

TORCH

Newspaper of the Revolutionary Socialist League

December 15, 1981-January 14, 1982

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JAN 15 1982

SOLIDARNOŚĆ!

DEFEND THE POLISH WORKERS!

- **Martial Law Imposed**
- **Thousands Thrown in Jail**
- **Factory Occupations and Strikes Reported**

**U.S. Economy:
Latest Recession
a Sign of Coming
Collapse**



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**UAW Tops Give
Green Light to
Company
Takebacks**

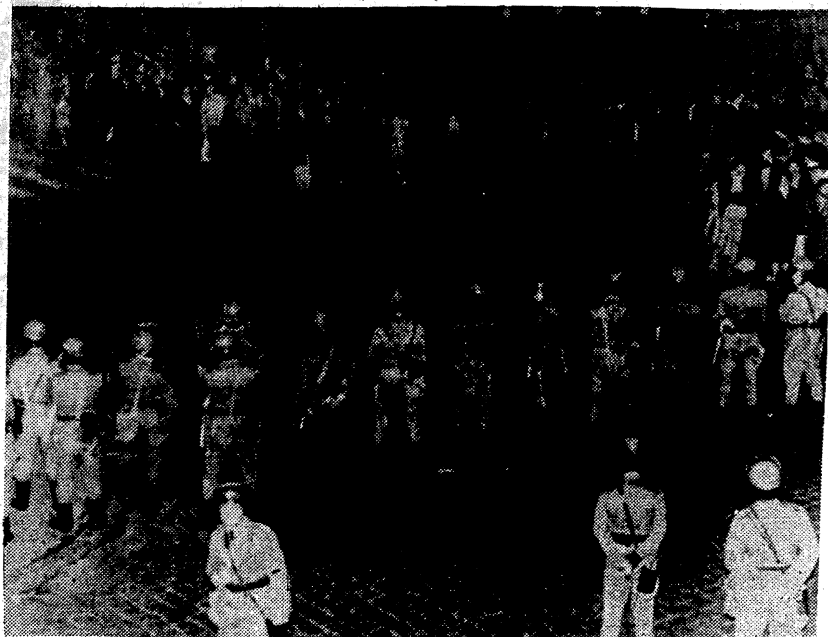
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**SECCION
EN ESPAÑOL**

AS WE GO TO PRESS, the Polish government is carrying out a massive crackdown against Solidarity (Solidarność), the mass workers' union, aimed at breaking the back of the Polish workers' movement and restoring governmental control over the country.

At midnight on December 13, Polish police and troops raided the union's Warsaw headquarters and jailed local Solidarity leaders. Shortly afterwards, government forces jailed almost all the national leaders of Solidarity, who were gathered in Gdansk for a meeting of the union's national commission. Reports indicate that all told, over a thousand union leaders and activists have been jailed. Solidarity head Lech Walesa, however, was reportedly not arrested and was flown to Warsaw for "negotiations" with the government. Meanwhile, troops moved into major cities throughout the country.

In other actions, the government sealed off Poland's borders and cut off the country's



Polish police with shields cordon off Solidarity offices in Wroclaw while workers gather outside.

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**our
readers
write...**

Send letters to:
TORCH, PO Box 1288
New York, NY 10116

More on the APC

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,
I am writing about your article on the All Peoples Congress (APC) in last month's Torch/La Antorcha. One thing the article failed to discuss was why Workers World Party (WWP) tried and succeeded to bureaucratically control and destroy the APC. Are they just rotten people into a sectarian power trip? Some Workers World members are in fact very dedicated. It is WWP's overall

political outlook which led to the fiasco at the APC.

WWP's view of socialism, what they are fighting for, is a top-down, bureaucratically run society, but one run supposedly for (not by) the workers and oppressed. They believe that the Soviet Union is such a society. While they claim to have some criticisms of the Soviet Union, you never hear them. On the other hand, WWP totally opposes any opposition to the state-capitalist (Stalinist) bureaucracies that run the so-called socialist countries. WWP opposes the Solidarity movement in Poland, for example, and has said it would welcome a Russian invasion!

With such a view of what they are fighting for, the way WWP ran the APC is not at all surprising. WWPers conceive of a mass movement as something formed by "leaders" behind closed doors. The masses then cheer these benevolent "leaders" on. WWP is trying to build a movement not run by oppressed people themselves, but run by these "leaders" for the oppressed. What was important to them was to have a PATCO striker and a welfare mother speak from the same podium in the front of the room—as we heard again and again—not to have the rank and file actually discuss the issues on the floor.

This method can also be seen in the way the APC was built. They did not want lively, democratically-run chapters where rank and file members could have a say in how PAM or the APC was run. In Chicago, for instance, the general membership only heard about an agenda for the conference two days before it was to be approved. The steering committee did not even schedule a discussion—we were simply informed an agenda was going to be approved. We only had a discussion of the agenda after an RSL member

supported by others pressed for one. Of course, nothing we said made any difference. (I might add that the agenda was never approved by the membership at the APC.) Instead of having political input, the role of the rank and file was to run around postering, leafleting, licking envelopes, and doing other busy work—just like some might do in a campaign for a bourgeois politician.

Given their vision of socialism, WWP members really have no conception that this might be undemocratic. In fact, rank and file members of Workers World Party have no say in how their own organization is run. For instance, at Workers World's 1977 National Convention, members were informed after they arrived that the organization's position on independence for Eritrea had been changed. There was no discussion before the convention about this issue. The purpose of the convention was not to decide this issue, but to explain to the membership the new position. The rank and file had no say about it at all.

WWP's bureaucratic manipulation is really just an extension of a bourgeois notion of democracy—where workers are just passive spectators who are allowed to choose between one master or another. What is the real shame in all this—and why the APC was really a step backward—is how newly politicized people will react. They will either become cynical and say that this is all that can be expected. Or, they will reject Marxism and turn to the reformists who reject revolution, but promise a more "democratic socialism."

In this context, the work of the RSL and the RML in promoting a truly democratic vision of revolutionary socialism becomes all the more important.

Joe Galanti
November 20, 1981

Postal workers speak out on harassment

Dear Friend,

We workers at Cathedral Station are writing this statement to ask your support in our struggle to be treated as human beings. Ever since Supt. James Nolan and his assistant, Reuben Blumen, arrived here, we have been subject to a campaign of harassment to get us to work like slaves. People have been written up for such "crimes" as talking to fellow workers and eating ice cream cones. Radios have been banned. People are not allowed to make or receive calls from their families. A worker with 16 years on the job was fired for defending himself from attack.

At the same time jobs have been cut.

The result is not surprising. Dozens of people have put in for transfers, including some with over 10 years' experience at Cathedral. Operations have broken down as management spends more and more time on oppressing people and writing up frivolous grievances rather than organizing the work. And service to the public has deter-

iorated. Parcel post wagons only go out irregularly because there aren't enough people to do the work. Lines in the lobby get longer as window clerks are taken off their assignments to fill in for parcel post. Mail gets warehoused in the aisles because there isn't enough help. Special delivery gets treated as ordinary mail because one job has never been filled. Every day there is chaos because there aren't enough backup people to fill in for emergencies. And now a first-class stamp is 20 cents!

We want an end to the harassment. We want an end to rules against talking and radios. We want rehired those who were fired for defending themselves. We want Nolan and Blumen transferred to places where they can't oppress people. There is a precedent for this: Several years ago Blumen caused so many problems as a line supervisor at FDR Station that he was removed and made a route examiner.

We also want more workers brought into Cathedral Station. We want an end to forced

overtime. We recognize that bringing in more people not only will help us do our jobs, but also will benefit those who presently have no jobs at all, and finally the customers, who will get better service.

Thank you.

(Adopted at a meeting of workers at Cathedral Station, N.Y., members of the National Association of Letter Carriers, American Postal Workers Union, and Mailhandlers, November 16, 1981.)

After five and a half years on the production staff of the Torch/La Antorcha—three of those as production manager—Lee Ramie will be transferring to the Los Angeles branch of the RSL at the end of the month. He will be replaced by Ian Daniels, who joined staff in September. We would like to welcome Ian and to wish all the best to Lee.

And, to all our readers, from everyone here at the Torch/La Antorcha, we hope you have happy holidays and a good new year in these increasingly difficult times.

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WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP!

On November 15, the Revolutionary Socialist League launched an emergency 10-week drive to raise \$10,000. Many readers have contributed generously to the drive and we have collected \$3,125 thus far. But with only six weeks left to go, we are seriously behind schedule.

It is crucial that we meet the \$10,000 goal of the emergency drive. Over the last several months, our expenses have been running \$2,500 a month over our income. Unless we can close this gap, we will be forced to make major reductions in our work, including a cutback in the Torch/La Antorcha.

Many readers have sent letters along with their contributions, letting us know how much they appreciate the coverage and analysis the Torch/La Antorcha provides every month. Six prisoners from the Federal Correctional Institution at Oxford, Wisconsin, wrote saying:

"We, the P.O.W.'s of F.C.I. Oxford, pledge our labour, in the making of ceramic coffee cups, mugs, flower pots, etc. to be sold at the Party's bookstores. We ask that these items be sold at a low price, to and for the working class people of Amerika.

"We ask that all money paid for these items be used for the funds needed to continue the work for the working class party—RSL."

With support like this, we are hopeful that we can meet our \$10,000 goal. But we will not make it without your help. Please contribute generously to the emergency fund drive.

Thank you for your support and best wishes for the holidays.
(Please make checks payable to RSL or Christopher Z. Hobson and send to: RSL, PO Box 1288, New York, NY 10116.)

By PAUL

"There is no stabbing going on here. It's very happy go-lucky."
—President

"It's the worst thing I've ever seen. It's the worst thing I've ever seen."
—Rep. Barney

A year ago, the Republicans were all Reagan's dogs, and Reagan was the dog.

Congress, as a vanguard in U.S. history, has jubilantly predicted that Reagan administration will restore the good capitalist free enterprise system. Companies made over fist without busybodies poking their noses into affairs, women people "knew their Calvin Coolidge."

And in fact the "evolution" got off to a start last spring when a broken series of budget proposals were pressed universally as the slickest political arrive on the U.S. scene since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Meanwhile, the country was divided and by their election divided some left groups formed together and pro-fascism was just corner or had already.

But only a few of the supposedly invulnerable administration hell from all sides. and foreign policy voking howls of

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Stockman Spills Beans on 'Voodoo Economics'

Reagan Administration in Disarray

By PAUL BENJAMIN

"There is no bickering or backstabbing going on. We are a very happy group."

—President Ronald Reagan

"It's the worst thing of all. People are starting to laugh at them."

—Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.)

A year ago, conservative Republicans were trumpeting Ronald Reagan's election as president, and Republican gains in

merely from working people or Democrats, but even from some of Reagan's warmest supporters. The president's closest advisors in the Cabinet and White House staff are mired in a series of well-publicized scandals and feuds. Reagan is showing himself to be a mere salesman for right-wing policies who neither understands the programs he is selling nor has the ability to hold his own administration together.

Instead of coming across as a new Roosevelt, or even a new

spring, nine percent unemployment—the highest jobless rate since World War II—and \$100 billion budget deficits for the next three years!

Even the most short-sighted Republicans can recognize a disaster when they see one—particularly with congressional elections coming up in 1982. So the Republican legislators who unanimously marched up the hill to pass the administration's budget last spring are starting to march down again.

Now, none other than Sen-

the Office of Management and Budget who designed the administration's budget, has admitted the whole program was a swindle to begin with. While Reagan was showing off his charts on TV, Stockman was telling William Greider (an editor of the liberal *Washington Post*) that no one in the administration knew where the economy was going, and that he made up some numbers to get the program through Congress.

Stockman also called Reagan's "supply-side" theories simply a cover for old-fashioned "trickle-down" economics. In particular, he termed the administration's highly touted three-year across-the-board tax cut a "Trojan horse" designed to sneak through massive tax breaks for wealthy individuals and corporations.

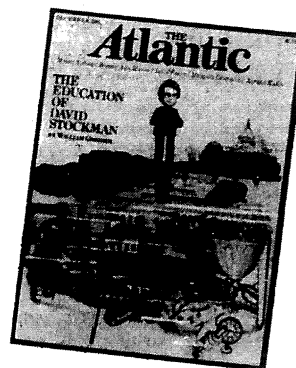
These revelations, published in the December issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, blew the bottom out of the administration's program and forced Stockman to submit his resignation. But Reagan is keeping Stockman on his job, at least for now, because no one else in the administration knows what the specifics of its budget proposals really are or can explain them in Congress. For their part, the Democrats at first roundly condemned Stockman. But they soon realized that Stockman had given them a ton of ammunition to use against the administration, so they are now praising his "refreshing candor" and licking their chops over the coming 1983 budget debate. In short, the administration's high-flying economic program is rapidly being reduced to a complete shambles.

