated 100,000 with the prospect of a cancerous future. Worldwide, millions of people were exposed to radioactive fallout as it drifted over the globe.

The global nature of this menace is also apparent in the 374 nuclear reactors licensed worldwide, including 100 in the United States. The International Atomic Energy Agency calculates that the world now relies on nuclear power for about one-sixth of its energy.

Here in the United States, the Reagan administration, Congress, and the media all initially joined in a loud chorus denouncing the Soviet handling of the disaster, while recklessly circulating accounts of thousands killed and mass graves. The initial lack of details from Soviet officials only encouraged these claims.

The anti-Soviet hysteria, however, rather quickly lost some of its edge. Two reasons explain this. First, reports of 2000 to 3000 killed, a complete meltdown, and a disaster at a second reactor were all proven to be wild fabrications.

Second, despite smug assurances that U.S. plants are safer, making too much of the Chernobyl disaster strikes a little too close to home for the U.S. nuclear industry and its allies.

The *Christian Science Monitor*, for example, reports that the French government claimed no large increase in radiation from Chernobyl when, in fact, it was aware that radiation levels up to 400

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Rail workers' strike inspires far-reaching labor solidarity

By MARK SCHNEIDER

BOSTON—"Workers Dignity vs. Corporate greed—Labor March Against Union Busting" was the theme of a May 18 march here by 1000 striking railroad workers, utility workers, flight attendants, nurses, garment workers, and their supporters.

Railroad workers initiated the march in defense of striking Brotherhood of Maintenance Way Employees (BMWE) on the Maine Central Railroad. The track workers went on strike March 3, when negotiations broke down with the powerful Guilford Transportation Industries, owned by Timothy Mellon.

Mellon also owns the Boston & Maine

Mark Schneider is a member of Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) Local 1089.

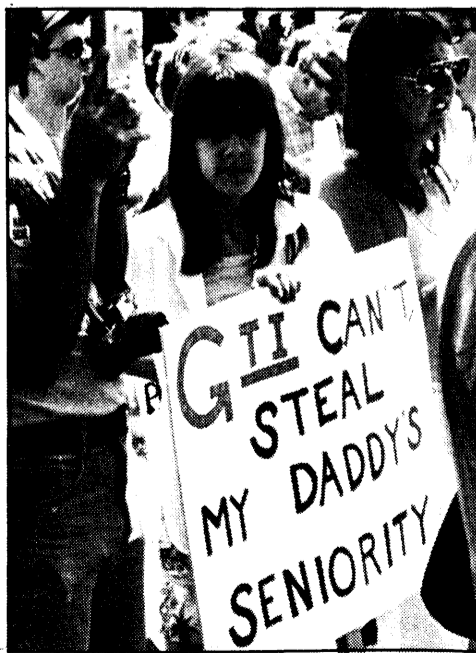
and the Delaware & Hudson railroads. His total corporate holdings are in the \$30 billion range, and he is personally one of the richest men in the country.

Rail unionists charge that Mellon is putting phase one of a major union-busting scheme into operation. A few years ago he commissioned a "White Paper," which advised ridding his properties of unions by busting the smallest local on the most isolated carrier. Then the plan was to extend that process throughout his system.

Although the Maine Central is a profitable company, Mellon's negotiators demanded a 20-percent wage reduction and that employees pay 50 percent of their health plan. The workforce had been reduced from 300 to 100 workers, and work had been contracted out to non-union outfits.

The laid-off workers, some with 10 to 20 years seniority, were offered no severance

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Ed Meese wages war on porn—and Constitution

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

President Reagan's attorney general, Edwin Meese III, has set up a Commission on Pornography. Last month, the commission issued a report aimed not at pornography but at the First Amendment to the Constitution—free speech.

Social researchers who have studied pornography and its alleged relation to the increasing violence against women are up in arms at the methods used by Meese's commission. Aggravating their concern is the release of this report before the members of the commission could meet and approve any conclusions.

Several of the commission's main researchers charge that the report's major conclusions resulted from a biased reading of inconclusive and contradictory evidence—ignoring some research findings and emphasizing others.

For instance, Allen Sears, the executive director of the commission, arguing that "science does not give the complete answer," simply ignored the scientific evidence. Instead, he featured unsubstantiated testimony from

such inherently biased elements as law-enforcement officers and members of the clergy with a political axe to grind.

Allen Sears, a prominent member of the conservative "religious right," lets no grass grow under his feet. Before the ink was dry on his commission report, he sent threatening letters to owners of the chain of 7-11 stores, Warner Publishing Services (parent of Warner Books), K-Mart (parent of Waldenbooks), and Rite Aid (parent of Encore Books).

The letters warned, "Your

company is involved in the sale or distribution of pornography... Failure to respond will necessarily be accepted as an indication of no objection."

Sears' publication of these letters amounted to a clear boycott threat, clubbing distributors into banning the targeted publications—or else. No due process, no formal hearing, no legal recourse. The charge is equal to conviction and sentencing—Joe McCarthy strikes again!

Fall into trap

Unfortunately, some feminists have fallen for this kind of witch hunt and are in serious danger of allying themselves with those whose real interest is censorship of newspapers, TV, magazines, and books for their own reactionary political ends.

Sears and his cohorts aim to divert attention from the institutionalized, legally sanctioned, economic and social violence against women. Sworn enemies of women's rights, these crusaders against pornography hypocritically applaud the wanton murder and mayhem practiced by

the U.S. capitalist government in places like Hiroshima, Korea, Vietnam, and Nicaragua.

It is the repression of sex and the "normalization" (if not "glorification") of violence that leads to violently sick sex in male-dominated capitalist society.

In fact, Beryl Kutchinsky, a psychologist at the Institute of Criminal Justice in Copenhagen, reported in April 1986, that the rate of occurrence of rape has remained constant or even declined over the last 10 to 20 years in those European countries that have abandoned all restrictions on sexual materials.

The actions of the women's movement—fighting for the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, equal job opportunities, and equal wages—have done more to combat the sexism and violence against women than all the hoopla against pornography.

It is no accident that the religious crusaders oppose this struggle for equal rights. It is to the credit of the National Organization for Women that they have not fallen for this phony "anti-pornography" fight of the political Rambos.



By CARL FINAMORE

SAN FRANCISCO—The Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice steering committee met on May 21 to evaluate the April 19, 1986, San Francisco demonstration. The protest attracted 25,000 people, making it the country's largest response to the U.S. bombing of Libya and the government's push to provide more aid to the contras.

The demands of the march and rally were the following: No U.S. intervention in Central America/Caribbean; Freeze and Reverse the Nuclear Arms Race; End U.S. Support to South African Apartheid; and Jobs and Justice, Not War.

Over \$30,000 was spent publicizing the demonstration during the five-month organizing effort. Endorsements and financial contributions came from major labor, religious, peace, and community groups.

The Mobilization was also able to build new ties with several large gay community groups such as the Lesbian and Gay

S.F. coalition sets antiwar priorities

Freedom Day Parade Committee and a major national sports organization, Athletes United for Peace. An important addition to the broad union support was the agreement of United Mine Workers of America President Richard Trumka to speak at the rally.

Mobilization steering committee members unanimously recognized the significance of the April 19 demonstration, which took place in spite of a prevalent mood of political pessimism among many anti-intervention groups. No other major local coalition nor any large national peace, community or labor organization sponsored broad protests this spring.

The lack of nationally coordinated spring actions affected every local area. It noticeably diminished the participation of many peace and solidarity groups inside the Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs, and Justice.

Mass-action strategy needed

The reasons for this lack of a united response to the escalating U.S. war drive are political: Many activists, unfortunately, ignore the bipartisan character of U.S. policy in Central America. Almost all the important national and local peace, solidarity, and anti-intervention groups emphasize lobbying Congress. This flows from their unfounded view that the maneuvers of Congressional Democrats will block U.S. intervention.

This false political conception leads to an equally damaging orientation. It points the movement toward concentrating on the whims of capitalist politicians rather than on building an independent movement capable of mobilizing existing mass anti-intervention sentiment.

The limited active participation of the trade unions in April 19 was also related to labor's longstanding priority of relying on the election of Democrats as an alternative strategy to mobilizing its own membership

and allies in a fight against the employer offensive.

Still, the success of April 19 shows that anti-intervention sentiment is deep enough to significantly overcome these problems.

The Mobilization steering committee believes that a powerful national movement can be built if strong commitments for mass action are obtained from major peace, solidarity, and labor forces. The coalition steering committee voted to encourage this development and authorized its leadership to actively consult and collaborate with national organizations.

While many coalition activists are confident that major national spring protests can be organized next year, most groups will probably continue to focus on

the November 1986 elections. This will most likely prevent any broad convergence of forces for a fall action.

The downturn in public protest activity comes at a time when Nicaragua faces increased military attacks and strong diplomatic pressures to reach a settlement with the murderous contra mercenaries. Anti-interventionist organizations should respond by organizing rallies and demonstrations this fall opposing renewed efforts to fund the contras and protesting all forms of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua.

The Mobilization voted to schedule a fall activity in order to maintain the visibility of antiwar sentiment and to maintain the coalition's accumulated network of important contacts. Steering committee members also pledged their support for an immediate response to any dramatic U.S. military escalation in Central America.

The next meeting of the coalition on June 26 will consider suggestions for fall activities and discuss the responses to its inquiries for united spring demonstrations in 1987.



A Mass Action Strategy for Peace, Jobs and Justice

This pamphlet by Carl Finamore discusses the road to building a mass movement to stop the warmakers. (24 pp., 75 cents; \$1.10 + postage)

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Why U.S. pushes Star Wars

By ASHER HARER

Nuclear weapons and nuclear power will always lead to accidents and always lead to death, and leave us only with the burden of radioactive waste that we can pass on to our children. And now they want to irradiate food....As for me, I want none of it. Dismantle the bombs, close the nuclear power plants and prohibit food irradiation.
Joseph Majer, San Francisco (from a letter to the editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 12, 1986).

There is an ever-growing loss of confidence in atomic energy and its uses, as the above letter reflects. A *Cable News Network* and *U.S. News and World Report* poll conducted in May found that 52 percent of American adults believe the accident at the Chernobyl reactor "shows the inherent danger of nuclear power in all countries."

When President Reagan launched the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) project in March 1983, he declared that it would provide a defensive shield over the nation that would render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," and thus "free the world from the threat of nuclear destruction." It was, in Reagan's words, "a vision of the future which offers hope."

But then he gave the game away. "As we proceed," Reagan cautioned, "we must remain constant in preserving the nuclear deterrent." This means that the buildup of nuclear offensive weapons—MX missiles, B-1 bombers, missile-carrying Trident submarines, etc.—will not cease, despite the president's declaration that such weapons will become "obsolete."

And further, it is not a new initiative—but rather, a deceptive new name for a highly sophisticated anti-ballistic missile system that has been in the experimental stage for many years. It is, in fact, a system of a type prohibited by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) of 1972.

Strike first with Star Wars

The Strategic Defense Initiative is essentially an offensive weapon—a needed component in a first-strike weapons system. Tagging the system as purely "defensive" is designed to counter the growing support for the anti-nuclear movement here at home.

It is also designed to distract attention from the Pentagon's role as military protector of U.S. investments and private property around the world.

"Since the end of the Second World War," as Seymour Melman notes in his book "Pentagon Capitalism," "what we have had is not a defense establishment, but rather a war-making machine of unprecedented destructive power."

A war-making machine, it should be added, that now gobbles up 54 percent of the federal budget. For 1987 that adds up to \$320 billion. Over the next five years \$1.8 trillion is expected to be allocated for "defense."

Of course, this "military-industrial complex," as President Eisenhower called it in his farewell speech, did not begin with Reagan. The basic philosophy of the "defense establishment"—that only military force can solve the problems of this decaying capitalist system—was actually first formulated under President Kennedy.

Melman points out that under Kennedy, "the armed forces were redesigned and enlarged in accordance with war plans that included required capability for fighting three wars at once: A NATO war; a war in Southeast Asia; and a smaller Western Hemisphere operation."

The basic war plans described by Melman have not changed under any succeeding president, Democrat or Republican—except that the Middle East and Central America have replaced Vietnam.

The philosophy and practice of America's rulers precludes acceptance of the Soviet Union's offer to end nuclear testing and abolish all nuclear weapons by 1999. These proposals are brushed aside as "propaganda" by the Reagan administration, which insists, as Secretary of State George Shultz has made clear, that nuclear testing must continue.

Why? Because Star Wars is not necessarily a "nuclear-free" system. Scientist Edward Teller, a well-known supporter of Star Wars, has proposed that the system be powered by nuclear reactors. Hence, testing to develop such a reactor must proceed.

How would Star Wars work?

Dr. Robert M. Bowman, president of the Institute for Space Security Studies and a former director of space programs for the Air Force, explains some of the key components of the Star Wars project in his book, "Star Wars: Defense or Death Star." It includes the following:



- High-power lasers, powered by either chemical or nuclear fuel, would be put into geo-stationary orbit at a height of 22,300 miles. A laser is a means of concentrating and applying intense heat, beams of light, which burn through the object the beam is applied to.

- Each laser, including fuel and a giant 30-foot-in-diameter reflecting mirror to direct the laser beam to targets on earth, would require an orbiting platform the size of a football field. To effectively "kill" even 90 percent of incoming missiles (at the boost phase or later), Bowman estimates that 90 such platformed lasers would be needed.

Each platform, including the cost of putting it into orbit, would cost \$2 billion. And note: A 90-percent accuracy rate in targeting "enemy" missiles, which is the most that can be expected—means that the number of incoming missiles would be reduced to a point just sufficient to blow up the country!

- In case of war, the orbiting laser, controlled entirely by computers, would quickly direct its beams to lower orbiting relay stations (equipped with smaller mirrors), which would relay the killer beams to targets.

- Virtually the only practical use for space shuttles is to put military hardware into orbit. Bowman estimates it

"There is no way of testing the system except by nuclear war"

would take decades, even with much larger and more efficient shuttles than presently exist, to put this system into space. The *Challenger* disaster was thus a grievous setback for Star Wars.

- The laser system (plus various other systems that would operate with it), in order to "defend" the United States properly, would require a computer program 10 million lines long. This is the Pentagon's estimate.

- Since there is no way of testing such a system, except by a nuclear war, *the system would have to work the very first time*. Anyone familiar with computers knows that nothing this complicated has ever worked the first time.

But if the system does work, it can also be used as an offensive weapon to create firestorms and reduce population centers to ashes within minutes. On the other hand, Bowman states that SDI could be rendered ineffective by a single nuclear explosion that would disrupt its millions of computer lines.

- Such a system would be accident-prone. A foul-up in the computers could possibly trigger a nuclear war. In truth, war could be declared by a computer.

"Their Maginot Line in the sky," Bowman concludes, "cannot provide Mutual Assured Survival. It cannot even provide Assured Survival for Fortress America. As we have seen, the Death Star does nothing to do away

with the threat of retaliation embodied in MAD [the concept agreed to by both the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1972 ABM treaty that a nuclear exchange meant "mutual assured destruction," and no defense could change this].

"Some think it will enable us to 'spend the Soviet Union into bankruptcy.' Others see it as giving us military superiority—to force the Soviet Union to 'change its behavior.' They are all wrong.

"Their Death Star alternative would replace a tenuous stability with instability; replace uneasiness with downright panic...replace nuclear stalemate with nuclear conflagration. Their weapons are offensive—in every sense of the word."

Scientists oppose Star Wars

The *Washington Post* reported in May that more than 6500 scientists, including a majority of professors in the nation's top 20 physics departments, have declared their opposition to Star Wars. These scientists have pledged not to accept any Star Wars research funds.

The scientists have condemned this profit-motivated raid on the U.S. treasury as "technically dubious and politically unwise"—it is "a step toward precisely the type of weapons and strategy most likely to trigger a nuclear holocaust." Further on they conclude: "The Star Wars program represents, not an advance toward genuine security, but rather a step backward."

Such opposition to the government's project may be in part motivated by the widely held scientific opinion that an atomic war would induce a "nuclear winter" that would make the planet virtually uninhabitable for any living thing (except perhaps cockroaches, which are peculiarly adaptable to radiation).

Indeed, as the Pentagon acquires ever-more-awesome weapons, there appears to be no limit to its deadly designs—other than the technical impossibility of devising a weapon that can kill an "enemy" more than once.

