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British Miners' Strike

See page 7

REAGAN'S MX FUELS WAR MACHINE

Congress voted to extend the MX program last month.

The "missile experimental" pushed by former President Jimmy Carter and called the "peace-keeper" by Ronald Reagan is a first strike weapon.

The MX is designed to destroy missile silos.

The government claims the MX will be used as a deterrent to threaten the USSR with retaliation if it attacks the U.S.

**STEVE LEIGH
REPORTS**

Yet there is no sense in having a deterrent so accurate. By the time it is launched to strike back, the Russian missiles would be gone. There is no reason to blow up empty silos. To destroy any other target, the current supply of missiles would be accurate enough. But the U.S. has frantically developed many such accurate weapons designed to destroy the USSR's missiles before they are fired—the Trident II, the Cruise, the Pershing—and of course, the MX

Jimmy Carter tried to pretend the MX was a retaliatory weapon not designed for first strike. He proposed to put the missile on underground railroad tracks moving from silo to silo!

In this way the Russian missiles could never find the MX and it would be safe to strike back. But Reagan has ended this pretense. He now proposes to put the MX in regular silos which Carter said were vulnerable to attack. This shows that protection of the MX is not that important. It is designed to be fired first.

CRISIS

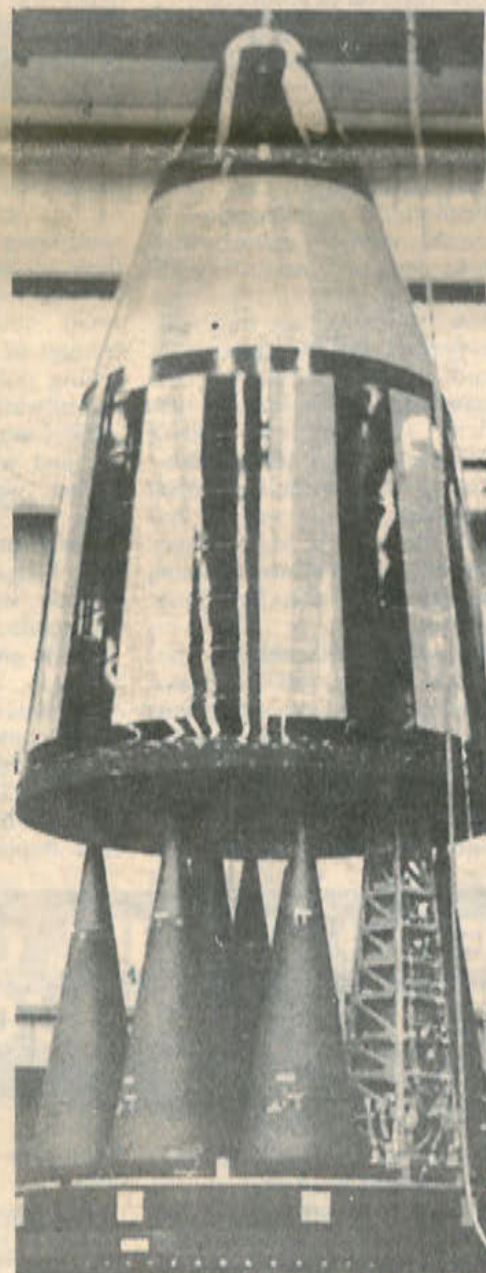
With the budget crisis, even many conservatives wanted to drop the MX to save money. But with the new round of negotiations, the pressure for the MX mounted.

Reagan claims he needs it in Geneva as a bargaining chip. As Democratic leader Tip O'Neill said, "Reagan has made a vote for the MX a vote for peace."

The Democrats began to drop their opposition to the missile. Once again negotiations were shown not to be a way to end the arms race—but a way to justify it. Once more the Democrats showed that in spite of their hemming and hawing, they follow along behind Reagan just as they did on the budget cuts.

But the terrifying truth behind the push for the MX is the logic of capitalism itself.

This is why the threat of war—and under modern conditions, nuclear war—can only be lifted when capitalism itself is destroyed. □



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



Pan Am Strike
See page 5



The Farming Crisis
See pages 8 & 9



Socialism and War
See pages 3 & 13

FIRST-STRIKE

**NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW
—BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM**

DEMONSTRATE: APRIL 20, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Gambling for high stakes in the world's money markets

The Home State Savings Bank of Ohio is by no stretch of the imagination one of the world's major financial institutions. And yet its closure last month led to near-panic selling of the dollar on the international money market.

The value of the dollar tumbled by 11 percent as traders unloaded them on the market on a massive scale.

The Home State collapse was the trigger. But signs of impending problems for the dollar were already present.

The British *Financial Times* commented earlier in the month that "dollar holders appear to be nervous about the state of the American economy."

INTEREST RATES

The dollar has been buoyed by the higher interest rates in the U.S. caused by government borrowing to feed the budget deficit.

But over the last year the gap between U.S. and European interest rates has narrowed. The continuing strength of the dollar today rests mainly on what was seen as the U.S. economic recovery.

Pre-tax profits in the U.S. jumped from \$105 billion at the end of 1982 to \$246 billion in 1984. These figures minimize the scale of the increase, though, because Reagan's 1981 tax changes allow companies to make larger write-offs of capital, leading to the showing of smaller profits.

Wall Street analysts estimate that real profits doubled over the last two years.

But the latest figures show a reversal of this trend. Profits are down, companies are being forced to cut back their margins as competition increases.

And the U.S. economic recovery has been uneven. It has been concentrated in those areas which are being shielded from competition. Either by their nature—like the service industries—or through protectionist policies—like the auto industry. And, above all, in the armaments sector.

The exposure of the way in which General Dynamics, the number one defense contractor, has boosted its profits

Any loss of confidence by the gamblers on the international money markets could lead to the failure of a major bank on larger scale than the near-failure of Continental Illinois.

Peter Webster explains.

by charging the government for anything it could get away with, has shown how tenuous the overall level of profits is.

DECLINE

The mainstream U.S. manufacturing industries remain in decline. While the overall unemployment figure is down, unemployment in manufacturing remains high.

Profitability remains too low to enable the U.S. manufacturers to compete on the world market.

The argument over the budget centers on this fact. Reduced expenditure on armaments will lower the deficit and interest rates, making it easier for manufacturing companies to invest in new capital.

But the cost is high. It is, after all, the defense sector that has been the backbone of the recovery.

The other element in the equation is the working class. If employers were able to drive down wages sufficiently, that could provide the increase in profitability which they need to boost earnings.

But no matter how much bat-



Ohio depositors line up for their savings. Inset: Financier Marvin Warner

tering labor has taken under the Reagan administration, its strength remains being able to prevent the kind of assault on wages and conditions which would be required to make the U.S. economy really competitive.

COMPETITIVE

A standoff occurs. The gamblers who play on the international markets have no real confidence in the ability of their system to sort out its problems. The closure of a small midwestern bank is enough to make them panic—selling dollars they were only recently buying massively.

They are gambling, however, not just with pieces of paper. Rather, workers' living standards are at stake. A bank closure may be written off as a lost account, but it can directly affect the lives of thousands of workers.

When the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Lincoln, Nebraska, failed in 1983, many of its customers were elderly citizens who lost their life's savings. The insurance company which "guaranteed" their deposits failed with the

bank—and the customers will be lucky to collect 65 cents to the dollar for the next ten years.

William Eyseck, Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) estimates that 100 banks will fail this year.

Major banks like Chase Manhattan and Citibank have set up new risk analysis departments because many of the investment areas they have moved into since deregulation are

inherently risky.

Any loss of confidence by the gamblers on the international markets could easily lead to the failure of a major bank on a much larger scale than the Continental Illinois Bank's near-failure.

Capitalism has always been an irrational system. But what can be more irrational than allowing our futures to depend on the gamblers of Wall Street? □

THINGS DON'T GO WELL WITH COKE IN OHIO

by STEVE STEWART

On February 28, 1985, 160 Teamsters, members of Local 1199 in Cincinnati, struck Coca Cola when their contract expired. The vote was 113 to 43.

The strikers were full of hope as the 140 Coke drivers in a separate union honored their pickets. On Friday, March 8, the Allied Food Council also showed support, calling for a boycott of Coke.

This quickly brought Coke back to the bargaining table. By this time, however, 150 scabs had been hired by the company. Along with supervisors, they managed to continue operations.

UNFAIR

The media coverage was unfair to the workers, portraying them as greedy and selfish. In reality they were being offered a five year contract with a quarter raise in the first year, increasing to 70 cents by the fifth year. Considering inflation, this works out to be a cut in wages. The company also proposed a change in the overtime structure from time and a half after eight hours and all day Saturday, to time and a half only after 40 hours.

The threat of losing their

jobs weighed heavily on the workers' minds as they voted 107 to 49 to approve Coke's proposed contract. This contract was basically the same proposal that they voted down on February 28.

Coke now has the right to sub-contract jobs to non-union firms as long as Local 1199 is fully employed.

By no coincidence, immediately following the settlement, Coca Cola officials announced that construction plans would be started in about two weeks to build a new bottling and canning facility to replace the current bottling plant.

It will surely require more workers to operate the new plant—and because of the new contract, they can be non-union.

After putting in 19 years at Coke, and going through three previous strikes, one picketer said, "If we lose this battle, I've lost my job."

In short, this contract paves the way for Coke to eliminate him along with the other members of Teamster Local 1199. And the contract also gives other owners confidence to go after long-term contracts designed to bust unions. □

LABOR'S DECLINE WILL ONLY BE REVERSED BY STRUGGLE

The number of strikes dropped to its lowest level in 38 years, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics released in March.

At the same time, the number of workers involved in "major" work stoppages, described as involving more than 1,000 workers and lasting more than one working day, stood at 376,000 workers in 1984—the lowest since 1963, when 512,000 workers took part in strikes.

Many of labor's top brass argue that these facts are further proof that the strike as a weapon is outdated—a relic

from the 1930's that is irrelevant to today's workers.

Strikes, they say, simply invite management to hire scabs and to break unions. As Lesley Israel of the Kamber Group, a leading consulting firm, put it: "Management is feeling very feisty and confident these days about their ability to exert their muscle and break a union, with no fear of the consequences."

Instead, it is argued, labor should be more "professional", using labor-management cooperation schemes and public pressure campaigns to force the

employers to bargain in "good faith."

MODERATION

The release of the strike figures in March was accompanied by commentary by business economists who praised labor's unions' new found "moderation" in wage demands. These comments should show the continued relevance of the strike weapon, not its irrelevance. Precisely as strikes have decreased, so have workers' living standards and union organization. The labor leaders' strategies will only accelerate this decline. □

FROM VIETNAM TO CENTRAL AMERICA

Brutal wars to defend ruling-class interests

Ten years after the U.S. was forced to withdraw from the Vietnam war we are still reminded of the conflict.

General Westmoreland recently took CBS to court over a television documentary he called libelous.

Thousands of Vietnam veterans discover that they are permanently damaged by exposure to Agent Orange—and are still being cheated out of the compensation they deserve—even if it won't ever make up for their damaged health.

And most important, once again, the U.S. is involved in an imperialist adventure abroad—this time, fighting a not-so-covert war to overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

The Reagan administration is backing right wing terrorists who continue to make forays into Nicaragua, while at the same time bolstering the reactionary military regime in El Salvador which has murdered thousands of Salvadoran workers and peasants.

The parallels between Vietnam and the current U.S. war in Central America are important to draw out—especially as the history of the Vietnam war is being systematically rewritten by apologists for the U.S. After ten years, it seems that little has changed—the U.S. has only shifted terrain.

EFFORTS

The Vietnam war stemmed from the efforts of the U.S. ruling class to dominate—both politically and economically—that region.

The Vietnam war finds its roots in the carve-up of the world which followed World War II.

U.S. rulers felt a powerful need to maintain "stability"



Thus, the Vietnam war should not be remembered 10 years after as a "tragic mistake" in U.S. foreign policy. It flowed from the needs of capitalism.

But the war should be remembered for something else. The Vietnam war had a profoundly radicalizing effect on American society. Millions took to the streets to protest the war.

Today is not 1968, or even 1975. But we should begin to build opposition to America's new wars, even if the climate is more conservative and patriotic. A good beginning will be to build and attend the demonstration in Washington D.C. on April 20.

The demonstration is also important because it links a number of issues, calling for an end to U.S. intervention in Central America, for an end to U.S. support to apartheid in South Africa, for jobs and for a rollback of the Reagan budget cuts.

Socialists must take part in the demonstration—to support active resistance to U.S. domestic and foreign policy, but also to argue that the march's organizing issues are linked because they are different elements of the same system.

It is the capitalist system, at the top of which stands the U.S. ruling class, which is the root of the problem of war abroad and poverty at home—as much today as during the Vietnam war. Eliminating war and poverty requires that the system be transformed.

But for that task to be accomplished, the power of the organized working class must be tapped. And building a socialist organization which will make these arguments is the only place to start today. □

in its sphere of influence—and of course, when they could, use their overwhelming economic and military power to extend that sphere.

The Chinese revolution of 1949—a war of national liberation from Western domination—shook the U.S. ruling class' plans. Throughout Asia, movements sprang up, the most dynamic of which were those in Indochina.

The U.S. supplanted the French in Vietnam after the Vietnamese liberation forces routed the French colonialists. But with U.S. interests in preserving its military bases in the East and in aiding the expansion of markets for U.S. goods in Japan, the Philippines and elsewhere, the war against the liberation forces became by 1965 a full-scale "American" war.

The central driving force behind the U.S. war in Vietnam was the need to show Russia—the world's other major superpower—that the

U.S. would fight to preserve its influence.

The horror of the Vietnam war is that it had little to do with Vietnam itself. It could have been fought almost anywhere.

Likewise, the U.S. is out to prove the same today, after a period of relative decline of its influence in the world. The national liberation movements throughout Central America threaten U.S. domination of the region—primarily U.S. investment in Mexico and Guatemala, as well as oil and other trade traffic through the Caribbean Basin.

But no matter how many lives are lost, the U.S. ruling class is out to show the world that they can and will defend their profits.

SET-BACK

But the U.S. ability to prop up the most brutal regimes at will, received a major setback in the successful overthrow of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua.

The Sandinistas' victory has inspired a number of other movements in the region, most importantly the one in El Salvador, that the U.S. has pledged to smash. Hence the funding of the contras in Honduras and aid to the government in El Salvador in its battle against the guerillas.

Today's challenge to U.S. power in the region comes in the context of a world crisis which destabilizes even the most ruthless regimes. Even though times have changed, U.S. foreign policy maintains the same aims.

It is important to remember that the Vietnam war began as a "covert" war in Southeast Asia. In 1959, the CIA destabilized the Laos government and set up Phoumi Nosavan as the military dictator. And U.S. funding for South Vietnam's military nearly allowed South Vietnamese and Thai troops to overthrow Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk in 1959.