Reagan vs. the 'Red Menace'

Another part of the Reagan "revolution," his "make America strong" foreign policy, is in even worse shape. To the extent that the administration has any foreign policy at all, it centers on a "get tough with the Russians" stance and an obsession with the "Red Menace"—alleged Russian military superiority and support for leftist national liberation forces around the world, termed "international terrorists" by Reagan and his advisors. This obsession has succeeded only in driving wedges between U.S. imperialism and some of its oldest and closest allies.

For example, the administration came into office believing it could unite the Israeli government and the Arab rulers in the Middle East, who are hardly the

best of friends, simply by pointing out the "Red Menace." It even pushed through the sale of AWACS surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia despite



heated opposition as part of its scheme to mobilize the Arab world against Russia. What were the results of this diplomatic coup? On December 2 the *Washington Post* reported that the Saudi government and other Arab governments had offered the Sultanate of Oman, on the Persian Gulf, \$1.2 billion to cancel an agreement giving U.S. military forces access to Omani military bases.

Earlier, Jordan's King Hussein shocked the administration when he calmly announced at the end of his visit to the U.S. that he had already signed an agreement to buy arms from, of all people, the Russian government.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government is screaming that Reagan is selling them out for the sake of Arab oil. To pacify the Israeli regime the U.S. signed a vague military treaty with Israel that was promptly denounced not only by Arab governments but by major opposition parties in Israel itself.

No wonder one Middle East diplomat complained: "It's one thing when people disagree with one another, but these people don't seem to know what they are doing."

In fact, no one either in or out of the administration knows who speaks for the U.S. on foreign policy, or what U.S. foreign policies really are. Reagan himself is notorious for his ignorance of, and disinterest in, foreign affairs.

While Reagan takes refuge in anti-Russian generalities, his advisors, such as Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and National Security Advisor Richard Allen are supposed to do the real work. But they have spent their time stabbing each other in the back in a dogfight

(Continued on page 16)



Congress, as a virtual "revolution" in U.S. politics. They

jubilantly predicted that the Reagan administration would restore the good old days of capitalist free enterprise, when companies made money hand over fist without government busybodies poking into their affairs, women and Black people "knew their place," and Calvin Coolidge was president.

And in fact the Reagan "revolution" got off to a rousing start last spring with an unbroken series of victories on its budget proposals. The capitalist press universally hailed Reagan as the slickest political wizard to arrive on the U.S. political scene since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Meanwhile, the Democrats were divided and demoralized by their election defeats, while some left groups freaked out altogether and proclaimed that fascism was just around the corner or had already arrived.

But only a few months later the supposedly invincible Reagan administration is catching hell from all sides. Its domestic and foreign policies are provoking howls of protest not

Calvin Coolidge, Reagan is looking more and more like the bumbling Jimmy Carter who was laughed out of the presidency in the 1980 elections.

Recession deflates economic 'miracle'

For starters, let's take a look at the fate of the president's economic program, the centerpiece of his whole administration. In a series of nationally-televised speeches shortly after he took office, Reagan told us that the magic of "supply-side economics" would enable him to cut taxes, increase military spending, maintain a "social safety net" for the poor and balance the budget all at the same time. He even produced charts "proving" exactly how this economic miracle would work.

But after Reagan got his program through Congress the economy began unravelling even faster than before. The concrete results of Reagan's miracle are turning out to be a recession lasting at least until

ator Paul Laxalt, one of Reagan's closest friends, is saying that the president went "a bit too far" with his budget cuts. Representative Jack Kemp, the patron saint of supply-side economists, publicly attacks Reagan advisors who welcome the recession as the only way to lower inflation. And key Republican senators, like Majority Leader Howard Baker, Finance Committee Chairman Robert Dole and Budget Committee Chairman Peter Domenici want to increase taxes and scale down military spending, in other words, junk half the president's original program, in order to salvage the economy and the Republican Party's chances in the 1982 elections. Meanwhile, the Democrats are gleefully promising to cooperate with the president—if he admits his economic miracle has flopped.

Boy wonder made up statistics

To top it all off, David Stockman, the boy wonder head of

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anti er 20, 1981

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o: RSL, PO Box 1288,

Central America: A Region in Revolt

Below is the second and final part of a talk on the situation in Central America given by Franz Morgan to a meeting of the RSL's Central Committee held September 26-27. Part one, printed in last month's Torch/La Antorcha, described how after decades of relative stability, Central America is in turmoil, posing a serious challenge to continued U.S. imperialist domination of the region. Morgan explained that U.S. imperialism's response to the crisis has several aspects: first, to give massive economic and military aid to "friendly" governments, particularly the rightist regimes in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala; and, second, to wage an intense propaganda campaign that invents and exaggerates the Soviet/Cuban "menace" in the region. Morgan noted that the bottom line for U.S. imperialism was to keep oil-rich Mexico, which has a 2,000 mile border

with the U.S., within its sphere. Finally, part one of the talk outlined the current situation in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Guatemala

Everything that El Salvador lacks in strategic importance for the U.S., Guatemala has. It has a large amount of U.S. capital investment—81 percent of the total U.S. capital in Central America. It has oil, as much as lies on Alaska's North Slope, and it could supply 10 percent of the U.S.'s annual oil needs. It has the strongest army in the region—18,000 well-trained, well-armed men. Guatemala is the largest of the Central American countries in population. And it borders on four other nations, most importantly Mexico.

While the crisis in Guatemala

has not yet advanced as far as that in El Salvador, it is well on its way, and the dangers it carries are much greater for the U.S. There has been a rural armed struggle underway in Guatemala for 20 years (much longer than in El Salvador) and under the pressure of recent events in the region, it has taken a giant leap forward. An estimated 2,000 armed guerrillas are operating under four leftist parties and a broad Democratic Front Against Repression (equivalent to El Salvador's FDR), which unites over 150 unions, church groups, student groups and other mass organizations.

A significant new development in Guatemala has been the successful incorporation of the nation's indigenous Indian people into the armed liberation struggle. The Indians, who make up 53 percent of the population, are mostly peasants and poor agricultural workers who

have previously been non-political and passive, alienated from the dominant Ladino/mestizo society. The guerrilla strategy of orienting to these Indian people seems to be paying off, and may be the key to a liberation victory there.

As elsewhere, the Guatemalan economy is in bad shape. Capital flight is a major problem, and profits are down in all the major industries—coffee, nickel and tourism. The oil is still in the ground and the big question is, can Guatemala's oil be developed fast enough and protected well enough to save the economy from collapse?

U.S. military aid to Guatemala was cut off under Carter, as part of his program to punish the worst "human rights offenders." But some of this aid, in the form of spare parts, has already been resumed. The cut-off never had a serious impact on the Guatemalan army, however, which was able to get

almost all it needed from U.S. allies: Israel, Argentina and Spain.

Meanwhile, the military government has launched a bloodbath against its own people, in the Salvadorean style, in an effort to prevent the rise of any democratic center force. Six thousand people have been killed in the past three years, especially unionists, teachers, priests, journalists, students and politicians—anyone who might be able to cohere a liberal opposition to the military regime.

Honduras

Honduras is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (only Haiti is poorer), and has a population of three million. Yet it is receiving a huge amount of U.S. military

Haig Threatens U.S. Military Action in the Caribbean

By ALBERT LARY

Following a month-long series of threatening remarks from top U.S. government officials, the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff are about to issue a new "threat assessment" of Cuba. The announcement is expected to set the tone for some definitive statement of U.S. policy toward the entire Caribbean and Central American region.

Until now, the U.S. position has been unclear, but generally warlike. The Pentagon's "assessment" is not likely to announce any drastic action such as a military invasion, but major naval maneuvers involving a U.S. carrier battle group withdrawn from the coast of Iran are expected to begin soon in waters off Cuba.

The latest round of U.S. imperialist diplomacy began November 12 when U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, declared the situation in Nicaragua to be "very, very disturbing." The Nicaraguan government, according to Haig, is

"moving toward totalitarianism" and continues to receive arms from Russia and Cuba which "can only be a force for aggression." Furthermore, said Haig, the Nicaraguan government is re-shipping many of the Russian and Cuban arms to the rebels in El Salvador.

A U.S. naval blockade of Nicaragua was hinted at, and when one Congressman asked the Secretary if he could rule out U.S. efforts to destabilize or overthrow the Nicaraguan government, Haig responded, "No, I would not give you such an assurance." One week later, Haig repeated his threat. "We haven't given up on Nicaragua," he said, "but the hours are growing rather short."

A series of news leaks and press speculations fueled a flurry of war stories throughout November. According to reports, the U.S. was planning everything: a blockade of Nicaragua, large-scale air and sea maneuvers near Cuba, a new trade quarantine of Cuba, even an outright invasion of both Cuba and Nicaragua. Haig did his best to keep the heat on,



Secretary of State Alexander Haig is threatening military action against Cuba and Nicaragua. U.S. imperialism, which sent Marines into the Dominican Republic in 1965, has often used force to maintain control of Latin America.

hinting in a series of interviews that at least some of the rumors were true. Both Cuba and Nicaragua put their military forces on alert, and inside the U.S. the left came out in emergency demonstrations to protest the threats.

After two weeks, the tensions began to diminish as it appeared that the U.S., under pressure from its Latin American allies, was stepping back from an immediate confrontation in the Caribbean. The conservative president of Venezuela, Luis Herrera Campíns, who agrees with U.S. policy toward El Salvador and Cuba, still felt it

necessary to issue a warning against Haig's latest threats. "Any military intervention will find a general rejection throughout the continent," said Herrera during a state visit to Washington.

The Mexican government also warned Haig that a U.S. military move against Nicaragua or Cuba would be a "gigantic error," while at the same time expressing Mexico's concern over the Nicaraguan arms buildup. A former president of Costa Rica, José Figueres, said that U.S. military intervention would be a "catastrophe which could set back U.S.-Latin

American relations 100 years."

Even the pro-U.S. opposition press inside Nicaragua, *La Prensa*, expressed anger at the threatening tone of Haig's remarks. *La Prensa* has come under fire from the Nicaraguan government and has been shut down several times recently for printing anti-government views. Haig has referred to the suppression of *La Prensa* as one justification for U.S. intervention. But in an editorial comment in late November, *La Prensa*'s co-director Pedro Joaquín Chamorro wrote: "*La Prensa* condemns the threatening and interventionist atti-

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Salvadorean leftists prepare for mass rally in 1980. Today working people are being bled to death by right-wing terror and civil war.

aid, including, recently, two dozen U.S. military advisors. With this aid, Honduras has built up the strongest air force in Central America.

Up until now, Honduras has been relatively stable politically, under a moderately rightist military regime. No major armed opposition groups exist. So why the degree of U.S. attention and aid? It appears that the U.S. hopes to make Honduras into

tude [of Haig]... We stand against this aggressive U.S. policy which could unleash a war so big that there would be no winner."

By the end of November the air had cleared somewhat. In talks with Mexican President José Lopez Portillo, Haig eased his stance slightly, to promise that the U.S. would "not intervene militarily, for the moment," while leaving open other, non-military, options. On November 28, Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto's view was similar. "At this time," said D'Escoto, "an invasion of Nicaragua does not seem very probable."

But the people of Central America, Cuba and the Caribbean region can take very little hope from this. If at the moment U.S. military planners are divided over the costs and benefits of a Caribbean military action, the idea is still very much alive. And the U.S. has a long and bloody tradition of imperialist intervention, wherever "unfriendly forces" come to power.

In 1965, 22,000 U.S. marines invaded the Dominican Republic to put down a popular rebellion. The CIA arranged for the overthrow of elected governments in Chile in 1973 and Guatemala in 1954. In earlier years, U.S. military forces occupied the nations of Haiti, Cuba, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama and parts of Mexico. U.S. imperialism still holds Puerto Rico as a virtual colony!

While a new U.S. intervention in the Caribbean region may not happen tomorrow, the threat is on-going and real. □

its most solid proxy in Central America—stable and militarily sound, sort of like Nicaragua was 20 years ago. Any expansion of U.S. war moves in the region are likely to use Honduras as the staging point. Because of its location, it offers easy access for armies seeking to invade either El Salvador or Nicaragua.

What is our attitude toward the rebellions in Central America?

Our starting point is that we support the struggles of the workers and small farmers of Central America against their ruthless exploitation by the local capitalists and landowners, against right-wing military regimes, and against U.S. imperialism. We not only believe that these are just struggles, but we consider them an important part of our efforts to destroy U.S. capitalism and capitalist oppression everywhere.

We are for a regionalization of the conflict to unite the national liberation forces of all the countries and to further extend and tie down U.S. "advisors." We should be aware that if Reagan chooses to increase U.S. involvement in the



The Indian peoples of Guatemala, most of whom live in extreme poverty, are playing a major role in the liberation struggle.

area, he too will seek to regionalize the war, in order to bring in the armies of Guatemala and Honduras. In light of this, we don't believe the rebels should continue to pay respect to national boundaries. We are for coordinated military activities by the rebels in El Salvador and Guatemala to inflict the maximum damage on their regimes, and we should demand (without expecting) that the Nicaraguan government actually give aid to the liberation forces in nearby countries, which it presently is not doing.

