

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

WOMEN DEMAND EQUAL RIGHTS

Rally tells Senate: 'Extend ERA deadline!'



Militant/Susan Ellis

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 26 — 2,000 supporters of Equal Rights Amendment demand Senate extend deadline for ERA ratification. Addressing rally is Eleanor Smeal, president of National Organization for Women (NOW), which called the action. See page 5.

The Road to Black Liberation



Steelworkers challenge McBride bureacracy

Report on USWA convention

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Machinists break with Carter

"We will no longer pay for votes against us," declared William Winpisinger, president of the one-million-member Machinists union.

He announced September 25 that the Machinists are withdrawing support from any congressional candidate who backs Carter's energy bill. Winpisinger also said that the union has "written off" Carter and will not endorse him for reelection in 1980.

The energy bill would end price controls on natural gas by 1985, costing consumers billions of dollars and adding billions to the profits of the giant energy corporations.

Winpisinger cited the now-familiar list of Carter's betrayals of the labor movement—his abandonment of full employment and national health insurance and his failure to fight for labor law reform.

"There is a time for pragmatism and a time for principle," Winpisinger said, "... and [as] of today, the Machinists union has taken a stand on principle. . . . We are fed up with posturing politicians who come around, seek our support, our money, our votes and then when the critical issues are up for a vote they see fit to horsetrade and swap votes on the issue."

Carter's antilabor offensive has been making it increasingly difficult for top union officials to maintain a "business as usual" stance of support to the administration. Dissatisfied union members are asking what good it does to give money and votes to politicians who side with big business on key issues. To safeguard their own credibility, the union tops are pushed to strike a more "independent" pose.

"There are increasing signs that the nation's two-party system has become a one-party structure with respect to the needs of workers," said John Henning, head of the California AFL-CIO, in a Labor Day message.

"For the first time in years, some leaders in our union are talking about a third party,"

said United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser. He hastened to add, "But that's not where I am."

Retiring United Electrical Workers President Albert Fitzgerald said at the UE convention in September that he favors a "third party." Fitzgerald said, "The major reason for it is that the politicians—particularly those in the Democratic Party—think that we have no place else to go, that we're their prisoners and we ought to be satisfied with a couple of bones. And right now, they're right."

Formation of an independent labor party—democratically controlled by the union ranks and fighting uncompromisingly for the interests of all working people—would be a tremendous step forward. It would shatter the political monopoly now enjoyed by the two big-business parties. It would unleash the immense potential power of the labor movement, now shackled by subservience to capitalist politics.

But don't hold your breath waiting for Winpisinger, Fraser, Fitzgerald, and Henning to launch such a party. They have built comfortable careers around a policy of collaborating with the bosses and supporting the boss parties. Their current protests are intended mainly as a warning to the employers and the Democrats that more concessions—or at least the *appearance* of more concessions—are needed to hold the union ranks in line.

Nonetheless, these statements give union militants a chance to push forward policies that *can* strengthen the unions and lay the groundwork for independent labor political action:

- Since the union leaders are admitting that the political course they have followed for decades is bankrupt, let's have a *full discussion throughout the union movement* on political action. Let's invite *all* the candidates—including the Socialist Workers Party candidates—to address our locals, and give the ranks a chance to discuss and decide on any political endorsements.

- Recognizing that we cannot depend on the Democrats and Republicans to do anything except sell us out, let's *mobilize our forces in the streets* to win such demands as a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, free medical care for all, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, and other urgent needs of working people.

- Instead of giving the Democrats "one more chance" or fruitlessly searching for another "lesser evil" among the capitalist candidates, let's get our union to go ahead now and *run workers for office* independent of the Democrats and Republicans, on a platform decided by the unions.

Amnesty for postal workers!

The U.S. Postal Service is threatening disciplinary action against more than half the 4,000 postal workers at Jersey City's bulk mail center. Punishments would range from letters of warning to full suspension.

Their crime? Being absent from work—for *any reason*—during the July 21-28 wildcat strike.

Ninety-three workers at the facility have already been fired for exercising their right to strike during the July walkout. One hundred more in California were also dismissed. The strikers were protesting management's first contract offer, which was later rejected by all three unions voting on it.

The fired Jersey City workers are challenging their dismissals as unconstitutional. They correctly point out that they have been denied not only their right to strike but also their freedom of speech. Some fired workers were singled out for leafleting at the picket line.

During the last round of negotiations in August, there was widespread sentiment among postal workers in all three unions to include reinstatement of the fired workers in any contract. Nonetheless, the settlement recently imposed by a government-appointed arbitrator contains no amnesty provision.

This summer the postal workers took a courageous stand against Carter's 5.5 percent wage-cutting guidelines. In doing so, they struck a blow for all unions at the top of Washington's "anti-inflation" hit list—teachers, Teamsters, rail workers, auto workers.

Now is the time for the entire labor movement to stand solidly behind the postal workers.

Rehire the 193!

Stop all disciplinary actions!

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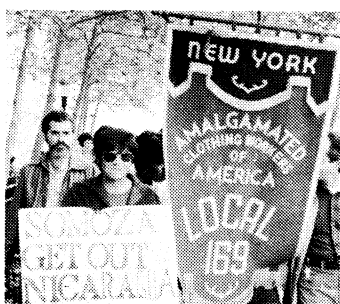
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Nicaragua. Iran. Zimbabwe. American workers can take inspiration from the heroic struggles of our sisters and brothers abroad. **Page 10.**

Che Guevara on Africa

On the eleventh anniversary of his death, Che's writings on imperialism in Africa and the need for solidarity with the Black masses there ring stronger than ever. **Page 7.**



Profits vs. miners' lives

The coal bosses are trying to gut safety gains won in the West Virginia mines. **Page 27.**



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Steelworkers challenge McBride bureaucracy

By Andy Rose

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.—As the United Steelworkers of America convention met here September 18-22, it appeared that USWA President Lloyd McBride had the proceedings under firm control.

The 3,000-plus delegates voted down by large margins proposals to guarantee membership ratification of all USWA contracts, to restructure union dues, and other policy changes.

Under the guise of banning "outside" contributions to union election campaigns, McBride pushed through new restrictions that will make it virtually impossible for an insurgent to run for top union office against the "official family."

He also secured salary increases for international union officials and an increase from sixty-five to seventy years in the mandatory retirement age. That makes McBride himself eligible for two more terms.

Resolutions lauding the helmsmanship of the "McBride team" were overwhelmingly adopted. Ed Sadlowski and others who challenged the officialdom in the February 1977 international union election were jeered as pawns of "outsiders" and "communists."

As *Business Week* magazine approvingly wrote, McBride "showed that he can control a convention."

Bureaucrats on defensive

Behind the facade of bureaucratic triumph, however, the convention revealed the USWA officialdom to be fearful and defensive in the face of mounting rank-and-file discontent.

McBride's lieutenants bombarded delegates with no fewer than twelve leaflets branding all opposition as the work of "commie sympathizers," "out-



Militant/Andy Rose

siders who want control of our Union," and a "discredited group of egomaniacs."

This shrill red-baiting barrage could hardly disguise the fact that McBride has proved incapable of stamping out the demands for union democracy that flared up in 1976-77 around Sadlowski and the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign.

On the contrary, in the weeks before

the convention a campaign for the right to vote on contracts showed sentiment for union militancy and rank-and-file control to be more widespread than ever.

The right to ratify was clearly the dominant issue of the convention. McBride had to allow nearly an hour of debate, including speeches from the podium by prominent right-to-ratify supporters.

He evidently felt unable to simply quash the democratic demand, proposing instead to refer ratification procedures to separate industry conferences (basic steel, aluminum, containers, and others) made up of local union officers.

This ploy aimed to head off the demand to write membership ratification into the USWA constitution. At the same time, however, it was a significant concession. It will keep debate open in the locals at least until the next Basic Steel Industry Conference, now slated for late 1979 or early 1980. It also makes it certain that the right to ratify will be a central issue in the local union elections taking place throughout the USWA next April.

Widespread opposition

At the previous USWA convention—held in Las Vegas in 1976—outspoken opposition came almost exclusively from District 31 (Chicago-Gary). At this convention the pro-union-democracy forces were more vocal and more widespread.

McBride could expect trouble whenever he called on the microphones for District 31, District 33 on the Mesabi Iron Range (where young miners last year led the biggest steel strike since 1959), or District 15 in southwestern Pennsylvania.

In District 15, a rank-and-file slate running on a right-to-ratify platform swept the delegate elections at the big Homestead Works of U.S. Steel (Local 1397). The Homestead delegates played a key role in pulling together nightly caucus meetings to discuss and plan for the next day's convention debates.

At various times delegates also spoke out against McBride's policies from District 6 in Canada, District 8 in Baltimore, District 26 in Youngstown, District 38 in the western states, and others.

The union bureaucracy's response to the rise of militancy and discontent in the ranks is two-sided.

On the one hand, the full weight of the apparatus is used to try to isolate, discredit, and destroy any organized opposition—through red-baiting, intimidation, threats of receivership and other antidemocratic crackdowns. Even physical violence was used against steelworkers and others distributing literature outside the convention.

Adapts to militancy

On the other hand, McBride also adapts to the sentiments of the ranks, seeking to portray himself as a staunch fighter for steelworkers' interests. He went out of his way, for example, to identify with the militancy of the 138-day iron ore strike.

"I toured the iron range. I visited with the miners. I was never more

Continued on next page

How USWA convention is stacked

USWA conventions are carefully organized to maximize the power of the union apparatus and minimize the chances of the ranks to influence union policy. Here are a few of the key ways this is done:

DELEGATES: To run for convention delegate, one must have attended half the union meetings in the past two years. This automatically eliminates the vast majority of members, who are discouraged from participating in the undemocratic and largely irrelevant proceedings that pass for meetings in most locals.

Up to one-third of the delegates are international staff representatives, appointed by and beholden to the international president. They often carry credentials from many small locals that can't afford to send

their own delegates.

COMMITTEES: The international president has sole authority to appoint convention committees. This year, in violation of past practice, McBride overruled suggested appointments by district directors identified with the pro-union-democracy forces, naming his own loyalists from those districts instead.

RESOLUTIONS: The only resolutions that come before the convention are those drafted by the Resolutions Committee and the Constitution Committee. These cannot be amended or substituted from the floor—only voted up or down.

Resolutions submitted by the locals are not even printed for the delegates to see. A delegate may request the chair to read a resolution passed by his or her local, but such

resolutions cannot be voted on.

CHAIR: McBride or another officer chairing the convention is at liberty to interrupt, argue, reply, or otherwise intervene in debate at any time. There is no procedure for assuring that the dozen floor microphones are called on equally or in order.

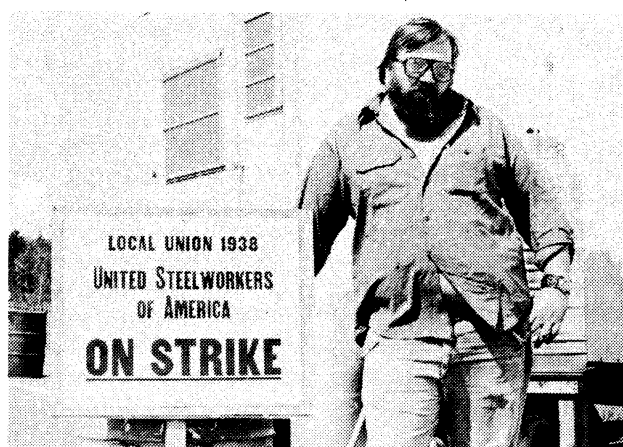
ROLL-CALL VOTE: A roll-call vote—putting the vote of every delegate on record—requires the support of 30 percent of the total registered delegates. Since many are registered more than once (from different locals) and only a fraction are on the convention floor at any moment, this 30 percent is liable to be an actual majority of delegates present and voting. There has never been a roll-call vote in the history of the USWA.

—A.R.

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Carter demands 'sacrifice' from steelworkers

You wouldn't have known it was the same speech.

When President Carter addressed the Steelworkers convention September 20, most news media reported the two key appeals that he made:

First, for labor support to a policy of "restraint" and "sacrifice from all" to allegedly fight inflation.

Second, for support to his energy legislation that will raise energy prices billions of dollars.

But when the daily USWA convention bulletin reported the speech, neither proposal was deemed worth mentioning. Instead the headline read, "Carter affirms his 'solidarity' with us."

USWA President Lloyd McBride assured the press that he was "very happy to hear the president's message."

"He's identifying himself with the workers in this country," McBride said.

Faced with the embarrassing facts that the Carter administration is campaigning to hold down wages, slash the federal budget deficit by cutting social services and jobs programs, and scuttle enforcement of "expensive" health and safety standards . . . the USWA leadership chooses to ignore



McBRIDE & CARTER: 'very happy to hear the president's message'

Militant/Andy Rose

the facts.

Carter's antilabor record is prettied up—his use of a Taft-Hartley injunction against striking coal miners, his sabotaging of the minimum-wage increase, and his advocacy of legislation that raises taxes on workers and cuts taxes for the rich.

There had been much speculation

before the convention that Carter would unveil proposals for wage-price guidelines. Instead, he stated only that "in the near future, I will announce a strengthening of our limited arsenal of weapons against inflation."

Addressing the convention two days before Carter, AFL-CIO President George Meany rejected the idea of

either mandatory wage controls or "voluntary guidelines."

"If the administration gets the prices of . . . necessities down to a reasonable level," Meany said, "then wage demands will also come down, and not before."

McBride also stated that trial balloons about a 7 percent wage guideline were unacceptable because "the only effect of that is to diminish the standard of living for workers."

McBride emphasized, however, that until he saw the details of Carter's proposals he could not rule out labor cooperation.

It was the cooperation of top union officials under cover of a phony "equality of sacrifice" that enabled Richard Nixon to zap labor with wage controls in the early 1970s. While McBride and Meany obviously cannot give Carter a blank check to repeat that assault, they appear to be leaving the door open to acceptance of some "even-handed" wage restraint plan.

Certainly their continued political support to the Carter administration despite all its antiunion actions leaves the labor movement politically disarmed in the face of whatever wage-cutting plan Carter eventually devises.

—A.R.

...bureaucracy under fire at USWA convention

Continued from preceding page

proud of being a Steelworker," McBride told the convention. He didn't mention that the strike was successful only because the local leaders and ranks rejected his efforts to divide them and force an industry-dictated settlement down their throats.

Fueling the rise of opposition sentiment is the increasing incapacity of the USWA officialdom to satisfy the needs and expectations of the membership.

A prime example is McBride's championing of the steel industry's anti-import campaign. The union president loudly echoes corporate claims that steel imports "steal American jobs."

At the convention McBride reported "remarkable and most encouraging progress" in curbing imports. Yet he offered no hope for the nearly 10,000 steelworkers in Youngstown, Ohio, and Lackawanna, New York, whose jobs were wiped out last year by plant clos-

ings.

The only tangible "progress" from import curbs has been the corporations' progress in jacking up steel prices and profits.

"We made collective bargaining history," McBride declared of the union's 1977 contracts. The landmark accomplishment was the "Lifetime Security Program" in basic steel. In reality this offers at most a modest pension supplement for high-seniority workers who lose their jobs in plant shutdowns.

Yet McBride's keynote speech revealed that *not a single steelworker has collected a penny from this scheme.*

A year and a half after the agreement was signed, the union tops are still locked in negotiations with the steel companies about how the "Lifetime Security Program" will work.

Signing a contract whose terms are not settled—that's "collective bargaining history" with a vengeance.

Saving steelworkers' jobs was the shining promise of both the anti-import campaign and the five-year-old Experimental Negotiating Agreement to prohibit national strikes in basic steel. Yet according to the *Officers' Report* to the convention, production and maintenance jobs in basic steel are being wiped out faster than ever. For the past three years employment has averaged less than 360,000—the lowest level since the 1930s Great Depression.

Belated enactment of a weak and loophole-riddled standard for deadly coke-oven emissions was hailed as the union's greatest breakthrough in health and safety.

When a delegate appealed on the convention floor for a meaningful fight to save the lives of coke-oven workers, McBride replied, "Some people in this union will never be satisfied."

Equal rights

In his lengthy opening address, McBride did not offer so much as a token word of support to equal rights for Blacks, other minorities, and women. The impact of their demands was nevertheless felt.

Members of the District 31 Women's Caucus played an active role—speaking on the convention floor, distributing copies of their newsletter and a leaflet to delegates, and appealing for formation of a Department of Women's Affairs.

The union leadership put forward two resolutions on women's rights.

One pledged that the USWA "will continue its own efforts to promote the social and economic status of working women and all women, to promote affirmative action for women in employment, and to encourage the active participation of women at all levels within the Union."

Another resolution reaffirmed support to the Equal Rights Amendment "and any extension of the ratification period necessary to secure its passage."

Delegate Alice Puerala from Local 65 in South Chicago condemned union support to politicians who vote against the ERA. "The ERA is a labor issue and if they're against the ERA, then they are against the cause of labor," she said.

Weber case

Brian Weber from Local 5702 in Gramercy, Louisiana, called for defeat of the civil rights resolution because it endorsed affirmative action in the basic steel consent decree and other USWA agreements. Weber's lawsuit against a USWA-negotiated affirmative-action program at Kaiser Aluminum is the gravest challenge to Black job rights now in the courts.

The convention repudiated Weber by adopting the civil rights resolution by an overwhelming majority.

In the short discussion on civil rights, Black delegates urged greater representation of minorities on the USWA staff. Their appeal was brushed aside by McBride.

For the McBride bureaucracy, the holy war against "outsider" contributions to union elections was the high point of the convention. A lynch-mob atmosphere was whipped up against union dissidents.

District 35 Director Bruce Thrasher thundered that the Steelworkers Fight Back candidates had been bankrolled by "our archenemies, the corporate executives, stockbrokers, and bankers."

The new constitutional provision states that no candidate "may solicit or accept financial support, or any other direct or indirect support of any kind . . . from any non-member."

Before accepting any check or any cash contribution of five or more dollars—whether at a plant gate, a rally, a raffle, or anywhere else—a candidate must record the name, local number, and signature of the donor. *All these names are to be turned over to McBride in a detailed series of monthly reports.*

"I oppose this resolution because I believe in democracy," District 31 Director Jim Balanoff told the convention.

He was nearly shouted down by Texas delegates stationed in front of the podium. "Get that commie out of here," they howled.

"The only thing that's not on there," Balanoff said, "is that you have to get permission from the president of this organization to run."

District 33 Director Linus Wampler declared that the regulations "insult the intelligence of our members" and are probably unconstitutional.

Michele McMills from Local 1397 proposed that if the convention was really interested in democratic elections, it should enact equal funding of campaigns from a one-dollar-per-member checkoff like that in U.S. presidential elections. The suggestion was ignored.

McBride's impossible dream

One of the final red-baiting leaflets declared of union dissidents, "let's wipe out their every trace." This convention, however, showed why that is an impossible dream for McBride and the rest of the USWA officialdom.

It is one thing to carry lopsided votes in a stacked and unrepresentative convention, the stronghold of the bureaucracy. It is something else entirely to maintain control over 1.4 million steelworkers—much less win their allegiance.

The world economic crisis of capitalism dictates sharpening corporate attacks on steelworkers and other working people. But the response of the USWA bureaucracy—the policy to which it is irrevocably committed—is to seek *closer* collaboration with the employers, not to mobilize the union ranks in a fight against them.

This guarantees that steelworkers seeking to strengthen their union and defend their living standards will be impelled—time after time—to challenge the bureaucracy and demand democratic control over their union.

The course of developments in the United Steelworkers—from the rise of a movement for union democracy in District 31 in the early 1970s up to this convention—confirms this dynamic. The potential today is greater than ever before to build a powerful rank-and-file movement to democratize the union and turn it into an instrument of class struggle against the steel corporations.

Marroquin wins support

By Jane Roland

Héctor Marroquín, a young activist who faces imprisonment, torture, or death on political frame-up charges in Mexico, was among the guests at the United Steelworkers convention.

He attended in order to talk to fellow unionists and win their support for his right to political asylum.

Thousands of steelworkers took copies of a special letter from Marroquín to convention participants. Many stopped to talk and to wish him well.

Among those who endorsed Marroquín's appeal at the convention were:

- James Blackstone, president of USWA Local 3522 in Baltimore,
- Cliff "Cowboy" Mezo, vice-president of Local 1010 in East Chicago, Indiana,
- Dorreen Labby, editor of the District 31 Women's Caucus newsletter,
- James Lyons, a leader of the Local 1033 Rank and File Caucus and of the District 31 Black Caucus, and
- Roberta Wood, a trustee of Local 65 in South Chicago and a leader of the District 31 Women's Caucus.

ERA: Frontline fight for women

Following are excerpts from the talk given by Willie Mae Reid at the August 1978 Active Workers and Socialist Educational Conference. Reid is the director of women's liberation work for the Socialist Workers Party.

Last July 9, most of us were marching in Washington, D.C., for women's equality along with thousands of our sisters and brothers. It was the largest demonstration in the history of the U.S. feminist movement.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) called the action to demand passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and extension of the March 22, 1979, ratification deadline.

The demonstration was successful beyond all expectations. It had an impact on the government, on labor, on women, on attitudes nationwide.

Participation in the march was broad. Women came by the tens of thousands to Washington, with thousands of male supporters. Many were new to the movement. This was their first demonstration. Others had marched before. Some who had stopped participating in demonstrations were inspired by July 9 to march again.

The huge NOW contingents in the demonstration reflected the steady and rapid growth of NOW since its 1977 national conference. Many women have been attracted to NOW because of its prominence in actions like July 9, its court fights on women's issues, and its recognition as an important national organization by a number of Black groups and the labor movement.

Contingents of students brought their vitality to the march. Students are among the most eager to act and earnest in their commitment to struggle. The student component has always been essential to the women's movement, and July 9 showed it will continue to be so.

Union women

Also marching were the largest contingents of labor ever to join in a women's rights demonstration. Union women readily identified with the march for equality. Many have struggled to force employers to provide equal opportunity on the job. A victory for the ERA means greater protection for their job rights.

Women workers spearheaded the July 9 work in the unions. Their hard work to build July 9 put pressure on the labor bureaucracy to turn their verbal support for the ERA into something tangible.

Another important dynamic of labor participation July 9 was the thousands of Black women and some Black men who came out to march with their unions. Although Black women also marched in NOW delegations and student contingents, the large majority of them were there with union delegations.

They came because they support women's rights and because they want to fight the government's racist and sexist attacks, which have hit them the hardest.

The early victories of the women's movement brought real changes in the daily lives of Black women. Abortion rights, child-care facilities, and affirmative action in education and employment benefitted Black women the most.

ERA: the central issue

The ERA ratification deadline means that in the next months the fight for the ERA will be central to the fight for women's equality. Much of the anger and frustration felt by women as a result of all the attacks is being channeled into the ERA struggle. The massive outpouring on July 9 reflected this.

Women are mad. They're angry at

'Equal rights, equal pay—ratify ERA!'



Militant/Susan Ellis

Part of auto workers delegation at September 26 rally in Washington demanding extension of ERA deadline

By Steve Bride

WASHINGTON—Two thousand supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment rallied here September 26 to demand that the Senate extend the deadline for ERA ratification.

Called on one week's notice by the National Organization for Women (NOW), the rally brought together NOW members and other ERA activists from up and down the East Coast and from as far away as Missouri and Texas.

A contingent from the United Auto Workers captured the militancy of the crowd. At the end of the rally, several dozen auto workers, most of them Black, marched to the Senate Office Building in a group. They chanted: "What do we want? ERA! When do we want it? Now!" and "Equal rights, equal pay; Ratify the ERA!"

On the steps of the office building, they stopped to sing "Solidarity Forever" and then entered the building to visit their senators and demand that extension be passed.

Other unions also had delegations, including the United Steelworkers, International Association of Machinists, and International Union of Electrical Workers. Four buses came from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. The American Association of University Women and the National Council of Negro Women sent representatives. Many groups carried their banners from NOW's July 9 ERA march of 100,000.

The September 26 rally was called after Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.) refused to bring up the bill to extend the ERA's deadline for a vote in this session. The ratification deadline is currently March

1979. The bill before the Senate—and already passed by the House—would extend the date to June 1982.

As support for NOW's emergency rally grew, Byrd backed down and put the ERA extension bill back on the Senate calendar. At the same time, however, he offered ERA opponents in the Senate a deal: if they drop their threatened filibuster on the extension bill, he will also bring up for a vote an anti-ERA bill, one that would allow states to rescind their ratification of the amendment.

Speaking at the rally were NOW National President Eleanor Smeal, Betty Friedan, UAW President Douglas Fraser, and many members of Congress.

In Kansas City, more than sixty ERA supporters picketed the federal building the same day in solidarity with the protest in Washington.

the vicious moves by government and employers to push back what little progress they've made. They're mad about the cuts in abortion funds, the drastic reduction in the few child-care facilities, and the danger to affirmative-action programs that have laid the basis for greater economic freedom.

Women are sick and tired of being pushed aside by employers, by union officials, by society as a whole. They feel they are equal and they want to be treated as equals. The refusal of the ruling class to even write women into the Constitution has unmasked the capitalists' opposition to women's equality, and this has outraged millions of women.

Growing numbers of people recognize what a serious defeat it would be for all working people if the ERA were lost. The racist offensive against the rights of Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Asians have made them identify with the issue. The vicious attacks on the human and civil rights of lesbians and gays make them identify with the ERA.

Trade unionists can see the connection between women's rights and union rights when they see that the resistance to passage of the ERA is greatest in the same states that have "right-to-work" laws.

Students can see the threat to the ERA coming down at the same time as they face hikes in tuition, the closing down of campus facilities, and high unemployment due to what the em-

ployers call the "oversupply of workers." An ERA victory is now seen by many as a victory on other fronts.

Why are rulers afraid?

The ERA is not just a symbol. If ratified, it means concrete gains and material improvement in the lives of women. It would wipe out scores of laws and practices that discriminate against women, deny them equal pensions, equal wages, and other benefits.

We must ask, why are the rulers so afraid to put equality for women into the Constitution? Why are so many politicians who give lip service to the amendment backsliding at every opportunity they get?

It is because they know that if the ERA is passed women will expect more rights. And more rights is not what the rulers have in mind for us. They are in the business of taking away rights these days. In their attempt to drive down the living standards of working people, they need to drive down our expectations, create an atmosphere that forces us to be satisfied with less.

In the next few months the fight for the ERA will be the front line in the battle for women's rights. This is not to say it's the only place women are under attack, or the only issue to which we must respond. But if the ERA is lost, its impact will be far-ranging.

A defeat will reinforce Bakke and Weber-type attacks on affirmative action. There will be more attacks on abortion rights and child care. There

will be increased attempts to drive women out of the hard-won jobs they've finally gotten in the mills, mines, and factories, jobs that were closed to women before they began to organize to win their rights.

The ERA is clearly the women's issue around which the most powerful forces can be united today. If we can build a powerful movement to win the ERA, this will help turn back the attacks on all women's rights—and women will be striking a powerful blow for everyone who is struggling against the take-backs.

Another march needed

New mobilizations of the forces that came out on July 9 could oblige the rulers to pass the amendment.

We think there are a lot of people who want to march again for the ERA. We think there are a lot of people who didn't come out July 9 who would give their eye teeth for a chance to join their sisters in another huge demonstration for the ERA.

The group with the power to call such an action is NOW. Many NOW members are eager for their organization to again take the lead in bringing masses of ERA supporters into the streets.

NOW's national conference this October provides an excellent opportunity to discuss and set plans for such an action. And to forge a strategy to win what the majority of Americans clearly want—equal rights for women.

A blow to Arab peoples

Sadat-Begin deal moves ahead



Sadat, Carter, and Begin signing Camp David accords. Agreement was victory for Washington and Zionist allies.

By David Frankel

A major step toward the conclusion of a separate treaty between Israel and Egypt was taken September 28 when the Israeli Knesset (parliament) approved the Camp David summit accords by more than four to one.

The vote was eighty-five to nineteen, with sixteen abstentions. That just shows how favorable the Camp David agreements are from the point of view of the Zionist regime.

During his opening speech to the Knesset September 25, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin could not refrain from boasting that as soon as a treaty with Egypt was concluded, his government would resume building new settlements on the occupied West Bank and would expand existing ones.

Begin further promised that there "will be no plebiscite" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, "and there is and will not be under any conditions or in any circumstances a Palestinian state."

During an earlier interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Begin cynically noted the "possibility we won't find an agreement" on the issue of sovereignty over the West Bank.

"Then the result will be local autonomy for the Palestinians and our soldiers will be there in Judea and Samaria."

Formula for oppression

This is the formula for continued occupation and oppression that is being palmed off by Carter and the big-business media as the road to peace in the Middle East.

In Egypt, of course, the tightly controlled media has hailed the summit as a triumph for Egypt and the Palestinians. It has praised Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and highlighted Israel's supposed agreement to withdraw from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

By suppressing many details of the accords, and by promising peace and quick prosperity, Sadat's propaganda apparatus has generated considerable popular support for the summit agreements. But support based on such illusions is hardly a firm foundation for Sadat's future.

Elsewhere in the Arab world, opposition to the Camp David accords has been virtually unanimous. Syrian President Hafez al-Assad summed up the reaction when he declared September 20 that Sadat gave up "not only Jerusalem but the whole Arab cause."

Washington Post correspondent Don Oberdorfer, who accompanied Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on a five-day trip to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria, described Vance's failure to win support for the accords in a September

24 dispatch from Damascus.

"The dominant reaction in the Arab states he visited was not enthusiasm or even understanding," Oberdorfer reported, "but deep apprehension mixed with frustration and anger."

To most Americans, who have seen the Camp David accords hailed by government officials and the press as a breakthrough for peace, the Arab reaction must be puzzling indeed.