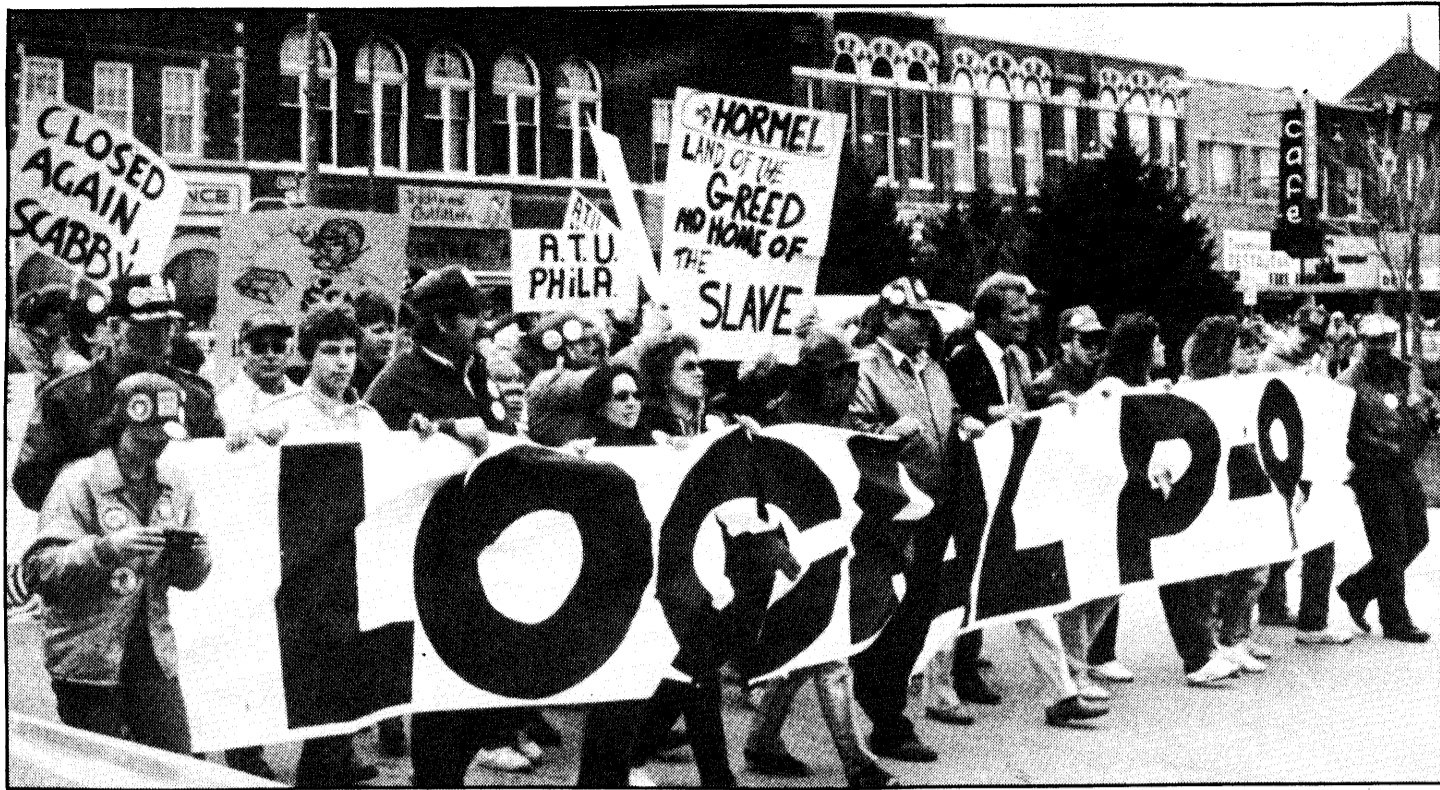
A step closer to nuclear war

Star Wars will not render nuclear weapons obsolete, but will actually bring us a step closer to their eventual use. From the point of view of the Pentagon and the arms industry, which exert a dominant control over the federal government, including Congress, huge profits are to be had from Star Wars.

For working people, there are no profits, only an accelerated danger of a nuclear conflagration that could mean the end of human life.

As long as capitalism continues to exist, the threat of nuclear extinction will also exist. This, of course, does not imply that a mass anti-nuclear protest movement cannot stop the deployment of Star Wars. Each and every escalation in the arms race by the United States must be answered with protests and demonstrations.

But it does mean that the threat posed by Star Wars and nuclear weapons cannot be permanently removed until the capitalist system that spawns such technological horrors is eliminated. ■



Socialist Action/Baer

Hormel strike signals growing union militancy

By NAT WEINSTEIN

The strike by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local P-9 against the Geo. A. Hormel & Co. has received exceptional attention from all sides concerned with the sharpening struggle between employers and workers in this country.

The nine-month long strike in Austin, Minn., has been in the limelight for a number of reasons.

First, Hormel's meatpacking plant in Austin is one of the most efficient and profitable in the country. Up until this strike, the employers' campaign to reduce the living standards of U.S. workers has focussed on those ailing sections of the economy where the threat of bankruptcy, plant-closings, and mass firings had some credibility.

Second, the Austin local is one of the industrial unions built through militant struggle during the mass labor upsurge of the 1930s. Local P-9's founders were the first in the United States to employ the sitdown strike to gain union recognition.

Their successful 1933 strike led to an outstanding contract, which included a guarantee that no layoffs could take place unless Hormel gave notice a year in advance. This was especially noteworthy in a period of widespread unemployment.

While other unions with comparable origins have also been victims of the current 15-year-long takeback campaign, this is the first time determined resistance on the picket line by such an industrial union has been challenged. When the United Auto Workers, for instance, gave historic concessions to the Chrysler Corp. in 1979, it was without a fight and thus without any need by the bosses to attempt to operate a struck plant with strike-breakers.

Third, the union-busting attack on Local P-9 has developed into a test by the employers to gauge the present fighting ability of workers and their unions. The capitalists, while systematically pressing their takeback campaign, are careful not to move too fast. They are concerned that their union-busting drive not spark a strong reaction by the workers and blow up in their face.

Such a misjudgment was made when then-President Jimmy Carter invoked the Taft-Hartley Act in an attempt to break a strike of the United Mine Workers in 1978-79. Determined coal-miner resistance and an accompanying wave of support by significant layers of union militants across the country forced Carter and the bosses to retreat. Drawing back in time, the bosses limited their losses.

Victory for the bosses in the current battle with labor in Austin will encourage the big corporations in future assaults

against larger and more powerful industrial unions.

De-facto break

Fourth, the Hormel strike has led Local P-9 leaders and members to take a step toward a de-facto break with the prevailing strategy of the labor bureaucracy. This strategy is based on the delusion that employers (those who have signed union contracts, at least) are in a "partnership" with their workers. This means, in practice, that workers must subordinate wages and working conditions to maintaining the profit rates of their capitalist "partners."

This conception seems to be confirmed every time a company goes out of business in the normal course of dog-eat-dog competition. The belief that the workers' fate is thus tied to the continued profitability of "their" company is in a sense true—given capitalist norms. But it is dead wrong when it is used to justify concessions by workers.

Sacrifices by workers cannot save companies that fall behind in the technological race for higher productivity. The

"Sacrifices by workers cannot save companies"

successful capitalists are those with the financial means and the wisdom, or luck, to have retooled at the right time.

The U.S. capitalist class has, over a long historical period, outproduced its competitors. After World War II, American employers reaped the largest profits from the capitalist world market, despite paying U.S. workers the highest wages in the world. Before that, British capitalism had dominated competition for the greatest share of the world's markets and profits.

But British capitalism lost out to a more dynamic U.S. capitalism after World War I. No sacrifices on the part of British workers could have changed that. And no sacrifice by American workers can save jobs in the current global economic war. Only a perspective of union struggle that points to solutions independent of company profitability can save jobs.

Fifth, the Local P-9 strike explodes the myth that token picket lines can win strikes. During the years of "prosperity" after World War II, strikes often appeared to be little more than a peaceful waiting game to see which side had the will to hold out longest.

The enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 permitted struck employers to get injunctions against mass picketing. But

until recently, while injunctions limiting picketing were routinely granted, token picket lines of a few workers were not directly challenged by the bosses in the major industrial unions.

The apparent ability of a handful of pickets to close down a plant had two adverse effects. It discouraged active participation in the unions—strikes became opportunities for many workers to take extended vacations. Second, it eroded the memory of how the unions were built—through mass mobilizations on the picket lines to keep scabs from taking jobs and breaking strikes.

Strikebreaking treason

Sixth, the P-9 strike spotlights the depths of treason to which the top labor officialdom is capable of descending. Both UFCW President William Wynn, Local P-9's parent union, and AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland have placed the American labor bureaucracy squarely on the side of the strikebreakers.

Wynn has offered, after withdrawing the strike sanction and meager strike benefits, "post-strike benefits" to members of Local P-9 as an inducement for them to scab. To qualify for these "benefits," striking members must put their names on Hormel's list of those willing to scab. Moreover, there is no guarantee that those who capitulate will ever be rehired if the union is crushed.

Furthermore, Wynn has initiated a "trusteeship" action to take over the striking local—remove its democratically elected leadership, entirely abolish P-9 members' democratic rights, confiscate its funds, property and records—and thus deal its Austin affiliate a *coup de grace*.

The top echelons of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, moreover, have brought enormous pressure to bear upon union officials close to the ranks to keep them in line and counter the widespread sympathy for their beleaguered sisters and brothers in Local P-9. Despite these pressures, material support keeps coming in to the striking Austin packinghouse workers.

President Wynn rationalizes the betrayal of his membership with the argument that his intent is to "standardize" wages in the meatpacking industry. His record of having signed more concessions contracts than any other comparable union official—not to mention his current blows against Local P-9—makes clear that by standardizing wages he means making them lower than the level his membership is willing to accept.

William Wynn and Lane Kirkland have shown by their open strikebreaking that they are committed to helping their employer "partners" come out on top in the sharpening economic conflict among the world's major industrial capitalist powers.

These "labor statesmen" have put all

their chips on winning the gratitude of the bosses in return for their collaboration. They hope to be permitted to continue to collect dues—higher dues from fewer members, no doubt—in exchange for their treachery.

They may also be under the delusion that their capitalist partners will gratefully give back what was taken away when, as they hope, U.S. capitalism comes out on top over its capitalist rivals. There is not a shred of evidence to support this conclusion.

We need not look far to see proof to the contrary. Hormel, the recipient of a long series of concessions which contributed to economic success in its Austin plant, is now paying back the workers in its own inimitable way—with more takebacks!

Collaboration doesn't pay

Seventh, this policy of collaboration with the employers, if permitted to follow its course to the end, will doom workers to ever-lower living standards, and eventually add millions more to the pool of permanently unemployed workers.

It should be remembered that since the end of World War II, the rise of long-term unemployment has occurred in a period of capitalist prosperity. When the economic bubble bursts—which is inevitable—the army of permanently unemployed will grow to new heights.

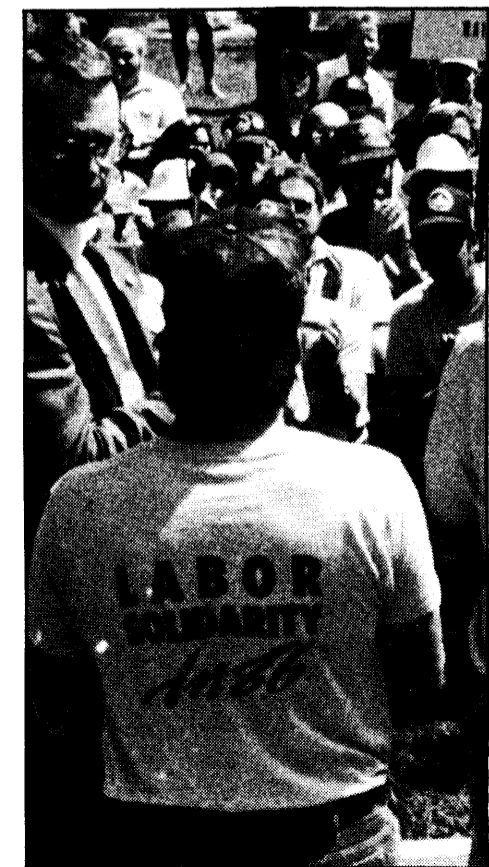
Real solutions for working people can only be at the expense of employer profits. The class interests of workers and bosses are mutually exclusive. What's good for the workers—higher wages, for instance—means reduced profits for the bosses. A shorter workweek, with no reduction in pay, along with publicly financed works programs to provide jobs at union scale for the unemployed is the only real answer to capitalist unemployment.

A progressively shorter workweek to permit the entire workforce to participate in production is eminently rational. The increased production of goods coming from scientific and technological progress would mean more goods and more leisure time to enjoy them. Only under capitalism does increased productivity result in increased misery.

In conclusion, new leaders are emerging from struggles such as the Hormel strike. As working people increasingly confront employers' takeback demands in the coming years, this process will continue. The old leaders with their strategy of collaborating with the employers will inevitably be replaced.

In the meantime, Local P-9's fight continues. The union can gain time and continue to bring pressure on Hormel with its boycott campaign. Every new strike confrontation will tend to raise the banner of Local P-9's struggle alongside its own. And reinforcements may yet come to turn the tide of the strike against Hormel.

But whatever the ultimate outcome of this strike, it will go down in labor history as a sign of a new willingness to fight, and of a growing consciousness of the bankruptcy of official labor strategy. ■



David Walsh

By LYNN HENDERSON

'Strike not over until we say it is over,' vows P-9 Pres. Guyette

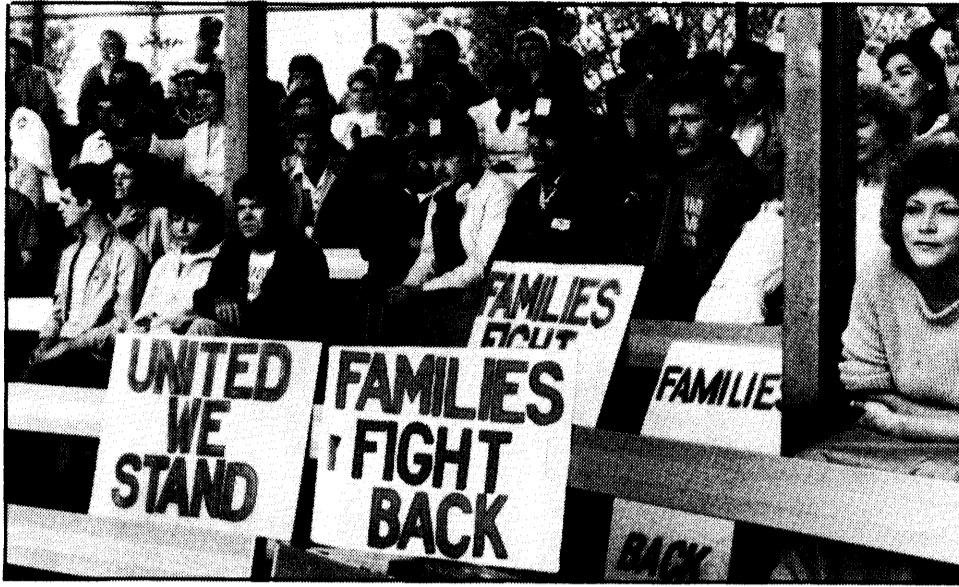
AUSTIN, Minn.—Local P-9 strikers have refused to call off their nine-month-long strike here against the Hormel meatpacking corporation—despite a mounting attack by the company, the courts, local banks, the International leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and the U.S. Postal Service.

On May 8, UFCW International officials declared they were placing Local P-9 in trusteeship and removing its elected leadership. The response of P-9's president, Jim Guyette, was direct and simple, "This strike is not over until the membership says it's over."

If the International's representatives attempt to enter the union hall, Guyette said, they "will be shown they are not welcome on our premises." Rank-and-file union members carrying baseball bats immediately set up patrols outside the hall.

On May 15, the UFCW rented a two-room storefront in Austin, where the new deputy trustee and two escorts set up business. UFCW Regional Director Joe Hansen explained that the trustees would take over the Austin Labor Center offices when they get court authority.

Meanwhile, the courts, which have been aiding Hormel's attempt to smash the strike with one injunction after another, showed they were only too happy to extend their services to the UFCW's International officers. On the same day the UFCW trustees set up their storefront office, U.S. District Judge Gerhard Gesell refused a request by P-9 to stay the trusteeship until May 23, when he could hear further



Socialist Action/Lynn Henderson

arguments.

