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# **INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS**

combined  
with **inprecor**

Vol. 19, No. 33

September 14, 1981

USA \$1.25 UK 50p

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More than one million in Tehran mourn President Rajai and Prime Minister Bahonar.

## **Iranians Say 'No!' to Terror Bombings**

**U.S. Vetoes Condemnation of South Africa**

**British Women Fight for Industrial Jobs**

# Reagan's 'context' in southern Africa

By Ernest Harsch

When a resolution came before the United Nations Security Council August 31 strongly condemning "racist South Africa's latest armed invasion against the People's Republic of Angola," only one hand was raised to vote against it—that of Charles M. Lichenstein, the acting U.S. representative.

And with that veto, it was the Reagan administration that stood condemned before the world.

"The U.S. had to vote against the resolution," Lichenstein explained, because it "places blame solely on South Africa for the escalation of violence."

Reagan, it seems, prefers to place the blame on the victims: the hundreds of Angolans killed by the South African bombings, the thousands of Namibians who have been forced to flee into Angola by the South African terror in their homeland, the liberation fighters of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) who are trying to free Namibia from the South African yoke.

Lichenstein said as much during the Security Council debates. The real source of violence in the region, he maintained, was the presence of "foreign combat forces in Angola, particularly the large Cuban force, and the provision of Soviet-originated arms to Swapo."

It was within this "context," the White House stressed, that the South African attacks must be viewed.

This refusal to denounce the massive South African invasion—in fact, this scarcely veiled backing for it—is the most blatant example yet of the Reagan administration's deepening alliance with the hated apartheid regime. Arm-in-arm, they are striving to push back the struggle for freedom in southern Africa, to maintain their oppressive domination over the Black majority. That is the essence of Reagan's "new direction" toward Africa.

## Reagan on a limb

In justifying the South African regime's armed aggression, Washington finds itself nearly alone.

Virtually every government around the world, whether in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or Europe, has denounced the invasion. Many have called for an immediate withdrawal of South African troops.

This even includes those imperialist governments that have been collaborating closely with Washington in trying to arrange a negotiated settlement in Namibia: Canada, West Germany, France, and Britain.

During the Security Council vote, the new Socialist Party government of France voted for

the resolution. And while the British Tory government abstained, it issued a separate statement "wholly deploring" the invasion.

Commenting on the Reagan administration's attempts to use the actions of SWAPO as a justification for the South African attacks into Angola, *New York Times* correspondent Bernard D. Nossiter reported from the UN August 29, "The United States view is diametrically opposed to that of nearly every other United Nations member, all of which regard South Africa as an illegal occupying power in Namibia." He also commented that "the dominant topic of conversation among diplomats was the growing loneliness of Washington in a world community that has almost universally condemned South Africa's assault."

Within the United States, the U.S. veto has been sharply attacked by the Congressional Black Caucus, a grouping of Black congressional representatives. In a September 1 statement, it labeled the veto a "dastardly act" that marked "an all-time low in the morality of the Reagan administration's foreign policy."

Walter E. Fauntroy, the chairperson of the caucus, said that the veto would only encourage the regime in Pretoria to continue its "reckless military action" in the region.

The same point was made a few days earlier within South Africa itself. The *Sowetan*, one of the few outspoken Black newspapers not yet silenced by the apartheid authorities, declared



Washington Post

in its August 28 issue, "South Africa has gained the impression that the United States, and therefore the West, would support it in virtually anything it does. And the United States' reaction to this raid is good enough reason for this country to feel smug."

## Continuing attacks

Coming while South African troops are still entrenched in large parts of southern Angola, the U.S. veto will certainly be read in Pretoria as a clear signal to continue its devastation of that country.

South Africa claims that its troops are withdrawing from Angola—having finished their "limited task"—are denied by the Angolans. On September 4, the Angolan government reported that South African forces were still in control of six towns, some up to 100 miles within Angola. The South African troops, moreover, had begun a new drive eastward, toward the major town of Mavinga in Cuando-Cubango Province.

The apartheid regime has also claimed that the targets of "Operation Protea," as the invasion is dubbed, are purely military: SWAPO guerrilla bases and Angolan anti-aircraft and radar systems that were supposedly protecting SWAPO.

But the accounts of journalists and diplomats who have visited southern Angola reveal that the real targets were villages, hospitals, bridges, schools, and businesses.

Almost every town and village in Kunene Province was hit by the attacks. Some entire towns, including Xangongo and Cahama, were leveled. According to Frank Kennedy, the British ambassador to Angola who visited Cahama with four other diplomats, "The town has been completely destroyed."

*Washington Post* correspondent Jay Ross, who visited Cahama a few days later, provided this description:

South African military forces that invaded southern Angola last week have transformed a large area of the country into a no-man's-land. . . .

This town of several thousand population was deserted. Destruction caused by South African air raids, which began Aug. 23, was widespread.

Most of the buildings in the part of town I saw were leveled or badly damaged, including houses, huts, stores, a makeshift outdoor school, a government building and a pharmacy.

Bits of clothing and household goods were scattered over a wide area where huts made of branches had been badly damaged on the edge of the built-up part of town. Two broken desks and two blackboards with sums on them were the remnants of the school.

There was no evidence of any military base near the ravaged area, nor was there any concrete indication that the town had been a base for guerrillas fighting for independence for neighboring Namibia (South-West Africa), as South Africa has claimed.

The local Angolan commander told Ross that the South Africans had attacked the town with French Mirage and British Canberra and Buccaneer jets. He angrily added, "South Africa is receiving weapons from Western countries. The Reagan administration is helping them and also the puppets," a reference to the



South African-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

The Angolan government has reported that 130,000 persons have been displaced by the South African invasion, and has declared four southern provinces disaster areas.

#### Angolans stand firm

Though one of the major purposes of the South African attacks on Angola is to pressure the Angolan leadership into pulling back from its support to SWAPO, the government in Luanda vowed to continue its backing for the Namibian freedom struggle, as well as to resist the South African attacks.

On September 2, the Angolan government indicated that it might be forced to call on the help of the Cuban internationalist fighters stationed in Angola (the Cubans arrived in 1975 at the request of the Angolans to fight off an earlier South African invasion). The U.S. veto of the Security Council resolution, it stated, could prompt it to evoke Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the right of countries under attack to "individual and collective self-defense."

In fact, Ross, in a report in the September 3 *Washington Post*, reported seeing some Cuban troops in the area of southern Angola hit by the South African attacks, although there was no indication that they had yet taken part in any direct fighting.

During a visit to Managua, Nicaragua, Angolan Ambassador to Cuba João Batista Mawete said that his government is "considering waging a prolonged war against the racist South Africans."

#### Terror in Namibia

The South African attacks into Angola have been paralleled by equally brutal actions against the Namibian population itself, including the use of torture, rape, and indiscriminate massacres of Namibian villagers (see report on page 912).

Pretoria's aim is to terrorize the Namibian population in the hopes of weakening their support for SWAPO and of improving the chances of the South African-backed Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), a coalition of white settlers and conservative Namibian personalities. It is the DTA that Pretoria seeks to install at the head of an "independent" Namibia.

One of the first results of Reagan's policy toward southern Africa was to encourage the apartheid regime at the beginning of the year to scuttle earlier attempts to organize UN-supervised elections in Namibia, elections that Pretoria feared would be won by SWAPO. Chester A. Crocker, Reagan's assistant secretary of state for African affairs, affirmed in a February 7 memorandum that Pretoria needed twelve to eighteen more months "to get in a better position to compete with Swapo."

#### Crocker spells out policy

On August 29, in a major speech on U.S. policy toward southern Africa, Crocker insist-

ed that any settlement on Namibia had to take into account Pretoria's main "concerns."

But in his speech, Crocker made it clear that Washington's concerns would also have to be protected, not only in Namibia, but throughout the region.

"United States economic interests in sub-Saharan Africa are heavily concentrated in the southern third of the continent. Nearly \$3 billion of direct investment, or about 60 percent of the sub-Saharan total, is located there. Our southern African trade totals over \$6 billion.

Crocker continued, "It is imperative that we play our proper role in fostering the region's security and countering the expansion of Soviet influence."

The strengthening of the apartheid regime is clearly seen as one of the main ways of maintaining capitalist "security" and "countering the expansion of Soviet influence"—a code

phrase for holding back the liberation struggles.

Noting that "important Western economic, strategic, moral and political interests are at stake" in South Africa, Crocker affirmed that the "Reagan Administration has no intention of destabilizing South Africa in order to curry favor elsewhere."

In fact, what was needed was a stronger alliance. "The U.S.," Crocker continued, "also seeks to build a more constructive relationship with South Africa, one based on shared interests, persuasion and improved communications."

The Reagan administration calls this policy one of "neutrality" in the region. But as all its statements and actions have shown, it has in reality come out openly on one side—that of the barbaric white minority regime, against Africa's vast majority. □

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Intercontinental Press (ISSN 0162-5594).  
Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and the third and fourth in August.

#### Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

**Editor:** Mary-Alice Waters.  
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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it re-

flects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

**To Subscribe:** For one-year subscriptions in the U.S. or Canada send \$35.00 (41.00 Canadian dollars) to Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for rates for first class and airmail.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box K208, Haymarket 2000. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 3774, Auckland.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland, and continental Europe send \$50 for one year; \$25 for six months. Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

# Masses repudiate terror bombings

## IRP regime cannot defend revolution

By Fred Murphy

The assassination of Iran's President Mohammed Ali Rajai and Prime Minister Mohammed Javad Bahonar on August 30 was answered the next day with a mammoth outpouring in the streets of Tehran.

The funeral crowd, estimated at between 1 and 2 million persons, chanted slogans blaming the U.S. government for the killings. Many of the demonstrators were workers who had gathered at their factories and then come in groups to the parliament building and prime minister's office in downtown Tehran.

This massive outcry against the bombing by counterrevolutionary terrorists was considerably larger than the one that took place on June 30, after a similar explosion killed seventy-two leaders of the government and the ruling Islamic Republican Party (IRP).

### Wave of terror

The murder of Iran's head of state and prime minister was only the latest and most spectacular of a series of terrorist attacks that has gripped Iran since mid-June. Besides the latest victims, these bombings and shootings have taken the lives of the head of the supreme court, four cabinet ministers, six deputy ministers, one provincial governor, thirty members of parliament, and a growing number of local officials and Islamic clergymen.

One recent report said that an average of twelve Pasdaran, or revolutionary guards, are killed or wounded every day. Random attacks have also claimed the lives of ordinary Iranians, such as workers and shopkeepers.

Newspaper offices, Islamic literature stands, government buildings, and local IRP headquarters have been bombed or set afire.

### Counterrevolutionaries

A quite varied array of political forces have been involved in, advocated, or applauded this campaign of terror. All aim at the overthrow of the Islamic Republican Party, and all claim to be seeking to "liberate" Iran and restore "democracy" and "freedom."

Who are these forces?

- Gen. Bahram Aryana, the last chief of staff of the shah's army, and his commando organization Azadegan. Among other monarchist officers in this outfit is Adm. Kamal Habibolahi, the last head of the shah's navy, who led the hijacking of an Iranian gunboat in August.

- Shahpur Bakhtiar, the shah's last prime minister. Bakhtiar demonstrated his commitment to "freedom and democracy" by ordering the army to gun down hundreds of anti-shah

demonstrators in January and February 1979.

- The shah's son, who has crowned himself "Shah Reza II" and has declared from his exile in Egypt that he will return to Iran to reclaim the throne.

- Counterrevolutionary officers who remain in the Iranian army. They are looked to by the imperialists and the local capitalists as a key element that could restore "stability" in Iran.

- Sectors of the state bureaucracy and government officialdom, whose help was obviously needed to evade tight security and plant the bombs that killed the seventy-two IRP leaders and the prime minister and president.

- Ex-president Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, who was ousted in June. Bani-Sadr fled to Paris in a plane flown by air force Col. Behzad Moesi, once one of the shah's personal pilots.

One week before the bombing of the prime minister's office, Bani-Sadr had told reporters, "If tonight five men were killed . . . the Government would collapse." Two of the five on Bani-Sadr's hit list were Prime Minister Bahonar and President Rajai. "Victory is near," an aide to the ex-president exulted after the August 30 bombing.

### Mujahedeen

- Massoud Rajavi, leader of the People's Mujahedeen Organization, who accompanied

Bani-Sadr on his flight to Paris.

Rajavi's organization, based among students and other radicalized petty-bourgeois layers, had sought to overthrow the shah through guerrilla warfare. After the Iranian masses toppled the monarchy, the Mujahedeen emerged as one of the strongest groups on the left.

The Mujahedeen initially gave political support to the Khomeini forces in the new government. But as the economic and social crisis deepened in Iran, they entered into alliance with the "secular-liberal" bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois forces represented by Bani-Sadr.

When Bani-Sadr was ousted from the government in June, the leaders of the Mujahedeen concluded that the revolution had been defeated and the "clerical dictatorship" would have to be overthrown.

On June 18 the Mujahedeen announced they were "launching war" against the Islamic Republic and called on the Iranian people to "resist with all the means at our disposal." Two days later the group mounted an armed demonstration in Tehran, and heavy fighting broke out between the demonstrators and Pasdaran and armed youth from the poor neighborhoods of the capital.

In published interviews since then, Massoud Rajavi has refused to deny responsibility for the terrorist attacks that have unfolded in Iran—not even for the June 28 bombing of the IRP headquarters. After the August 30 attack, the Mujahedeen leader said that while he was "not informed" as to who had planted the bomb, "it was the resistance movement, and I do not deny that the Mujahedeen make up the majority of the movement."

### Left cover for imperialism

The attempt to physically destroy the Iranian government is a reactionary attack on the revolution itself.

Under the left cover provided by the Mujahedeen, the field has been opened for destabilization attempts by every variety of counterrevolutionary—the monarchists, the liberals, and the U.S. imperialists themselves.

"Despite their political views and goals, the Mujahedeen's terrorist activities are indistinguishable from the terrorist attacks by the monarchists and other counterrevolutionary forces tied to imperialism," the Iranian socialist weekly *Hemmat* said in an August 4 editorial.<sup>1</sup>

### Jailed socialists released in Tehran

Faranak Zahraie and Monavar Shir Ali were released from Tehran's Evin Prison on September 1. The two women, members of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), had been jailed on July 4 and falsely charged with starting a strike at the Rayo-Vac factory where they worked.