Currently, the news is filled with the exploits of CIA

backed "covert" wars in Nicaragua. The CIA has already mined Nicaraguan harbors, destroyed power plants and other installations in an effort to destabilize the Sandinistas. And the Reagan administration is pressing Congress to approve more aid to the contras.

As the Vietnam experience shows, the threat of direct U.S. military intervention is never far behind "covert" operations. The Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was set up, in the words of Eisenhower Administration Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, "to provide our president legal authority to intervene in Indochina."

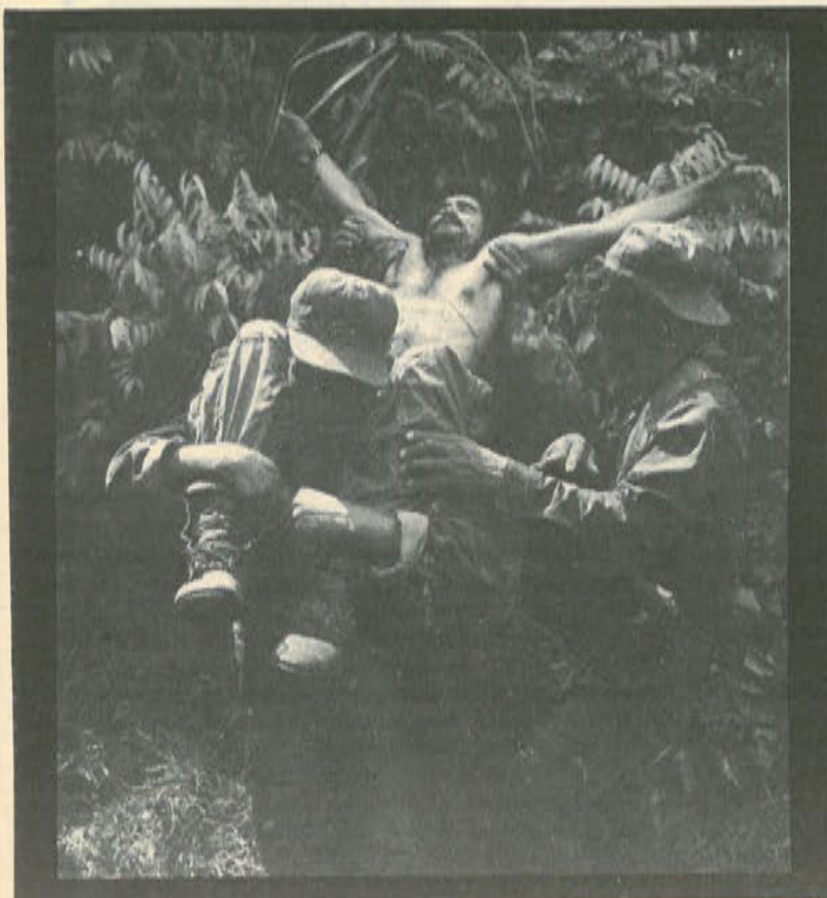
Today, the U.S. has revived the Council for Central American Defense (CONDECA), an organization of the pro-U.S. governments in the region set up in the wake of the Cuban revolution, to provide a pretense for U.S. intervention by inviting U.S. support if the contras should establish a "provisional government" in the sections of Nicaraguan territory they capture.

One has only to look at the role of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the U.S.-backed group which "requested" U.S. intervention in Grenada in October 1983.

TRANSPARENT

The U.S. government that fought the war in Vietnam said they were fighting the spread of communism throughout Asia—just as Reagan says the U.S. is fighting Cuban-Soviet influence in America's backyard. This is transparent nonsense—although ideologically important in justifying U.S. adventures abroad. The war in Central America stems from the need to maintain the political, economic and military power of the U.S. ruling class.

And the movements fighting for national liberation should be supported in attempting to rid themselves of U.S. backed dictatorships



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Bolivian general strike wins pay increase

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA—A 16-day general strike forced the Bolivian government and President Hernan Siles Zuazo to grant a 300% increase in its minimum wage.

The announcement of the raise came at the end of a tense week in March in which "democratic" president Zuazo called out the military.

BLOCK

The militancy of Bolivian workers has been the main stumbling block in the way of

the government's attempts to impose drastic austerity measures ordered by Bolivia's creditors. In May, following on the heels of International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands for cuts in social spending, the Bolivian Labor Confederation (COB) organized three-day general strike. The government backed off.

In November, when the government tried to repeat its failure from May, the COB called an indefinite general strike. But COB leaders called

off the strike after nine days, giving the government room to implement some austerity measures.

Last month's raise in the minimum wage represents the regime's attempt to buy off this discontent. Though the general strike's achievement is impressive, prices will likely rise much faster than wages can catch up. The current inflation rate is an astronomical 50,000%. The paper on which the money is printed is Bolivia's third leading import.

The debt crisis shows no sign of letting up. About one quarter of the country's foreign earnings are spent to pay back previous debts. And the IMF is standing back with more austerity plans, waiting for the government to establish "order."

FORCE

The military patrols in the streets in March are signals that the "national unity" government of Siles Zuazo, which contains representatives from

the country's leading social democratic party and from the Communist Party, is quite prepared to use force to "preserve order."

Working class struggle—often independent of the conservative leaders of unions and reformist parties—has prevented the government from working its will in following the bankers' dictates. A heightened struggle will be necessary to preserve working class living standards in the future. □



THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF BLACK AMERICA

The promise and failure of populism

It was an event without precedent in the South. On a moment's notice, 2,000 white farmers dropped their work, picked up their guns and rode in from across the state to Thomson, Georgia. They came to defend a young Black preacher threatened with lynching for his political activities.

The year was 1892, an election year. The Black man, H.S. Doyle, was under attack by the southern ruling class for having made 63 speeches in support of Tom Watson, the white congressional candidate of the newly formed People's (Populist) Party, and the main leader of the southern and most radical wing of that party.

Populism emerged in response to the frightful conditions faced by small farmers, tenants and sharecroppers in the 1880s and 1890s. In these years, steadily growing numbers of them became dependent on the "crop-lien system" for credit—a system that turned them into virtual debt-slaves and forced them to plant more and more of their land in cotton.

Yet the price of cotton continued to fall, from a dollar a pound at the end of the Civil War to 7¢ a pound in 1891—less than it cost to produce. To these already poor farmers, the depression of the 1890s—the worst in American history until the 1930s—came as the last straw. For many, their survival was at stake.

All this had taken place under the reign of the "Bourbon Democrats," an alliance of planters and new industrialists who ruled the South unchallenged since the defeat of Reconstruction in the 1870s. These Democrats had relied upon racism to keep themselves in power, using the specter of "Black rule" to keep poor whites in line.

UNITED STRUGGLE

But faced with the crisis conditions of the 1880s and 1890s, many Southern farmers, Black and white, began to think for themselves. They realized that their only hope lay in a united struggle against the big planters and capitalists.

by NANCY MACLEAN

In the late 1880s they began to organize cooperative efforts to deal with their problems. By 1890 some three million white farmers belonged to the Southern Farmers' Alliance, and 1¼ million southern Black farmers belonged to the Colored Farmers' National Alliance. These groups, along with fledgling unions in the urban areas, provided the basis for the Populist Party, founded in St. Louis in 1892.

Denouncing both major parties as "tools of the capitalists," the Populists adopted a broad platform. It included changes in the currency system that would help debt-stricken farmers and workers, support for organized labor and for a shorter work day for industrial workers, government ownership of public utilities, a graduated income tax and many democratic reforms of the nation's political system, such as the right to referendums, recall and female suffrage.

Millions of farmers and workers found in the Populist program a voice for their anger at the gross inequalities and injustices of American society at the time.

In 1892, the Populist presidential candidate won over a million votes—8.5% of the total—and over 1,500 Populist candidates won election to state legislatures.

The populist movement held out the hope for a very different South—for both Black and white sharecroppers.

Clearly, the Populists were a force to be reckoned with. Yet their greatest threat was not in the specific reforms they called for, but rather in the future they looked to.

In the South, the Populists threatened the mainstay of ruling class power: division among the exploited. As Tom Watson explained to Black and white farmers: "You are kept apart, that you may be fleeced separate-

ly of your earnings. You are made to hate each other because upon that hatred is rested the financial despotism that enslaves you both. You are deceived and blinded that you may not see how this race antagonism perpetuates a system that beggars both."

COMMON INTERESTS

The Populists were not explicitly anti-racist, but they emphatically defended the political rights and equality of Blacks, and they insisted on the common economic interests of the oppressed and exploited. As Watson said, "The accident of color can make no difference in the interests of farmers, croppers and laborers."

For the South, indeed for the U.S. of the time, this was a revolutionary stand. Its result was to briefly bring Blacks and whites together in a common class struggle the likes of which had never been seen before or since in the South.

The response of the southern ruling class was swift and effective. Through fraud, bribery, intimidation, violence and terror, they denied Populists their rights and stole their hard-won electoral

victories. In 1892 alone, 155 Blacks and 100 whites died at the hands of lynchers. Throughout the South, armed planters hauled their Black croppers to the polls in wagon-loads and forced them to vote for the Democratic Party.

But brutality and fraud were only tools in the chest of the ruling class. Another was to rekindle irrational white fears of Blacks through vicious racist propaganda.

And then there was co-optation. The Democratic Party did an about-face in 1896, putting forth a presidential candidate who spouted the rhetoric of reform in order to steal the Populists' thunder. The Democrats had no intention of making any real changes, but the more far-sighted realized that they had to pay lip-service to reform in order to contain the spread of radicalism.

Through such tactics, the Democrats managed to defeat the Populist movement and de-fuse its threat to ruling class power.

INTERNAL PROBLEMS

The movement had its own internal problems that contributed to defeat, of course. It was neither

a working class based nor a socialist movement, and as such it had no chance of fundamentally changing the capitalist society in which it grew. Likewise, class conflicts existed even within the movement, between medium-sized planters, like Watson, and the Black and white tenants they employed.

But even with its limitations, the Populist movement gives us an inspiring glimpse of what a united struggle by the exploited can achieve, and of how quickly old prejudices and fears can change in a common fight around common interests. And no other movement of the time held such promise for the rural poor. Its defeat, therefore, ushered in an era of disaster for the 90% of Black Americans who still lived on the land, and for their poor, white one-time allies.

The defeat of Populism paved the way for unprecedented reaction and repression. Beginning with Mississippi in 1890, the ruling Democrats devised a series of limits on voting rights which effectively disenfranchised Blacks—and later many poor whites—throughout the South. At the same time, they wrote the practice of segregation into Jim Crow laws.

The disillusionment and bitterness bred by defeat made poor whites vulnerable to the worst sort of demagoguery. Democratic Party politicians now made the manipulation of racism their stock in trade, using it to distract poor whites from their real problems and their real enemies, while their own conditions grew worse by the year. Many former populists, including Tom Watson, became virulent racists.

DEFEAT

The demise of the Populist movement was thus a defeat for almost all concerned. All, that is, except the ruling class who organized that defeat, and their Democratic Party, which stole only enough of the Populists' platform to derail the movement, but not enough to effect any real change.

Once again, the Democratic Party earned its reputation as the graveyard of American radicalism. □



Newly freed slave family

Pan Am strike: Another attack on airline workers

A tentative agreement has been reached in the Pan Am strike. But the strike highlighted the airlines' offensive against airline unions.

LEE SUSTAR reports on the strike and explains its importance—both for

NEW YORK, NY—Nearly a month after it began, a strike against Pan American Airways by 5,000 members of the Transport Workers Union is facing the isolation and scabbing that has defeated walk-outs at other airlines.

The strike began February 28 with solidarity all too rare today—5,000 members of Local 504 of the TWU were joined at the picket line by Pan Am's 6,000 Teamsters, 5,000 members of the Union of Flight Attendants and the Airline Pilots' Association, which virtually never honors picket lines. The pilots had signed a new contract with Pan Am less than a week earlier.

ISSUES

The issues included Pan Am's refusal to restore a 14.5% "temporary" wage cut negotiated in the 1981 contract, the company's unilateral decision to stop paying workers' pension funds, company demands for layoffs of 700 commissary workers and the creation of part-time positions for mechanics.

More than 3,000 workers from all four unions on March

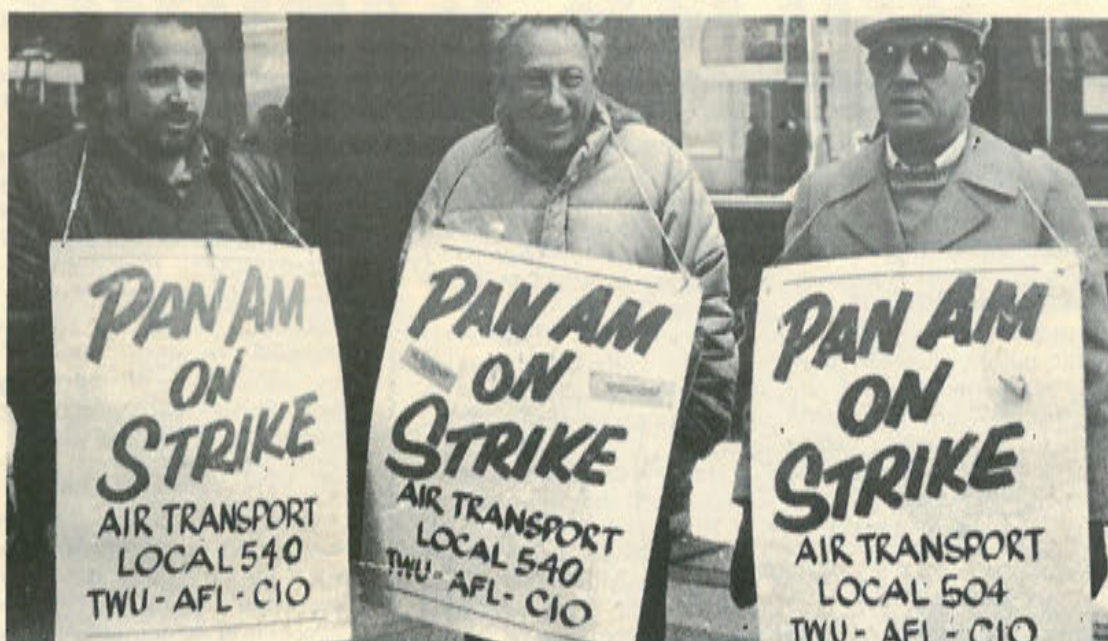
Pan Am and other airline workers, arguing that solidarity action is the key to turning the employers' assault.

7 clogged the streets in front of the Pan Am building in midtown Manhattan to demand a decent contract for the mechanics represented by the TWU. It was the biggest labor rally the city had seen since the Greyhound strike in the fall of 1983.

But just hours after showing apparent solidarity, pilots began crossing picket lines. Pan Am flights jumped from five or six per day to nearly half their normal capacity, robbing the strike of its initial effectiveness. Still, morale remained high. A mass picket outside a Pan Am hangar at JFK Airport forced the company to shut down an "open house" hiring session for scab flight attendants.