The judge then went on to indicate how he intended to rule when he did hear the case. "I don't see any substantial possibility in the papers I have before me that the local is going to prevail in setting aside the trusteeship," he said.

On the next day, at the request of UFCW officials, two Austin banks announced they were freezing P-9's checking accounts. Sterling State Bank declared it was denying P-9 access to its safety deposit box. UFCW Regional Director Hansen also requested the

Minnesota Postmaster to forward all P-9 mail to the UFCW.

In the meantime, Hormel is obviously taking advantage of the situation to press ahead with its plans to smash the local, smash the union, and organize a decertification election later in the year.

P-9's response to all of this has been to reaffirm that the local's membership will determine the leadership and the policies of P-9. Plans to step up the nationwide boycott of Hormel products were announced.

At the start of fishing season last month, P-9 supporters unfurled banners reading "Boycott Hormel Greed" across highways used by anglers heading toward northern Minnesota waterways. Tens of thousands of working people saw the banners.

P-9 supporters also announced that the boycott had been endorsed by the 6000-member Minnesota chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), by Minnesota's Branch 9 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, and by Local 299 of the Graphic Communications International Union.

P-9 has called for a week of peaceful demonstrations and picketing outside the Hormel plant during the week of June 22-28. A "Solidarity City," reminiscent of tent cities erected during the civil rights actions of the 1960s will be set up in Austin at that time.

On June 15, a benefit concert for the P-9 strikers will be held in Austin, featuring Arlo Guthrie and David Bromberg. For more information on this month's actions—the concert, the "Solidarity City," and the mass picketing—call (507) 437-4110.

To ensure that the P-9 strikers receive all funds donated to them, checks should be made out to The United Support Group and mailed to 316 4th Ave., N.E., Austin, Minn. 55912.

Cal. teachers oppose contras, aid P-9 strike

By BIANCA GOLDMAN

SAN JOSE, Calif.—The more than 600 delegates to the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) 1986 Annual Convention unanimously rose to their feet to oppose American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker for his publicly stated support to aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

Contra aid, school reform, greater professional status for K-12 teachers—and a series of social, political, and educational issues resolutions—were debated at the April convention.

The spontaneous floor demonstration against Shanker's support to the contras followed an extended debate in an earlier session. At that session delegates had unanimously passed a resolution censuring Shanker "for promoting an escalation of violence in Nicaragua." The resolution urged Shanker to follow the 1979 policy established by the AFT Convention. The earlier AFT resolution had opposed "any direct or indirect [U.S.] military intervention...in Nicaragua."

The CFT resolution also opposed Shanker for supporting increased U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan contra terrorists at the 1985 AFL-CIO Convention.

On a special order of business, CFT delegates voted unanimously to support the United Food and Commercial Workers

(UFCW) P-9 strike against Hormel in Austin, Minn.

In addition to supporting the Hormel boycott, the delegates voted a \$500 donation to the P-9 "adopt-a-family" fund. They also took up an on-the-spot collection for P-9 and recommended that all CFT locals adopt a P-9 family.

This action also served notice on Shanker, who had supported the UFCW International after the November 1985 Bal Harbour meeting of the AFL-CIO. Shanker had lobbied heavily inside the AFT against support to the P-9 strike.

The U.S. government's "gross acts of aggression against Libya," as well as the U.S. State Department's denial of a visa to Professor Julio Portillo, general secretary of ANDES 21 de Junio (The National Association of Salvadoran Educators), were opposed in successful resolutions.

Dr. Portillo had been invited to address the CFT convention. An additional resolution included support to the Shell Oil boycott as an act of solidarity against South African apartheid.

Shanker's address on school reform forecasted a national crisis in the supply of teachers. Professional schools of education turn out only 120,000 teachers annually. By 1990, 250,000 new teachers will be needed annually just to maintain current teacher-student ratios. Steps must be taken

now to head off this crisis, warned Shanker. Students must be recruited now for teaching careers.

Shanker projected reforms to include salaries comparable to those of other professions, smaller class sizes, and paid time for teachers to consult with other teachers and upgrade their skills.

The most important issue for K-12 teachers, however, said Shanker, is their ability to exercise their own judgment and self-direction in their work. This is not only necessary for the success of classroom teachers today, but also to improve the public image of teachers and attract the best

qualified people in sufficient numbers to ensure that the children of the '90s will get a good education.

A resolution on pre-school education was debated. The resolution reaffirmed CFT policy supporting state-provided pre-school education for all children from the age of four whose parents elect to send them.

The CFT represents approximately 25,000 of the close to 600,000 AFT members. The AFT is among the AFL-CIO unions which has continued to grow, especially during the past several years. It represents not only teachers but also health-care and other public service workers.

Rally supports Chi. Tribune strikers, recalls Haymarket

By WALT GRAHAM

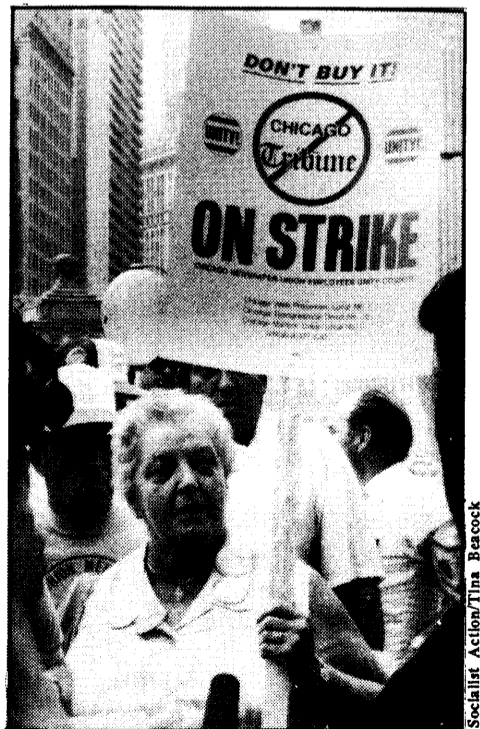
CHICAGO—One thousand striking pressmen, printers, mailers, and their supporters rallied under the *Chicago Tribune* office tower here on May 4. Called by the striking workers' Unity Committee, the rally served to protest the union-busting conduct of the *Tribune* and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Haymarket bombing.

Speaking as a strike supporter and labor historian, Professor Bill Adelman of the University of Illinois Circle Campus pointed out that the *Tribune* has historically been in the forefront of the employers' attacks on the workers' standard of living.

Today it is one of the companies leading the employers' takeback and concessions campaign. On May 4, 1886, using the bombing as an excuse, the *Chicago Tribune* helped organize a successful witch hunt against organizers of the eight-hour-day movement.

Jim Guyette, president of striking UFCW Local P-9 in Austin, Minn., delivered a brief message of solidarity and congratulated the *Tribune* strikers for their support of Local P-9. Additional speakers were Robert Healy, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor; Georgia Demarest Lloyd, a granddaughter of one of the *Tribune's* cofounders; and Marsha Mickens of the Detroit bakery workers union.

Following the rally at the *Tribune*



Socialist Action/Tina Barcock

offices, the Unity Committee led a march through the Chicago streets to a markerless, vacant corner lot, which was approximately where the Haymarket bombing occurred. Here another rally was held, sponsored by the Haymarket Centennial Committee. Among the additional speakers were Dennis Brutus, an exiled South African. Entertainment was provided by the Sechaba Players, a Black South African dance troupe.

HORMEL STRIKERS INVITE YOU TO SOLIDARITY CITY

Come help build our tent city in Austin, Minnesota and join us for a week of peaceful demonstrations and picketing at the Hormel plant

SUNDAY, JUNE 22 THROUGH SATURDAY, JUNE 28

Boston rally cheers rail workers' strike

By ART LECLAIR

BOSTON—Chanting "no more union-busting," and "they say giveback, we say fightback," 1000 union members and their families paraded through downtown Boston to the Boston Common on May 18.

The "Labor March to Stop Union-busting" was sponsored by the New England Association of Railway Crafts and was called in response to the flagrant union-busting campaign being carried out by Guilford Transportation Industries on the three railroads it owns: the Maine Central, the Boston & Maine, and the Delaware & Hudson.

Although the focus of the rally was the strike by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) against the Portland Terminal Co. and the Maine Central, other unions experiencing similar attacks in other industries also participated.

Fran O'Donnell, representing the Independent Federation of Flight Attendants on strike against TWA, was greeted with loud applause. She asked those assembled for their continued support.

Nancy Flynn, of the Massachusetts Nurses Association, thanked the greater

Boston labor community for its support in the nurses' strike against Carney Hospital (owned and operated by the archdiocese of Boston).

Bill Flaherty, president of Utility Workers Union of America Local 387, took the opportunity to explain the facts in his local's strike against Boston Edison Co. Edison supplies electricity to over 600,000 customers in eastern Massachusetts and operates the Pilgrim's Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth.

A representative of the garment workers at the P & L Co. addressed the rally in Chinese. P & L was a garment factory that closed its doors on Dec. 6, 1985. Its workforce was primarily women of Chinese, Italian, and Hispanic descent. Since the plant was shut down, these hardworking people have been virtually ignored by state agencies, who were supposed to establish training programs as well as offer other forms of assistance to help them find new jobs.

Fifty United Auto Workers union members, who have been on strike for four months against the Colt Firearms Corp., traveled for two-and-a-half hours from Hartford, Conn., to express their solidarity with "everyone on strike and everybody in the organized labor family." Their own strike has lasted over four months.

Perhaps the most electric moment came when Micky Neader, chief steward of the



David Walsh

International Union of Marine Ship Building Workers of America (IUMSWA) Local 6, from Bath, Maine, read a statement of solidarity with the BMWE strikers from Local P-9 in Austin, Minn.

As a railroad worker for the last 14 years, this reporter was struck by the elation coming from the participants. Several speakers told everyone to "look around and see who's here." This was a historic moment in the Boston labor movement.

For the first time, representatives and members of all 14 railroad crafts and five different carriers came together in a show of solidarity with every union now under attack by the employers.

John Davidson, general chairman of the BMWE on the struck railroads, summed it up when he said, "I look at this turnout and I see all the different unions and I've got to tell you, this is the happiest and proudest day of my life."

Art LeClair is a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 791 Protective Committee.

... Rail strike

(continued from page 1)

pay or compensation. Also, Mellon refused to call back furloughed employees according to seniority.

When the track workers struck, workers from the shop and operating craft honored the picket line. Mellon responded by importing supervisors from his other carriers. The workers countered by picketing the Boston & Maine and the Delaware & Hudson, severely limiting freight movement. Mellon then used commuter lines north of Boston to shield freight movements. The workers reluctantly answered by closing down commuter lines, forcing 12,000 rail commuters onto buses.

Mellon recruits scabs

After six weeks of the strike, Mellon sent a letter in late April to all individual workers, threatening to replace them permanently with scabs. He had been trying to recruit scabs with large newspaper ads.

This tactic was in clear violation of the Railway Labor Act, and Boston & Maine workers, who previously had been honoring other workers' picket lines, struck on their own for one day, shutting down all commuter rail service. But a federal judge ordered them back to work within 24 hours.

Throughout this period, the Maine track workers were pursuing their fight in the streets, on the picket lines, and in the courts. They organized rallies of 200 each

in Waterville, Maine, and Deerfield, Mass., gathering the support of unions in these areas. They sent their members to freightyards as far away as Virginia, closing down whole operations with two or three pickets. The pickets often held a solitary post day and night.

Union representatives also debated a Mellon public-relations spokesman on the radio for a few hours, until the man bolted the station. BMWE attorneys argued that other non-Guilford railroads had offered the Maine Central "mutual aid," and were thus subject to be picketed as well.

But a federal judge ruled in the union's favor on this issue. Then the situation shifted dramatically twice in 24 hours. BMWE picketers headed for Conrail freight yards and began shutting down a major Northeast carrier.

Thereafter, Reagan invoked presidential powers and ordered all workers back to work under prevailing conditions before the strike. The presidential order mandates a 30-day fact-finding period and a 30-day cooling-off period before the strike can resume.

Mellon interpreted the presidential order in his own fashion. Claiming that he had lost business because of the strike, he refused work to 1000 to 1500 workers when they reported back. However, the unionists are claiming that Mellon is keeping scabs on the payroll. The BMWE may take legal action to win back any wages lost after the back-to-work order.

Solidarity is growing

"For the first time ever, we had rail unionists from all the different unions on all the different carriers coming together in support of fellow workers under attack," said Dave Walsh, president of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks Local 1089 (Amtrak and Conrail) and one of the organizers of the solidarity march.

"This did not happen in New England, at least, during the 1981 rail workers march on Washington over the threatened elimination of Amtrak and Conrail," Walsh noted. "We've been through the huge layoffs on Conrail, several years of stagnant contracts for all crafts and the constant threat of losing Amtrak, so workers are a little more vigilant now than in the past."

Walsh continued, "Mellon's intentions are so obvious that people can see that they will be next if he gets away with forcing concessions on the track workers. We were

also able to reach out to other unions who are up against it now—the flight attendants at TWA, the nurses at Carney Hospital, the garment workers at P & L."

"I think it was a real learning experience, too, for the mostly male railroad people to meet women workers who are breadwinners fighting equally tough battles," Walsh went on to say. "This whole process still has a long way to go. It's still a narrow layer of union activists leading the way."

Some workers felt that Reagan's back-to-work order was a victory for the strike. "Not so," says Walsh. "In fact, it is a dagger pointed at the heart of the strike. Mellon will use the extra time to sell off

his short lines, dump smaller customers, and consolidate his position. It's true that Mellon thinks he has the upper hand and is willing to wait 'forever' to get a favorable settlement."

"It's also true that Reagan did not issue the back-to-work order until Conrail was shut down, and that fact shows the power of the labor movement. But we'll never win the strike by relying on courts or executive orders," Walsh concluded. "As long as we rely strictly on the Railway Labor Act and the courts, our hands we'll be tied and our cause we'll be lost. A settlement favorable to labor will be won only by mobilizing the ranks on the picket line."

Last chance...



Socialist Action/Mary Gong

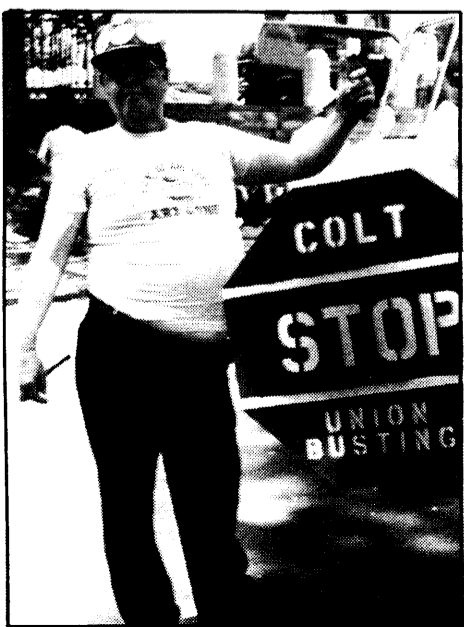
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David Walsh

Socialist Action Forum



'We will not disarm' resounds at Managua May Day rally

By HECTOR TOBAR

MANAGUA—More than 100,000 people marched to this city's Plaza de la Revolución on May 1, demonstrating their support for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and repudiating Reagan's policy of support for the contra mercenaries. Under a blistering mid-day sun they heard President Daniel Ortega say that Nicaragua will not disarm itself or negotiate with the U.S.-backed counterrevolution.

Ortega's declarations came amidst a rapidly changing diplomatic climate, in which Nicaragua has become increasingly isolated. The Sandinistas have, in the past few weeks, come under strong pressure to sign the most recent peace treaty proposed by the Contadora nations—Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico.

Under this Contadora proposal, all Central American nations would be required to observe "a moratorium on the acquisition of new weapons." The proposal does not, however, make any demands on the United States, which could continue to fund the counterrevolution even if the Contadora treaty were signed.

Central American nations, which themselves are under strong U.S. pressure, are pushing for the signing of the treaty on June 8. Recently-elected President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica called this a "sacred date."

Nicaragua was the only country willing to sign a much different version of the Contadora treaty in September 1984. The Reagan administration dismissed the Sandinista offer at that time as a "propaganda ploy."

In his May Day speech, Ortega said that Nicaragua wants peace and is willing to discuss the remaining points of the Contadora peace treaty. But it "cannot sign or execute this act as long as the direct and indirect aggression, or aggression in any form, by the United States against Nicaragua does not cease."