The HKE carried on an extensive defense campaign for Zahraie and Shir Ali, distributing leaflets to workers' meetings and confronting government authorities to expose the frame-up.

After the strike charges were refuted, the regime tried to cook up evidence that the two HKE members actually belonged to the Maoist group Peykar. Many members of Peykar have been executed in recent weeks, and the lives of Zahraie and Shir Ali were also in danger.

The release of these two anti-imperialist fighters is an important victory for the right of socialists to express their views in Iran.

1. *Hemmat* is published by the Workers Unity Party (HVK), one of three groups in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.



By turning to armed attacks on the regime, *Hemmat* continued, the Mujahedeen have "freed the hand of the imperialists to carry out terrorism in Iran. Right now, by using the disorientation and tension resulting from the fact that the Mujahedeen's terror is indistinguishable from their own, the counterrevolutionary monarchist forces are in an excellent position to step up the level of terrorism and try to form an internal counterrevolutionary front. Thus the Mujahedeen give the imperialists the opportunity to deal more vigorous blows to the Iranian revolution."

Rajavi has now joined Bani-Sadr in calling for a bloc of all forces who want "independence, freedom, and Islam" in order to overthrow the government.

One of Bani-Sadr's charges against his opponents is that they have allied with "agents of Soviet imperialism." This theme was also taken up in a May 1 sermon by an unlikely ally of Bani-Sadr—Ayatollah Khomeini's own grandson, Hojatolislam Hossein Khomeini. The young Khomeini blasted the IRP regime for collaborating with "accomplices of the Soviet Union" and called on Iranians to "unite around our President, the beloved Bani-Sadr."

The ayatollah's grandson went on to accuse "the new dictatorship" of being "worse than that of the shah," composed of "fascists worse than the founders of fascism," and using "brutality such as not even the Mongols practiced." (The young Khomeini is now reportedly under house arrest in the city of Qum.)

#### Liberals and army officers

A key element of the counterrevolutionary bloc is the liberal bourgeois faction around ex-Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan. (He was ousted in November 1979 after his ties to Washington were denounced by the students who occupied the U.S. embassy in Tehran.)

Bazargan's newspaper threatened Ayatollah Khomeini with "civil war" last May unless he would agree to receive a delegation from the Mujahedeen. Now the liberals have set up a clandestine "Superior Coordinating Council" inside Iran. A member of this body told correspondent Eric Rouleau of the Paris daily *Le Monde* that the Mujahedeen were playing a "complementary" role to their own movement.

The Mujahedeen's "organizational capacity and their arsenal could come together with our influence on public opinion to precipitate an uprising by the population and the armed forces," the liberal leader told Rouleau.

Appeals to the army to act against Khomeini and the IRP are an important part of the approach of Bani-Sadr, Rajavi, and their allies. "Ninety percent of the army supports me," Bani-Sadr claimed in mid-August.

A Mujahedeen supporter interviewed by the *Christian Science Monitor* "said a large number of younger officers and others who still support Bani-Sadr would probably join forces with the Mujahedeen to eliminate the Revolutionary Guards. 'Already at the front, relations between the Guards and the Army are none too good. The Army would simply love

to settle scores with the Revolutionary Guards.'" (July 28.)

In fact, leaders of the Revolutionary Guards—which are based mainly on militant youth from working-class and poor neighborhoods—have repeatedly denounced the officer corps of the army for failing to vigorously pursue the war against the Iraqi invaders. In recent days, some Pasdaran leaders have publicly accused army officers of "treason" at the front.

The counterrevolutionary appeals to the army are echoed more and more in the columns of the imperialist press. A July 4 editorial in the London weekly *Economist* pointed to the army as "still probably the strongest alternative to mullahs' rule." The editors said that "right-wing military authoritarianism . . . would be welcomed by the west. . . ."

#### Capitalists losing confidence

In the September 3 *Washington Post*, columnist Joseph Kraft expressed hope for a "pro-Western outcome" in Iran, which he said "would take the form of a military regime supported by the bazaar, the tribes and the conservative clergy." Kraft called on the Reagan administration to encourage the reactionary regimes in Turkey, Oman, and Pakistan "to help the Iranian opposition"; he also said Washington should "use its influence to discourage infighting among Iranian exiles. . . ."

The bazaar merchants mentioned by Kraft have in the past been cited as part of the social base of the ruling Islamic Republican Party. There are now indications that these capitalists are losing confidence in the IRP's ability to restrain the social demands of working people.

"The bazaar, which was one of the motor forces of the uprising against the monarchy, has been largely alienated by measures taken against men of property," Eric Rouleau reported from Tehran in the July 24 *Le Monde*. "In two years, fifty-one industrial complexes have been expropriated, 600 enterprises nationalized, and 100,000 pieces of real property—homes and apartments, most hotels, movie houses—have been seized and handed over to the Foundation for the Disinherited."

The mercantile bourgeoisie are especially concerned about the provision in the Islamic Republic's constitution that calls for a state monopoly on foreign trade. The legislation for implementing this measure has been bogged down in parliament, but there is growing sentiment for imposing it in order to strike against hoarders and speculators.

"There is a great deal of discussion now about why the revolution should focus against the capitalists and landlords," a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) in Tehran told *Intercontinental Press*.<sup>2</sup> "This is a big topic in all the committees and Pasdaran units."

Production in the nationalized industries has dropped, and disruption and sabotage are causing further problems, the HKE leader said.

2. The HKE is one of three groups in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.

More and more, workers are blaming this on the state-appointed managers. Discussions are taking place in the workers *shoras* (committees) and other organizations in the factories about the need for the workers themselves to exercise control over production.

In the countryside, peasants are pressing for implementation of Section C of the land-reform law, which authorizes distribution of large holdings. "You often hear interviews with peasants on the state radio," the HKE leader said, "and even in the most remote villages, when they ask, 'what do you want here?' the peasants say, 'Land, water, state aid.'"

#### IRP has no answers

But the most immediate question facing the oppressed of Iran is the defense of the revolution itself. Through their massive demonstration on August 31, the Iranian workers have decisively repudiated the terror campaign. They recognize its counterrevolutionary content and the openings it provides for the imperialists to regain control of the country.

At the same time, there is a growing realization that the IRP government is incapable of even defending itself, let alone the revolution. The regime's only answer to the terror has been to carry out hundreds of executions. Despite an appeal by Ayatollah Khomeini to avoid taking "revenge" for the August 30 bombing, 101 more members of the Mujahedeen and other groups—already jailed before the attack—were executed in the first three days afterwards.

The regime has failed to mobilize the workers, peasants, and oppressed nationalities to defeat the invasion from Iraq. Instead it has sought to rely on the army and an officer corps infested with counterrevolutionary traitors.

The IRP rulers have refused to take the necessary measures against the capitalists and landlords to halt their hoarding, speculation, and sabotage. Under cover of the drive against the terrorists, the regime has cracked down on democratic rights, jailing workers and banning newspapers and public meetings. Inside the factories, activists in the *shoras* are harassed by the IRP's Islamic Committees and often fired at the committees' behest.

But however much the Iranian bourgeoisie would like to see the *shoras* smashed once and for all and capitalist "stability" restored to the cities and the countryside, they and their regime are in no position to confront the masses head on. This is why the capitalists are losing confidence in the IRP and have welcomed the

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terrorist attacks in hope of confusing, dividing, and demoralizing the workers and the oppressed.

The terror tactic itself shows that the counter-revolutionary forces are too weak at this time to strike more decisive blows, such as a military coup. They fear the response of the

working class, and they distrust the thousands of armed, revolutionary-minded youth that make up the ranks of the Pasdaran.

Contrary to the hopeful predictions of imperialist politicians and editorialists, the Iranian revolution is not over. The oppressed of Iran will put up a gigantic fight to protect what they

have won since getting rid of the shah. Just as it was the working masses who defeated the monarchy with their bare hands, it is they who have the power to decisively crush the counter-revolutionary threat and achieve the social and economic liberation they made their revolution for. □

## Kampuchea

# Pol Pot official admits torture

### *Claims Tuol Sleng death-house was 'mistake'*

By Steve Bride

A top official in the deposed Kampuchean government of Pol Pot now admits that regime ran a torture center that slaughtered upwards of 16,000 people.

Ieng Sary, former deputy premier and now chief spokesman for the exiled Khmer Rouge forces, told the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that documents recording the horrors of the Tuol Sleng interrogation center are indeed authentic.

At the same time, Ieng Sary claimed he had no idea such things went on under the regime of Pol Pot, who is his brother-in-law.

The documents were first made public by the London *New Statesman*, which broke the Tuol Sleng story more than a year ago. Since then Khmer Rouge officials have maintained the center was set up by the Vietnamese.

The Khmer Rouge were overthrown in 1979 by the Vietnamese troops and Kampuchean insurgents after four years of rule. During this time, the regime is believed to have been responsible for as many as 3 million deaths.

In their subsequent efforts to reclaim power in Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge have been supported diplomatically and militarily by the U.S. and Chinese governments.

Formerly a high school in Phnompenh, Tuol Sleng under Pol Pot became a prison, torture house, and place of execution for suspected opponents of the government.

In his interview with the *Review*, Ieng Sary verified a written account by a prison official of one such extermination.

The prisoner, it read, admitted to "violating the party's secrecy policy" and "the Organization's instructions which forbid people to contact one another." He then confessed to plotting to "rule Kampuchea as a revisionist country like Vietnam. . . ."

"I have tortured him to write it [the confession] again," the document continues; then ends, "prisoner crushed to bits: 6 July 1977." "Yes, that is true," said Ieng Sary after reading the account. "And that is Deuch [a pseudonym for the director of Tuol Sleng], head of security."

The prisoner in question was Hu Nim, ex-minister of information in the Pol Pot govern-



IENG SARY

Ernest Harsch/IP

ment and a close friend of Ieng Sary's. As late as December 1978, said the *New Statesman* in its May 2, 1980, story, journalists were told by the Khmer Rouge that Hu Nim was "still active in government."

The document on Hu Nim is among almost 15,000 discovered at Tuol Sleng. These routinely describe prisoners being "whipped four or five times" and taken away "to be stuffed with water."

They are accompanied by photos that, according to a report in the May 19, 1980, *Washington Post*, "show corpses with their throats slit, laid out on the checkerboard tile floors found throughout the school, identification numbers on their chests."

These, along with piles of battered corpses and parts of corpses, were found by Vietnamese upon their arrival at Tuol Sleng in January 1979.

Ieng Sary's wife, Ieng Thirith, suggested to the *Review* one reason why so much documentation had been left behind: "We left Phnom Penh on January 6. We left all our records

there. As I told you, nobody thought we would leave Phnom Penh for good."

While in power, Ieng Sary denied a 1978 request by *Review* correspondent Elizabeth Becker to visit prisons in Kampuchea. "We have no prisons, no courts," he told her then. "It is people's justice."

Ieng Sary later acknowledged that some 30,000 Kampuchean may have starved or been executed, but said this was the work of provincial officials who were agents of the Vietnamese.

Now, said the *Review*, Ieng Sary probably "feels free to admit to what went on in Tuol Sleng and to other activities under the regime, because it is safe and the evidence is overwhelming."

It is also a means of distancing himself somewhat from the atrocities of the Pol Pot regime.

"They told me only that the agents [anyone suspected of opposing the Khmer Rouge] were sent out to cooperatives for re-education," Ieng Sary told the *Review*. "Personally, I wasn't aware of the deaths. . . ."

"Pol Pot . . . knew the accused were killed but not their families."

All this, by way of proving the Khmer Rouge's good intentions to a world who, in its large majority, would sooner have them put away than back in power.

"We made mistakes. We want to inform the people of these mistakes so they know we can't have the same policies as we had from 1975 through 1978." □

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# Workers occupy plants to save jobs

*Lee Jeans women win*

By David Martin

"We are no 'rag trade' girls, we are women workers fighting for our jobs with the only weapons available to us. Women's jobs are as important as any other, and we aim to prove that women can fight for them."

This was the determination expressed last March in an appeal for support made by 250 workers, primarily young women, four weeks after occupying the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock, Scotland.

This August, they won their months-long struggle against the Vanity Fair Corporation, owner of Lee Jeans.

Vanity Fair is a U.S.-based textile and garment giant with thirty-four plants in the United States and ten in Europe. The occupation began February 5 after it was disclosed that the Lee Jeans operation was going to be moved to two plants in Ireland. At the time, the unemployment rate around Greenock was 15 percent and rising.

The plant had opened in 1970, taking advantage of large government subsidies and tax schemes designed to attract business and provide jobs. For most of the young women who worked there, it was their first job after leaving school and one of the few jobs available in the area.

The strikers received impressive support from workers throughout Britain, whose financial contributions allowed the struggle to continue. The occupation was visited by Labour Party leaders, such as Michael Foot and Tony Benn, and secured the backing of the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party contributed a showing of the movie *Norma Rae*, the story of a struggle of textile workers in the southern United States to unionize their factory. Vanity Fair's U.S. operations are concentrated in the south, particularly Alabama, and have nonunion conditions similar to those portrayed in the film.

Speakers from the Lee Jeans workforce toured the country, spoke at May Day rallies, and participated in demonstrations such as the Labour Party-sponsored march of 60,000 in Glasgow February 21 and the Liverpool to London trade union-sponsored March for Jobs in May. Through these and other activities, such as a national boycott of Lee Jeans, the workers made their case widely known and focused attention on the fight for jobs for women, and the power of the tactic of factory occupation.

The victory was won when Vanity Fair agreed to sell the plant to another jeans manufacturer that has said it will retain the work-



Socialist Challenge

Worker at occupied Lee Jeans plant.

force and maintain production. The strikers have announced that they will keep up a token occupation until production is actually started up again.

## Laurence Scott occupation

Another factory occupation, at Laurence Scott Electromotors in Manchester, was raided at 2:45 in the morning on August 18. The raid was conducted by more than forty bailiffs, smelling of beer and armed with axe handles and sledgehammers.

The Laurence Scott occupation, which, in the words of Tony Benn, had "given hope to millions" in the fight for jobs, involved 600 skilled engineering workers. It began April 24, two weeks after the management announced plans to close the plant on July 10.