On March 14, about 1,000 TWU picketers ignored police barriers and sat down in the middle of the passenger entrance to the Pan Am terminal. Although cops arrested 40 workers, the city's media ignored the event.

Only about 200 flight attendants heeded Pan Am threats to fire them if they did not return to work. But on March 21, the UFA executive board voted 7-6 to order the atten-



dants to cross the TWU picket line—even though the UFA's contract with Pan Am expires April 1. Pan Am is attempting to engineer the kind of split in union ranks that defeated strikes at Braniff and Continental airlines, where pilots crossed picket lines only to find themselves the target of the bosses' attacks.

PROFESSIONALS

"We never expected the pilots to support us," said Herb Hintz, a flight dispatcher at Pan Am for the past 25 years. "They think of themselves as professionals, not workers. As for the flight at-

tendants, they should have never left the TWU. They thought they could get a better contract on their own. They may find out differently."

Bob, a TWU shop steward and a mechanic at the Pan Am's JFK hub for the past 17 years, said that although the flight attendants' return to work hurt the union, the strike may yet succeed. "They made it more difficult by going back to work. Pan Am can shift management people who had been flight attendants to other duties. But they still can't put them on maintenance," he said.

"You can't learn that overnight. Even if they get a lot of people from the armed services, mechanics still have to train them. It will still put a crimp in their style. Once they start flying more planes, they will create more work. The more planes you fly, the more maintenance you need."

SECRET

TWU leaders, who have kept negotiations with management secret even from the rank and file, are making no effort to keep scabs from crossing picket lines. Instead, they are waiting for Pan Am's planes to deteriorate to the point of being unsafe to fly.

But such a strategy has major weaknesses. "I remember the Continental strike," Bob said. "The Federal Aviation



Pan-Am Chairman Acker

Administration didn't do anything about the severe maintenance problems—we call them "no go" items. But the FAA is another organization that is not really doing its job.

"It doesn't go into action until 150-200 people are killed in an accident." Pan Am can do all but the heaviest airplane jet maintenance at its hubs in Frankfurt, West Germany, London and Tokyo, he said.

The mechanic sees the crumbling solidarity of the Pan Am strike as part of broader problems among trade unions. "The real trouble with the labor movement started with PATCO. Everyone stood back now and let Reagan fire them," he said. "Since then, business has been able to do what Caesar did: divide and conquer. Union leaders have become more establishment-oriented. They fight among themselves, cross each other's picket lines. Meanwhile, they're watching their own base erode. Unions are losing millions of members."

ESTABLISHMENT

Workers must look to themselves to fight that trend, Bob said. "The media is 90% establishment-oriented. They say we are asking for a 20% raise, but they don't mention that we are trying to get back 14% that they took away from us in the last contract. The raise is really only 6%."

"Everything is establishment-oriented today. Look at the minister (Douglas Roth) in Pittsburgh. The Constitution says there is supposed to be a separation of church and state. But they threw him in jail for trying to help working people.

"How do they get away with that?" □

WHY WE LOST THIS STRIKE

Michael Mascaros, a Pan Am flight dispatcher for the last 26 years, told Socialist Worker that the Pan Am bosses' attack was part of the larger employers' offensive.

“ Union leaders don't see the whole picture. This strike has become a single issue. We picket once a week and that's it. But that's how they get away with things like (busting) PATCO and Continental Airlines. If there had been an air traffic controllers strike in Europe, you would have seen a 24-hour work stoppage. All flights grounded. It would have given the administration something to think about.

But in Europe, union membership is much higher. Here it is only 18%. Very simply, strikes are becoming a losing proposition.

PILOTS

This strike was damaged when the pilots went back to work. How do you have solidarity with a guy who makes \$100,000 a year? They didn't learn from the Continental strike (where pilots crossed mechanics' picket lines only to have their own union attacked afterward). They reason they can make enough money even with a 2% pay raise.

The Transit Workers Union has had solidarity with the United Flight Attendants and the Teamsters. We all face the



same problems.

This strike is not going to be won. We have already lost. And it will take a long time to get back what we have lost. The only question now is whether or not the company gets everything it wants—our pensions. They unilaterally stopped paying into the pension fund in 1983. They want to push us back 30 years.

We gave them wage concessions in 1981—a 14% cut. Concessions don't save jobs.

Pan Am has continued to push commissary workers out the door and subcontracted the work. We were supposed to get the wage cut restored as of January 1, 1985. The union had to go to court to get it.

The turning point in the strike was the pilots' decision to cross the picket line. You can get flight attendants fairly easily—Pan Am put 500 trainees into the air right

away. You can even get by without the mechanics. There are maintenance crews in London, Frankfurt and Rio. Not to mention the supervisors in New York, San Francisco and Miami who can also do the work. As long as they don't fly 100% of their capacity—which they are not—they can do it.

SOLIDARITY

This strike began with real solidarity. We had 3,000 workers demonstrating around the Pan Am building—pilots, flight attendants, Teamsters as well as mechanics. The cops had to close off three blocks and called in the mounted police to keep us in line. They were ready to start swinging their clubs—typical fascists.

That solidarity didn't last. But that was the kind of solidarity that could have won the PATCO strike—mechanics, pilots and flight attendants could have gotten behind the air traffic controllers and said, "screw you, Drew Lewis" (then the Secretary of Transportation).

I have sympathy for the socialist movement. It has valid reasons for existing. People should feel free to look at politics in different ways. People should be able to spend their time thinking, creating things. But if you have to be down working in a coal mine eight hours a day, you won't get the chance to do it. ”

Talking about socialism

WHY WORK UNDER CAPITALISM IS ALIENATING

For Marxists the ultimate aim of the working class movement is a society based on the principle "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs."

Distribution based on need is more equal than giving everyone the same—it recognizes individuals with different needs.

But before this can happen, capitalism must be overthrown and replaced with socialism on a world scale, where production is planned and based on satisfying the basic needs of everyone.

MOTIVATED

An impossibility people tell us. People are motivated to contribute according to their abilities when they are rewarded properly—when they receive a greater reward than someone else. Inequality, by this argument, is essential to make people work and society function.

But if this is true, why do some of the most unpleasant or most dangerous jobs receive less incentive under capitalism? For example, garbage collectors, miners and firefighters all perform necessary and often dangerous work. They receive, however, less incentive (pay) than cleaner and safer jobs such as those of architects, doctors or corporate managers.

Then there are those who do no work at all, but simply invest their money and get the highest incentive of all—the capitalists.

If people only worked for proper rewards, then capitalism would have never gotten off the ground. Most people work because they have to. The real incentive is to not starve, to have a roof overhead.

INCENTIVE

This incentive would still exist under socialism, too. Work would still be necessary because human labor is the foundation of any society. The difference is that under socialism everyone would work.

Another way in which work would be different is the elimination of competitive work. Under capitalism, individuals are divided

by BILL ROBERTS

through piece-work, through promotions and through physical versus brain work. Women are pitted against men, Blacks against whites, the old against the young. These divisions are only necessary in order to maximize profits.

But socialism offers everyone the collective incentive of working as a team to directly improve the common good.

Under capitalism workers have to sell their labor power to an employer. What is important for the seller is the price this commodity (labor power) will bring. Its final use is of little concern.

Auto workers don't work for GM because they like making cars any more than secretaries like working for Prudential and enjoy typing insurance policies. The motive is money. It's what is necessary in order to live under this system.

Marx called this kind of work—work under capitalism—"alienated labor." It's alienated because once the compulsion to work is removed, people want to stop working. Thus, whenever someone wins a big lottery prize, they generally quit their job.

COLLECTIVE

Socialism, in which the producers are the collective owners of the means of production, will do away with this alienated form of work.

Attitudes towards work will change with workers' control and the application of technology to reduce drudgery and dangerous or dirty work. The working week can and eventually will be reduced, and people will have time to develop other skills and interests. Work will become more integrated to living, instead of being just a means of escaping poverty.

From simply being a means to earn money, work will become a positive human need. Then people will contribute according to their abilities. The incentive will be in the work itself and the contribution it makes to society as a whole.

Once achieved, human freedom can begin. □

Union Carbide blames victims for deaths

by ALAN MAASS

The corporate killers at Union Carbide are doing their very best to pass the blame for the chemical disaster at its pesticide plant in Bhopal, India—the worst industrial accident in history.

The company released the results of a "lengthy investigation" that called the accident "the result of a unique combination of unusual events," and that placed blame for the disaster—which killed more than 2,000—squarely on Indian workers.

Union Carbide officials claimed to be "shocked" by violations of operating procedures and safety regulations at the Bhopal plant.

JARGON

And their corporate study was filled with highly technical jargon designed to shift attention to a series of procedural irregularities that the corporation wants us to believe was responsible for the gas leak.

Carbide Chairman Warren Anderson went so far as to suggest that workers might have sabotaged the plant's operation—not realizing the tragedy that could result.

Nowhere have any corporate officials bothered to say why Union Carbide cannot ensure the safe operation of its equipment and plants.

Anderson declared, "Compliance with safety procedures is a local issue."

Apparently compliance with the slightest regard for human life is hardly an issue that would concern Union Carbide's executives.

The release of Carbide's investigation was little more than a promotional stunt—and a pretty mediocre one at that. The study's release coincided with an announcement that the corporation would reopen a plant in West Virginia that processes the



same chemical that caused the deaths in Bhopal.

According to the bosses, at Union Carbide, conditions like those at Bhopal would not be tolerated in the U.S.

Unfortunately for Union Carbide executives, their lies are exposed almost as quickly as they think them up.

LUCK

Only a week earlier, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced an investigation into a toxic leak at another Carbide plant in West Virginia.

Ten people were injured by the leak as the toxic emissions formed a vapor that drifted toward a local shopping mall where, said a witness, it fell "sort of like raindrops."

One local official said, "We've not had a leak of this magnitude before."

Meanwhile, Union Carbide is trying to cut a deal with the Indian government to keep any payments for legal damages out of court.

That way, they can keep the

costs down—and avoid being legally implicated for negligence. The prospects for an out-of-court settlement look good, especially as the new government in India is anxious to attract even more U.S. investment.

THREAT

Union Carbide, the third largest chemical manufacturer in the U.S., is really only suffering from hard luck; most other manufacturers run the same risk of industrial disaster in one way or another.

The fact is that corporations do anything they can to avoid instituting really safe working conditions—because the cost of safety cuts into profits.

For the ruling class, the "grim lesson of Bhopal" is that industrial accidents can happen anywhere—and they cannot be prevented.

For us, the lesson of Bhopal is that the ruling class can tolerate the deaths of thousands—as long as their precious profits aren't touched. □

Graffiti

Wendy's beef . . .

Clara Poller, who asked "Where's the Beef?" in Wendy's TV commercial got her walking papers last month. Wendy's fired her after she "found the beef"—in another company's spaghetti ad.

And Nothing But the Truth!

A CIA memo introduced as evidence in the Westmoreland-CBS libel trial included this question: "Have we gone beyond the bounds of reasonable dishonesty?" □

Serious Business . . .

A May Chicago marketing seminar promises to apply "the classic wartime principles of German militarist Karl Von Clausewitz" to marketing in its brochures announcing the event. □

Scout's Honor . . .

The Boy Scouts of America are planning to introduce a new merit badge that Scouts can earn—the American Labor badge. The National Right to Work Committee objected, saying the Scouts should teach "right to work" principles and not offer information about unions. The Boy Scouts have promised, faithfully, to "maintain a proper balance." □



The lessons of the British miners' strike

SPECIAL REPORT
BY
SOCIALIST
WORKER

THE YEAR-LONG British miners strike collapsed in March—and British workers suffered their biggest defeat since the 1926 General Strike.

For one year, miners in Britain's coal heartlands fought against tremendous odds—police attacks, an unrelenting Thatcher government, a rabidly hostile press, and—quite literally—starvation—to protect the jobs the National Coal Board decided to sacrifice to "efficiency" and "productivity."

And while the miners fought courageously, their titular leaders, Labor Party head Neil Kinnock and Trades Union Congress (the equivalent to the AFL-CIO) head Norman Willis, sold them out.

Kinnock, nursing hopes of becoming prime minister as Margaret Thatcher's popularity ebbs, sat on the fence throughout the strike. He jumped off it only

once—in October, when he denounced the miners for picket line violence.

FULL-SCALE

Willis went even further. Though the September TUC national congress endorsed full-scale mobilization in support of the miners, in February Willis actually attempted to persuade the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to accept a settlement that was so unfavorable that the most conservative members of the NUM executive could not accept it.

This defeat will have a major impact on the course of the class struggle in Britain over the next several years.



THE BETRAYAL OF THE STRIKE

ON MARCH 1, 1984, the National Coal Board, the state monopoly that runs the British coal industry, announced that it would begin closing uneconomic pits. It closed the Cortonwood colliery and announced plans to close several other pits.

This was a provocation. The government provoked the strike to weaken the strongest section of the British trade union movement. Once the miners were defeated, the Tories predicted, they could attack one section of workers after another until they had succeeded in their plans to cut workers' wages—a strategy to make British capitalism more competitive.

The government expected a short strike. But NUM locals in Yorkshire and Scotland called indefinite strikes within days of the Cortonwood closing. On March 8, the NUM Executive sanctioned a nationwide strike.

MOBILIZATION

Two weeks later, the government drafted 10,000 police to Nottinghamshire in the largest anti-union mobilization since 1926. Thus began the government's all-out attempt to defeat the strike. Over the year, the government spent more money trying to defeat the miners—about \$30,000 per miner—than it did in either the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war or on the 1984 housing budget.

"Flying" pickets began to crisscross Britain—despite police roadblocks and court injunctions banning them, as miners locals attempted to win support from unions at steel and power plants. A few months into the strike, scab miners groups began to emerge,

backed by the government and business. These groups sued the NUM for the "right to work." The courts supported most such groups claims.

By June, the focus of attention had shifted to the Orgreave coke plant—a key facility whose closing could have brought the miners to victory. Arthur Scargill, the NUM president, called for every trade unionist in Britain to show up for mass pickets at Orgreave. But union officials in the Orgreave area sent pickets elsewhere, leaving the mass pickets—when they did take place—weak and demoralized.

WEAKNESSES

Orgreave not only exposed the weaknesses in strike organization, the unwillingness of the union leaders to act in support of the miners, but also the brutality of the Thatcher government. On June 18, strikers were met by 5,000 police in full riot gear. Scores of miners were injured, including Scargill, who was hospitalized.

But in early July, following on the heels of the Orgreave defeat, another opportunity to win the strike suddenly appeared. Dockworkers throughout Britain struck against government employment of non-union labor to unload ships.

Suddenly, the Thatcher government was faced with a two-front war. And it was scared.

But ten days later, the dockworkers' leaders agreed to government promises to hire union labor, and settled the strike. Once again, the miners were left to fight alone.