We want to take note of the importance of orienting toward the urban workers, as well as toward the specially oppressed segments of the area's population. The example of the rapid politicization of Guatemala's Indian people is an indication of what is possible when the left seriously makes an appeal to the specially oppressed. Our program includes the right of self-determination for all oppressed nationalities in the region—the various Indian tribes, Nicaraguan Blacks, and so on.

We are for a quick military victory for the Salvadorean FDR/FMLN, but since that seems unlikely under present conditions, we do not oppose negotiations. We don't think that negotiations, in themselves, are necessarily a sellout. A lot would depend on the content of any settlement. We do know that under the present situation, the Salvadorean working masses

are being bled to death. If this level of mass murder goes on much longer, there may not be any viable working class left in the country. If a negotiated settlement can prevent this, can preserve the working class and its organizations, can keep open the possibility for a future working class revolution, then we are not opposed.

Our slogan is not, however, "Negotiate Now!" We do not demand of the U.S. imperialist government that it negotiate with the rebels. Our demand on the U.S. is to get out! U.S. imperialism has no right to even be in Central America, let alone



negotiate the terms of its presence or withdrawal.

To the Salvadorean people we want to warn about a negotiated deal—a deal is a deal and something is going to be given up. We should look for ways to comment concretely on any negotiations which occur. We say the masses must retain their guns, for example, strikes should be allowed, refugees should be allowed to return, etc. It may be that negotiations are impossible in any case with the current U.S.-backed regime. But at the moment it is a big issue in the movement, both in El Salvador and here, and we do have something to say about it.

Another general approach we should have toward all the struggles in Central America is that Stalinism, that is, state capitalism, is not necessarily more left-wing or more desirable than Social Democracy. Both represent variations on

capitalist rule. We do not automatically favor a Stalinist (state-capitalist) leadership or program over a Social Democratic one. Our first concern is the concrete conditions of life for the working class and its ability to organize and fight. That determines our attitude toward national liberation struggles, toward negotiations, and all the rest. There are some specific ways we can begin to use this understanding in the context of Central America.

Among the rebels in El Salvador, for example, the FMLN leader, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, is generally thought of as more left than the FDR leader Guillermo Manuel Ungo. Cayetano Carpio is a former Communist Party chief and Castroite Stalinist. Ungo is a leading member of the Socialist International. Thousands of Salvadorean leftists think Cayetano Carpio is the real chief, that he is "secretly" for socialism, and that Ungo is a mere figurehead. Cayetano Carpio probably does hold the real power (after all, his people have all the guns), and Ungo may be dumped after a rebel victory, but Cayetano Carpio's program for El Salvador has no more to do with working class rule than does Ungo's. We can respect his personal courage and military skills, but we should not give an inch to the illusion that his

brand of "socialism" is somehow better, or closer to what we want.

At the same time, we believe that the only lasting solution to the crisis in El Salvador and throughout Central America is for the workers and small farmers to take over these countries for themselves. We are not simply for national liberation; we believe that national liberation can only be secured if parasitic capitalism, both in its pluralistic and state varieties, is done away with once and for all. From our point of view, this will take socialist revolutions in the countries of Central America, ones that actually put the working people in power.

From our reading of the situation, none of the major national liberation forces in Central America currently stands on such a perspective. None stands for the direct rule
(Continued on next page)

New Attacks on Jamaican Left

By IAN DANIELS

Two months ago, the *Torch/La Antorcha* reported that Jamaica's two active left organizations, the Revolutionary Marxist League (RML—sister organization of the RSL) and the Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ), along with the Youth Organization of the liberal capitalist Peoples National Party (PNP), had been attacked in parliament by Jamaican National Security Minister Winston Spaulding.

In new developments, Prime Minister Edward Seaga and Spaulding have again targeted the RML in parliament, accusing the RML comrades of being terrorists and Cuban agents.

The right-wing Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) government has been waging a series of anti-communist attacks designed to divert attention from the total failure of the JLP program to



Unemployed Jamaican women demonstrate this August for jobs and against sexual exploitation of women workers. The JLP government is attacking leftist groups to divert attention from its failure to solve the country's economic crisis.

solve Jamaica's economic crisis. A major part of this campaign has been the creation of "the Cuban Menace." On October 29 the JLP government broke off diplomatic relations with

Cuba, and expelled all Cubans from the country. Since then, the government and the Jamaican newspapers have been ranting about Cuban infiltrators and the threat of Cuban-organized disruption.

On November 17, according to a report in the *Jamaica Daily News* (11/18/81), Prime Minister Seaga told parliament that the Cuban government was training young Jamaicans in Cuba to carry out terrorist activities when they returned home. He further said that: "These people were kept up to date on crime, shooting and burning of business places and told that on their return to Jamaica they should join the Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist [sic] League." He went on to say that these people were told to help return Michael Manley, leader of the PNP, to power. Seaga warned that Jamaica's security force would

be stepping up its investigations as a result.

While the specific charges against the RML are flatly absurd—the RML has no connection with the state-capitalist government in Cuba, and the RML opposed the fake-reformer Manley in the last elections—this attack cannot be dismissed as merely a paranoid fantasy on Seaga's part. The RML has been outspoken in its criticism of the JLP government, and has supported Jamaican workers in many strikes and other struggles against the JLP's forced economic austerity. Seaga sees that the militant opposition of working people to his program is a threat to the stability of his government. Rather than admit that his economic policies are causing discontent, he has chosen to put the blame on Cuba, a supposed commun-

ist country. Seaga has several goals in doing this. One, he wants an excuse to crack down on the left, which is gaining support because of the failure of his policies. Two, Seaga is hoping to stop working class militancy by threatening the workers that if they struggle, they too will be labeled "saboteurs" and crushed.

Thirdly, he hopes to discredit his opposition. Manley's PNP government had friendly ties with Cuba before the JLP victory in 1980. Similarly, though all the left in Jamaica may not be pro-Cuban, the

on October 25. The RML noted that the JLP's economic failure has an international context: "Seaga's economic policy is no more likely to succeed than similar programmes being carried out by his reactionary friends, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in England and the United States. Like Thatcherism and Reaganomics, the JLP's so-called economic recovery programme is a scheme to soak-the-poor and fatten a tiny clique of capitalists."

As part of this program, the broadcast continued, "the JLP has voiced its determination to 'eradicate radicalism' from the society, that is, crush left-wing and especially communist views At the same time it is very important to note that this anti-communist campaigning by the reactionaries has gone hand-in-hand with an equally vicious campaign against the working class and especially unionized workers. The main form this has taken has been that of attempts by Gleaner [right-wing Jamaican daily paper tied to the JLP—Ed.] columnists and ranking JLP politicians to blame the left for the waves of strikes and other labour struggles which were triggered by the JLP's anti-working class economic policies earlier this year."

The broadcast concluded with

Central America . . .

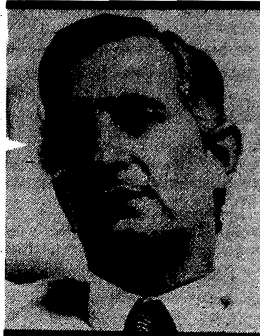
(Continued from previous page) of the workers, small farmers and oppressed peoples of these countries. For this reason, we still see the need for the formation of working class revolutionary parties in Central America, parties that stand for international socialist revolution.

If we had comrades of our political tendency inside El Salvador today we would consider them the nucleus of such a revolutionary party. We would want them concentrated in the urban working class. If we had the forces, of course, we would also want cadre behind the rebel lines, working with the small farmers and fighting in the rebel army. Wherever we were, we would affiliate with the mass organizations of the FDR (trade unions, housewives' committees, student groups, etc.). In whatever way we could we would want to get across our ideas about the need for direct working class rule. We would argue that the existing clandestine committees of factories, students, housewives, etc., should be the base for a new society. And we would argue for this to be the program of the FDR/FMLN. And we would look for the advanced workers who could be recruited directly to our organization.

A similar situation exists in Nicaragua. Do we demand of the FSLN (a mixed Stalinist/Social Democratic organization) that they expel the remaining capitalists from their government, that they fully nationalize the economy, that they

more quickly suppress the bourgeois press? No. The FSLN, and its government, is capitalist itself, with or without the Chamorros, the Robelos, or the other big private capitalists. If all the industry is nationalized tomorrow, Nicaragua will still be capitalist, and if all the bourgeois press is permanently shut down, the working class will be no closer to its own freedom. All we demand of the FSLN, as a capitalist government, is that it leave the working class and small farmers alone. We demand an end to the laws against strikes, against land seizures; we demand an end to the suppression of the revolutionary left.

We must be absolutely clear, however—we are not for Social Democracy any more than we are for Stalinism. We're for the working class, and Social Democracy is pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist, through and through. But neither do we think that political tendencies are graded, with Stalinism more left-wing or "almost revolutionary." Despite the formal Marxism-Leninism, the Stalinists (and other pro-capitalist forces on the left) will all line up against the working class when certain orthodox criteria have been met—a "Marxist" leadership, nationalized property, no private capitalists in the government. In Central America, we do not favor state capitalism as the "lesser evil." We favor workers' rule, as quickly as possible, and if other roads will lead us there faster, we should take them. □



Prime Minister Seaga told Parliament that the Cuban government had trained young Jamaicans to carry out terrorist activities and had ordered them to join the RML upon their return to Jamaica.

socialist connection is made, labeling leftists as saboteurs and terrorists.

After Spaulding's first attack in parliament, the RML gave a broadcast over Radio Jamaica

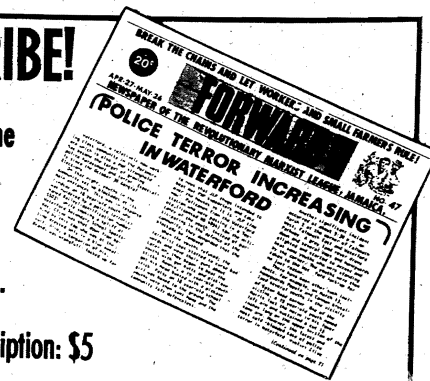
a call for the Jamaican working class to organize against the JLP government, and urged leftists in Jamaica to form a united front against the threatened repression. □

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Anti-Klan Activist Wins Partial Victory in CT

The state of Connecticut has backed off charges against Steve Rose, a long-time gay activist and supporter of the RSL. On November 23, a Meriden, Connecticut, court dismissed a charge of inciting to riot arising from Rose's participation in a July 11 anti-Klan rally in Meriden. The court also placed Rose on one year's "accelerated rehabilitation" on charges of reckless endangerment and inciting to riot, stemming from an earlier anti-Klan rally, held in Meriden on March 21.

"Accelerated rehabilitation" means that if Rose is not arrested during the next year, the charges are dropped and the arrest removed from his record. However, the judge added a special stipulation: Rose is forbidden to participate in any further anti-Klan rallies in Connecticut. This means that while

the Klan is free to demonstrate whenever it chooses (with the protection of the police), Rose is forbidden to lawfully demonstrate his opposition to the racists.

The Klan has been organizing in the Meriden area for months. The March 21 demonstration was called by the Klan in support of a white police officer charged with the off-duty slaying of an unarmed Black man suspected of shoplifting. The Klan's plans backfired, however, when several hundred people, the majority Black and Latin residents of Meriden, literally ran the Klan out of town, sending their police protectors scurrying with them. Several members of the Progressive Labor Party/International Committee Against Racism (PLP/InCAR) and the RSL participated in the anti-Klan action.

The March 21 rout left the Klan and the Meriden and Connecticut state police embarrassed, bitter and looking for revenge. The Klan, which has several known members on the Meriden police force, launched a campaign to demand the arrest and prosecution of anti-racists who were present on March 21. On July 11, the Klan organized a second march in Meriden, specifically around that demand. This time the police were well-organized and out in force, and three militants, Steve Rose and two supporters of PLP/InCAR, were arrested. When Rose showed up in court for arraignment on August 5, he was re-arrested and charged with reckless endangerment and inciting to riot for his participation in the March 21 demonstration. As we go to press we do not know the disposition of the charges against the two InCAR supporters.

Since his arrest in July, Rose has received three letters from Bill Wilkinson's Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, "inviting" him to show up at other Klan rallies. The last letter was sent along with a copy of the Klan's newspaper with an article describing Rose as a "communist agitator" from New York City. The letter said, in part, "now we all know where you are."

Even though Rose did not go to trial, legal fees were high. Many friends and supporters of the RSL have already contributed to help pay these fees, but money is still owed. Those who are able to should send contributions to: Rod Miller, Box 1288, GPO, New York, NY 10116. □



Meriden cops arrest Steve Rose during July 11 anti-Klan rally.

Photo courtesy of Lawrence Frank

Justice Department Delays Indictments of Non-Registrants

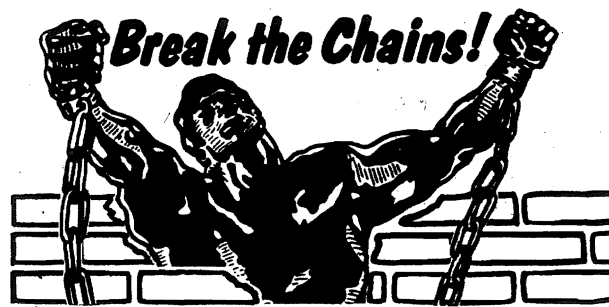
The Justice Department announced on December 10 that it was backing off plans to indict young men who failed to register with the Selective Service System. Since registration began in 1980, nearly one million young men have ignored the government's demand that they register upon turning 18 years old.