The plant had been acquired only last October by Arthur Snipe, a notorious right-wing entrepreneur known as "the J.R. of Doncaster" (after the evil and hated Texas oilman J.R. Ewing in the popular television series "Dallas"). Doncaster, fifty miles east of Manchester, is

the location of Snipe's main enterprise, the Mining Supplies company.

Snipe had bought Laurence Scott with the intention of closing it and stripping it of its equipment for use in another, less militant, factory.

At one point early in the dispute when Laurence Scott workers set up pickets outside his Doncaster plant, Snipe drove his Rolls Royce into a table set up by the pickets, pinning one worker against a wall. Snipe, still in his Rolls, then chased another picket down the sidewalk.

The raid on the occupied plant came after a settlement had been negotiated between the company and the national leadership of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. The settlement guaranteed only three months of production, working two days a week, and had been voted down overwhelmingly by the strikers. The subsequent withdrawal of official union support for the occupation gave a green light to the cops to enforce an earlier court injunction allowing Snipe repossession of the plant.

A press release issued by the strikers after the raid showed their determination to continue to fight for their jobs:

"What we have witnessed today is a disgrace to British industrial relations. From the outset the workers at Laurence Scott have sought nothing other than the right to work. When consultation takes the form of sledge hammers and pick axe handles then we are returning to the nineteenth century.

"The workers at Laurence Scott have repeatedly declared that they would not resist the bailiffs. In such circumstances how can we possibly justify 40 to 50 men with sledge hammers and pick axe handles being sent to take over the factory? . . .

"The manner in which the factory was repossessed today will make the workers ever more determined to pursue their fight from the streets outside the factory."

Picket lines have been set up outside, which the transport workers union has said it will honor, preventing Snipe from going through on his plans to remove the machinery.

Over sixty Labour Party members of Parliament are on record in support of the Laurence Scott workers, and support among workers was reflected by a rally in Manchester August 23 that drew 500 unionists.

Speaking at that rally, strike leader Dennis Barry summed up the stakes in the fight against plant closures: "We are fighting a battle for every worker in Manchester and indeed nationally. Our fight is your fight. It's us today—it could be you tomorrow." □

# Women fight for industrial jobs

## Unions discuss the need for affirmative action

By Denny Fitzpatrick

The following are some revealing facts about the situation of women workers in British industry:

- Women constitute 42% of the workforce yet remain concentrated in four main industries: food and drink, tobacco, technical engineering, and clothing and footwear. These industries employ 10% of male industrial workers.

- Despite the Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1975, women earn less now relative to men than in 1977. The average wage for women is 71% of the average wage for men. Women make up two-thirds of workers earning less than £60 per week. (£1 is equivalent to US \$1.90).

- Segregation is increasing. In 1959 58.1% of women workers worked in distributive trades and service industries; in 1980 the figure was 71.4%.

- In 1979, in industry as a whole, 92.2% of general managers were male. Only 15% of women who worked had skilled manual, professional, or management jobs compared with 65% of working men.

- Between January 1976 and January 1980, unemployment among women rose from 254,000 to 412,000—an increase of 62%.

- Of young women in employment, 10.4% received time off work for advanced training programs, compared to 39.7% of young men.

- In 1975, 43% of young men but only 6.5% of young women entered sponsorships to

skilled occupations. The majority of those openings for young women were in hair-dressing!

These are the facts, despite five years of the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA).

### Why did these Acts fail?

Declaring everyone to be equal is one thing. But overcoming the obstacles that prevent equality requires action.

These two acts, while important gains, did not have sufficient teeth to do much. The EPA embodied the principle of equal pay for women "doing work the same or broadly similar to men." That's a bit tough because in most places there were no men to be compared with, a sort of Catch 22.

And in any case, is that our worth—only to be compared to what a man would get if he did the job?

The irony of the EPA is that the Trades Union Congress (TUC) wants to put on an amendment to introduce "a notional man"—i.e., what you would get if a man was there.

The SDA declared us all equal. It's very similar to a litter law. Making it forbidden to drop litter doesn't necessarily solve the litter problem. Don't you have to take measures to prevent it continuing? Don't you have to fine offenders who violate the law?

The SDA had no teeth. It did not recognize past discrimination that had held women back, nor did it require compensatory measures. It had few powers of action to prevent continued discrimination.

### Trade unions forced to act

Women want more and the pressure is on for a new approach.

At the September 1980 TUC a motion was passed calling for a vigorous campaign of positive [affirmative] action. In November 1980 the TUC held a special conference for all unions to discuss positive action.

Marie Patterson, chairperson of the TUC Women's Advisory Committee, in her opening address to the November conference said:

"Job segregation, which has been the main stumbling block for women in gaining equality with men, has hardly been affected since the passing of the legislation [EPA and SDA]. . . .

"And the challenge to the movement is to produce a positive action policy which is sound and realistic, and at the same time one which will have a definite effect on the employment prospects of working women by breaking down barriers which have been erect-

ed over so many years."

The conference put forward two approaches:

- For voluntary agreements on positive action between trade union negotiative bodies and employers. This has been called the Swedish road.

- For a legally enforced system of goals and targets to increase the representation of women in male-dominated areas. This model is based on the experience of the affirmative action programs in the United States, which make it mandatory for employers to set such targets.

Of course the bureaucrats preferred the first option. What they said about the American road was:

"Such an enforceable program runs counter to the tradition of voluntarism"—a truly British spirit!

In other words, what they want is cozy collaboration with the bosses.

It is interesting that in the June women's TUC bulletin, an article discussing positive action and goals said that the problem was that it put men off.

In August the London *Guardian* reported that James Prior, the minister of employment, when asked if he favored positive action to overcome women's segregated labor, said, "Well, it puts some people off."

So it seems that the bosses and bureaucrats agree to divide and weaken the workforce by maintaining segregation.

### What socialists are doing

Supporters of the weekly *Socialist Challenge*, through the newspaper and with pamphlets, have been campaigning for positive action—American style—in union meetings and in women's groups.

We have begun to make some important gains.

There are no other revolutionary groups that support these demands. They fall into the trap that it "puts people off." They say that it is not realistic to ask for preferential hiring of women in a period of mass unemployment, and counterpose positive action to the fight for the right to work.

We say, yes, fight for the right to work, but for *the right to work wherever we choose!* We're not fighting the Tories and unemployment in order to stay where we are—in the worst paid and least organized jobs. How can women be expected to support the fight to stay the same?

### What gains have been made?

At the Easter 1981 TUC women's conference a motion from the Union of Construction,



Denny Fitzpatrick is a member of the Post Office Engineering Union in London, and a supporter of the newsweekly *Socialist Challenge*.



Allied Trades, and Technicians (UCATT) called for:

- Recognition of past discrimination and the need for compensatory measures;
- Goals and quotas to be decided by the unions and backed by the law; and
- Positive action measures to be compulsory.

Although the motion was composited with several others on positive action for consideration by the conference, the first point was accepted.

The second point was weakened to call for targets jointly arrived at by the unions and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Manpower Service Commission (MSC), and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). Compliance with the targets would then be jointly monitored.

These recommendations for amendments to the existing laws are going to be presented to the full TUC at its September 1981 meeting.

The EOC has also proposed amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act. They want employers to be obliged to hire women and train them specifically for jobs that currently have no women.

This is a real opening for a campaign to get women into skilled jobs.

The same EOC report noted that little had changed since the SDA was enacted. A survey they conducted found that only 3% of employers could even find a written copy of their equal opportunities policy.

### So far, so good

What is needed now to get this campaign going is action by the unions. Action to get young women apprentices taken on in nontraditional jobs. For women in unskilled jobs in a factory to be retrained for skilled work.

A start has been made in British Telecommunications, where I work. Through the union, a Women in Telecomms group has been set up. We got hold of a copy of the British Telecommunications equal opportunities policy and are systematically campaigning to show how inadequate and ineffective it is. Like most employers, British Telecomms has declared itself an equal opportunity employer under the SDA, but this has meant only approximately 300 women telecommunication engineers compared to over 100,000 men.

By looking at British Telecomms's recruitment policy, its interview techniques, its criteria for hiring, and so on, we hope to show that positive action policies are needed.

We have gained support in the union. Through meetings and resolutions to national conferences we have fought for positive action. Recently, the EOC awarded us a £2,462 grant to continue this work. We are producing a magazine which will lay out the facts, and put the case for positive action. This magazine is about women for the union.

The Post Office Engineering Union has only recently begun discussing women's issues—for the first time in its ninety years. Presum-



Striking nurses. Women are fighting to get out of job ghettos into higher-paying skilled industrial jobs.

ably, when you're not seen, you're not heard—but times are changing. The union's official journal began by reviewing a book about women workers. It has also covered the Women in Telecomms campaign against management's sexist advertising, a campaign which has won the backing of Tony Benn, the leader of the left-wing of the Labour Party.

### Times are changing

Women are also getting into rail jobs for the first time. Often women just apply using their initials, no Ms. or Mrs. or female name, so when they turn up for an interview the interviewers are shocked. They know they can't legally exclude women, so they put them through very strenuous interviews.

In the engineering [machinist] industry women have battled to get into government training schemes, and in some cases have actually gotten trained and hired.

The policy of hiring women especially for training in areas where they are not now represented could be a real boost to breaking into the higher-paying engineering jobs. Action is needed to force such a policy. As more women break into these areas, attitudes will change and more women will follow.

All these union campaigns must also be taken up in the Labour Party. Within the Labour Party there are already moves for positive action—to increase women's participation in

government, as Labour candidates and so on. But this alone is not enough. The Labour Party must commit itself to a policy of positive action for women workers, for programs in law, backed by government action to break down job segregation.

Through the local councils—which employ many construction workers, engineers, and others—the Labour Party could do much for advancing real equality of opportunity.

Why do councils with Labour majorities take on so few women in nontraditional jobs? Why do they not implement positive action in retraining women clerical workers for higher-paying skilled jobs? These are questions being raised in the Labour and trade union movements.

The demands of women for positive action and the campaign to orient the unions to fight for it is in the interest of all workers.

A segregated workforce, divided by sex and race, benefits only one class—the bosses. When women are earning 71% of what men make, who is getting the other 29%? The bosses.

No worker benefits from a mass pool of unemployed and low-paid workers.

Women in Britain—52% of the population and 42% of the workforce—need positive action to give them their rightful status and to benefit the entire workforce. □

# Strike ends in victory

## Workers get support from New Zealand unions

By Tony Lane

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—On April 7, the Public Service Association (PSA) of the Pacific nation of Western Samoa called its members out in the country's first-ever strike.

The initial demand was for a 20 percent wage increase to try to keep pace with an inflation rate expected to reach 38 percent this year.

But other issues immediately came to the fore. These included the right of the union to exist, its right to negotiate with the government, the right of workers to go on strike without losing their jobs, and the right of the PSA to present its case in the government-controlled media.

The PSA was in a strong position. Out of a

population of 153,000 in Western Samoa, 6,000 are public servants, which is half the paid workforce.

The PSA was well organized, with collection and distribution of food arranged along with other relief services. Mass rallies were frequently held to protest against the government and keep PSA members and their supporters informed. These demonstrations consistently involved up to 12,000.

The strike ended victoriously. After thirteen weeks, PSA members returned to work having won all their demands.

One of the reasons for the success was the support that the PSA received internationally,

especially from New Zealand workers.

In May, Ieti Taulealo visited New Zealand to seek support. The result was the donation of thousands of dollars from New Zealand unions.

In August, Taulealo again visited New Zealand to attend the New Zealand Public Service Association conference and to report on the strike.

*Socialist Action*, the newspaper of the Socialist Action League, the New Zealand section of the Fourth International, interviewed Ieti Taulealo to find out the reasons for the strike victory and the impact that it has had in Samoa and the rest of the Pacific region.

*Question. What gains were made through the strike?*

*Answer.* Firstly, the economic gain. We got a salary increase of between 32 percent for the lowest-paid worker and 5 percent for the highest-paid worker. With the 8 percent we got at the end of the year, it means 40 percent for the guys at the bottom, and 13 percent for those at the top.

Secondly, the social impact of the strike. We have seen a new awareness of the workers and their rights as workers. This has come out very strongly and people now are beginning to ask questions and exercise their rights and talk openly about them.

You see we are very fortunate in Samoa. We have got a very comprehensive constitution and it is very difficult for the government to ban strikes, demonstrations, that sort of thing without violating our rights.

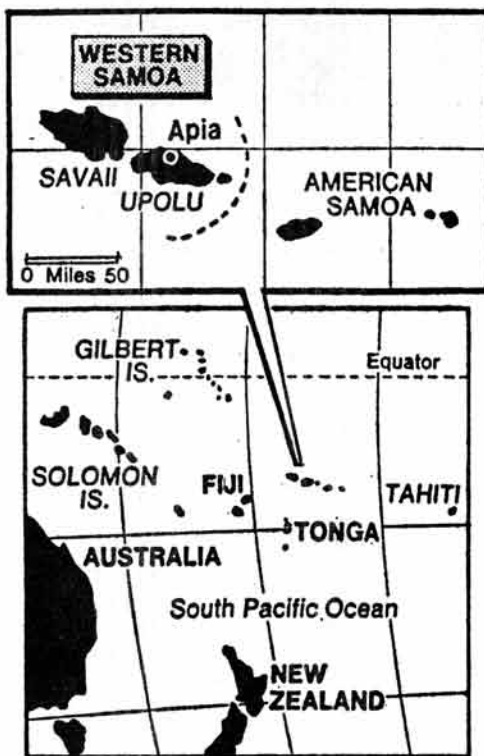
Politically, the impact has been incredible. The present government will need a miracle to get back in next year. People are very politically oriented now. They are looking at the overall political situation and asking questions about what sort of things the government is doing for the country.

We are having elections in February 1982, so it is going to show the kind of impact the strike has had. Before, it was a question of whoever had a lot of money or had a lot of power goes into Parliament. Now people care about issues, so this is a very important political development for us.

At the personal level in Samoa, workers are very, very confident.

*Q. Why did your strike have this far-reaching impact?*

A. I think that it was a combination of



issues. When the government refused to broadcast our notices and the news on the publicly-funded broadcasting station, it made us organize publicity committees, information centers, and big public meetings.