Reason for anger

But there is good reason for apprehension and anger on the part of the Arabs. Israel was established through the dispossession and expulsion of some 700,000 Palestinians. It has repeatedly attacked its Arab neighbors. Today, armed with nuclear bombs and an arsenal of U.S. weapons that has few equals in the world, the Israeli state sits astride conquered Arab territory and threatens new aggression against Lebanon and Syria.

Solidarity in the face of the aggressor is one of the most important ways that the Arab countries can defend themselves. Sadat has struck a heavy blow against such solidarity by bargaining for Egyptian land at the expense of the rest of the Arab world.

Not even Washington's most subservient clients in the Arab world were willing to publicly back Sadat's separate deal. Oberdorfer hints that Vance may have gone so far as to threaten to cut aid to Jordan if King Hussein refused to cooperate. "As Vance headed overseas word was out that he intended to lean hard on Hussein, and that over-all U.S.-Jordanian relations could be affected. Carter, back in Washington, said Vance was urging Hussein 'in the strongest possible way' to join the West Bank negotiations."

Carter's pressure on Jordan and Saudi Arabia reflects his desire to bolster Sadat's regime by helping to overcome its political isolation in the Arab world. At the same time, endorsement of the accords by other Arab regimes would further divide the Arab world and weaken its ability to resist imperialist domination.

Having succeeded in breaking away the largest Arab country from the military front against Israel, Carter is now attempting to reclaim the role of "honest broker" between the Arabs and Israelis. Thus, after dealing a hammerblow to the aspirations of the Arab peoples, he turns around and engages in a well-publicized dispute with Begin over the Israeli regime's intention to continue building settlements in the West Bank.

Also playing a part in this charade is Sadat. Officials in Cairo, *Washington Post* correspondent Thomas Lippman reported September 25, admit that the Camp David accords are "less

than perfect." However, Lippman continues, "they say Sadat has a personal commitment from Carter that the Egyptians believe will prevent Israel from taking advantage of the accords' ambiguities or shelving the West Bank talks once an Egypt-Israel peace treaty is signed."

It is doubtful if even Sadat believes Carter's vague promises about the West Bank. However, such promises are part of the political cover that has enabled Sadat to make a separate deal with Israel while maintaining the fiction that he is negotiating a framework for an overall peace.

Washington's gains

From the point of view of American imperialism, Carter has made substantial gains. He has strengthened the military and political position of the Zionist state and driven a wedge into the center of the Arab world.

Moreover, Washington has gained a big advantage in its competition with the USSR by effectively shutting Moscow out of the Mideast negotiations.

But the strengthening of imperialist domination in the Middle East will not advance the cause of peace. On the contrary, it will result in even harsher exploitation of the Arab peoples, new mass upsurges, and new wars.

Correction

Last week's *Militant* mistakenly reported that under the Camp David accords Israeli troops would remain in part of the Sinai Peninsula indefinitely. The accords provide for the indefinite stationing of UN troops in the Sinai, but call for the withdrawal of all Israeli troops within three years after an Egyptian-Israeli treaty is signed.

For further reading...

Israel: A Colonial-Settler State? By Maxime Rodinson. 128 pages, \$2.45.

Burning Issues of the Mideast Crisis by Peter Buch. 32 pages, \$.40.

War in the Middle East: The Socialist View by Dave Frankel, Dick Roberts, and Tony Thomas. 32 pages, \$.60.

How Can The Jews Survive? A Socialist Answer to Zionism by George Novack. 24 pages, \$.25.

Order from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014. Please add 25 cents for postage and handling.

Earthquake in Iran: no help from shah

By Matilde Zimmermann

The city of Tabas in eastern Iran was hit September 16 with perhaps the worst earthquake in the nation's history. In ninety seconds the entire city was reduced to rubble.

Initial government reports put the death toll at 11,000, but survivors claim that 30,000 have died, and an Agence France-Press dispatch from Tabas predicts the final count may reach 40,000. Of Tabas's 13,000 residents, less than 2,000 survived, most of them seriously injured. Forty nearby towns were completely demolished, and another sixty suffered severe damage.

The exact number killed will never be known; no one is keeping count as the victims are hastily buried in mass graves to avoid the spread of disease.

Many who were not killed immediately died later of their injuries and of exposure to the hot sun and cold nights of the desert. Some of these people would have lived if adequate help had been rushed to the area. But the shah, who has mobilized his 700,000-man army against massive demonstrations for nine months, could spare only 700 troops to help dig out Tabas.

"We need people to help," pleaded Abbas Safaie, a former mayor of Tabas. "We could use 2,000 to 3,000 more." The Iranian people were more responsive than their government; thousands lined up in Tehran to volunteer to help with the rescue operations. Leaders of the anti-shah opposition movement sent dozens of truckloads of food, blankets, and medicine into the area.

The shah sent Empress Farah on a trip reminiscent of Pat Nixon's 1970 "mercy mission" to Peru following the disastrous earthquake there. She got an angry reception. Survivors screamed "Dig out the dead! Dig out the dead!" at the shah's wife, until security men whisked her away. One young man threw himself at the empress's car, crying "Don't go sightseeing. Go pull out bodies of my family!"

The reason almost all the residents of Tabas were killed was because their mud brick houses collapsed on them.

There are few places on the planet where the danger of earthquakes is greater than in the region where Tabas is located. Twelve thousand died when an earthquake struck the area in 1968. A quake in a neighboring province killed almost 600 only nine months ago. Yet the entire population of Tabas was living in mud death-traps—under the leadership of Iran's great "modernizer."

Some correspondents have speculated that the shah may derive some political benefit from the tragedy of Tabas. The shah can hardly be blamed for the earthquake—the reasoning goes—and the magnitude of the disaster will draw attention away from the antigovernment rebellion that rocked the country in early September.

The approach of these commentators seems rather short-sighted. The 1972 earthquake in Nicaragua and the 1973-74 famine in Ethiopia were "natural disasters" too. But the Nicaraguan and Ethiopian masses correctly blamed many of the deaths on their corrupt rulers who withheld or siphoned off the emergency aid so desperately needed. This anger fueled the revolutionary movements in both Ethiopia and Nicaragua.

There is little reason to think the people of Iran will react differently.

From *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*

Vorster moves to install puppet gov't in Namibia

By R.D. Willis

At a September 20 news conference in Pretoria, South African Prime Minister John Vorster announced two major decisions. First, that he would resign from office as soon as a successor was chosen, thus ending twelve years as prime minister of the white supremacist state. Second, that Pretoria was rejecting a United Nations-sponsored plan for the independence of Namibia, a South African colony.

Vorster gave no reason for his resignation, but he is known to be ill. There was no apparent pressure on him from the white population, the regime's only real social base, which has generally applauded his brutal actions in suppressing the Black freedom struggle.

Vorster's successor, who will be selected by the National Party leadership, will most certainly continue—and even extend—the same racist policies that have been followed by the South African regime for decades. Vorster, moreover, may himself continue to lend a hand, since he declared that he would be “available” for the largely ceremonial post of state president.

Vorster's declaration on Pretoria's Namibia policy may have a more

decisive impact on developments throughout southern Africa. In rejecting the UN proposal (which some South African officials had earlier indicated they might agree to), Vorster said that Pretoria would go ahead with its own formula for Namibian “independence.”

In fact, however, the South African plan aims at the installation in Namibia of a puppet regime willing to safeguard Pretoria's substantial economic and political interests in the territory. Since the plan is opposed by the main Namibian nationalist forces, Vorster's announcement also signals a commitment by Pretoria to maintain, and even increase, its large military presence in Namibia to ensure the survival of whatever administration it chooses to impose.

The American State Department reacted with concern to the announcement, no doubt fearing that Pretoria's intransigence could provoke an even sharper struggle by Namibia's masses for independence. Washington also fears that an escalating conflict could lead to stepped-up assistance to the Namibian freedom fighters from Cuba.

Speaking in Lusaka, Zambia, September 22, Mishake Muyongo, an official representative of the South West Africa People's Organisation, the main Namibian nationalist group, said that SWAPO would never participate in South African-organized elections in Namibia. “Instead,” he declared, “we will intensify the armed struggle. . . .” Muyongo also said that SWAPO might call upon “socialist countries” to provide it with “all-out military assistance.” Behind him hung a portrait of Fidel Castro.

From Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

Black Liberation and Socialism

Edited by Tony Thomas. 207 pp., \$10.00, paper \$2.95

Order from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014

So. Africa conferences gain new endorsement

By Omari Musa

Fall activities in opposition to U.S. complicity with apartheid are in full swing.

In the Chicago area, the Divestiture Working Group held a city-wide meeting September 23 to publicize plans for its upcoming Midwest conference on southern Africa. The conference is slated for October 20-22 at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

The planning meeting established task forces to reach out to the labor movement, Black community, campuses, and church groups.

The day before the September 12 meeting, the Divestiture Working Group held a picket line in front of the South African consulate to protest the trial of eleven Soweto student leaders charged with “sedition” and “terrorism” by the racist regime.

For more information on the October conference, contact: Divestiture Working Group, 1570 Oak Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201. Phone: (312) 492-3122.

The North East Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa (NECLSA) is winning new support for its conference November 17-19 at New York University.

Recent endorsers include Robert Chrisman, publisher of Black Scholar magazine; actor Ossie Davis; Brenda Eichelberger, executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists; Alvin Poussaint, Harvard medical school professor; Koko Farrow, Committee for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ; Prexy Nesbitt, American Committee on Africa; Richard Lapchick, United Nations Center Against Apartheid; and Tyrone Brooks, national field director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

For more information, contact:

NECLSA, c/o American Committee on Africa, 305 East Forty-sixth Street, New York, New York 10017.

On September 12, the Coalition Against Apartheid at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana organized a memorial rally commemorating the first anniversary of the murder of Black Consciousness Movement leader Steve Biko. More than 300 students attended.

The CAA also renewed its demand that the university divest its \$3 million investment in companies operating in South Africa. A year ago U of I students passed a referendum calling for divestment.

Following the rally, 100 students marched to the administration building to press for a public debate on divestment. The administration has agreed to arrange board of trustees hearings in October. Students demand that the hearings be open to the public, that there be no restrictions of testimony, and that they be held in a place where hundreds of students can attend.

In Northfield, Minnesota, the Carleton College administration, under the pressure of a strong campus movement last spring, organized a conference on divestment September 15-17.

Speakers included Donald McHenry, assistant to Andrew Young; a representative of Control Data Corporation; Mxolisi Ntlati, a political exile from South Africa; and Afro-American history professors Lansina Kaba and Susan Rogers.

Exiled South African editor Donald Woods addressed more than 500 people at the final session, telling them he wholeheartedly supports the divestment movement.

Carleton students plan to demonstrate for divestment outside the scheduled October 7 trustees meeting.

Che on Africa



What is Cuba doing in Africa? That has been a burning question ever since Cuban troops played a decisive role in defeating the South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76.

However, Cuban assistance to the African freedom struggle did not begin in 1975. Cuba's revolutionary leadership has always seen this fight as a big component of the unfolding world revolution. And they have done whatever they could to push that struggle forward.

Ernesto 'Che' Guevara traveled extensively in Africa. In the early 1960s he fought arms in hand alongside Congolese freedom fighters seeking to rid the Congo (now called Zaïre) of the neocolonial yoke.

Che was murdered in a joint CIA-Bolivian

army operation on October 8, 1967. At the time he was attempting to aid the revolution in that country.

On this eleventh anniversary of Che's death, we are printing a small sampling of his views on Africa. They provide a good guide to the thinking behind Cuba's policy in Africa and are just as relevant today as when Che spoke them.

There are no boundaries in this struggle to the death. We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, for a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory; just as any country's defeat is a defeat for all of us.

Each time a country is freed, we say, it is a defeat for the world imperialist system, but we must agree that real liberation or breaking away

from the imperialist system is not achieved by the mere act of proclaiming independence or winning an armed victory in a revolution. Freedom is achieved when imperialist economic domination over a people is brought to an end. (From a speech given February 26, 1965, at the Second Economic Seminar of the Organization of Afro-Asian Solidarity.)

The United States formerly did not have colonies in this region [Africa] and now it is struggling to penetrate the preserves of its partners.

It can be said that Africa constitutes, in the strategic plans of North American imperialism, a long-range reserve; its current investments there are of importance only in the Union of South Africa, and it is beginning to penetrate into the Congo, Nigeria and other countries.

In Rhodesia British imperialism utilized all the machinery at its disposal to hand over power to the white minority which now holds it illegally.

In Rhodesia the situation could become highly explosive if the efforts of the black patriots to rise up in arms materializes and this movement is actually supported by the neighboring African nations. But today all these problems are aired in bodies as innocuous as the UN, the Commonwealth or the OAU [Organization of African Unity].

The confrontations of revolutionary importance are those that hold at bay the whole imperialist apparatus, although we would not because of that cease struggling for the liberation of the three Portuguese colonies [Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau—all now independent], for the deepening of their revolutions.

When the black masses of South Africa or Rhodesia initiate their genuinely revolutionary struggle, or when the impoverished masses of a country set out against the ruling oligarchies to redeem their right to a decent living, a new era will have opened in Africa. (From a public statement made between the time Che left Cuba in 1965 and his death in 1967. It was addressed to the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America and was made public in Havana on April 16, 1967.)

Special sales week off to strong start

By Nelson Blackstock

NEW YORK, September 27—This is being written midway during the big sales week.

Last Saturday was the major sales day for most of the forty cities taking part in the drive. (Some cities get their papers later, however, and will have their big sales Saturday, at the end of this week.)

Here's a sample of some of the returns that have come in so far:

On last Saturday alone socialists in Washington, D.C., sold 370 papers—330 *Militants* and 40 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*. So successful was the response, that they raised their sights for the week from 400 to 525. Moreover, their normal weekly quota for the fall will be going up from 250 to 300.

In New York City, *Militant* salespeo-

ple hit a total of 1800—1660 *Militants* and 140 *PMs*. Meanwhile, in nearby Newark, socialists sold 319 papers.

In San Francisco they sold 240 that day. Many people bought the paper at one of seven campaign tables set up around the city for Sylvia Weinstein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Board of Education.

On the same day, Los Angeles was in the grip of a sweltering heat wave. But despite the record 105 temperature, a total of 305 papers were sold.

Thus a big step forward is being taken in the drive to sell 100,000 copies of the *Militant* and the Spanish-language biweekly *Perspectiva Mundial* this fall.

In the *Militant* being sold are articles well-suited to the political needs of the hour.

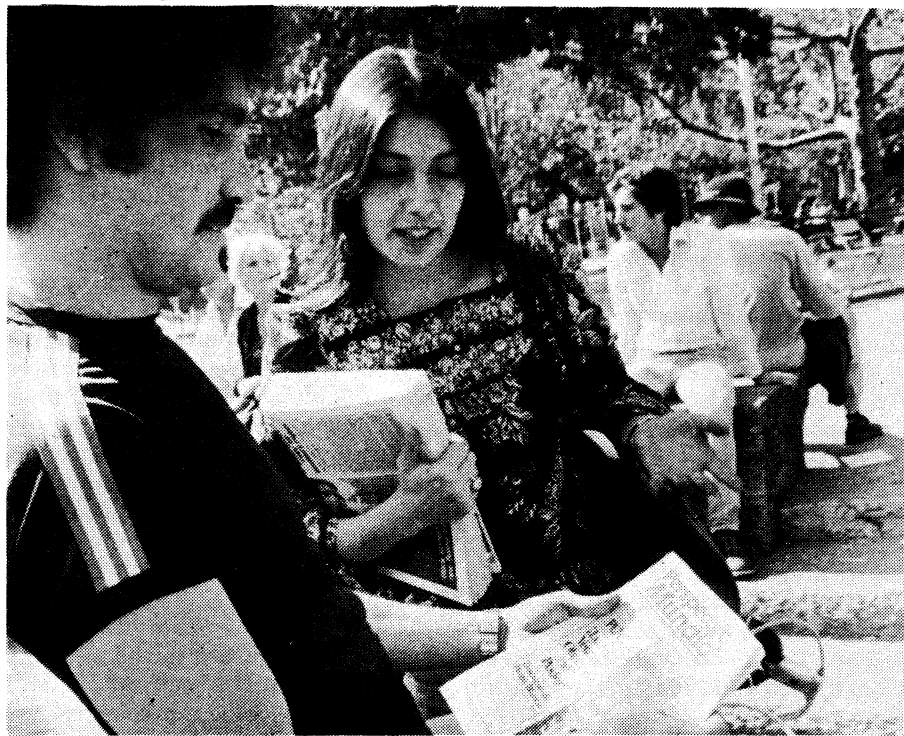
An example is Andy Rose's special series on the Weber case—the suit aimed at blocking union-negotiated affirmative action in the steel industry. In the New Orleans area, thirty-six Kaiser workers bought copies, including twenty-three in the plant where the racist Brian Weber works.

In Washington, D.C., the focus is on getting copies of the Weber articles into the hands of members of the Communication Workers of America. There's widespread dissatisfaction with threats by union officials to block a court-ordered affirmative-action program at the telephone company. Along with their *Militants* socialists are taking copies of leaflets building a forum next Friday night on the Weber case.

Among the speakers at the forum will be William Simons, president of the Washington Federation of Teachers. Both the *Militant* and forum publicity reached teachers who attended a mass rally Monday night to discuss strike action.

When a recent *Militant* carried an

'Buy Perspectiva Mundial'



Militant/Susan Ellis

Perspectiva Mundial, the biweekly Spanish-language socialist magazine, is finding an expanding audience during this fall's drive to sell 100,000 copies of the socialist press. Above, Jo Otero shows *PM* to an interested bicyclist in New York City.

At a big Chicano community fiesta in Los Angeles on September 16, 222 copies of *PM* were bought, as well as 207 *Militants*. In Albuquerque they're selling 25 to 30 copies of *PM* each week. Last week two people sold 22 *PMs* and 19 *Militants* at a market catering to Chicanos.

Anti-Somoza demonstrations by Nicaraguans have been among the best places to introduce people to *PM*.

Rail strike

When a nationwide strike of railroad workers broke out during the big sales week, socialists moved swiftly to get the *Militant* into their hands.

Particularly timely was the article by Dick Roberts on the railroads today.

In Chicago, teams were dispatched to picket lines around the city. By mid-day Wednesday, some 111 papers had been bought by striking members of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks and other rail unions.

Similar teams brought the paper to picket lines in Seattle; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; and other cities.

And we'll be taking this issue—with its back-page coverage of the strike—onto the picket lines too.

article on the Bingham Stamping Plant in Toledo, socialists inside the plant set about getting it into the hands of co-workers. They drew up a list of everybody they knew who might

be interested. But when word about the article got out around the plant, others began to ask how they could get their copy. Twenty-six *Militants* were sold in all.

Ma Bell & Pan Am: it's not cheap

By Harry Ring

Recent telephone company commercials focus on how easy and inexpensive it is to call people in other countries.

It is relatively easy. But it isn't cheap.

We know because we've been getting the bills for some of the calls to current political hotspots such as Peru.

This summer, for example, Fred Murphy and Gus Horowitz went to Peru for the *Militant* and *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* to report on Hugo Blanco's triumphant return after being elected to the Constituent Assembly while in exile. More recently, Pedro Camejo was there. He brought back an account of Blanco's stirring visit to the town of Tacna, where 15,000 people turned out to hear him speak.

The *Militant* was back on the phone to Peru last month getting the latest news on government attacks against striking miners and paramilitary terrorist operations against the left.

Politically, such phone calls are invaluable. But they do raise hell with a tight budget.

As a paper that's never missed an issue for fifty years, we obviously don't ignore budget problems.

But we've never permitted those problems to stand in the way of political needs.

And when workers in other countries are battling against the established order, we consider it a political obligation to report such events as fully as we're able.

In addition to our on-the-spot coverage from Peru, the *Militant* has been providing news and analysis of the recent popular rebellions in Iran and Nicaragua.

Our reports on the enormous demonstrations in Iran brought *Militant* readers information on the size and scope of those protests, and the savagery of the shah's repression, that was simply not available in the big-business-controlled dailies or on television.

When possible, we send reporters to the scene. For a small paper, with limited resources, our record in this respect is quite impressive. Consider a partial listing:

- In 1973 we sent Fred Halstead and Mirta Vidal to Argentina to cover the elections there.
- In 1977 José G. Pérez and Caroline Lund provided on-the-scene reporting and background on the elections in Spain, the first elections since the victory of Franco forty years before.
- Last year David Frankel spent a month in Israel, writing an invaluable series on the real role and nature of Zionism there.

50th

Anniversary Fund

Goal=\$75,000

	\$60,000
	\$45,000
As of Sept. 26	\$30,000
\$25,072=33%	
	\$15,000

- Labor writers Nancy Cole and Andy Rose have traveled to Canada to report on important union developments there.

We made these big expenditures because we consider it important to bring our readers the most comprehensive world coverage possible.

Now, with the present inspiring events in so many parts of the world—southern Africa, Nicaragua, Iran, Peru—our international coverage becomes even more important.

But we live in a capitalist world and if we want to keep publishing, bills have to be paid. Inflation keeps swelling the amounts of those bills.

How do we deal with our budget problems?

We rely on our supporters.

Our readers understand the importance of world events. When there are big developments, they've always helped financially so that we could get the story as fully as circumstances permit.

Right now we're celebrating our fiftieth birthday. To mark that anniversary, we're raising a special fund of \$75,000.

It couldn't have come at a better time.

There's a lot of important news in the world today. If you agree that it's essential to spread that news, you can register your agreement by clipping the Fiftieth Anniversary Fund coupon and sending it in with a contribution. Today.

COUNT ME IN

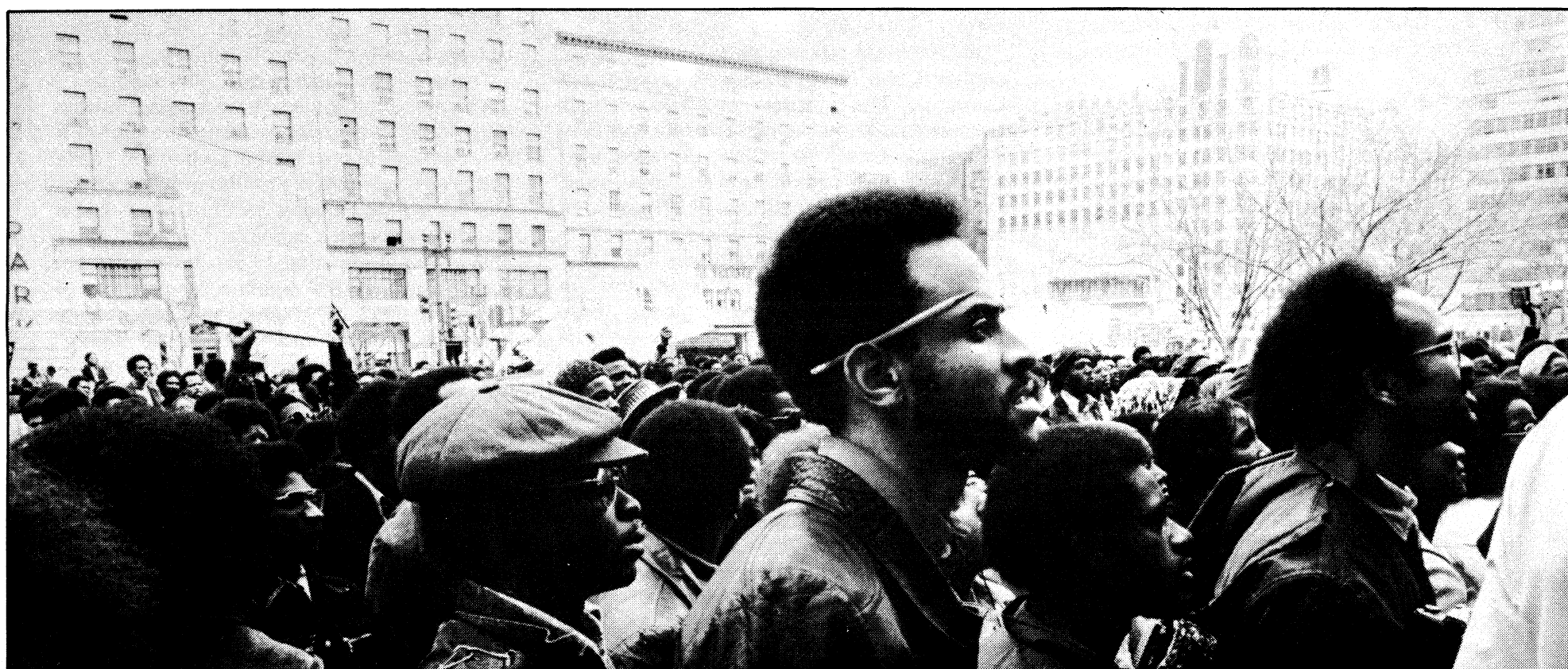
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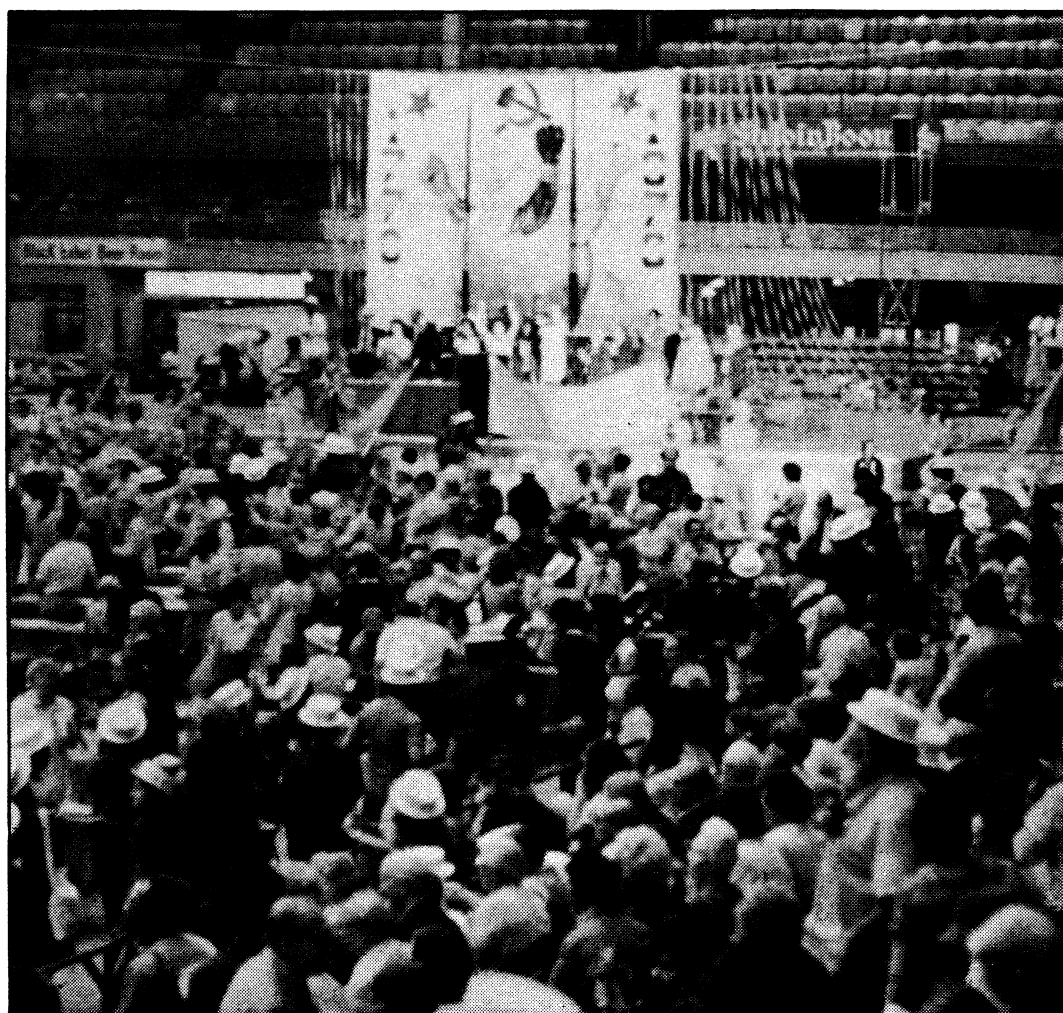
international **socialist** review

Black America Today **The Road to Liberation** By John Hawkins



Militant/Eric Simpson

American Stalinism and the Labor Movement By Mary-Alice Waters



1975 Communist Party national convention

Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

Common Aspirations and a Common Enemy

Millions of people marched in the streets of Iran's cities in recent weeks. Crying, "Down with the shah!" they demanded basic democratic rights. The shah responded with a bloodbath.

In September, resistance to the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua reached the point of popular insurrection. Somoza used his air force and National Guard to pound cities into rubble, murdering hundreds.

In Zimbabwe, resistance to white rule is growing, despite Ian Smith's effort to gull the Black population by including three Black leaders in the white-run regime. Smith has tried to stamp out the growing rebellion by expelling more than 1 million Blacks from their homes in counterinsurgency operations. Nonetheless, big sections of the country are held by nationalist guerrillas. Protests by tens of thousands against Smith's government have recently taken place in Zimbabwean cities.

The U.S. rulers watch these struggles closely—trying to prop up existing regimes where possible and preparing the ground for military intervention should that be needed to preserve their interests.

But the rulers encourage the very opposite of close attention on the part of American working people. They foster the attitude that world events are unimportant for most Americans—just strange behavior by foreigners, better left to "experts" in Washington.

To the extent that the capitalist media provide us with any information at all, it is deliberately twisted.

What are the peoples of these countries really fighting for? Why have thousands of unarmed or poorly armed men and women given their lives in struggle against regimes armed with the most modern weapons—usually supplied by Washington? What produces this courage and self-sacrifice?

The masses of Asia, Africa, and Latin America want basically the same things that American working people want. They want economic security—enough food, good housing, and jobs at decent pay. They want an end to grinding poverty and to economic and

cultural backwardness.

They want the right to demonstrate and to join political parties and unions to advance these goals. They want the right to speak their minds without fear and to elect their governments.

The Black masses of Zimbabwe want to end racist brutality and humiliation. They want majority rule.