"The United States spends billions of dollars on weapons that endanger the lives of the men who work the land," Ortega said, "but raises a scandal when Nicaragua resorts to international solidarity so that the people can have the arms necessary to defend themselves against Yankee aggression."

Ortega concluded that the FSLN and the government of Nicaragua will "continue to defend the right of the Nicaraguan people to arm themselves."

Celebration and defiance

The mood in the Plaza was one of celebration and defiance. The festivities had begun the night before in Managua's working-class neighborhoods with bonfires and "socio-dramas," popular street theater with political themes.

Marchers began to leave for the Plaza in the early morning, arriving in contingents representing trade unions, schools, and neighborhood committees. In the Plaza itself people danced and formed human pyramids to raise the red and black flag of the FSLN above the heads of the crowd.

Ortega's speech was interrupted several times as the crowd raised fists in the air and chanted "no pasarán" ("they shall not pass") and "un solo ejército" ("one unified army"). The strongest reaction was to Ortega's reaffirmation of the FSLN's commitment never to negotiate with the U.S.-backed contra mercenaries.

A student and part-time employee of the Ministry of the Interior who attended the celebrations agreed with Ortega. "Reagan has already said he is a contra. So we won't talk to the contras, but to Reagan, the 'jefe' [chief] of the contras."

The contra war continues to wreak havoc on Nicaraguan society. More than 14,000 Nicaraguans have died since 1980 as a result of the war. The war claimed 1811 victims in the first four months of this year alone.

On May 9, four teachers and three merchants were assassinated by contra mercenaries in two ambushes near



100,000 rally in Managua to celebrate May Day.

Chontales in Northern Nicaragua. Attacks against trained personnel and technicians are common.

Political parties, unions divided

Despite the widespread repudiation of U.S. aggression, strong divisions exist among Nicaragua's various political parties and trade unions. This prevented the working class from joining together in a united front on May Day, as the pro-Sandinista unions had proposed.

Talks for a unified May Day celebration began in January with the participation of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and several non-Sandinista labor federations, including the Council on Trade Union Unification (CUS), the Federation of Trade Union Unity and Action (CAUS), the Nicaraguan Workers Federation (CTN), and the General Workers Federation-Independent (CGT-I).

The CUS is a right-wing confederation known to have close ties to the CIA-financed American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). The CTN is affiliated with the conservative People's Social Christian Party. The CAUS is led by the Nicaraguan Communist Party (PCdeN). Each of these groups has approximately 1000 to 3000 members.

The CGT-I, affiliated with the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), is the largest non-Sandinista labor confederation, with 17,000 members. The CST and other Sandinista unions have approximately 202,000 members.

The non-Sandinista unions withdrew from the talks almost immediately, protesting the presence of other Sandinista trade unions in the committee. The CUS, CAUS, CTN and CGT-I then formed the Unitary Committee for the Celebration of May Day—Martyrs of Chicago. The unions led by the PCdeN and PSN, two pro-Moscow Stalinist parties, thus found themselves allied with the right-wing, pro-capitalist trade unions.

This alliance between the far-right and "ultraleft" is not

uncommon. In a recent issue of *Avance*, the official organ of the PCdeN, party leader Eli Altamirano "saluted" the right-wing parties, the PSN, and the Catholic hierarchy for having a favorable attitude toward a dialogue with the contras, whom he euphemistically called the "Nicaraguans in arms." Altamirano added that "the thesis of national dialogue is the most patriotic thesis that can be defended in our country today."

Eventually, though, talks between the "ultraleft" and right-wing trade unions opposed to the Sandinistas also broke down. As a result, at least three demonstrations were held on May Day.

Apart from the official Sandinista demonstration, the CTN held a Catholic mass, led by Cardinal Miguel Obando. The CAUS and the CGT-I joined in a rally at the Plaza Ana Maria. Both opposition rallies drew approximately 1500 people.

Debate in National Assembly

These same political parties are represented in the National Assembly, which has recently concluded the first step in the elaboration of a new constitution. The Sandinistas see the constitution as a formalization of the revolutionary power conquered by the people in July 1979. The final version of the constitution is scheduled to be voted on later this year.

The drafting of the constitution has been strongly opposed by the U.S. government. In fact, the Reagan administration has stated that direct talks between the United States and Nicaragua can only resume if the National Assembly is dissolved and new elections are held, this time including the contras.

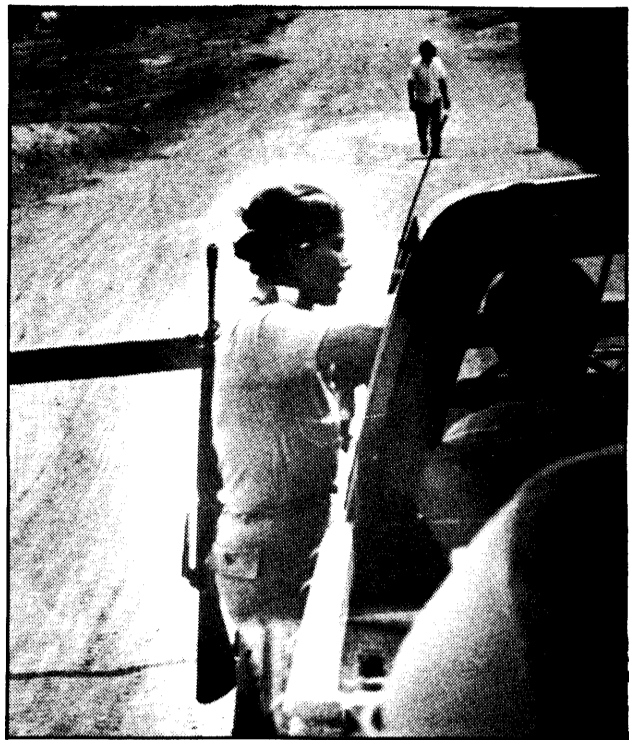
The Independent Liberal Party (PLI), a capitalist party with two deputies in the assembly, has already withdrawn from the constitutional process, and other parties are under heavy pressure from the U.S. Embassy to follow suit.

The capitalist opposition has argued that the social and

(continued on page 10)

Special section: Report back from Nicaragua

FSLN alters policies to counter effects of



By ALAN BENJAMIN

MANAGUA—The signs of war are visible everywhere in this small nation of 3 million people.

Armed militias patrol factories, bridges, farms, schools, and hospitals at all hours of the day. The Sandinista Army is on alert throughout the country in response to the U.S. "Ocean Venture" war maneuvers off the coast of Puerto Rico. Buildings destroyed by the contras lie in rubble while others still bear the marks of the intense fighting that preceded the victorious revolution seven years ago.

But the signs of war also include the long lines at the government's retail stores and the thousands of people who swarm the city's markets and bus terminals peddling anything from cloth to avocados. "This is a period of economic survival," a woman standing in line for clothing says. "There are shortages of everything these days, but we must endure until peace can be won."

Economic survival is the term used here to describe the current war economy. Indeed, due to the continued terror rained down on the Nicaraguan people by the U.S.-backed contras, the Sandinista government has been forced to devote over half of its annual budget to defense.

Factories that once produced cloth for the population must now make clothing for the army. Over 250,000 people have been displaced from their land because of contra attacks, leading to a drastic drop in agricultural production. And tens of thousands of workers and peasants have been mobilized in the war zones, leaving women and even children behind to pick tobacco or work on the assembly lines.

Fertilizers, medicine, machinery, and spare parts that were once purchased in the United States are now inaccessible because of the U.S. economic blockade. It is estimated that \$861 million has been lost over the past six years due to material damages or production losses.

Moreover, the burden of Nicaragua's debt to the imperialist banks has further increased the strain on the economy. In his speech to the United Nations last fall, President Daniel Ortega stated that "with the blood and sweat of the people of Nicaragua, we have paid \$621 million in debt service in five years." This, Ortega explained, represented two years' worth of income in export earnings.

Limits of liberalization

In February 1985, the Sandinista government adopted a series of economic measures aimed at reactivating production and reducing the inflation spurred by a war economy.

Incentives were given to the private producers (mainly the agro-export capitalists), state subsidies for basic foods were eliminated, government spending was sharply cut back, and the Nicaraguan currency (the córdoba) was devalued.

Envio, a monthly magazine published in Managua by the Central American Historic Institute, explained that these measures represented a shift toward less state intervention in the economy: "The U.S. belief that the pressures of the war are pushing the state toward increasing its role in the economy is totally belied by the 1985 program" (*Envio*, October 1985).

But as *Envio* also stated, "the effects of this economic shift were felt unevenly...with the workers and poor peasants bearing a disproportionate burden of the sacrifices." Indeed, the workers saw their purchasing power steadily decline, while the speculators and petty merchants were allowed to reap large profits from a mushrooming informal commercial sector.

Moreover, the 1985 economic measures did not produce the desired results. The Gross Internal Product in 1985 actually went down 2.7 percent; investment by the capitalists fell 17 percent as more money was diverted



Empty shelves in a Managua market. The economic boycott by the United States and the continuing contra war have aggravated the shortages of basic consumer goods.

toward speculation; exports fell by 13.8 percent; the state's budget deficit rose to 26.5 million córdobas; inflation reached a yearly rate of 210 percent; and the purchasing power of the average wage fell 36 percent.

By the end of the year, the Sandinista government faced a difficult dilemma. The liberalization policies had not worked. Yet something urgent needed to be done to increase production and to lessen the economic burden on the workers and peasants, the social base of the revolution.

Envio (October 1985) stated the government's dilemma in this manner: "The Nicaraguan government is caught between a rock and a hard place. It is committed to maintaining the mixed economy and therefore to preserving a sector of large private capitalists. It does this both to sustain the economy and as a political project of national unity.

"But the government is also committed to responding to the popular demands and to spreading the costs of the war more equitably....These pressures inevitably mean readjusting the mixed economy...toward (1) a stronger government control over the distribution system, (2) a more radical agrarian reform, and (3) a series of advances in workers' participation in the management of the factories."

Confronted with this drastic economic situation, the Sandinista government was compelled to once again shift its strategy in 1986. It would prioritize the needs of the masses—but still within the framework of the mixed economy. This would require an even more delicate balancing act.

Problems of distribution

One of the economic problems most discussed in Nicaragua is the problem of distribution of food and basic supplies. Due to the increased shortages and the lack of effective government controls, a parallel or informal market known as the "bisnes" has been able to develop and flourish.

Thousands of workers and peasants have flocked to the city's markets, parks, and bus terminals in the hope of making a better living. Managua's population has doubled since 1979 to its present size of 900,000, largely on account of this exodus from the countryside.

The reason for this terrible waste of human resources is not hard to find. According to *Envio*, a peasant woman can actually make more money than Nicaragua's president by selling soft drinks or homemade coconut sweets in a public park.

This situation has in turn created chaos in the labor market. According to a Nicaraguan government survey, the official minimum wage in 1985 would buy only a quarter of the basket of basic goods necessary to feed a family of six. Those who don't quit the productive sector altogether are therefore forced to take one or two days off work each week to do "bisnes" if they wish to make ends meet.

To help resolve this severe problem, the Sandinista government has decided to reinstitute wage and price controls and to guarantee a minimum quota of low-priced basic supplies to Nicaragua's workers and peasants. This has meant a greatly increased role by the state in the distribution of basic goods.

Workers and peasants can now buy basic grains and limited amounts of rice, oil, sugar, salt, and soap at

subsidized prices in the new Workers Supply Stores (Centros de Abastecimiento de los Trabajadores/CAT).

In addition, the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), which before the 1985 economic measures had been given some power in controlling speculation and prices, were again reactivated as organs of consumer defense.

In February, the Ministry of Internal Commerce (MICOIN) worked with the CDSs to carry out a massive consumer census in the Pacific region of Nicaragua. MICOIN is also training 4000 "popular inspectors" to help check on distribution at the local level and to turn in the speculators. Workers in the factories are also being trained in the factories to make sure that production is not diverted to the black market.

This shift by the government, however, has not been well received by the Nicaraguan capitalists—nor by *El Nuevo Diario* newspaper, which is a supporter of the Sandinista government.

"The government is moving toward monopolizing the distribution system," writes *Diario* staffwriter Adolfo Sanchez on May 3. "The recent reordering of commerce will not work. The laws of supply and demand must be allowed to regulate this market....This is the only realistic perspective under the present circumstances."

Agrarian reform law expanded

Tens of thousands of peasant families remain landless in Nicaragua. The hit-and-run terror of the contras has forced thousands more to abandon their land. Together, the landless and displaced have increased pressure on the government to distribute land to the peasants.

The two agrarian reform laws decreed in 1979 and 1981 expropriated lands from Somoza and his cronies as well as all idle land over 865 acres. This land was distributed to state farms and service or production cooperatives. But only a small percentage of the land went to the poor

Structure of land tenancy: 1978-1985 (Percentages of cultivable land)

Sector	1978	1985
• Large private (1)	52	26
• Medium private (2)	30	30
• Small private (3)	18	8
Cooperatives	0	17
State farms	0	19

Source: MIDINRA, Managua

(1) Over 345 acres
(2) 85-345 acres
(3) less than 85 acres

in 1986 U.S. war

peasants in individual parcels. And by 1985, the agrarian reform was grinding to a halt as little land was left to be distributed according to the provisions of the laws.

Peasants in Masaya Province became increasingly impatient with the pace of the land redistribution and, in defiance of the law, stepped up their occupations of the estates of the large private landowners.

In Nicaragua's Region V, which makes up one-fifth of the country's total land area, the pressure for the land was equally strong. As late as 1985, 1000 wealthy families controlled 1 million acres while the poor peasants, over 40 percent of the population, owned only 400,000 acres.

In response to the continued demand for the land and in order to undercut any possible support for the contras among the peasantry, the Sandinista government amended its agrarian reform law last January.

Idle lands of any size can now be expropriated. The state is no longer obliged to pay compensation for the expropriated idle lands. And, for the first time, the law allows the state to confiscate the estates of efficient large capitalist landowners.

By moving in this direction, the government also hopes to stem the rural exodus to the cities.

Commander Jaime Wheelock, minister of agrarian reform, explained the new measures in this manner: "We maintain our principle of integrating all private producers, large and small, into the mixed economy. But the mercenary imperialist aggression has forced us to

"For the first time, the state can confiscate the land of the large capitalists."

deepen the agrarian reform and, on the other hand, the needs of the people have pressured us to act."

Wheelock continued, "An efficient producer has other means of sustenance, but 500 peasant families do not. We prefer to respond to the needs of the 500 peasant families even though, after the imperialist aggression has ended, we may revise the current measures" (*Pensamiento Propio*, Managua, January-February 1986).

Since the January agrarian reform decree, the government has announced several new distributions of land totalling over 200,000 acres. In Region V alone, 40,000 acres have already been turned over to the poor peasants. An additional 135,000 acres are to be distributed before the end of the year in this region.

Half this redistributed land, however, is to come from the "unproductive" state-owned farms. These are farms that have received little technical aid or credit from the state and have not met their production goals.

The Sandinista government is committed to maintaining the mixed economy and has therefore opposed parceling out the lands of the large capitalist producers. But by dismembering these state farms, thousands of agricultural workers are being forced to relocate to other crowded state farms or to leave their jobs altogether.

And, although the government has promised to make more land available to the landless peasants, there is still discontent in certain regions with the pace of redistribution.

In March, for example, hundreds of peasants marched in Masaya, waving placards listing the names of big landlords. They were demanding that the new reform law be implemented rapidly so as to give them the land before the next crop cycle. The pro-Sandinista National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) has proposed a list of 21 estates in the Masaya area that should be taken over and parceled out to the poor peasants.

On May 5, *Barricada*, the official paper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), explained that land occupations were also continuing to take place in the Masaya region. "There are more demands for land by the campesinos than there is land to be distributed," *Barricada* noted. It is estimated that 20,000 peasant families in the region want land.

Barricada quoted Roberto Coronel, vice minister of agrarian reform, who warned against further illegal land occupations. "The peasants who want land must respect the laws that the revolution has created to give them the land," Coronel stated. "We must not forget that in Nicaragua there exists a mixed economy."



Socialist Action/Alan Benjamin

Coronel continued, "If an occupation is considered illegal by the regional committee of the Agrarian Tribunal, the land must be returned to the owner....The revolution wants to favor the peasants, but within the framework of a legal juridical system."

Workers' participation and control

One of the primary preoccupations of the Sandinista government in the 1986 economic plan is to win the battle of production. A key component in this strategy, government planners believe, is to increase the participation of the workers in the management of the enterprises. The unions and mass organizations are expected to play a major role in this task.