When the government refused to talk to us on a person-to-person level, we organized public meetings. So instead of talking to the government, we talked to everyone about it.

It was like a big education campaign—about the law and about rights, civil rights.

The far-reaching impact it has had on everybody is because we were able to get across to the people. We visited people out in the villages, talking to the chiefs, older people, villagers, ministers—all at their level. This was going on right through the strike.

Also, I believe our members were in a positive mood right through the strike.

People tend to get very negative during a strike. When you have a strike, the important thing is to keep the solidarity. I don't believe you can help that by getting negative, by getting worked up. It doesn't help the image of the leaders who are trying to get the thing through.

What we tried to do was to have a more positive approach and in doing so we had the solidarity of our members. We were organizing social events through the strike. We had big parties, dancing, festivals, feasts. At the same time you can attack the government, attack what they are doing.

Because you are in a good frame of mind it doesn't necessarily mean that you are not serious about pushing your case anywhere, in the court, to the government, or anywhere else.

*Q. What impact has your success had on the union movement in the small island nations of the Pacific?*

A. Before our strike, there was a strike in Guam, and from the information that we got, apparently quite a lot of the strikers were kicked out of work. In small island nations, it is very easy for governments to take the law into their own hands.

It was very important for us to make sure that nobody took the law into their own hands. It was very important for us to make sure that our rights—the rights of the workers—were recognized.



Of course, we got what we wanted. And I gather that soon after that the government of Tonga gave increases to their public servants without a strike and that the Vanuatu people also went on strike and were given some economic adjustments.

I believe that the workers in the islands have got this confidence that we have got, that it is their right to look after their families and be reasonably secure economically. And, it was shown through our strike that the international trade-union community will always come in behind with support.

*Q. What effect has your victory had on the union movement in Samoa?*

A. Unionism in Samoa, and again in any small island, is very difficult to get off the ground. There is a lack of jobs, so one has to think seriously about starting a union if you still want to keep your job in the private sector.

But during the strike, the electricity workers formed themselves into a union and even came

out for four days in support of the PSA. So that is a sign that people are starting to form unions.

*Q. What about people who criticize your strike as not being "fa'a Samoa" (the Samoan way)?*

A. I have been very disappointed about the stand made by some of our critics of our strike here in New Zealand.

They have said that the strike is foreign, that the strike is not in accordance with the Samoan way of life, that the government hasn't got any money, so why are we asking for money. They said that the strike was politically motivated to discredit the government.

I don't blame some of our critics, because this was the type of propaganda that our government was putting out. But it does show up a lot of patronizing and ignorant New Zealanders. They still believe that the island people are running around in next to nothing, lying out

among the coconuts waiting for the nuts to fall, still thinking that the islands are a paradise.

It annoys me personally, because it is an attack on my intelligence—and on our ability as workers to organize ourselves.

All I can say is that there is nothing foreign about asking for more money. And there is nothing un-Samoan about exercising your constitutional rights under the Samoan constitution.

As for being politically motivated, I go along with that. What more political act can you have than exercising your rights? As for the criticism that it was an attack on the government, and to discredit the government, I think that it did quite well to disgrace itself, without any effort on our part.

The strike lasted thirteen weeks without any violence and the main reason for our success, I believe, was that this strike was organized and run with a deep understanding and sensitivity to the Samoan way of life. Without that the Samoans would have got pissed off, and gone back to work. □

## DOCUMENTS

# Victims answer Zionist prosecutors

*'The way of Vietnam is the way of Palestine'*

[On May 2, 1980, Palestinian liberation fighters carried out a guerrilla action in the West Bank city of Hebron, in which six Israeli colonists were killed. Zionist settlers from the nearby Kiryat Arba colony had taken over a building in the center of the city, claiming that it had once been owned by Jews, and converted it into a religious school. This was intended to serve as the first step in expanding the Zionist colonization of Hebron.

[The following statement was made in court by the four Palestinians charged with carrying out the guerrilla action in Hebron, Adnan Jaber Jaber, Yasir Hussein Zayadat, Muhammad Abdelrahman Shubaki, and Taisir Mahmoud Taha. It is reprinted from the July 12-18 issue of the Jerusalem weekly *Al-Fajr*.]

\* \* \*

We are brought today to be tried before the court of the occupation. We recognise neither the court nor the occupation and we do not recognise the right of the occupiers and oppressors to bring us to court and to try us, the oppressed. We are brought to this court against our will to participate in the show that the Zionist authorities are preparing.

We do not intend to react to the charges against us and the only report we will make about our deeds will be to the Palestinian revolution. No doubt, in the court of history, we will be acquitted.

Rumour has it that the climax of this show will be the death penalty. The Kiryat Arba

settlers and Rabbi Kahane want to execute us and it is well known that their wish is the Israeli government's command. You can try us as you wish. If you try us to death, you should know that death is the beginning of life for us. If you try us and sentence us to life imprisonment, you should know that the doors of prison will not silence us. We have lived for our homeland and for our people and dying for this is a sign of honour and a symbol for those who would follow us.

We are being charged with the Beit Hadasah (Daboya) operation, an operation where settlers and occupying soldiers were killed and injured. There is not and there cannot be a Palestinian for whom the Beit Hadassah (Daboya) operation has not brought him back his self-respect and made him stand tall. There is not and there cannot be a progressive person who has not breathed easily, saying that they deserved it—those land robbers, law breakers, cocksure—when the operation happened. They deserved it so that they will not feel secure, even for a moment, for a long time to expel and exploit other people.

It was not coincidental that Eli Haze'ev was among those killed. That mercenary fascist and racist had killed and robbed in Vietnam and managed to escape the hands of the victorious revolution there. Those who have continued the way of the Vietnamese revolution have reached him here in Hebron and have executed the verdict of progressive humanity. The way of Vietnam is the way of Palestine.

You, who came to Palestine, armed, and with colonizing intent and hostility. You should know that it is only natural for us to defend our land and our people. The Palestinian struggle defends to the best of its ability—at times with stones and at times with hand grenades—our rights and our lives. As long as you are endangering us, we will bear the rifle.

But the olive branch, that the leader of the Palestinian people lifted up to all the nations of the world, is still forwarded to you, the Jews who live in Palestine. You can still share in a life of peace and equality in the democratic, secular Palestine. Until then, revolution, revolution until victory. □

### Attention Foreign Airmail Subscribers:

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# The 'Workers Congress' system

*Bureaucracy seeks to head off another 'Poland'*

By Kai Chang

[The following article appeared in the August 1981 issue of *October Review*, a revolutionary-socialist monthly published in Hong Kong. The translation has been provided by *October Review*.]

\* \* \*

The working class of China, nominally the master of the country, has long been deprived of democratic rights and the power to supervise and control production and state affairs.

In the past two years, the Chinese Communist Party leadership has proposed reforms in the system of economic administration. Highly centralized power has been partially transferred to local enterprises, and workers have been allowed limited intervention in the affairs of production.

It has been officially reported that about 36,000 enterprises in the country have set up what are termed "Workers Congresses." In big industrial cities like Peking, Tianjin, and Shanghai, the system has been introduced in 90 percent of the large- and medium-sized enterprises. Many enterprises have elected team leaders, section heads, and workshop directors, and nearly 1,000 units have elected factory directors, managers, and other administrative cadres.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that the Workers Congresses have not been very effective (the same official report said that a survey conducted in some cities revealed that only 25 percent of the Workers Congresses function well, while 60 percent remain ineffectual and 15 percent have a merely formal existence), the introduction of the system shows the pressure of the Chinese working class in raising demands and gaining concessions from the party leadership.

The central apparatus of the party recently issued some "Provisional Regulations for the Workers Congresses in the State-Owned Industrial Enterprises." These regulations were drawn up by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and the party's Organizational Department. They provide for setting up Workers Congresses throughout the country. The regulations establish criteria for leaders of enterprises to follow, but they also restrict the demands of the workers.

According to the regulations, the functions and powers of the Workers Congresses are as follows:

1. To examine and adopt resolutions on the work report, production plans, and major man-

agement issues submitted by directors of the enterprises. (The directors are responsible for carrying out the resolutions.)

2. To decide on issues of vital interest to the workers and staff, such as funds for labor protection, welfare funds, bonuses, systems of awards and punishment, and allocation of housing.

3. To adopt resolutions on matters related to reform of the organization of the enterprises, their major regulations, and wage readjustments.

4. To supervise leading cadres at all levels of the enterprises, and make recommendations about them to higher authorities.

5. To elect administrative personnel in accord with the arrangements made by the higher authorities in the enterprises.

However, the powers of the Workers Congresses are also restricted by three stipulations:

1. The Workers Congresses must be "based on the state's policies and decrees and on the demands of planning."

2. The Workers Congresses "must support the directors in carrying out their functions and powers, defend the higher authority of the command system of production, educate the workers to continually increase their sense of responsibility as masters, consciously observe labor discipline, and strictly carry out various systems of job responsibility in production and technology."

3. The Workers Congresses may put forward suggestions on the decisions and directives of the leading bodies of the enterprises, but if the suggestions are not accepted, those decisions and directives "must be implemented."

A more obvious restriction is set down in the section of the regulations on "general principles":

The Workers Congresses shall be "under the leadership of the party committee"; they shall "comply with the party's general policies and the state's laws, and exercise their powers and functions under the leadership of the party committee."

The regulations also stipulate that no standing body shall be set up for the Workers Congresses—this means that when the Congresses are not in session, there is no executive body to exercise their powers and functions.

## Contradictions

In remaining under the party's leadership, the Workers Congresses are far from being the highest organs of power in the enterprises. Despite party propaganda to the effect that the workers should be masters of the enterprises

and of the country, the reality proves to be otherwise.

If they are to be the genuine masters of the country, the workers need to start from democratically elected Workers Congresses on the enterprise level (which would serve as the highest organs of power in the enterprises), and proceed toward Workers Congresses on the county, provincial, and national levels. Such Workers Congresses—together with peasants congresses and soldiers congresses on the national and various other levels—would form the highest national and regional organs of power.

But such a scheme has always been rejected by the Chinese CP. The present regulations are the latest proof of this.

Reporters from the Xinhua news agency concluded in a report on the Workers Congresses in Chongqing: "One can see from the enterprises of Chongqing that the Workers Congresses have only begun to play the role of organs of power. The situation in different enterprises is very uneven, and is still far from meeting the criteria and the demand that the workers be the genuine masters. In particular, *the very urgent demand of the workers and the masses for the power to elect and recall leading cadres including factory directors and managers*, has basically not been realized" (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup>

The "very urgent demand" for the power to elect and recall leading cadres stems from the masses' refusal to tolerate further the bureaucratic arbitrariness and blind commands of the leading cadres. Such practices have led to neglect of professional opinion, sluggish production, enormous waste, trampling of workers' democracy, and indifference to the hardships of the masses. That such demands and remarks were reported by Xinhua lends them credibility and reflects the existence of such problems.

In handling this question, the party simply gives decision-making power to the leadership of the enterprises—that is, the question of election and recall is to be decided by the very ones who are subject to such election and recall. Thus most of them stall the proceedings or arrange only for the election of the lowest-ranking cadres.

China's experience with the Workers Congress system is far inferior even to that practiced by Yugoslavia. Xinhua news agency has reported that workers councils are the highest organs of power in Yugoslav enterprises, and that all major issues there are voted on by the councils. This is one important way in which

1. *People's Daily*, June 10, 1981.

2. *People's Daily*, October 5, 1980.



the Yugoslav working class can participate directly in factory management. There, workers can decide directly on working conditions and on the division of income after taxes are deducted. The workers councils are elected by secret ballot by all the workers, and their powers are quite extensive. They are responsible for the selection and dismissal of administrative personnel in their units (including the managers).

Under the Yugoslav workers councils are executive bodies (management committees) that handle day-to-day affairs. The leading role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (the CP) is not written directly into the regulations of the workers councils (although the party of course exercises the decisive role in practice).<sup>3</sup>

The gains of China's working class thus lag far behind those made in Yugoslavia. But the Workers Congress system is still a first step forward.

#### Why such concessions?

The Chinese CP has made these concessions in hope of overcoming the present economic and political crisis. China's economic difficulties have continued to worsen. The two years of Hua Guofeng's "leap forward" added further disasters to the serious disruptions that took place as a result of the ten-year Cultural Revolution and other wrong policies.

In general, the workers are not enthusiastic or efficient. Regulations are ineffective, labor discipline is lax, and no one assumes responsibility. Many leading cadres in the enterprises have no standing among the workers—in fact, they are targets of opposition.

The crisis that erupted in Poland in August 1980 is a frightful warning to all the ruling bureaucracies of the workers states—especially to the Peking bureaucracy, whose base of rule has already been seriously undermined. Polish-type events could break out in China if preventive measures are not taken. This has prompted the party to allow some industrial enterprises to try reforming the leadership system, beginning in the fourth quarter of last year. The regulations have been issued in order to promote the Workers Congress system.

The regulations reveal that the party's main purpose is to use the Workers Congresses to help implement its own policies. Besides the functions of the congresses mentioned above, there are six provisions concerning the obligations of the delegates to the congresses. The least-disguised of these are the following:

1. The delegates "should serve as models in upholding the party's general policies and the state's laws, strictly observing labor discipline and regulations and performing well their duties on the job. . . ."

2. Delegates "should help educate and supervise workers and staff members who violate factory regulations and labor discipline, in

order to make them consciously correct their mistakes and shortcomings." (Article 10.)

This means transforming the Workers Congresses into trade unions and the delegates into trade-union cadres. The unions in China have always acted as auxiliary instruments of the regime, similar to the role of the official trade unions in Poland.

According to the party's explanations, the Workers Congress system is to be one step in reforming the institutions of enterprise leadership, part of the overall reform of the party and state leadership institutions. The party proclaims that in the enterprise reforms, "the basic contents are: 1) to give full scope to the party's leading role, in particular to strengthen and improve its leadership in the overall policies and political thinking of the enterprises. . . . Whatever the circumstances, the party's leadership cannot be forsaken."<sup>4</sup>

The basic contradiction can be seen here. The party's intention in promoting the Workers Congress system is to strengthen the party's leadership—but genuine power for the working class will mean weakening the party's leadership.

