



## INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS DAY

# Fight back against Reaganism!

The First of May is the 100th anniversary of International Working Class Day. The Marxist-Leninist Party calls on all class conscious workers and revolutionary activists to celebrate this important centennial. Come out in militant demonstrations and rallies! Raise high the banner of class struggle and international solidarity of the working class!

### Why Is May Day So Important?

100 years ago the U.S. workers embarked on the road of class struggle. With the call for a general strike for the eight hour day on May 1, the workers spread their strike movement across the country. They demonstrated that the working class is an independent class fighting for its own interests against the dollar-hungry exploitation of the capitalist class. May Day became the symbol of the class struggle of the workers. It was embraced by the class conscious workers of all lands and turned into an international day of protest against tyranny and exploitation, a day to organize the class struggle.

This year the call to organize the class struggle is all the more important. Behind the Reaganite drive against the workers and poor stands the interests of a small class of exploiters, the capitalists. The Gramm-Rudman cuts of social benefits for the working people, the segregationism and anti-immigrant hysteria, the gunboat diplomacy and hi-tech warmongering are the bipartisan policy of the capitalist class as a whole, of the Democrats as well as the Republicans. The fight against the Reaganite offensive must be organized as a class struggle.

### How Is the Class Struggle To Be Organized?

The mass struggle is a key to release the fighting spirit and initiative of the broad masses of working people. Strikes, demonstrations and other mass

actions are the weapons of the hard pressed workers, the unemployed, the oppressed nationalities, and anti-imperialist fighters. It is these actions that give real support to the workers and peasants of Central America and to the fighting black people of South Africa. It is these actions that help the working class survive in the battle against wage cuts, unemployment, racism, immigration raids and all the exploitation and oppression. **May Day is a time for demonstrations and protests, a time to build up the mass actions of the working people.**

To become effective the mass actions need an independent policy and conscious direction. For this, revolutionary leaflets and newspapers are essential. As long as the masses are influenced by the honeyed promises of the Democrats, as long as there are still illusions in the union bureaucrats, as long as the upper crust of the oppressed nationalities sits like a dead weight at the head of the anti-racist movements, then the demonstrations limp along and the strikes are left defenseless before the police-protected scabs. Revolutionary agitation is needed that tells the plain truth about the class oppression, that exposes all the enemies and traitors of the working people, that imbues the mass movements with the independent aims of the working class. **May Day is a time for revolutionary agitation, a time to spread the leaflets and papers widely through the working class neighborhoods, the work places, and schools.**

The class struggle also requires the building of solid, fighting organizations. The workers must have their own vanguard party to stand independent from and against all the parties of the rich. All class conscious workers and revolutionary activists should rally to the Marxist-Leninist Party, the party of revolutionary struggle and socialism, and assist it in the work to organize and guide forward the working masses. As well, the growing distrust for the union bureaucrats and other misleaders must be consolidated by building up stable

groups in the factories and other work places, in the neighborhoods, and in the schools to organize all of the various sections of the masses for struggle. Individually each worker is but a powerless wage slave. But once combined by organization the workers can become an invincible force. **May Day is a time to work to build up organizations of the working masses.**

Mass struggle, revolutionary agitation, and building fighting organizations

— this is the program for organizing the class struggle against the capitalist offensive headed by the Reaganites. **Militant workers, anti-racist fighters, anti-imperialist activists, and all who stand for a real fight against the Reaganites: Join with the workers the world over in a militant celebration of the 100th anniversary of May Day! Take part in the demonstrations and rallies! Organize the class struggle!** □

## May Day Events

### BOSTON

#### Demonstration

Thursday, May 1 afternoon  
Time and place to be announced

### CHICAGO

#### Demonstration

Saturday, May 3 1:00 pm  
Assemble at 18th Street & Union

#### Meeting

Saturday, May 3 6:30 pm  
6556 W. Barry

#### Contingent in Parade

Sunday, May 4 3:00 pm  
Union Park  
1501 W. Randolph  
Sponsored by the Haymarket Centennial Committee.  
Join the MLP contingent.

### SEATTLE

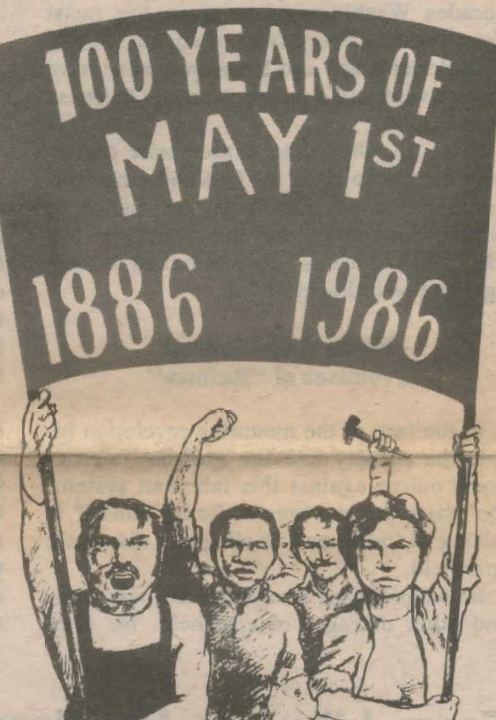
#### Meeting

Saturday, May 3 7:00 pm  
C.A.M.P.  
722 18th Avenue

### OAKLAND

#### Meeting

Sunday, May 4 5:00 pm  
Marxist-Leninist Books and Periodicals  
3232 Grove Street