Barricada devoted its entire May 5 weekly economics section to the lessons of the state-run Induquinisa plant, where workers were able to surpass the production quotas because of their "organized and conscious participation in the affairs of the factory." The motto of the workers at Induquinisa was "Participation is the motor of productivity."

Barricada pointed to the problems the government faces as it tries to motivate workers to produce more and better. These include the "excessive centralist and hierarchical methods of administration" in the state sector; the arrogance and resistance of the "privileged private sector;" and the overall low degree of participation of the workers, who "don't know the political importance, the costs, or the destination of their production."

While it is clear that the Sandinista government is committed to overcoming these obstacles, many deeper problems seem to lie embedded in the economic system

itself.

Francisco Cano, international director of the Rural Workers Association (Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo/ATC), explained that the Ingenio San Antonio, the largest private sugar refinery in the country, "places great obstacles in the path of workers' participation."

Cano explained that San Antonio, which is not necessarily representative of other private companies, "is unwilling to open its bank books to the union, claiming the right to bank secrecy." Without the right to know the profits of the capitalists, workers' control over production means little.

Other limitations have to do with the scope of decision-making of the unions. The national wage scales, codes on working conditions, and economic priorities are all decided by the FSLN national directorate and the Ministry of Labor.

Representatives of unions on a given company's production council must function within the framework established by the government, and their major goal, as they see it, is to ensure that the production goals are met.

They can point out violations of the labor code and abuses or corruption by the administration—which are not infrequent. And they can adjust production quotas. But beyond this, their role is actually quite limited. [See interview with Jose Adan Rivera in this section.]

Still, the recent shift toward what *Barricada* calls new "relations of production" is very positive. To move ahead, however, will require that the state overcome all the obstacles created by the private sector, with the working-class and mass organizations becoming the fundamental decision-making bodies of the state. ■

Agrarian reform director explains new measures

The following is an interview conducted on May 8 by Socialist Action with Miguel Barrios, director of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform (MIDINRA) in Region VI, which includes the Northern provinces of Matagalpa and Jinotega.

Socialist Action: In January, the government passed a new law that now permits MIDINRA to confiscate the lands of the large efficient producers. Why was this necessary?

Miguel Barrios: We had to amend the agrarian reform law to enable us to resolve a grave social problem—the pressure for land of the landless peasants. In those areas where there is no other alternative, we will expropriate the lands of the large efficient producers.

Obviously, it is a problem for us to have to confiscate the lands of the efficient producers. This creates insecurity among them. Being a good producer is no longer a shelter from the agrarian reform. The large producers strongly opposed this new amendment in the National Assembly.

In fact, the Independent Liberal Party (PLI) and the Conservative Democratic Party (PCD), two of the right-wing parties in the assembly, recently proposed that the agrarian reform be paralyzed for 10 years.

S.A.: What is to prevent the poor peasants who receive the land from selling it to a large owner, thereby creating a new cycle of land concentration?

Barrios: The peasants can only buy or sell the land with the authorization of MIDINRA.

S.A.: Is the government still committed to the mixed economy?

Barrios: Yes. Production in Nicaragua is based mainly on the small and medium producers. But it also includes large owners who have been willing to produce under the new rules established by the revolution.

In Nicaragua we have control over foreign trade. This prevents the large growers from trading independently on the world market.

The capitalists must also turn over a share of their profits to the workers in the form of benefits and wages. And workers have a voice in the private plants and farms, which is not well looked upon by the capitalists.

The fundamental problem for us is not who owns the means of production, but rather how the economy is regulated and how the surplus is distributed.

S.A.: In Nicaragua, the state sector only controls about 20 percent of total economic production. In these conditions, how is it possible to effectively plan and direct the economy?

Barrios: It is obvious that we don't have a planned economy in Nicaragua. But our strategy is to control certain important elements of the productive process.

Currently the state is investing heavily in large, state-owned, agro-industrial plants. Our only road to economic development is to add value to our agricultural products. These large factories will provide technological and economic direction to the economy as a whole.

Even though the state's share of the GNP is relatively small, it still has an important impact on the economy. And if the large private landowners don't produce efficiently in Nicaragua, they can be expropriated. So, as you can see, we do have some levers of planning at our command. ■

Rural workers' union leader speaks: 'Production councils strive to function by consensus'

The following is an interview conducted on May 8 by *Socialist Action* with Jose Adan Rivera, the head of the pro-Sandinista Rural Workers Association (Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo/ATC) in Matagalpa.

Socialist Action: Who does the ATC represent in this region and how is it organized?

Jose Adan Rivera: We represent agricultural workers in the state and large private sectors.

Since the triumph of the revolution new laws have been progressively introduced at the national level in the interests of the workers. Wage scales and labor laws are established by the government at the national level and must be abided by in the state and private sectors.

In each state unit, there are production councils made up of representatives of the administration and of the union. Here the interests of the state and those of the workers are combined.

In the private sector, the relations of production are those of bosses vs. workers. But these relations are regulated by a series of national labor laws. The workers in this sector know that what they produce is being controlled by the revolutionary state.

S.A.: Do the workers have actual control over production or are they just simply consulted in these production councils? If there is a dispute between the administration and the union, how is it resolved?

Rivera: In the state sector, the administrator is often nominated by the workers. The state will provide the basic guidelines for production to the administrator, who will then meet with the union in the production council.

After the council reaches a consensus, it will take the proposals to the general assembly of the workers. The workers will then decide if they agree with the proposals of the council.

Let me give you an example. In Region VI [Matagalpa and Jinotega], the government will tell the administrator that the production goal is "x" tons of coffee. The council will discuss if the plant has the capacity to produce such an amount. If resources are lacking to meet the quota, the council might ask the National Planning Council for more help. If no additional aid is forthcoming, the quota is lowered.

This month a number of state coffee farms are discussing the government's budget cuts for the next growing season. We are having to scale down our investment plans and goals. These meetings are therefore aimed at making the necessary adjustments to meet our goals and needs.

Now, as workers, we are able to understand the need to make sacrifices to meet our production goals because we have representatives in the plant and at all levels of government.

Even the president of the country, Daniel Ortega, meets every one or two months with the workers in Face the People meetings.

Now if a worker feels that there is a problem that has not been resolved and could be resolved—despite all the difficulties caused by the imperialist aggression—he or she will take the problem to a higher body. In many cases problems of this sort arise out of bureaucratic negligence by some administrator. But if the problem is still unresolved, the grievance can be taken as high as the National Planning Council and the president himself.

The administrator in a plant must give a performance report to the workers every three months. If the administrator fails to give a report or if the report contains incorrect information, the workers can request that the state appoint a new administrator.

This is how things should work in theory. In practice, however, these guidelines are unevenly implemented. In the private sector, or in those state farms where the workers' level of consciousness and organization is lower, actual workers' participation is more difficult.

S.A.: What happens, though, if the workers and the administration cannot reach a consensus? What if there are differences on work conditions or levels of investment? Who decides—particularly in the case of the private sector?

Rivera: In the case of the private sector, we sit down with the bosses and draw up a collective agreement. In it we agree on wages and work conditions as established by the Ministry of Labor. In addition, we demand that a certain percentage of land be made available to the workers for their individual production. And we say they must repair the dining hall or fix the child-care center.

As can be expected, the bosses usually tell us they don't have the money to do all this. What they are interested in, of course, is their profits.

But we know what their profits are. And so we draw up an agreement that takes into account the needs of the workers and the bosses' need to turn a reasonable profit. This agreement is drawn up in the presence of the Ministry of Labor.

Now if the bosses fail to carry out the agreement, then the Ministry of Labor can intervene to settle the dispute. It is the ultimate arbiter. The need for state mediation with the private sector is, in fact, very common.

So, if the Ministry rules in favor of the workers, the bosses are fined. And if the bosses refuse to invest part of the total profits, or if they continue to refuse to play by the new rules, this is considered economic sabotage and their land can be confiscated.

S.A.: But what happens if the workers don't agree with the decision of the Ministry of Labor?

Rivera: They can take their grievances to the presidency. It is important to understand that the methods of struggle of the workers depend on who is in power. In Nicaragua, the workers are in power. We are not struggling for simple economic demands. We are struggling to preserve and defend our revolutionary power.

The right to strike, for example, is included in the statutes of the ATC. But this method of struggle is only valid when the workers don't have power. They are striking against the capitalists. But because in Nicaragua the capitalists aren't in control, the workers would be striking against themselves.

S.A.: But don't the large capitalists still control a significant percentage of the economy? Isn't the mixed economy still regulated by the capitalist laws of production?

Rivera: In Nicaragua, we have a state that defends the interests of the workers. The capitalists who are willing to produce patriotically for the revolution are producing in the interests of the workers.

In Nicaragua there was a very weak, backward, and thwarted national capitalist class. A normal capitalist class never developed here. Our mixed economy is therefore very peculiar.

The capitalists in this region produce 3 million to 4 million pounds of coffee as individual producers. Many of those who stayed are willing to work with us. This is essential to increase production to defend the revolution. We will combine the efforts of all sectors of society to meet our goals. ■



Commander Jaime Wheelock (left), minister of agrarian reform, talks to workers at state-run dairy farm 30 miles north of Managua. Wheelock, who visits state farms and cooperatives every Saturday, is being informed of problems on this farm.

...Managua May Day

(continued from page 7)

political conditions for the elaboration of a constitution do not exist in Nicaragua.

The leader of the PLI, Vigilio Godoy Reyes, opposed the idea of a public discussion of the constitution altogether. "There can be no freedom of expression regarding the constitution while a state of emergency is in effect," he said.

"Freedom of expression exists in Nicaragua," said Jose Luis Villavicencio, the FSLN's National Assembly fraction coordinator, in an interview with *Socialist Action*. "But freedom of information is regulated. *La Prensa* would like to do to our revolution what *El Mercurio* did to Allende in Chile—confuse the masses and undermine the government. We cannot permit that." *La Prensa* has been censored by the government because it continues to publish stories aimed at sabotaging Nicaragua's defense efforts.

But in spite of this opposition, the elaboration of the constitution continues. The main points of a draft prepared by the National Assembly and approved by the

FSLN on May 8 will be discussed in 84 public "town meetings" scheduled to begin this month.

Character of the new constitution

The draft of the constitution, according to Villavicencio, is modeled on the Swedish parliamentary system. The future government would be based on an elected president, assembly, and municipal councils.

The drafters of the constitution specifically rejected creating a national governing structure based on the mass organizations, unions, and Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS)—i.e., a national council of organs of people's power.

Asked why the drafters chose not to even represent the mass organizations directly in the new form of government, Villavicencio responded that it was "merely a juridical question." He said the unions and mass organizations would be represented indirectly through the elected legislators of the FSLN.

The capitalist parties have nonetheless opposed the draft. They claim it leaves the main structures of Sandinista power intact—despite its recognition of the principles of political pluralism and the mixed economy. Many conservative leaders, for example, have called for fundamental changes in the nature of the Popular

Sandinista Army, which they say functions as the armed branch of the FSLN rather than as a national army.

It seems highly unlikely, however, that the FSLN will permit any fundamental changes in the structure of the armed forces while the country is in a state of war. Moreover, the creation of a mass popular army is currently at the heart of the Sandinista's conception of revolutionary democracy.

In a speech to a congress of Brazilian sociologists last March, FSLN Commander Tomas Borge pointed out that in Nicaragua "There is no more radical or consistent way to be democratic than the Sandinista slogan: All arms to the people."

Indeed, since the beginning of the U.S. war on Nicaragua, over 300,000 rifles have been given to the workers and peasants. These arms can be seen carried everywhere by members of the Sandinista Army, the Reserve Military Police, and the People's Militias. Workers and peasants guarding their factories and farms also carry guns and are allowed to take them home.

"If our government didn't have the support of the people, if it weren't a democratic government, don't you think these guns would be turned against the government?" asked Villavicencio. The question did not require an answer. ■

Inflation measures disguise attacks on Brazilian workers

By ALBERTO OLIVEIRA

SAO PAULO—A new series of economic measures have been instituted by presidential decree in Brazil. President Jose Sarney caught the country by surprise when he announced the new plan on Feb. 28. The plan was rubber-stamped by Congress barely a month later.

Sarney explained that the new wage and price freeze package (popularly called "o pacote") will put an end to inflation—which rose by 264 percent in 1985. Inflation skyrocketed by an annual rate of almost 600 percent during the first two months of this year.

But contrary to Sarney's claims, living standards are sure to be eroded still further. Brazilians will have their wages frozen at their *average* rate for the previous six months, while prices are frozen at the level of Feb. 26—the *highest* level in six months. Workers who had pay raises scheduled for the period after February will be especially hard hit.

Jose Sarney was the running mate of President-elect Tancredo Neves. Both were appointed to office by an electoral college in November 1984. Their appointment was carried out against the will of the majority of the population, which demanded direct and free elections.

Neves died, however, before entering office, and Sarney, a supporter of the former military dictatorship, automatically became president.

The government felt pressured by demands of the International Monetary Fund to carry out austerity measures in order to maintain interest payments on the country's huge debt. Brazil owes more than \$100 billion—the largest foreign debt of any country in the world.

But the IMF demands were countered by an upsurge in the labor movement. There were 661 major strikes last year. The work stoppages involved over 7 million workers compared to 1.5 million in 1984.

With the new plan, the Brazilian capitalists have been able to take the political initiative once again. Not only was the new scheme successful in placating the demands of the IMF, but it also received initial support from a large part of the Brazilian population.

Sarney told the people, "You are appointed to be price inspectors." Within hours, legions of housewives and other working-class Brazilians responded to his call. They began to organize grass-roots patrols of supermarkets in order to maintain the price freeze and discourage hoarding. Stores that dared to raise prices were forced to close down.

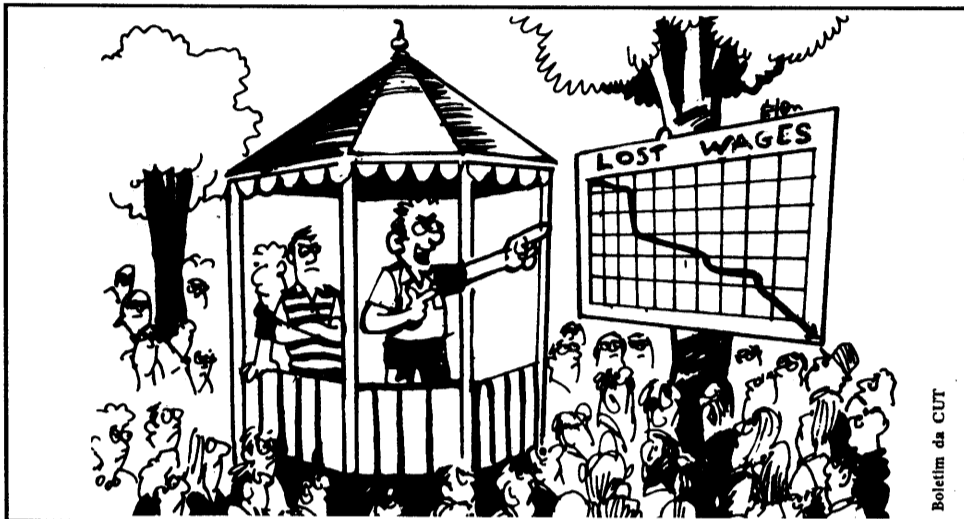
Still, Brazil's leading trade union federation, the Central Unica dos Tra-



balhadores (CUT), opposed the new plan and warned that "o pacote" could not halt the rise in prices. At best, the CUT stated, the measures would affect the "tip of the iceberg" of the problems facing working people.

"It is true that the people demand the freezing and control of prices," the CUT stated. "But more should be controlled: The people ought to decide the direction of the economy and whose interests it must serve. They ought to decide on whether or not to pay back the national debt, which we did not contract and which threatens to sink our nation with millions of Brazilians aboard."

The CUT, many of whose leaders and activists are also members of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers Party/PT), has put forward its own demands. These include a legal minimum wage, back-payment of all wages lost under the new plan, a new calculation of wage rates according to the most recent level of inflation, and a sliding scale of wages to be readjusted each time inflation goes up 5 percent. It also called for a national day of protest against the new plan.



... South Africa

(continued from page 1)

classes in various parts of the country should return to school. Most of the conference participants agreed that the perspective of "indefinite" school boycotts was not effective.