Thus it is no surprise that Wang Li, secretary of the party's Central Secretariat, said at the National Forum on Democratic Management of Enterprises: "Some of our leading comrades are afraid of convening Workers Congresses and of proposals made by the masses."<sup>5</sup>

The *Workers Daily* pointed out:

To promote and perfect the Workers Congress system, the crux lies in strengthening and improving the party's leadership—in genuinely and clearly es-

tablishing among various levels of cadres the notions of "everything in the interests of the masses" and "everything depends on the masses," and in safeguarding the powers of the Workers Congresses as provided in the regulations. Otherwise, implementation of the regulations will inevitably fall short or even be reduced to empty talk. At present . . . formalism still exists in some units, and the Workers Congresses cannot play their role. The main reason is inadequate solution of the question of the cadres' understanding.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the matter is not a simple one of misunderstanding. At bottom, the cadres fear the loss of their power and their established privileges. The clash over material interests exists throughout the country and is not confined to "some leading comrades" or to "some units." Thus it is crucial that the limited powers of the Workers Congresses provided in the regulations be fully implemented.

For the central apparatus of the party, its overall interest in saving its entire system of rule demands limited concessions to the masses and sacrificing the interests of individual bureaucratic elements. Notorious and incompetent low-level cadres are also being purged by the masses themselves.

But the masses are not content with such meager concessions. They will fight for the implementation of the rights granted on paper, despite the resistance and disruption by the cadres. A struggle between the rulers and the ruled on the enterprise and factory level has opened up. The masses will not cease to struggle until their demands are satisfied. The promulgation of the Workers Congress regulations serves as one of the battlefronts of the Chinese proletariat in the fight for their rights and interests.

July 25, 1981

4. Editorial in *People's Daily*, July 22, 1981.

5. *People's Daily*, June 10, 1981.

6. Editorial in *Workers Daily*, July 20, 1981.

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3. Xinhua news agency dispatch from Belgrade, November 2, 1980; published in *People's Daily*, November 4, 1980.

# The 1980 Lublin general strike

## *Opening act of the workers' revolution*

By Ernest Harsch

LUBLIN—One year ago, the people of this small city in eastern Poland decided that they had had enough.

With a militancy and spirit of unity that took the authorities completely by surprise, Lublin's more than 100,000 workers carried out the first general strike in the history of the Polish People's Republic.

Lublin had not been previously known as a center of political or labor ferment. Nestled in the heart of a predominantly agricultural region, located less than fifty miles from the Soviet border, with a population of just 300,000, the city had been bypassed by the worker revolts of 1970 and 1976. And although the massive upsurge of 1956 had found an echo in Lublin, it was very faint.

All that changed in July 1980, virtually overnight. The bitterness, frustration, and anger that had been building up during thirty-five years of bureaucratic privilege, mismanagement, and authoritarian rule suddenly burst out into the open. The workers of Lublin demonstrated to the entire country that they, too, were ready and capable of challenging Poland's bureaucratic system.

The Lublin general strike did not receive much press coverage at the time, either within the country (because of censorship) or abroad. But it was nevertheless the first truly massive mobilization in Poland's unfolding workers' revolution, coming a month before the much more well-known Lenin Shipyard occupation in Gdansk. It was a foretaste of what was to come.

### 'We've had enough'

On July 1, 1980, the government introduced changes in the system of meat sales that would have led to effective price increases of 90 to 100 percent for certain types of meat. The following day, when the change was announced, the first scattered protest strikes broke out in various parts of the country.

The reaction in Lublin was not immediate. The government had announced that implementation of the price increases would be staggered and left to the discretion of the local authorities. Moreover, the local press reported that the prices in the factory canteens would not go up.

The small town of Swidnik is a half-hour drive from Lublin, past the site of the old Majdanek concentration camp where several hundred thousand people were gassed by the Nazis during World War II. Swidnik is dominated by the large Pulawski helicopter factory, where most of the workers in the town are em-

ployed. It was there that the dam finally burst.

At 9:00 a.m. on July 8, a group of workers went into the canteen. According to one of them, Stanislaw Ruk, beef cutlets were selling for nineteen zlotys, instead of the usual ten zlotys. "Enough. We cannot afford this," the workers declared.

At first, the workers of only two particular sections of the plant stopped work. They did not initially talk about going out on "strike." They simply decided not to work, and to see what would happen.

An hour later, party officials in the plant came to talk to them. They asked Ruk whether the workers would go back to their jobs if the prices were brought back down.

"No," Ruk told them. "We've had enough. If you have an ulcer, you don't bandage it. You cut it out."

The work stoppage then quickly spread to the rest of the first shift. Workers began raising and discussing all sorts of demands. They wanted higher pay. They wanted the meat prices to go back down. They wanted soap and washpowder so that they could wash their hands. They wanted cleaner toilets.

Literally hundreds of different demands were raised. Some may have seemed trivial, but to the workers they were important, reflecting a deep bitterness and discontent over their living conditions.

When the first shift ended, and the second began to come into the factory, the strikers appealed to them to join the strike. "We started this thing," they told them. "We'll finish it."

From the first day of the strike, the workers stayed by their machines to make sure nothing happened to them. They were afraid that the authorities might try to sabotage some of the equipment so as to blame it on the workers.

### Singing and crying

On the second day, the strikers were joined by the white-collar employees.

As the office workers marched out of their building, with the women in front, an official approached them and warned that they would be fired.

"We don't like the air in the offices," Zbigniew Puczek, a technical worker, replied. "We just want to get some fresh air."

The official warned, "If you don't like the air, you should go outside the gate."

Looking around at the growing crowd, Puczek said to him, "Well, it looks like you will be the first to go." As more and more workers gathered, the official left and hid in the office of one of the directors.

Soon, a large crowd of 10,000 strikers had

assembled in the main square just outside the administration building, with a few worker guards left posted by the machines. The strikers waited for someone to come out and talk to them. When no one came after an hour, the workers started to sing religious, labor, and patriotic songs. They also made up satirical songs in an effort to provoke the authorities into talking.

"The singing was so loud," Puczek explained, "that it carried outside the plant. It was extraordinary, people singing and crying. We were singing both labor songs, including the *Internationale*, and religious songs. The singing united the people. It was an expression of anger at the evasive actions of the authorities."

Just outside the nearby gate to the factory complex, the families of the strikers had gathered to join in the singing and to bring support and food to the workers.

### 'The factory is ours'

Zofia Bartkiewicz, an administrative worker and a member of both the Polish United Workers Party (the Communist Party) and the People's Council (a local governmental body), got on the steps of the administration building to address the strikers.

"Listen to me carefully," she said. "I'm talking to you as a member of the party and a member of the council. I've been talking about all these issues for some twenty years, with no results."

"There's no other way to get what we want than by acting together. Let's look at each other. We are standing here side-by-side, the simple worker and the white-collar employee. Remember, don't let them make us quarrel with each other; we are all workers. Your wives and mothers standing here with us are, after all, workers in the offices. Your sons, husbands, and fathers are operating the machines here. Together we make one family."

"Remember, the factory is ours. We have to take care of it. Nothing can be lost and nothing can be destroyed. That is what I am asking of all of you."

Not far from where Bartkiewicz spoke, in the middle of the packed square, was a flowerbed. As if in response to her appeal, not a single flower was damaged by the crowd.

Puczek, who is also a party member, explained that as he was listening to Bartkiewicz's speech he realized that nothing the workers were demanding was illegal or outrageous. He too climbed the stairs and spoke to the workers, repeating Bartkiewicz's appeal for unity.



Puczek suggested that the workers choose representatives to negotiate with the management. He and Bartkiewicz were chosen.

A couple days later, the workers elected a formal strike committee, with one representative from each of the thirty-one sections of the plant. Bartkiewicz was elected the leader of the strike committee.

With the establishment of the strike committee, it became possible to systematically formulate the workers' demands. After they were grouped by subject, the list was reduced to 110 demands. In the process, one particular demand for a reduction in the number of white-collar employees was dropped, since the strikers realized that the problem was the bureaucracy, not that there were too many white-collar employees.

The strikers also set up a workers' defense guard. Identified by red and white armbands (the colors of the Polish flag), the 100 guards protected the machinery and acted to prevent any provocations from the management or party authorities.

Throughout the course of the strike, there were numerous attempts by police agents, party members, and plant officials to intimidate the strikers. Telephone lines were cut to try to isolate the strikers from the outside world and to hamper communications between the different buildings in the factory complex itself.

One of the directors of the plant told a doctor to give Puczek a tranquilizer injection so that he could be taken away to a mental hospital. She refused, and promptly told Puczek about it.

Zofia Bartkiewicz was continually followed by the police. "But I was not afraid," she said. "Because I knew *they* were afraid, a minority standing against the workers."

Although some police and party members outside the plant tried to provoke the workers into going outside, they stayed within the gates throughout the course of the strike.

Recalling the shootings of workers that took place in 1970 and 1976 when workers marched out onto the streets of Gdansk, Radom, and elsewhere, Puczek explained, "We didn't go out onto the streets. We wanted to avoid confrontation. That was the thought that everyone had, that we should be together, that we should be inside the factory, and that we shouldn't allow any sabotage. The people working here are generally young, but politically they're very mature."

"This was the success of Swidnik. It showed the whole society how people should fight, how to avoid new victims."

The workers of the Swidnik helicopter factory also showed how working people could win.

On July 11, the last day of the Swidnik strike, the management conceded the strikers' main demands. All wages were raised by one category. The prices of food in the factory canteen was reduced to the previous levels. Promises were made to respond to the full list of 110 grievances by the end of the year.

The authorities, however, did not even get a



Slawomir Smyk: Srodkowo-Wschodni Solidarity  
Zbigniew Puczek, with Solidarity flag, on first anniversary of Swidnik strike.

chance to catch their breath. The victory of the workers in Swidnik only inspired other workers in the area to try to win similar concessions.

On July 11, the same day the Swidnik strike ended, the workers of the FSC truck factory in Lublin downed their tools and occupied their plant. Workers in twenty-one other enterprises in Lublin did the same. During the following days, workers in Pulawy, Poniatowa, and Lubartow, all not far from Lublin, also went on strike.

On July 15, the railway workers began to go into action. In addition to demanding higher wages, they also insisted on getting family allowances equal to those enjoyed by the police and military.

The engine repairers were the first to go on strike. But they returned to work after only two hours, since many of the engine crews were not actually in Lublin at the time, but out with their trains on regular runs.

The next day, when most of the crews were back, the strike got off the ground. The first thing the workers did was organize a strike committee, initially composed of seven workers, but later of fourteen. They used one of the rooms in the main train station as their headquarters. Czeslaw Niezgodna, an engine repairer, emerged as the main strike leader.

The strikers also very quickly organized workers' guards to secure the gates to the yard and to ensure that the engines were protected. Throughout the strike, the workers continued

to maintain the engines, so that they would be ready to roll as soon as the strike was over.

All trains into and out of Lublin were blocked, and by the end of the day all the railway lines were quiet. Trains that had been coming into Lublin or passing through had to stay ten kilometers from the main station.

The authorities tried all sorts of tricks to intimidate or divide the workers.

Rumors were circulated by party members that the railway yard was being surrounded by troops and that a train was on its way with two cars full of bandages for the wounded.

Drivers were brought in from other areas to run the trains, but when they found out what was going on, they, too, refused to work.

The authorities appealed to the crew of one train to let the train move so that the children of the railway workers could go on their summer holidays. The strikers replied that their children were not privileged; if the children of other workers could not leave, neither could theirs.

Pressure was put on the families of railway workers to get them to persuade the strikers to go back to their jobs.

But the strikers refused to be set against each other or to back down.

One important factor in this was the support they got from other residents of Lublin. Many passengers, who had been on their way out of the city on vacation, were sleeping at the station. Although a few were angry that the strike was not being settled quickly, most supported the strikers.

The authorities arranged buses to take people from the Lublin station to nearby Motycz, where trains were running. But some refused to take them.

Even some police who were passing by the strikers shouted out, "Hold on! You'll make it!"

Although the director of the railways had been given a list of the workers' demands, they insisted on talking to the railway minister himself. On July 17 the deputy minister came. But he did not go directly to talk to the workers. He stopped first at the local party headquarters, a fact that the strikers soon learned about.

At 11:00 p.m., the deputy minister called up the strike committee and asked to talk to them alone. They said no. He had to come and talk to everyone, out in the open. And since he hadn't seen fit to come when he first got into Lublin earlier in the day, he could wait and come in the morning.

The first direct talks between the strikers and the deputy minister began the next day, on July 18. But they were inconclusive.

By then, however, the railway strike itself had already become overshadowed by broader events. The entire working population of Lublin was out on strike.

#### Transport workers give signal

Up until July 18, workers had heard about strikes in other enterprises mainly by word of mouth. Since many of the factories were just outside the city, and since the workers stayed

• OJCZYŻNA • PRAWDA  
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Slawomir Smyk/Srodkowo-Wschodni Solidarity

Rally at FSC truck factory in Lublin on first anniversary of 1980 strike. Solidarity banner reads: "Homeland. Truth. Equality. Dignity."

within their plants, the extent of the strike wave was not that apparent.

The strike by the public transport workers, which began early on July 18, changed all that. Everyone could see that they had stopped work. And their example was contagious.

The transport workers had formed their strike committee as early as July 11, around the time of a brief two-hour strike by workers at a bus repair shop. They had won a three zloty an hour raise, and promises of bonuses for those who worked twelve hours a day or longer. But the workers were not happy with the raise, and saw the bonus offer as a trick to lengthen the working day even more. They met with the director on July 15 and demanded new concessions within three days, or they would go on a full strike.

The director responded with threats. According to Miecieslaw Boczek, a leader of the strike committee, the director threatened the drivers with a militarization of the public transport system, under which they would be obliged to work under military discipline.

"People thought that was outrageous," explained Jan Bartczak, a bus dispatcher and now a leading trade unionist in the area. In addition to their economic demands, the trans-

port workers felt that they also had to go on strike in protest against the director's threats. "The people were trying to defend their dignity," Bartczak said.

At 4:00 a.m. on July 18, about thirty bus drivers had reported for work, including one of the members of the strike committee. When he told the others of the director's threats, they started shouting and refused to sign in. Later, after more drivers arrived, they decided to accept Bartczak's suggestion that they sign in, go out to their buses to make sure they were in working order, but then simply not do anything.