In all these countries, the peasants want to be free from the ruthless exploitation of big landlords and giant corporations.

These are things that thousands of American working people have died for—in two revolutionary wars, in the strikes that built the American union movement, in the southern civil rights and northern ghetto struggles of the Black liberation movement, and in other battles.

When people in Nicaragua, Iran, and other lands try to assert such basic rights, they face arrest, torture, and mass murder. That is the answer of the rich and privileged minority—landlords, industrialists, and the political apparatus that defends their property interests—to such demands.

But this is not the most powerful enemy of working people in these countries. If it were, the oppressive regimes would be overwhelmed by popular opposition. In reality, these countries are not independent. They are dominated by big imperialist banks and corporations—by U.S. imperialism above all.

Thus, the people in these lands confront the possessors of the greatest economic power and military arsenal in the world.

That is why Washington worries about "another Cuba" in Nicaragua—and not just in Nicaragua. The struggle compels workers and peasants to realize that the only way they will be able to win basic human needs is by ending imperialist domination and expropriating the landlords and capitalists. These were the measures by which the Cubans won emancipation from U.S. imperialism.

The government and media try to turn American working people against these struggles. But we should not be fooled. The U.S. government that wants to deny human rights to the Iranians, Nicaraguans, and Zimbabweans, in the interests of the banks and corporations, has the same program for working people here.

They aim to cut back wages and living standards and to weaken and eventually destroy the unions. They want to reinforce racist oppression, maintain the misery of the ghetto, and preserve a vast army of unemployed as a cheap labor supply. And they want to take back our democratic rights so that we can't organize effectively to defend our living standards.

At the same time, they want American working people to pay for more armaments. They want to be able to send us to fight and

die in order to prevent people in other countries from winning their rights.

The basic approach of the imperialists is the same the world over: to increase the profits of the rich at the expense of the great majority of workers and farmers. Although their tactics differ from country to country, the American ruling class stands for the same thing in Detroit and Los Angeles as it does in Iran and Zimbabwe—exploitation, racism, and minority rule.

Working people have a big stake in what happens in Iran, Nicaragua, or southern Africa. The people of these countries and American working people have common aspirations—and a common enemy.

If the Iranian, Nicaraguan, and Zimbabwean peoples make gains, it will strengthen struggles for basic human rights here in the United States. Working people gain strength as imperialist domination is weakened anywhere in the world.

American working people have good reason to oppose any moves the United States makes toward military intervention in Nicaragua, Iran, or southern Africa, and to demand that all U.S. aid to these regimes be stopped.

There are many ways to help these struggles. The Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran is organizing to expose the shah's blood-soaked regime. Demonstrations in solidarity with the Nicaraguan people are taking place in many U.S. cities.

And students and other opponents of white minority rule in southern Africa are holding conferences in New York, Chicago, and Duke University in North Carolina this fall.

These efforts deserve our full support.

The heroic struggles of the masses in Iran, Nicaragua, and southern Africa are part of a new upswing of the colonial revolution. These upheavals, combined with the growing struggles of working people in the United States and other advanced capitalist countries, make this an inspiring time to be alive. As Fidel Castro said in the Second Declaration of Havana in 1962, "This great mass of humanity has said, 'enough!' and has begun to march."

In times like these, there is no more rewarding way to spend your life than to become part of these struggles that are destined to change the world. In this country, the best way to do so is to join the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party.

The YSA and SWP are involved in solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world—and are participating in struggles of American workers, oppressed nationalities, and women challenging U.S. imperialism on its own turf.

The struggles of our sisters and brothers in Iran, Nicaragua, and Zimbabwe are sending us a message: Join us in the fight for a world free of oppression and exploitation!

There has never been a better time to answer: yes!

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Black America Today: The Road to Liberation

By John Hawkins

The following article is based on a speech given by John Hawkins to the August 5-12, 1978, Active Workers and Socialist Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio.

We need to look at the prospects and problems of the Black liberation movement in order to answer two urgent questions: How can fighters for Black rights gain ground in the struggle? How can we win?

Black Revolt and Racist Retreat

As a starting point, it is useful to look at the Kerner Commission Report—published ten years ago. This commission was set up by President Lyndon Johnson to look into the causes of the gigantic Black ghetto rebellions that exploded across the country in 1967—from Newark to San Francisco.

These massive, spontaneous rebellions marked a turning point in the struggle for Black freedom. They were powerful uprisings of Black youth and Black workers who were fed up with promises and anxious for some real action against racist oppression.

In Newark and Detroit, where the most sustained rebellions took place, the Black masses fought pitched battles with the local cops, state police, and the national guard. In Detroit the Black rebels held an entire airborne division at bay for a time.

The power and impact of these upheavals were reflected in the Kerner Commission report. The rebellions, it said, were a form of social protest against the brutality of life in the ghetto, and racism was largely to blame.

"What white Americans have never fully understood," the commission wrote, "but what the Negro can never forget, is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it and white society condones it."

"Our nation," the report continued, "is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."

This was a far cry from the usual racist analysis of these revolts. So were the commission's recommendations for forestalling new outbreaks. In addition to the usual call for more cops and more effective repressive measures, the commission—with memories of the crackle of gunfire and ghettos in flames still fresh in their minds—called for raising the standard of living and quality of life in the Black communities and moving toward real desegregation of American society.

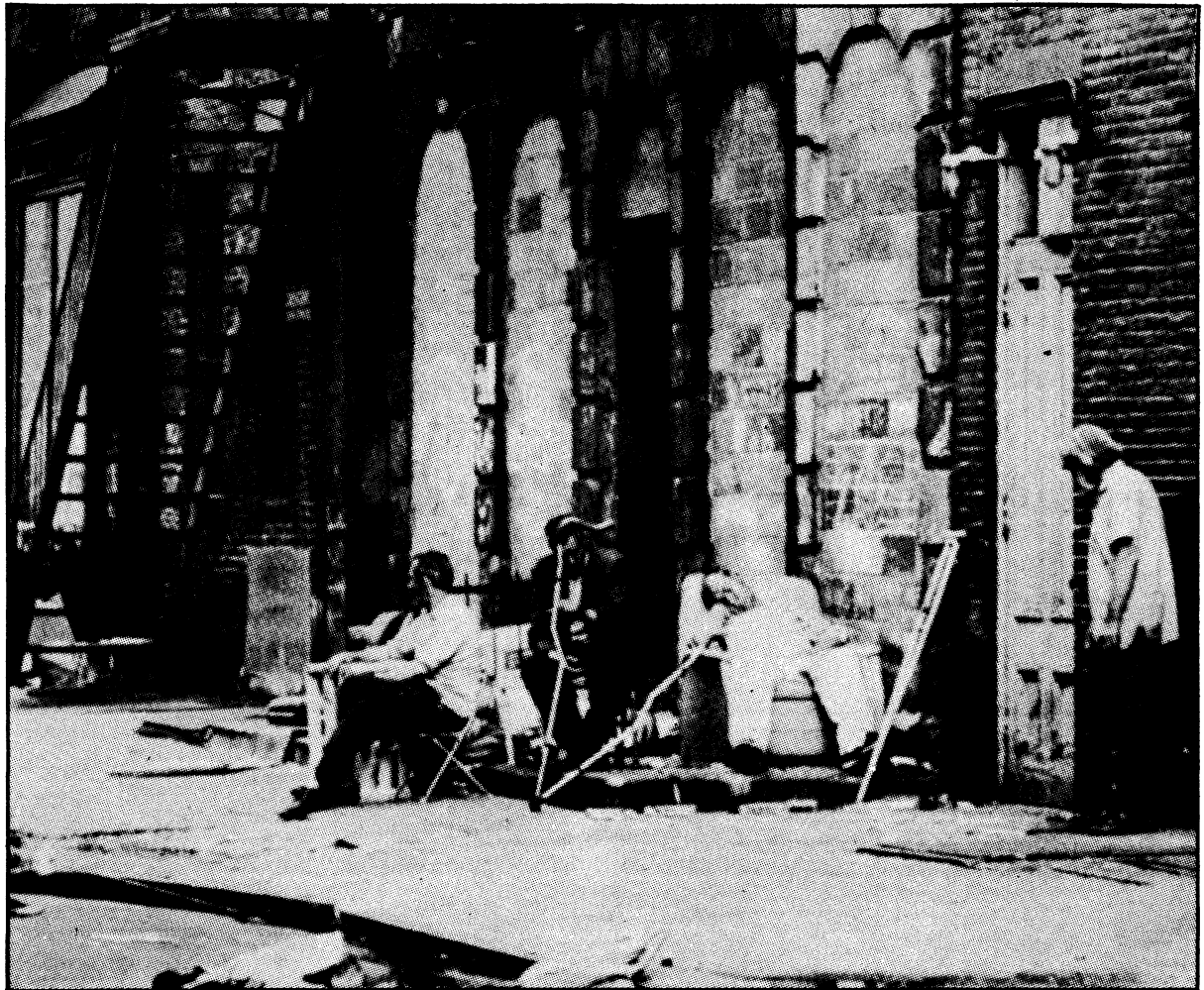
As liberals and conservatives debated the Kerner report in the press and Congress, the Black masses themselves decided to add their two-cents worth to the discussion.

Their contribution didn't take the form of polite conversation. They spoke out with another wave of rebellions—even more extensive than the first—following the assassination of Martin Luther King in April 1968.

Advances for Blacks

The ghetto rebellions were a striking demonstration of the power of Black working people. The ruling class was forced onto the defensive, and some significant gains for Blacks were shaken loose.

The civil rights demonstrations and ghetto struggles of the early 1960s had already ended some of the most blatant segregationist practices, especially in the South, and had forced the



For Blacks in the United States, the 'American dream' is a nightmare of racism, poverty, and decaying social services.

passage of laws that gave Blacks equal rights on paper. That was as far as the capitalist class and its political representatives in the Republican and Democratic parties wanted to go.

But the uprisings of the late 1960s forced the rulers to go further—to begin implementing some measures to alleviate conditions in the ghetto.

Where Blacks had been excluded from many types of jobs before, some were now being hired. Once on the job, they fought against racist mistreatment and stepped up the fight for their rights within the unions.

Where Blacks had been largely frozen out of most colleges, new programs brought thousands of young Blacks onto the campuses. Once this new breed of Black students hit the campuses—filled with pride by the big rebellions in their communities—they demanded more Black admissions and Black studies programs. With support from the Black community and other students, they forced the university administrations to meet some of their demands.

The Black revolt penetrated every institution of this society, including the armed forces engaged in a shooting war in Vietnam. Blacks joined with other GIs in direct action against racist frame-ups and brutality, and against the war.

Today, ten years later, the tables are being turned. The American ruling class is pressing hard to take back the concessions it yielded so reluctantly.

Since the 1974-75 depression, American capitalism has stepped up its attacks on all working people. The rulers are directing their most cruel blows at those on the bottom—Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, women, and youth.

The opening of this offensive coincided with the depression. Blacks were the first to be thrown out of work—as always, the last hired and first fired. Despite the weak upturn of the past few years, Black workers have still not recovered from these discriminatory layoffs.

The racist offensive against school busing in Boston marked an escalation of the ruling-class drive to stop any progress toward real desegregation.

What the right-wing mobs in Boston couldn't do, Congress, the Ford and Carter administra-

tions, and the Supreme Court have tried to accomplish for them.

With a rash of court decisions, White House decrees, and reactionary legislation, the government has tried to barricade every single avenue out of ghetto existence.

The State of Black America

The plight of the Black community is graphically reflected in statistics. For the overwhelming majority of Black people, things are as bad as they were ten years ago—if not worse.

Every single economic gain Blacks made over the past decade has been eroded. Black unemployment in 1967 stood at 7.4 percent, according to official figures. By the end of 1977 it had doubled to 13.2 percent officially—and these figures are always below the real situation.

In 1967 638,000 Black workers were without jobs. In 1977 more than twice that number were unemployed—close to 1.5 million. That's the largest number of Blacks recorded as unemployed since the government began compiling such statistics by race!

No single category of Black workers has been spared. For Black women unemployment doubled over the past ten years. For Black youth unemployment has continued to climb, from 26.5 percent to 38.6 percent by official figures. The government itself admits that Black youth unemployment is as high as 60 and 80 percent in some areas.

Nor has any single industry been left untouched. For Black steelworkers, unemployment is 13.1 percent; for Black auto workers, 10.8 percent; and among Black garment workers, 12.9 percent.

Combined with inflation, this unemployment has had a devastating impact on thousands of Black families.

In 1970 the median family income for Blacks stood at 61 percent of that for whites. Seven years later that figure was down to 59 percent—just one percentage point above the 1966 figure.

Government cutbacks and stiffer restrictions on welfare and unemployment payments have taken their toll. During the 1974-75 depression, the number of Black families receiving welfare

John Hawkins, an activist for many years in the Black liberation movement, is a member of the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee.



Detroit, 1967: Ghetto rebellions showed the power of the Black masses and forced some concessions from the rulers.

actually declined—from 27 percent to 22 percent. The proportion of poor Black families receiving any form of public assistance went from 60 to 54 percent.

The same inequality shows up in the figures for health care. Blacks are twice as likely to die of diabetes than whites, three times as likely to die of high blood pressure, four times as likely to die of heart disease and chronic kidney failure, and five times as likely to die of tuberculosis.

Blacks face a crisis in education. Along with school segregation, illiteracy is rampant. Forty-two percent of all seventeen-year-old Black youths are functionally illiterate, as compared with 8 percent for white youth.

'Bakke': Blow to Equality

In the face of this growing misery and inequality, the highest court in the land sent a chilling message this summer to Blacks, along with all of this country's oppressed nationalities and women: The government, the employers, and the courts have no intention whatsoever of ending race and sex discrimination in the work place, in the job market, or in education.

The *Bakke* decision prompted one of the biggest cover-up campaigns in years. The *Washington Post* headline declared, "Affirmative Action Upheld." The *New York Times* announced its satisfaction with the ruling in an editorial: "The movement to expand opportunity for Blacks and other minorities has been ruled legal. . . ."

The Carter administration and some Black leaders joined in this chorus of praise. The whole orchestrated snow job was designed to downplay the stunning blow and head off any response by the Black masses.

'Reverse Discrimination'—Racist Myth

At the heart of the court majority's opinion—written by Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell—is the false, racist notion of "reverse discrimination."

The court's decision severely undermined the idea of affirmative-action quotas. It placed new limits on those seeking relief in the courts against race and sex discrimination.

Moreover, it handed the right-wing opponents of Black equality a powerful legal weapon and politically encouraged their campaign to roll back Black rights.

Think for a minute about the idea of "reverse discrimination."

How can there be reverse discrimination when only one out of every 3,800 Blacks is a doctor, compared with one out of every 700 whites?

How can there be reverse discrimination when unemployment for Blacks is twice that of whites?

How can there be reverse discrimination when life expectancy for Blacks is six years less than for whites?

How can there be reverse discrimination when every Black man, woman, and child who walks the streets is fair game for some gun-happy killer cop?

There can't be. And there isn't.

All the propaganda about the so-called merit system and qualifications is just clumsy cover for what the ruling class is really pushing—the old racist lie that Blacks just can't make the grade because we're inferior.

Blacks are victimized by racist discrimination from cradle to grave. The essence of the idea of affirmative action is that society and institutions that have victimized Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and women have the responsibility to take action to end this discrimination, to enforce equality for all.

Fight is Only Beginning

Quotas are important because there is no other way to enforce affirmative action. There is no other way to *achieve* equality. Affirmative action is a fiction without quotas, just as school desegregation is a fiction without busing.

Voluntary affirmative action is as phony as voluntary school desegregation. It places the decision in the hands of those who have practiced discrimination. As Malcolm X would have put it, it's like asking the fox to guard the chicken coop.

Despite the attempted cover-up, the *Bakke* decision was clearly seen by most Blacks and supporters of affirmative action as a serious blow.

The fight to defend affirmative action is by no means over. In fact, the fight is just beginning. The big question now is what the reactionary *Bakke* ruling will mean in practice and what will happen in other pending affirmative-action suits.

The fact that the Supreme Court tried to cover its tracks with hollow phrases that could be interpreted as upholding affirmative action "in principle" says something about how the rulers are proceeding.

They know—as we know—that any attempt to hand down a sweeping court order wiping out affirmative action in principle and all at once could provoke a powerful angry response. Although their goal is to get rid of affirmative action altogether, the rulers move cautiously. They test the response before making each major move, and all along the way they try to cloud their real objectives.

For example, the Court left itself some maneuvering room by upholding court-ordered quotas—if *intentional* discrimination can be proved. Thus, on the day after the *Bakke* decision was handed down, the same judges upheld an affirmative-action plan at American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.

Exactly what the racist *Bakke* decision will mean in real life will be determined by the scope of resistance to attempts to implement it. Given a big enough fight, the *Bakke* decision can be turned into a blunted sword for the ruling class—just as the miners during their 110-day strike turned the union-busting Taft-Hartley Act into a worthless scrap of paper.

'Weber': An Even Greater Threat

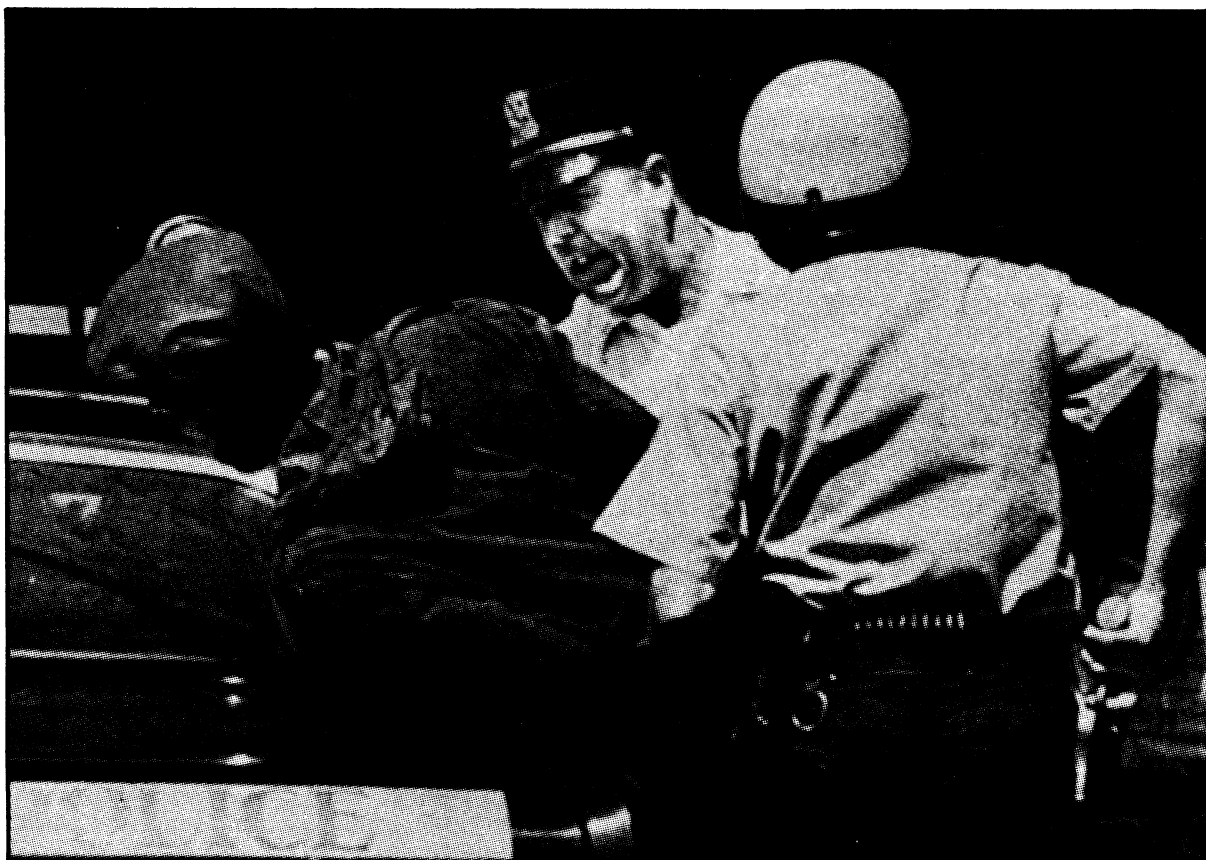
In its 1974 contract negotiations with Kaiser Aluminum, the United Steelworkers of America fought for and won a training program for skilled jobs at the company's Gramercy, Louisiana, plant. That program was unique because it included special provisions to ensure the upgrading of Blacks and women.

The program established two seniority lists—one for Black workers and another for whites. As openings in the training program came up, they were to be filled with one Black and one white until the percentage of Blacks in the skilled trades came up to the percentage of Blacks living in the surrounding area—40 percent.

In 1976 Brian Weber, a white employee at the plant, filed suit in federal court, claiming he had been discriminated against under the program.

In November 1977, the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court decision that ruled in favor of Weber. The judge cynically based his ruling on Title VII of the 1964 Civil

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Cops brutalize thousands and murder dozens of Blacks each year. Racist officials, courts, and prosecutors help them get away with it.

The Anatomy of Stalinism

The American Communist Party Today



CP contingent in the April 26, 1975, march for jobs in Washington, D.C. CP aims to keep such struggles tied to a strategy of class collaboration. Militant/Flax Hermes

'When the leaders of the Communist Party talk of 'independent political action,' they often mean working in the Democratic Party. When they talk of 'self-determination for oppressed nationalities,' they mean the sanctity of the borders established by the oppressors. When they talk of women's liberation, they mean glorifying family responsibilities as women's source of fulfillment.'

By Mary-Alice Waters

The following talk was given by Mary-Alice Waters to the Active Workers and Socialist Educational Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, August 5-12.

Charlene Mitchell, the 1968 presidential candidate of the Communist Party and currently the executive secretary of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, recently appeared at a press conference organized by the Political Rights Defense Fund. Like many other supporters of the Socialist Workers Party's suit against the government, she demanded that Attorney General Griffin Bell turn over the files on eighteen FBI *agents provocateurs* used against the SWP. In her statement to that press conference, Mitchell noted the important role of the SWP suit in exposing government infiltration and disruption of the labor movement and other social struggles.

Her appearance at the press conference stood in stark contrast to the attitude of the Communist Party of the United States toward the leaders of the SWP and Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544-CIO on the eve of World War II. Then the *Daily Worker* announced that the CP was joining "the fight to exterminate the Trotskyite Fifth Column from the life of our nation." It complained that the Justice Department was putting leaders of the Socialist Workers Party on trial as revolutionists instead of as agents of fascism, as the Kremlin had smeared the Trot-

Mary-Alice Waters is a member of the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee. She is the author of Feminism and the Marxist Movement and Women's Liberation and the Socialist Revolution, both published by Pathfinder Press.

skyists a few years earlier in the Moscow trial frame-ups.

Charlene Mitchell's welcome statement reflected not a change of heart but a change in the relationship of forces since World War II between the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. Revolutionary Marxism has gained on Stalinism in the United States. Despite this favorable shift, however, the U.S. Communist Party remains a formidable obstacle within the American labor movement to the development of the socialist revolution. It is our strongest organized opponent on the left.

The CP publishes a daily newspaper, the *Daily World*, with a Spanish-language section, *Voz del Pueblo*; a West Coast weekly, *People's World*; and a monthly theoretical magazine, *Political Affairs*; as well as numerous newsletters such as *Economic Notes* and *Jewish Affairs* aimed at select audiences. It supports a monthly labor newsletter, *Labor Today*.

The CP has a youth organization, comparable in size to the Young Socialist Alliance, with its own publication, the *Young Worker*. The CP dominates a women's organization, Women for Racial and Economic Equality. The Communist Party's active membership is probably larger than ours, and they have a periphery of ex-members and sympathizers that is much bigger than ours.

Behind the CP stand the resources of a state power with all the advantages that brings, such as large numbers of paid subscriptions and bundle orders for the *Daily World* going to cities all over the Soviet Union, free trips to the "land of socialism," and much more.

We in the Socialist Workers Party have no illusions that because of their decline in membership in the past thirty years, the American Stalinists can be easily pushed aside today. Our goal is to prevent the Stalinists from ever

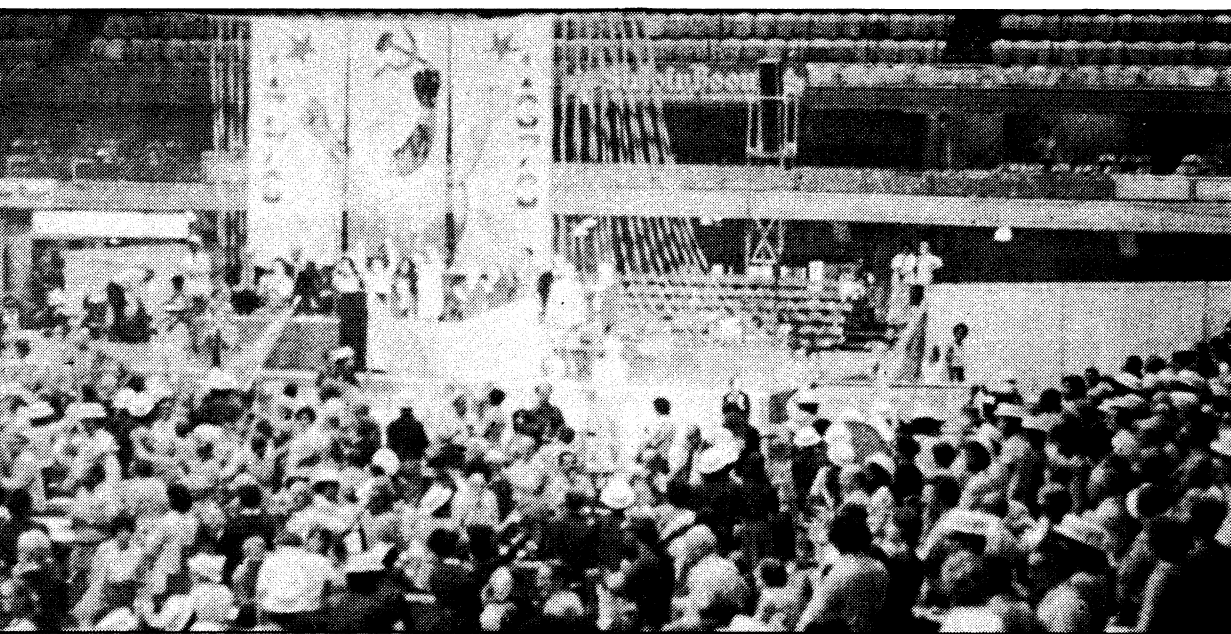
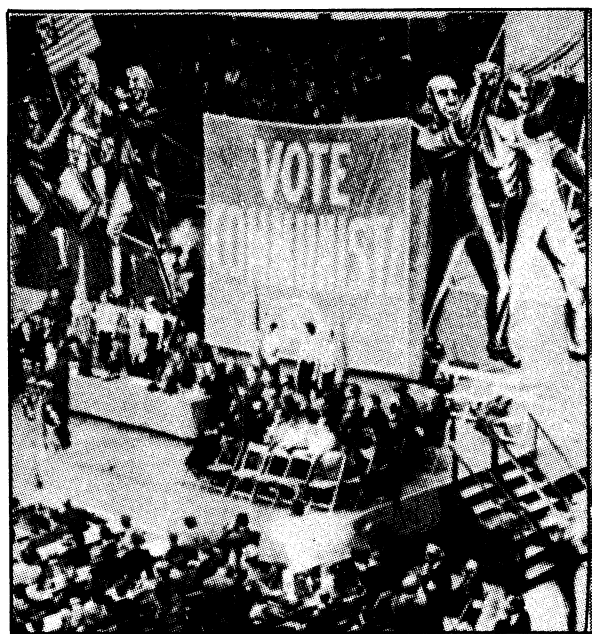
reestablishing the hegemony they once held on the left.

At its high point, toward the end of World War II, the Communist Party had close to 100,000 members. Two open members of the CP sat on the city council of New York. One-third of the members of the CIO Executive Council were CP members or sympathizers, and more than 25 percent of the membership of the CIO belonged to unions that were led by Stalinists or their close sympathizers. In early 1946, when it had already lost 50 percent of its wartime-high membership, the Communist Party still had units in more than 600 cities and towns in the United States. Fifty-one percent of its members were industrial workers. It had more than 9,000 members in the CIO alone.

A decade later, after years of witch-hunt and reaction, after the Khrushchev revelations admitted at least some of the horrendous crimes of Stalin, and after the Hungarian revolution was crushed by Soviet tanks, only 5-7,000 members remained in the American CP.

As the first stirrings of a new radicalization began to appear in the late 1950s, and as it deepened in the 1960s, the CP was only one of several currents—including the Trotskyists—striving to win leftward-moving youth. And we have been steadily gaining on it in numerous areas ever since.

The Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, as both turn toward the new political openings in the American working class, are competing for the allegiance of hundreds (and in the future it will be thousands and tens of thousands) of radicalizing workers and youth—Black and white, Chicano and Anglo, women and men. That is why we constantly examine what the CP is doing and expose every aspect of their line, showing how it is the antithesis of Marxism. We do this not to light-mindedly dismiss the CP or succumb to the sectarian



Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

Communist Party held a dominant position in the American radical movement in the 1930s. Today it remains an important force but has lost much ground to the revolutionary socialist current, the Socialist Workers Party. Above left, CP convention in 1936. Right, CP convention in 1976.

fantasy that they pose no serious problem. Just the opposite.

We must constantly check our analysis and perspectives not only against objective events but against others who compete for leadership of the American working class. That is the only way we can educate ourselves politically, make necessary adjustments, and confirm for ourselves the fundamental correctness of our own program. It is also the only way to learn how to be politically effective in winning those who are confused, disoriented, and misled by the Communist Party.