This point was emphasized in a leaflet distributed earlier this year by Students of Young Azania (SOYA). The leaflet pointed out that in most cases "the boycott is a weapon that can and should be used for short periods of time" and for limited purposes.

SOYA urged "maximum unity of students, teachers, and parents, on a single, national program of action." The leaflet concluded, "Let us continue the struggle inside and outside the schools and let us use the boycott when we have to and when it suits our purpose."

Unions help lead struggle

Last autumn, when the schools boycott movement was at its height, the organizers of the boycott took relatively few steps to coordinate their activities with those taken by the Black and non-racial trade unions.

But student and community activists responded when, at the founding of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in November 1985, the new 500,000-member federation dedicated itself to increased participation in the anti-apartheid fight.

This bond was reinforced as COSATU members helped to set up action committees to guide the struggles in the Black townships. These bodies of "people's power" have virtually taken over the administration of several communities—such as Alexandra, a township next to Johannesburg.

"What we did in Alexandra," metal-workers union leader Moses Mayekiso told the *Socialist Organizer* newspaper during a tour of Great Britain, "is set up street committees like those structures in the trade unions themselves, where the leadership has to be answerable to the communities."

The struggles in the townships have, in turn, helped to fuel the strike wave that has swept the country since COSATU's founding. As the *South African Weekly Mail* pointed out in its April 4, 1986,

issue, the June 16-18 general strike will "take on an added significance because of the events of the last three months, which have seen the most sustained expression of workers' militancy since 1973."

More than 500,000 workdays were lost in strike action during the first three months of 1986. It is estimated that in the mines alone during the same period there were 11,000 people on strike per day. More mineworkers have participated in work stoppages so far this year than in all of 1985—and more than during the great mineworkers' strike of 1946.

The strikes by Black workers have taken on a more political character, too, taking up anti-apartheid demands. Wildcat strikes against "racial incidents" are becoming more common.

Black trade unionists have increasingly made use of the sit-in strike—occupying their workplaces and defending them against scabs. The sit-ins (often known as "sit-downs" in labor history) were begun late last year in the metal industry. The tactic spread to the mines, where sit-ins are especially difficult to carry out due to the lack of oxygen and water. Last month, close to 60 Pic n' Pay supermarkets were occupied by workers.

Buthelezi's sham trade union

A back-handed tribute to COSATU's organizing successes and its efforts in the anti-apartheid fight was paid last month by Gatsha Buthelezi, conservative chief minister of the kwaZulu "homeland." Buthelezi chose May Day to hold a rally in Durban to launch a "rival" to COSATU, the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA)—an avowedly "pro-capitalist" formation.

Buthelezi told the rally that COSATU's support of foreign sanctions against South Africa would heighten unemployment among Black people. Meanwhile, Buthelezi's followers demolished a symbolic coffin with the names of COSATU's two top officials printed upon it. T-shirts reading "Jobs—not sanctions" were distributed to thousands in the crowd.

It is no wonder that the state railway system facilitated the rally by adding trains from as far away as Johannesburg. In addition, thousands of people were bused in to the gathering from rural districts—courtesy of Inkatha, which is the ruling party in kwaZulu.

UWUSA is almost completely a paper organization, claiming under its banner only a small union of workers in sugar-refining. That union was started with money from a sugar-growing company.

In the beginning, the new "federation" may find some success in signing up members from the Black shanty towns ringing Durban and in kwaZulu, where people are desperately worried about job security. Unemployment among Black people runs between 25 percent and 60 percent throughout the country.

Ultimately, however, Buthelezi's new union will only gain members if it proves able to help workers keep their jobs and win wage gains. This will be difficult, given the reluctance expressed by UWUSA's chief officials to engage in strikes.

COSATU and other democratic Black unions are growing precisely because of their militancy. And they are attractive to most Black workers because of their anti-apartheid activity, not in spite of it. As the struggle in South Africa deepens, it will likewise spread to less politicized workers. Even members of Inkatha will be radicalized.

"Homelands" take up struggle

Recent battles against apartheid have spilled over from the central industrial regions into rural "homeland" areas. In some sections of the country, elected

village councils have completely replaced the government-appointed tribal authorities.

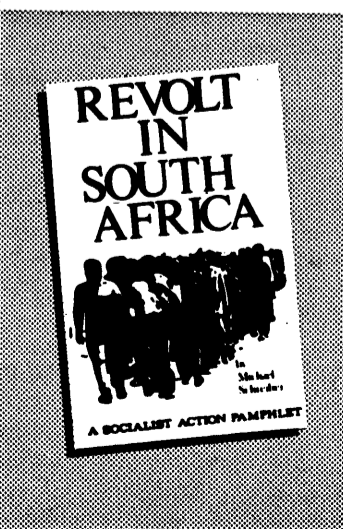
In the Northern Transvaal, *The [Johannesburg] Star* reports, villagers have built structures "which are the rural equivalent of the street committees and neighborhood organizations established in the urban townships." The apartheid regime has responded by unleashing a "situation of civil war" in the region, according to Dr. Beyers Naude, secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches.

Incidents of police terror are greater than at any time during the Black upsurge of the past two years. Last month, Alexandra was occupied by almost 1700 troops. Large sections of Crossroads, near Capetown, were burned to the ground by police-backed vigilantes—making as many as 50,000 homeless.

The government is using preparations for the June 14-16 general strike to motivate new laws that will allow authorities to detain political opponents for up to six months without charges or trial.

"These people must take what they get!" Law and Order Minister Louis Le Grange blustered in parliament, shrugging off charges that several political activists in Alexandra had been assassinated by the police. It is the terrorist program expressed by Le Grange—not the "power-sharing" schemes that the government occasionally puts on display—that sets the tone for apartheid policy in South Africa today.

A must for anti-apartheid activists!



This timely pamphlet discusses the on-going struggle in South Africa from a revolutionary Marxist perspective. The program of the South African Communist Party and other political organizations, the role of rural workers, and the recent development of COSATU, the new union federation, are analyzed in detail.

By Michael Schreiber and Carole Seligman, 75 cents (\$1.10 includes postage).

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A legacy of lies follow growth of nuclear power

By MARK HARRIS

President Reagan has criticized the Soviet Union for its "stubborn refusal" to provide a "full accounting of what happened" during the nuclear accident at Chernobyl. This, the president says, is "the least the world community has a right to expect."

Unfortunately, the former General Electric spokesman turned president is not such a forthright critic when it comes to the nuclear industry in the United States.

Secrecy and deception have, in fact, been the watchwords of the nuclear industry from its inception. A six-month old U.S. government survey, made public on May 1, 1986, reveals that "potentially significant" nuclear accidents "may not have been publicly reported" in 14 of the 17 "non-Communist" countries with operating nuclear power plants. General Electric and Westinghouse corporations are the main exporters of nuclear technology to other nations.

One hardly unknown accident, of course, was the disaster at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, Pa., in 1979, which was a not-so-well choreographed exercise in duplicity by Metropolitan Edison Co., the operator of the plant, and state and federal officials.

All is well?

"Everything is under control," said Lt. Gov. William Scranton as radioactive

steam vented from the damaged nuclear plant.

"There was nothing there that was catastrophic or unplanned for...the plant is in a safe condition," Metropolitan Edison Vice-President John Herbein told reporters soon after the accident, failing to mention the radioactive releases because "it didn't come up."

Radiation levels within three miles of the plant reached 25 millirems an hour on the first day of the disaster. Government standards, which themselves are highly questionable, set 170 millirems a year as the maximum "safe" dose for the public.

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader noted that Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials purposely avoided a mass evacuation from the Three Mile Island area because they feared the political consequences of such a drastic emergency measure on the future of the industry.

"It would have shown 150 million people watching on TV a picture of half a million people fleeing from a potential disaster," Nader noted. "That picture would have terminated the nuclear industry right there and then."

The reactor actually came within 30 to 60 minutes of a meltdown—a scenario that could have meant death for thousands and turned eastern Pennsylvania into a radioactive graveyard.

Today a senior Reagan administration

official complains that "exaggerated press attention" about Three Mile Island "needlessly alarmed the public."

At the time of the Three Mile Island disaster, radiation expert Dr. Ernest Sternglass said that radioactivity released on the first day alone "corresponded to a major fallout pattern from a bomb test."

Of course, during the 1950s such a characterization might have been used to reassure the public, since government spokesmen were fond of telling the public in those days that fallout from nuclear weapons tests was "insignificant" and no cause for concern.

Deception in the desert

Previously secret Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) documents, however, have revealed that one atom bomb test alone in 1953 subjected residents of southern Utah and Nevada to doses of radiation 400 to 500 times higher than was released during the Three Mile Island accident.

Between 1951 and 1958 there were 97 atmospheric atomic explosions in Nevada. The leukemia death rate in southern Utah, where the fallout drifted, was found to be 50-percent higher than expected from 1950 to 1964.

Dr. John Gofman, the AEC's former top expert on the biological effects of radiation,

says that the government canceled atomic tests when the winds were blowing toward heavily populated areas—but not if the fallout would be blown toward sparsely inhabited areas.

Similarly, in 1954 the U.S. military exploded the Bravo hydrogen bomb in the Marshall Islands, which covered residents of the island of Rongelap with a snow-like radioactive ash. A 1954 U.S. Defense Nuclear Agency report, not released until 1982, confirmed that U.S. officials *knew in advance* that the fallout would blanket the islanders.

At the time, the military claimed the winds unexpectedly shifted toward Rongelap at the last minute.

CIA covers up Russian disaster

Moreover, the U.S. government doesn't just cover up its own tracks. In 1957-58, a nuclear disaster of perhaps unparalleled magnitude occurred at Kyshtym, a town in central Russia, when a reactor explosion poisoned an area estimated at 40 to 400 square miles. Thirty villages were abandoned, and possibly thousands died.

The Soviet Union kept quiet about the disaster—and so did the CIA, which confirmed in 1977 that it knew of the disaster. It was only through the effort of Dr. Zhores Medvedev, a Russian scientist living in Britain, that details became known after 20 years of silence.

The CIA apparently didn't want to stir up anti-nuclear sentiment, so they covered up the accident, in cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Lies and subterfuge have been the routine response to each and every crisis of nuclear technology. Such deception, of course, is designed to perpetuate the biggest lie of all—that nuclear technology is safe. ■



High-ranking government personnel are illuminated by atomic blast at Atomic Energy Commission's Pacific Proving Ground in 1951.

U.S. Air Force/photographer unknown

Best nuclear survival tactic? Run for office

Full-scale nuclear war certainly ranks high on my list of must-avoid situations. It is a prospect so horrifying that it may be preferable not to survive such a holocaust than face the devastation to follow.

Hard as it is to believe, however, there actually is a fate even worse, thanks to the farsighted designs of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is what might be called a scenario of "worst-case" proportions, and it is this: To survive a nuclear attack only to discover that your fellow survivors consist of an inordinate number of elected public officials and government bureaucrats.

This nuclear nightmare may become reality, if the Reagan administration accepts the FEMA's proposal to construct 600 bomb shelters for local officials between 1988 and 1992. The idea behind this "Save the Politicians" campaign, which will cost \$1.5 billion, is to ensure that order is quickly restored during what the FEMA calls the "trans-attack" period, and a smooth transition made to "post-attack government and society."

The architects of this plan seem unfazed by the fact that these sheltered officials will represent a "post-attack" constituency that resembles something closer to Post-Toasties than registered voters.

Still, they hope to get the day after off to a patriotic start, and what better way to do that than by making sure that private property stays private. That's why the bomb

shelters will also house all the land records, so that survivors can "retain and demonstrate ownership" of property.

Of course, restoring "post-attack" inequality will be a time-consuming drain on a budget-strapped government, so the FEMA forewarns the public that when the bombs drop—you're on your own. This is what the FEMA likes to refer to as a "self-help" program. In other words, don't expect a free ride just because life as we know it has ceased to exist.

That's an idea that should appeal to Ronald Reagan, for whom the extent of philosophical wisdom doesn't go beyond the idea that clean living and hard work always pay off.

Here we have the make-believe ideology of the conservative movement carried to its absurd end. Just pull yourself up by your bootstraps, brush off that radioactive dust, and go out and conquer the world and/or start a small business.

Do you think Horatio Alger would have allowed something as petty as total nuclear devastation to get in the way of personal ambition? This is America, after all, where anyone can become president—an assertion the present occupant of the White House provides unfortunate confirmation of.

Still, the folks at the FEMA are not purists. They do plan to distribute what may become standard to every

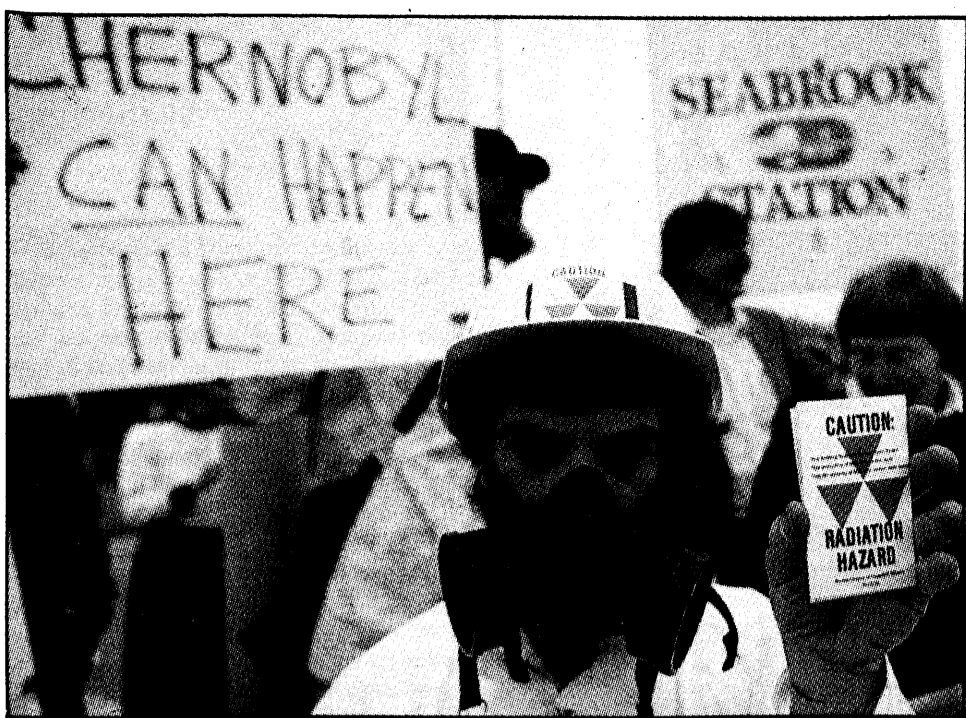
"post-attack" household—low-cost radiation detectors. For starters, 3.8 million of these will be handed out.

The FEMA also plans to circulate "instructional materials" for use by families, churches, and schools. What kind of instruction will be provided is not explained, but in line with the "self-help" philosophy perhaps we can expect books and pamphlets on such topics as "Radiated Real Estate?: How to Avoid a Financial Meltdown;" or "I'm OK, You're Thermo-nuclear."

Back in the 1950s they used to tell us to "duck and cover" in the event of a nuclear attack. The 1980s version of this advice apparently has a different twist: The politicians will be the ones running for cover, while the rest of us act like sitting ducks in an atomic shooting gallery.

All this could be left at the level of a ridiculous joke, if not for the fact that the Reagan administration and its cronies at the FEMA are dead serious. And if you don't believe them, they've got a little arsenal of nuclear warheads that provide 30,000 reminders that they're not kidding around.

Now, if we could just convince them to enter those shelters a little early, and take all those property records with them. We'll let them know when it is safe to come out.—MARK HARRIS



Peter Blakely

... Chernobyl

(continued from page 1)

times greater than normal had been detected. France feared the truth would spur greater support for the anti-nuclear movement, as unnamed officials told the *Monitor*.

Those in the know, of course, know better than to believe that a disaster like Chernobyl can't happen here. "The Russians didn't build that plant with an eye toward having it blow up," said Owen Thero, president of Quality Technology Co., a Lebo, Kan., firm that serves as a consultant to the nuclear industry. "It was a management failure and we've got them here in the U.S., too."

The Western media for two weeks made much of the fact that the Chernobyl facility, according to U.S. intelligence sources, lacked a containment dome required of U.S. commercial reactors.

However, *The New York Times* belatedly reported on May 19 that the Chernobyl plant did have a containment structure. The plant "had more safety features and was closer to American reactor designs than Western experts had assumed," the *Times* noted.