The miners weren't completely alone, however. The strike



radicalized the small mining villages which British police had turned into armed camps. Particularly important was the emergence of groups of miners' wives and girlfriends, who organized pickets, kitchens, fundraising and other activities. In August, a group called Women Against Pit Closings marched in London.

The women's efforts challenged many of the sexist assumptions that the male miners had shared. By the strike's end, the women were being called "the backbone of the strike."

ATTACK

The government began a two-pronged attack on the NUM. Following a High Court ruling declaring the strike illegal, the government moved to seize NUM funds. This amounted neatly to outlawing the NUM. And the government stepped up negotiations with NUM leaders, trying to appear reasonable while it continued to batter the union.

As the Christmas holidays drew near, the Coal Board tried another tactic—offering holiday bonuses to workers who would cross picket lines. These bonuses were already owed the workers, but they were significant in luring a few hundred miners across the lines. Still, the core of the strike was intact despite a stepped-up media back-to-work campaign.

As 1984 ended, the TUC delivered another blow, announcing that it would not take action in support of the NUM and risk contempt charges from the High Court. This was the last nail in the strike's coffin.

By January, the strike was obviously weakening. Solidarity was breaking down in several areas and the government, more confident than ever of unconditional victory, began to close other pits and stonewall negotiations.

The strike broke when in the days of the February and first days of March as area locals voted to return to work.

A BATTLE LOST-BUT A WAR TO WIN

THERE ARE a number of lessons to be drawn from the experience of the British miners' strike—that apply, despite different conditions—to the U.S.

The miners proved completely wrong a number of assumptions that have become commonplace on the left: that the working class has disappeared, is powerless and helpless in the face of the bosses onslaught. Despite their defeat the miners showed fantastic heroism, determination and power during their strike.

The role of the left-wing reformist leaders—who mouthed support but sabotaged the strike—shows the bankruptcy of reformism in general as a viable strategy. And the role of the police only highlighted the willingness of the ruling class to use force when threatened.

But many—and militant activists among them—will draw the conclusion that industrial action, strikes cannot defeat the bosses. But this is to misinterpret what happened to the miners' strike.

The fundamental factor which led to the miners' defeat was the abysmal failure of the labor movement to provide solidarity action.

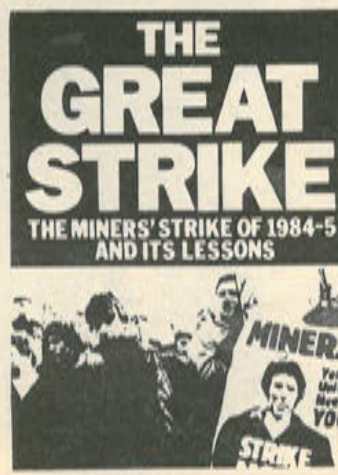
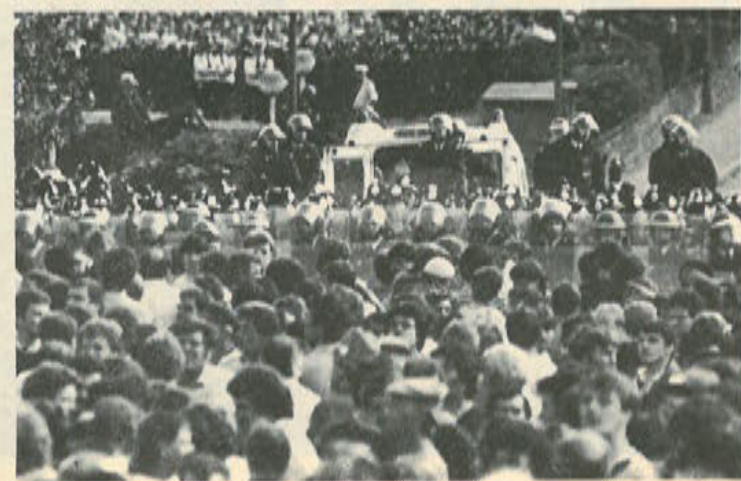
It was not a failure of the whole movement—tens of thousands of individual workers supported the miners—but fundamentally of the movement's leaders.

Unfortunately, the role of these leaders in selling out the strike will not immediately translate into a move to the left, and to the demise of the right in the unions.

On the contrary, the miners' defeat—and the ensuing demoralization—will make labor-management cooperation and parliamentarism more practical to the ideas of class struggle and working class action.

STRUGGLE

Socialists will have to help combat this drift to the right. But they will also have to continue to make the difficult arguments for class struggle—and for the overriding need to build an independent revolutionary socialist party in the workplace. This is the only strategy to win the war—even if workers have lost this battle. □



A new book from Socialist Worker by Alex Callinicos and Mike Simmons reviews the British miners' strike and draws out its implications and lessons for the class struggle in Britain.

Available in mid-April from Hera Press, Post Office Box 16085, Chicago, Illinois 60616. \$6.00 (Postage included).

THE CRISIS IN U.S. FA

U.S. farmers are facing their biggest crisis since the Great Depression. Nearly 20% of U.S. farms are on the verge of bankruptcy, according to an Iowa State University economist. An estimated 12%—or about 250,000 farms—will go bankrupt this year alone.

And while farmers are floating on \$212 billion of debt, nearly the size of the federal budget deficit, the Reagan administration's "market-oriented" proposals to cut credit and subsidies make no bones about their ultimate aim—the driving from business of the weaker, smaller farms.

Significantly, the crisis has provoked organization—specifically, a new group called "Groundswell"—among farmers to fight the administration's plans. Many of the farmers who voted for Reagan only five months ago are taking part in protest rallies like the one that drew 1,200 farmers to St. Paul, Minnesota in February. At several locations around the Farm Belt, farmers and their families have organized rallies of 200 to 500 people to prevent creditors from auctioning off their equipment.

These events are important. But they can only be understood by taking a closer look at the American agricultural system as a whole. **Len Silva** looks at the issues involved.

Although comparisons of the current farm crisis with that of the Great Depression abound, in reality, the crises are very different.

In 1930, about one-fifth of the U.S. population lived and worked on farms. Today, the figure is three percent. Thus, farming played a much greater role in the U.S. economy as a whole. New Deal farm subsidies—the first major government support for farming—were politically crucial.

The Great Depression on the farm resulted from a concentration of ownership and production, and the simultaneous introduction of new farm technology—such as heavier mechanization, hybrid seeds and petroleum pesticides.

These "labor saving" innovations served to drive millions of people off the land as subsistence family farms collapsed, unable to compete with the higher technology.

Farming, always sensitive to changes in credit, also suffered disproportionately when the U.S. banking system collapsed in 1929.

The New Deal ushered in farm policies that are relatively intact today—subsidies to boost the prices of specific commodities, government-backed loans

to farmers, controls on production levels.

With government support and higher technology, farming became a big and productive business—even while the percentage of Americans living on farms dropped to the lowest of all the advanced countries.

RESTRUCTURING

The 1985 crisis, on the other hand, represents a restructuring of the agricultural economy that is not as radical as that of the 1930s. If the 1930s represented a sharp break with the past, the 1980s represent a consolidation and concentration of an already large, multi-million dollar, high-tech industry.

One-half of U.S. farms—unlike the Great Depression days—are not in debt. They are the massive corporate farms that will weather the crisis and come out stronger—much to the Reagan administration's liking.

But it is the farmers who depend heavily on debt, much of it government-backed, who are losing out. These farms' main asset—land values—has collapsed in the last four years.

In the 1970s, when land prices were high, many farmers bought land expecting to sell it for a profit later. But the bottom fell out of the market, and farmers, stuck with shrinking assets, became greater risks for bank loans. With banks refusing to lend and Reagan determined to pull the credit plug, these farms are going under. □

A society whose food production is based on human need would produce enough for all to eat—and guarantee producers the ability to make a living.

While many lament the death of the family farm in 1985, it isn't hard to see that the family farm actually died long ago.

In 1950, the average farm encompassed 213 acres. Today, the average is 433 acres. Between 1950 and 1983, the average assets per farm increased seven times and the average farm owner's net worth increased by about 15 percent.

These facts add up to one thing: most U.S. agricultural output comes from huge corporate farms that are technologically advanced and well-financed—and benefitted by government programs.

LOSES

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) counts 2.4 million farms in the U.S. The vast majority of these—1.7 million—sell less than \$40,000 in commodities annually. The average owner of one of these farms actually loses money on farming, but supplements his or her income by off-farm jobs.

Thirteen percent of farms, those selling \$100,000 or more, account for 68 percent of farm sales, according to USDA. The largest 25,000 farms account for 30 percent of farm output.

Contrary to popular notions, it is this top 13 percent which



receives approximately two-thirds of all government price supports.

The 12 percent of farms that sell between \$100,000 and \$499,999 in goods per year earn 38.1 percent of direct government payments. To keep food prices high, the government pays large farms like these to take acreage out of production or to subsidize commodity prices.

In theory, the price supports are supposed to trickle down to the smallest farmers. But because so much investment is required even to start a farm—a typical Wisconsin dairy farm costs more than \$500,000 to start, a typical California irrigated rice farm \$2.3 million—it is not surprising that these farmers cannot "buy in" to the programs. They must survive on non-farm employment.

AGRIBUSINESS

Thus, many of the subsidies amount to government grants to agribusiness. In contrast, the average government benefit to farms that sell between \$40,000 and \$100,000 annually amounts to about \$60 per week—less than unemployment compensation in some states.

So, who are the nation's farmers? The majority of food produced does not come from "family farmers," but from

huge agricultural corporations—agribusinesses—that own and cultivate millions of acres. These are the giant food corporations like Del Monte, Castle and Cooke and Dole.

In addition, much of farm land in the U.S. is owned by non-agricultural businesses. Oil companies, such as Standard Oil of California, own thousands of acres.

Almost 40 percent of the loans for buying farm land come from Fortune 500 pension funds, according to *Progressive Farmer*, or from insurance companies or large banks. Many of these institutions are large landowners themselves. □

FARMING

Who are the farmers who have organized and protested from Washington to the Chicago Board of Trade, the world's major commodity exchange?

Many are farmers who sell between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in goods yearly and cultivate 1,000 to 2,000 acres. These farmers are the ones locked in the debt cycle. Their position is similar to that of the independent truck drivers who have organized protests in recent years.

On the one hand, these farmers, like the independent owner operators, are small business people. They aspire to be "their own bosses" and to get rich by out-selling other farmers on the market.

FORCES

On the other hand, these farmers are victims of a number of forces, such as levels of government subsidy and banks, that operate beyond their



The "family farm" really died a long time ago.

Much of U.S. farm land is owned by non-agricultural big business. Companies like Standard Oil of California own thousands of acres.

FORMING



The irrationality of capitalist food production that agribusiness is paid to idle one-third productive farm land while millions—from Ethiopia to Southeast Asia starve to death for no reason but profit margins.



Agriculture Secretary, John Block (left) and pig

IS BIG BUSINESS

control. And many of them work grueling 16-hour days with dangerous equipment in all weather conditions. The current farm organizing in Groundswell and in the American Agricultural Movement shows that many can no longer live in the "old" way. Signs criticizing the arms race and announcing labor union support for the farmers have appeared in the farmers' demonstrations. Some farmers threatened by the current crisis can move leftwards—like some truckers did—and identify their interests with those of workers and the poor. But the crisis has also strengthened the influence of right wing forces—that use "radical" rhetoric but offer no real alternative to the farmers' crisis. The current Congressional debate on the Farm Bill revolves around several versions of similar initiatives. While the Reagan

Agricultural Adjustment Act would mean a virtual repeal of most New Deal farm policies, other bills move in the same direction at a slower pace.

WASTE

Some kind of emergency farm credit package could emerge from Congress this year. However, it will only supply a Band-Aid for a system which is bent on driving smaller, less efficient producers off the land. This is not because farmers do not work hard enough, but because farming is Big Business.

A society whose food production is based on human need would produce enough for all to eat and would guarantee producers the ability to make a living. But the irrationality of the capitalist food machine is that agribusiness is paid to idle one-third of productive farm land while millions from Ethiopia to southeast Asia starve to death.

PCB OPPONENTS STORM CITY COUNCIL MEETING

BLOOMINGTON, IN—Over 200 residents of this midwestern college town filled city council chambers March 20.

The standing room only crowd came armed with over 7,700 signatures on a "Petition of Instruction" demanding that the city council cancel their planned final vote of an out-of-court settlement with Westinghouse Corporation.

In 1975, city officials discovered that Westinghouse, which manufactured electrical capacitors using polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in its plant on Bloomington's west side, had allowed PCB to be haphazardly spread all over the county. Research has linked exposure to PCB with often fatal diseases.

Of hundreds of known sites of PCB contamination in Bloomington and Monroe County, the secretly negotiated settlement with Westinghouse would clean up only six.

EXPERIMENTAL

The settlement, called a "consent decree," allows the corporate giant's Hazardous Waste Management Division to build an experimental incinerator using Bloomington as the guinea pig.

Incineration of PCB releases carcinogens (furans and dioxins) into the atmosphere. The settlement offers nothing to Westinghouse workers and city residents who report PCB-related illnesses and deaths.

It would locate the incinerator upwind from downtown.

While the consent decree was made public, details of the secret negotiations which produced it remain secret. The Environmental Protection Agency threatened to sue the city if it did not approve the settlement.

Bloomington is controlled by a Democratic Party machine which has caved in under pressure from the federal government and Westinghouse. Everyone knew the council's vote would be eight for and one against the settlement.

On the night of the final vote, the city council chambers were so packed with angry citizens that many who came to speak couldn't even get into the room. But the council refused to move or postpone the meeting.

The council attempted to limit public input to three minutes per speaker. Com-

by BILL STANT

munity activists presented their petition to the council. It demanded fundamental changes in the consent decree, full discussion of those changes required postponing the vote on the decree as it stood. But it was soon clear that the council intended to disregard the petition's instructions. Support for the petition from 7,700 of the city's 53,000 residents meant nothing to the council.

CHEERED

When David Shaik, the former city chemist, fired for opposing the policy of secrecy, demanded that the mayor and the entire council resign, the crowd cheered wildly.

When community activist Mike Andrews demanded that the petition replace the consent decree as the item under discussion, the crowd rose to its feet for a full 15 minutes, clapped and chanted, "Not Vote!" and "resign!"

Gross threatened to call a vote if the crowd was not silent. The people advanced on the councilpeople and engaged them individually in loud face-to-face debates. When Gross

Media coverage of the protest condemned the action as mob rule. The Herald-Telephone, Bloomington's right-wing daily, printed front-page quotes the next day from "respectable" consent decree opponents, calling the action "regrettable" and claiming no association with the action.

A Herald-Telephone editorial called for tighter controls on public input in upcoming events of the County Council and the State's Environmental Management Board. Both must approve the decree before it can be implemented.