Industrial Concentration

A few paragraphs from an article in the July-August 1977 issue of *Political Affairs* by George Meyers, the *Daily World's* labor editor, gives a clue to the nature of the challenge we face. The article, entitled "Industrial Concentration: The Bottom Line," was adapted from a speech he gave to a Young Workers Liberation League convention. Here is what Meyers has to say:

"It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the question of industrial concentration. How we develop and apply this policy is, in essence, the key to the future.

"It is the key to the struggle against racism, for class struggle trade unionism with all that means, for working-class political independence, for jobs, for every single basic reform. . . .

"We direct our main attention to the workers in basic industry because of their relation to the means of production.

"They are the fountainhead of surplus value—of profits. By withdrawing their labor, they can 'shut off the water.'

"They have the strength of organized numbers in the great mills and factories. . . .

"The primary purpose of industrial concentration is to release the powerful, revolutionary potential of the working class. This begins with moving its organized sector—the trade union movement, on behalf of the needs of the class as a whole and its specifically oppressed minorities. . . .

"The trade unions are the key mass organizations of the working class. In our country, their transformation from policies of class collaboration to policies of class struggle trade unionism are at the heart of our industrial concentration policies."

Aside from a few words, it sounds like something we could have written.

Phrases like "class struggle," "class collaboration," "fighting for union democracy," "breaking with the two capitalist parties," "taking the unions out of the hands of the bureaucracy," appear often in CP literature. In fact, references to almost every basic objective that revolutionists like ourselves raise and fight for in the unions can be found there.

In the same article Meyers outlines a nine-point "program of class struggle trade unionism" for "left-led rank and file movements" in the unions today. In the abstract way the points are formulated, we would generally agree with them. In reading SWP literature and the material of the CP, someone might legitimately ask, what is the difference between what the SWP says and what the CP says? Why are the differences important? Aren't your points of agreement much more fundamental than your points of difference?

Our answer to this is, no. However much two platforms might superficially sound similar, the program of the Socialist Workers Party and the program of the Communist Party are diametrically opposed.

The very same words often mean the exact opposite. When the leaders of the Communist Party talk about "independent political action," they often mean working inside the Democratic Party. When they talk about "self-determination for oppressed nationalities," they don't include, as Lenin did, the right to establish a separate state; they mean defending the sanctity of the borders established by the oppressors. When they talk about women's liberation, they do not mean socializing the household drudgery of women and creating the conditions for real equality between men and women; they mean glorifying the biological role of women as mothers and institutionalizing each woman's family responsibilities as her source of self-fulfillment.

The glaring discrepancy between the words and the deeds of the Stalinists on issue after issue flows from the social position they hold and the political function they actually perform. Like the Social Democrats, they are a tendency operating within the working class but serving interests alien to it. They must acquire or hold on to the allegiance of the workers in order to carry out their reformist line. That gives their policies a contradictory, two-faced character. They must demagogically tailor their propaganda to the aspirations of the masses while pursuing a course that frustrates their realization.

Bolshevism vs. Stalinism: Our Roots

From its foundation in 1919 through the mid-1920s the Communist Party was a revolutionary party. The Socialist Workers Party stems from this revolutionary Communist Party. The origins of our party are in the workers and socialist movement that developed during the mass working-class radicalization produced by the rapid expansion of capitalism prior to World War I.

Our roots are in the October revolution, which brought capitalist rule to an end in Russia. They are in the inspiration and political education that American revolutionists received from our Russian teachers, who led the first socialist revolution in history and passed on to us the lessons that made such a revolution possible.

Like the Bolshevik Party, the U.S. Communist Party in the early 1920s drew to it the best of that revolutionary generation, those committed to fight uncompromisingly for the interests of the working class. Like other parties around the world that looked to the Bolsheviks for leadership, the fate of the Communist Party in the United States was bound up with the vicissitudes of the Russian revolution.

As the post-World War I revolutionary wave in Europe subsided and met defeat; as the infant Soviet state suffered years of civil war and imperialist invasion, which took their toll through disease and destruction; as the devastation exacerbated the economic backwardness and the isolation of Russia, a revolutionary generation was exhausted in the struggle against immense odds. The result was not just bureaucratic excesses, like the growth of red tape, but the ascendancy of a parasitic bureaucracy that constituted a huge, privileged social layer. It is a crystallized caste that bases itself on the eco-

nomic conquests of the revolution as well as the exhaustion of the Russian working class and the gutting of the democratic institutions of the toilers—the soviets.

The bureaucratic caste secured for itself a broad range of material privileges: better food, better housing, better education, better health care, and luxuries unavailable to the average Soviet worker. In many ways, despite its different economic roots, the Soviet bureaucracy is comparable to American labor bureaucrats today. The union bureaucracy bases itself on the workers' conquests of the 1930s, leeching off the power of the organized working class, taking inordinate salaries and expense accounts.

As the Soviet bureaucracy, headed by Joseph Stalin, consolidated its hold over the economy and the state apparatus of the Soviet Union, the defense of its own privileged status—not the interests of the Soviet and the world working class and the colonial masses—determined its policies domestically and internationally.

Stalinism abandoned the most fundamental guideline of Marxism, as expressed by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* 130 years ago: Communists "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole."

Defense of its special privileges as against the needs of the working class led to two fundamental political positions that to this day dominate the thinking and shape the conduct of the Stalinists. One is the perspective of building socialism in one country, the myth that a socialist future can be guaranteed in a single country if an economy based on nationalized property and planning is given enough time to prove its superiority over capitalism. This involves abandoning in practice the advancement of the world socialist revolution. . . .

From the perspective of socialism in one country flows the policy of peaceful coexistence. Détente, as it is usually called today, is the Stalinists' vain attempt to cooperate and collaborate with imperialism and to try to contain the class struggle and maintain the world relationship of class forces, the overall status quo.

For those parties around the world, such as the Communist Party in the United States, which after purges and expulsions of all who protested, came to accept and believe in building socialism in the USSR alone, all else followed.

Stalinism is not some mistaken proposal about how to make the transition from capitalism to socialism. It is not a conservative, timid, vacillating political course that reflects a mistaken assessment of the strength of the capitalist enemy but nonetheless remains genuinely committed to socialist revolution. Stalinists are not just undemocratic, bureaucratic bullies in the labor movement who want to control and dominate things to enhance their own personal power (although they attract and use individuals of that type for their own ends).

Stalinism is not just a collection of wrong ideas. It represents the interests of a social layer that is alien to the working class. The Kremlin bureaucracy—like the Peking bureaucracy—is not part of the working class but a parasitic growth on it. Their goal is not the advancement of the socialist revolution. They have abandoned that goal because it is in contradiction to preserving their privileges and powers. In its place they have substituted the goal of collaboration with

bourgeois forces to preserve capitalism.

The very heart and soul of Stalinism is class collaboration.

It is this international political framework that determines what the Stalinists do. But what does it lead to in the American labor movement today? In the Black struggle? In the women's movement? After all, most working people are not primarily interested in what happened in the Soviet Union fifty years ago, or even what the international Stalinist movement is all about—at least not to begin with. They're concerned with who has the best ideas about what to do right now. What to do about inflation, speedup, discrimination, unemployment, the danger of war, and environmental destruction? How does the CP view such issues?

Our Goals and Our Policies

In 1924, when the American Communist Party was still revolutionary, James P. Cannon, who was then one of its leaders and later a founder of the Socialist Workers Party, gave a report to a party conference of coal miners in St. Louis. In it he outlined the party's trade-union policy. He began by explaining to the miners:

"We are meeting here today to consider the problems of the particular trade union you belong to, from the standpoint of the Party, which is the standpoint of all Communists. And I think I will be proceeding in the proper order if I put forward as a premise the revolutionary aims of our Party and propose that we weigh and judge every trade union question that comes before us, no matter how small or practical it may appear to be, in the light of our final aims.

"Our party is a party of the proletarian revolution. . . . All our work must lead to this goal. This is our starting point in the trade unions, as in every field of activity in the class struggle. It is this fundamental conception that distinguishes us from all other parties and groups in the labor movement. It is the band of steel that binds us together in one Party.

"Our revolutionary goal shapes our policy in the daily struggle."

Our goals shape our policies in the daily struggle. That's true for the Socialist Workers Party. And it's no less true for the Communist Party. But the goals are opposites.

The goal of the SWP, the party of proletarian revolution, is to build fighting, class-conscious, socially conscious democratic trade unions. We strive to teach the workers to trust in their own power, in their own capacities to think through and democratically decide what is in their interests, and chart a course of struggle accordingly.

Our task, in short, is to construct a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement. We are fighting to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle. To do this we put forward transitional demands that can build a bridge from today's struggles and level of consciousness toward the goals of socialist revolution.

What about the Communist Party?

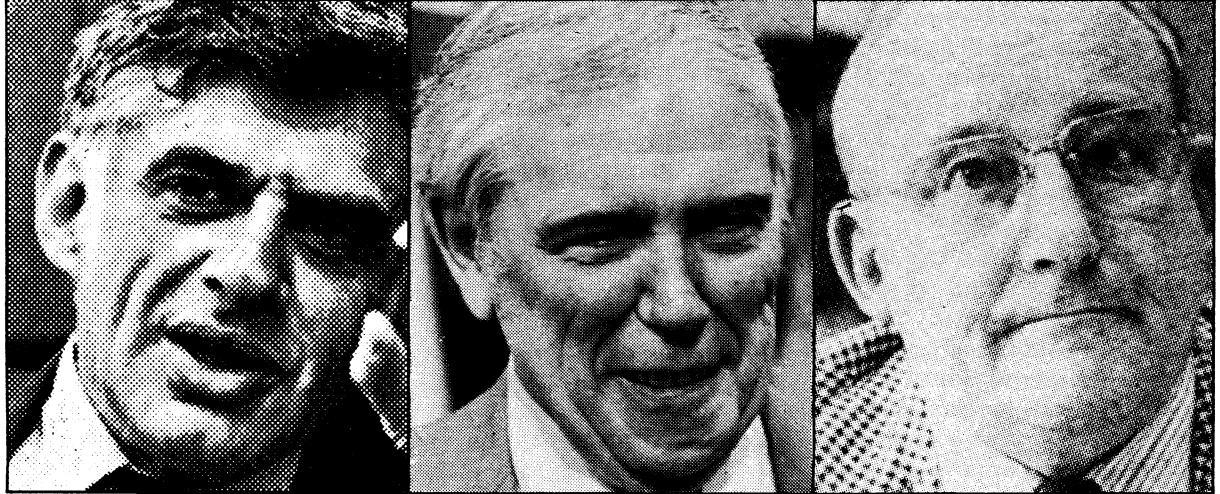
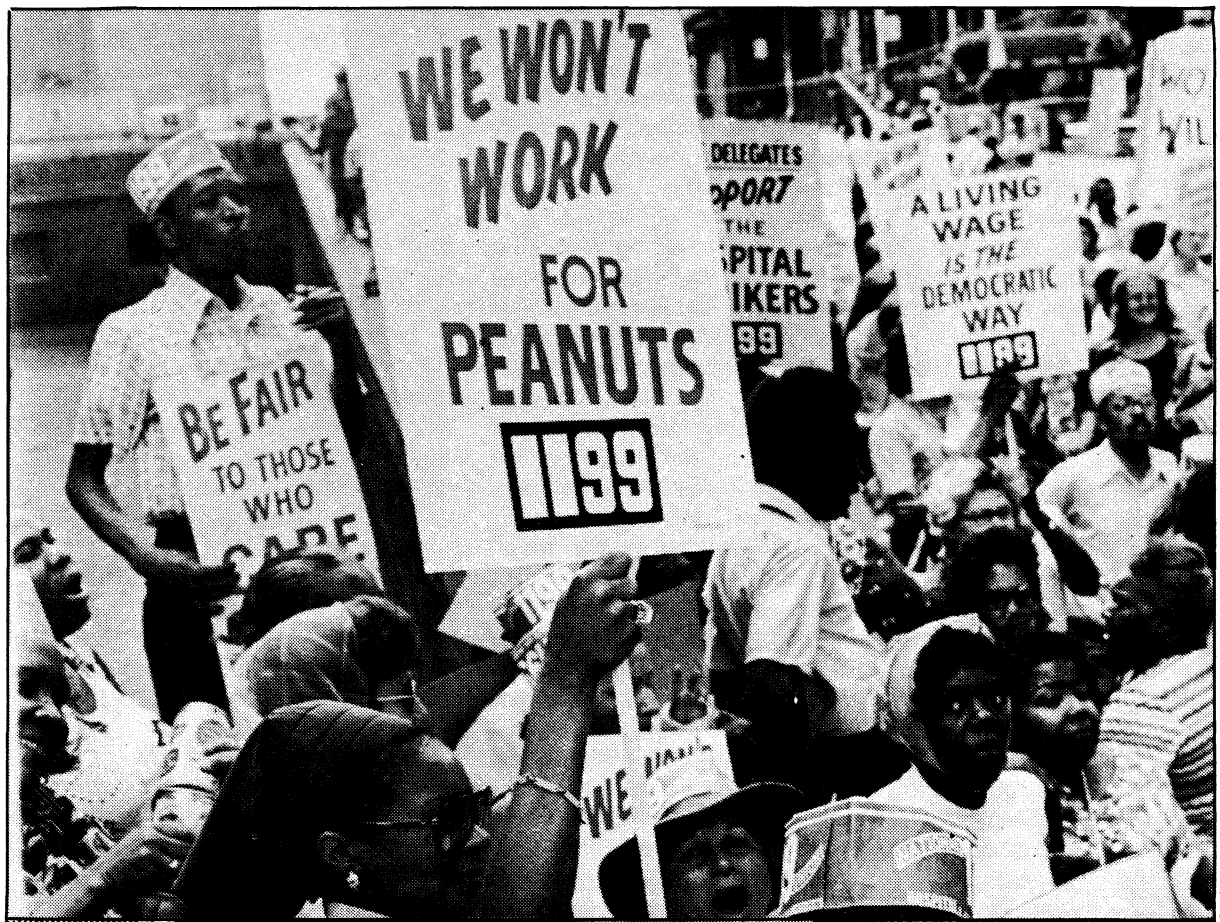
Henry Winston, the national chairman of the CPUSA, spelled out the goal that shapes its policies in daily struggle in a report given to the national council of the Communist Party a little over a year ago. He explained:

"The task of the CPUSA [is] to help guide the working class, especially the working class in the basic industries of our country, to understand that it alone is capable of uniting and leading the entire people in consistent struggle which can put an end to the arms race, cut the military budget, and win the 6-hour day with no reduction in pay."

He went on to add that this means we must "make each factory a base for democracy and peace," with labor "waging the struggle for detente, disarmament, peaceful coexistence, national liberation, non-discriminatory trade relations," and social reforms. (*Political Affairs*, July-August 1977, pp. 2-4).

"Peaceful coexistence"—that is, worldwide class collaborationism—is the goal that shapes the CP's daily policies in the labor movement. They say so explicitly.

To advance this goal, they put forward what they themselves describe as a minimum program. They don't need a transitional program because they don't intend to cross any bridges. At the very center of their strategy for the labor movement is not the class-struggle left wing but its opposite—what they term "left-center unity." The Communist Party does not strive to mobilize the ranks of the labor movement, instill in them



American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees President Wurf; United Auto Workers President Fraser; and International Association of Machinists President Winpisinger. CP calls them honest, militant, 'center' forces who have broken with class collaboration. But none of them will follow policy of consistently mobilizing workers to break from Democratic Party in demonstrations such as that shown above.

a sense of power based on deep-going democracy in the unions. To the contrary, the Stalinists strive for a bloc with a liberal section of the labor bureaucracy against what they consider to be the reactionary, cold war, anti-détente forces—the George Meany-Albert Shanker wing of the AFL-CIO.

Thus, from two opposite starting points in world politics, from two opposite historic goals, the CP and SWP arrive at two opposite policies in the labor movement today.

'Left-Center Unity'

It's worth taking a closer look at "left-center unity." For months the Communist Party has been writing article after article about this in their press. The talk by Henry Winston I quoted from was entitled "Build the Unity of the Left and Center: Key to Workingclass Victory." Winston lavishly praised CP National Secretary Gus Hall as being no less than "brilliant" for selecting left-center unity as the main point of emphasis for the party. He defines it as the most basic task of CP members today.

The need for left-center unity, Winston explains, is based on changes taking place in the labor movement. One change the CP sees is the reemergence, after a couple of decades, of forces within the labor officialdom that are starting to challenge the cold-war policies of the Meany-Shanker wing. Another change they see is the growth of the "left." The "left" in left-center unity is the Communist Party and its sectarian front groups, usually called rank-and-file caucuses: Auto Workers Action Caucus, the National Steelworkers Rank and File Caucus, Mine-workers Rank and File Caucus, and so forth. According to the CP, such caucuses are emerging once again after having been virtually driven out of the labor movement during the years of the cold war and the witch-hunt.

What Is the 'Center'?

Most important is the CP's concept of the "center." At first I couldn't figure out what they meant by "center." I read an article by Gus Hall

in the January 1978 *Political Affairs* in which he describes the center as "honest, militant, working-class trade union forces" including those on a leadership level who "have separated themselves from the status quo of class-collaboration."

I wondered who he might be referring to. I thought maybe he meant forces like those involved in the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign of Ed Sadlowski. I read more and got more confused, not less.

Then I read the March 1978 *Political Affairs*. It contained a polemic by S. Shaw against those whom the CP considers ultralefts in the labor movement, which includes the SWP, of course. The problem, Shaw said, is that the ultralefts have "a very simplistic and classless strategy" that holds there is a trade-union bureaucracy with "distinct and opposing material interests" that are different from those of the workers. (It's understandable that the CP is a little sensitive on this point.)

This "ultraleft" concept of a trade-union bureaucracy, the author explained, makes it impossible to chart a course that can drive a wedge between Meany and Company and the "center" forces. The latter, the article strongly implied, includes some international union presidents who hold "progressive views." Both Winston and Shaw held that these were not class-collaborationist bureaucrats but trade-union militants who were merely dragged into Meany's orbit for a couple of decades because the left was virtually driven out of the labor movement.

That article helped clear things up.

I wasn't the only one who had been confused, however.

The *Daily World* has a very useful institution, a column that appears fairly regularly called "Ask An Expert." Whenever you get really confused about something the CP is doing, keep an eye on "Ask An Expert," because sooner or later someone else who is confused will write in and ask about it. And then you get an answer.

In the February 4, 1978, *Daily World*, a reader

Militant/Dick Roberts

asked: "In trade union work, what are the 'center' forces?"

Answered George Meyers: "Dogmatic formulas are of no use when it comes to estimating Center forces in the trade union movement." (When the CP starts warning about "dogmatism," it's time to grab onto a few class principles and hold tight.)

"Center," our expert goes on, "is a flexible concept extending from 'left of Center' to 'right of Center' depending on specific issues. . . .

"Center forces . . . might take the following positions which provide a basis for unity with the Left."

First? You guessed it! "Support of Detente and peaceful agreements with the Soviet Union."

Second, "in favor of the Transfer Amendment which provides for a cut in military spending with the money saved being used for social needs."

Third, "support for Affirmative Action programs, at least in principle" (emphasis added).

Fourth, "demand for certain reforms such as more vigorous action by the AFL-CIO to organize the unorganized."

Fifth, "expression of a desire for more political independence on the part of Labor, but usually within the framework of the Democratic Party" (emphasis added).

And sixth, "favoring fraternal relations with unions in other countries, including socialist countries, and affiliation with the International Labor Organization."

Now, isn't that a real class-struggle program!

The "center" can supposedly be distinguished from the right-wing Social Democratic labor bureaucracy because the latter staunchly advocates class collaboration, anti-Sovietism, and opposes any and all forms of affirmative action.

In case you still don't have it clear, our expert puts it all on the table.

"Generally, the leaders of the UAW [United Auto Workers] and AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees] can be classified as Center forces." Also getting honorable mention is William Winpisinger of the Machinists.

There you have it. Douglas Fraser, Jerry Wurf, and William Winpisinger are the CP's honest, militant trade-union forces who have broken with class collaboration!

It's interesting to note that the two most important forces in the labor movement that have recently pointed towards a *real* break from the class-collaborationist policies of the labor bureaucracy aren't even mentioned: Steelworkers Fight Back and the mine workers who battled the coal barons to a victory in the 110-day coal strike last winter. They're a little too radical for the Stalinists.

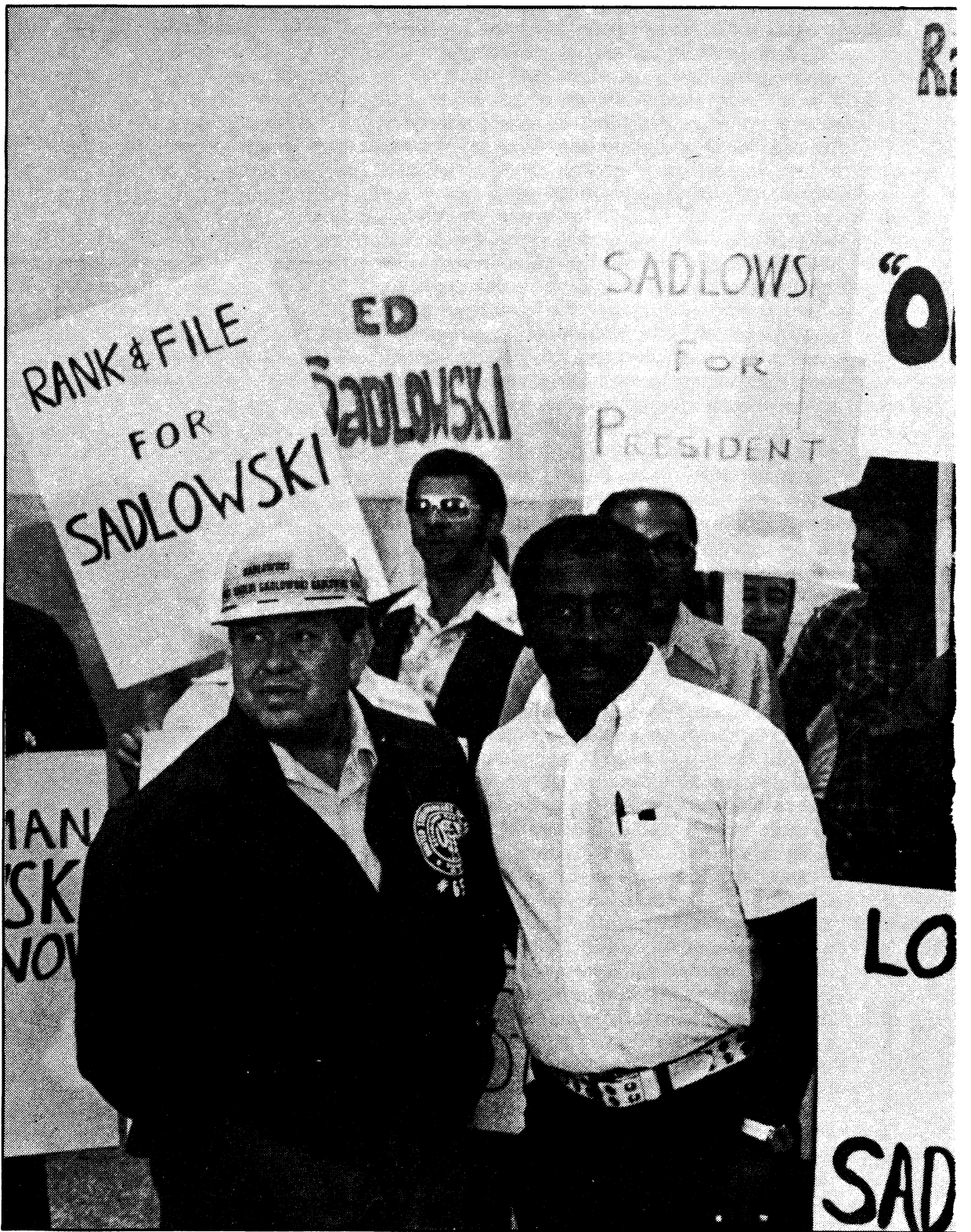
The CP did virtually nothing to build Steelworkers Fight Back outside of its stronghold in the Chicago-Gary area. As for the heroic miners, the *Daily World* carried a vicious attack on a mass rally of more than 2,000 miners in the western Pennsylvania's UMW District 5. The miners were protesting the coal bosses' February 6 contract offer and the UMW top leadership's support for it. The *Daily World* declined to even report on the mass strike rally. Instead it chose to print comments about it from a District 5 official who called those in attendance at the rally "traitors."

As against these militant workers, the CP prefers forces like Fraser and Wurf, the "new breed" of "social unionists" whose main difference with Meany and Shanker is that they favor more coordinated lobbying efforts in Washington and would have backed Democrat Carter from the beginning in 1976 instead of losing time on Democrat Henry Jackson.

Left-Center Program

What about the CP's program for left-center unity? As Patrick Williams explained in the December 1977 *Political Affairs*, "unity will be built around issues and demands that both the Left and the Center agree are vital." In other words, the starting point is not the defense of the most vital interests of the working class—it's what Fraser and Wurf think is compatible with maintaining their positions.

Concern for the difficult position the bureaucracy finds itself in when rank-and-file pressure starts pushing them is one of the preoccupations of the Communist Party. Gus Hall waxed eloquent on this in a recent report to the CP National Council printed in the June 22 issue of the *Daily World*. He spells it out.



While formally backing Sadlowski's campaign for steel union president, CP thought he was too radical

"Left-center formations will not take root if the main focus is not on economic questions."

"Economic issues," we will see, translates for the CP into avoiding the key political questions that mark the dividing line between a class-struggle program and the class collaboration of the "center" bureaucracy. In other words, "left-center unity" must be built on a minimum program that elements in the bureaucracy can support.

Hall complains that some on the left, including some members of the Communist Party, feel uncomfortable with becoming too closely identified with the "center" and its reactionary positions on many questions. He attacks CP members for holding a sectarian attitude towards working with the "center." The "left," he explains, has to understand the real problems of the bureaucracy and not expect too much.

"We must be ready to accept the reality that . . . there are also legitimate reasons why Center forces cannot, and frankly should not, take positions that would isolate them."

"We can win the confidence of Center people if we argue about their wrong ideas and assessments, but also show them that we understand the real problems they face and that we have ideas about changing them" (emphasis added). Compassion for the "legitimate" problems of the labor fakers—what a starting point for a class-struggle policy in the labor movement!

Where does this lead politically? Let's take an issue that the Stalinists talk a lot about: the fight against racism, against discrimination, and for affirmative action.

Affirmative Action—In Principle

The *Daily World* gives the impression that the CP places high priority on the fight for affirmative action with quotas. The paper explains, as we do, that this is the only position that can unite the working class in defense of its interests.

But what does the CP do concretely around this question in the labor movement? Its attitude toward the consent decree in basic steel is indica-

tive. The 1973 consent decree was a court ruling that forced the basic steel producers to accept changes in seniority rules within each plant that would facilitate the fight of Black, Latino, and women workers to move up from the worst, dirtiest, lowest-paying jobs.

The consent decree is weak and insufficient. But it is an affirmative-action measure in basic steel. Our attitude toward the consent decree is like our attitude toward most contracts—it may not be the best contract in the world, or even the best the union could have won, but once it's signed we fight to make the bosses live up to every provision that benefits the workers at all.

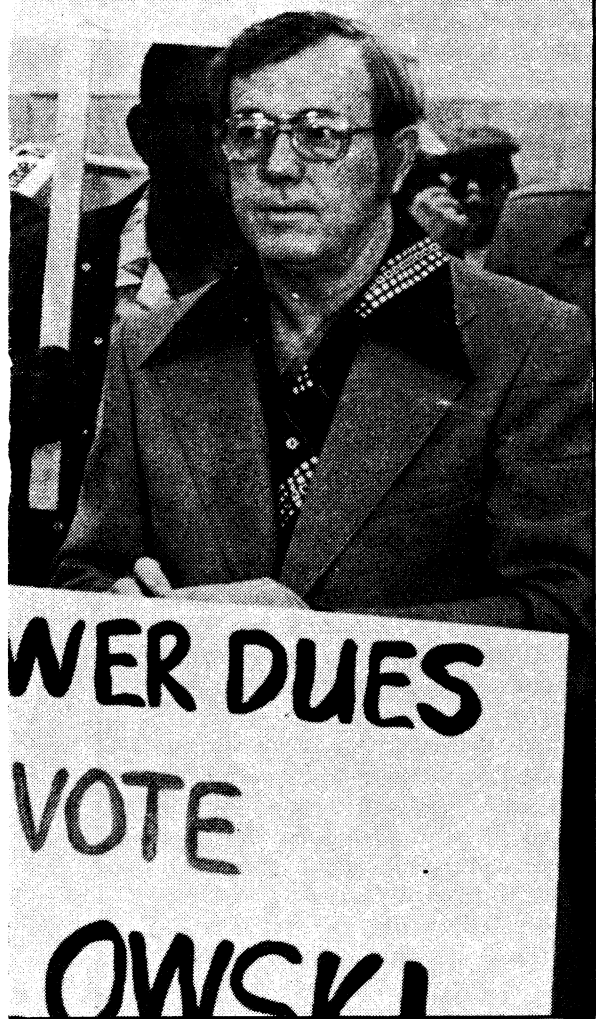
What was the attitude of the USWA officialdom to the consent decree? It can be accurately described as a conspiracy of silence. This is criminal, since the consent decree expires in 1979, and even the meager affirmative-action measures it provides for are in danger of being wiped out.

The ultralefts refuse to fight to implement the consent decree because they think it's not strong enough.

Communist Party members in the USWA, true to left-center unity, basically join the bureaucracy in the conspiracy of silence. For example, in District 31, where the CP has a significant concentration of forces, they helped initiate and are the dominant political tendency in the recently formed women's caucus. Yet they never raise the consent decree as an issue that women steelworkers should be concerned about. Affirmative action for women is a rather basic "economic issue." But the "center" bureaucracy is not too enthusiastic about it, especially when it goes from being a stand "in principle" to a concrete consent decree around which the steelworkers should be organized to struggle.