The Justice Department said it was delaying seeking criminal charges "until the Reagan administration decides whether to continue the [registration] program." During the presidential election campaign, Reagan claimed he opposed draft registration. However, since taking office, Reagan has launched the largest peacetime military buildup in U.S. history and has threatened military intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. Such policies make military conscription all but inevitable.

A national network of 24 organizations, including many local draft resistance committees, the Coalition Against Conscription/NY Mobilization for Survival, the Westchester Peoples Action Coalition, the National Lawyers Guild and the Revolutionary Socialist League, has sponsored a "Call to Action" which says in part:

"We call for nationwide protest and civil disobedience to begin with the arrests of the first non-registrants who want it, to coincide with each court appearance for arraignment, trial, sentencing, etc. . . ."

Anti-draft activists will now be watching closely to see what the government's next move will be. Reportedly, a decision as to whether to proceed with the indictments may come as soon as December 20.



Fulani Sunni Ali jailed

On December 7, the FBI and federal prosecutors succeeded in their second attempt this fall to put Fulani Sunni Ali (also known as Cynthia Boston) behind bars. Sunni Ali is a leader of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA), a Black nationalist group. The RNA has been the target of a government vendetta for years.

Shortly after the October 20 robbery and shoot-out in Nyack, New York, for which several members of the Weather Underground were arrested, the FBI claimed it had evidence linking the RNA, and specifically Sunni Ali, with that event. On October 27, approximately 200 combat-ready police officers, backed up by four tanks and two helicopters, descended on an RNA farmhouse in Gallman, Mississippi, where Sunni Ali lives and took her into custody.

Sunni Ali was brought to New York and charged with conspiracy. At the same time, one of her lawyers, Chokwe Lumumba, was forbidden from appearing on her behalf because he is an RNA member. Acting on a motion from the government, Judge Irving Cooper made use of the technicality that Lumumba is from Detroit rather than from New York to bar his appearance. Sunni Ali refused any cooperation with the court as long as her right to counsel was denied. Nevertheless, just 10 days after Sunni Ali's arrest the government was forced to free her. Their "evidence" that she was in New York on October 21, conspiring with people believed to be involved in the Nyack incident, had been decisively refuted by solid proof Sunni Ali was in New Orleans on that date, having her car fixed.

As Sunni Ali was leaving jail, however, she was handed a subpoena to appear before the same grand jury that had been on the brink of indicting her and give them samples of her hair and handwriting. Sunni Ali continued to refuse any cooperation unless represented by Chokwe Lumumba, and on December 7 she was sentenced for contempt of court. The sentence is an indeterminate one, and could run as long as the grand jury is in session: 18 months.

Thousands demand release of refugees

Over 3,000 demonstrators marched in Washington, D.C., December 12 to demand that the 2,700 Haitian refugees now being held in prison camps in the U.S. and Puerto Rico be released. The demonstration was sponsored by the NAACP and the Committee for the Defense of Haitian Refugees.

The Reagan administration appears to be going ahead with its plan to send 5,000 Haitian and Cuban refugees now in camps in the Miami area to Fort Drum, New York, near the Canadian border. Temperatures in the area go down to 30 degrees below zero Fahrenheit and annual snowfall is more than 12 feet. Fort Drum was actually Reagan's second choice for the refugees; a location in Montana with an even harsher climate was rejected because it cost too much.

At the same time, there are reports from the more than 700 Haitians in Fort Allan in Puerto Rico that several of the men have developed enlarged breasts and are secreting fluid from their mammary glands. The suspicion is that they are covertly being given hormones to aid "population control."

Black men arrested for rabbit-hunting

Eleven Black Chicago men were arrested November 4 for rabbit hunting. For over 10 years the men, all from Altgeld Gardens public housing project, have hunted in the open fields along the Illinois Central railroad tracks running south along the lake from the Loop. Many of the men take the rabbits back to their families for food. Some of the rabbits get sold for \$4-\$5. But many times, according to neighbors, the men give away rabbits to people who have fallen on especially hard times. The Gardens is one of the most economically depressed of Chicago's many projects.

The men were arrested at gunpoint and held at the police station until 3:00 in the morning. They were booked for using illegal methods to kill rabbits, hunting without a license (although all have the proper permits) and trespassing on railroad property.

—WF



Klan Organizing in Area Hard Hit by Layoffs

Sixteen white-hooded members of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, held a brief pep rally in the Fontana, California, Junior High School auditorium November 27, while dozens of heavily armed police social guard outside. With about 15 supporters in the audience, the event was much smaller than predicted by Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson for this stop on his 20-city recruitment tour of California.

But a promised protest by the Fontana Community Action Group never happened either. Reportedly, some protesters did appear in a nearby San Bernardino courtroom where an unsuccessful last-minute legal effort was made to ban the Klan rally. About 20 people, including a contingent from the Los Angeles RSL, showed up in heavy rain to protest the Klan meeting itself.

One day earlier, a Klan rally on the steps of the Palm Springs City Hall drew a hostile crowd of 125 jeering people. But, as in Fontana, heavy police protection allowed the Klan meeting to take place.

Klan activity in the Fontana/San Bernardino area has increased dramatically. Last year a Black Fontana telephone lineman was shot and partially paralyzed by a Klan supporter. When two large anti-Klan rallies were organized in response, a Black minister involved in the organizing received death threats.

The recent announcement that the huge Kaiser Steel mill in Fontana will be permanently closed has created new social tensions. Thousands of workers are expected to lose their jobs. Wilkinson's current tour is designed to take advantage of the area's severe economic crisis by seeking to lay the blame on Blacks, Chicanos and immigrant workers.

San Francisco Gay Community Protests Rising Violence

Over 1,000 people marched in the rain November 27 to protest a rising wave of anti-gay violence in San Francisco. The event marked the third anniversary of the City Hall murders of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk. The two were shot by Dan White, an anti-gay, right-wing politician and ex-cop, in 1978. White's later light conviction for voluntary manslaughter touched off a night of violent rebellion by outraged San Francisco lesbians and gay men and their supporters.

This year there was no rebellion, and the cold rain kept crowds smaller than expected. But anger in the gay community has become intense after a recent series of sensational anti-gay murders. Even the current mayor, Dianne Feinstein, has reluctantly admitted that the attacks are motivated simply by anti-gay bias.

In August, William Singleterry was killed in a gay area near Buena Vista Park. On September 12, two gay tourists were attacked with knives after their attacker shouted "Are you dudes fags?" One of the two, Nicholas Ritus, died. On November 21, two drunken men stood for four hours on a street corner just off the busy gay area of Polk Gulch, shouting insults at gay men who passed by. Finally they attacked. Three men were stabbed; one died.

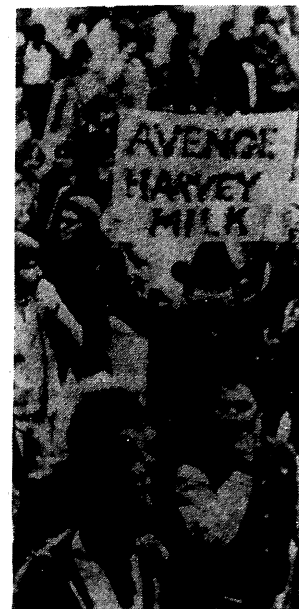
"This has been going on for a long time," said Paul Lorch, editor of the gay-oriented Bay

Area Reporter. "It's just becoming more open and blatant. It can only happen because of official non-interest. The mayor and police chief aren't outraged unless a stabbing happens in Pacific Heights [a rich area]."

Indeed, while reported crimes against lesbians and gay men in San Francisco are up 40 percent over last year, the police response—far from protective—has been to launch more attacks of their own against the gay community. Numerous San Francisco bars, especially s/m bars, have been hit with raids this year. In October a gay community benefit fundraiser was broken up by cops on a charge of "illegal gambling." And in five weeks of street sweeps along Polk Gulch (where two of the recent murders took place) police rounded up over 500 gay men.

A leaflet distributed by the RSL at the San Francisco march warned gays against any reliance on the cops or on gay rights legislation to protect us from attack. Instead, the leaflet outlined the following strategy to fight back:

"Fighting back means building a movement that stands for the freedom of all those attacked by the system and its bigots. Fighting back means uniting oppressed and working people for human liberation: freedom for lesbians and gay men, women, Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans; youth. Fighting back means organizing ourselves into neighborhood defense committees,



democratically-run, to make it clear that we, as the oppressed, are not to be messed with. Fighting back means militant struggle. It means responding to government threats with shows of strength. And it means a willingness to defend ourselves against attack by any means necessary. Fighting back means standing up for ourselves and for what we need and not waiting for someone else to save us. Fighting back means overthrowing this whole capitalist system and replacing it with one that serves our needs and guarantees our freedom... It's a matter of life and death." □

Coalition Pickets Falwell Speech in Chicago

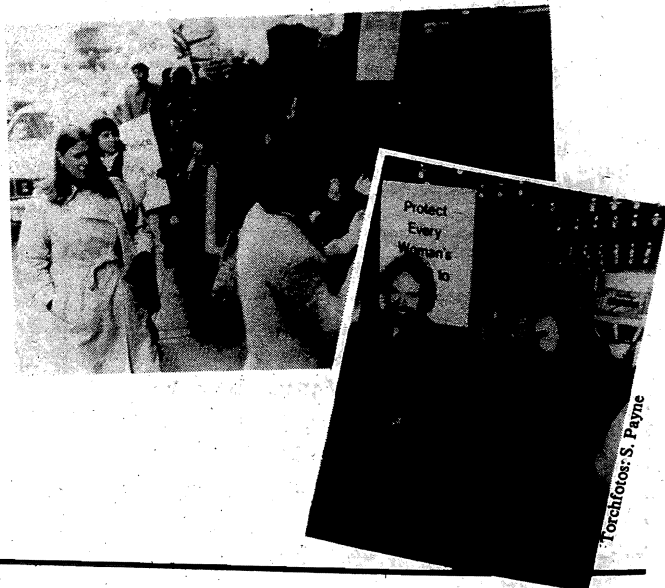
CHICAGO, November 13—Over 75 demonstrators turned out today in front of the Bismarck Hotel in chilling winds to protest the appearance of Jerry Falwell, leader of the Moral Majority, as the guest speaker at the Chicago Executive Club. The spirited picket line voiced its opposition to the New Right, chanting "Moral Majority, go to hell; we all say it's right to rebel!" and "Gay and straight, Black and white; same struggle, same fight!"

The event was sponsored by the RSL and endorsed by Blazing Star/New American Movement, Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Sojourner Truth Organization. Women Organized for Reproductive Choice and the National Abortion Rights Action League also sent contingents.

The action was notable for the diversity of its participants. Included were lesbians and gay men; Black, Latin and Native people; older people and unaffiliated activists as well as left groups. This unity of forces, along with the enthusiasm and determination to fight expressed by the demonstrators, was seen by the RSL as a mark of the success of its organizing efforts.

Although the protest was virtually ignored by the Chicago dailies, several TV and radio reports covered it. Sharon Page, an RSL supporter and a demonstration organizer, told a Chicago gay newsweekly: "Falwell represents a real danger. He's only the more outspoken representative of a policy advocated and supported by people in government, from the White House to the Pentagon to Congress—and especially bankers and corporate heads. That policy is to try to get lesbians and gays, women, Black and Latin people, and working people in general to take the blame for the crisis in society." (Gay Life, 11/20/81.)

Sizable protests have also been reported in other cities where Falwell has spoken recently, including Tucson and San Diego. □



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On Nov several tho in Washing second Wo tion (WPA two-day ac stration at protest th violence ag increase i threatens a

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Women's Pentagon Action Hits Militarism



By PAT NELSON

On November 15 and 16, several thousand women massed in Washington, D.C., for the second Women's Pentagon Action (WPA). The focus of the two-day action was a demonstration at the Pentagon to protest the rising wave of violence against women and the increase in militarism that threatens all human existence.

During the rally, 62 women were arrested on charges of "impeding access" to the Pentagon when they staged a sit-in on the steps. Three were charged with damaging government property when they reportedly smeared blood on pillars at one entrance.

Last year, at the first WPA, about 1,500 women demonstrated and there were 140 arrests. This year's demonstration at the Pentagon followed a gathering held the previous day at the Washington Coliseum. Over 2,000 women from around the U.S. and at least five other countries spent the first few hours of the gathering checking out displays of literature, T-shirts and buttons on topics ranging from ecology, defense cases and lesbian liberation to socialist politics.