"Their guidelines for conducting the hearings should be so tightly drawn that a reoccurrence becomes impossible," the editorial said. "This may result in limiting public input, but many of the freedoms in this country are inhibited by the necessity of protecting society from those who refuse to conform to acceptable behavior."

WILLING

The city council meeting demonstrated that a growing number of Bloomington residents are willing to actively oppose the attempt to build the PCB incinerator. This is a

Protesters in Bloomington, Indiana, collected 7,700 signatures—out of a town of 53,000—demanding that the city council not accept the building of a PCB incinerator in town.

attempted to call the vote, people ripped the microphones from their stands. Angry citizens stopped attempted police arrests by throwing their arms around the intended victims.

In the midst of this commotion, Gross gathered the council in a corner and conducted a hasty vote: 8 for and one against the consent decree.

FLED

The council then fled the building under police escort. The citizens convened their own meeting in the council chambers and debated whether to occupy the building.

But lawyers representing the "respectable" wing of opposition to the consent decree argued against an occupation. Their intervention killed the crowd's momentum and many decided to call it a night.

healthy development in the struggle against the sell-out settlement with Westinghouse.

The future of this fight lies in mobilizing more active opposition to the city council's charade.

Those who carried out this action also learned that lawyer-guided reformists will sell you out whenever the going gets tough and constitutions aren't worth the paper they're written on.

They also learned that the government at the local level represents the dominant interests of the corporate ruling class.

The democratic process they have been taught to respect isn't democratic at all, and that the ruling class will ride roughshod over the interests of the majority for its own narrow interests.

1933-1983

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CRISIS IN U.S. FARMING

st crisis since the Great Depression. Nearly 1/3 of bankruptcy, according to an Iowa State University study—about 250,000 farms—will go bankrupt

\$12 billion of debt, nearly the size of the federal government's "market-oriented" proposals to cut out their ultimate aim—the driving from busi-

ness organization—specifically, a new group of farmers to fight the administration's plans. Many of the farmers to St. Paul, Minnesota in February. At the same time, farmers and their families have organized protests from auctioning off their equipment. The crisis can only be understood by taking a closer look at the system as a whole. **Len Silva** looks at the issues

controls on produc-

government support technology, farming big and productive even while the per- Americans living on the lowest of the world's countries.

RESTRUCTURING

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receives approximately two-thirds of all government price supports.

The 12 percent of farms that sell between \$100,000 and \$499,999 in goods per year earn 38.1 percent of direct government payments. To keep food prices high, the government pays large farms like these to take acreage out of production or to subsidize commodity prices.

In theory, the price supports are supposed to trickle down to the smallest farmers. But because so much investment is required even to start a farm—a typical Wisconsin dairy farm costs more than \$500,000 to start, a typical California irrigated rice farm \$2.3 million—it is not surprising that these farmers cannot "buy in" to the programs. They must survive on non-farm employment.

AGRIBUSINESS

Thus, many of the subsidies amount to government grants to agribusiness. In contrast, the average government benefit to farms that sell between \$40,000 and \$100,000 annually amounts to about \$60 per week—less than unemployment compensation in some states.

So, who are the nation's farmers? The majority of food produced does not come from "family farmers," but from

huge agricultural corporations—agribusinesses—that own and cultivate millions of acres. These are the giant food corporations like Del Monte, Castle and Cooke and Dole.

In addition, much of farm land in the U.S. is owned by non-agricultural businesses. Oil companies, such as Standard Oil of California, own thousands of acres.

Almost 40 percent of the loans for buying farm land come from Fortune 500 pension funds, according to *Progressive Farmer*, or from insurance companies or large banks. Many of these institutions are large landowners themselves. □

The irrationality of capitalist food production is that agribusiness is paid to idle one-third of productive farm land while millions—from Ethiopia to Southeast Asia starve to death for no reason but profit margins.



Agriculture Secretary, John Block (left) and pig

FARMING IS BIG BUSINESS

Who are the farmers who have organized and protested from Washington to the Chicago Board of Trade, the world's major commodity exchange?

Many are farmers who sell between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in goods yearly and cultivate 1,000 to 2,000 acres. These farmers are the ones locked in the debt cycle. Their position is similar to that of the independent truck drivers who have organized protests in recent years.

On the one hand, these farmers, like the independent owner operators, are small business people. They aspire to be "their own bosses" and to get rich by out-selling other farmers on the market.

FORCES

On the other hand, these farmers are victims of a number of forces, such as levels of government subsidy and banks, that operate beyond their

control. And many of them work grueling 16-hour days with dangerous equipment in all weather conditions.

The current farm organizing in Groundswell and in the American Agricultural Movement shows that many can no longer live in the "old" way.

Signs criticizing the arms race and announcing labor union support for the farmers have appeared in the farmers' demonstrations. Some farmers threatened by the current crisis can move leftwards—like some truckers did—and identify their interests with those of workers and the poor. But the crisis has also strengthened the influence of right wing forces—that use "radical" rhetoric but offer no real alternative to the farmers' crisis.

The current Congressional debate on the Farm Bill revolves around several versions of similar initiatives. While the Reagan

Agricultural Adjustment Act would mean a virtual repeal of most New Deal farm policies, other bills move in the same direction at a slower pace.

WASTE

Some kind of emergency farm credit package could emerge from Congress this year. However, it will only supply a Band-Aid for a system which is bent on driving smaller, less efficient producers off the land. This is not because farmers do not work hard enough, but because farming is Big Business.

A society whose food production is based on human need would produce enough for all to eat and would guarantee producers the ability to make a living. But the irrationality of the capitalist food machine is that agribusiness is paid to idle one-third of productive farm land while millions from Ethiopia to southeast Asia starve to death. □

The "family farm" really died a long time ago.

Much of U.S. farm land is owned by non-agricultural big business. Companies like Standard Oil of California own thousands of acres.



STEVE ZELUCK 1922-1985

Lifelong activist and socialist

Dear Socialist Worker,
A memorial meeting was held for Steve Zeluck at the Machinists' Hall in New York City on March 25th.

Steve died on March 3rd of mesothelioma, an incurable cancer caused by exposure to asbestos when he worked at the U.S. Navy shipyard in Philadelphia at the beginning of World War II.

Steve was a founder, in 1979, of both Workers' Power, a revolutionary organization, and *Against the Current*, a socialist theoretical journal. He was an editor of *Journal* from its founding to his untimely death.

His death is all the more tragic because it was avoidable. The employers in the shipyards were well aware of the dangers of asbestos but refused to do anything to protect the shipyard workers. It is a brutal example

of a system that Steve fought against his whole life. A system that puts profits before human needs.

Steve believed that the working class has the capacity for self-organization and the creativity necessary to emancipate itself and free the world of all forms of exploitation. Steve advocated a socialism based on direct workers' power, free from bureaucracy and paternalism. A power that would rationally and democratically organize production to satisfy social needs.

He supported the self-organization of the specially oppressed as both a means to and a constituent of a socialist society.

Committed to these ideas in practice as well as theory, Steve joined other young leftists in reentering industry in the labor

upsurge that followed World War II. As a militant at the International Harvester plant in Chicago, he participated in a long and bitter strike which tried to retain union control over changes in working conditions.

After becoming a teacher, Steve helped organize the New Rochelle Federation of Teachers, serving as president of the local at the time collective bargaining rights were won. He was also elected vice-president of the Empire State Federation of teachers for the years 1961-1962.

With a vision of power that could be welded if the union joined forces with parents, students and the community, to improve the education system to the benefit of all youngsters as well as education workers, Steve worked untiringly, from

the mid-sixties until his retirement in 1976, to build a national opposition within the AFT to the narrow business unionism and racist policies of Albert Shanker.

He believed that the growing teacher union movement could lead a rank and file upsurge and help revitalize the American labor movement as a whole.

Steve was a socialist activist and a marxist intellectual. He was a student and teacher, comrade and friend. He will be sorely missed by the many who came to know and love him. The work of the revolutionary left will be more difficult without him.

Still, as his wife Barbara pointed out at the memorial meeting, we must not mourn, we must organize.

Aaron Brenner,
New York ISO

A good center

Dear Socialist Worker,
Your center on women workers last month was excellent. It is a sad fact that International Women's Day has been largely forgotten in the U.S., where it originated, even though it is celebrated in other countries.

We need to renew our fight for better pay and working conditions, since solidarity at work is the best way to change our situation as women.

Jean Whittlesey
Boston, MA

We'd like to establish relations

Dear Socialist Worker,
I am writing this letter to you on behalf of a small group of Guyanese marxists who are seriously interested in establishing fraternal relations with your organization.

We have already established relations with your sister party in Britain.

At present most of our work is limited to theoretical work and propaganda. We would like to hear about our proposal from you.

Neither Washington Nor Moscow—but International Socialism
Georgetown, Guyana

Letters



KEEP LETTERS TO SOCIALIST WORKER SHORT AND TO THE POINT...

Injunctions will not stop anti-abortion violence

Dear Socialist Worker,
Anti-abortionists are picketing Seattle abortion clinics—continuing their campaign of harassment and intimidation. The Broadway Women's Health Center is the weekly scene of Saturday morning anti-abortion picketing, countered by a well-organized body of pro-abortion defenders. This same clinic was the scene of contention two years ago. Then, abortion foes were forced to move on when counter-pickets effectively outnumbered them.

They showed up a year later at the Everett Feminist Women's Health Center. Mass counter-picketing was organized there, too. Cautious clinic attorneys, however, discouraged the militant defense and instead sought an injunction. Thanks to the "fair-minded" judge, the injunction virtually eliminated the pro-abortion presence while doing little to stop the right-wingers.

Three arson fires later, the clinic was closed because the landlord and insurance companies cancelled the lease and fire insurance.

The arsonist, Curtis Beseda, was caught. According to Michael Undseth, organizer and fund-raiser for Beseda's defense, it was a tragic case of a quiet and sincere "pro-life" picketer who was falsely accused. This story held until Beseda took the stand at his trial and confessed.

Beseda has shown no remorse. In an article he wrote for *U.S.A. Today*, he supported abortion clinic bombings and called other anti-abortionists "timid" for denouncing them.

Beseda's conviction was a hollow victory for abortion defense forces. He succeeded in closing the only reasonably-priced abortion facility in the Everett area.

Arson defender Undseth and his genteel cohorts are sharing the sidewalk on Broadway with Catholics holding high the crucifix while whispering "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys."

These two groups seem a little embarrassed by the recent arrival of a bunch who can only be described as Athletes for Pregnancy, young jocks carrying signs reading "Pregnancy is Beautiful," and similarly irrelevant myths. These



men are dangerous.

Until they showed up, the anti-abortionists were reasonably well-behaved. Superior organization by the defense pickets kept them isolated on the ends of the sidewalk and prevented attempts to approach clinic patients.

Even on March 9, when anti-abortionists showed up in large numbers and squeezed the abortion supporters into a tight picket line on a key area of sidewalk, none of the right-wingers dared more than yell a few "Murderers" at the defenders.

This seeming setback fuelled a discussion among the abortion supporters about supporting clinic staffer's desire to seek a court injunction restraining the anti-abortion pickets. The sleazoids seemed to be winning and clinic defenders were willing to seek any port in a storm.

On March 16, the pro-abortionists outnumbered the anti-woman crowd. After some verbal exchanges, including those immortal lines "Athletes for Pregnancy, give them a vasectomy," the jocks twice

attempted to climb the wall between the sidewalk and the clinic. They clearly intended to invade the facility.

Quick and militant response by the abortion defenders, including one anti-abortionist being tackled by a woman who walks with a cane, turned back the invasion.

The events of March 16 prove we don't need an injunction. We can defend this clinic ourselves.

An injunction would open a second front. There is already a fight on the sidewalk. Going to court would mean devoting energy to selecting an attorney, maneuvering to get the most friendly judge, paying the attorney and contacting the police to enforce any injunction granted.

To date, the police have not been present or observed from afar. When they have stopped by the line, officers gave thumbs up to anti-abortionists and shook the hand of Michael Undseth, the defender of arsonists.

Any injunction would be written by the judge, not by clinic attorneys. It would most likely re-

strain picketing by both sides, as the injunction in Everett did. Any restriction of our numbers would limit our ability to support the rights of women more than it would hinder the anti-abortionists' ability to harass individual women coming to the clinic.

Those who argue that a recent injunction against "right-to-life" pickets in Tacoma, Washington was a good thing fail to note that there is no militant, organized defense of the Tacoma clinic. If there were, the Tacoma judge surely would have enjoined it, too.

Injunctions have not stopped the arson attacks which have shut down clinics in Everett and across the country. Although mass picketing is no guarantee of safety against a terrorist attack, it leaves the door open for building mass defenses large enough to organize round-the-clock guards when they are needed.

Seeking an injunction means going hat in hand to a judge, who's probably been elected with right-wing support, and saying, "Your honor, (you have to say "Your

honor," even if they aren't) we can't defend the rights of women and we ask you and your police force (even the officers who don't support women's rights) to do it for us. Please decide how many of them and us you will allow on the sidewalk under what circumstances. We understand we will have to call the police every time we want them to come and take our chances on who they arrest, if they arrest anyone."

An injunction takes the initiative for clinic defense and the defense of women out of our hands and puts it squarely in the hands of attorneys, courts and the police. Look what a mess of women's rights they have made in the past. Better to keep our options open and organize the best damn mass defense we can.

This means recruiting for clinic defense with posters and handbills all over town. We want to drive the slugs back under their rocks. This means aggressive picketing with the forces we recruit. The clinic defense picket line should occupy as much of the sidewalk as possible, drowning out and demoralizing the anti-woman forces.

Abortion rights and other women's rights are too important to be left to capitalist judges and their armed stooges. They weren't able to defend the clinic in Everett (which was right across the street from the courthouse) and even refused to post 24-hour guards on the facility. Instead, they shackled the defense movement by restricting the numbers and creativity of the defenders.

We cannot allow the same thing to happen at Broadway. A victory here would give us the strength to take on the anti-abortionists at the two other Seattle clinics where they've mounted their disgusting campaigns.

Defending the clinics ourselves will not be easy. It will mean week after week and month after month of mobilizing our forces. But, it is the only strategy that guarantees that we, not the state and not the church, remain in control of our lives.

Mary Deaton and
D.S. West
Seattle, WA

SOCIALISM AND WAR



Today's world is wracked by war. Socialists argue that war is endemic to capitalism and that in order to prevent senseless slaughter, capitalism must be overthrown.

PAUL D'AMATO explains the socialist case against war, and looks at Lenin's pamphlet "Socialism and War."

The world today is wracked by war: from the senseless slaughter of the Iran-Iraq war to the civil war in El Salvador between guerrillas and the El Salvador military, to the war on Nicaragua's borders between the Sandinista army and the U.S.-backed counter-revolutionary contras. And while these relatively small fires rage, rulers of the superpowers continue to extend and improve their arsenals of nuclear warheads: weapons that could, if used, destroy the entire planet.