It's also interesting to look at the ten-point program entitled, "The Communist Party's Solution to the Steel Crisis." Point three calls for "complete, specific affirmative action programs against discrimination. End all racist hiring, and

Rank & File
are not
outsiders



Militant/Joel Britton

too far in front of liberal bureaucrats.

promotion practices." But not a word about the consent decree.

Similarly, on the issue of school desegregation, the Communist Party is on record in favor of busing to achieve school desegregation. Moreover, CP literature stresses the need for labor to join and help lead the fight around this and other aspects of the struggle against racism.

In Cleveland a struggle over school busing to achieve desegregation has been simmering for some time, with racists threatening violence to try to prevent desegregation from taking place.

The Communist Party briefly fostered a group of trade unionists for desegregation. The group called for quality education and peaceful desegregation. But the real dividing line in the struggle in Cleveland was for or against busing. And on this the group was silent.

Busing is the key political issue because voluntary "desegregation" without busing is a fraud. But the CP avoids this decisive question.

When the racists went on an antibusing rampage in Boston, prodesegregation forces began to mobilize in defense of busing. The CP virtually abstained from this struggle. It attempted to undercut every action it could not control. Busing may be the only way to desegregate school systems, but it doesn't sit too well with "progressive" Democratic politicians and "center" union officials, and CP policies are shaped by the goal of building alliances with such forces.

Another issue facing the labor movement today is protectionism. The trade-union bureaucracy calls for restriction on imports as the way to protect jobs for American workers. The CP press argues correctly that unemployment in the U.S. is not caused by Japanese workers. But what do the Stalinists propose?

They tell the steelworkers to appeal to the "friends of labor" in Congress to support the Conyers shorter workweek bill; support the Transfer Amendment; pass a law prohibiting layoffs and wage cuts in basic steel; control the price of steel used for federal projects; and repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which restricts

trade with the Soviet bloc! That's their solution. They don't call for building a fighting, democratic Steelworkers union that can use its power to impose a shorter workweek on the steel barons—and can help lead a political fight to extend it nationally. They don't seek a revitalized union that can force the bosses to open their books and prepare the workers to run the industry. They don't explain the need for a labor party as the political arm of such a class-struggle, fighting union movement.

Instead the CP proposes lobbying the Democratic friends of labor and, above all, détente. Détente equals peace equals trade equals jobs for American workers, proclaims the Communist Party, and therefore peaceful coexistence has top priority for the American working class.

Revolutionary socialists favor peace and trade with the Soviet Union, of course. But we tell the American workers the plain truth that the strategy of attaining these through détente is a cruel hoax. It does not bring humanity one step closer to peace. It only emboldens the American ruling class to press its aggressive foreign policy, posing the ever-growing danger of an eventual nuclear holocaust. The American ruling class will never, can never, peacefully coexist with states that have abolished capitalism.

Unlike the CP, we agree with Lenin and Marx and Engels, who dedicated every word they wrote to imbuing the workers of the world with the understanding that the interests of the workers and those of the capitalists are irreconcilable. The economic systems today represented by Moscow and Washington are incompatible. Lenin put it eloquently: "As long as capitalism and socialism exist, we cannot live in peace: in the end, one or the other will triumph—a funeral dirge will be sung over the Soviet Union or over world capitalism."

The only road to world peace is for the American working class to take power and disarm the U.S. rulers before they incinerate us all.

Ducking the Deportations Issue

The CP's stand on undocumented workers is cut from the same cloth of duplicity as its policy on other issues.

In the CP's nine-point program for left-led rank-and-file caucuses in the trade union movement, published in the July-August 1977 *Political Affairs*, point nine states: "Rank and file movements must fight attacks on foreign born workers in this country, with or without documents."

But as José G. Pérez pointed out in an excellent article in the July 1978 *International Socialist Review*, the CP *evades* the main political issue: the fight against deportations. On that question they are silent. Deportation is the chief form that the attacks on undocumented workers take. A clear stand against deportations of undocumented workers is precisely what divides a class-struggle policy from a policy of class collaboration in the Chicano movement, and in the labor movement. But the CP doesn't want to push this particular "economic issue" because it's not exactly popular with the center bureaucrats.

Hiding Their Politics

The Communist Party's mode of functioning in the labor movement also stands in stark contrast to revolutionary socialist goals and methods.

Unlike SWP members in industry, CP members hide their political affiliations as a matter of policy. They are not open about their politics. They try *not* to distinguish themselves from the "center" by a very wide margin.

They don't sell the *Daily World* on the job, although sometimes other CP members give it away at factory gates.

They don't campaign for CP candidates. As a matter of fact, you can often tell who the CP members are because they are campaigning for some liberal Democrat. Nobody else is interested enough to bother.

CP members on the job don't build *Daily World* forums or other CP meetings.

In the article by Winston referred to above, he comes on strong against members of the CP who think it would be correct to work openly. He criticizes "sectarian talk which speaks about the open role of the Communist Party, irrespective of time, place and circumstances." This is "not inviting workers to join the Party; it is driving workers away from the Party."

Why is this so? Winston explains: "In a period of 10 million unemployed, when these workers know that out there are company stoop pigeons,

spies, etc., not to speak of goons, it is NOT the time for us to be out there at the gate talking about subscriptions and joining the Communist Party" (capitalization in original).

Let's hope they stick to that line for a long time!

Second, the CP's policy is for members to seek posts in the unions—not only as shop committee people and grievors, but official posts as high as they can go. They do not get elected on the basis of clearly explaining to the workers the limits of what can be accomplished by electing any given individual to a union office. Also, they are often not even known to their fellow workers as socialists who, as individuals, defend a whole range of political views. To the contrary, they soft-pedal their politics. Like other aspiring bureaucrats, they tell the workers, "Elect me, I'll set you free."

Thus a CP member starts down the slippery slope of the union bureaucracy like any other petty office seeker who wants to get the "outs" in. The labor bureaucracy is expert at the art of corrupting promising potential leaders who engage in that kind of union politicking.

This is just the opposite of the Socialist Workers Party's policy. SWP members in the unions seek to mobilize the *ranks* to fight for their own interests. We tell them that only they can open the way for labor to move forward. This doesn't exclude participating in union elections, of course. To the contrary. But that's useful only as part of building a movement of class-conscious union members.

Third, the CP's line in the unions is to build sectarian "rank and file" caucuses, which are invariably counterposed to the development of any real motion toward a class-struggle left wing. An example of this was the way the CP counterposed the National Steelworkers Rank and File Caucus to Steelworkers Fight Back. While formally supporting Ed Sadlowski's campaign for president of the Steelworkers, the Stalinists feared Sadlowski and the forces in motion around him. They thought he was too radical, too independent, too far ahead of the center bureaucrats. They thought he would isolate himself from the majority of the workers.

The one thing the CP fears most is the mobilization of the ranks of the labor movement. As real class forces begin to move, they can take an independent direction and develop a dynamic the CP cannot control. On this the CP has a profound feeling of psychological identity with the entire labor bureaucracy.

The Lesson of World War II

The Stalinists hark back fondly to the days of World War II, which they consider to have been the finest hour for left-center unity. The united "left" and "center" forces then made a "magnificent contribution," we are told, and "gave the workers a sense of perspective" (*Political Affairs*, October 1977).

The CP certainly made a big contribution to the imperialist war effort. It pushed the policies of class collaboration with American imperialism to the hilt and helped to police the labor movement for the ruling class. Its members led the drive to impose the wartime no-strike pledge. They fought for speedup, piecework, and incentive pay. They supported the proposed labor conscription act of the Roosevelt administration. They accused the mine workers of *treason* for striking to protect their working conditions and pay during the war. The CP attacked the Black movement for raising the "Double V" slogan: Victory over racism at home, victory over fascism abroad. The Stalinists said the fight against racism can wait; to fight racism now only helps Hitler.

The CP supported the ruling-class decision to round up all Japanese-Americans on the West Coast, confiscate their property, and throw them into concentration camps. And it cheered the ultimate, final horror of the war—the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The day after the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, the front page of the *Daily Worker* featured a racist cartoon depicting two bombs exploding in the face of a caricatured Japanese man with the caption, "The Old One-Two."

That's the real meaning of left-center unity for the labor movement. And it's no wonder that when the cold war witch-hunt began, and the Stalinist labor leaders looked around for support among rank-and-file unionists, they found they had none. That's the true story behind the postwar collapse of the American CP.

The policy of left-center unity goes hand in

hand with class collaboration in the electoral arena. Every party represents the interests of one class or another. The issue in every single election is: which class shall rule, which class shall govern? The SWP strives to bring the question of class independence and the perspective of a workers government to the fore in every election.

An uninformed reader of the Stalinist press could get the mistaken impression that they too are for working-class independence in the elections. The CP often talks about the need for labor to break from the two capitalist parties, the need for labor to run its own candidates. Articles in the CP press argue, "You wouldn't ask your landlord to represent you on a rent control board, why elect him to represent you in Congress?"

As in the labor movement, though, the essence of their line is the polar opposite of independent working-class political action. It is the opposite of the SWP's fight for a labor party based on and responsible to a democratic, fighting union movement. The CP is not for a labor party. It is for a mass, antimonopoly, people's party, "anchored in labor," as they say.

That's not a working-class party in program and composition. It's a capitalist third party, one that is for capitalism but against monopoly capitalism—as if that were a possibility in the strongest imperialist power in the world today.

Of course, the CP's opposition to independent working-class political action doesn't mean the Stalinists won't be involved in developments toward a labor party or that they wouldn't participate in a labor party if one were actually formed. They'll be in there, trying to push it in the direction of class collaboration in one form or another.

In his book *Teamster Politics*, Farrell Dobbs describes how the Stalinists operated in the Minneapolis Farmer-Labor Party in the late 1930s, trying to turn it into a "people's party," to blur the class lines, and to discourage trends toward genuine class independence and action. In any future labor party development, the Stalinists will try to place themselves in a position of leadership so as to be better able to block its forward motion and sabotage its independent action.

The CP's electoral perspective is not based on a strategy of transforming the trade unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle against the rulers. It is not oriented toward instilling the most combative workers with a deep sense of self-confidence and class consciousness. On the contrary, it is aimed at teaching the workers to fear an independent course, to fear a break with the ruling class, to doubt their own power, to under-rate their capacity to run society, to be craven before the bosses and their political stooges.

Whether it's called antimonopoly coalition, advanced democracy, historic compromise, new democracy, people's front, or any other slick slogan, from the United States to France to Italy to Chile, the Stalinist program is the same: prevent workers from taking an independent road, prevent them from defending their class interests to the end. Supposedly this will prevent the workers movement from being isolated and crushed by the superior forces of reaction. But as Chile once again tragically confirmed, people's frontism simply disarms the workers and paves the way for the victory of the counterrevolution, the bloody liquidation of the workers movement.

The CP's antimonopoly coalition line is not a confused line, well-meaning but wrong. It is a consciously counterrevolutionary line, intended to keep the workers movement within the confines of class collaboration.

The fact that the different goals of the SWP and the CP dictate different policies in day-to-day struggle is brought out sharply in an editorial in the March 1978 *Labor Today*, published by the CP-fostered Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy.

"Let's re-state the basics," write the editors. And they do: "Labor needs its own dependable power base in Congress and in the legislatures."

A power base for labor in the legislatures? Revolutionary socialists tell workers that their power base is themselves, their mass working-class organizations, the fact that they make the country run—and certainly not the charlatans and crooks who haunt the halls of Congress.

The purpose of labor political action to establish a "power base" in Washington is supposedly "to compel action on the most urgent economic and social questions confronting workers and the nation." The Humphrey-Hawkins bill, the Conyers shorter work week bill, and lifting trade



Stalin (top right) with Roosevelt aide Harry Hopkins in July 1941 after Hitler invaded Soviet Union. CP sees World War II—when they pushed no-strike pledge, speedup, and opposed antiracist struggles—as high point of 'left-center unity.' CP even hailed the bombing of Nagasaki in cartoon in August 10, 1945, 'Daily Worker.'

restriction with the Soviet bloc are mentioned.

That's what a "power base" in Congress could do for you! With the Humphrey-Hawkins fraudulent "jobs bill" and more Soviet trade, who needs a socialist revolution?

Three-Pronged Class Collaboration

In order to move toward a third capitalist party, the CP has a three-pronged electoral approach. Prong number one is working within the Democratic Party. Prong number two is promoting "independent people's candidates." Prong number three is running Communist Party campaigns.

In reality, all three are designed to deepen collaboration with the pro-détente forces within the Democratic Party. This has been the CP's consistent line since 1936 with a brief hiatus during the Stalin-Hitler pact.

If you're confused about how all this adds up to independent political action, you're not alone. A lot of CP members clearly feel uncomfortable with it too. This was recently reflected in a polemic against the SWP in the *Daily World*, arguing that working in the Democratic Party is independent political action.

The author explains that the SWP's problem is that we don't understand dialectics. We supposedly don't comprehend that people are shaped by their experiences in society and they don't all become conscious at the same time. Unlike the SWP, Lenin supposedly understood that revolutionists have to work in even the most reactionary organizations that include workers. We want to fence ourselves off from all those who disagree

with us today, and that's sectarianism.

Diane Wang did a fine job of unraveling all this in the August 11 issue of the *Militant*. She points out, for example, that Lenin was talking about the need for workers, organized in their own party, to participate in bourgeois elections and legislatures and work in reformist political formations such as the British Labour Party (which was based on the unions but led by people with a political line similar in its class-collaborationist essence to that of the CP today).

The SWP's difference with the CP is crystal clear in this exchange between the *Militant* and the *Daily World*. Our starting point is how to educate the American working class to understand, as Lenin explained, that the "so-called bipartisan system prevailing in America . . . has been one of the most powerful means of preventing the rise of an independent working-class, i.e., genuinely socialist, party" on a mass scale. The working class needs its own party to fight for its interests on all fronts, and it will never get there without a total break from the two-party system.

The Stalinists' hatred and fear of any political action that genuinely points toward a class break from the two-party system can best be seen in their reaction to expression of independent working-class political action such as the Freedom Now Party in Michigan in 1964 or the Raza Unida parties today. All the fine words about "independence" are forgotten and the real line of sticking with the liberal Democrats comes through clearly.

When the Raza Unida parties held a national conference in El Paso in 1972, they had a thoroughgoing political debate and finally voted not to endorse McGovern for president in the 1972 elections. The *People's World*, in a rare exception to its policy of ignoring the very existence of the RUPs, responded to this rejection of the two parties of big business with the following analysis:

"To fail to help defeat Nixon is to confuse people and win their disrespect and scorn. The people will ask, and rightly so, what kind of party is this that while it talks good and does good work, when it comes to the decisive question of curbing the drive toward fascism, insists on yelling from the sidelines like the religious fanatic who can't see past his damnation of a doomed world."

That's what the Communist Party thinks of independent Chicano political action—it's a stalking horse for fascism.

The Struggle for Black Liberation

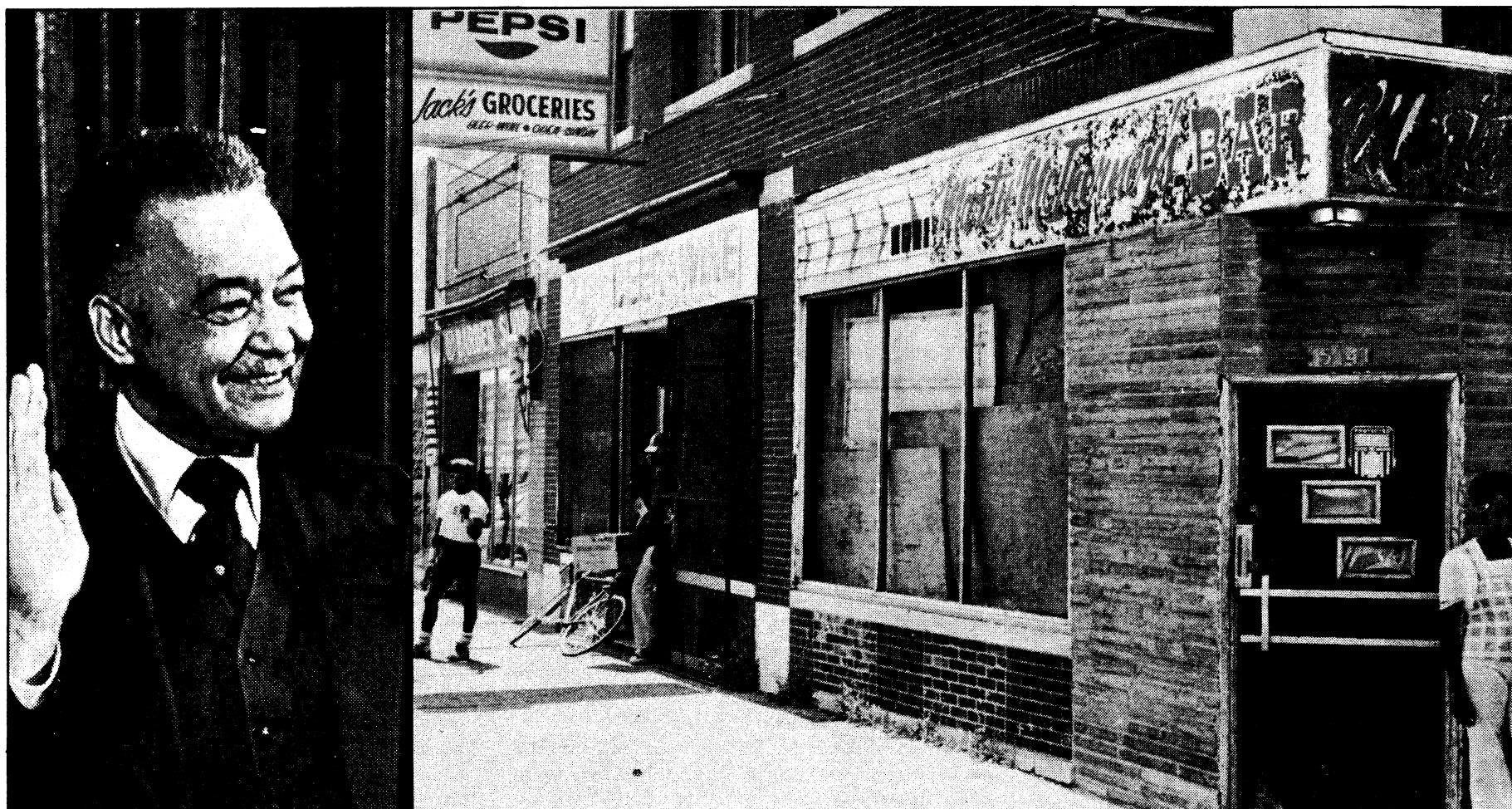
Nowhere can the Communist Party's hatred for the independent action of the oppressed be seen more clearly than in the struggle for Black liberation. They fear any movement that could break out of the political straitjacket of subordination to the Democratic Party.

As in the labor movement, what they say and what they do are two different things. Words themselves often mean the exact opposite of what you would assume. For example, the Stalinists say they are for the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities. But as Black nationalist consciousness began to spread in this country in the early 1960s, the Communist Party attacked it with fury, especially its most articulate and politically farsighted representative, Malcolm X.

They labeled Malcolm a "conscious huckster of worthless nostrums" and an agent of ultrareactionary forces. They do not defend Black nationalism as a form of rising proletarian class consciousness with profoundly revolutionary implications.

The CP's refusal to recognize the progressive character of the nationalism of the oppressed and the reactionary role of the nationalism of the oppressors is not confined to the Black movements. Denouncing Chicano nationalism as a bourgeois ideology, the March 18 issue of the *Daily World* recently branded it "the last trench of reaction." Denouncing the idea that the right to self-determination for Chicanos includes the right to a separate state, Lorenzo Torrez, chairman of the "Chicano section, Department of Nationalities, Communist Party, USA," came to the defense of the U.S. border and American imperialist sovereignty. Torrez argued that the American working class would never "stand still" and allow a new nation to be carved out of the United States!

As if the borders established by U.S. imperialism have anything to do with the American working class and our needs! He should have



CP hustled votes for Detroit's Democratic Mayor Coleman Young (left). But Young has done nothing to make life better for Blacks in Detroit.

concluded his article with a chorus of "God Bless America."

The CP does make a distinction between the nationalism of the oppressed and the nationalism of the oppressor, but not the distinction Lenin made. It *opposes* the first and *supports* the second.

The SWP takes a different stand. We say the right to self determination is meaningless—from the United States to Africa to the Soviet Union—unless it includes the right to separate if the oppressed nationality chooses to do so. Unconditional defense of the right to separate is the only program that is in the interests of the working class. It is a precondition for a victorious socialist revolution in the United States.

That stance has been part of the Marxist program ever since Marx himself codified it in a resolution of the First International more than 100 years ago. "Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains." That's our position. Like Lenin, we say to any "socialist" who refuses to support the right to self-determination—you're "a scoundrel and an imperialist."

The Communist Party's opposition to the right of self-determination is a genuinely counter-revolutionary position for one simple reason. Unless the oppressed nationalities of this country are convinced that a workers government will guarantee the right to genuine self-determination for them, the forces necessary to assure the victory of the American socialist revolution can never be assembled.

All these positions come together politically in the Communist Party's vigorous support to Blacks running for office on the Democratic Party ticket. Their determination to keep the Black struggle tied to the capitalist two-party system stands out in all its stark detail.

You could ask for no better example of what this means for Black people and for workers than by looking at one of the Communist Party's idols: Democrat Coleman Alexander Young, the honorable mayor of Detroit.

The Detroit 'Model'

When Young was elected mayor of Detroit in 1974, James Jackson, a longtime leader of the Communist Party, lauded Young in the March 2, 1974, *Daily World* as "one of the finest sons of the U.S. working class." He hailed the election as a model of "independent" labor and Black political action.

Young ran for the mayor of Detroit on a ten-point program to bring Detroit together—Black and white, auto baron and assembly-line worker—all pulling together. At the center of Young's program was the need to fight crime. Unlike the run-of-the-mill "law and order" candidate, Young acknowledged in his inaugural address that crime is "not unrelated to poverty and unemployment." But like every other law-and-order candidate, Young's solution was to put

1,000 more cops on the streets of Detroit. He announced he intended to transform the police department from being "anti-people" to "people-oriented."

It's people-oriented, all right! Oriented toward brutalizing and terrorizing the chief victims of poverty and unemployment, who are overwhelmingly Black people in Detroit. That's just the other side of the coin of "property-oriented," which is the one and only responsibility of any cop anywhere, regardless of race or sex. Cops have one social role: to protect the wealth of them that's got it.

In overwhelmingly Black cities such as Detroit, the ruling class has felt the need for a more effective police force, one that would seem less like an army of occupation, one with more Black and female faces, one that could better protect private property. They've proceeded to do this with great show. In Detroit, the capitalist courts have proceeded with great determination to rule in favor of affirmative action for Detroit cops. It's rather ironic. In how many other places are the bosses pushing for affirmative action today? You get the feeling there's something a little different about "affirmative action" for cops.

Young's program for rebuilding Detroit is not a program for mobilizing the power of the labor and Black movements to chart an independent course, to fight for a massive public works program and a shorter workweek, to tax the corporate wealth of the auto industry to pay for the needs of the working class. Breaking with the two parties of big business is the last thing that Young or the Stalinists have in mind. Here again, the *Daily World* laid it out with admirable clarity in James Jackson's article:

"For the successful realization of a program for civic improvements . . . the administration of Mayor Young must have the cooperation of important sections of the industrialists. Such big capitalists as Henry Ford have their own need for the development of Detroit; they are coming from far different positions than Mayor Young and are motivated by the pursuit of their own special interests. *The broadest alignment of class forces are both possible and necessary for addressing the problems of urban crisis which holds Detroit in its grip*" (emphasis added).

The "urban crisis"! That's the capitalists' code word for brutally slashing the standard of living of the most oppressed and exploited workers who live in America's cities. The *Daily World* says all that is going to be changed by appealing to the good will of Henry Ford and his friends, who are responsible for the "urban crisis" to begin with!

Henry Ford seems to have joined the antimonopoly coalition.

The *Daily World* hailed Young's election as a model of how labor can initiate broad-based people's political action (note that "people" now includes Henry Ford) "to commence the process of struggling to occupy the main seats of governmental power." The goal is to solve the most

"pressing social and political problems whose solution are mandatory for the nation's salvation and progress."

The *Daily World* is not talking about the problems of the oppressed *nation* that constitutes the majority of Detroit's population. It's referring to the problems of the oppressor nation of Henry Ford. That is bourgeois nationalism, and that is the last trench of reaction. But the *Daily World* isn't noted for remembering the basics of Marxism.

That's the CP's real program for "fighting racism," the real meaning of its slogan: "black and white, unite and fight." Coleman Young and Henry Ford hand in hand, solving the problems of GM and Ford Motors by taking it out of your hide and mine.

If it's necessary to make the point any clearer, last week Coleman Young threatened to fire more than 3,000 striking municipal employees in Detroit who were protesting the intolerable working conditions of Detroit's sanitation workers. So much for the CP's glorious son of the American working class.

Stalinism and Women's Liberation

What do the Stalinists offer women?

Their attitude toward the feminist movement stems in part from the same fear that marks their response to other social forces that begin to move in an independent direction. It's similar to their hostile response to Black nationalism and Chicano nationalism. But there is something more involved. It is related to the centrality of women's liberation to the socialist revolution, to the socialist reconstruction of society.

When the women's movement came on the scene in the early 1970s, the CP reacted vehemently against it, denouncing it as bourgeois and petty bourgeois and insisting that the feminist movement had no relevance to the real needs of Black and other working-class women. The CP's central political target was the fight for legal equality, which focused on the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. The Communist Party referred to the ERA as a "seemingly militant measure which, if thoroughly examined, will be found to mislead women into disunity and defeat."

One of the rare pieces of literature the CP has published on the question of women is a pamphlet titled *Enter Fighting: Today's Woman* by Clara Colón. It came out in 1971. At that time their main argument against the ERA was that equality would mean tying the noose of the military draft around our own necks.

"What is the gain for women or for anybody in adding forces to the armed might of U.S. imperialism in its savage war against a freedom-loving people?" Colón argued. "Are American women to rise in defense of Mme. Nhu's rubber plantations in Vietnam, or will they fight in solidarity with the Vietnamese people's heroines, to bring their own men home alive and put an

end to the blood-letting?"

She labels the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment as "separatism," which leads into a blind alley.

The Communist Party clung stubbornly to this anti-ERA position until January 1978. By then the CP was so isolated on the American left, even among liberal and union forces, that it faced an open revolt in its ranks, with prominent spokespersons such as Bettina Aptheker publicly stating that they supported the ERA and disagreed with the position of their party.

Then the January 1978 *Political Affairs* announced a shift. The anti-ERA position had not been wrong in the past, the article argued, but a "new" situation had emerged. New forces had come into the struggle for women's rights (no thanks to the CP, I might add). The article concluded that it is now in the interests of working-class women to win the Equal Rights Amendment if it is linked to the fight for other demands such as affirmative action.

How the mobilization of women to fight for the ERA could do anything but advance the struggles of women on all fronts, of course, remains a mystery that can only be explained by that kind of dialectics that the SWP doesn't grasp.

Even after the Stalinists changed their tune, the CP line was so vacillating, and their explanations of it so tortured, that everyone was still confused. But "Ask An Expert" came to the rescue again. This time the expert was Alva Buxenbaum, chairperson, Women's Rights Section, CPUSA.

"Question: What is the Communist Party's current position on the Equal Rights Amendment?"

"Answer: The Equal Rights Amendment has now become a major battleground for the struggle for women's equality." (To believe the CP, it hasn't been a major battleground for the past several years.)

What's changed? A "highly organized right wing" opposition to the ERA and affirmative action "now exists." (They seem to think that's something new, too.) "The 'new right wing' intends to seize the ERA as it did the Bakke case in its attempts to defeat affirmative action" (July 27, 1978, *Daily World*).

Of course Buxenbaum has just explained that the right is mobilizing to block passage of the ERA. Now she implies they want to pass the ERA in order to use it to wipe out affirmative action programs. Ignoring the contradiction, our expert goes on.

"The role of progressive and left forces must be to help clarify the intent of the ERA so that it . . . becomes synonymous with affirmative action."

Our position, and the position of the women's movement, is that the fight for the ERA, for affirmative action, and for other demands of women are interconnected. But the interpretation of a law is never decided in the courts. Any law can be twisted and used to justify something diametrically opposed to its intent. This happened in the Supreme Court *Bakke* ruling, which was based on a perverse reading of the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Mobilizing women and our allies as a fighting, self-confident force, determined to see the struggle for equality through to the end, is the *only* way we can assure that the ERA will advance affirmative action, abortion rights, child care, pregnancy benefits, and every other goal we seek.

But all the "expert's" words still don't clarify "what is the CP's position on the ERA?" Not on affirmative action, but on the Equal Rights Amendment. Is the CP for it or against it? The real answer came on July 9 when 100,000 women and men marched in Washington for the ERA. The Communist Party was not there.

Despite all the fine words about the key role played by working-class forces, and by Black women especially, in the struggle for women's rights, the CP did not support July 9. It did not help build the trade-union contingents or help mobilize Black women and Chicanas and other Latinas. July 9 clarified before the whole country the real position of the Communist Party on the Equal Rights Amendment.

A Very Radical Issue

But we still have to ask, why? From the point of view of "left-center unity" and work in the Democratic Party, the Stalinists' opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment was suicidal. Even Meany and Shanker were to the left of the CP on this issue. A pro-ERA stand would have facili-

tated their collaboration with the labor bureaucracy and Democratic Party. So why did it take them so long to shift their formal stand?

In a letter to the *Militant* a few weeks ago, George Breitman posed a question. If 100,000 Blacks supported by numerous trade unions and other organizations had marched on Washington demanding equality, would the CP have been absent, even if they were critical of the demands raised? Breitman defied anyone to come up with an explanation for the CP's stance other than simple chauvinist bigotry towards women. I think he is correct.