In total, more than 2,000 transport workers went out on strike. They halted all buses and trolleys, and even some taxis.

#### 'People were smiling'

Even under normal circumstances, the transport workers' strike would have greatly disrupted industry by preventing other workers from getting to their jobs. But in a situation where Lublin was already in such a state of social turmoil, it did much more than that. It served as a signal to the rest of Lublin's working population.

Factories that were not already out on strike

were soon occupied by their workers. Shops stayed shut. After a while, even the private taxis stopped running, since they could not get any gasoline.

"There was no bread, no milk, but people were smiling," one resident of Lublin told me. "Everybody loved it."

Although the demands of the strikers were mainly economic, another explained, most people felt that the strikes had political implications, that they were directed against the authorities who for so many years had tried to keep people divided, to keep them down.

Because Lublin had no prior history of labor militancy or independent workers' organization, the general strike itself was not organized. A few students did act as couriers between different plants, but there was no overall coordination to speak of. And although some supporters of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) came to Lublin, they were under such strict surveillance by the police that they were unable to do much to help the strikers.

Basically, the strikes spread by force of example. Each factory or enterprise had its own strike committee and issued its own list of demands. Each negotiated with the authorities independently.



Despite this lack of coordination, the strikers in different plants adopted remarkably similar methods, a testimony to the extent to which Polish workers had learned the lessons of previous labor upsurges. Many of the same methods were to be employed a month later by the shipyard workers in Gdansk.

The single most important lesson the workers of Lublin had learned was that they were in a much stronger position if they occupied their factories than if they simply stayed home. They were also less vulnerable to police repression than if they marched out onto the streets. No one wanted a repetition of the 1970 massacres in Gdansk and Gdynia.

"When they were organized in the factories," an instructor at the Catholic University here explained, "people stopped being afraid of the authorities. Instead, the authorities became afraid of the people. Some may have wanted to use the police, but most realized that it wouldn't work."

In virtually all cases, the strikes started with the locking of the main gates and the posting of guards to protect the factories. The workers' guards wore hardhats and red and white arm-bands. The Polish flag frequently went up in the occupied plants.

Unity between manual and technical workers was widespread. Usually the strikes were started by blue-collar workers, but in some cases it was engineers who organized the strikes, primarily those who worked directly with manual workers.

Throughout the strikes, the strike committees and workers' guards stayed within the plants at all times. The other workers came in on their regular shifts, changed into their work clothes, and then did not work. Family members and other supporters frequently brought the strikers food, cigarettes, clean clothes, and other necessities.

In general, the strike committees refused to talk with intermediate officials. They demanded to negotiate with government ministers or other top officials from Warsaw. And they insisted that the talks take place *within* the factories, publicly. Everything, moreover, had to be written down, since the workers no longer trusted the verbal promises of the authorities.

One demand that was common to all the factories was that the governor promise that there would be no police reprisals against the strike organizers. He agreed, but that did not prevent the authorities from trying to use intimidation.

On the day of the general strike, government appeals went up around the city calling on people to return to work, and warning about "anxiety among our friends," an oblique reference to Soviet concern. Police were brought in from other cities and police cars and water cannons were posted around Lublin in a show of strength.

But the authorities were not really in a strong position—and everyone knew it. The determination and unity of the strikers forced them to retreat. They finally agreed to many of the strikers' demands, on a factory-by-factory

basis.

Some new strikes continued to break out after July 18, but within a few more days most workers had resumed work. They had won.

Looking back on the strikes one year later, Jan Bartczak, who is now the regional head of Solidarity, the independent union, attributed the workers' success to their determination,

"but also to the cool and rational way they acted. They struck not just to gain something immediately, but to change the relations between workers and the authorities."

As the subsequent victory of the Gdansk strike and the formation of Solidarity showed, the workers of Lublin had succeeded in helping to do just that. □

## Hungary

# Poland viewed from Budapest

*'It's tremendous the workers demanded free unions'*

[In late 1980, the Hungarian dissident writer Miklos Haraszti conducted a series of interviews in Budapest with people from various walks of life about their opinions on the situation in Poland. The interviews were published in *Magyar Fuzetek*, a Hungarian émigré magazine published in Paris.]

[The following extracts from Haraszti's interviews are taken from a translation in the June issue of *Index on Censorship*, which is published every two months in London.]

\* \* \*

### Pal Juhasz, agricultural expert

*Question. Is a similar change [like that in Poland] possible in Hungary?*

*Answer.* Not now. We can't expect a similar growth of new institutions representing the special interests of workers and peasants, distinct from the State. Hungarian society is less caste-ridden than the Polish. The Hungarian "workers aristocracy" does not feel as divorced from the managers and officials as they are in Poland.

On the other hand, our economy is more fragile than many people believe. The leadership—in spite of its bad conscience—is self-satisfied enough not to strive for the establishment of more flexible social and economic structures.

As far as Poland is concerned, I certainly didn't expect the tremendous speed in the growth of political maturity. It has been a pleasant surprise, mostly because—instead of windy rhetoric—we can see an agreement between the intelligentsia and the workers in everyday, workaday matters.

### A 54-year-old fitter

*Q. What opinions have you heard about Poland?*

A. One of my relatives thinks the Poles are poor because they don't work. I don't think this is true. I've been twice to Poland—they can work as hard as anybody. The trouble is—there as well as here—that ordinary people can't get ahead. There, as here, if you are a party member, you don't have to do real work,

you can talk nonsense and blather—the money still comes to you. Here as much as there, that's the cancer of this socialism.

*Q. Do you think the free trade unions can survive?*

A. I reckon for the next twenty years they wouldn't dare to put the squeeze on again. The Poles are real upright people, one just can't play fast and loose with them.

*Q. Could there be any free trade unions here in Hungary?*

A. They keep a closer watch on you here—they would nip in the bud any such venture soon enough. There was the trouble at the great Csepel combine—Kadar himself went there to put things right.

### A 25-year-old toolmaker, Communist Party member

*Q. What do you think of the free trade unions?*

A. I was astonished when I heard of the strikes. I could hardly believe it—no such thing has ever happened before. I'm on the side of the workers. It's a tremendous thing that the workers demanded free trade unions. Our trade unions don't function as they should. A trade union should protect the interests of the workers. At least, that's what it *ought* to do. That's what trade unions do in the West, I think. What do I get for my union dues? Working clothes and a washroom in the factory. I would get these even if I weren't a member.

Then there are those special shops in Poland—we have them too, for the police, the army and such like—where the bosses, people in uniform, can buy things we can't.

*Q. Will all this have any effect here?*

A. I suppose it must have had some effect in September, with the price increases. I can't prove it, but there were all sorts of rumours about new price increases. Then it came out official: there would be no price increases. I suppose they were scared that there would be some resistance here too. I'm sure the leader-



ship is very concerned, they must be worried about the effects of the Polish events here at home.

*Q. Would the workers strike here too?*

A. There are rumours that something of this sort occurred at Csepel. Maybe I'm biased, but I don't think working people will start anything without a very good reason. There would have to be really great exasperation for a strike to break out.

**Janos Kis, philosopher**

*Q. What conclusions do you draw from the events [in Poland]?*

A. Firstly, that it is possible to create a radical mass movement in a Soviet-style country, provided its goals are limited and these limits are strictly adhered to. Which, in turn, requires at least an elementary form of organised action.

Secondly, if such a movement can rely on substantial social forces, the rulers can be

compelled to accept a—for them—lesser evil, a compromise.

Finally, it has been proved that it is possible to modify the political system in a Soviet bloc country following an open social conflict, without provoking an armed intervention.

*Q. What are the lessons for the Hungarian opposition?*

A. I would like to say: if it was possible in Poland, why not in Hungary? Alas, we are far from that. Neither the social and psychological, nor the organisational conditions are present here. . . .

The question is, how long will the leadership be able to satisfy all the groups that can influence public opinion? Coming economic changes may prove to be very unpleasant. Besides, concern about Hungarian minorities across the border is growing fast. Fewer and fewer people believe that this government would do anything for the Hungarian minorities in Rumania and Slovakia. On top of this,

the Afghan adventure of the Soviets . . . a certain ferment in the churches . . .

The Hungarian leadership has been quite skillful in that it has avoided provoking social conflict. But when conflicts do arise, the Achilles heel of the regime will be there for all to see: it is not democratic. Only democracies can solve their conflicts without crises.

The coming crisis, however, will hardly be influenced by the small groups of Hungarian opposition. Their appeal does not extend beyond the intelligentsia.

But it may be a sign of the impending crisis that their effect is on the increase. More people are prepared to take part in actions inspired by the opposition. What these small groups are doing is perhaps the same thing, on a small scale, as has happened in Poland on a large scale. They are confronting the leadership with a choice: either it mobilises naked force against them, or it must apply gentler methods of reprisal—and this, in a Soviet-type system, means toleration. □

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## United States

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# Black party charts course

## *Founding congress of National Black Independent Political Party*

**By Malik Miah**

[The following article appeared in the September 4 issue of the U.S. socialist newsweekly *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

CHICAGO—"We must build a mass-based party from the bottom up in the interests of Black liberation," the Rev. Ben Chavis told delegates and guests to the August 21-23 founding congress of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP).

Chavis explained, "Ronald Reagan is not the first president of the United States to say to us he doesn't care about the suffering of our people. . . . We must be prepared to fight. We must be prepared to struggle against all forms of oppression we face today coming from Washington, right here in Chicago, or wherever our people are.

"If we do not organize Black people, if Black people don't organize Black people, nobody will."

In that spirit 700 delegates and guests participated in this historic conference of the Black liberation struggle. Delegates came from thirty-three chapters and sixteen local organizing committees. This included representatives from California, Alabama, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Arkansas, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Washington, D.C.

Delegates were industrial workers, teachers,

professionals, students, and community organizers—a cross-section of the Black community. A majority were in their twenties and thirties.

### **Party charter adopted**

The main purpose of the congress was to discuss and ratify the founding program and structure of the National Black Independent Political Party. This process began one year ago in New Orleans at the fourth national political convention of the now-defunct National Black Political Assembly. On a motion by the Rev. Ben Chavis, that convention voted to launch a movement to build an independent mass-based party.

Three months later in Philadelphia 1,500 people attended a convention that issued the call to build NBIPP. It also ratified a tentative charter to be finalized in Chicago.

Since the Philadelphia convention, the new party has organized chapters and local organizing committees that include a membership totaling over 1,600. Over the last year, the party also began to engage in political activities on a local and national level and held political discussions on the proposed charter.

This process culminated in Chicago with four days of lengthy discussions and debate on the proposed charter and the election of a leadership for the party.

The day before the congress opened, the National Party Organizing Committee (NPOC)

and Charter Review Commission (CRC)—two interim leadership bodies set up by the Philadelphia convention—hammered out rules for the congress and guidelines to discuss the charter at the congress.

On Thursday evening, August 20, a symposium on "Strategies for African-American Liberation and Self-Determination" was held. Two leaders of the party spoke, Barbara Sizemore from the Pittsburgh chapter and Rev. Chavis.

Friday and Saturday, discussions on the charter were held at sub-committee hearings.

### **Democratic process**

Special commissions on women, youth/students, prisoners, labor, and the elderly were held to discuss the program of the party. The party members who attended these meetings took their decisions to CRC hearings to make sure their concerns were incorporated into the charter.

State and local caucuses were also held during the congress. This allowed delegates to discuss the charter and other proposals for the party's platform.

This lengthy, democratic process culminated with the vote on the charter, section-by-section, Saturday night and Sunday morning.

Through this lively scenario—that went from 9 a.m. to as late as 2 or 3 a.m. in the morning on each day—the program and structure of the party were forged.

The decision of the delegates by an overwhelming majority to adopt the charter is historic. The new charter is the most advanced program ever adopted by any organization in the history of Black people. The charter represents what is objectively needed to advance the fight, not only of our people, but of all working people. It is an anti-capitalist, pro-Black, pro-labor program.

### Principles of unity

What does the charter say?

The major objectives and goals of the party can be summarized best by quoting from it.

One point in the preamble states: "The National Black Independent Political Party aims to attain power to radically transform the present social-economic order, that is, to achieve self-determination and social and political freedom for the masses of Black people. Therefore, our party will actively oppose racism, imperialism, sexual oppression, and capitalist exploitation."

Point ten of the "Principles of Unity" states: "The party must define our attitude towards the Democratic and Republican parties. We should observe both the Democrats and Republicans as serving only the interests of the ruling class; therefore, they are diametrically opposed to the interests of African and poor people."

In the party platform subsection on "Electoral politics," the charter says: "The electoral strategy of NBIPP is independent of the Democratic, Republican, and all other parties."

No other Black organization on the scene projects such a radical view of electoral politics. The traditional civil rights organizations—NAACP, SCLC, Urban League, PUSH—all view politics *within the framework of reforming the capitalist parties.*

NBIPP's charter correctly explains that this hasn't worked and can't, because these parties—the Democrats and Republicans—are here to uphold capitalism.

The main planks of the program include: demands for full employment; jobs for all; an end to racist job practices; for massive public works programs; affirmative action programs; free education; job training programs; health care programs; an end to plant closings; the repeal of [anti-trade-union] "right-to-work" laws.

It includes sections on the elderly and children; support for the voting rights act; programs to fight racist violence and the Klan; and a call for the abolition of the FBI and CIA.

### Against war drive

The party's program rejects the government's policy of preparing new Vietnams. The section on "Military conscription" says, for example, "We believe that Black people have the right to refuse induction into the U.S. armed services."

Further, "we believe that no Black person should be forced to fight in an imperialist war of aggression for the U.S. against people who are oppressed and fighting for freedom as we

are here in the U.S."

The demands raised include: "an end to draft registration and the draft. The right of Black people in the services to organize and fight racial discrimination and repression."

The section on "International relations" and "Solidarity with oppressed peoples" adds that the party supports "the heroic and just struggle of the people of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean against colonialism and neo-colonialism and for freedom, national liberation, self-determination, sovereignty and independence."

The program also contains a strong position against the energy trusts. Four of the demands are: "Nationalization of the energy industry at all levels and in all sectors with full participation of Black and poor people in the management, control, and decision-making policies of the industry; an end to all propaganda which blames the so-called energy crisis on the energy producing third world nations and OPEC; full disclosure of the corporate records of the energy monopolies; immediate halt to the use of nuclear power."