Workshops were also held but, unlike last year, most of these were not organized in advance and some of the listed workshops failed to take place. The RSL held a workshop called "Ain't No Socialism

Unless Women Are Free!" Despite the difficulties of meeting in the noisy arena, the workshop was well-attended and a

ers had been predicting that 7,000 women would attend the two-day action, the actual turnout was considerably less. How-



Over 250,000 West Germans protested European nuclear arms buildup on October 10. WPA is part of growing international movement against nuclear war threat.

lively discussion followed the presentation. After the gathering, women marched to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum to demand the use of technology for human needs, not war and destruction. Although the WPA organiz-

ever, it was still larger than last year and was viewed as a success.

WPA a part of broader movement

The Women's Pentagon Action represents a significant part of the rapidly growing international movement against the growth of the military, nuclear power and weapons, environmental destruction and attacks on personal freedom. The WPA is especially significant to the U.S. women's movement because it does not simply address "women's only" issues. Its Unity Statement clearly draws the links between the climate of increased attacks on women—from wife-battering and rape to the Reagan budget cuts which especially affect women, particularly poor, working class and elderly women—and the growing racism in society toward Blacks, Latins, Native Americans and undocu-

mented workers; the increased oppression of lesbians and gay males; and the tremendous buildup in the means of destruction. Furthermore, the WPA understands that the situation is becoming critical. As the WPA Unity Statement says, "We are gathering at the Pentagon on November 16 because we fear for our lives. We fear for the life of this planet, our Earth, and the life of the children who are our human future."

'We have a common enemy'

It is vital, however, that we go beyond the fear which brought so many women to the WPA. It is important that we begin an open discussion on the nature of the enemy we face and what it will take to destroy that enemy.

The RSL workshop attempted to open this discussion. The speaker, Miriam Lee, presented our views on how we can get from the oppressive and destructive system we live under now to the kind of world we would like to live in.

"The reason that it is important that we see our oppression connected to the oppression others face," Lee said, "is that we have a common enemy—the world capitalist system. This world is capitalist, whether we are talking about the capitalist imperialism of the U.S. or the state capitalism of Russia...."

"The one weapon that the working class and poor people have to fight back with is our ability to unite people on our side—working class and oppressed people from around the world—into a social movement. This movement needs to defend us against the attacks being waged against us today.

"This same movement will have to take power away from the ruling class, make a revolution, smash the state and completely change the direction and priorities of society."

Lee warned, however, that overthrowing the capitalist ruling class will not automatically guarantee women's liberation. This will take a fight on the part

of women and men against the sexism of centuries. And this will only happen if women are part of the broader movement—fighting for the rights of all the working and oppressed people throughout the world and explaining to others the need for them to take up the struggle for women's liberation along with their own.

Lee also emphasized the need for a revolutionary party to unite the most conscious revolutionaries on the basis of a common set of politics. This party would train people to lead the struggle for freedom. "Whether or not it is admitted," she said, "leadership exists. We do not want a new elite. In capitalist society working class people are told they can't do for themselves. A revolutionary party exposes this lie through education and training working class people to lead their own fightback."

Finally, Lee discussed the RSL vision of what true freedom and socialism would be like. "Our vision of socialism is working class people taking control and making the decisions which run society." Twenty-four hour free quality child care, community laundries and kitchens, equal job training and good paying jobs, free safe birth control and abortion on demand, and the ability to control our own bodies and lives are some of the gains Lee mentioned as necessary for true liberation.

More strategy discussions needed

The Unity Statement says, "We women are gathering because life on the precipice is intolerable." With that as a starting point, the WPA needs to discuss and develop a strategy to fight the "intolerable." We can take advantage of the network that has been set up in order to share our strategies and ideas. More political discussions in local groups and regional conferences would be an important place to start. Let us begin to build on the commonly felt desire to fight for freedom from the oppression we all face daily. □

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UAW Tops Give Green Light to Company Takebacks

In a policy reversal that will have far-reaching repercussions for the entire U.S. labor movement, the executive board of the United Auto Workers union (UAW) voted on December 9 to allow the re-opening of already existing contracts. Specifically, the board said the decision to renegotiate contracts—something more and more companies are demanding—will now lie in the hands of the union bargaining councils that represent the workers of a given employer.

Previously, the union International had opposed, and—with the exception of the 1979 Chrysler contract—refused to allow, such renegotiation. When the Chrysler contract was revised in 1980, resulting in lower wages, fewer benefits and an easing of work rules, UAW President Douglas Fraser claimed he was only making a special, one-time exception to the union's policy.

Since then, however, Ford and GM—which with Chrysler are known as the "Big Three" automakers—have been making increasingly strident demands for union "givebacks," pleading poverty and arguing that the concessions made to Chrysler give that company a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Additionally, the American Motors Corporation (AMC) and International Harvester (IH)—manufacturer of trucks and

heavy farm and construction equipment)—both in financial trouble, have used the Chrysler precedent to insist on a renegotiation of their contracts with the union.

Thus Fraser's "special exception" has quickly come home to roost. Now, with the union's change in policy, the way is paved for all contracts to be "Chryslerized," from the ones covering, say, a dozen workers at a small shop, right up to the one covering the 440,000 UAW members who work for GM.

UAW members likely to take a beating

The board's action is horrible any way you look at it.

First, it gives the green light to the companies to pull out the blackjacks and beat out of UAW members everything they can. It announces, in advance, that the supposedly powerful International basically agrees with the companies and will do nothing to stop them. Not surprisingly, therefore, the auto companies have been, to say the least, pleased. "This is certainly welcome news," said Alfred S. Warren, vice-president for labor relations at General Motors. Warren's counterpart at Ford termed the decision a "poten-

tially positive step."

Second, it concretely undercuts the ability of UAW members to resist company demands for renegotiations and givebacks. Before, the workers could point to UAW policy and refer the company to the International. Now the companies can point to the executive board decision and say to the workers, in effect, that their own leaders said it was okay to re-open the contract.

Along with this, the board's decision makes it more likely that large numbers of workers will feel they must go along with company demands. The new policy basically amounts to "everyone for themselves." It

therefore leaves all the initiative to the more conservative workers, who will be able to argue—with a lot of apparent truth on their side—that the workers have no choice but to give in if they are to save their own jobs. Isolated from other workers in the same industry who work for a different boss, unable to mount a united response, many workers will choose to go along, including many more militant workers who don't like it one bit.

Finally, on the broadest level the new policy sets a dangerous precedent for all unions. Historically, the UAW has been considered a pacesetter for other unions. This has always re-

ferred, however, to the UAW's ability to win relatively higher wages and better benefits than other unions. Now the "pace" is going the other way. This sets a particularly bad precedent for next year, when contracts covering 40 percent of unionized workers expire—including Teamsters, electrical, rubber and oil workers, various public employees and the autoworkers themselves.

Capitalist press welcomes UAW surrender

The UAW's new policy is being hailed by the bourgeois media as a sensible one given the crisis of the auto industry. But it is not only the auto industry that is in trouble—the whole economy is in terrible shape. And it is not only the auto companies that are, and will be, demanding givebacks, it is the entire capitalist class, which seeks to get out of the mess by throwing tens of thousands out on the streets and more brutally exploiting those left with jobs.

In the face of this, the UAW—long considered one of the more militant and progressive unions in the country, and some of whose leaders are supporters of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (including Fraser himself)—not only is leading a major retreat but is calling for the workers to disperse and surrender. They seem to be adopting the slogan, long held by the capitalist class, that what's good for General Motors is good for the country. □



UAW militants who demanded fight against auto bosses at 1980 convention are being sold out by Fraser's no-fight strategy.

LABOR IN STRUGGLE

USWA creamed at Du Pont

Workers at 14 E.I. du Pont plants rejected membership in the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in elections held December 7-11. The union has been trying to organize Du Pont, the huge chemical company, for eight years. It has especially focused on these 14 plants and two others (where elections have yet to be held) for the last 18 months.

Over 95 percent of the eligible workers cast ballots in the elections, and in most cases they rejected representation by the USWA by a wide margin. In some cases the vote was for no union. At other plants it was for continued representation by employee associations that are descendants of company unions Du Pont organized in the 1930s.

According to the *New York Times*, workers at Du Pont's Chattanooga, Tennessee, plant voted 1,146 for no union to 961 for the USWA; at Belle, West Virginia, the vote was 808 for no union to 263 for the USWA; and in Florence, South Carolina, the vote was 467 for no union to 197 for the USWA. Even in New Jersey, a heavily unionized state, the vote was 198 for the employee association to 103 for the USWA at a plant in Newark and 165 to 32 for an employee association at a plant in Grassell.

Du Pont, whose plants are concentrated in the South and East, is the second largest non-union employer in the country. It has about 100 plants and 66,000 employees, but only 3,300 of its workers are union members. The company has long had an

active and aggressive anti-union policy. In recent years, Du Pont has often been ready to pay wages close to union scale to discourage workers from organizing. Du Pont also fosters a paternalistic image, and works to convince its workers it will treat them fairly and provide economic security.

Of the 3,300 Du Pont workers who are unionized, only 18 (at a plant in Minnesota) are currently represented by the USWA. But the union hoped to build on its first big win in the South last year—at Tenneco's Newport News shipyard—and magnify its impact by cracking the acknowledged toughest anti-union company around.

The union was not successful. The choice for Du Pont workers came down to getting what they could from the so-called paternalism of the company or believing that through the union they could achieve greater economic security and better working conditions.

But apparently the union was not able to inspire confidence in its potential. Judging from interviews with Du Pont workers, one reason for this was that many big unions, including the USWA, have failed to protect their members from layoffs and wage cuts in the past few years. In its anti-union leaflets, Du Pont pointed out the many giveback agreements the unions have signed in the past year and asked, apparently effectively, "Can the USWA guarantee you anything—but more talk?"

In brief . . .

Ronald Reagan made an empty, hypocritical gesture of peace towards the labor movement December 1 by announcing that fired air traffic controllers could apply for federal government jobs—except as air traffic controllers. This leaves the controllers free to apply for jobs at any one of the hundreds of federal agencies now laying off their employees. . . . Meanwhile, one member of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) reports that a solid job offer with an aviation consulting company was withdrawn after the Federal Aviation Agency told the firm that hiring an ex-controller would hurt its chances of getting federal contracts. . . . In late November PATCO filed for bankruptcy in a Washington, D.C., court. On December 7, PATCO appeared in federal district court in Brooklyn and agreed that it owed the airlines \$28.9 million in damages from the first three days of the strike. This is in addition to \$4.5 million in penalties imposed at that time. PATCO now has \$3.8 million in assets, which will be divided among its creditors.

* * * * *

A November 30 press release from the Department of Labor reports that strike activity for the first 10 months of 1981 was the lowest in over 10 years. From January through October of this year there were 3,563 strikes involving a total of 1.1 million workers. Days idle because of strikes were only .12 percent of total estimated work time.

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By WILLIAM

Just under 3 medium cheeses labor movement together in New Yember 16-19teenth biennial the American Labor-Congress Organizations (A

The delegates when anti-union blowing stronger for 30 years. Total bership is down cent of all work after employer ha ful at blackmailing accepting giveba contracts are bei industry after inc

Unionized pub are one of the m Reagan's so-called. And in the wake o the air controllers ens of local offici inspired to engage union-busting cam

The storm batter the labor movement the AFL-CIO without ever being AFL-CIO President land and most leaders insist every At the same tim Kirkland has been "new activism" to calls "the challenge future."

Kirkland seeks new AFL-CIO

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In a break from neither Ronald Reag cretary of Labor Donovan was invited at the convention. In the president and se labor were always

AFL-CIO's 'New Activism': March to the Polls for Democrats

By WILLIAM FALK

Just under 3,000 big and medium cheeses of the U.S. labor movement gathered together in New York City November 16-19 for the fourteenth biennial convention of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

The delegates met at a time when anti-union winds are blowing stronger than they have for 30 years. Total union membership is down below 20 percent of all workers. Employer after employer has been successful at blackmailing workers into accepting givebacks. National contracts are being eroded in industry after industry.

Unionized public employees are one of the main targets of Reagan's so-called budget cuts. And in the wake of the defeat of the air controllers' strike, dozens of local officials have been inspired to engage in their own union-busting campaigns.

The storm battering down on the labor movement dominated the AFL-CIO convention—without ever being mentioned. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and most other union leaders insist everything is fine. At the same time, however, Kirkland has been pushing for a "new activism" to meet what he calls "the challenge of the future."

Kirkland seeks new AFL-CIO image

What Kirkland wants to do is back away from the dinosaur policies of former federation president George Meany. Whereas Meany was an open racist and sexist, and agreed with the most hawkish generals in the Pentagon in his views on foreign policy, Kirkland wants to steer the federation in a more moderate-to-liberal direction. At the same time he wants to gain more clout for the AFL-CIO by creating a modern, capable, attractive organization, with ties to other social movements.

The September 19 Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington, D.C., was the first big show of Kirkland's new activism. The November convention took several additional, largely symbolic, steps.

In a break from precedent, neither Ronald Reagan nor Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan was invited to speak at the convention. In the past, the president and secretary of labor were always invited,

whether they were Democrats or Republicans.

Also at this convention, the AFL-CIO voted to rejoin the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Labor Organization (ILO). The AFL and the CIO, working closely with the government, had founded these and other world

Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women, and Henry Lacayo, chairman of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, were all asked to speak.