### NEW YORK CITY

#### Demonstration

Time and place to be announced

#### Meeting

Saturday, May 3 6:30 pm  
Room 136 Thompson Teachers College  
120th Street & Broadway

**Organize the class struggle!**

## U.S. imperialism, get out of Central America!

# No to Reagan's dirty war on Nicaragua!

The war drums are pounding in Washington against Nicaragua. There is no end to the lies coming from the White House as Reagan campaigns for new money for the contra terrorists waging war on the Nicaraguan people.

It is clear where things are heading. A few years ago, it was so-called covert funding for the contras. Today it is \$100 million in direct aid to the contras. It is calls for Green Beret "advisors" for them. And it is an ever expanding role for U.S. troops in Central America.

U.S. forces have just been used to ferry reactionary Honduran troops to the Nicaraguan border. Two thousand U.S. troops are in Honduras for war exercises that have become a frequent occurrence in that country. The latest war games began a few weeks ago with American soldiers parachuting into an area less than ten miles from Nicaragua. This year, National Guard units from a number of states are also involved in

these military maneuvers.

We have been here before. The march goes on towards a new Viet Nam-style war in Central America. And just as it was two decades ago, this war is also a dirty, unjust and imperialist war to punish a small people, this time of less than three million, for the "crime" of seeking freedom and carrying out a revolution.

The working people of the U.S. do not want this war. There is nothing in it for us except being used as cannon fodder to kill the working men and women of Nicaragua. And just as we fought against the U.S. war in Viet Nam, we must organize to fight this latest imperialist adventure.

### Reagan's Crusade — Lies, Lies and More Lies

If there is one thing that Reagan has proved in his latest campaign it is that there is no limit to his ability to lie. The crusade to

fund the contras has set new records in imperialist doubletalk, deception and hypocrisy.

Some of these lies have been so baldfaced that they have had to be refuted the very next day in the newspapers. For example, Reagan tried to make an emotional appeal to the people with the claim that Nicaraguan government officials are active in drug running to the U.S. But the federal government's own Drug Enforcement Agency denied Reagan's assertion. What is more, it wasn't too long ago that government officials were quoted in the press admitting that the contras, Mr. Reagan's buddies, have their hands deep in drug trafficking. And the contra airfields in Central America, built with U.S. aid, are used as stop-off points in the drug traffic to the U.S.

It would take tons of newsprint to refute all the incredible lies cooked up by the Reaganites. But a word or two is necessary about some of the Big Lies coming from the

White House.

The Reaganites paint Nicaragua today as a brutal tyranny while the contras are declared to be the "democratic resistance" and "freedom fighters." Quite often, Reagan will describe the contras as the real revolutionaries of Nicaragua, who allegedly fought against Somoza but were betrayed. This is rubbish. On occasion, Reagan cannot however refrain from letting the cat out of the bag, as for instance the other day when he declared that, "I guess contra means counterrevolutionary, and God bless them for that." Reagan beamed that he too was one of them. This is indeed what chief contra Reagan and his self-declared brothers really are — counterrevolutionaries. Their cause is the throttling of the Nicaraguan revolution.

In 1979 the Nicaraguan workers and peasants rose up and overthrew the hated U.S.-backed dictatorship of Somoza. This

Continued on back page  
See NICARAGUA

## Apartheid no! Revolution yes!

# Support the heroic black people of South Africa!

For over a year and a half, the oppressed people of South Africa have kept the struggle against apartheid on the front page. Through their almost daily strikes, township rebellions and other heroic actions against the racist regime they have riveted the attention of the whole world. From being a strange foreign word, "apartheid" is fast becoming a household expression meaning racist slavery and naked tyranny.

### What Is Apartheid?

It is the official code of oppression in South Africa. It puts into law the Nazi ideals of racial superiority and "master race." It is the system that guards the privileges and power of the small white minority by stripping 24 million blacks, along with mixed-race "coloreds" and Asian Indians, of political and social rights.

Apartheid is the system of pass laws and superexploitation that drives the black workers hundreds of miles from their families to live in barracks, reducing the workers to near-slaves in the mines and factories of the white capitalists and multinational corporations.

Apartheid is also a favorite stepchild of the "western democracies" — the U.S., British and other imperialist powers. For decades Washington has given the racist slave masters every type of support, while both Republicans and Democrats alike have given a wink and a nod to the nasty business of apartheid.