### Women's rights

The most striking section of the party's program concerns women's rights. There is no Black organization—or labor union—that has such a strong policy in support of the rights of women.

The party congress, for instance, mandated all chapter delegations (except where it wasn't possible) to be 50 percent female. All party leadership bodies must also be 50 percent women.

The party's program on women includes the following demands: "Conduct a massive educational campaign within the party and the Black community about the need to struggle against sexism and to fight for the complete equality of Black women; work to support the Equal Rights Amendment, but while doing so speak to the special needs of Black women, the need to struggle against racism and sexism simultaneously; fight against all constitutional or legal barriers to abortion (denying the right to make a personal decision to choose whether or not they wish to terminate a pregnancy) upon demand."

Two special activities were discussed at the congress. A report was given by D.C. party leader Hulbert James on the tentative conclusions of a fact-finding task force sent by the party to Atlanta in July. The report called on party chapters to carry out educational activities on the child murders. This includes exposing the role of the media, FBI, and Maynard Jackson administration in the racist cover-up of the killings.

The party's workers commission outlines a series of proposals for NBIPP to participate in and build the AFL-CIO September 19 Washington, D.C., Solidarity Day demonstration against Reagan's budget cuts.

The ideas discussed for NBIPP's participation in the rally include distributing an educational leaflet at the march; holding a news con-

ference beforehand; organizing a forum on the weekend of the action to attract Black workers to the party; and organizing a contingent to march behind a banner reading: "Break with Democrats and Republicans, for union democracy, build NBIPP."

### Leadership structure

The leadership structure adopted by the delegates is inclusive of the various political currents in the Black community that support independent Black politics. This includes former Democrats and Republicans, ministers, socialists and communists, and nationalists and pan-Africanists.

This policy of non-exclusion was a topic of lengthy debate at the congress. The delegates consciously decided to appeal to all Blacks who agree with the party's goals to join and help lead the party.

Seven national officers were elected. Two representatives from each of six regions, and two convenors for each special commission on women, the elderly, workers, students/youth, and prisoners were also elected. These brothers and sisters and two representatives from each local chapter will compose the party's central committee.

The new officers include the Rev. Ben Chavis, Elsa Brown (from Richmond, Virginia, a former coconvenor of NPOC), Ron Daniels (former chairperson of the National Black Political Assembly), and Barbara Arnwine (state coconvenor from North Carolina).

This new leadership team includes old experienced hands from the Black struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s and activists from the new generation arising in the post-1974-75 depression era.

The prospects to build a "mass-based party from the bottom up" are good, and the need is ever more urgent. With the adoption of the radical program embodied in the new charter, the NBIPP has met the challenge it faced coming out of the Philadelphia convention.

The next challenge is to take this historic program adopted in Chicago to the masses of Black people, and to use the NBIPP charter as a guide to action. □

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# Socialist Workers Party convention

## How can labor movement respond to Reagan's attacks?

By Cindy Jaquith

[The following are major excerpts from an article that appeared in the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

Where does the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) stand today in its goal of building a mass revolutionary working-class party in the United States?

This was the debate at the Thirty-first National Convention of the SWP, held in Ohio in early August. More than 1,300 SWP members, Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) members, supporters, and international guests attended.

The week-long debate and discussion centered on three questions:

1. What is the character of the offensive by the Reagan administration against working people here and abroad? Does it represent a fundamental rightward shift by the ruling class, in response to economic and political realities? Or only a temporary attack that will be followed relatively soon by concessions and expansions of rights?

Are the U.S. imperialists compelled to prepare for new wars, to reinstitute the draft, and to use military power abroad? Will they continue to push in this direction despite the mass sentiment against war among American workers?

### Crisis of leadership?

2. What is the nature of the leadership crisis in the labor, Black, and women's movements? Is there any motion toward a class-struggle orientation among the traditional leaders of these movements? Can the crisis be resolved solely through more audacious use of demonstrations and strikes?

3. Who will resolve the crisis of leadership, and what does that mean for socialist workers? Is the SWP's decision to place the majority of its members in industry correct?

What orientation should the SWP have toward the YSA and young workers?

What stance should the party take toward revolutionary leaderships in other countries, especially in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada?

These questions were debated for more than three months prior to the convention in branches of the SWP and through a written discussion bulletin open to all members.

The preconvention discussion was opened with the submission of a Draft Political Resolution approved by majority vote of the party's National Committee. For the first time, the resolution was printed in Spanish as well as English.

At the close of the preconvention discussion, delegates were elected by the branches for the convention. Of these, 67 percent were currently working in industry and another 24 percent had previously held industrial jobs.

### World political situation

At the convention, the framework for the discussion was laid out in a report on the world political situation, presented by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

"There is a sharp, sustained, relentless shift to the right in bourgeois politics in this country," said Barnes. The capitalist rulers are determined to *take back* what American workers conquered in the 1930s, to take back what Blacks, women, and others among the oppressed and exploited conquered in the 1960s. The plans the ruling class has set in motion are devastating."

He explained the sweeping scope of the attacks:

- On the economic plane, the cutting of unemployment benefits for strikers, food stamps, education, and health care, while taxes on workers will rise;

- A challenge to Social Security for the first time in its nearly fifty-year history, beginning with new restrictions on who receives benefits and delays on when payments begin;

- The stripping away of protection against hazards on the job, toxic chemicals, environmental dangers, and occupational diseases such as "black lung" (which affects coal miners) and "brown lung" (which affects textile workers);

- On the social plane, a war against busing for school desegregation, undocumented workers, affirmative action, voting rights, bilingual education, abortion rights, and the Equal Rights Amendment;

- The restructuring of government agencies to appoint avowed opponents of human rights in charge of all social programs;

- A foreign policy where "authoritarian" regimes are praised, where food is used as a weapon against oppressed peoples;

- An open attack on all aspects of democratic rights and civil liberties;

- An ideological offensive against Blacks, women and Jews; a media campaign about "rising crime" and the need for "law and order"; attacks on scientific thought, through the promotion of "creationism"; the spread of censorship and book banning.

This drive did not start with Reagan's election, Barnes explained. The groundwork began being laid a decade ago when the decline of the world capitalist economy set in. With the 1974-75 recession, the offensive exploded

with real force.

Most of the current cutbacks were begun piecemeal under the Carter administration, but with Reagan's election, the ruling class decided to drive them through.

### Goal of offensive

"The goal," said Barnes, "is to transform the relations between capital and labor in this country. To transform the relations on the job. To drive down both workers' direct wages and the socialized wages workers have won for the American people—like social programs, schools, welfare benefits, and so on.

"To drive *up* the rate of exploitation. To drive *down* the conditions of the working class. To divide that class. And to weaken, and eventually break, the potentially powerful trade unions that stand in the way of the rulers accomplishing these reactionary goals."

A graphic example of this—the government union-busting assault on air controllers—unfolded as the convention was going on.

The rulers can no longer take the piecemeal approach, Barnes explained. The factors that led to massive economic expansion in the twenty-five years after World War II have now run out.

"The capitalists must now radically transform the relationship with the working class that grew up on the basis of that prolonged expansion, on the basis of a certain type of accumulation of capital.

"This is what is involved—not only chipping away at the New Deal. Not only being stingy to 5 or 10 percent of the most oppressed."

### Raise level of misery

"Instead, the rulers are driven to raise the general level of human misery, to traumatize the working class, to divide and atomize it, to demoralize it and crush its confidence and fighting capacities.

"This is what the capitalists must achieve in order to restructure and reorganize industry to compete profitably on a world scale.

"There is nothing that can change, stop, or reverse this antilabor drive—whatever the conjunctural ups and downs—short of a showdown with the U.S. working class."

There's another important aspect of the offensive, Barnes emphasized—its bipartisan character. "The Democrats control the House of Representatives," he said. The massive majorities in the House for the cutbacks and tax frauds are *Democratic* majorities."

As this bipartisan onslaught against the working class proceeds, he explained, the Democrats are being "stripped naked" in the eyes



of the American public, and the "two-party system" exposed as really one party, a party for the rich.

### Foreign policy

"The relations between classes here at home are an integral part of class relations on a world scale," Barnes said, "just as foreign policy fundamentally reflects ruling-class domestic policy."

"What the rulers do abroad is an extension of what they're trying to do at home."

The U.S. imperialists "need to be able to use their own military power—first and foremost in Central America, but also in the Middle East, and throughout the semicolonial world."

"But their problem is *how* to accomplish this."

"The question of war is fundamentally a political question, a class question," Barnes explained. It's inextricably tied up with all other political questions, with the class struggle—domestically as well as internationally.

The U.S. rulers' offensive abroad is waged from weakness, not strength, he explained. Their biggest problem is capitalism's lack of economic flexibility today—the inability to make much in the way of concessions to American workers, and the need to impose austerity around the world. This, combined with the deep antiwar sentiment in the United States and the rise of revolutionary struggles around the world, poses big obstacles to the war drive.

### Must press toward war

Nevertheless, the imperialists must press toward war to protect the private profit system. Their decision to go ahead with the neutron bomb and to begin prosecution of nonregistrants for the draft shows the direction they are moving in.

As the imperialists drive toward war and against the living standards of the American people, their effort to divide working people by nation, race, sex, and age begins to turn into its opposite, Barnes explained. They begin driving sectors of the exploited back together again. Solidarity deepens within the class as the real enemy becomes clearer and clearer. New allies and new political answers are sought in an effort to fight back.

This political process escalated throughout the spring of 1981, with Blacks, miners, textile workers, rail workers, and others demonstrating in Washington against the new administration and its policies.

As those policies more and more brazenly attacked working people, pressure built up to the point that the [U.S. labor federation] AFL-CIO decided to call its Solidarity Day demonstration in Washington for September 19. This is a political demonstration against the government, uniting unions, civil rights and women's groups, antiwar organizations, and all other victims of the Reagan administration's policies.

September 19, Barnes explained, points in the direction of the next, obvious step for labor—breaking from its subordination to the

Democrats and Republicans, forming its own party, and running independent candidates.

### Black party's example

While no section of the labor movement has yet moved to do this, an important example of independent political action is developing in the Black movement. The convention devoted a session to a report and discussion on the National Black Independent Political Party, which held its founding convention a week later.

Reporter Mac Warren, a member of the SWP Political Committee and Black work director for the SWP, outlined the evolution of this vanguard formation and why socialist workers are loyal builders of it.

Activists in the Black party start from the premise, outlined in the preamble to the party's draft charter, that: "Both major parties (the Democratic and Republican parties) have betrayed us because their interests essentially conflict with ours."

On the goals of the Black party, the preamble states: "The National Black Independent Political Party aims to obtain power to radically transform the present social-economic order, that is, to achieve self-determination and social and political freedom for the masses of Black people. Therefore, our party will actively oppose racism, imperialism, sexual oppression and capitalist exploitation."

This program points the way forward not only for Blacks, but for all working people.

The Black party, Warren explained, also sets an example for labor in its internationalist support to revolutionary struggle abroad, its support to women's liberation (50 percent of elected leadership positions in the party must go to women), and its stand in support of the September 19 AFL-CIO march on Washington.

Independent working-class political action was also the theme of a report on "American Labor and the Party's Trade Union Policy," presented by National Committee member Ken Shilman.

Shilman explained that the September 19 action "represents the broadest forces ever called together for a march on Washington. What a picture for American workers! The labor movement, Black and women's organizations, youth, all with their demands, demonstrating against the government in a day of solidarity in the face of a common enemy."

"We will throw all our forces into building this demonstration. In the process we will meet, work with, and talk politics with a big layer of activists who come forward to build it."

"What an opportunity to educate fellow workers on the need for independent labor political action! We need a political party representing all the forces that are coming to Washington September 19, to take on the Democratic and Republican parties."

### What kind of labor party?

"That is the kind of labor party we are talking about—one that begins by reaching out to

Blacks and women, that unites in struggle all those who are targets of the capitalists' attack."

Where does the labor bureaucracy stand in the face of this attack? Shilman cited the Steelworkers officialdom's failure to block plant closings; the United Auto Workers (UAW) officials' inability to stop layoffs; the rail union tops' complicity in a Chrysler-type settlement\* for Conrail and Amtrak workers.

"No section of the bureaucracy has done anything or proposed any course that can stop layoffs, wage freezes, speed-up, and the outright union-weakening that is at the center of the bosses' offensive," said Shilman.

"The bureaucrats haven't advanced a program to combat the ruling-class offensive because they share the employers' assumption that all answers must be found *within* declining capitalism."

To organize the nonunion coal mines in the West, for example, a different policy must be pursued than that currently followed by United Mine Workers head Sam Church. A social movement must be organized:

"This movement would have to appeal to the environmental, antinuclear, antimissile sentiments in the western states," Shilman explained.

"It would have to speak out on the national rights of Native Americans and Chicanos. It would have to deal with the housing question and the need for social services in an area where company towns and trailers dominate."

"And just this one task will run up against the power of the administration, Congress, and the Supreme Court. For miners to take on the bipartisan attack of the Democrats and Republicans, to defend themselves against black lung and food stamp cuts, and to move forward to organize the West, independent political action is absolutely necessary."

### Railworkers and profit system

The same problem confronts those fighting the cutbacks in Conrail, Shilman explained. "The rail workers are trapped in the framework of the private-profit system."

"This Chrysler-type attack has only one answer: put human needs before profit. The railroad has to be nationalized, run publicly with its operations in the open, and with workers' control on the job and over the general operations of the nationalized system."

"That's the only option rail workers have, to demand that Conrail be nationalized and run in the interest of society. Millions of Americans, from commuters who need decent transportation to farmers who need to move their produce, are the natural allies in the fight to na-

\*When the Chrysler Corporation was facing bankruptcy in 1980, the bureaucracy of the United Auto Workers union agreed to accept the layoff of tens of thousands of Chrysler workers and substandard wages for those who remained. The union officials urged government subsidies for Chrysler and the lowering of government pollution and safety standards. UAW President Douglas Fraser was given a seat on the Chrysler board of directors.—IP



SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes speaking to party convention.

Charles Ostrofsky/Militant

tionalize the railroads."