Under these circumstances it is important to take a look at how Marxists in the past have dealt with the question.

An excellent place to start is with a short pamphlet, *Socialism and War*, written by Lenin during the first world war. In the opening passage he wrote:

"Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal. Our attitude to war, however, is fundamentally different to that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) . . . We differ from them in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within a country.

"We understand that wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created. We also differ in that we regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by an oppressed class against the oppressor class, by slaves against slave-holders, by serfs against landlords, and by wage workers against the bourgeoisie, as fully legitimate, progressive and necessary."

ORGY OF VIOLENCE

Pacifists condemn all wars and all sides in a war because they see war only as an orgy of inhuman violence. They say to the combatants: a plague on both your houses.

Socialists, on the other hand, view every war from the angle of the class struggle. It would be unthinkable for socialists to reject all war. For to do that would be to renounce the possibility of workers ever wresting power from the world's ruling classes who, after all, are armed to the teeth to defend their system.

Lenin characterized the first world war as a battle of the "world's biggest slaveholders for the maintenance and consolidation of slavery."

The world's major capitalist powers were battling it out for a greater slice of the world's markets and colonies, for the right to exploit and oppress the greatest number of workers and peasants.

Such a war, Lenin argued, should be vigorously opposed by socialists. Workers should not be used as fodder by their own ruling class, but should fight against their own exploiters and seek solidarity with the workers of other nations.



Lenin also ridiculed the claim of the state that its war was a "defensive" one. Every ruling class, whenever it engages in war, always argues that it is fighting a "defensive" war.

As Lenin wrote: "The most widespread deception of the people by the bourgeoisie in the present war consists of their using the ideology of 'national liberation' to cloak their predatory aims."

In World War One, Germany promised to liberate oppressed nations under the "evil tsarist yoke," while continuing to oppress its own colonies. Russia paid lip service to freeing the peoples crushed by the heel of "barbarian German militarism" and were careful to avoid mention of their own imperialist domains.

It is not unlike Ronald Reagan's denunciation of Russia's invasion of Afghanistan out of one side of his mouth, while sending U.S. Marines into the tiny island of Grenada.

WARS OF LIBERATION

Lenin's position on the colonial aspect of the war was clear-cut: Wars of liberation on the part of an oppressed nation against the oppressor nation are to be supported because they would weaken imperialism.

In order to free workers of their intoxication with patriotism—which serves only to bind them to "their own" ruling class—socialists of an oppressor nation must argue for the "right of nations to self-determination," especially those oppressed by their country.

America today is a "great" power. While it has no formal colonies that it administers directly, it utilizes other methods: propping up and supporting "friendly" military dictatorships, shutting military "task forces" around the globe to ensure "stability" and aiding in the formation of mercenary armies in order to destabilize "unfriendly" regimes. All this makes it imperative for opponents of U.S. policy

to fight hard against patriotism—which is so often coated in sugary phrases about "freedom" and "democracy," and give strong support to the struggles against U.S.-backed dictatorships in El Salvador, Guatemala, etc.

A distinction must be drawn, however, between the socialists' support for self-determination—which has as its starting point the aim of uniting the working class internationally against imperialism—and the liberal criticism of government policy which aims to "curb" excesses. The leaders of the anti-intervention movement have a tendency to drag out liberal Democrats like Paul Tsongas or Christopher Dodd as members of Congress who strongly oppose Reagan's policies in Central America. Yet by their own admission, these men are not supporters of liberation.

Their disagreement with Reagan is not over whether or not American imperialism should be defeated in Central America but over the best tactics to maintain a foothold in the region. Reagan is for the use of force as a first resort, while Tsongas is for the use of force as a last resort. How else

can we explain the fact that the very same men who oppose a covert war on Nicaragua's borders recently came out in support of air strikes against Managua if a few crates on Nicaragua's docks contained a few MiG fighters?

PROFITS

"In *Socialism and War*, Lenin pointed out how, in the Russian context, when the war broke out virtually all Russian liberals came out in favor of the war as soon as they saw the profits that were to be made. Yet these same liberals had been, on one level, critics of tsarism.

To those who argued that war was a historical accident that was really against the interests of all, he argued that war is a "continuation of politics."

Rather than reflecting the world's temporary lapse into insanity, the war was a logical culmination of rival imperialist powers jockeying for position in the world market. Military competition was a natural outgrowth of economic competition. The war brought to light the fact that the interests of capitalism had outgrown the boundaries of national

states—had become international.

Lenin argued, therefore, that any peace resulting from the war would merely pave the way for future, more destructive wars.

The only guarantee of real peace was socialist revolution, in which the working classes of each state "convert the imperialist war into a civil war." As Lenin said: "Whoever wants a lasting democratic peace must stand for civil war against the government and the bourgeoisie."

Today, many argue that this is no longer applicable. A more sophisticated version of the pacifist argument states that with the advent of the nuclear arms race, it is logical that World War III should be opposed by all sections of society—including generals, statesmen and arms manufacturers—because such a war would threaten to annihilate us all.

But this argument cannot explain why the world's ruling classes persist in acting against their own supposed interest. In reality, the arms race, irrational though it may be, is mutually enforced upon each rival ruling class. The logic of imperialism is simple. Grab and exploit as much of the world as possible so as to build up the military capacity to stop your rival grabbing and exploiting areas to build up its own military potential.

For Russia and the U.S. to relax military spending means to risk losing strategic superiority to the rival imperialism. Hence, the endless arms talks which never lead to real arms reduction but merely serve as a cloak for each side to continue the military build-up.

The world today is not in the midst of world war, and therefore, as an immediate tactical slogan, Lenin's "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" is inappropriate. But the basic thrust of his argument is entirely correct: Ultimately the only way to prevent world destruction is for the workers of the world to overthrow the system upon which imperialist rivalry is based. And for us the slogan has to be "The real enemy is at home"—the ruling class. □



"The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles.

The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose; the subject class nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives."

—Eugene Debs, Canton, Ohio, 1918

WHERE WE STAND

WORKERS' CONTROL

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

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

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

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

A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT

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

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

FIGHT OPPRESSION

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

BLACK LIBERATION

Our support for the struggle against racism is unconditional, and we oppose any attempt to subordinate this fight. We fight racism in all its forms, from institutionalized "legal" racism to the activities of groups such as the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan.

We fight segregation in the schools and in housing, we support affirmative action, and we oppose racist firings and harassment. We support armed self-defense in the face of racist attacks. We support independent self-organization and the right to self-determination of the Black community. We demand freedom for all political prisoners.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We fight for women's liberation. We support equal pay and equal job opportunities for all women. We demand free abortion and an end to forced sterilization, and quality child care. We oppose all forms of violence against women including sexual harassment at work. Under capitalism the state intervenes to maintain women's subordination within the family, to maintain oppressive sex roles and her exploitation at work.

We support lesbian and gay liberation. We demand quality sex education in the schools, we are for lesbian and gay custody rights and the right to be open lesbians and gays at work, home and in school.

RANK AND FILE ORGANIZATION

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

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

INTERNATIONALISM

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

We champion workers' struggles in all countries, from Poland to Puerto Rico, from Palestine to El Salvador. We support all genuine national liberation struggles. We call for victory of the Black freedom fighters in South Africa and Namibia. We oppose all forms of imperialism and oppose sending U.S. troops anywhere in the world to impose U.S. interests.

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

REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

For more information about the International Socialist Organization (ISO) please write P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616



What's ON

BALTIMORE

Film: Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. April 11, 7:30 p.m. Comment Ty Miller, Baltimore ISO. Johns Hopkins University, Eisenhower Library, Garrett Room.

BLOOMINGTON

Introduction to the Politics of the International Socialist Organization. April 27, 7:30 p.m. Call 332-6682 for details.

BOSTON

Eleanor Trawick on *Lessons of the Yale Strike*, April 7, 7:30 p.m.

Black Workers and the Crisis in South Africa. April 21, 7:30 p.m. Call 427-7087 for details.

CHICAGO

Ahmed Shawkil on *Is Socialism Possible?* April 2, 12:00 noon.

Christina Baker on *Socialism and the South African Working Class*. April 3, 7:30 p.m.

Alan Maas on *Karl Marx, the Paris Commune and the First International*. April 8 & 10, 7:30 p.m.

Ben Blake on *The Roots of the New Cold War*. April 16, 12:30 p.m.

Glenn Perusek on *Reform or Revolution: The Politics of the Second International*. April 22 & 24, 7:30 p.m.

For more information on these meetings, call 684-2260 (south), 549-8071 (north) or 328-6830 (Evans-ton).

ISO FUND DRIVE

Over the next three months, the ISO is conducting a fund drive. We aim to raise \$5,000. But in order to reach our goal, we need your help. Can you make a donation, large or small? Or ask friends for us? Anything you can give will help us to achieve our goal.

Checks can be sent to either the ISO or to Sharon Smith, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, Illinois 60616. Thank you.

RUSSIA: HOW THE REVOLUTION WAS LOST



A new pamphlet from Hera Press, *Russia: How the Revolution was Lost*, which traces the fate of the Russian revolution and the rise of Stalinism. \$2.25 including postage.

CINCINNATI

Steve Stewart, Ben Blake and Joe O'Sullivan on *The Arms Talks: A Socialist Perspective*. April 6, 7:30 p.m. Room 428, TUC, University of Cincinnati.

Introduction to the ISO Study Series. Every Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Call 751-1871 for details.

CLEVELAND

The Legacy of the Vietnam War. April 28, 1:00 p.m. Call 651-5125 for details.

DETROIT

Which Way for American Labor? April 10, 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 527-2180.

MADISON

Ahmed Shawkil on *Why the "Socialist" Countries Are Not Socialist*. April 8, 7:30 p.m. Call 251-5982 for details.

Socialist Day of Discussion. Talks on Imperialism and World Crisis, the Politics of International Socialism and more. Call 251-5982 for details.

NEW YORK

Eleanor Trawick on *Reagan's Wars in Central America*. April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Frances Witlin on *Permanent Revolution and Central America Today*. April 14, 4:00 p.m. Call 614-0286 or 280-7484 for details.

ROCHESTER

Michael Ondrusek on *1920: Workers' Power in Italy*. April 8, 7:30 p.m.

Rubina Saigol on *Class Struggles in Pakistan*. April 21, 6:30 p.m. Call 235-3049 for details.

SAN FRANCISCO

Video Fundraising Party. April 6, 7:00 p.m.

David Siddle on *Striking Against Apartheid*. Laney College, Oakland, April 12, 7:00 p.m. Call 285-4057 for details.

SEATTLE

Mary Deaton on *Out of the Courts and Into the Streets: A Strategy for Defending Abortion Rights*. April 5, Noon, University of Washington, and 7:30 p.m. Ethnic Cultural Center.

Steve Leigh on *The Arms Talks Fraud*. April 21, 7:30 p.m.

Study Series on *Marxism and the Party* continues. For more information, call 324-2302.

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

— Karl Marx

If you want to help us change the world, join us.

There are ISO members and branches in the following cities:

- Baltimore, MD
- Bloomington, IN
- Boston, MA
- Chicago, IL
- Cincinnati, OH
- Cleveland, OH
- Detroit, MI
- Indianapolis, IN
- Iowa City, IA
- Kent, OH
- Los Angeles, CA
- Madison, WI
- Minneapolis, MN
- Muncie, IN
- New Orleans, LA
- New York, NY
- Northampton, MA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Rochester, NY
- San Francisco, CA
- Seattle, WA

ISO National Office, P.O. Box 16085, Chicago, IL 60616

The challenges facing American labor

Even the most complacent union official has to admit that American labor is in trouble. The problems have been well-publicized—particularly the AFL-CIO's decision to back Walter Mondale, the biggest loser in American presidential history.

But such analysis confuse the symptoms with the disease. Labor's waning influence is clearly connected to the decline in trade union membership—from over a third of American workers in the early 1950s to just over 18% today. Why?

A new book, *Challenges and Choices Facing American Labor*, attempts to give an answer—and fails miserably.

An outgrowth of the Sloan Project—a three-year study by academics and labor relations experts—*Challenges* is often stupefying glop. Regression analysis of trade union membership and logarithms of NLRB elections are tedious enough. But the author of *Challenges* make a bad situation worse, crunching numbers to make arguments which are almost idiotically circular.

The best example of this method is economist Henry Farber's argument that structural changes in the working class since World War II cannot account for all of the drop in trade union membership from 34.5% in 1956 to 25.1% in 1978. Farber measured the decline in industrial manufacturing, the rise of the service sector, the huge increase in the number of women workers, and the shift of jobs and population to the anti-union right-

Challenges and Choices Facing American Labor. Edited by Thomas A. Kochan. MIT Press, 1985. 356 pp. \$15.

by LEE SUSTAR

to-work Sun Belt states. Each of these factors, Farber writes, account for at most one to two percent of the total drop in union membership. Taken together, he argues, they explain, at most 40% of the loss in union membership. Obviously, there must be other reasons for the decline.

BOSSES

But Farber doesn't blame the bosses for their assault on unions. Nor does he mention that union leaders willingly handed over concessions, thereby making union membership unattractive to many workers.

Instead, Farber points to a 1977 survey indicating that as many as 30% of unorganized workers were interested in joining a union, but did not. Farber concludes that the reason for this is a "shortage of union jobs"! Thus we are back to the original question—phrased differently.

Given Farber's and other *Challenges* authors' place in the world, we shouldn't be surprised at their conclusion. The Sloan Project was a

Technology's Sloan School of Management, named after Alfred P. Sloan, the man who presided over General Motors as it grew from a motley collection of car companies into the world's largest auto manufacturer.

While not cheering on the employers' offensive, *Challenges* preaches a restoration of the "balance" which supposedly characterized labor-management relations in the 1950s and 1960s.

In so doing, the book's contributors absolve the trade union leadership of responsibility for the erosion of membership that began 30 years ago. The trade union bureaucracy, content with collecting dues from workers whose wages were steadily rising, was under no pressure to organize the unorganized.

When the U.S. economy hit the skids in the early 1970s, trade union leaders began to play an even more conservative role, cooperating with the bosses in their attempt to make workers pay for the crisis through layoffs and concessionary contracts.

STATISTICAL JUMBLE

But the abstract statistical jumble of the Sloan Project lets people like Lynn Williams off the hook. It isn't surprising that the Steelworkers Union president attended a conference to discuss the



report. He was joined by fellow bureaucrats Donald Ephlin of the UAW and Charles MacDonald of the AFL-CIO, whose insubstantive comments are reprinted in *Challenges*. Williams' statements make it clear that the ability to reverse labor's fortunes lie with the rank and file.

"We seem to have a Catch-22 here . . . We need organizational clout to get political power and vice versa. Clearly, we hear that things are getting worse but my question is, from whence comes the clout for change? Clearly, it comes from a strong membership base to begin with."