But the narrow limits of what this newfound unity really means was also revealed at the convention.

The AFL-CIO's desertion of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization

If the pilots had honored the air controllers' picket lines for even a week, it is likely that PATCO would be alive today. Instead, with the approval of the federation, the pilots laid a nice wreath on PATCO's grave.

And in a display of high-handedness that was reminiscent of Meany, Kirkland ignored Black union leaders' recommendations after asking them to suggest candidates for the AFL-CIO executive board. Going into the convention the 35-member board consisted entirely of white men except for one woman and one Black man. Kirkland wanted the board to look broader and had a definite idea of who he wanted: a conservative Black woman without a strong base. When the Black union officials gave him a list of four men and one woman with long careers in the unions, he threw away the list.

Nominated and elected was Barbara Hutchinson, a lawyer for the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, who first became a union member four years ago and is currently the women's affairs director of the American Federation of Government Employees.

AFL-CIO moves deeper into Democratic Party

But the real guts of Kirkland's "new activism" is to be in and with the Democratic Party. This was well reflected at the convention. "Democrats and AFL-CIO Leaders Hold a Love Feast," the *Washington Post* headlined a story on November 19.

Speakers during the four days included Senator Edward Kennedy, former vice-president Walter Mondale and Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill.

The convention passed a large dues increase to aid political action committees and the federation will now fund COPE (Committee on Political Education) directly instead of through separate pledges.

At the same time, Kirkland has moved to involve the AFL-CIO more directly in internal Democratic Party affairs. He was instrumental in choosing the current Democratic National Chairman, Charles Manatt, for example. This year the number of AFL-CIO people on the Democratic National Committee (DNC) was increased from five to 15. Five other AFL-CIO representatives now sit on the Democratic Party executive committee. Democrats have announced plans for

a DNC labor committee, with two AFL-CIO members acting as co-chairs.

Finally, Kirkland has announced that the federation might take the unprecedented step of endorsing candidates in Democratic Party caucuses and primaries.

In some ways, what Kirkland is doing is turning the idea of the labor movement founding its own political party upside down—he is integrating the AFL-CIO into the Democratic Party apparatus. "I say I welcome you to the fold," said Tip O'Neill when he addressed the convention.

Convention ignores coming union contract battles

Pursuing its new activist orientation, the convention called for Solidarity Day Two on November 2, 1982—election day. Union members and their allies will "march to the polls in unprecedented numbers," the resolution said. In choosing November 2 as the next Solidarity Day, the AFL-CIO carefully overlooked a more appropriate date: September 15, when the contract of labor's flagship union, the United Auto Workers, runs out.

In fact, in 1982 nearly 40 percent of all unionized workers will be negotiating for new contracts. The outcome of the 1982 contract round will set the pattern for many of the other unionized workers and millions of non-unionized workers as well. All indications, as we described in the *October Torch/La Antorcha*, are that unionized workers will be taking a beating.

The AFL-CIO convention should have been used to prepare a strategy for a coordinated struggle to prevent the imminent labor defeats in the next year. The unity and solidarity that the AFL-CIO big shots are fond of talking about can only be achieved through a strategy of fighting together for what we all need. But the federation's convention was instead used to draft union members into being good soldiers for the Democratic Party.

As if all was well for the union when Jimmy Carter was number one.

As if the capitalists' attacks on the unions, and the push for givebacks, started only one year ago.

Kirkland's new activism, far from being a bold new path to victory, is simply a slightly longer route to the meat grinder. □



Lane Kirkland, who replaced George Meany as AFL-CIO president in 1979, is calling for a "new activism" by labor unions. But he is doing nothing to defend workers like the PATCO strikers who come under attack from the ruling class. Instead he is telling workers to rely on Democratic Party leaders like Edward Kennedy, Tip O'Neill and Walter Mondale, who all spoke at the recent AFL-CIO convention.

labor organizations after World War II as anti-Russian, pro-U.S. groups. But Meany pulled the federation out of the ICFTU in 1969 because it was pro-detente and withdrew from the ILO when that organization gave verbal support to Palestinian rights.

One of the things Kirkland has been working at is achieving greater unity within the labor movement and between the unions and other social movements. Thus, the AFL-CIO convention welcomed the United Auto Workers back into the federation's fold. In addition,

(PATCO) was endorsed in a mild resolution that called on federation affiliates to "continue assisting" (!) the air controllers. More militant resolutions coming out of California—including one to discipline the pilots' union for opposing the PATCO strike—never made it to the floor.

To add insult to injury, the pilots' union announced during the convention that they were reversing their previous opposition and were now supporting the strike! The reason: Pilots were being laid off as a result of the new air traffic restrictions.

By RON TABER

As should be increasingly obvious to everyone, the U.S. economy is in a serious crisis. Virtually all the economic statistics indicate that the economy is sinking, and sinking rapidly.

For example, the government's index of leading economic indicators, which is supposed to reveal where the economy is heading, dropped 1.8 percent in October. New orders for durable goods (costly consumer items expected to last for more than three years) dropped 8 percent in October, the biggest one-month drop in two and a half years. And not least, unemployment is high and rising. Officially, 8.5 percent of the workforce is unemployed (this figure does not count those who are without jobs, but who have given up looking for work) and 860,000 workers lost their jobs in September and October alone.

As Douglas Rossman, a raw materials purchaser for the Federal Mogul Corporation, put it: "Business has dropped like a stone in the last month." (New York Times, 12/7/81.) Even President Ronald Reagan has admitted that the economy is in a recession, technically defined as a drop in the Gross National Product (GNP—the total amount of goods and services produced in the economy) for two consecutive quarters, that is, six months.

Bourgeois economists are divided over how deep and long the current recession will be. But few predict a serious upturn in the economy before the end of the second quarter (June) of next year. We think this may be too optimistic. While there may be some kind of recovery by next summer, it will most likely be extremely feeble. Whatever actually happens, the underlying sickness of the economy will remain.

Major companies, industries sinking

The present crisis is more than "any old" recession. Among other things, it is the second downturn in two years; the GNP declined a whopping 10 percent in the second quarter of 1980.

Another indication that the current

crisis is no typical post-World War II recession is the fact that small businesses are failing at record rates. In the first 10 months of this year, business bankruptcy filings rose to 14,499—an increase of 42.2 percent from the comparable period last year. This is the highest number reported since 1962.

But the crisis is not just threatening the survival of small businesses. Major household-name corporations are in serious danger of going under. Everybody knows about Chrysler, which had to get loan guarantees of \$1.2 billion from the government last year and will have to go back to the public trough for the \$300 million more than was authorized. International Harvester, the maker of trucks and agricultural equipment, is also in serious trouble. It lost over \$635 million on its

regular business operations in the year ending October 31 (70 percent more than last year) and has had to lay off 10,000 of its 36,000 union workers in the U.S. and Canada. Pan American Airways is also on the rocks and may not get rescued. Finally, major savings banks across the country are close to collapse and are only being "saved" by being merged into marginally stronger institutions.

Even more broadly, major industries (not just some companies but **entire industries**) are in trouble. Most people know about the auto industry, which has been in a serious slump for two years. Sales in the first 20 days of November alone dropped a steep 23 percent from the none-too-high figure of last year. Since 1979, the Big Three (Ford, GM, Chrysler) automakers have laid off nearly a quarter of their U.S. workforce and have closed 16 of their approximately 220 manufacturing plants. More cuts are coming. Finally, industry losses for 1980 and 1981 are expected to total \$5 billion. Chrysler is only the tip of the iceberg. Ford is pretty sick and the once-proud General Motors (the virtual symbol of U.S. capitalism) is also not doing well. Aside from low sales and other problems, GM recently had its credit rating lowered.

The residential housing industry has also dropped off a cliff. Housing starts (initiation of the construction of new homes) in October plunged to their lowest level in 15 years, while sales of new homes dropped 12.6 percent in September to the lowest annual rate since the government began keeping records in 1963. Meanwhile, as the prices of new homes, along with costs of financing (interest rates), have gone through the roof (the price of the average home increased three-fold during the 1970s), cost of buying a new home has gone beyond the reach of millions of working class and even middle class families.

As a result, the entire housing industry, which expanded at an extremely rapid rate in recent years and was

financed by a mammoth expansion of mortgage debt, is on the verge of collapse. Today, the number of homes being repossessed by banks and finance companies for failure to cover mortgage payments is at record levels.

If the sad state of the auto and residential housing industries were not enough, many other industries, related in one way or another to housing and auto, are also doing very poorly. The rubber industry, the steel industry, the primary metals industry, auto parts industry, automotive dealerships, all of which are closely linked to the auto industry, are sick. Industries dependent on the housing industry are also in dire condition, such as the lumber and wood-working industry. Of particular note is the crisis among the savings banks and savings and loan associations, which are the major source of mortgages to finance home buying and are near collapse.

Crisis begets crisis

One of the reasons the present crisis is so severe is that these economic sectors are all so closely linked together. As a result, a crisis in one leads to crises in the others, in a snowball-rolling-down-

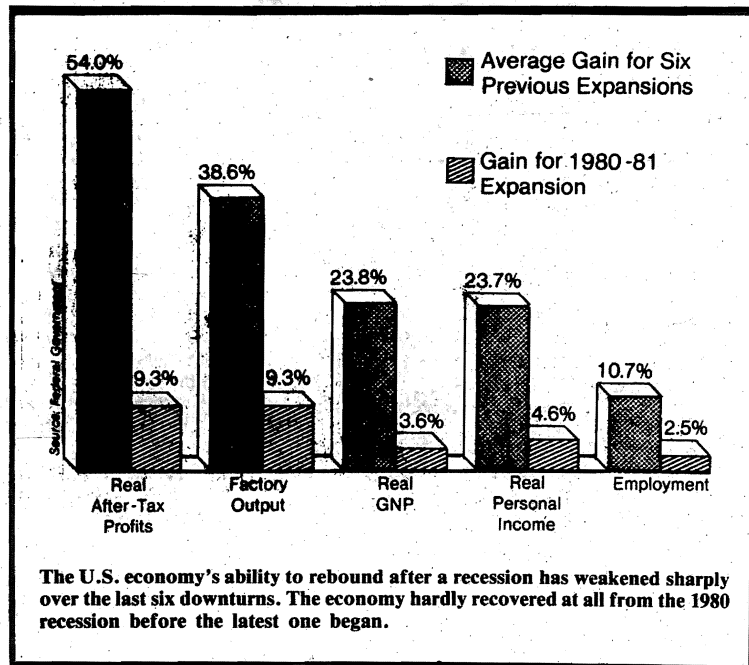
a-hill fashion.

For example, auto is in a tailspin. Companies cut their orders for rubber and auto parts, and workers. The auto parts and rubber companies are the first to be laid off workers and cut their orders for materials. Meanwhile, the workers of all the companies can't buy cars, houses, home appliances (even eat out). As a result, car sales drop and the troubles are intensified, while the workers in the housing industry, with the laying off of construction workers, cuts in orders for lumber and building materials used in construction, leads to layoffs in those industries. At the same time, the housing industry intensifies its losses of the savings banks. Actually, the crisis winds through much of the economy, retailers, for example, who are doing too well recently.

The fact that the crisis is spreading to the auto and housing sectors and industries related to them in the present recession is one of the unraveling of what has been the post-war boom, the economic expansion that began after World War II. Housing, and related industries were the

U.S. ECONOMY:

LATEST RECESSION A SIGN OF COMING COLLAPSE



Unemployed workers in Detroit have been forced to rely on church soup kitchen. The recession has wiped out 250,000 auto jobs.

RECESSION A COLLAPSE

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For example, auto is in a crisis, so the companies cut their orders for steel, rubber and auto parts, and lay off workers. The auto parts, steel and rubber companies are then forced to lay off workers and cut their order for raw materials. Meanwhile, the laid-off workers of all the companies cannot afford to buy cars, houses, home appliances (or even eat out). As a result, the sales of cars drop and the troubles in that sector are intensified, while the crisis spreads to the housing industry, which results in the laying off of construction workers, cuts in orders for lumber and other raw materials used in construction. This leads to layoffs in those industries and a still further cut in consumer spending. At the same time, the crisis in the housing industry intensifies the problems of the savings banks, etc. Eventually, the crisis winds its way back through much of the entire economy; retailers, for example, have not been doing too well recently.

The fact that the crisis is centered in the auto and housing sectors and the industries related to them reveals that the present recession is one more stage in the unraveling of what has been known as the post-war boom, the long-term economic expansion that followed World War II. Housing, auto and the related industries were the key domestic

component of that upturn. Based initially on the pent-up demand for consumer durable goods that accumulated during World War II, these industries underwent a tremendous expansion. They also stimulated and created a vast array of other industries, some of which we have mentioned. The result was a significant economic, social and political transformation of the country during this period, which can be summed up by the term "suburbanization."

Today, however, there is little near- or intermediate-term possibility that these industries will regain their former size and strength. For example, even if the auto industry succeeds in its current modernization program, it is unlikely that it will ever again have the strength and central position in the economy it had during the 1950s and '60s.