Only political solutions that point in this direction make sense today, and these are the kinds of ideas American workers and the oppressed are seeking.

In floor discussion and at meetings of socialists from various industries, the impact of the rulers' offensive on the thinking of workers was reported.

#### Discussion among miners

Mary Zins, a Pennsylvania miner in Local 2874 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW), described the shift in miners' thinking since the 1978 coal strike. After that strike, discussion in the mines focused on then-UMW President Arnold Miller and his misleadership of the strike. "Many miners saw him as our main enemy," she said.

Out of the experience of the strike this spring, however, "Miners saw the U.S. government and the employers as a far more direct threat," she reported. "They are talking about black lung, the danger of nuclear power, the youth rebellion in Britain, and the election of Mitterrand in France.

"And they are beginning to discuss out what kind of leadership is necessary to stop the attacks on us."

Many delegates spoke of co-workers' concern with international events and especially

their identification with the victories won by Polish workers. Several delegates commented on the heightened interest in life in Cuba, as life in the United States continues to deteriorate.

Rich Stuart, a member of Steelworkers Local 1938 on Minnesota's Iron Range, reported that when he returned from a recent trip to Cuba, a great many workers were eager to hear what he saw. One older worker approached him after Reagan announced his Social Security cuts to ask, "How do they do pensions in Cuba?"

A minority tendency in the party, which received 4 percent of the vote in branches, presented counterdocuments to the Draft Political Resolution and counterreports at the convention to the party's line for work in industry and the unions, and on the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian leaderships.

Delegates representing this tendency disputed the analysis that the capitalists have made a fundamental shift to the right. They argued that a new round of substantial social and economic concessions is still a viable policy option for the U.S. ruling class. They opposed making the labor party proposal the axis of socialist propaganda in the labor movement, counterposing immediate tactical prescriptions for action around issues that arise on the job.

This tendency also criticized the decision of the Young Socialist Alliance in 1979 to place

the majority of its members in industry. Since that decision, the YSA has succeeded in getting 65 percent of its members into industrial jobs. The minority tendency proposed that the youth group redirect its primary political attention and forces to the college campuses.

#### Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada

A second minority tendency, which received 5 percent of the vote in the SWP branches, also presented a counterreport on the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian leaderships.

The majority report on this question was presented by Political Committee member Steve Clark. He described the twenty-year record of the Cuban leadership in pushing forward the world struggle of the workers and farmers for socialism. Out of the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada, he explained, new leaderships have come forward that have deepened this process.

Clark emphasized that the emergence of these leaderships helps advance the possibilities in the United States and around the world to build revolutionary parties and a mass Leninist international. This has been the goal of the SWP and of its sister parties in the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement, since their founding nearly half a century ago.

The two minority tendencies received less than 10 percent of the vote at the convention.



Summing up the different perspectives in the debate, Ken Shilman said, "Two approaches have been put before the party. One approach looks backward to the past, to the trade-union tactics, partially recalled, of the 1940s and 1950s, a period of capitalist reaction when the working class was in retreat.

"This approach looks to the 1960s when the youth in motion were centered on the college campuses. It looks away from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada. And it argues that talking socialism and the labor party on the job is 'exotic.'

"Our approach is the opposite. We look to the young workers in industry. We look to the experiences they are gaining in today's class struggle.

"It is our Marxist miners, steelworkers, and auto workers, who are part of the labor movement, who know its direction and sense its mood.

"It is our machinists, garment workers, and electrical workers who are best equipped to link up with the vanguard youth who are coming forward to take destiny in their hands in Britain, Ireland, Poland, Vietnam, South Africa, Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador.

"It is our active worker cadres who are leading the party today. We propose to point this party to the future. We propose to deepen our orientation to industry. We propose to find all roads to the young worker, the Black worker, the woman worker."

It's this perspective, he concluded, that is transforming the SWP "into an internationalist party of industrial workers."

#### Major YSA step

The most important single step in this direction at the convention was the decision that all party members aged twenty-nine and under should become active members of the YSA. "The YSA is the very best avenue for recruitment of young workers to our ideas," SWP National Co-chairperson Mary-Alice Waters explained in making the proposal.

The job of party members in the YSA will be to "help organize, build, and lead the YSA," to strengthen the organization so that it can take maximum advantage of the opportunities to win revolutionary youth to its ranks and to the SWP.

Part and parcel of this turn to the YSA and its work in industry was the decision to begin consolidating new national industrial fractions in garment and textile, oil and chemical, and the electrical industries. National fractions already exist in rail, coal mining, steel, auto, and machinists.

#### Garment industry

The step taken toward building a national garment and textile fraction was especially important because it enables socialist workers to deepen their orientation to an important industry, two major unions, and a highly exploited section of the working class, with many young, female, and immigrant workers. The

garment industry has big centers in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other cities.

The convention also decided to expand the party to new areas of the country where opportunities have arisen in the class struggle: to Seaside, California, where an SWP leader in the Black community has been elected to the city council; to Lincoln, Nebraska, a rail center; to Price, Utah, a center of western coal mining; and to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

#### Fight for ERA

There was also a debate in the written pre-convention discussion, on the convention floor, and in workshops over perspectives in the women's movement.

This debate focused on what role the SWP can play in the struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would change the U.S. Constitution to guarantee women equality under the law. The legislatures of three more states must still vote to ratify the ERA before June 30, 1982, if it is to become the law of the land. But it is clear that the ruling class plans to let the amendment die.

Is there some tactical proposal that socialists should advocate that could turn this situation around?

In a major talk before the convention, SWP Women's Liberation Work Director Margaret Jayko placed the ERA crisis in the context of the Reagan offensive against all women's rights and against the working class.

The approaching defeat of the ERA reflects the crisis of leadership not only in the women's movement, but in the labor and Black movements as well. The perspective of all these leaderships is to try to rescue the rights of working people within the framework of agreeing with the capitalists that "the pie is shrinking."

This has led the leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW) to retreat on fundamental demands of the feminist movement—to remain virtually silent on the attacks on abortion rights; to disregard the effects of the offensive on Black, Latino, and working-class women; and to offer only a meek protest on the ERA.

The most serious error of the NOW leadership has been to give a progressive veneer to the capitalist propaganda on militarization and the draft. When Carter proposed that women be drafted, the NOW leaders supported this position, arguing that if women were drafted this would be a step toward more equality.

#### Who are women's allies?

"The general orientation of the women's movement, if it is to succeed, has got to be toward the working class and its allies," Barry Sheppard said in the tasks and perspectives report. "The NOW leadership's position on the draft orients women toward the ruling class, and it cuts across reaching the allies of the women's movement.

"We want to see more protest demonstrations on the ERA and abortion rights. We are advocates of them. But as our central contribu-

tion we have to put forward an overall orientation for the women's movement.

"We must explain why women must link up with the working class and the oppressed. There is no other way forward. Protest demonstrations *outside* this context cannot win. *Within* such an orientation, they can be decisive tools for advancing it," he said.

"Women as well as the working class are going to suffer some defeats, probably some big ones, in the coming period," Margaret Jayko said in the conclusion of her talk. "It will take time and experience for a large number of women to see there is something fundamentally false with the perspectives advanced by the national leadership of NOW, and begin to chart a different course.

"That is why developments like September 19 are so important. Why the founding of the National Black Independent Political Party is a step forward for women. Why the discussions taking place in various union circles about the need to break from the Democratic Party and organize a labor party, based on the trade unions, are part of the solution to the crisis of perspectives in the women's movement.

"And why strikes like that for equal pay in San Jose, California; conferences of women coal miners; and strong women's committees in unions such as the auto workers, steelworkers, and machinists show us where the forces will be coming from to forge a leadership of the women's movement that does have a working-class perspective."

#### Internationalist party

It was looking at politics from this working-class perspective that tied together the entire convention. It was a perspective that placed American workers at the heart of the class struggle worldwide, at the center of charting a course for the emancipation of humanity from capitalism.

"Only the workers right here can do that job," said Jack Barnes.

"Ultimately, the deepest questions of internationalism in *this* country and in *this* party are the ones that have to do with organizing and preparing the American workers to wrest the power out of the hands of the U.S. ruling class and make the world safe for human life and social progress.

"Deepening the turn into industry. Winning young workers to our movement. Learning and growing through struggle. Challenging the political monopoly of the bosses. These are the biggest international questions for us. They are the *decisive* ones.

"And the greatest thing we can do to aid our comrades in Cuba, in Nicaragua, in Grenada, in Vietnam, in Africa, Poland, and Ireland—the best thing we can say to them is what a founding leader of the SWP, James P. Cannon, said:

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



# The ravages of war

## South African forces carry out reign of terror

[The following are major excerpts from a report that appeared in the July-August issue of *Focus on Political Repression in Southern Africa*, a news bulletin published every two months in London by the International Defence and Aid Fund.]

\* \* \*

The fabric of Namibian society, already distorted by apartheid, is being further destroyed by the effect of the war on the civilian population. People in the north bear the brunt of the increasing violence perpetrated by the South African security forces and the various sections of the indigenous police and military. Reports of attacks on villages, indiscriminate killings by individuals, and forced removals give evidence of the suffering inflicted on the population.

According to recent reports, people in the north are being forced to leave their villages as a result of army and police action. Their sources of water are being cut off with the destruction of pumps and boreholes. Houses and agricultural land are being burned down by the Home Guards with the help of South African troops, according to a letter in the *Windhoek Observer*. The writer reports that "South African army vehicles are destroying the fences and agricultural vegetation of the Ovambo-speaking people by passing over their land." The soldiers don't pursue SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organisation] guerillas but "come to the civilians and start beating them up, asking why they do not shoot the SWAPO people," the writer says.

According to SWAPO, the purpose of these actions is to force people to move near the main towns of Oshakati and Ondangua, where major South African army bases are located, in an effort to prevent support for SWAPO guerillas.

### 'Free-fire' zone

The South African army has previously cleared large areas along the Namibian border with Angola of civilians. In 1975/76, South Africa decided to create a "free-fire zone" of one kilometre width along the entire Namibian border with Angola. The area contained large settlements with church missions, schools, clinics, shops and cafes which had to be abandoned. South African police carried out the wholesale destruction of villages and crops. Up to 50,000 civilians were forcibly removed from their homes. Security forces were instructed to "shoot to kill" if necessary in the depopulated border zone.

Several recent reports give evidence of coer-

cion, arrests and shootings of civilians by the armed forces. Andreas Shipanga, the leader of the SWAPO-Democratic Party, returning from a visit to Ovamboland in December 1980, said he had never seen so many cripples in his life. He added that the Ovambo people were under crossfire and were being terrorised by the armed forces.

A representative of the Lutheran Church in America, John Evenson, arrived in Oniipa in northern Namibia at the time the printing press, owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church (ELOC), was blown up. He witnessed the arrival of soldiers two nights after the event, and was told that a number of Namibians had been rounded up. Some were accused by hooded informers of being SWAPO guerillas. One shopkeeper was severely beaten and taken away.

The following day, the rounding up continued. In the shop area of Oniipa armoured cars were positioned in a circle, with machine guns pointed at more than 40 Namibian men sitting in the centre of the circle. Evenson learned later that, after producing their identity cards, the men had been forced to say repeatedly "we hate SWAPO," and then to shout "the white man is good" louder and louder.

Two persons who had not responded quickly enough to questions had been clubbed, and a number of persons had been taken away. Evenson, who had taken pictures of some of these incidents, was forced to hand over his film.

During his stay in northern Namibia, he met numerous people who told him of family members arrested, missing or killed by white South African army and police officers.

As a result of widespread violence, many essential services no longer function in the north. At least 15 schools have been closed in Ovamboland, affecting approximately 20,000 children. Medical assistance is non-existent in some areas. Clinics have been burnt down and local people often have to walk 50 kilometres for medical treatment.

### Rape

Women face the additional fear of being raped by armed soldiers, with little chance of escape or redress in the courts. Although the maximum sentence for rape is death, no soldier convicted of rape has received more than a suspended sentence or a fine.

In one case, a 26 year old SADF [South African Defence Force] soldier, Johannes Pretorius, raped an 80 year old woman, Sabina Kasiku, at a wedding party in Kavangoland. Evidence cited in court established that he had first

tried to rape a younger woman, that Ms. Kasiku had been hospitalised for two weeks because of profuse bleeding, and that the soldier's rifle was found at the homestead. Nevertheless, Pretorius's plea of "consent" was accepted. He told a court reporter afterwards that he had lied to escape "the shadow of the gallows."

An 18 year old white soldier, Jacobus Abel van Zyl, was given 18 months and 6 months suspended sentences and R200 and R100 fines respectively for raping Hilma Sakarias (25) and attempting to rape Frida Dawid (20) in February 1980. Van Zyl had at first pleaded not guilty to the charges and only changed his plea after several women had given evidence.

Pregnant women are not safe from such assaults. During an attack on civilians at Otshandi in the north in September 1980, a pregnant woman died after being raped by five South African soldiers.

Faced with such lenient attitudes towards the perpetrators of rape, many women are reluctant to seek redress in court. A letter to the *Windhoek Observer* points out that South African Defence Force members in the north "believe they are free to do anything with an Ovambo-speaking person. Many women have been raped, and . . . people killed like flies without compensation to their families. If the convicted cannot be punished according to the law, why bring them before the court?"

### Civilians massacred

The population in the north is in the frontline of attacks by the security forces. Under the guise of looking for SWAPO guerillas, army and police subject people to frequent harassment and violence. A number of incidents have been reported recently which indicate that the security forces perpetrate atrocities against defenceless civilians.

This is in direct contrast to South Africa's claims that it is winning the "hearts and minds" of the people in Namibia through civic action programmes, placing soldiers in schools, health clinics and agricultural projects.

In one incident, the army attacked a small settlement in the Oonghooi area in Ovamboland, killing 11 civilians. The commander who directed the operation from a helicopter claimed that his men had been fired on, and that SWAPO guerillas were believed to be in the village.

A survivor gave evidence that in fact the seven men, two women and two children killed in the attack had been eating a meal, and that there were no guerillas present. The troops opened fire as they were approaching the settlement, and hurled hand grenades. Two huts went up in flames, and six of the victims burned to death. The soldiers found no guerillas in the area. No action has been taken against the soldiers involved. □

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