RANK AND FILE

In other words, Williams knows that only a militant rank and file can draw the line against the bosses attacks. But since that degree of class struggle would jeopardize his and other officials' position of leadership, it is too risky. Yet without such a fightback "things get worse." That is the Catch-22 of the union bureaucracy.

While listening to the moans of union leaders is not particularly exciting, such insights make *Challenges* worthwhile—if you can stomach the \$15.00 price.

That said, *Challenges* does contain quite a bit of useful data, which is increasingly difficult to get from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which has suffered from Reagan's budget cuts.

The most worthwhile essay is UAW Lee Price's article on the impact of the internationalization of production on American workers. Though his conclusions are thoroughly reformist—"a sound fiscal policy to bring down the deficit,"—Price gets to the root of the world economic crisis.

While the U.S. was devoting much of its technical resources to the military, countries like West Germany and Japan channeled investment into manufacturing plants cheaper and more efficient than their American counterparts. The result was the reintroduction of economic competition on a world scale.

With cheaper labor and more efficient plants available internationally, bosses began to tell American workers to either take concessions or face plant closures in favor of overseas investment.

For the most part, the bosses have been successful in intimidating workers. And as Lenin once said, there is no crisis that the capitalists cannot find their way out of if the working class doesn't fight back. That is the real challenge and choice facing American labor. □

AMERICAN SOCIALIST THOUGHT

Prophets of the Left: American Socialist Thought in the Twentieth Century by Robert Hyfler. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1984.

REVIEW BY GLENN PORTER

Robert Hyfler's intention with this book is to examine the thought of the major American socialist thinkers of this century. He includes in his study five chapters on pre-World War One socialists—from Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger, spokesmen for the right wing of the American Socialist Party, to Daniel DeLeon, Louis Boudin and Louis Fraina, the most important left-wing figures of the period. This choice of thinkers is to Hyfler's credit.

But he runs into his first problem with the divide between the left and right of the Socialist Party after the first world war. He dismisses anyone associated with the Communist Party, giving a summary, one-sentence explanation. He says he has a "bias against those who ignore the complex yet vital relationship between democratic norms and social justice."

Thus, a discussion of the political problems of revolutionary socialists after the first world war (including the American Communist Party's succumbing to Stalinism) is altogether untouched in this volume.

MYOPIA

Instead, the two concluding chapters deal with Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington. Indeed, Hyfler gives the impression that Thomas was the only genuine socialist attempting to create a viable



alternative in the 1930s.

But we can overlook the fact that Hyfler's myopia leads him to deal with two thinkers who qualify more as liberals than socialists. The strength of the book, in terms of selection of thinkers, lies in the fact that the bulk of it deals with the pre-World War One period.

But then we run into the second problem: Hyfler's is an academic not political method. This leads him to deal with writers ahistorically, abstractly. His chapters contain a brief biographical sketch of the writer followed by many pages of abstract discussion about the thinker's ideas. In this manner, important questions can only be raised—not answered in a satisfactory way.

Hyfler asserts, for example, that "to DeLeon, consciousness was a function not of struggle or economic conditions but of education." This is an important point: it would be a key influence on DeLeon's conception of the role and activities of the revolutionary party: a propagandistic versus interventionist conception of the party, the former relying on pure educa-

tion, the latter seeing involvement in the on-going class struggle as central. But then this subject, once raised, is dropped after two paragraphs.

In a similar manner, the discussion of Harrington shows a perception of several of the ambiguities in Harrington's claim to be a Marxist. Harrington's most important book, "The Other America," is characterized as a "consciously non-socialist work" which claimed that poverty could be eradicated in the U.S. without thoroughgoing political and social change.

Indeed, in Harrington's view, the elimination of poverty was in the interest of the ruling class, and could only be carried out by them. "By focussing on an analysis of what is, at the expense of an explicit vision of what could be, Harrington allowed his work to be reintegrated into the very ideology he rejected."

But this is ultimately not a problem for Hyfler. He concludes by accepting Harrington's eclectic and liberal politics as a step forward. This issue of working within the Democratic

Party or not is not seen as crucial. And Hyfler approvingly quotes Harrington's attitude to the trade union bureaucracy: "We had determined to be truly radical: to involve ourselves with the leaders elected by the American workers themselves, rather than with those imaginary figures who should have been leading a revolutionary proletariat that did not exist." Thus, in the name of "democracy" the strategy of working within the Democratic Party and orienting to the trade union leaders, instead of the rank and file, are both accepted.

VIRTUE

At the same time, however, Hyfler has good things to say about the revolutionary left (although only in passing): "Trotskyist organizations (he is speaking here of the Young Socialist League, where Harrington started out) have the unique virtue of being able to balance a complex, often ideologically rigid position with the necessities of working in coalition with others with whom they disagree. In part, this characteristic derives from their faith in the potential of the working class for self-education through struggle."

The conflict between this kind of politics—strict adherence to principle plus tactical flexibility—and Harrington's liberal/social democracy should have been apparent to Hyfler. But because he has an academic approach, the issues are passed over. A better book on the subject needs to be written. But read this for the pre-war writings included in the volume. □



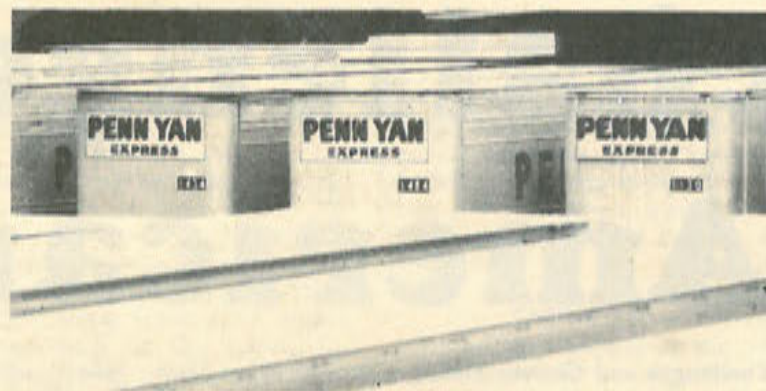
on the picket line

TEAMSTER CONTRACT

As negotiations on the National Master Freight Agreement kick into high gear, Teamster president Jackie Presser appears ready to cut a deal with the trucking bosses that will result in a small increase in wages, but will give in to a two-tier wage system and will ignore increasing employer attacks on job security. Presser's attitude of ignor-

ing corporate strategies of hiring non-union labor in certain subsidiaries has angered rank-and-filers and even a few local union officers.

The potential is there for a campaign that will reject the disastrous agreement Presser appears ready to negotiate. But militants will have to begin arguing now for a decent contract. □



Filenes workers sold out

by BOB DAHLGREN and GARY BRACKETT

BOSTON, MA—Workers at the Filene's department store chain—members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445—reluctantly accepted a contract offer: 4½% for the first year and 5½% for the remaining years. This works out to be a 16-25¢ raise per hour. The contract passed by a 1137 to 430 margin.

IMPORTANT

This contract is identical to one that the workers originally struck against. The frustration over this was underscored by the heated atmosphere of the meeting. 1,300 members walked out in disgust without voting.

In one of the most important developments in the three-day strike, the first in the company's history, a federal mediator was brought into the negotiations.

In a backroom deal it was decided that the union would ask members to return to work on Saturday, March 16—a sale day—before voting on the proposal the following Monday.

During the strike, management continually attacked the rights of the workers. Scabs were hired at higher wages and are expected to continue at the same wage. The company also refused to negotiate unless the workers returned to work.

Several truck drivers had been fired and their reinstatement is still under negotiation. Among the other demands that were rejected was a paid holiday on Martin Luther King's birthday.

FATAL

Throughout the strike, the union provided little leadership and the inexperience of the striking workers proved fatal. The picket line itself was characterized by a lack of organization by the union and, more importantly, of the rank and file.

The result was relatively low turnout, lack of direction and poor coverage of picket areas. There was no initiative from the rank and file to challenge this situation.

The strike provides some insight into the relationship of workers to their union. And for many workers, the union obviously lost any respect it may have had.

As one put it, "They really shot us down. I don't think they are for us anymore."

Among those workers who voted for the contract, as well as the many that did not vote at all, an attitude of "what could we do?" prevailed. In face of the hard line of management and the perceived weakness of the union to fight and win a better contract, going back on strike was not presented to the workers as an alternative.

"We had no choice but to accept—I'm selling out, but at least I'll pay my rent," said one striker.

LESSON

There is a lesson to be learned from this strike. It is important for the Filene's workers and all workers to see that the power to fight bosses is in their own hands—not up to the union officials. To win these struggles, they must make the bosses reckon with their own organized militancy. As one worker said, "If everybody came out and did their part, if we stayed out there and didn't go back, we could have won."

TALKIN' UNION BY JOHN ANDERSON

CLASS STRUGGLE UNIONISM HELPED FOUND THE UAW



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

The UAW celebrates its 50th anniversary in 1985. Its magazine, *Ammo*, says: "From now through the Constitutional Convention in 1986, the UAW will observe the 50th anniversary of the founding of this great union. There will be ceremonies on Labor Day 1985 throughout the country." The International is urging each local to write its own history, but they make no reference to Article 27, Section 5 of the International Constitution that makes it mandatory to teach labor history and the history of the UAW. They don't want the membership to know the true history of the UAW. They don't want them to know the role of the left in building our union. They don't want the membership to know that many of the early founders of the UAW were members of the Socialist and Communist parties.

HISTORY

In writing a history of the UAW and a biography of Reuther, I was able to add to my knowledge of both, just as I had learned from my participation in making this history. Being a member of the Socialist Party with the Reuther brothers—Roy, Victor and Walter—I knew them personally. I saw the letter Victor sent to Mel Bishop from Gorki in the USSR which called "for a Soviet America." Dave Miller, a member of the Communist Party and a close friend of Walter's told me how Walter got his UAW membership card when he was unemployed and therefore ineligible for membership.

He also told me how the Communist Party withdrew one of its members as a delegate to the South Bend UAW convention so Walter could be a delegate. A leading Communist Party member, Nat Ganley, in the papers he left in the Reuther Library at Wayne State University, said: "Yes, Reuther was a member of the Party. I collected his dues."

Walter was elected to the International Executive Board in South Bend, as was Wyndham Mortimer and other left-wingers. The Communist and Socialist Party members in the shops were the shock troops in organizing the auto workers. Without them General Motors would not have been organized, nor would there have been sit-down strikes.

It was the Communist Party members in Fisher #1 and #2 in Flint and Kermit Johnson in Chevrolet #4 who made victory possible. It was their counterparts in Cadillac and Fleetwood in De-

troit who organized sit-down strikes, giving their support to the Flint sit-downers. It was Wyndham Mortimer who insisted on corporation-wide bargaining to settle the strike. And he was the one that John L. Lewis selected to represent the UAW in the bargaining with GM that led to the settlement.

RESPONSIBLE

In giving them credit for their contribution to the early strikes, one must also hold them responsible for some of the failures of the early UAW. They capitulated to John L. Lewis and Franklin D. Roosevelt rather than fight for the needs of the workers. It was Mortimer who negotiated an agreement eliminating the shop steward system for bargaining purposes in GM. He also agreed to a no-strike clause that became a permanent part of not only GM contracts, but all UAW agreements.

The Communist Party was more concerned with supporting the foreign policy of the USSR than in the interests of the workers. Walter Reuther and others were more concerned with their own careers than in advancing the interests of the rank and file.

It was Walter Reuther who introduced the umpire system of settling grievances, taking them out of the control of the workers. He used this grievance procedure to silence his critics. After the Stalin-Hitler pact, Reuther was more interested in supporting FDR's drive toward war than in defending the rights of workers. He showed little interest in organizing Ford or the aircraft industry. He remained silent when Roosevelt sent federal troops to break the North American Aircraft strike in Long Beach, California on June 9, 1941. Reuther joined with Philip Murray in adopting the no-strike pledge for the duration of the war without consulting the workers. His was a strike-breaking role during the war.

In his campaign for the UAW presidency, Reuther promised, if elected, to help form a labor party. He promised to fight for the 30 hour-week with 40 hours pay. He ordered all UAW plants to close at 2 p.m. on April 24, 1947 in protest against the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. He betrayed the demonstrators by having his supporters remain on the job until 3 p.m. so they wouldn't violate the GM contract. This act of betrayal won him the support of the news media, the employers and the anti-labor politicians. Reuther won full control of the UAW in

1947 by the use of red-baiting and making promises he never carried out.

He rejected a pension plan negotiated by Richard T. Leonard with the Ford Motor Company in 1947 for pensions of \$100 per month plus Social Security. It was to take Reuther 18 years before Ford, GM and Chrysler workers were to get pensions as generous as those negotiated by Richard Leonard.

I had campaigned for the cost-of-living escalator clause since 1938, and I tried to have it adopted at the 1947 GM conference dealing with economic demands. It got no support from the leadership. A week before the 1948 GM conference, Reuther, speaking in Flint where the proposal had the support of five local presidents, denounced it as a "Trotsky-Communist plot to create problems for the workers." When it was introduced at the 1948 conference, Reuther ruled it out of order, saying it was in violation of UAW and CIO policy. Because Reuther was in the hospital, Emil Mazey led the UAW bargaining team. He, too, had been opposed to the escalator clause. When C.E. Wilson, then GM President, suggested a cost-of-living adjustment, Mazey and the top committee accepted.

ACTIVITY

The two-year contract in 1948, the five-year contract in 1950 and the three-year contracts thereafter did much to discourage union activity by the rank and file. Reuther traded control on the shop floor for fringe benefits. The long-term contract has drained away the life from the union. The three-year contracts were in violation of a resolution passed at a Special Bargaining Convention in 1961 limiting all contracts to a maximum of two years. The weakened condition of the union led to the disastrous concession policy of the last five years.

To recover from these bankrupt policies, we must carry out the resolution of the 1961 Special Convention. We must throw out the good labor relations policy and return to the class struggle policies that served to build the union. We must break our ties with the Democratic Party and form a workers' party. □



CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY THREATENS JOBS AND SERVICES

CHICAGO, IL—With management threatening 2,200 layoffs and massive cutbacks in service, Chicago Transit Authority workers recently rejected a contract which varied little from a concession contract management offered two months previously.

The CTA demanded reduced management contributions to the workers' pension fund and a one-year wage freeze. Since the last contract offer in January, management has proclaimed its inability to pay for the pension without massive layoffs and the union has temporarily waived these payments. Yet as recently as December the CTA gave 27 administrators a total of \$47,000 in raises.

PENSION

Even the conservative *Chicago Tribune* has conceded that management is using the pension issue "to put pressure on

the union." Gut the workers' pension package, management says, or in addition to the threatened 2,200 layoffs, all weekend subway service will be ended, all weekday subway service after 8:00 p.m. will be

The Chicago Transit Authority is threatening to cut subway, rail and bus services. But this is a bluff designed to win concessions from CTA workers. Andy Thayer explains.

ended, 27 rail stations will close 29 bus routes will be terminated, and service cuts on additional 33 bus routes will be forthcoming.