But this still doesn't answer the question, why? Why is it so hard for the CP to make a shift on this question? Why is the resistance so strong? Why is this true on all the issues related to women's rights? For example, the CP favors legalized abortion, but they are uncomfortable with the question. They don't like to raise it and avoid it like the plague. You have to go through months of the *Daily World* to find even one article about the fight for abortion rights.

The answer lies in the central place women's liberation occupies in the socialist revolution. The Stalinists have a deep fear of the independent and radical character of the struggle for women's liberation—radical in the original sense of the word: going to the roots.

Women's liberation is inseparable from the socialist reconstruction of society. It is synonymous with restructuring social relations from top to bottom, eliminating the very essence of class society—relations between people based on material inequality, economic compulsion, discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and fear. Women's liberation is the liberation of humanity—women, children, men. It means the end of exploitative and oppressive social relations that are maintained by violence, fear of authority, and hierarchy. It means the end of the psychological and ideological conditioning of human beings to accept such relations as natural and normal.

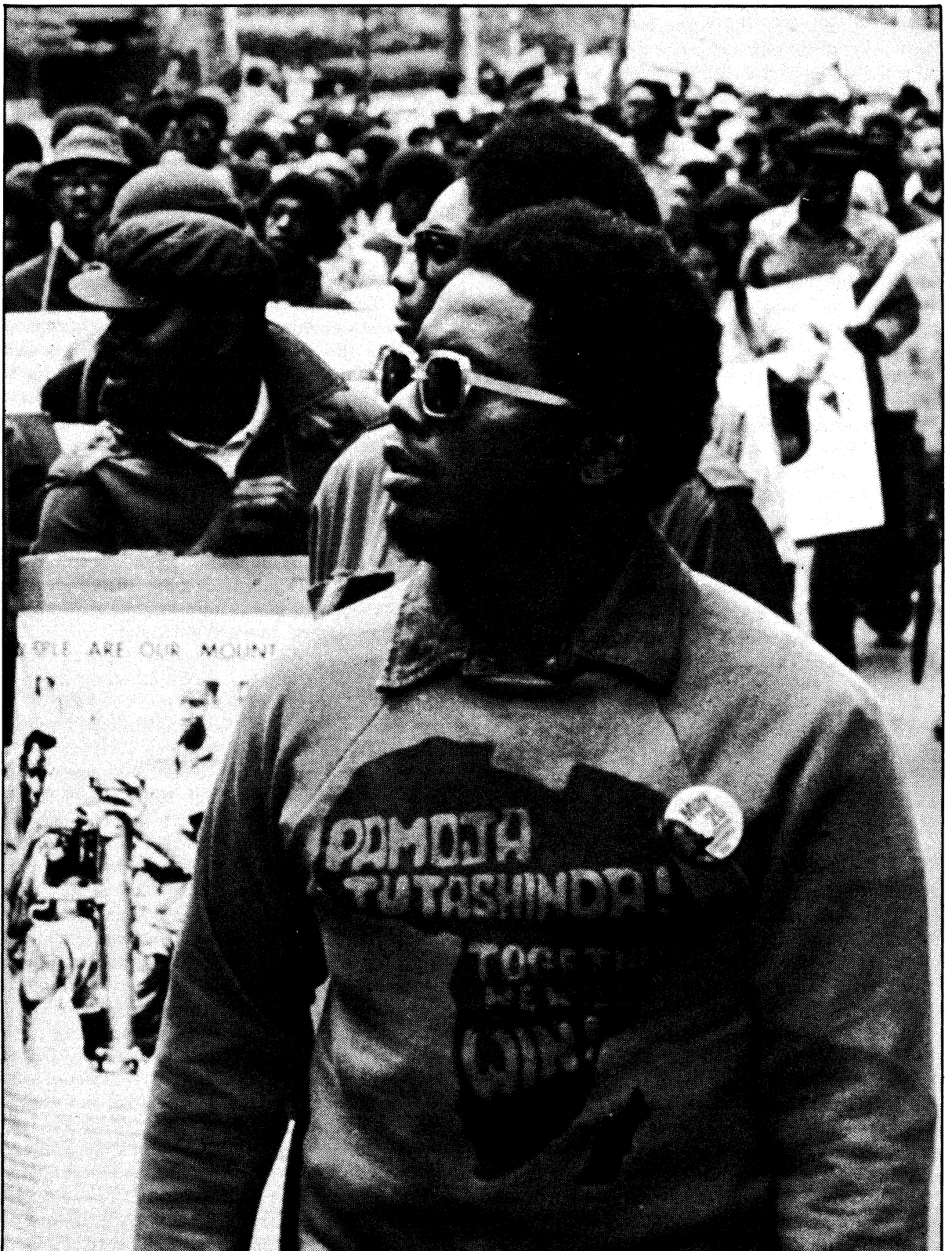
Women's liberation is incompatible with the

preservation of special bureaucratic privileges that can be maintained only through violence and compulsion. Women's liberation and social inequality cannot coexist. That is why the Stalinists keep insisting that women's central role is to be mothers, and that the family (which cannot exist without the oppression of women) is the most perfect social institution for raising children.

In Stalinist literature you will rarely see a reference to women without the mention of women as mothers, women as pillars of the family. This is typified by the attitude of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union toward women today. The Stalinist counterrevolution reversed the Marxist program of the Bolshevik Party on women's liberation, as well as the Bolsheviks' elimination of all laws against homosexuals. The Stalinist bureaucracy enthroned forced motherhood and the family as institutions of support for the counterrevolutionary caste. Despite proclamations of equality, women's wages still average on 70 percent of men's in the Soviet Union today. Women still do four to seven hours of household work a day, in addition to full-time jobs.

The attitude of the Stalinist bureaucracy toward women's role in society is best epitomized by what I call the "Tale of Two Equal Rights Amendments." One is the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the American Constitution, which simply states: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." The sheer simplicity of it strikes terror into the Stalinists' hearts. They feel trapped. "Yes" or "No"? Women are equal, or we are not. The best you can say is that the CP just wishes this question would go away.

The other ERA is the amendment to the equal rights provision of the Soviet constitution. Equality has been the law in the Soviet Union since the Bolshevik revolution. This is codified in Article 35 of the Soviet constitution, which was



CP denounces Black nationalism because they fear it could spur break with Democratic Party.

revised last year in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the Russian revolution—it would be more accurate to say in “dishonor” of that revolution. What is the amendment to the equal rights provision of the Soviet constitution? The Stalinist ERA projects the “gradual shortening of the work-day for women with small children.” Leonid Brezhnev explained in *Pravda* that this new constitutional provision reflected the line of the party and the Soviet state on the need to improve the position of “women as workers, mothers, childraisers and housewives.”

Not more child-care centers, not more cafeterias and laundry facilities, not affirmative action for women in all spheres, but more time to do their housework and raise children. That's their concept of women's place in society.

This was epitomized last March 8, International Women's Day, in the salute to Soviet women issued by the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After hailing the patriotic daughters of the fatherland, the central committee message says:

“The Soviet State has adopted a whole series of measures designed . . . to see that conditions are being established that enable women to harmoniously combine fruitful work and social activity with family obligations.

“Mother! This word captures what is most cherished by every Soviet citizen. The woman is not only she who gives life to children. She is also their first educator. She instills in the new generation a high level of consciousness—love of work, sterling moral qualities and social ideals. Women, you who are mothers, we bend our knee before you. We thank you for the warmth of your hearts, for the concern that you show for strengthening the Soviet family, and for your desire to raise citizens worthy of respect.”

The revolutionary socialist vision of the role of women in society is radically different. And the working-class program to fight for women's liberation is the opposite of the CP's perspective. The independent, fighting women's movement we are helping to build will be a central component of the leadership of the coming American revolution. That revolution will lay the material foundations to wipe out the centuries-old domestic servitude of women and establish genuine equality for all. The potential and capacity of every human being will be able to flower.

What is at Stake?

The American Communist Party is only one component of an international Stalinist movement that is today in growing disarray. This disarray is rooted in the same things that produce the optimism and self-confidence of the Socialist Workers Party—the rising struggles of our class and our allies on a world scale. From southern Africa and Palestine, from Spain to



Pro-ERA march in Washington, D.C., July 9

Canada, from Poland and Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union itself, the liberation struggles of the masses are sounding the death knell for the counterrevolutionary, bureaucratic caste. This caste leeches off the workers of the world only because our class has not yet fully taken its destiny into its own hands and wiped the imperialist thieves and their collaborators from the face of this earth.

The inability of imperialism and Stalinism to guarantee their counterrevolutionary pact for peaceful coexistence—their inability to stop that great subversive, capitalism, from generating new explosions in the class struggle—means that the crisis of Stalinism will continue to deepen.

In the United States, the crisis of Stalinism began when the American CP was at the very zenith of its strength and influence. It decimated the organization within a decade. The crisis continues. And from 1945 on, the SWP has continued to gain ground on them.

Through the years of the witch-hunt, during which the SWP refused to be driven underground or silenced.

Through the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian and Polish revolts of 1956, when the SWP systematically worked with any and all (precious few though the initial forces were) who were beginning to break from Stalinism in a revolutionary direction.

Through the founding of the Young Socialist Alliance, which grew while the Stalinists were floundering through one attempt after another to build a youth organization.

Through the years of the opening of the Cuban revolution, which brought a whole new generation of radical activists to Trotskyism.

Through our participation in the mass Black civil rights struggles in the South and the solidarity actions in the North.

Through our party's understanding of and identification with Black nationalism and Chicano nationalism.

Through our orientation to the student radicalization of the 1960s.

Through our understanding of the new rise of the feminist movement.

Through an uncompromising fight to keep the anti-Vietnam War movement in the streets demanding the withdrawal of troops.

Through an offensive against the political police apparatus of the U.S. ruling class, led by the SWP's campaign against government spying, provocations, and frame-ups.

Through the ability of the Socialist Workers Party to size up the changing situation in the American labor movement and send our growing forces into the mines, factories, and mills, from Salt Lake City to Birmingham, Alabama.

Year by year, we have steadily gained on our main opponent in the American labor movement.

One thing we know for sure. The mounting forces of world revolution are on our side. We approach our competition with the CP, our fight to win the confidence, trust, and leadership of the American working class, without an ounce of sectarianism in our blood. Unlike the CP, we have no interests distinct from those of the international working class.

The fate of humanity is at stake. The hegemony of the Stalinist movement in the 1930s—the small size of the Trotskyist movement, and the success of the Stalinists in winning major influence in the American labor movement in that decade—derailed the movement for class independence and crippled the anticapitalist and antiwar forces. This paved the way for the imperialist slaughter of World War II.

Today, in the nuclear age, the stakes are higher. But the odds in our favor, in favor of the survival of humanity, are better too.

We say it without bravado but with the deepest confidence: the Socialist Workers Party is a party equal to the challenge.

For Further Reading...

The Third International After Lenin

By Leon Trotsky. What are the roots of the reformist policies of the U.S. Communist Party? How does Stalinism stand in opposition to Marxism and Leninism? How did a privileged bureaucracy begin to take power in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death? 346 pp., \$4.95 paper.

The First Ten Years of American Communism

By James P. Cannon. A vivid description of the Communist Party's revolutionary origins and the causes of its degeneration. Also includes essays on Eugene V. Debs, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the Black liberation struggle. 343 pp., \$5.45 paper.

The History of American Trotskyism

By James P. Cannon. The story of the origins of the Socialist Workers Party, which began in a struggle to uphold revolutionary socialism against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state and the American CP. 268 pp., \$4.45.

Labor's Giant Step

By Art Preis. The only complete history of the rise of the CIO, from its origins in the depression to the merger with the AFL in 1955. Contains rich material on the role of Stalinists, Social Democrats, and revolutionary socialists in the American labor movement. 538 pp., \$6.95 paper.

The Struggle for Socialism in the 'American Century'

By James P. Cannon. Contains Cannon's classic essay, 'American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism.' 480 pp., \$4.95.

Prospects for Socialism in America

By Jack Barnes, et al. Leaders of the Socialist Workers Party discuss the causes and prospects of working-class radicalization in the United States, the central role of the Black liberation struggle, and how to build a revolutionary party in the United States. 266 pp., \$2.95.

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...Black America

Continued from page ISR/4

Rights Act, which outlaws job discrimination. The court said it is "unlawful to limit access to jobs on the basis of race."

This case is now headed toward the Supreme Court. It is the next big test case for affirmative action.

The circuit court decision on *Weber* is an assault on the right of unions to negotiate contracts, since the judge ruled that programs like that at Kaiser can only be established by court order. If this ruling is upheld, it would virtually prohibit unions from championing the rights of their members by negotiating such affirmative-action provisions in contracts.

Like the University of California in the *Bakke* case, Kaiser—while formally the defendant—is really on the same side as *Weber*. Kaiser management denied it ever discriminated against Blacks at Gramercy. The Steelworkers union—also a defendant—is officially on the right side in this case.

This is a case where opposition to affirmative action by one racist white will obviously hurt all workers—Black and white—by ending a job upgrading program. This is also a clear case where racism has led to a direct threat against the union and its power.

For socialists, the fight to defend affirmative action is decisive. It's what the struggle for Black and women's equality is all about. The fight for affirmative action and its implementation will strengthen the unity and fighting capacity of our entire class and weaken the enemy—the ruling rich.

The capitalists fear affirmative-action measures of any sort. The consistent implementation of affirmative-action quotas for Blacks in higher education and in industry would mean abolishing the segregation of Blacks within the work force.

The ruling class cannot allow equality on the job, because this would undercut their system of class exploitation. It would mean giving up the use of racism to divide working people and giving up the use of Blacks as a reserve army of cheap labor.

The big gap between the wages paid to Blacks and whites is the result solely of racist discrimination. On top of that, Blacks are concentrated not only in the lowest-paid jobs, but in industries and departments within industries that have the most unhealthy and unsafe working conditions.

Ending segregation of the work force would mean cutting into the capitalists' profits. Blacks could no longer be consigned to the lowest-paid jobs—where their wages help drag down the wages of all workers. It would mean accelerating demands for a general raise in pay—in those departments that are now predominantly Black, and rapidly throughout industry as a whole. It would give impetus to demands for improved health and safety.

Most importantly, ending the segregation of the work force along race lines would deprive the capitalists of a powerful weapon against the working class—their ability to divide and conquer.

Without the ability to single out sections of the work force to receive the brunt of their blows, they wouldn't be able to get away with their assaults. Attacks on working people—such as the mass layoffs during the recent depression—



Malcolm X told Black people, 'You put the Democrats first, they put you last.'

would meet a united, and therefore more powerful, response.

In this period of economic crisis, the rulers are out to deepen the stratification of the work force. They want to shore up the segregation of the Black ghettos. They want to strengthen racism as an ideology.

That's what the *Bakke* decision and *Weber* case are all about. That's why the fight to halt these assaults on affirmative action is crucially important to the entire working class. And that's why we in the Socialist Workers Party are going to be in the front lines of the battle to defend affirmative action.

New Mood

Declining confidence in the Carter administration is fueling anger and dissatisfaction in Black communities across the country.

A public-opinion poll at the beginning of this year on the Carter administration shows this too. Though Carter won the votes of the overwhelming majority of Black voters in 1976, his credibility in the Black community is rapidly fading.

The major issue of concern was the economy. Fully 50 percent of those polled by the *New York Times* and CBS said they considered themselves worse off today than the year before. Among whites, 33 percent disapproved of Carter's handling of the economy; among Blacks 46 percent expressed disapproval.

Asked if Carter could solve the problem of inflation, 81 percent of Blacks said he couldn't. Did they think he would balance the budget by 1981? Seventy-four percent thought he wouldn't. Could Carter reduce unemployment to any real degree? Fifty-eight percent said no.

How about restoring trust and confidence in the government? Only 43 percent of Blacks thought Carter could, down from 71 percent a year ago.

More and more Blacks across the country are drawing the conclusion that the Carter administration doesn't give a damn about their well-being.

This spring an impressive series of actions by Blacks and their supporters showed how deep this discontent goes. From mid-March to the end of April about 40,000 Blacks took to the streets in protests around South Africa, the Wilmington Ten, jobs, and the *Bakke* decision—not to mention local struggles against police terror and other injustices during and after this period.

The slogan chanted by some of the Black youth who marched in these protests typified the new mood: "We're all fired up—can't stand no more!"

Several features were common to nearly all these actions.

First was the involvement in the organization, leadership, and composition of these actions of a new generation of young Black workers and students. The role of women was particularly striking.

This is a generation that knows little or nothing about the Jim Crow system of legally imposed segregation that existed in the South up until the early 1960s and had many reflections in the North as well.

For them, the offensive against the gains won in the 1950s and 1960s is not just an attempt to turn the clock back. It's a wholesale assault on *rights* they had always assumed were theirs.

Union Participation

Another significant feature was the increasing involvement of forces from the trade-union movement.

The defense of the Wilmington Ten was endorsed by the recent convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

And in Washington, D.C., on April 15, Black and Puerto Rican construction workers from the



April 15, 1978, march against 'Bakke' decision in Washington, D.C.

Militant/Lou Howort

Bronx marched in support of affirmative action. Contingents from the United Steelworkers, Furniture Workers, Fur and Leather Workers, railroad workers, and other unions were prominent in the demonstration.

A significant development occurred in the fight against unemployment as well, when elements within the United Auto Workers and other unions organized the All Unions' Shorter Work Week Conference this spring.

Union members and leaders have joined in protests against U.S. support to the apartheid regime in South Africa. A number of international unions—especially those with large Black memberships—have withdrawn pension funds from banks making loans to South Africa. Among them are the United Auto Workers; the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union; and the Furriers Joint Council.

A public meeting on South Africa was sponsored recently by Steelworkers Local 65 in Chicago, and a conference on South Africa of 200 trade unionists—most of them young, white industrial workers—was held in the San Francisco Bay Area.

While these are just beginnings, they justify the prediction that any new war or military adventure by imperialism in Africa will immediately face resistance from the American labor movement.

Africa and World Politics

With the fall of Portuguese colonialism in 1974 and the revolution in Ethiopia, a new period of revolutionary upsurge opened on the African continent. Since that time, all of the white minority regimes in southern Africa have come under increasing attack by the insurgent Black masses.

This new rise in the revolution in Black Africa poses a grave threat to the imperialists. They learned from the Cuban revolution that such struggles for national liberation have a tendency to grow over into socialist revolutions. Even if they stop short of that, victories for these nationalist movements would be grave blows to imperialism.

In trying to halt this upsurge and preserve imperialist investments, the Carter administration threatens to embroil American working people in a war in Africa. U.S. imperialism's drive to subjugate the peoples of southern Africa poses the danger of an assault on revolutionary Cuba, which has aided the African liberation struggle, or a confrontation with the Soviet Union. And that raises the possibility of a nuclear holocaust.

This raises the stakes for working people around the world.

If Washington attempted a military intervention in Africa, it would confront opposition from the 30 million Afro-Americans who live in the United States—the largest group of Africans living outside Africa. They have tremendous social and political weight, and their identification with the African freedom struggle makes them a powerful force for the rulers to contend with.

There is also deep antiwar sentiment among the American working people as a whole.

Defend African Revolution

The revelations about Washington's extensive aid to the South African invasion of Angola, the upsurge of the Black masses in southern Africa, and the U.S. government's probing for an opening to intervene—all these fuel sentiments of solidarity in this country with the Black freedom fighters. It deepens the determination of American working people that there will be no new Vietnam in Africa!

The growing movement of solidarity with the struggle in southern Africa not only helps tie the hands of U.S. imperialism in Africa. It also gives encouragement to the freedom fighters in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

With this in mind, members of the Socialist Workers Party are stepping up activity in defense of the African revolution this fall. The SWP will help build the speaking tour of Drake Koka, general secretary of the Black Allied Workers Union of South Africa and an outspoken fighter against apartheid. Union locals across the country, as well as Black community organizations and student groups, are showing an interest in hearing Black South African unionists like Koka.

Socialists will also devote their energies to building the conferences being held this fall on South Africa. One is called for November 17-19 at



Militant/Baxter Smith

Militant actions by Black workers in the unions will play important role in building a class-struggle left wing in labor movement.

New York University in New York City; another, initiated by South African-born poet Dennis Brutus, will be held October 20-22 in the Chicago area; and a third conference will be held at Duke University in North Carolina November 11-12.

Impact of Growing Protests

Developments in other social and political struggles are affecting the thinking and actions of Black people.

The July 9 march in Washington, D.C., for the Equal Rights Amendment is the best example. Blacks—who are the most pro-ERA segment of the population—responded to this action with enthusiasm.

Watching the contingents form and pass by the march staging point, you couldn't help but notice the number of Black women in the union contingents as they stepped out.

First came the American Federation of Government Employees and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. Their contingents were about 20 to 30 percent Black. Then came the contingents of steelworkers, and the three auto workers contingents from the Detroit area and Toledo, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard contingent marching in their hard hats. These were about 50 to 60 percent Black. New York City's District 65 and Hospital Workers Local 1199 contingents, they were mostly Black and Latino.

This turnout reflected a rise of feminist consciousness among Black women. And the turnout of Black women industrial unionists—probably the largest group of Black women on the march—indicates the music of the future.

This new thinking was also reflected at the recent convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, where the women delegates fought for and won endorsement of the July 9 march.

The rise in the antinuclear movement has also left its mark upon Blacks. Especially given Carter's threats against Africa, Blacks will more and more see the links between nuclear power and the threat of nuclear war. As that happens, and as more information about the dangers of nuclear power gets out, Black involvement in the

antinuke movement will grow.

Class-struggle moods are growing among industrial workers. And they'll have an important impact on the developing resistance among Blacks to the rulers' offensive. Especially important is the example set by members of the United Mine Workers union in their 110-day confrontation with the coal barons and the Carter administration.

Along with the rest of the working class, Blacks sensed that a defeat for the miners would be a defeat for all working people. And they knew that the opposite was also true: If the miners won, it would be a victory for all working people.

As the radicalization among industrial workers—Black and white—deepens, the mood of resistance among Blacks that we saw this spring will become more intense. This resistance will be strengthened by a new layer of Black workers with combat experience gained in union battles.

Crown Heights

We had a glimpse of things to come in the fight against cop terror in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn this summer.

The racist brutality of Brooklyn cops is infamous. Over the past few years they have murdered many Blacks in cold blood, including children, and gone scot-free. Although the Black community protested each killing, there was an unprecedented outpouring of anger when dozens of cops strangled Black civic leader Arthur Miller to death June 14. This brutal murder was carried out with racist arrogance on a crowded street in broad daylight.

For a month, the Crown Heights Black community mobilized time and time again in protest. On July 16 more than 5,000 Blacks marched through Crown Heights chanting, "Jail the cops, jail the killers! Justice for Arthur Miller!"

Black women played an important role in getting the whole Crown Heights community moving against the racist killer cops who infest their neighborhood. A large number of new activists came to the fore. They began to get a sense of their potential power and of the need to democratically decide what to do next in the fight against cop terror.

And we saw how a branch of the Socialist Workers Party threw itself into the struggle, put forward our proposals on how to fight back, and won respect as part of the leadership of the struggle.

There are going to be more "Crown Heights." As these struggles unfold, more and more Black activists are going to be willing to listen to socialist ideas and proposals.

The task confronting the Black movement today is to organize the developing resistance to Black oppression into a political force with real power.

If that is done, the Black community can combine its strength with others fighting capitalist injustice—especially the radicalizing industrial workers—in order to beat back the capitalist assault.

The Problem of Leadership

If this has not yet been accomplished, the fault certainly does not lie in a lack of fighting spirit among Black people. Nor are the many setbacks Blacks have been dealt due solely to the driving force of the capitalist offensive.

The biggest roadblock within the Black movement to an effective defense of Black rights is the assorted array of misleaders who control politics in the Black community today. They range from the heads of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to the Black elected officials.

They control the community through the two-party system—especially the Democratic Party. They control it through their misdirection of the Black civil rights organizations. They control it through the bureaucracy that sits atop the trade-union movement.

This crisis of leadership within the Black movement makes itself felt at every turn—restraining and retarding the resistance of the Black masses, and channeling the political energies of Blacks into fruitless support for the Democratic Party.

Look at the response of these misleaders to the racist Bakke decision. With few exceptions, the Black elected officials, Black and white union officials, and civil rights leaders did nothing to mount a campaign to counter the racist, "reverse discrimination" myth. Nor did they make the slightest effort to mobilize the power of Blacks

Continued on next page

Speeches for Socialism

By James P. Cannon. New York. Pathfinder Press. 1971. 462 pp.

Reading this collection of speeches by James P. Cannon, covering more than four decades of American labor history, is both an effective and enjoyable way to learn many of the basic ideas of socialism. It provides an overview of where the socialist movement came from, how socialism can be achieved, and what a socialist society will be like.

As a traveling organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World, Cannon learned the art of revolutionary oratory by addressing groups of workers from soap boxes on street corners. An agitator and educator in the tradition of Eugene V. Debs, Cannon became an outstanding socialist speaker.

This collection provides ample testimony to his talents. The language is simple and clear, yet colorful and humorous. A striking quality of Cannon's speeches—typical of the best revolutionary speakers, from Trotsky to Malcolm X—is the complete absence of demagoguery. The stress is on conveying the truth in convincing ways rather than on winning audience approval.

Speeches for Socialism provides an inspiring picture of a working-class fighter who held on to his principles and his confidence in the socialist future of humanity in the midst of events—such as the rise of Stalinism, World War II, and the capitalist witch-hunt and prosperity that followed—that broke many other spirits.

Cannon did more than hold firm. He showed through his speeches and writings that these events could be explained only from the standpoint of revolutionary socialism and that these very events confirmed the fundamental correctness of the socialist perspectives.

In "The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution," he cogently explained the rise of Stalinism, why the Soviet Union remains a workers state that should be defended against imperialist attack, and why the goals the Russian Bolsheviks fought for in 1917 remain valid.

In the midst of World War II,

'Speeches for Socialism' Pathfinder's Choice for October



JAMES P. CANNON

Cannon gave a radio speech explaining the imperialist nature of the conflict between the United States and the Axis powers. This talk, "How to Fight Imperialist War," describes how the plague of war can be ended.

In "Sixty Years of American Radicalism," a speech given in 1959, he rebutted those who argued that American workers would never support socialism. He detailed from a Marxist standpoint the reasons for the failure of the Communist and Socialist parties and the reasons for the delay in the working-class radicalization. He concluded with the prediction that the new generation would see expanding opportunities for socialism in the United States.

Cannon's vision of the socialist future contributed to the firmness with which he defended his principles. This vision is effectively presented in "What Socialist America Will Look Like."

The importance of labor solidarity against attacks on civil liberties is a theme that runs through several of these talks. In stressing this, Cannon applied a lesson he learned in the IWW and through

his activity as the head of the International Labor Defense in the 1920s: "An injury to one is an injury to all."

In "The Trial of the Stalinist Leaders" (1949), Cannon explained why socialists must defend leaders of the Communist Party who were being framed-up under the Smith Act even though the CP had supported the Roosevelt administration's use of the Smith Act to jail Cannon and other leaders of the SWP during World War II.

"If the Stalinists are convicted . . ." Cannon said, "the same law

can be invoked against other political organizations, against college professors, and even preachers who happen to have opinions contrary to those of the ruling powers and the courage to express them."

Internationalism permeated Cannon's outlook. Many of his speeches (particularly "The End of the Comintern and the Prospects of Labor Internationalism") can and should be used as texts on the basic concepts of internationalism.

Cannon's confidence in the prospects for the American revolution, in the revolutionary future and capacities of the American workers, and his stress on the decisive importance of the American revolution for the victory of world socialism were closely intertwined with his internationalism. Cannon's 1946 speech to the twelfth national convention of the Socialist Workers Party, "The Coming American Revolution," can be rewardingly studied from this angle.

Pointing out that objective circumstances will create the opportunity for a socialist victory in America, Cannon concluded with a statement that sums up the goal of his life work:

"The rest is our part. Our part is to build up this party which believes in the unlimited power and resources of the American workers, and believes no less in its own capacity to organize and lead them to storm and victory."

—Helen Meyers and
Fred Feldman

25% Discount Offer

Speeches for Socialism is available at a special discount price of \$4.10. The regular price is \$5.45. Order from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014. Send check or money order, or return this coupon to one of the socialist bookstores listed on page 31. Offer expires November 30, 1978.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

...Black America

Continued from previous page

and other working people to reverse the ruling—putting their weight behind the April 15 march, for example.

Almost all these misleaders downplayed the seriousness of the ruling.

Look at their proposals for solving the crisis of unemployment. Neither the labor bureaucracy nor the major Black organizations are putting forward a fighting strategy to win jobs. Instead, they rely on lobbying Congress for legislation like the phony Humphrey-Hawkins bill, which wouldn't create even one job.

The rulers have such contempt for this show of weakness that they won't even throw them this bare bone.

Look at their proposals for who should govern this society. For the past forty years, the misleaders of the labor movement and the Black movement have been in the hip pocket of the Democrats.

If the past ten years have shown anything, it's that the capitalists are not about to voluntarily give up the racist oppression that's so essential to the functioning of their system. There is no

way out for Blacks within the capitalist two-party system—no way out under the rule of the rich who profit from Black oppression.

Since the toppling of Jim Crow, the Black movement has confronted the racist oppression and segregation more deeply rooted in the capitalist system itself. All the demands of the Black movement imply a thoroughgoing democratization of the economy, a fundamental change in decision making about what is to be produced and on how the socially created wealth of society is to be distributed.

Increasingly the question is posed of the need for a fundamental reorganization of society. This in turn poses the question of a fundamental change in government—a change in which class rules.

The key to the Black movement's ability to beat back the attacks of a racist and profit-hungry ruling class is overcoming the obstacle represented by the present leadership. A new leadership for the Black movement will come from the new generation of working-class fighters now making its appearance—as well as leaders for the fight to transform the union movement into a fighting ally of Blacks.