Not only that, two nuclear safety critics, Robert Pollard, who has served on the staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Daniel Ford, former executive director of the Union for Concerned Scientists, charge that the containment structure at

Chernobyl "bears a striking resemblance to the defective pressure-suppression design used by General Electric."

In 1972 the top safety adviser at the Atomic Energy Commission had recommended that General Electric be forced to stop building nuclear plants with a "plainly defective safety shield."

However, as the suppressed documents show, Joseph H. Hendrie, an AEC safety adviser who later became chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, opposed the recommendation because it "would throw into question the continued operation of licensed plants" and "could well be the end of nuclear power."

Ford said suppressed government documents made public under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that 39 of the 100 U.S. nuclear plants have containment structures that could leak or rupture even in relatively minor accidents.

And in the event of a meltdown, Ford warned, there is no "magic shield" at any U.S. plant that could contain such a disaster.

Moreover, there are five aging, government-run nuclear plants, which are used for the current nuclear weapons build-up, that lack any containment buildings.

One of these plants is a graphite-moderated reactor run by the Department of Energy in Hanford, Wash. A former technician at the Hanford plant, Larry Caldwell, told *The Washington Post* that "all the problems that plagued the Russians could

potentially affect this one. They've blown fuel elements out of the reactor tubes. Two years ago, they...spilled 400,000 gallons of radioactive water."

The other four reactors are at the Savannah River complex near Aiken, S.C. It too has been plagued with spills, leaks, and other accidents.

And things are getting worse. The Critical Mass Energy Project, a Ralph Nader group, recently released a study that demonstrates a trend toward increasing problems at U.S. plants. Reported safety incidents at nuclear plants rose from 2310 in 1979 to 5060 in 1983.

In fact, 1985 was the worst year for safety since the Three Mile Island disaster in 1979, according to Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.). Markey warns that "the list of close calls strongly suggests that a major U.S. nuclear accident could be lurking around the corner."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission admits that commercial reactors in the United States suffered from a host of safety problems last year, including broken emergency equipment, inadequately trained operators, badly designed or poorly maintained machinery, insufficient attention to detail, and poor management.

One incident last year involved a nuclear power plant in Ohio. It suffered a series of operator errors and equipment malfunctions that led, as a senior atomic safety adviser described it, to "40 minutes of chaos and fast-approaching disaster" before the reactor was brought under control.

Another incident involved the Rancho Seco reactor near Sacramento, Calif., which went through a severe temperature gyration last December, dumping hundreds of gallons of radioactive water inside the plant. These are but two among a number of serious safety incidents in the past year.

But it is not only the threat of a nuclear accident that poses risks. There is danger from the mining and processing of uranium necessary for nuclear production, which imperils workers employed in this industry and threatens the environment by releases

of radioactive gases.

And there is the eternal problem of what to do with nuclear wastes, some of which must be kept isolated from all living things for hundreds of thousands of years. There is, in fact, no existing technology for its safe disposal.

Yet nuclear power continues to proliferate. Cuba, for example, is now constructing two nuclear plants. President Fidel Castro justified this project at the First National Forum on Energy in December 1984, when he said that nuclear contamination and accidents were problems limited to capitalist societies "seeking to cut corners and costs."

Unfortunately, that is not true. Nuclear technology is unsafe wherever it exists.

Still, Castro is right in one respect—nuclear power in capitalist societies serves to generate not just power but profit—and profit conflicts with safety. Carl Walske, head of the Atomic Industrial Forum, put it bluntly: "If you buy two cents worth of safety for a dollar, that doesn't make much sense."

Rep. Markey, too, pointed out in Congress that the NRC considers modifications in existing reactors more on the basis of how much a change will cost than how much it will improve safety.

When it comes to its liability in the event of an accident, however, the nuclear industry displays a much keener sensitivity to the potential for disaster. Industry lobbyists are now pressuring Congress to defeat a bill that would increase liability from the present \$650 million limit to \$8.2 billion.

Nuclear power is a threat that has been foisted upon the world first by Washington and the U.S. nuclear industry, and second by the short-sighted policies of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The disaster at Chernobyl confirms again the urgency of organizing a protest movement of international scope that can compel the promoters of nuclear power to take the one step that will ensure no more disasters: Shut down all nuclear plants! ■

HERdles



Toronto protest planned on S. Africa, C. America

By BARRY WEISLEDER

TORONTO—The call has gone out to individuals and groups throughout English Canada and Quebec to participate in a mass demonstration and fair here on June 14. This demonstration, in protest of U.S. policy in Central America and Canadian complicity, will incorporate an exciting new dimension—unity with the movement against apartheid in South Africa.

The call was issued in January by the Toronto Anti-Intervention Coalition (TAIC), which unites over 90 labor, church, antiwar, solidarity, and women's rights organizations. And now, the TAIC is working with anti-apartheid and Africa solidarity groups to broaden the base and scope of the day.

The attempt to link the Central American anti-intervention struggle with the anti-apartheid struggle was approved at a general membership meeting of TAIC last December. The conference took place on the first anniversary of the founding of the organization. Before the meeting, TAIC had been beset by six months of divisive internal debate over the group's perspectives.

One current in the debate bemoaned the alleged ineffectuality of demonstrations. Some TAIC members urged the coalition to adopt as its major activity the promotion

of "peace initiatives" by forces in Central and South America—including various capitalist governments. They also wanted to downplay any role of the Canadian

government in support of U.S. intervention.

But the December meeting decisively rejected those views. It opted instead to maintain an independent mass-action perspective that would protest both U.S. intervention and Canadian involvement with U.S. military activities.

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was one of the few world figures to line up

in support of President Reagan after the U.S. bombing of Libya in April. The June 14 demonstration will give people throughout Canada the opportunity to demonstrate our opposition to the real terrorists—those who uphold racism, repression, and U.S. intervention.

For more information, contact TAIC: 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7. Telephone (416) 535-8779. ■

... Wallace

(continued from page 16)

year in which we did not have a demonstration."

One of the more successful demonstrations was against the San Francisco school board. "It was proposed," Wallace recalled, "that they pass a resolution banning discrimination based on race, sex, religion, or sexual orientation. They passed a motion that included everything except sexual orientation. We were enraged when we heard about it. The board passed the motion late at night after the gays had left the meeting."

"So at a following meeting we came back with about 350 people and packed the chamber. We put our banners up on the wall. We had labor people lobby the union representatives on the board. We had religious people lobby a priest on the board and we had professional people lobby a doctor. We were very methodical.

"The outcome of the meeting was that the board unanimously reversed itself.

"We even received an apology from the priest admitting his cowardness at the previous meeting.

"It was a considerable victory, extensively covered by the media. The victory demonstrated that it takes a combination of tactics to win the big fights. Lobbying alone would not do it. Mass action alone would not be enough."

New campaigns

Wallace continued, "The campaigns of BAGL developed thousands of activists politically. New organizations sprang up. One was the Butterfly Brigade. This was a street patrol to deal with gangs who were attacking gays. We have a modern offshoot of that in the Community United Against Violence. It has a \$100,000-a-year budget.

"We became a strong force behind the boycott of Coors beer, which is still continuing. In this period from 1975 to 1978 we had actions almost every week. If

we heard of the slightest anti-gay or anti-lesbian act or comment anywhere we had a demonstration. This established direct action and mass action as a workable tactic.

"Attacks on us in San Francisco spurred us on to the offensive and made our movement grow. When Anita Bryant led a campaign to repeal gay rights legislation in Florida, we got even more active in San Francisco. We had over 7000 people in the streets. They marched not for just one night but for five nights in a row.

"Bryant's campaign in Florida was a defeat for the homosexual movement. But in San Francisco we made it an opportunity to mobilize our forces. It taught us that we should never accept any defeat as final. We should just get up and fight again."

"We should not be limited in our tactics," Wallace concluded. "Lobbying, direct action, civil disobedience, mass marches, legislative action, court suits, and general propaganda and education—these are all legitimate tactics in the struggle for our rights. We have come a long way. We are not turning back." ■

George Breitman: A fighter to the end for socialism

George Breitman, an internationally renowned leader of the American Trotskyist movement, died on April 19 after many years of severe illness. He was 70 years old.

Breitman joined the Trotskyist movement in 1935 at the age of 19 in Newark N.J., where he had been active in organizing unemployed workers. His talents as an effective organizer, writer, and popularizer of socialist ideas quickly earned him the respect of his coworkers and comrades. His proletarian background and his early years as a class-struggle leader were to steel him for the rest of his life in the ideas of revolutionary Marxism.

In 1937, Breitman was a delegate to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Two years later, he was elected to the party's National and Political committees.

Breitman was the youngest member of the party's National Committee majority tendency, which was led by party founder James P. Cannon, at the time of the 1940 split with the minority tendency led by Max Shachtman and James Burnham. The minority broke with the Marxist analysis of the Soviet Union and soon drifted toward social democratic, reformist politics.

Breitman served on the SWP's local and national leadership bodies from 1939 to 1979. He was editor of *The Militant*, the newspaper of the SWP, on various occasions and in later years edited the English-language, 14-volume "Writings of Leon Trotsky."

One of Breitman's most unique contributions was his thorough analysis of the profound revolutionary implications of Black nationalism. In the 1960s, he wrote numerous books on the life and political legacy of Malcolm X.

Breitman was an internationalist. In 1943 and 1944, while serving in the Army in Europe, Breitman made contact with the European Trotskyists. In 1946 he attended a pre-World Congress meeting of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement, in Paris as an observer. From then on, he closely followed and participated in



George Breitman (left) with Larry Trainor at SWP camp in late 1940s.

all the major debates within the Fourth International.

In January 1984, Breitman was bureaucratically expelled from the SWP. He was framed up on charges of "disloyalty" and expelled without a trial. Along with scores of other party members who remained loyal to the original program of the SWP, Breitman had become an outspoken opponent of the party leadership's abandonment of Trotskyism.

By 1984 the SWP was no longer the same party as the one to which Breitman had devoted 50 years of his life. The new generation of party leaders, drawn from the student radicalization of the 1960s and

lacking experience in the class struggle, had lost confidence in the party's historic program. They then imposed their anti-Trotskyist orientation on the party over a period of nearly five years. In fact, after 1981, all debate of the leadership's new course was banned inside the party.

After his expulsion, Breitman helped found the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and was an editor of its monthly magazine, the *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*.

Breitman, like the other expelled SWP members, appealed his expulsion to the party leadership and membership on various occasions from 1984 to 1986—but to no avail.

The period following the 1981 SWP national convention was the most painful of Breitman's life. His arthritic condition had severely crippled him. And his party was throwing its program overboard, along with its best and most loyal members.

Despite these hardships, Breitman devoted every ounce of his remaining energy to the struggle for program and theory—to the fight for a political clarification of the issues in dispute in the SWP. He was deeply committed to preserving the revolutionary continuity of the movement founded by Trotsky and Cannon for future generations of class-struggle militants.

Above all, Breitman was concerned that the wrong lessons not be drawn from the factional struggle inside the SWP. He became impatient with—and would argue bitterly against—all those who claimed that the seeds of the party's degeneration were to be found in the Leninist concept of the party or in the SWP's program and practice prior to 1979.

Breitman traced the beginning of the party's degeneration to 1979, when the party leadership began to revise its previous positions on the Cuban Revolution and on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. He sought to preserve and defend the political and organizational gains made by the party from its founding up to 1979.

Until the very end, Breitman remained a "Cannonist" and Trotskyist, two designations used simply to denote a revolutionary socialist in today's world.

We in Socialist Action pay tribute to a revolutionist who was our comrade and friend. We pledge to continue the struggle for the program and principles that Breitman and our movement in this country have fought for during the past 50 years.

We are strengthened in our commitment to pursue this work by the example of George Breitman. ■

Gusty Trainor celebrates 50 years for socialism

By JEFF MACKLER

BOSTON—Some 50 friends and comrades of Gusty Trainor celebrated her 50th year in the revolutionary movement on May 10.

Gusty recalled how she was inspired to join the Trotskyist movement by Dr. Antoinette Konikow. In 1938 she worked hard to help prepare the food for a celebration the early American Trotskyists were organizing to commemorate Konikow's 50th year in the revolutionary movement.

Konikow was a veteran socialist leader and a pioneer in the fight for the right to abortion and birth control. She was one of the founders of the Left Opposition organized by Leon Trotsky to challenge the Stalin-led bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

"Antoinette said to me," Gusty proudly remembered, "Gusty, I hope you too will choose to devote 50 years of your life to

the movement." And with just a bit of her Italian, working-class wit and modesty, Gusty added, "And I did."

Gusty Trainor told those present that she couldn't understand why everyone was making such a fuss about the event. "I was just a rank-and-filer," she said. And a rank-and-filer she was, available for any task the movement needed doing. She was a domestic worker, a stitcher in a shoe factory, a worker in a war plant and, more recently, a key-punch operator in a hospital clinic.

Gusty and her husband Larry, who died in 1975, were asked to live in Coyoacán, Mexico, in 1940 to be part of the team organized to defend the life of Leon Trotsky against Stalin's assassins.

She was a dedicated activist in the Socialist Workers Party until last year, when she retired from the SWP in disagreement with the party's course away from its original traditions. ■



Gusty Trainor in Mexico in 1940.

In the early 1970s, Gusty was a leader of the Boston women's liberation movement, a cause she continues to champion to this day.

At the tail end of the McCarthy witchhunt, Gusty and Larry helped recruit a new generation of youth to the Trotskyist movement, which enabled it to become involved in many of the important struggles of the '60s and '70s.

A number of those present remembered the many hours they spent at the Trainor household learning about the struggles of the workers in the past, learning that workers are fully capable of changing the world for the benefit of all.

This writer was honored to say a few words at the event. I'm sure I shared the feelings of everyone when I said that the example of Gusty Trainor and the comrades of her generation, as well as those who came before her, was the reason our hearts and minds remain true to the socialist cause.

The event was organized by Boston Socialist Action and friends of Gusty Trainor—old and new.

Breitman remembered

By CARRIE HEWITT

CHICAGO—Friends of George Breitman, veteran leader of the American Trotskyist movement who died April 19, recently gathered here for a memorial meeting to commemorate his life and contributions to revolutionary Marxism.

Organized by Socialist Action for George's friends in the Chicago area, the meeting was attended by many of his longtime political associates and members of several political groups. Greetings were heard from Socialist Action, Solidarity, and Spark.

Recalling George's extensive theoretical work and his dedication to building a revolutionary socialist organization, Adam Shils of Socialist Action observed that "George saw his task as educating and consolidating the new cadre in our movement. He therefore threw himself into the editing of the 'Writings of Leon Trotsky.'

"George also delved deep into the history of the Socialist Workers Party—not as an academic study, but so that the lessons of the hard struggle waged by Jim Cannon and his comrades would not be lost and could instead be a compass for us in these complicated times."

Patrick Quinn, a member of Solidarity, recounted Breitman's many contributions to the Trotskyist movement, including his work on the SWP's defense campaign for Jimmy Kutcher, "the legless veteran," in the 1950s and his writings on Malcolm X.

A spokesperson for the group Spark paid tribute to George's theoretical work and its importance in educating future generations of revolutionary socialists. ■

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Preparing a radiant dinner—FDA style

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

Although limited applications of food irradiation have been around for many years, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has just recently given the food-processing industry the green light to start irradiation of fresh fruits and vegetables. This follows FDA approval of pork irradiation in 1985.

The National Coalition to Stop Food Irradiation (NCSFI) claims that the government's OK of food irradiation is the result of a concerted campaign to establish a nuclear food industry, whose main purpose is to provide storage for the waste products of the nuclear power and weapons industries—specifically, Cobalt 60 and Cesium 137.

Both of these elements emit Gamma rays, the shorter rays with more penetrating radiation, that either kill or sterilize food contaminants such as Salmonella and other bacteria, fungi, and other parasites.

The food processors, who are expecting this technology to increase their exports and profits, claim that food irradiation will act as a substitute for many dangerous pesticides and fungicides now widely used by the agricultural industry. The FDA has backed up this claim.

Additional benefits claimed by the Coalition for Food Irradiation (the industry-sponsored group whose members include Hormel, Campbell Soup, Nestle's, and Purina) include extending the shelf life of foods, limiting spoilage, and using this increased supply to feed the world's hungry.