Inflation, in general (that is, the rising costs of raw materials, energy, etc.), plus the specific costs of modernization that the companies have to cover, will mean that cars will be increasingly more expensive. In the meantime, as inflation eats away at paychecks, workers are laid off, people drive fewer miles to save on fuel costs, and the cost of financing a car purchase increases, fewer people will be buying fewer cars. As a result of all this (and even not counting the fact that foreign auto companies have captured nearly 30 percent of the U.S. market), the auto market will not soon return to its previous size, and a significant shrinkage and restructuring of the auto industry is in the offing.

Along with the fact that the two other key props of the post-World War II upturn—the U.S.'s international economic hegemony and the short-term stimulatory impact of arms production—have already been kicked away, the present crisis in the auto and housing sectors signals the final collapse of the post-war boom.

High interest rates not source of problem

Bourgeois economists have sought to blame the present crisis on a number of factors, particularly the high interest rates, which, among other things, are making it difficult for people to borrow money for the construction and purchasing of houses. While high interest rates (and the other factors often cited) certainly play some role in the crisis, they do not, by themselves, explain it. In fact, high interest rates are more a symptom of the economy's sickness than they are its cause.

The cause of the present crisis (and the present high interest rates) lies in the nature of the post-war boom itself. Elsewhere, we have discussed this in detail (see our pamphlet entitled **Capitalism in Crisis**).

Here we would like to focus simply on two of the more fundamental factors. The first of these is the fact that throughout much of the post-war period, the U.S. capitalists failed to modernize their plants and equipment, that is, replace obsolete facilities with new, up-to-date ones. One of the clearest and most extreme examples of this is the steel industry: The last time a U.S. steel company actually built a totally new steel-making complex (as opposed to a piecemeal modernization of older facilities) was nearly 20 years ago, when Bethlehem Steel built its Indiana Harbor mill. Although the industry has recently

undertaken some modernization, mostly as a result of the current crisis, they have been largely investing their profits in other industries, while pleading poverty and crying for government protection from foreign (and cheaper) steel. U.S. Steel's offer to buy the Marathon Oil Company (that is, invest in the oil industry) for an estimated \$6.4 billion is only the most recent, and outrageous, example of something that has been going on for a long time.

While the situation in other industries is not so blatant, the point we are trying to make should be clear: Overall, the U.S. capitalist class has allowed the country's basic industrial structure and infrastructure to decay, at a time when the capitalists of other countries, such as those of West Germany and Japan, were modernizing theirs. If one wants to know the real cause for the decline in productivity in the U.S. it lies here, not in the frequently cited allegation that U.S. workers are getting paid "too much."

To the stagnation and decay of U.S. industry in the post-war period was coupled a second factor: a massive expansion of debt. This is obvious in the housing industry and is the case in the consumer durable goods sector generally. The corporations also went into debt to maintain their ongoing operations, to pay for whatever modernization they did undertake and to finance their investments in, and takeovers of, other companies. Finally, the government debt expanded rapidly, as the capitalists sought to rely on government spending to subsidize various sectors of the economy (such as agriculture), bail out collapsing corporations (such as Chrysler), finance various social programs (unemployment benefits, welfare) and offset economic stagnation and crises generally.

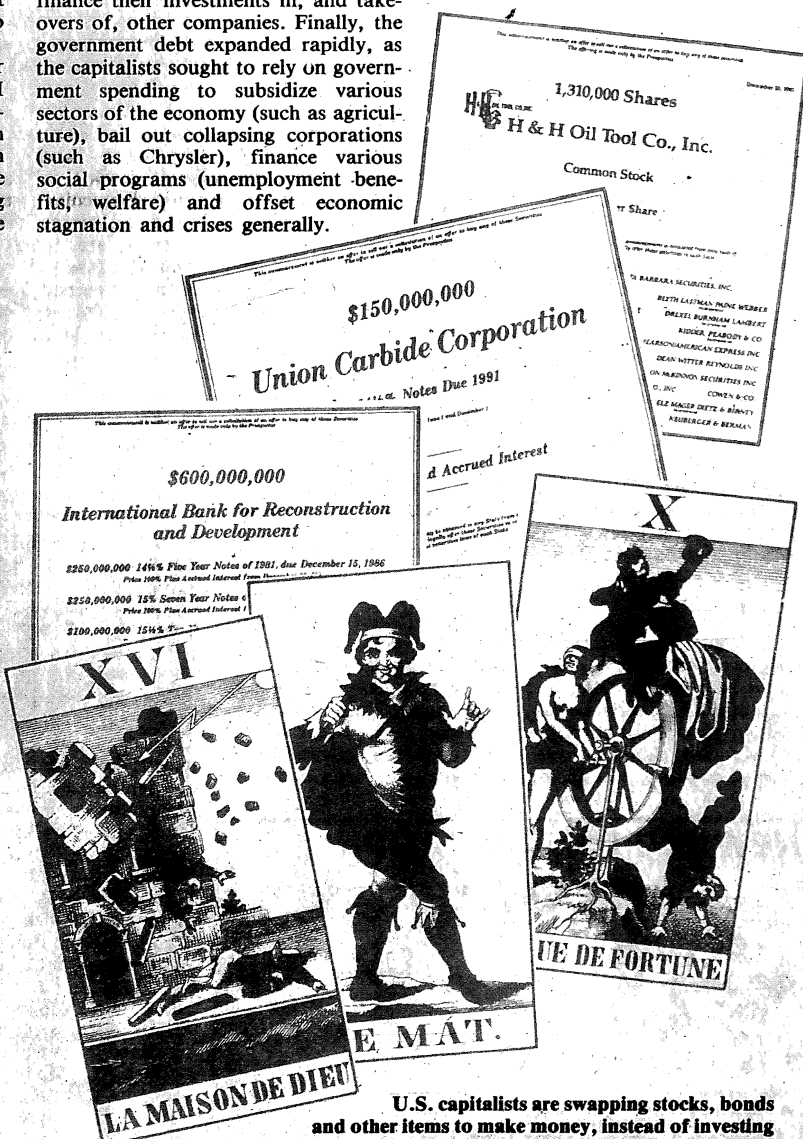
The result of the two economic tendencies we have just discussed—the stagnation of the industrial apparatus plus proliferating debt—was inflation. Put simply, inflation occurs when there is more money (currency plus credit) chasing relatively fewer real goods, which leads to higher prices.

A low rate of inflation would not, by itself, be a very serious problem, but inflation tends to feed on itself, to create the conditions for ever greater inflation. It encourages people (and corporations and banks) to go into greater debt on the assumption that, since the dollar will be worth less in the future, it makes sense to borrow now and pay back later. This increased borrowing in turn creates still more inflation.

To make matters worse, as the rate of inflation rises, the capitalists (and investors generally) turn increasingly to speculation as a means to make money. Speculation means that the capitalists (and whoever else does it) attempt to make money not by investing in factories or other productive activities, but by trading various items—stocks, bonds, commodities, currencies, futures contracts (contracts to buy or sell a given amount of, say, a commodity at a given price at a specific point in the future).

One type of speculation, called risk arbitrage, involves taking advantage of

(Continued on page 16)



U.S. capitalists are swapping stocks, bonds and other items to make money, instead of investing in new plants and equipment. Their speculations amount to financial fortune-telling with tarot cards.



They have been forced to rely on church soup kitchens for food. 250,000 auto jobs.

Defend the Polish Workers!

(Continued from page 1)

telephone and telex communications with the outside world. It also cut off communications between Warsaw and the rest of the country.

At six a.m., General Wojciech Jaruzelski, who is the Polish prime minister, defense minister, and first secretary of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), appeared on

The RSL is organizing support for the Polish workers. Demonstrations have already been held in several cities and ongoing coalitions are being formed. For information on how you can get involved, please contact your local RSL branch (see listings on next page).

national television and formally proclaimed a state of emergency and martial law in Poland. Jaruzelski announced he was forming a "Military Council of National Salvation" to run the country because, in his words, "the state structure has ceased operating."

The military regime's first formal decision was to order a ban on trade union activity and demonstrations against the government. It warned that violators of this decree would face severe punishment, including the death penalty.

Local union officials in Warsaw who remained free called a general strike for December 14 and issued leaflets protesting the government's "brutal provocation." But the influential Polish primate of the Roman Catholic Church, Józef Glemp, warned workers to "remain calm" and avoid actions that might lead to bloodshed.

Because of the communications blackout, we cannot say for sure how workers are responding to the general strike call. At least some strikes or factory occupations have been reported in Warsaw, Gdansk, Szczecin, the Silesian coal fields, and other parts of the country. The government claims to have broken up one factory sit-in, at



Although the U.S. and Western European capitalists are calling the Polish government's crackdown an "internal matter," worldwide demonstrations supporting the Polish workers, like the one in France pictured above, have already begun.

a Katowice steel mill, by force. Other factories are said to be maintaining operations, although with reduced workforces. Despite this resistance to the crackdown, however, the government has dealt the Polish workers' movement what may be a mortal blow.

Strike ban termed 'temporary'

Jaruzelski is combining his repressive measures with promises of moderation in order to head off popular resistance to the crackdown. In his nationally televised speech Jaruzelski claimed that the ban on union activities was only a temporary measure, and that the government would never return Polish society to the conditions that existed before August 1980, when the workers' revolt that led up to the formation of Solidarity began. He also claimed that the army would do all it could to avoid bloodshed.

Finally, to show the "impartiality" of the military council, he ordered the arrest of several PUWP officials, including former PUWP boss Edward Gierek. Jaruzelski accused Gierek and others of causing the economic crisis that led to the workers' rebellion and abusing their posts for personal gain.

At the same time, Jaruzelski

tried to justify the crackdown by insisting that drastic action was necessary to prevent union "extremists" from plunging the country into civil war. In particular, the government is using radical resolutions passed by the Solidarity leadership only hours before the crackdown as a pretext for its offensive. The union's national commission had voted to organize a national referendum that amounted to a thinly disguised call for the Polish people to reject the PUWP regime and Russian domination of Poland altogether. The commission also called for nationwide demonstrations on December 17 to protest the break-up of a firefighter cadets' strike in Warsaw by police on December 2.

Crackdown planned for months

However, it is obvious that the state-capitalist rulers of Poland were preparing their crackdown well before this meeting took place. Ever since the Polish workers' rebellion began, the PUWP has been seeking ways to discipline and eventually crush the workers' movement. Stanislaw Kania, who replaced Gierek as PUWP leader in September 1980, was himself removed from office and replaced by Jaruzelski this past October because of his failure to re-establish the authority of the PUWP and the government.

Jaruzelski took over the government at a critical point in the class struggle in Poland. A dual power situation had developed, in which Solidarity enjoyed almost total support from the Polish people while the PUWP remained in control of the state apparatus. Meanwhile, the economy had collapsed to the point that workers could not even obtain food, let alone other essential goods. Finally,

just as Jaruzelski assumed power, workers, frustrated by the economic crisis, organized their biggest strike wave since the original rebellion in August of last year.

Jaruzelski's maneuver

In one of his first major acts as party boss, Jaruzelski met with Walesa and Glemp to discuss a joint "Front of National Agreement" between the government and the union to resolve Poland's economic and social crisis. As has become increasingly clear, this seeming concession was actually a clever maneuver in Jaruzelski's plan to crack down on the Polish workers.

First, the PUWP's offer of a national accord served to disarm the Solidarity leadership, and the Polish people as a whole, while the government prepared for a showdown. In particular, it led many workers to believe that the government might actually cede a measure of power to Solidarity. It also put Walesa in the position of trying to rein in the workers' struggle in the interests of coming to some sort of agreement with the government. Just before his meeting with Jaruzelski, Walesa even demanded—unsuccessfully—that the union enact its own strike ban.

Second, by offering the union a national accord the PUWP was able to pose as the one force that was sincerely trying to solve the crisis in Poland, while laying the basis for pinning the responsibility for the failure of the talks on Solidarity if and when the negotiations broke down.

Finally, the government's offer of a national accord succeeded in deepening the divisions within the Solidarity leadership itself. Walesa's goal was to win a radical reform of Po-

land's state-capitalist society, while holding back the workers from an all-out confrontation with the government that would provoke a crackdown or Russian intervention.

But Walesa's approach was opposed by other Solidarity leaders, such as Jan Rulewski, head of the union's Bydgoszcz branch, and Zbigniew Bujak, head of the union's Warsaw region. These militants, who reflected the more radical sentiments of Solidarity's middle-level leadership and many rank and file workers, had no illusions in the government's promises, and were increasingly challenging Walesa's leadership inside Solidarity. By offering to negotiate without actually being willing to make serious concessions to Walesa, the government brought the tensions within the union leadership to a head.

When negotiations over the national accord began November 17, Walesa, responding to the left-wing pressure within the



Jaruzelski's declaration of martial law is aimed at breaking the back of the Polish workers' movement.

union, demanded sweeping reforms, including free elections to local government councils and greater union access to the mass media. But the PUWP flatly refused to accept any limitations on its power and, as a result, the negotiations over the national accord quickly deadlocked.