The radicalization of industrial workers is vitally important to the Black struggle. That is because an indispensable step toward Black liberation lies in taking the government out of the hands of the capitalist class—which has deep

material interest in *oppressing* Blacks. We need a government of a class that has a material interest in *liberating* Blacks—the working class.

Without keeping that goal in mind and without a clear understanding of how to get there, it is impossible to effectively defend and extend the past gains of the Black struggle, let alone make new conquests.

The only way to be a *consistent* fighter for Black liberation is to be a revolutionary socialist collaborating with other revolutionary socialists in a party dedicated to the replacement of the capitalist government with a workers government.

The Socialist Workers Party will be fighting alongside the new generation of Black liberation fighters in the factories and the labor movement for union democracy; against racist discrimination on the job and for affirmative action; in defense of the Wilmington Ten and other Black victims of injustice; and in defense of the African revolution.

We are going to be with these Black workers as they battle in the Black community against cop terror; for school desegregation; and against all forms of racist oppression.

And we are going to win the best of this new generation of rebels to the revolutionary socialist program and to the only party that will assure their victory—the Socialist Workers Party.

Washington fears social revolution

Somoza butchers thousands in Nicaragua

By Fred Murphy

Using weapons supplied by Washington, the U.S.-trained troops of the Nicaraguan National Guard have succeeded in regaining control over the cities where popular uprisings occurred during the second week of September.

Terror and mass destruction have been the principal methods of the National Guard. As *Newsweek* magazine put it, "President Anastasio Somoza . . . seemed ready to destroy his country in order to save it—for himself."

Estelí, a town of 25,000 some eighty miles north of Managua, was the last to fall and the hardest hit. "The whole town is a cemetery," a Red Cross worker said after the National Guard fought their way into Estelí on September 21. "The guardsmen are killing like dogs," said another.

"Execute all the subversives" was the order given over radio September 18 from the National Guard's headquarters in Managua. The order was enthusiastically carried out. *Washington Post* correspondent Karen DeYoung reported from León on September 20:

At least 14 young men were killed last Friday afternoon [September 15—five days after León fell] on a two-block stretch of Santiago Arguello Avenue here. All of them, according to family members and neighbors, were executed by submachine guns at point-blank range by the Nicaraguan National Guard and all of them begged for mercy, some on their knees. . . .

For the National Guard, which ostensibly believes it is saving the country from an imminent guerrilla-led communist threat, every Nicaraguan youth has become a potential terrorist, and every closed door a potential hideout. . . .

Estimates of the dead from the guard's aerial bombing and strafing, shelling by heavy artillery, and cold-blooded murder range from 1,500 to 5,000, according to the Red Cross and opposition sources. Thousands more have been wounded.

In each city the National Guard has retaken, large numbers of buildings and homes have been destroyed or burned. Thousands of refugees have fled into Honduras or Costa Rica.

If dictator Somoza has managed to regain military control of Nicaragua through brute force and terror, the situation his National Guard has created can only bring further hatred for his rule among the masses. In addition to the death, destruction, and



Somoza indicted

Militant/Lou Howort

New York Nicaraguans protest

By Doug Cooper

NEW YORK—Nicaragua solidarity demonstrations are continuing here. In the largest so far, 300 people protested Somoza's repression and U.S. support to his regime.

The action, held at the United Nations September 25, was sponsored by the Association for Human Rights in Nicaragua of New York and New Jersey and the Committee of United Central Americans.

Two unions were represented, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers and the Joint Board of the

Furriers union.

Other participating groups included the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA), Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Non-Intervention in Chile, and Workers World Party.

A further protest was slated for September 27, when Somoza's foreign minister was scheduled to address the UN. That action is sponsored by the Sandinista Movement in New York.

There have also been solidarity

demonstrations in Latin America.

In Santiago, Chile, law students defied the junta September 5 and 6 to register their support for the Nicaraguan rebellion.

On September 20, in Honduras, hundreds of students and workers marched in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, demanding that their military regime stay out of the Nicaraguan conflict.

And in Mexico City, in early September, 10,000 people marched in solidarity with Nicaragua.

Roots of rebellion

A dispatch from Nicaragua to the September 19 'Wall Street Journal' offers an insight into what is sparking the fight to topple the Somoza dictatorship and on the developing social consciousness of the combatants.

The following is an extract.

* * *

A recent walk through a barrio in the colonial city of León—before it erupted into full-scale guerrilla warfare—reveals a degree of poverty and desperation that is startling, even by Latin American standards.

Inside a tumbledown, two-room hut, an old grandmother stands over a stone fireplace fueled by straw, frying plaintain and scraps of fat for her family of 17. One baby sleeps in a hammock fashioned from a feed sack; another lies curled up in a pile of rubble with a dog. Outside, a naked infant—covered in ringworm—grips its distended belly and cries. Other naked children splash and drink from a fetid pool of

water by the roadside. Rail-thin pigs share the same water. And down the road, a young father carefully tends a straw pigeon trap, his best means of putting meat onto the table.

The days of passive isolation appear over for this barrio. "Don't think we don't know we're poor," the pigeon trapper says. "This is why I am a revolutionary." The young men of this barrio spend their days at the university in town, where the walls are plastered with posters of their heroes: Cuban revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and Augusto Cesar Sandino, the nationalist hero of Nicaragua, believed murdered by Gen. Somoza's father.

By night, they build barricades, toss homemade bombs, steal guns and removes street stones from the intersections to impede passage of Gen. Somoza's feared National Guard trucks. They hold political meetings and they listen to short-wave radios for words of encouragement from Radio Havana. They are preparing for war; it arrives a few nights later, and will certainly return again and again.

workers are either on strike or else terrorized or driven out of their homes in the slum areas of the northern cities by the National Guard.

There has been a "massive flight" of capital, according to central bank president Roberto Incer. Wealthy Nicaraguans have sent \$40 million out of the country in the past three months, and \$235 million in dollar deposits was withdrawn from banks prior to the imposition of exchange controls. This amounts to the virtual entirety of private dollar holdings in the country.

Teachers went unpaid for several months, only to have their August checks from the government bounce. A similar prospect faces other public employees.

While large numbers of the youth who joined with the Sandinistas to fight the National Guard in the cities have been massacred, thousands more have fled to the countryside to swell the ranks of the guerrillas. In addition, the guard's brutality has created still more sympathy for the Sandinistas among the populace.

The potential remains for further spontaneous uprisings, such as the one that occurred September 16 in Corinto, Nicaragua's principal Pacific port. Three thousand persons, unarmed, dispersed a small contingent of guardsmen and forced open the doors to six big food warehouses and emptied them of their contents. Somoza sent naval forces under the command of his half-brother, José, to restore order and guard the many merchant ships standing in the port.

Washington has grown increasingly

concerned about the situation in Nicaragua, despite Somoza's "victories" on the military level. The most ominous sign of this was the appearance of one or more U.S. warships off Nicaragua's Pacific coast on September 22. A Pentagon spokesman acknowledged they were there—"to monitor radio communications."

The sending of the naval vessels coincided with a meeting of the Organization of American States in Washington September 21-23. The OAS provided the cover for the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965; a similar role for it at this time should not be ruled out.

But the U.S. imperialists and their Latin American allies seem to be split rather sharply over how best to stave off a popular revolution in Nicaragua: keep Somoza in power at all costs, or force him to resign. This was reflected in the failure of the OAS gathering to arrive at any clear position.

Divisions over how best to contain the upsurge in Nicaragua are also evident in the U.S. Congress. On September 22 the Senate voted to cut off all remaining economic aid to Nicaragua, at the urging of Senator Frank Church of Idaho and other liberal Democrats. Church called on the administration to disavow Somoza and press for "a moderate government which respects human rights and free enterprise."

"The longer we delay, the greater the chance that the revolution will fall into the hands of the extremists," Church said.

From Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

Cops harass defense effort for Miami Black

By Lee Smith

MIAMI—As support for Leo Harris's fight against political frame-up grows, Miami cops are attempting to undercut endorsement of the Leo Harris Defense Committee.

The committee was formed after Harris's arrest during a Haitian anti-racist demonstration in August. A cop drove a car into Harris. Claiming they were taking Harris to the hospital, the police instead booked him on charges of disorderly conduct and criminal mischief.

Since then, many prominent figures in the Miami area have joined in demanding that the trumped-up charges be dropped. Cops have visited several of the defense committee's endorsers, unsuccessfully trying to influence them to withdraw their support for Harris, who is a longtime Black activist and a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Cops have asked endorsers, "Are you a member of the Socialist Workers Party?" and told them, "We just don't want to see you get used by the SWP."

Cops showed at least one endorser a blurry photograph of several young Blacks, one of whom is holding a rifle. Cops allege that the photo, taken in 1968, shows the founders of the Black Afro Militant Movement (BAMM), a

Black liberation group in Florida in the late 1960s. Cops claim Harris is the man holding the rifle.

In fact, Harris did not live in Florida when the photo is alleged to have been taken and never belonged to BAMM.

But activists in BAMM were themselves the victims of police disruption and frame-up. Less than a year after the group's formation in 1969, fourteen of its members were arrested in a Cointelpro-type operation carried out by FBI provocateurs who had infiltrated BAMM.

Al Featherston, one of the leaders of BAMM, spent five and a half years in prison as a result. He is now an endorser of the Leo Harris Defense Committee.

Featherston told the *Militant* he became suspicious when one man joined BAMM and offered to provide guns, explosives, and rifle training. The man later turned out to be an FBI plant. Featherston and others were arrested for FBI-inspired illegal actions they knew nothing about.

At their subsequent trial on conspiracy charges, the main evidence against the Black activists was the testimony of FBI agents and their written reports.

Despite police efforts, the list of endorsers of the Leo Harris Defense

**You
can
help!**

Messages demanding that the charges be dropped against Leo Harris should be sent to Dade County State Attorney Janet Reno, 1351 N.W. Twelfth Street, Miami, Florida 33135.

Copies of protest messages, as well as urgently needed contributions, should be sent to the Leo Harris Defense Committee, P.O. Box 380013, Miami, Florida 33138

Committee continues to grow.

Among those backing the defense committee are Gwendolyn Cherry, Florida State Representative; José Molina, a Puerto Rican community leader and head of the All People's Neighborhood Organization; and Eufaula Frazier, vice-president of the Southern Region, National Tenants Rights Organization.

The committee also received the endorsement of the Miami Branch of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) and the Dade County Coalition

for Human Rights.

A letter sent to State Attorney Janet Reno September 19 by William Perry, Jr., president of the Greater Miami Branch of the NAACP, said: "We urge you not to prosecute Mr. Harris, but to conduct an investigation into the incidents which led up to his unlawful arrest."

Harris's trial, originally set for September 22, has been continued, but a new date has not yet been set.

Lou Beller, Harris's attorney, has filed a motion for dismissal.

Texas RUP discusses elections, cop terror

By Miguel Pendás

LUBBOCK, Tex.—The Texas Raza Unida Party held a statewide convention here September 9-10. The seventy-five RUP activists discussed the *partido's* fall election campaigns and many problems facing Chicanos in Texas and throughout the Southwest.

One resolution focused on the escalating police terror against Chicanos in Texas. It condemned Carter's "human rights" hypocrisy, pointed to his failure to urge federal prosecution of killer cops who got off lightly in racist state courts.

In light of this inaction, the conference urged the formation of a statewide body "comprised of leaders of statewide organizations such as Raza Unida Party, GI Forum and LULAC [League of United Latin American Citizens] . . . that will look into cases of mistreatment of citizens who are in custody of police officials."

Another resolution stated that the RUP "supports unconditional amnesty for all Latinos, regardless if they are here legally or not. This amnesty is to include equal access to all social services, equal protection under the law, and the right to vote."

The platform adopted two years ago had called for a one-year residency requirement before granting *mexicano* full rights.

In his speech to the convention, RUP leader José Angel Gutiérrez of Crystal City pointed to the success of last fall's

RUP-initiated National Chicano/Latino Conference on Immigration in San Antonio. He noted the "help of the Socialist Workers Party and CASA."

Gutiérrez said that the coalition around the conference included "everyone from left to right" in the Chicano movement—socialists, GI Forum, LULAC, and others. This unity, he said, was a key factor in dealing a setback to Carter's racist deportation plan.

The conference reaffirmed the RUP's

support to the Texas Farm Workers Union. It called on the state to make bilingual-bicultural education a "top priority." And it demanded an end to job discrimination against Chicanos and blasted the racist *Bakke* decision.

The conference also called on Carter to immediately pardon Ramsey Muñiz, an RUP leader sentenced to a long prison term on marijuana charges.

Delegates called for lifting the U.S. blockade against Cuba. José Angel Gutiérrez said that he had learned

from his trip to Cuba several years ago that the society there offers "some real examples of how to solve our problems."

The conference demanded that the University of Texas divest its holdings in companies doing business in South Africa.

Other resolutions denounced the bloody repression of mass demonstrations by the shah of Iran; condemned the Camp David talks and offered support to the Palestinians in the "liberation of their homeland"; and solidarized with the mass popular uprising against the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua.

Several RUP candidates addressed the convention, including gubernatorial nominee Mario Compeán and Luis Diaz de León, candidate for U.S. Senate. Compeán said that there are about thirteen RUP candidates running in the November 7 elections, mostly for local office.

José Angel Gutiérrez proposed that the *partido* call a national RUP convention for 1979 to take up the issue of the presidential election.

Other speakers included Juan José Peña, who brought greetings from the New Mexico RUP, and Armando Gutiérrez of the Chicano Legal Defense Fund.

María Elena Martínez was unanimously reelected chairperson of the Texas RUP. Ramón Vázquez was elected vice-chairperson.



Raza Unida Party gubernatorial candidate Mario Compeán addresses state convention.

Study exposes lies about immigrant workers

By Mark Schneider

SAN ANTONIO—A new study confirms that Mexican immigrant workers are superexploited, heavily taxed, and receive little or no social services in return for their labor.

The study was released by the Texas State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. It is based on interviews with 600 immigrant workers in Texas.

The study found that:

- In the Rio Grande town of McAllen, 72.8 percent of those surveyed earned less than \$2.50 an hour.
- In El Paso, the average hourly wage was between \$2.29 and \$2.90.
- San Antonio immigrant workers

averaged \$2.66 an hour.

- No one surveyed received Social Security benefits.

As the summary to one part of the study concluded: "The undocumented alien is a source of cheap manual labor for Texas business."

So much for the myth that "illegal aliens" are forcing American-born workers out of high-paying jobs.

During a three-day hearing conducted by the civil rights committee, the Carter administration's deportation plan came under heavy attack from a panel of Chicano community representatives.

Jorge Zaragoza, an organizer for the Texas Farm Workers union, repudiated

the testimony of a grower who claimed that onion pickers earn seventy-five dollars a day. He then blasted Immigration and Naturalization Service Director Leonel Castillo. "We would like to know," Zaragoza said, "if Castillo had been INS director two generations ago, would he have deported his own grandfather?"

Raza Unida Party leader José Angel Gutiérrez also testified.

He released documents from his own FBI files, which refer to an "Operation Cactus," an FBI disruption program dating from the 1960s. The documents show collusion between the INS and the FBI on both sides of the border.

Asked if the INS has improved since

Castillo took over, Gutiérrez replied, "No, if anything, there has been a more aggressive campaign to make the roundup of undocumented people more efficient."

During the final hours of testimony from the public, Agnes Chapa, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Texas attorney general, told the committee about the case of Héctor Marroquín, the undocumented worker now fighting for political asylum in the United States.

One courageous woman, testifying through a friend, announced that she had no papers. She told of the abuse she received at the hands of the INS, including rape, and the psychological harassment of herself and her child.

Companies' profits come first

W. Va. state board rules against mine safety

By Tom Moriarty

FAIRMONT, W.Va.—After a two-month stall, State Director of Mines Walter Miller has announced new mine safety regulations that violate the law and endanger coal miners' lives. The regulations also flout a recent state supreme court ruling.

Miller is head of the State Coal Mine Health and Safety Board. Considering his past performance, it was no surprise that he sided with industry in the safety dispute, thus swinging the board's vote to the coal operators' side.

The controversy stems from a lawsuit filed by Danny Walls, president of UMWA Local 8217 in Logan County, West Virginia. Walls charged that regulations governing the dangerous practice of moving heavy equipment underground were laxly enforced.

The state supreme court agreed last July and unanimously ordered the safety board to devise new, stiffer rules.

Miller's proposed rules, however, would allow direct-current-powered machinery to be moved while miners are working on the same ventilating split of air inside the mine.

The board consists of Miller, three industry representatives, and three representatives of the United Mine Workers. One of the UMWA members, Richard Cooper, declared that Miller's regulations are "contrary to the law, contrary to the state supreme court and advice of the attorney general."

Equipment is generally moved by loading it onto a flatcar and pulling it along tracks with an electrically powered locomotive. The chief hazard is the danger of a fire sparked by contact with the overhead trolley wire.

Smoke and toxic gasses resulting from any fire on the tracks are inevitably



LNS/Jeanne Rasmussen

carried into the mine through its ventilation system. According to the *UMW Journal*, "A small amount of the toxic calbe smoke can suffocate an entire mine section."

Nine miners were killed by suffocation in such a fire during an equipment move at Consolidation Coal's No. 2 Mine in Blacksville in 1972. The current state law was born of that disaster.

The movement of the equipment could be made on weekends or at the beginning of a shift before workers enter the mine. But that might cut into production, the mineowners say.

The West Virginia Coal Association hysterically predicted major cuts in coal production, massive layoffs, and mine closings. State representatives and senators of both the Democratic and Republican parties joined the chorus.

But these dire predictions failed to

stampede miners into opposing the safety rules.

According to the *Morgantown Morning Reporter*, UMWA President Arnold Miller scoffed at industry reports of a 20 percent decline in production. He challenged West Virginia Coal Association President Edwin Wiles to "show me where the 20 percent is."

Unfortunately, there has been no organized discussion on the issue at UMWA meetings yet. Most miners are forced to follow the controversy in local newspapers.

Ignoring or defying safety regulations will mean more injuries and deaths for coal miners. But it means higher productivity and profit for the companies.

The coal operators know that if a union mine is no safer than a nonunion mine, if a union miner has no more control over working conditions than a nonunion miner, then the union is less attractive to the unorganized.

Socialist blasts ruling

MORGANTOWN, W.Va.—Socialist Workers Party senatorial candidate Rosalinda Flint has blasted the decision of the State Coal Mine Health and Safety Board as a "serious attack on miners' right to safety on the job." In a statement released to the news media, Flint said that for miners throughout the state, the rules on moving heavy equipment underground



FLINT

is "a life and death question."

As for the claim that safety regulations would cut down on production, Flint said, "The fact of the matter is that the coal bosses are simply opposed to all rules and regulations that limit their ability to reap super profits off the backs of miners."

The socialist candidate called for "strong safety regulations that miners have the power to enforce. Not the coal operators nor the coal board should have the right to a final say over mine safety rules," Flint declared.

That is central to the companies' attack on the UMWA. And it is central to the defense and strengthening of our union.

This latest attack in West Virginia should be met with a united response from coal miners declaring, "Safety before profits!"

MIT: Iranian students protest Maoist violence

By Shelley Kramer

Iranian students and their supporters at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have called an October 8 meeting to defend free speech and protest political violence on campus.

The October 8 meeting is in response to the physical disruption of a September 17 public meeting at MIT sponsored by *Payam Daneshjoo*, a Persian-language magazine published by Iranian students opposed to the shah's bloody dictatorship.

Fifteen people came to the meeting to discuss "Iran: the Struggle for Democracy." But as the first speaker began, a gang of thirty people led by Iranian Maoists burst in. They drowned out the speaker with chants and screams.

The attackers charged that supporters of both *Payam Daneshjoo* and the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI) are CIA and SAVAK (Iranian secret police) agents. They tore up and confiscated the literature in the room and threw chairs at meeting participants. One student attending the meeting was assaulted and his lip cut open.

The thugs then posted guards at the doors and windows and forced their captive audience to listen—without the right to respond—to two and a half hours of their tirades.

The disruption was carried out by members of three different factions of the Iranian Student Association. The prime instigators belong to the Maoist ISA-Reunification of the Student

Movement faction, which has worked closely with the U.S. Revolutionary Communist Party in the past.

This same ISA faction has attacked CAIFI-sponsored meetings on campuses in Houston, Portland, Seattle, and Boston. At the MIT meeting they threatened to escalate their violence.

"These attacks are politically desperate acts," Firouz Farzinpour, who attended the meeting, told the *Militant*. "The Maoists have no idea how to aid the mass movement in Iran. So they try to violently assert their sole leadership. And with the growing convergence between China and the shah—symbolized by Hua Kuo Feng's recent trip to Iran—they are thrown into even greater crisis."

But supporters of *Payam Daneshjoo* will not be silenced by such thuggery—which only helps the shah discredit the opposition movement. Students at MIT have launched a campaign to defend their rights.

"At the time when mass opposition to the shah has surfaced in Iran, what is needed in the United States is the maximum unity of all those who support the struggle for democratic rights in Iran," reads a statement circulating at MIT.

"All opponents of the shah must find ways to work together to build support for the Iranian people's struggle for freedom. And all groups opposed to the shah must have the right to explain their views in a free and open manner."

San Diego socialists attacked by goon squad

By Jerry Merrill

SAN DIEGO—Several members of the Socialist Workers Party here were assaulted and prevented from distributing copies of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and SWP election material September 24. The attack occurred outside a Chicano community convention that had been billed as "open to any interested party."

The victims of the unprovoked physical attack were Jay Ressler, San Diego SWP branch organizer, and Mark Friedman, a member of the International Association of Machinists and of the SWP.

Ressler and Friedman were surrounded a half block from the convention site by a goon squad of fifteen "convention monitors."

The two were shoved and kicked. Friedman was pushed to the ground and kicked again. The attackers also seized and ripped up more than ten dollars worth of literature.

The attack was organized by leaders of the Committee on Chicano Rights, a group headed by Herman Baca. Leading the goon squad were CCR Vice-president Carlos Vasquez and Howard Hollman. Both these CCR leaders have attacked SWP members previously over the past year.

Moments after the assault, Hollman told a Chicano supporter of the SWP campaign, "Next time I'll bust your heads off."

Among those who witnessed the unprovoked attack was reporter Dan

Carson of the *San Diego Union*. He included an account of the assault in a story filed on the convention.

Commenting on the attack, Ressler said, "We intend to go on a public campaign to win support from hundreds of individuals and organizations in the labor movement and Black and Chicano communities in support of the right of anyone to express their views without fear of intimidation or physical violence."

"We hope that conference organizers will repudiate this attack by members of their staff," Ressler said.

Three SWP members, including Ressler, were again physically threatened on September 25 when they attempted to distribute a press release on the incident to reporters at a news conference at the San Diego Chicano Federation. The three were prevented from getting out of their car near the federation headquarters.

These attacks culminated a year-long series of threats by CCR leaders against the rights of SWP members to distribute socialist literature.

The San Diego SWP is asking San Diego political activists to sign a statement condemning the September 24 attack. The statement notes that "differences among those fighting for social justice cannot be resolved by acts of violence. Physical violence and the suppression of freedom of speech only opens the way for the police and FBI and all the enemies of minorities to tear us apart."

Quote unquote

"Just as it took Richard Nixon to go to China, it takes a Democrat to control spending."

—Governor Brown of California.

RALLY BACKS RUSSELL MEANS

A two-day rally for political prisoners at the state penitentiary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, opened with news that Native American leader Russell Means had been stabbed two hours earlier. The wounds, fortunately, were superficial.

Framed up on a rioting charge and then imprisoned on an equally false charge of violating parole, Means has been

imprisoned since July 27.

American Indian Movement officials charged that the September 16 knife attack represented an assassination attempt condoned by prison guards.

As Means returned behind prison walls after hospital care for his wounds, a drum from inside the prison opened the rally. Speakers were able to address inmates and then came outside to speak to some 300 people who gathered on the prison lawn.

The speakers included entertainers Marlon Brando and Harry Belafonte and attorney William Kunstler. Principal leaders of AIM spoke along with other Native American activists.

Many participants then proceeded to Rapid City for the founding conference of Women of All Red Nations, held September 18-22.

FBI informer Gary Rowe indicted for murder

Gary Rowe, the FBI's man in the Ku Klux Klan, was indicted September 20 for the 1965 murder of Viola Liuzzo, a civil rights activist who was shot to death during the famous Selma, Alabama, protest.

Earlier, two members of the KKK had been convicted on a federal charge in the murder. They were found guilty after testimony by Rowe, who was in the car with them at the time. The two say that Rowe pulled

the trigger.

It has also been established that Rowe, a favorite of J. Edgar Hoover, beat and killed other civil rights workers in his capacity as an FBI employee.

Attorney General Griffin Bell is currently courting a jail term for contempt in a Socialist Workers Party lawsuit rather than divulge the identity of federal informers. Rowe is a good example of the type Bell is so determined to protect.

BRIDGEPORT TEACHERS WIN

Striking teachers in Bridgeport, Connecticut—266 of whom were jailed—returned to work September 25 having won a contract victory. According to Art Pechillo, president of the Bridgeport Education Association, the jailings of up to thirteen days set a national record for teacher strikes.

"We had an impact on this city that will last for a long time to come," he told the *Militant*. "It was beyond our dreams the way the community got together behind us. And we're going to continue that momentum in making effective changes in education. . . ."

The mediated settlement for the 1,250 teachers includes a 6 percent pay raise the first year and 7.5 percent the second. The contract provides for the hiring of nine specialists the second year in art, music, and physical education. It also increases medical coverage and life insurance.

As we go to press, teachers in other cities were still on strike, including in Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio.

BAKKE GOES TO SCHOOL

Allan Bakke, initial beneficiary of the Supreme Court's racist "reverse discrimination" ruling, entered medical school at the University of California at Davis September 25. As the thirty-eight-year-old Bakke entered class, some 100 supporters of affirmative action picketed outside. Bakke's class of 101 includes four Blacks and two Chicanos.

Hua's Iran visit catches U.S. Maoists flat-footed

No genuinely revolutionary government would relish the adherence of mindless supporters. But bureaucrats perhaps assume, not unrealistically, that that's about the only kind they're likely to get.

For example, there is the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), the authentically mindless U.S. supporters of whatever regime happens to be in power in China.

We doubt Peking was unduly embarrassed by the September 18 issue of the *Call*, voice of the CP (M-L).

A page 9 news article is headlined—correctly—"Mass movement rocks Iran despite bloody repression."

The article, which solidarizes with the effort of the Iranian masses to overthrow the shah, is somewhat at odds with a page 2 editorial.

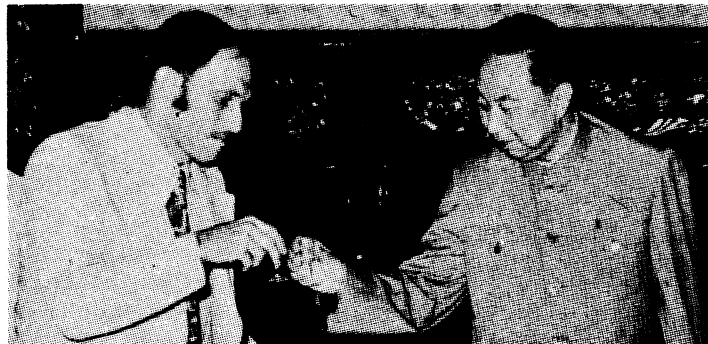
Lauding Chairman Hua's recent tour abroad, the editorial expresses particular

happiness over his visit to Iran.

The editorial explains that Iran is "strategically important" in light of "superpower rivalry" in the area. These are Maoist code words to suggest that instability in Iran could strengthen Hua's archenemies in the Kremlin.

Hua's "historic" visit, the editorial neglects to mention, came after the shah began his "bloody repression" of the Iranian uprising. In fact, the situation was such that Hua had to be whisked in and out behind a wall of security organized by SAVAK, the shah's secret police.

The harsh fact is that Hua's visit was intended to bolster the shah, a hireling of U.S. imperialism whose rule is threatened by the Iranian masses, not Moscow. But that, of course, is of no consequence to the CP (M-L). After all, it wouldn't be mindless to weigh such a contradiction.



Chairman Michael Klonsky with Chairman Hua.

What's Going On

CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

SOCIALIST WORKERS CAMPAIGN DINNER AND RALLY. Speaker: Fred Halstead, Socialist Workers Party gubernatorial candidate. Sun., Oct. 15, 4:30 p.m., reception & cocktails; 6 p.m., buffet dinner; 7:30 p.m., rally. 2936 W. 8th St. Donation: \$5 for rally and dinner; \$2 for rally only. Ausp: SWP Campaign Committee. For more information call (213) 482-1820 or 469-9983.

LOS ANGELES: SOUTH EAST

IRAN IN REVOLT. Speaker: Said Pakzad, Iranian student activist and supporter of *Payam Daneshjoo*, Persian-language anti-shah publication. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 2554 Saturn Ave., Huntington Pk. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (213) 582-1975.

FLORIDA MIAMI

PERU IN REBELLION. Speaker: representative of Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 7623 N.E. 2nd Ave. Donation: \$1.25. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (305) 756-8358.

GEORGIA ATLANTA

MASS UPSURGE IN IRAN. Speakers: Saeed Zabihi, activist in Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran; Harris Freeman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 509 Peachtree St. N.E. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (404) 872-7229.

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO: WEST SIDE

NORFOLK & WESTERN STRIKE. Speakers: Doug Hord, member of International Association of Machinists; Mark Manning, member of Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks; Guy Miller, member of United Transportation Union.

Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 3942 W. Chicago Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (312) 384-0606.

KENTUCKY LOUISVILLE

WHO KILLED KAREN SILKWOOD? Speakers: Robert Busch, member of Paddlewheel Alliance; Charles Holloway, member of Mobilization for Survival; Helen Kuester, member of University of Louisville Young Socialist Alliance and a founding member of Paddlewheel Alliance. Sun., Oct. 1, 7 p.m. 1505 W. Broadway. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (502) 587-8418.