Not everyone, however, has been taken in by these

corporate claims. A 1979 review of 1223 studies in the field of food irradiation tabulated 1414 adverse effects, 185 positive effects, and 900 neutral effects. Some studies conducted on the process have led to predictions of genetic mutations—not just in the bacterial parasites that infest food, but in humans who consume it.

Even the FDA agrees that irradiation creates new substances in foods. These are called radiolytic products, and many of them are still unidentified. This has led NCSFI to demand that the FDA rescind its approval of irradiation until it is able to scrutinize these substances more thoroughly.

The argument that irradiation can substitute for many pesticides is also false according to NCSFI. Most pesticides are applied before harvest. But irradiation is only done after harvest.

Expansion of radioactive materials

The effects of radiation on food is not the only safety issue. When you understand that irradiation proponents want to set up 1000 irradiation units around the country, you can see that this means a big expansion in the use of radioactive materials.

The dose of radiation already approved by the FDA for use on vegetables, fruits, and pork is 1 million times the dose of radiation in one chest X-ray. For spices it's 30 million times one chest X-ray.

Some irradiation plants are located in densely populated areas near schools, child-care centers, and homes. The radioactive source material is transported from nuclear power and nuclear weapons facilities on public highways and railroads. The current issue of the NCSFI newsletter, "The Food Irradiation Alert!", cites

several accidents at irradiation sites that resulted in toxic exposures.

Denis Mosgofian, a leader of NCSFI, explained that the corporations and the government are pushing food irradiation in order to sell a "socially acceptable industry which will require the building of thousands of warehouses for America's nuclear waste and opens the door to unloading America's rad-waste into developing nations."

Mosgofian backed up this charge with the fact that the U.S. Department of Energy got a \$5-million appropriation in fiscal 1985 for the express purpose of promoting food irradiation in six target areas. "This is a government subsidy for taking nuclear waste off the government's hands," he said.

The more aggressive food irradiation proponents claim that the process will end world hunger by increasing the food supply. NCSFI explains that world hunger is *not* caused by food scarcity.

If the food industry is interested in feeding the hungry, "why," Mosgofian asked, "does the government pay farmers not to grow food? Why are thousands of farmers allowed to lose their farms every day? And why are poor countries with starving people—like Ethiopia—exporting food? The implication is clear: An industry based on production for profit is not interested in feeding starving people."

The Coalition, which sees this fight as a means of winning a first real victory over the nuclear industry, is concentrating its energies on winning passage of HR4762, a bill calling for a moratorium on irradiation and strict labeling of all irradiated foods and ingredients.

The effort to stop the use of ionizing radiation on foods is nothing less than a vigorous challenge to the nuclear industry, the food-processing industry, and the U.S. government.

Furthermore, the issues of this struggle reveal probably the central moral issue of modern times—the potential of science and technology to solve the fundamental problems of humanity versus the existence of a social system, capitalism, so backward that it cannot allow such an advance to happen.

Am I concluding that what we need is socialism? You bet.

Note: The National Coalition to Stop Food Irradiation can be contacted at P.O. Box 59-0488, San Francisco, CA 94159.

Our readers speak out

P-9 speaker

Dear editor,

I was sorry to see that your May 1986 edition supported the decision to prevent Local P-9 (Hormel strikers) from speaking at the April 19 rally in San Francisco.

Your statements that the P-9 local's talk might be seen as a provocation to the AFL-CIO affiliates and that P-9 does not have the support of the International UFCW or the AFL-CIO is curious since on page 4 of this same issue you criticize the actions of both the International (calling it "treacherous") and the AFL-CIO (who invited the same Gov. Perpich who called out the National Guard against the Hormel strikers to speak at its political action conference.)

It is also curious since other unions (you cite "dozens of unions from over 30 states" on page 1) have already publicly expressed their support for the P-9 workers. This includes San Francisco unions.

I also fail to understand how the P-9 local is supposed to settle its problems within the union, as you seem to suggest it ought to, when your own paper chastises the International UFCW for its tactics against this local.

There were 20,000 or so people at the April 19 rally. Allowing the P-9 workers to state their case could have helped to increase their base of support. Surely the San Francisco AFL-CIO is not so anti-labor that it cannot bear to have workers state their case to the public and let the public decide who is correct or incorrect?

On the other hand, if the AFL-CIO is that anti-labor, then what is the logic in a socialist

newspaper supporting that kind of decision?

G. Thorpe,
Sacramento, Calif.

A response

Dear G. Thorpe,

I completely agree with your interest in providing P-9 strikers a platform to publicize their struggle. My article stated that "Undoubtedly, it would have added to the April 19 rally to have a P-9 speaker."

But that is not the point. The Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice organized the largest spring anti-intervention demonstration in the United States largely because it retained its extremely broad base. The Mobilization leadership continues to involve the widest representation of labor unions of any coalition in the country.

Yet, most major labor officials, unions, and central labor bodies supporting the demonstration opposed scheduling a P-9 speaker for the April 19 rally. Official labor support for April 19 and any future activities would have been severely undermined had P-9 supporters in the coalition overridden their objections.

Socialist Action did, therefore, support the "tactical decision to not push the issue" to avoid making "the Mobilization the battleground for this dispute," as I stated in my article. We believe that arguing for a P-9 speaker was subordinate to the importance of forging the widest possible unity in action against the U.S. war drive—particularly the U.S. war against Nicaragua.

The extent of political agreement in the Bay Area coalition is determined by the character of the forces leading the coalition.

Under different circumstances—in the context of a resurgent labor movement—a new union leadership would emerge from the militant struggles against the employers. This class-struggle leadership would, in turn, inevitably alter the character of the united-front type coalitions.

Militant trade unionists would then be in a position to advance these action coalitions to a higher political level in the struggle against the bosses and their government. A situation such as arose around the P-9 speaker would not exist. This, however, is not the case today.—JOE RYAN

Chinese TV

Dear editor,

In 1965, Malcolm X, the great Black revolutionary leader, commented on the fact that he had come across copies of *The Militant* newspaper in Paris and even in Africa. He said that he didn't know how they got there but that "If you put the right things in it, what you put in it will see that it gets around."

The Militant, while still existing in form, has changed drastically in content and outlook since then. In my opinion *Socialist Action* newspaper is the continuator of the dynamism of a Trotskyist perspective. A recent example has come to my attention here in Los Angeles.

In December 1985 *Socialist Action* carried an article on South Africa titled "Capitalism and apartheid: The deadly connection" by Ann Robertson. A Chinese-language television program called "Look at the World" on Channel 18 (KFTI out of the Los Angeles/San Fernando Valley area) used this article as the basis for a discussion on the economic

roots of racism in South Africa.

There are tens of thousands of Chinese-speaking people in Southern California, and this popular program gave a wide audience the unusual opportunity to hear our ideas in their own language.

Our ideas are getting around in unusual ways and reaching evermore people. Keep up the good work.

Kathleen O'Nan,
Los Angeles

Chevron jobs

Dear editor,

Recently Chevron announced plans to reduce its workforce of 60,000 employees by 15 percent. This reduction was alleged to be the result of the drop in crude oil prices. According to Chevron, drastic cuts in operating expenses must be made in order to maintain its "competitiveness."

However, a look at last year's


profits reveals a different side to this current "oil crisis."

According to Chevron's report to its stockholders, in 1985, Chevron paid \$2.40/share in dividends for 341,003,000 shares of common stock. This meager \$814,000,000 paid in dividends would keep over 23,000 people employed for one year at \$35,000!

The chairman of the board received total compensation of \$1.25 million last year, which included \$500,000 "incentive" pay. Together, the top 10 executive officers in Chevron were paid a total of \$6.15 million in salaries, incentives, and bonuses. Clearly, the executive officers and large shareholders do not have much reason to complain. They have enjoyed superprofits for many years. Why not let them bear the losses resulting from the capitalist cycle of overproduction?

A Chevron employee,
Berkeley, Calif.

International VIEWPOINT



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There's no going back to the closet for gays

By HAYDEN PERRY

SAN FRANCISCO—Gay people will never return to the days before 1969, when the patrons of the Stonewall bar in New York repelled a police raid and launched the fight for full citizenship for gays and lesbians. Too many thousands have fought and won battles to go back into the closet.

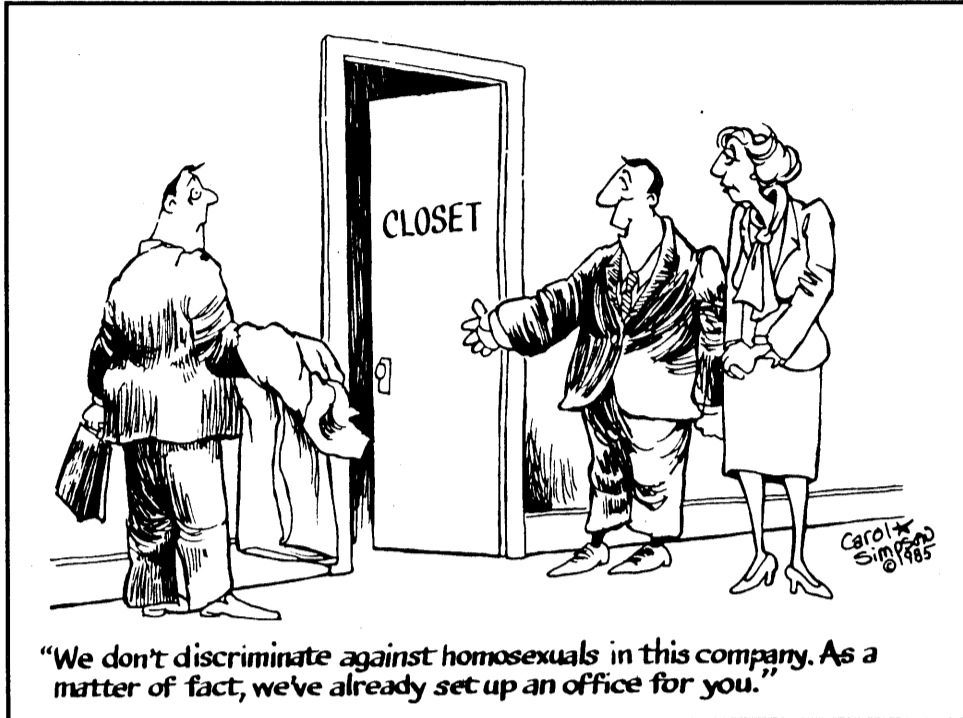
Despite the menace of AIDS and continued oppression, gays and lesbians can celebrate victories. Over 60 cities have passed laws banning discrimination because of sexual preference. New York recently passed an ordinance in the face of the AIDS scare.

Gains have been made in the union movement. The AFL-CIO passed a resolution at its national convention condemning discrimination against homosexuals and calling for legislation at the federal, state, and local level to defend the right of sexual preference.

Lesbian women have gained protection as they fight for the rights of all women. As a result of this, some courts no longer take children away from lesbian mothers. But the fight must go on.

Homosexuality is no longer a taboo subject in American culture. On TV and in films, gay and lesbian life is increasingly being treated sympathetically.

It has taken decades of struggle to win



these victories. Small groups of gay activists have grown into movements that can summon hundreds of thousands into the streets. From the first, the strategy has been to take the offensive—bolder and ever bolder—with court suits, boycotts, rallies, and mass marches.

Today hundreds of lesbian and gay groups claim to speak for over 22 million Americans. This emphasizes the importance of their demands within the civil rights struggle. And the gay rights movement is international. American gays and lesbians are not fighting alone.

Far-right organizations and individuals are trying to use the AIDS hysteria as a club to beat gays back into the closet. "Homosexuals create AIDS!" they cry. But AIDS is not a homosexual disease. It is striking heterosexuals in increasing numbers. If every gay person were back in the closet, the AIDS problem would not disappear.

Jerry Falwell, Lyndon LaRouche, and their ilk don't want AIDS to disappear. They are riding a wave of hysteria—hoping it will increase their political power. Falwell talks of God's retribution on gays. LaRouche wants a blood test for every citizen and advocates isolating all AIDS suspects in leper-like colonies.

In 1979 State Senator John V. Briggs jumped on the homophobic bandwagon with his initiative to ban sexual freedom in California. Early opinion polls gave his initiative a two-to-one chance of passing.

The pollsters did not count on a mobilization of lesbians and gays and other defenders of civil rights. The initiative was defeated two to one. It showed that in the face of danger, a united movement oriented toward mass action can deliver a lot of clout. Falwell and LaRouche can be defeated—as Briggs was in 1979.

The Reagan administration's plans to cut the already inadequate AIDS budget while increasing the Pentagon budget is a national disgrace. The discrimination gays face in employment, housing, publicity, immigration, child custody, and insurance should be seen as a threat to everyone's right to equality. A return to 1950s-type social repression in the name of "sexual decency" likewise threatens everyone.

The AIDS crisis will be overcome. The struggle for sexual freedom will continue as part of the struggle for economic and social justice for everyone.

Howard Wallace: 'We have to remain constantly visible'

By HAYDEN PERRY

I recently spoke to Howard Wallace, co-chairperson of the Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance in San Francisco and director of the AFL-CIO Northern California Coors Boycott. Wallace has been active in the gay movement since 1974 and in the labor, peace, and civil rights movements for more than 30 years.

I asked Wallace to describe the history of gay rights activities in which he participated. Wallace began by describing his own political development, which began in the late 1950s during the McCarthy period. "To be gay at that time was to be damned," Wallace told me.

"It was not just anti-gay sentiment. It was an awareness that the culture was glorifying conformity in every possible way—first and foremost in sex roles. That was a difficult time to be gay."

"It was a sub-rosa [underground] existence," Wallace continued. "The taboos against departing from those roles were overwhelming. Those few lesbians and gays who openly acknowledged their sexuality were ostracized by gays and straights alike."

The gay movement was tiny and largely closeted at that time. "Most of us led double lives," Wallace said. "Seeking each other out became a difficult, time-consuming, and often dangerous proposition."

The emergence of the beat generation in the 1950s loosened things up a bit. "I took refuge in coffee houses which honored non-conformity," Wallace said. "They featured

the proudly gay writer Allen Ginsberg among their heroes."

"The hippie movement," Wallace pointed out, "introduced a sub-culture where men were less at war with their own bodies. 'Make love, not war' carried an anti-macho message. These developments opened up some cultural doors for gays. They emboldened some gays and just made it easier to survive in general."

"In the early 1960s," Wallace continued, "the Black movement changed the social climate even more by challenging every institution of society. Of course, the massive anti-war movement and the modern feminist movement—in which many gays and lesbians played critical roles—eroded the social norms of bourgeois institutions even more."

"The first battles of gays were around gay bars," Wallace pointed out. "Because the gay culture was an underground culture for most of our history, our main meeting place was in bars. So the gay bar became as important in its way as the Black church in the Black community."

"Gay bars were always harassed by the cops in San Francisco and every other city. In fact, the gathering together of gay ghettos in the United States has come about through successive waves of witch hunts and harassment."

Stonewall became rallying cry

The spark that set off the major battles was the Stonewall confrontation in New York in 1969. Gay patrons of the Stonewall bar in Greenwich Village fought a pitched battle with the cops and won.

"In San Francisco," Wallace said, "there was a whole succession of events and battles but they did not take so dramatic a form. It took a legalistic form. Gay organizations engaged in legal action and education."

"But then there began to be small sporadic direct action events in San Francisco. Gays used the Stonewall victory as a sort of rallying cry. Nothing massive, however. A regular commemoration of Stonewall was established, and then the annual parade. The parades started out quite small, eventually growing to 200,000 or 300,000 people."

The parades served to make San Francisco a mecca for gays around the country. "The city was seen as a sanctuary," Wallace told me. "I was lured to the city from Denver at that time—in 1968."

"When I joined the fight for sexual freedom, I became convinced that the single most important factor in building the movement was constant visibility. So that the public could not escape discussing this

question. Only in this way can society overcome the unreasoning homosexual taboo that is so deeply engrained in the collective psyche."

In 1975, Wallace joined a few socialists and activists in founding a group called Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL). "It was predicated on several key conceptions," he stressed. "That we needed mass action on a regular basis to gain our rights—and at the same time we could use the legal system. That we could not be picky or choosy over who we worked with. That we had to unite the whole community as much as possible, and make room for anybody who felt comfortable."

"We needed also to build alliances with other progressive movements. BAGL did not endorse candidates and was consciously independent of the Democratic and Republican parties."

"From the first, we had about 200 to 350 attend each meeting. This continued for about a year. Hardly a week went by that

(continued on page 13)



Socialist Action/Joel Ryan