The Russian ultimatum

By this time, Jaruzelski had probably become thoroughly convinced that Walesa was losing control of the union to more militant people and that drawing out negotiations in the

Workers occupied are going on around is still unclear.

hopes of defusing rebellion no longer purpose.

Moreover, Jaruzelski's enormous pressure on Russian ruling class workers' rebellion all. The Russian wanted to avoid a sion of Poland if as this would ha fierce resistance w and condemnation world. But the P ship was undoubt that if they hel longer, Russian move in. In short, an all-out offensiv workers had arriv

Government offensive begins

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Five days later, up the firefighter in Warsaw. This first time that the had used force to anti-government st Polish rebellion beg ernment's action meant as a test of willingness to resist crackdown.

Jaruzelski can be encouraged by the leadership's responsive. The government's actions required an im militant response fion. Instead, Walesa's one-day protest at Sejms passed the stri an unlimited genera if the government enforce it.

The union's on response to Jaruzelski's ultimatum was to formal negotiations over t accord.

Meanwhile, the government launched a full-scale

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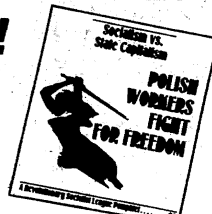


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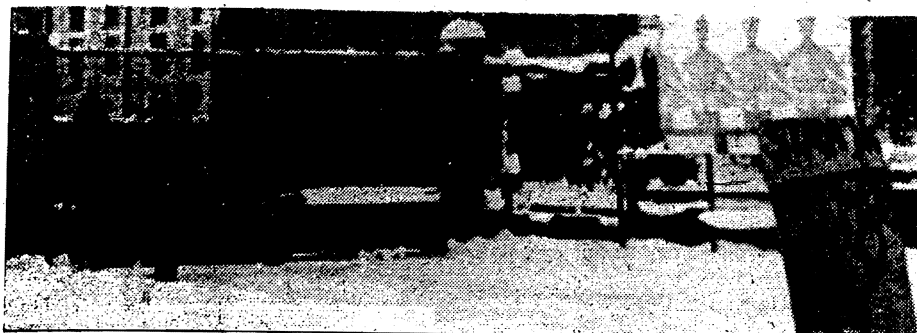
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Workers occupied this factory in Szczecin to protest martial law. Other strikes and factory occupations are going on around the country, but the extent of workers' resistance to the government's offensive is still unclear.

hopes of defusing the workers' rebellion no longer served any purpose.

Moreover, Jaruzelski was under enormous pressure from the Russian ruling class to crush the workers' rebellion once and for all. The Russian government wanted to avoid a Russian invasion of Poland if at all possible, as this would have provoked fierce resistance within Poland, and condemnation around the world. But the PUWP leadership was undoubtedly warned that if they held back any longer, Russian troops would move in. In short, the time for an all-out offensive against the workers had arrived.

Government offensive begins

On November 27, while negotiations over the accord were still underway, the PUWP demanded that the Sejm (parliament) enact a ban on strikes to last through March 31, 1982. It also demanded emergency powers that would have enabled Jaruzelski's regime to forbid all public meetings other than religious gatherings, re-impose strict censorship over the press, and bring offenders before military courts.

Five days later, police broke up the firefighter cadets' strike in Warsaw. This marked the first time that the government had used force to suppress an anti-government strike since the Polish rebellion began. The government's action was clearly meant as a test of the union's willingness to resist the coming crackdown.

Jaruzelski can only have been encouraged by the Solidarity leadership's response to his offensive. The government's actions required an immediate and militant response from the union. Instead, Walesa called for a one-day protest strike if the Sejm passed the strike ban, and an unlimited general strike only if the government tried to enforce it.

The union's only concrete response to Jaruzelski's ultimatum was to formally break off negotiations over the national accord.

Meanwhile, the PUWP launched a full-scale propagan-

da campaign against Solidarity. The government insisted it was doing "everything in its power" to bring about a national accord. And it accused the union of violating its agreements with the government by breaking off negotiations and "embarking on an open struggle against the socialist authority and a struggle for power."

In particular, the government sought to undermine Walesa's credibility with Polish workers by branding him a two-faced liar who had secretly been plotting to overthrow the government. On December 7, it produced tapes of a Solidarity meeting where Walesa told other union leaders that "confrontation is unavoidable" and talked vaguely about overthrowing the regime at some future time.

In fact, the excerpts from the tapes published by the government—no doubt carefully chosen for maximum effect—reveal that Walesa was mainly concerned with excusing his earlier betrayals in the face of attacks by union militants. For example, Walesa is heard admitting that he "made a mistake" by trying to delay a confrontation, and that he and his allies "really do not believe" any of the PUWP's promises.

Union leaders at the meeting clearly had no trust in Walesa's new-found militancy. Seweryn Jaworski, deputy head of Solidarity's Warsaw branch, told him: "If you go back even one step then I will cut your head off myself, and if I am not doing it, someone else would do it."

But the government's campaign did succeed in sowing confusion among some workers over Walesa's honesty and his intentions. One worker told reporters: "Mr. Walesa's attitude shocked me most. If he was playing a game, why did he

The column World in Revolution was dropped this month to make room for our report on the events in Poland. As a result, we have no coverage of the Reagan administration hysteria over Libya and of the attempted coup by white mercenaries in the Seychelles, both of which were to be in the column. World in Revolution will appear again next month.

meet with the prime minister and the primate?"

Union unprepared for crackdown

The union leadership was now paying the price for its previous efforts to hold back the workers' struggle against the



Police broke up firefighter cadets' strike in Warsaw on December 2.

government. When the Solidarity national commission met on December 11, some leaders privately conceded that up to 30 percent of the union's 10 million members were "wavering" and were "susceptible to government persuasion."

But rather than confronting the critical problems facing the

union, commission members indulged themselves with empty rhetoric. By voting to organize the referendum, the commission was in fact issuing a call for an overthrow of PUWP rule—an act that neither the union leadership nor the Polish working class as a whole was in any way prepared to carry out. Using this as a pretext, the government pounced.

The crackdown in Poland demonstrates all too clearly the bankruptcy of Walesa's reformist strategy. For months after the Polish revolt began, the workers were on the offensive, building a powerful national organization and constantly extending their demands on the government. But Walesa's efforts to rein in the workers and compromise with the PUWP ultimately demoralized sections of the working class and gave the government a chance to regain the initiative. Jaruzelski seized upon this opportunity with a vengeance.

Militants such as Rulewski

believe—to the very end—that militant protests, and even militant speeches, were all that were necessary to force the downfall of the government. This naive policy left the militant faction in Solidarity—and the Polish people as a whole—totally unprepared for Jaruzelski's crackdown.

International reaction

The Russian ruling class, which has been demanding such a crackdown ever since the Polish revolt began, has every reason to celebrate the recent dramatic events in Poland. Not only has Jaruzelski inflicted a sharp defeat on the Polish workers, but—as of this writing—he has done so without having to resort to a bloody and uncertain military intervention on the part of the Russians.

Meanwhile, the U.S. ruling class and its Western European allies, who vehemently proclaimed their support for the Polish freedom struggle, have reacted to the crackdown by demonstrating a total lack of concern over the actual fate of the Polish people. Secretary of State Alexander Haig told reporters that the Polish crisis was "an internal affair that the Polish people must settle for themselves." Senator Paul Laxalt declared that a crackdown by either the Polish government or the Russian government was inevitable, and that on the whole he preferred that the Polish rulers, rather than the Russian rulers, carried out the crackdown. And West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt not only called the government's offensive an internal Polish affair, but also pledged to continue economic aid to Jaruzelski's regime.

While it is too soon to say exactly what will happen, it is obvious that the struggle in Poland has entered a new and ominous phase. The Polish rulers have seized the initiative, and dealt the workers a substantial defeat. □

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U.S. ECONOMY...

(Continued from page 13)

the ups and downs in stock prices, such as occur when corporations are threatened with takeovers, to make money. For example, when a corporation becomes a target for a takeover, such as the Marathon Oil Company, the price of its stock tends to rise. On the other hand, the prices of the stocks of those corporations bidding to take over the given company, such as Mobil Oil and U.S. Steel, tend to decline. Ideally, if someone with money (their own or borrowed) hears a rumor from a reliable source that a given company, say, Marathon, is a target for a takeover bid, that person would buy Marathon stock. After the takeover bid becomes public, the price of Marathon stock will rise. At some point, when the price of Marathon stock has risen sufficiently (the person will try to hit what turns out to be the peak price of the stock), the person who has bought Marathon stock will then sell it, thus making money on the difference between what the stock cost

at the time of purchase and at the time of sale.

This is only one type of speculation; one can make comparable (and even more complicated) transactions/maneuvers with currencies, bonds, mortgages, futures contracts. Indeed, the capitalists have been getting increasingly ingenious in coming up with new ways to make money without producing anything.

But all this gambling has its costs for the economy as a whole. Specifically, speculation, like inflation, tends to feed on itself. In fact, speculation and inflation tend to feed on each other. Inflation makes the capitalists hesitant to invest their funds in production (such as building new plants and buying new machinery), since this tends to tie up the capital for a long period of time. Instead of investing productively, they speculate, trying to make big gains as quickly as possible. This leads to a relative

decline of production coupled with an expansion of credit. This, in turn, leads to still more inflation, which encourages yet more speculation, while discouraging productive investment, which stimulates inflation, etc., etc. The result is an inflationary/speculative spiral, an increasingly large mountain of debt, sitting atop an increasingly stagnant, decrepit productive apparatus.

In very broad terms, this is the problem in the U.S. economy today. While the economy has been virtually stagnant for the past two years, speculative trading in futures of various kinds now involves \$2 trillion per year.

This cannot go on indefinitely. Over time, there is less and less material wealth to support the debt, which is in fact a massive amount of claims on the produced wealth. More and more, the paper—that is, the stocks, bonds, mortgages, mortgage securities, futures contracts and dollars—represent no (actually, very little) real value produced in the production process. Sooner or later, the bubble collapses and the entire economy, including the little material pro-

duction that had still been going on, grinds to a halt.

This type of total collapse has not happened... yet. What has occurred is this: The inflationary/speculative spiral we have described has led to increasingly high interest rates, as more and more individuals and corporations have needed ever greater amounts of credit merely to maintain their present level of consumer purchases and productive operations. In recent months, the cost of borrowing money became so high that much of the economic activity previously based on this credit expansion is now ceasing.

It is not clear exactly what will happen in the immediate future. At the very least, the economy will be in a very severe recession. Even if this downturn, in the context of a worldwide economic crisis and weakness in the international monetary system, does not lead to a world depression, the U.S. economy will remain mired in a state of stagnation for an indefinite period of time. In our view, this will most likely be only a prelude to the worldwide economic catastrophe that is in the offing. □

REAGAN...

(Continued from page 3)

for control of the administration's policies.

Most recently, in November, Haig publicly accused Allen of waging a "guerrilla campaign" against him. Instead of congratulating Haig on finally turning up a guerrilla after nearly a year in office, Reagan called both men into his office and told them to quit quarrelling and shut up. This particular feud may now be over, as Allen seems to be on his way out on the wake of revelations about his dubious connections with Japanese lobbyists.

But Haig and Weinberger are still slugging it out. Just as Reagan tried to patch up the Haig-Allen feud, Haig and Weinberger publicly clashed over possible U.S. military intervention in Central America. Then at a Senate hearing, Haig blurted out secret U.S. plans to set off a "demonstration" nu-

clear warhead in the event of a European war. An outraged Weinberger immediately claimed no such plan existed. The White House ended up saying both men were right in an effort to bury the whole affair.

Capitalist leadership crisis re-emerging

We are hardly shedding tears over the problems facing the Reagan administration. But these problems do reveal a good deal about the state of U.S. politics today.

To begin with, they show that the Reagan "revolution" is failing to stabilize U.S. capitalism on a right-wing basis. The Reagan economic program is really a jumble of mutually conflicting and even quack cure-alls that are accelerating the U.S.

economic crisis instead of solving it. The administration's anti-Russian rhetoric cannot conceal its lack of answers to the declining power of U.S. imperialism.

More broadly, the disarray in the Reagan administration reflects the thorough-going political leadership crisis facing the U.S. capitalist class itself. No section of the ruling class really has any solution to the capitalist crisis. Consequently, the pro-capitalist politicians in the Republican and Democratic parties, who are really front men for different factions in the ruling class, can neither solve these problems when they are in office, nor, almost as important, fool people into believing that they have any answers for very long.

Only five years ago Jimmy Carter became president by portraying himself as an "outsider" who could clean up the mess in Washington. We all know what happened to Jimmy Carter. Then in 1980 Reagan won the presidency, and even gained

support from substantial numbers of working class voters, by claiming he had concrete programs for the problems Carter was unable to solve. Now these programs are beginning to break down, the polls show

increasing popular disenchantment with Reagan's administration and his supporters are starting to jump ship. Once again, the leadership crisis of the U.S. capitalist class is coming out into the open. □

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