REPORT BACK FROM HARLAN COUNTY MINERS' STRIKE.

Speakers: Ed Bloomer, member of International Union of Electrical Workers Local 761, General Electric Appliance Park; Jim Burfeind, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress Third C.D. in Louisville. Both speakers recently returned from a four-day tour of Harlan County and Stearns, Kentucky. Sun., Oct. 8, 7 p.m. 1505 W. Broadway. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (502) 587-8418.

LOUISIANA NEW ORLEANS

A VICTORY FOR THE TEACHERS. Speakers: Nat LaCour, president, United Teachers of New Orleans; Joel Aber, Socialist Workers Party; others. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 3319 S. Carrollton Ave. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (504) 486-8048.

MARYLAND BALTIMORE

REPORT FROM UNITED STEELWORKERS CONVENTION. Speakers: Bobbi Spiegler, member USWA Local 2610; Norton Sandler, member, USWA

Local 2609. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 2117 N. Charles. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (301) 547-0668.

WHY THE MIDEAST PACT WON'T BRING PEACE

Speakers to be announced. Fri., Oct. 13, 8 p.m. 2117 N. Charles. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (301) 547-0668.

MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

CIVIL WAR IN NICARAGUA—DOWN WITH THE SOMOZA DICTATORSHIP! Speakers: Sister Mora Clark, Marykgoll nun who spent 15 years in Managua; Nelson González, activist in Puerto Rican independence movement and Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 510 Commonwealth Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (617) 262-4621.

MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS

SUPPORT THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY & AIRLINE CLERKS STRIKE! Speakers: Bill Peterson, United Transportation Union Local 911 and Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate; others. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 23 E. Lake St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 825-6663.

ST. PAUL

THE MIDEAST ACCORDS: CAN THEY BRING PEACE? Speakers: Khalil Nakleh, Palestinian and professor of anthropology at St. John's U.; Gary Prevost, professor of political science at St. John's U. and member of Socialist Workers Party; Hisham Reda, former president of U. of Minn. Organization of Arab Students. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. MacAlester College, Weyerhaeuser Chapel Basement (on Grand Ave.). Ausp: Militant Forum & Young Socialist Alliance. For more information call (612) 222-8929.

MISSOURI KANSAS CITY

THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT: WILL IT BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST? Speakers to be announced. Sun., Oct. 8, 7 p.m. 4715-A Troost Ave., Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (816) 753-0404.

NEW JERSEY NEWARK

WHY CAMP DAVID WILL NOT LEAD TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. Speaker: David Frankel, staff writer for the *Militant*. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 11-A Central Ave. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

NEW MEXICO ALBUQUERQUE

LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY VS. DEMOCRATIC PARTY: STRUGGLE IN RIO ARRIBA COUNTY. Speaker: Ike DeVargas, chairperson, Rio Arriba County RUP. Fri., Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. 108 Morningside N.E. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (505) 255-6869.

NEW YORK NYC: QUEENS

CIVIL WAR IN NICARAGUA. Speakers: Fred Murphy, staff writer for *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*; Salvador Orochena, representative of the Association for Human Rights in Nicaragua. Fri., Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. 40-43 149th St., Jamaica. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (212) 658-7718.

OHIO TOLEDO

THE FARM LABORERS' STRIKE: THE NEXT STEP. Speakers: Baldamer Velásquez, president of Farm Labor Organizing Committee; Lynn Stankey, chair of FLOC Support Committee; Tony Dutrow,

member of United Auto Workers Local 12 and of Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Oct. 8, 7 p.m. Univ. of Toledo, Room 3020, Student Union. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (419) 242-9743.

PENNSYLVANIA PITTSBURGH

SOCIALIST WORKERS CAMPAIGN BENEFIT. Speaker: Mark Zola, SWP candidate for governor of Pennsylvania; music by Anne Feeney. Thurs., Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m. Wobblie Joe's, 27th & Jane sts. (south side). Donation: \$1. Ausp: Pittsburgh Socialist Workers Campaign Committee. For more information call (412) 441-1419.

WASHINGTON SEATTLE

UPSURGE IN IRAN. Speakers: member of Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran; Bill Robinson, Socialist Workers Party; others. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 4868 Rainier Ave. South. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (206) 329-7404 or 723-5330.

WASHINGTON TACOMA

IRAN IN REVOLT. Speaker: representative of Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran. Sun., Oct. 1, 7 p.m. 1022 S. J St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (206) 627-0432.

TEACHERS UNDER ATTACK. A panel discussion. Sun., Oct. 8, 7 p.m. 1022 S. J St. Donation: \$1. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (206) 627-0432.

REPRESSION IN MEXICO. Speaker: Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, leader of Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Disappeared, Persecuted and Exiled. Sun., Oct. 15, 7 p.m. YWCA, 405 Broadway. Ausp: Hector Marroquin Defense Committee and Tacoma National Organization for Women. For more information call (206) 627-0432.



Militant/Howard Petrick
Berkeley Socialist Workers Party contingent in last June's San Francisco Gay Pride demonstration urged support for Berkeley gay rights ordinance. Ordinance was enacted September 19.

Berkeley OKs gay rights law

BERKELEY, Calif.—The Berkeley City Council voted September 19 on first reading to enact what has been described as the strongest gay rights ordinance in the country. Final approval, slated for October 10, is generally regarded as a formality.

Although adopted unanimously, the measure has been before the council for a year. It took a persistent campaign to get it passed. Two hundred people were in the council chamber when the vote was taken and hundreds had attended previous hearings.

At one point the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce had proposed a "friendly" amendment that would have seriously weakened the statute. Gay rights activists responded with petitions signed by several thousand people, demanding passage of the measure without it being watered down.

The ordinance prohibits discrimination against gays in employment, credit, education, city services and facilities, housing, and public accommodations.

It provides for relief through civil- and small-claims courts, which could award \$200 to \$400 in penalties, plus attorneys' fees and damages.

Meanwhile, a new victory for gay rights was won with recognition of a Gay Student Union at the University of Missouri, Kansas City. Similar recognition was won earlier at the university's Columbia campus.

Recognition came after the university lost in the courts. Its earlier denial of such recognition had been ruled illegal by a federal court. The university appealed this to the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused this past March to consider the case.

Class solidarity—A Soviet writer now suggests that Lee Harvey Oswald was a Chinese agent and that the Kennedy assassination was planned jointly by Peking and the mafia. We wouldn't be surprised if the Chinese government responded, "Not us. The Gang of Four."

Must pay great wages—A new martial law decree by Philippine dictator Marcos provides for the arrest of "able-bodied" beggars over the age of fifteen, and fines for people who give them money. The government said many Manila beggars were making more than the average industrial worker.

Tinkering with human nature?—Arguing in favor of retaining a limit on outside earnings by members of the House, Rep. Millicent Fenwick (R-N.J.) said it would permit "some moderation . . . of our greed."

New safety crackdown—California safety officials found that fifty-seven

workers had been exposed to dangerous levels of asbestos dust for two years at a Pacific Gas & Electric power plant. Exposure to the cancer-causing debris resulted from "serious violations" of safety orders and failure to put warning labels on containers of asbestos. The utility was fined \$1,000.

Legislative seat—Virginia taxpayers will rest easier knowing that their representatives in the state senate will be getting new seats—forty natural leather chairs for \$15,000. That's but \$375 per chair, little enough to assure a properly ensconced solon.

Social solutions dept.—Those who argue that private industry can't solve social problems should take a look at Continental Airlines, which recognizes the mounting ordeal of hapless air travelers: the battle to get to the airport; the ticket window lines; security checks; hassles with baggage, etc. The Continental solution? They're investing \$2 million in new flight attendant uniforms.

Union Talk

Postal 'economizing'

This week's column by Frank Cameron is excerpted from a talk given to the September 17 Louisville Militant Forum. Cameron worked for nine years as a letter carrier and for the past year as a letter sorting machine operator. He is a member of the American Postal Workers Union.

LOUISVILLE—Postal workers are interested in a living wage and decent working conditions. Management's sole concern is "economizing" the Postal Service. Economizing is a catch-all—our jobs, our hours, our grievances are what are being economized.

One big problem nationwide for both carriers and clerks is the grievance procedure. You might have to wait from six months to three years for a grievance to be finally settled. It's really a form of harassment. The government stalls the procedure so that it won't have to correct its mistakes and its abuses of employees.

Another issue for the carriers is the new private management "principles." These economic principles were introduced when the post office became the U.S. Postal Service, a semi-public corporation.

Carriers used to do the whole show. We forwarded the mail if someone moved. We delivered packages. A lot of us even carried stamps in case a customer wanted them—although we weren't required to do so. In other words, we tried to perform our jobs as professionally as possible.

Now it has changed. Any mail that is to be forwarded goes to a central location where a label with the new address is affixed. I don't know what the cost savings are, if any, but the time delay is from two to six days. That's service?

Another facet of cost cutting is called pivoting. If a carrier calls in sick, the supervisor doesn't obtain a replacement. The other carriers are forced to absorb the sick carrier's route. Unless the mail is unusually light that day, the carrier will have to curtail mail on his or her own route, thus depriving customers of some of their mail.

But nothing has affected the delivery of mail as much as "street supervision." This is when a supervisor follows carriers on their routes to check up on them.

Carriers have been warned for taking thirty-five-minute lunches instead of

thirty. They have been warned for not being on a specific street at the time they were scheduled to be there. Our taxes are paying grown men to harass letter carriers in a pathetic game of hide-and-seek.

Last year I transferred to the clerk craft. I wanted afternoon or night hours so that I could watch my children during the day while my wife finished school. It has been as a clerk that I have learned the meaning of forced or mandatory overtime. Six-day weeks, eight-to-ten-hour days have been quite common. The government finds it cheaper to work us overtime than to hire additional workers.

Again, at our expense, they have been proven wrong—at least as far as providing service is concerned. Backlogs of two months or more on magazines became the usual. Third-class mail was handled as an afterthought. All we did was work and sleep. Overtime affected our income, but also our sanity.

Management has gradually hired a few more workers—but not enough to eliminate overtime. Thousands are on the waiting lists for work in the post office. But they are denied the right to work by a management that wants to "economize."

I have given only a few examples of the plight of postal workers. The Postal Service tries to keep us divided through fear. The postmaster tells us of our obligations, our duties, and of his right to fire and jail us if we strike.

The government puts its news on the post office bulletin boards. We are inundated subtly and forcefully by the government's idea of how we should act.

We have to counter this. We have to put up our own information on bulletin boards. But most importantly, we must go to the public with our ideas on pivoting, street supervision, and postal mismanagement. The government implements new harebrained programs whenever it sees fit. We must respond to these in order to protect our rights and our jobs.

The media has declared the contract settled through binding arbitration. Are we silly for continuing to discuss it? Hardly. Management has always had the upper hand because of the silence of the unions. A silence imposed by binding arbitration and the no-strike contract clause. We must begin to change that situation.

ANTINUKE ACTIVITY UNDER WAY IN TEXAS

A teach-in on nuclear power was held at the University of Houston September 16. Seventy people participated. Workshops were led by activists in member organizations of the Lone Star Alliance, a statewide coalition of groups opposing nuclear power.

Lone Star Alliance members also got together to plan future antinuke activities. They agreed to have a contingent at the Karen Silkwood Day activities in Oklahoma November 13; an action November 4 at a proposed nuclear power plant site at Wallace, Texas; and a January 20, 1979, antinuke rally at the state capital.

For more information, or for the name of a group in your area of Texas, contact: Texas Mobilization for Survival, 600 West Twenty-eighth Street, Suite 102, Austin, Texas 78705.

OSHA EXEMPTION DIES IN CONGRESS

In the face of labor opposition, Congress retreated on a measure to exempt millions of smaller employers from regulation and inspection by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The Senate-approved proposal was killed by House-Senate conferees September 19.

If passed, it would have meant that nearly 70 percent of the nation's employers need no longer concern themselves about even the current inadequate health and safety regulations.

AFL-CIO President George

Meany had branded the proposition a "killer amendment" that would "turn several million workplaces into death traps."

WHEN IS BRAND X NOT BRAND X?

Years back, consumer groups established that people were being ripped off paying higher prices for brand-name drugs that were usually the same as non-name brands. Two-for-a-nickel Bayer aspirin, for instance, is identical to two-for-a-penny Brand X.

Which leads to the recent attempt by HEW Secretary Califano to withhold government documents from a House subcommittee. Califano asserted it would compromise "trade secrets."

The "secrets," it turns out, were documentation on a drug industry swindle. Not only is the brand-name drug identical to Brand X, it often is Brand X. The brand-name outfits farm out production to the other companies and then simply add their trademark—and price markup.

Meanwhile, it was disclosed that Senator Hollings (D-S.C.) arranged for Capitol facilities for a cocktail party thrown by Hoffman-La Roche, the drug biggie. The purpose? To acquaint congressmembers with Hoffman-La Roche's public service program to educate the elderly on proper use of medicine.

Like, for instance, insisting on generic names?

Our Revolutionary Heritage

Celebrating 50 years of the Militant, 1928-1978

October 1973 war

Five years ago, in October 1973, the fourth Arab-Israeli war broke out. Coordinated offensives by the Egyptian and Syrian armies, aimed at regaining the Arab territory seized by Israel in 1967, pushed back the Zionist war machine and shattered racist myths about the invincibility of the Israeli army and the inability of Arabs to fight.

Zionist leaders have always insisted that the Arab masses could be beaten into accepting the Israeli state by repeated military defeats. But the October 1973 war, coming only six years after the smashing Israeli victory of June 1967, gave the lie to this perspective and caused a crisis of confidence in Israel.

On the other hand, the Arab showing in the war served to inspire the Palestinian masses. It helped spark a deepgoing radicalization of the Palestinian population within Israel's pre-1967 borders, and a new upsurge among the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

After four full-scale wars in twenty-five years, the Zionist regime was further away than ever from being able to impose its will on the Arab peoples.

But Tel Aviv did have one ace in the hole.

For years Washington had claimed to oppose the Israeli presence in the occupied territories. Yet, when Syrian troops sought to regain the Syrian Golan Heights, and when Egyptian troops sought to win back the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, the U.S. government mounted a massive arms airlift to Israel.

Washington went even further in its determination to guarantee an Israeli victory. A worldwide alert of U.S. forces was ordered, and President Nixon made clear that he was prepared for a nuclear confrontation with Moscow over the Middle East.

When the war ended, Israel was firmly in control of the occupied territories. Nevertheless, it had suffered an important political defeat. This was reflected in the invitation of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat to speak in front of the United Nations General Assembly one year later, and in the 1975 UN vote condemning Zionism as a form of racism.

Today, all this seems to be part of the distant past. Instead of threatening nuclear war on behalf of its junior partner, Washington is trying to polish up its image as a peacemaker. Instead of condemning Zionism as a form of racism, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat is preparing to formally recognize the Zionist regime and exchange ambassadors with it.

But the fact that Sadat has declared his willingness to endorse the imperialist domination of the Arab world and the dispossession and oppression of the Palestinian people will bring neither peace nor



Yassir Arafat speaking at United Nations. One result of October 1973 war was growth of international support for Palestinians.

justice to that area. Sadat's betrayal will not stop the struggles of the Arab masses, and especially of the Palestinians. And imperialist attempts to crush these struggles will inevitably result in new Mideast wars.

Just six months ago, for example, the Israeli army was unleashed against the people of Lebanon. Its stated aim was to destroy the Palestinian liberation movement there.

Even as Sadat met at Camp David with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Carter, Israeli warplanes were cracking the sound barrier over Beirut, and Israeli officials were threatening to strike at Syrian forces in Lebanon.

In trying to portray the Camp David accords as a step toward peace, the big-business media points out that a treaty between Egypt and Israel will make it virtually impossible for the Arab states to launch another war to regain their land, as they did in 1973.

Of course, the pro-imperialist commentators fail to mention that it was Israel that attacked Egypt in 1956 and 1967, not the other way around. With Egypt out of the picture militarily, it will make it harder for the Arab states to initiate any military action *but easier for the Israeli regime to carry out its own attack.*

No, the Camp David accords have nothing to do with establishing peace in the Middle East. By setting up the framework for a separate Egyptian-Israeli deal, they merely change the relationship of forces more in Israel's favor. They help to strengthen imperialist domination in the Middle East and to bolster the oppression of the Palestinian people. This is a formula for new wars, not for peace.

—David Frankel

Letters

Vote socialist

Former Pittsburgh Mayor Pete Flaherty is running for the office of governor of Pennsylvania (along with Dick Thornburg, the Republican Vietnam War hawk, and Socialist Workers Party candidate Mark Zola). Flaherty resigned as mayor to become deputy U.S. attorney early in 1977. The NAACP and others protested his appointment because of his racist and antilabor sentiments and tactics.

Throughout the city Flaherty cut jobs and utilized forced speedup, similar to corporate techniques, with the aid of his executive secretary Bruce Campbell, a former time-study official for U.S. Steel.

Flaherty and Campbell utilized every antilabor tactic known. They came up with a new city pension plan that hits everyone hired after 1975. For example, the retirement age is sixty, but when you go on social security the city pension is reduced.

There is no doubt that when he was mayor, Flaherty was seriously interested in saving dollars for certain Pittsburgh taxpayers. But let's name some of them: U.S. Steel, Rockwell International, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, Westinghouse, Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh National Bank, Gulf Oil, J & L Steel.

As to the welfare of the people of Pennsylvania, Pete Flaherty's qualities can be summed up in one word: treacherous.

Frank McDonough
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ERA action urged

The September 22 issue of the *Militant* states that the Philadelphia National Organization for Women voted to urge NOW's national conference to call a march on Springfield, Illinois, on March 11, 1979. [See "NOW national meeting to discuss ERA fight."] This is not quite correct. The resolution calls for a national demonstration in Washington, D.C., on that date.

Eileen Gersh
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Worker's paper

Keep up the good work. The *Militant* is the only paper workers can read with confidence that they are receiving accurate information.

Philip Sicks
Chicago, Illinois

'Militant' tote bag

Do you plan to make any more *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* tote bags? I bought one at the Socialist Workers Party educational conference in Ohio. Now at least five people here in Milwaukee have told me they would like to buy one or two.

I think it would be a good fund-raising idea for the *Militant* to make more tote bags. I'm sure that many

people across the country would send in for them. They are excellent for holding papers when you go out to sell.

Alexandra Topping
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

[Your suggestion is a good one. *Militant* readers and sellers can order their tote bags from the Militant Business Office, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014. See ad elsewhere in this issue.]

Bloodsuckers

Malcolm X used to say, "Show me a capitalist and I'll show you a bloodsucker." I recently came across an interesting confirmation of that. It was in a speech by John Roelker, head of Revlon's "Health Care" division.

He explains that "there is an acute shortage of blood fractions [parts of human blood used in medical procedures] the world over. This might seem to create a threat, but it is not as much a threat as one might imagine . . . rather than a threat, the international shortage presents a profitable opportunity."

One of Revlon's subsidiaries, he goes on to say, "owns and operates ten donor centers in the U.S. and 230,000 donations are collected each year," accounting for 15 percent of U.S. supply.

C.C.
New York, New York

Radio readers

Thank you very much for the subscription to your newspaper. Although there are no Socialist Workers Party chapters within 100 miles, we feel that the perspective the *Militant* has to offer, the party's case against the FBI, and your continued effort to build an effective rank-and-file movement in the U.S. are important things to keep in touch with.

Robert Lorei
WMNF Radio
Tampa, Florida

Can't live without it

I don't want to miss an issue of the *Militant*, so please start my subscription immediately. I have been buying and reading your paper steadily, and I don't want to live without it. I am a senior in high school.

J.F.
New York, New York

Manna from GM

The new "Holy See," Pope John Paul I, once said, "The true treasures of the church are the poor, the little ones, to be helped not merely with occasional balms, but in a way they can be promoted."

The marbles leading General Motors, General Electric, Shell and Gulf Oil companies, Bethlehem, IBM, and Transworld and Pan American airlines chant the same tune. But they all know the biggest profit is realized from the poor.

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Learning About Socialism

Reply to a 'Daily World' smear

It's easy to understand why the Vatican invests its excesses in these companies. Not surprisingly, no pope has ever condemned these money changers for their transgressions against humanity. None of these companies are accountable to any government. Rather, governments are accountable to big business.

GM continues grinding out tin cans; GE dumps deadly chemicals in our waterways; oil companies make illegal political contributions; Bethlehem fails to pay federal income taxes; IBM invests more in South Africa; and TWA-PAA divides the world's lucrative air market. It's easy to see why churches invest heavily in the multinational corporations. The glove fits the hand perfectly.

And, may I add, the hand gets a generous amount of lubricant to help slip into the glove.

I don't speculate that the new pope will impose order and morality on church finances. And since big business is a headless monster, responsible to no one, the poor will continue to get it from both ends.

John Rabbets
Cullman, Alabama

Miserable schools

I have been educationally ripped off, and I am very bitter about it. I was issued a high school diploma in 1973 and now find I am unable to read beyond the fourth-grade level.

When I entered college, the scores on my tests were getting worse and worse, and I didn't know exactly why. So I took some skills tests and found that my reading and mathematics skills were at a grade-school level. This was a terrible shock to me.

I directly blame the education system for my deficiencies. The education system in the United States is a poor one, and people like me are the ones who have to suffer.

I am attempting to sue the Massachusetts school system, but similar cases have already been thrown out of court in New York and California. No one should have to go through this. I hope we can put a stop to it before everyone is illiterate!

Todd Malfa
Miami Beach, Florida

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

The way Erik Bert sees it, the *Militant's* "Learning About Socialism" column should be renamed "Learning About Counterrevolution."

That was the central idea in his article in the September 12 *Daily World*, voice of the Communist Party.

Bert's article is a response to a column I wrote in the September 8 *Militant* titled, "Why we defend the Soviet Union."

In that article, I explained that despite our opposition to the bureaucratic misrulers in the Kremlin, the *Militant* unconditionally defends the Soviet Union against imperialism.

Pointing to the remaining conquests of the 1917 revolution—abolition of production for profit and substitution of a nationalized economy—I likened our approach to the Soviet Union to our attitude toward the unions. While we heartily oppose the union bureaucrats and favor the ranks throwing them out, we also unconditionally defend the unions against the bosses.

Bert responded to all this just like the union bureaucrats do. Jab a bureaucrat for crimes against the members, and they'll bellow: "You're not attacking me, you're attacking the union!"

Such opposition, the bureaucrat asserts, is the same as employer opposition to the union itself.

Now listen to Bert: "The 'Militant' phrases its policy as: 'get rid of the bureaucrats.' Spelled out, that means: get rid of the Soviet state. . . ."

Tossing in the shameless vilification that the Trotskyist view of the Soviet Union is akin to Hitler's, Bert offers an old, fake amalgam:

"The line of the Trotskyites that the Soviet Union and the other socialist states are 'bureaucratically misruled' is one of the lines that the Central Intelligence Agency has played from Munich . . ."

Nice and simple. Criticize the Moscow bureaucrats from a revolutionary socialist point of view, and that makes you the same as the anti-communists who oppose them from a procapitalist standpoint. Any deviation from the CP's practice of parroting Brezhnev and Company is the same thing as "counterrevolution," according to Bert.

With that crooked logic, you could prove the Communist Party is a tool of the National Association of Manufacturers. After all, the Communist Party does criticize George Meany and his cohorts. Does that criticism put the CP in the camp of the right-wing union busters?

Bert seems particularly upset that we characterized the recent trial and conviction of Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky as a frame-up.

Could that anger stem from questions the CP is getting about the Shcharansky trial from its own supporters—particularly those concerned about continuing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union?

Bert's furious sputtering about our assertion that the Soviet workers are denied their democratic rights by bureaucrats intent on preserving their material privileges has a similar basis.

A growing number of Communist Party supporters are facing the reality that there is a bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and that it commits terrible crimes in the name of socialism.

After all, the left-wing forces who have come to this conclusion are no longer limited to just the Trotskyists. Today, to a greater or lesser degree, such clearly non-Trotskyist groups as the French, Italian, and Spanish Communist parties are protesting Kremlin frame-ups.

This presents a delicate problem for the U.S. Communist Party hacks who persist in their blind apologetics for the Kremlin. Are these European CPs also "Anti-Sovietees?"

Such an argument could get a bit sticky, even for an Erik Bert. It's simpler to haul out the old mud bucket and fling another brushful at the "counterrevolutionary" Trotskyists. And it also suggests to others what they're in for if they keep asking questions.

Lenin emphasized that revolutionary socialists have no greater weapon than the truth. The contempt for truth displayed by the Stalinist leaders of the CP simply confirms their degradation of Leninism.

—Harry Ring

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Support the rail workers

No to government strikebreaking

WEDNESDAY, September 27—As the 'Militant' goes to press, the Carter administration is threatening strikebreaking action against the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks and other rail unions honoring BRAC picket lines.

At a Washington, D.C., news conference this morning, Labor Secretary Ray Marshall announced the resumption of negotiations between BRAC and the Norfolk & Western Railway; the appointment of a mediator; and the imposition of a twenty-four-hour deadline for reaching an agreement.

The expansion of the strike beyond the N&W, Marshall said, "has now idled . . . as much as two-thirds of the rail traffic in this country. We are determined not to prolong a strike that could cripple our nation's economy."

"There are other possible ways to settle this widespread railroad strike," Marshall warned rail workers. If the twenty-four-hour deadline is not met, he added, "the administration will take further action."

Willie Mae Reid, chairperson of the Socialist Workers Party National Campaign Committee, denounced the Carter administration's strikebreaking move.

"The SWP supports rail workers in their fight against the union busting of the carriers," she said.

"Under the guise of defending the national interest, Carter is preparing a blow against railroad workers and all working people—just as he did during the miners' strike with the imposition of the Taft-Hartley slave-labor act.

"No judge and no politician has the right to force these workers back to work. They deserve the full support of all working people.

"Solidarity with the railroad workers!"

By John Hawkins

Some 350,000 railroad workers in forty-two states stayed away from work September 26 in solidarity with striking clerks at the Norfolk & Western Railway.

The picket lines set up by striking members of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) were honored by members of the United Transportation Union, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, and other rail unions.

Early on the morning of September 26, BRAC members began picketing at "intersection points" between the N&W and forty-three other roads. An intersection point is a train yard where rail cars are transferred from one carrier to another.

According to the American Association of Railroads, the strike has already shut down more than 60 percent of the rail system nationwide.

Among the forty-three carriers struck are the Burlington Northern; Chicago & North Western; Louisville & Nashville; Milwaukee Road; Missouri, Kansas & Topeka; Santa Fe; Seaboard Coast Line; Soo Line; and Union Pacific.

With the exception of the northeast corridor between Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston, AMTRAK was forced to cancel all passenger service.

BRAC officials decided not to picket Conrail, the country's largest freight carrier, after being served with an antistrike injunction last weekend.

In announcing the strike, Fred J. Kroll, president of the 235,000-member union, said, "We are taking



BRAC pickets at Norfolk & Western in Chicago joined by members of other rail unions

Militant/David McDonald

this action in order to bring increasing pressure on the N&W to start negotiating a settlement in good faith."

Close to 5,000 clerks at the N&W have been on strike since July 10 in face of the company's refusal to negotiate on the issue of job security for clerks displaced by automation.

BRAC is demanding guaranteed jobs and retention of the current wage rate for employees displaced by technological changes at N&W. Most other roads already have agreed to such an arrangement.

The N&W and the carriers backing their union-busting assault hope to lay the groundwork for eliminating this provision on other lines. The assault on the N&W clerks is closely linked to the chief aim of all the carriers in this round of railway negotiations—reduction of the railroad work force and a drastic speedup for those workers who remain on the job.

Though the strike was 90 percent effective against the N&W, 400 company officials and supervisory personnel had been moving freight between the N&W and the forty-three struck lines.

Furthermore, the N&W has been receiving \$6 million a week in "service-interruption insurance" from seventy-three other carriers in accord with a "mutual assistance" pact.

Said Kroll in the September 6 *Chicago Tribune*: "Norfolk & Western's disdainful attitude toward a fair strike settlement and the alliance of the railroad companies in support of the N&W demonstrates beyond question this conclusion: The strike has assumed the proportions of a historic confrontation between working people and big corporate capital acting like a monolithic machine."

Determination and solidarity with the N&W clerks ran high among striking railroad workers, reports *Militant* correspondent David McDonald from Chicago.

If they can get away with this against the N&W clerks, one striker told McDonald, they'll try it on other lines, and with other railroad crafts.

Pickets and supporters, McDonald reports, have no question about their ability to maintain a solid strike. One said his only fear is that "interfering judges will bust the strike."

A number of carriers have already moved to

obtain injunctions against the picketing. In Chicago, a federal district judge ordered strikers back to work on six struck roads. In Minneapolis a judge ordered back strikers on the Soo Line and the Burlington Northern.

When a Burlington security guard attempted to serve the restraining order on pickets at the road's Minneapolis yard, pickets tossed it away, saying they would look to their union for word on what to do.

Throughout the N&W strike, Washington has been aiding the rail bosses in their attempt to break the union. The Federal Railway Administration has looked the other way, as supervisory personnel unqualified to handle trains have moved freight with two-person crews.

Many other safety regulations have been violated by the scabs, placing in jeopardy the lives of those who live and work along the company's right of way.

BRAC, along with the International Association of Machinists and the Sheet Metal Workers, has turned down the national contract with the rail carriers. BRAC officials are suing the National Mediation Board, a government railway arbitration agency, to force it to declare a bargaining impasse. That would clear the way for a nationwide strike ninety days after such a ruling.

Forums on rail

Forums in solidarity with the BRAC strike

CHICAGO: Speakers: Doug Hord, member of International Association of Machinists; Mark Manning, member of Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks; Guy Miller, member of United Transportation Union. Fri., Oct. 6, 8 p.m. 3942 W. Chicago Ave. Donation: \$1.50. Ausp: Militant Forum. For more information call (312) 384-0606.

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