Management's strategy is clear: threaten crippling service cutbacks and layoffs, and blame them on the union.

BLUFF

But while giving massive coverage about the threatened service cut-backs, no Chicago newspapers are saying that, in reality, the cut-backs are a bluff. But that is all they are: a public relations ploy to turn public opinion against the union and divide the union membership.

If the cuts were a real possibility, CTA management would be seen making dramatic appeals for funds from both the city and state governments. Currently, while most other city transit systems receive about two thirds of their revenue from governmental sources, the CTA only gets one-half from government sources—the rest is made up in farm collections.

If the threats were genuine, the Chicago business community would be up in arms—the potential economic disruption would be too immense.

RETAIL SALES

With no weekend subway service, downtown retail sales would plummet. With limited hours on weekday service, management would find that many of its low-paid third shift

CLOTHING WORKERS FIRED FOR ORGANIZING UNION

NEW YORK, NY—Three workers at the Norma Walters clothing makers were fired February 28 for trying to organize the company's 30 employees into the International Ladies and Garment Workers Union.

"She asked me if I intended to join a union, and I said yes," said Jerry Aponte, who has worked in the designers' shipping department for a year and a half. "She said, 'You're fired.' That is supposed to be illegal."

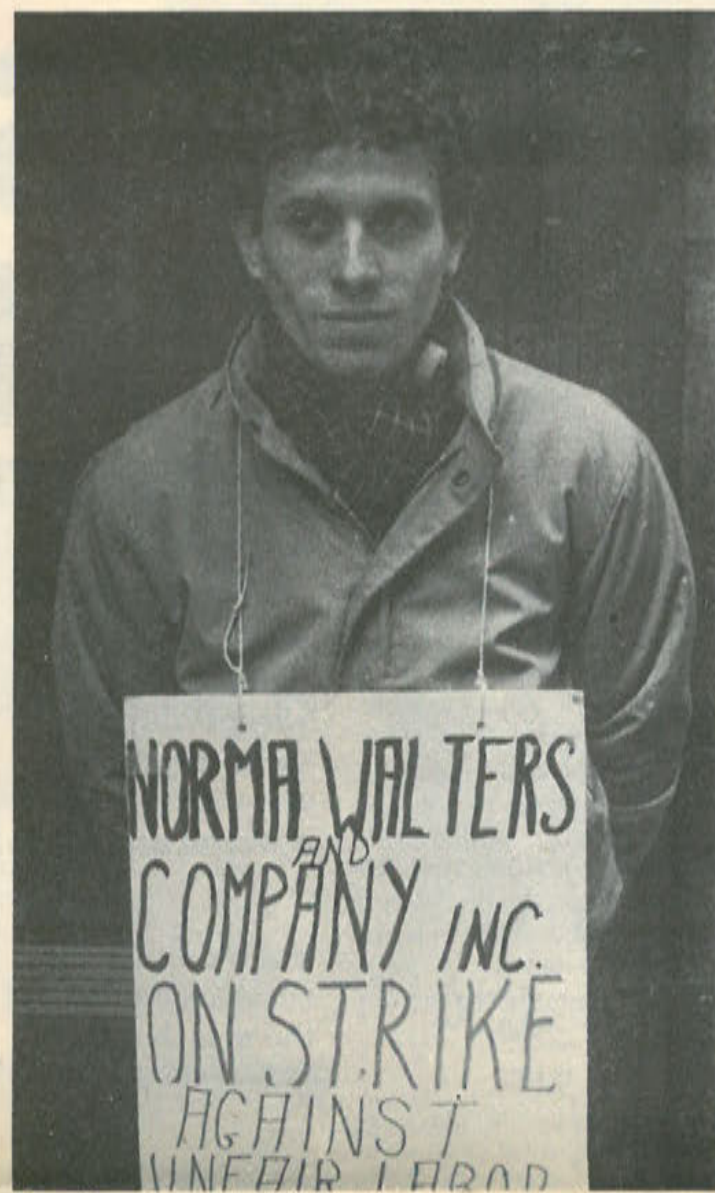
"I've been picketing ever since."

BAD CONDITIONS

Aponte said the mostly Hispanic and Asian women who work for the high-fashion manufacturer earn only \$4.25 per hour and have no health or pension benefits. "Working conditions are very bad," Aponte said. "I usually work from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. There are a lot of us in a small place—a real fire hazard. And she (Walters) makes people do things they shouldn't do, like clean bathrooms."

Most of the workers, frightened for their jobs, are crossing picket lines at Norma Walters, located on Seventh Avenue in Manhattan's garment district. But Aponte said that Walters, accused of unfair labor practices, has begun to negotiate with the ILGWU. □

by LEE SUSTAR



Jerry Aponte was fired for trying to organize a union

ALASKA AIRLINE WORKERS IN BITTER STRIKE

SEATTLE, WA—The employers are on the offensive again against airlines workers. Alaska Airline mechanics and baggage handlers, members of the International Association of Machinists, are striking in the face of company demands for give-backs. Although Alaska Airlines posted record profits last year, they want a pay decrease for starting employees and to use 20% part timers.

Unfortunately, the union bureaucrats are telling the members they must accept the two-tier wage—but that they will obtain more favorable terms. The problem, as other contracts show, is that any two-tier wage agreement divides workers, and eventually mean lower wages and fewer jobs for all.

As one striker put it, "If they can get concessions when the company is showing profits, they can get them anytime." Support from other workers has been good. Teamster members won't cross picket lines to make deliveries.

The flight attendants were honoring picket lines for the first few weeks of the strike. Machinists had supported them before—and their own contract negotiations were at an impasse. Together, machinists and flight attendants cut Alaska Airline's flights and income by over 50%.

But the flight attendants sell-out leadership negotiated a contract which included an agreement to cross the mechanics' picket line. This is a major set back for the strike. It's the same old story: United we stand, divided we fall. □

by PETER COGAN

DEMOCRATS REBUFF AFL-CIO

Labor's leaders thought they were onto a good thing. Noting labor's decline over the last decade, they argued that the best way to reverse labor's fortunes was to throw unions squarely behind Walter Mondale's presidential bid. And they endorsed Mondale early, in October 1983, during the primaries and caucuses.

But instead of improving labor's lot, labor's choice suffered a humiliating defeat.

Undeterred, the recent AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Bal Harbor, Florida, upheld

workers could not get to work. Many second shift workers would have no transportation home after work.

Unfortunately, union bureaucrats at Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241 and 308 are not calling management's bluff.

Instead of putting the onus on management to cut its own salaries and get more funds from the city and state governments, the union leadership has been mute on these issues.

Instead of countering the layoff threat with an all-out strike threat, the union has meekly agreed to arbitration—even though it is clear that management does not intend to bargain seriously.

Only organized pressure from the union's rank and file can force management—and the union bureaucrats—to move on these issues. □

the tactic. The AFL-CIO bureaucrats continue to argue that the Democratic Party is still labor's best hope.

But the Democratic Party itself views the matter differently.

In a speech to the Communication Workers of America (CWA), Paul Kirk Jr., the new Democratic Party chairman, urged unions not to endorse a presidential candidate early in 1988—it simply would not be in the best interests of the party or of the Democratic presidential candidate. □



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Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION

END U.S. SUPPORT TO APARTHEID!

Twenty-five years to the day after the infamous Sharpeville Massacre, South African police opened fire on a group of Black marchers near Uitenhage.

Nineteen Blacks were killed. Scores were injured. It was one of the worst outbreaks of indiscriminate police violence in South Africa since Sharpeville, when police opened fire on an unarmed crowd of non-violent demonstrators on March 21, 1960.

WAVE

The Sharpeville Massacre left 69 protesters dead—and signalled a new wave of repression on the part of the government.

Minister of Law and Order Louis Le Grange said police fired in "self defense" at the crowd of several thousand marching to a funeral service for some 30 Blacks killed in recent clashes with police.

But this is sheer fabrication. "We have been told that the police shot at the crowd indiscriminately," the South African Catholic Bishops Conference said.

Eyewitness accounts described the crowd as peaceful and unarmed. Among the

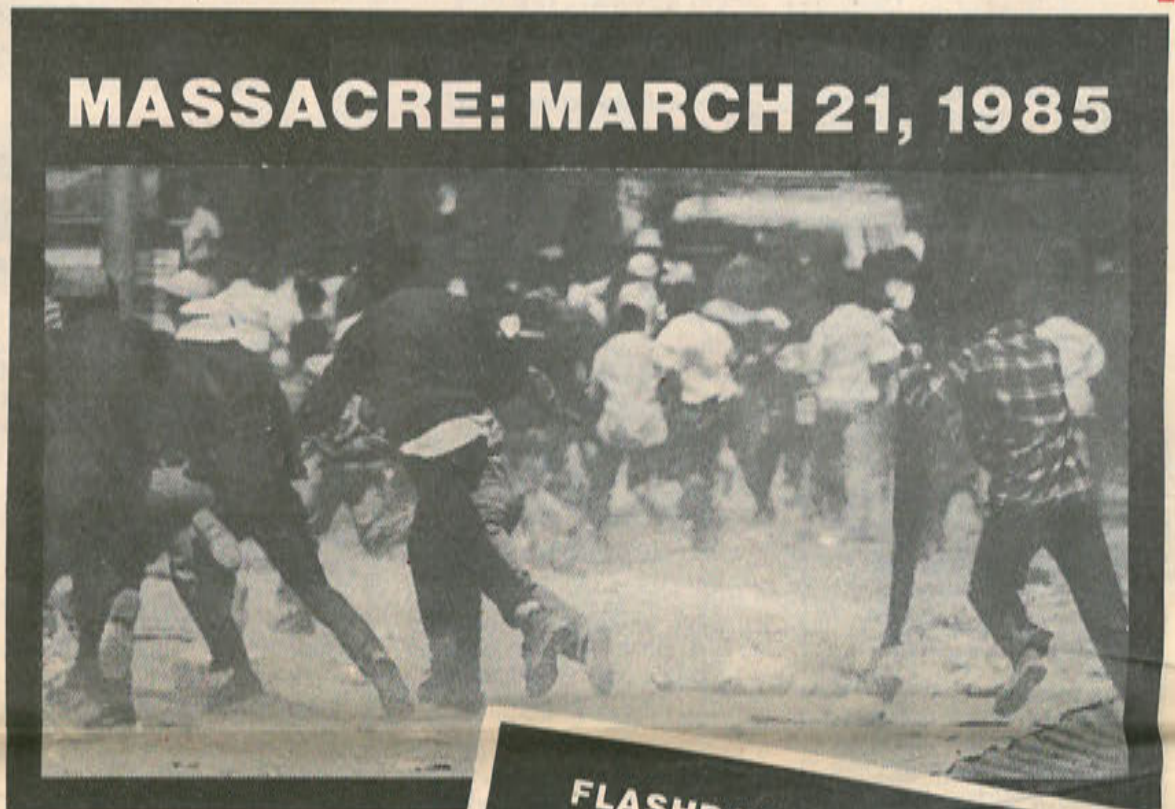
The South African regime commemorated the Sharpeville Massacre in its own way—by killing 19 peaceful protesters.

But the regime survives because of the massive aid it gets from the U.S.

marchers were children, who linked arms and sang as they marched. It is clear that the police intended to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre—by repeating it.

As it did in 1960, the government hopes that repression will cow the rising opposition to its rule. But there are differences between the two events. The protest in 1960 was a peaceful protest against "pass laws"—an "internal" passport that Blacks are forced to carry at all times.

The recent protests have



MASSACRE: MARCH 21, 1985

been very different, and at their core is the massive Black working class that has grown over the last two decades.

And the Black workers movement will not be beaten back easily. Over the last three years it has increased in size and in confidence.

ILLEGAL

Only last month, more than 40,000 Black miners staged an illegal strike for higher wages in the Vaal Reefs, the world's largest gold mine. This follows a successful miners strike last year.

Fearing increasingly militant Black workers, the South Africa Chamber of Commerce, representing 350 companies, called for the government to legalize Black organizations and declare amnesty for jailed leaders. It is not that the chamber is a champion of racial justice and Black rights. It is an expression of their fear of an increasingly strong working class movement.

Although there are differ-

ences between South Africa in 1960 and today, one thing remains unchanged. Capitalism in South Africa and in the West depends on apartheid to enforce low wages and high profits.

And the South African government today depends even more on the support it receives from the U.S. and other western powers for its sur-

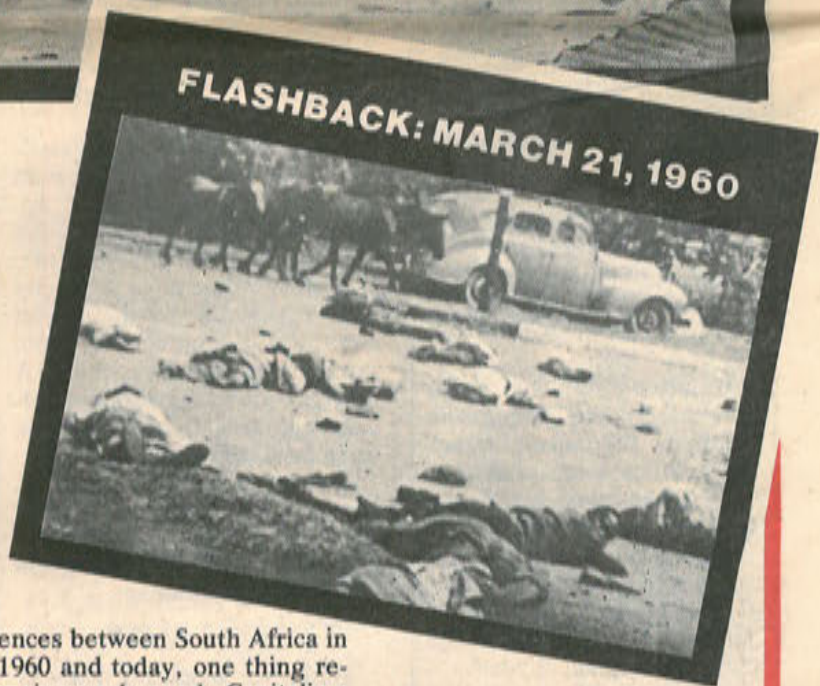
vival.

This is why, in the face of growing opposition to U.S. support for the South African regime, Ronald Reagan defended the massacre at Uitenhage. The protesters, Reagan said, had it coming to them. The police were provoked by elements "who want trouble in the streets," he said.

SUPPORT

Neither repression nor U.S. support for apartheid will stop the protests in South Africa and the U.S. And socialists must be there to make the arguments against U.S. collusion with apartheid and for the struggle for workers' power in South Africa.

A good beginning is to build and attend the national demonstration in Washington on April 20. End U.S. Support to Apartheid! For Workers' Power in South Africa!



FLASHBACK: MARCH 21, 1960



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