After all, the white supremacist regime enforces cheap labor for GM and other corporations; it provides a secure source of strategic materials for the Pentagon war machine; and it's an anti-communist fortress against revolution in Africa.

### Botha Hides Behind Promises of "Reform"

In the face of the mounting revolution inside the country and the growing international outcry against this inhuman system, the racist Prime Minister Botha himself is talking of "reforms" to allegedly dismantle apartheid.

Botha promises to adjust the pass laws and other outrages of apartheid. He even



A scene from the militant anti-apartheid picket at the San Francisco docks on March 10. The protesters, with support from dockworkers, succeeded in preventing the unloading of South African cargo for a day and a half.

floats schemes for "power sharing" to bring black sellouts into advisory councils.

But all that Botha's chatter of "reforms" amounts to is putting band-aids on white minority rule in order to save it. It is public relations to prettify the racist system and to put a lid on the revolutionary mass upheaval.

### The U.S. Government Stands Behind Botha

The U.S. government is one of the biggest sellers of Botha's public relations effort. Reagan's "constructive engagement" policy has meant full support for apartheid. Now the bigots in the White House are adding their voices to urge "reforms" in this fascist system. Reagan is helping Botha hold up the fig leaf of "reform" and prop up the stinking corpse of apartheid.

Meanwhile, in Congress the liberal Democrats give sermons about the wrongs of apartheid. At the same time, they bemoan what they see as the even greater horror of the growing revolutionary upheaval. They appeal for "dialog" and "negotiations" with the tame and reformist elements in the anti-apartheid struggle as the only way to avert the "looming catastrophe" of revolu-

tion. After all, these liberal hypocrites argue, Bishop Tutu is more effective than the police in dispersing angry demonstrations.

### Freedom Will Be Won Through Revolution

Humanitarian sermons and idle chatter about "reform" have changed nothing. For month after month the South African police and troops continue to escalate the apartheid fury of bullets, dogs, tear gas and sjambok whips on the workers and school children. And the blood of the oppressed will continue to flow until the whole structure of apartheid is trampled into the dust.

The white capitalist rulers will not fold their hands and give up the fabulous wealth sweated from the enslavement of the black majority. What's more, international capitalism has shown that it will stand behind the racists to the end.

Majority rule and liberation will only come through the revolutionary action of the masses; the smashing of the racist regime; the destruction of the armed forces and all the other institutions of apartheid slavery.

There can be no talk of freedom in South Africa without revolution.

### Build the Fight Against Apartheid!

Last month, hundreds of activists manned a militant picket line protesting the unloading of South African cargo in San Francisco. With the sympathy of the dockworkers they successfully shut down the pier for a day and a half, until the police came out in force and made over 50 arrests. As well, on college campuses across the U.S. confrontations over "shanty-towns" and other anti-apartheid protests are continuing.

The spread of the anti-apartheid movement poses a number of questions of what path this movement should follow.

The liberal and reformist chieftains linked to the Democratic Party are pushing their agenda on the movement. In one form or another, they are preaching faith in a reformist solution to apartheid. And they spread the illusion that the U.S. government will bring about this solution, if only the people place their trust in the Democratic Party hypocrites in Congress.

The workers and militant anti-apartheid activists must have their own agenda. The movement must be built on the shoulders of the American working people. The workers of both the U.S. and South Africa share common interests in the struggle against racial oppression and exploitation — they both have nothing to lose but their chains.

The movement must also draw clear lines against the U.S. government, the corporations, and the Republican and Democratic Party politicians. They all stand for the imperialist system of racism, repression and exploitation at home and abroad. That is why they all agree on the need to put brakes on the growing revolution in South Africa.

The fight against apartheid demands solidarity with the revolutionary action of the South African people. This means both condemning the bloody suppression of the masses, and exposing the attempts to reconcile them to apartheid rule with cheap talk of "reform" and "dialog."

Through their courageous mass actions, the oppressed of South Africa are casting away illusions, moving step by step towards settling accounts with the apartheid monster. Let us back them up with all our might in their struggle for freedom and revolution! □

## From Libya to Honduras, from Star Wars to nuclear tests

# Say no to the Reaganite war drive!

The U.S. government is a swaggering international bully and warmonger.

This was shown once again the other day when the U.S. Navy provoked a confrontation with Libya and killed as many as 80 Libyans. The Reagan administration first struck a pose of mock innocence. "Oh we were just cruising in international waters when we were attacked first." And "we just defended ourselves."

Hogwash. This was not the "Love Boat" out for a peaceful cruise. This was the 6th Fleet carrying out naval maneuvers off the Libyan coast as a deliberate provocation. Now even U.S. government officials have admitted so. An admission not out of remorse, but simply as a cynical boast.

This particular confrontation did not develop into a wider war, but it signals that the Reagan administration is itching for military adventures abroad. It shows that the government can ignite a war just about any time it wants to. And the Reagan administration is certainly busy keeping the pot boiling from one corner of the world to another. The U.S. government is acting as the world policeman for capitalism and reaction.

Remember that it was Reagan who invaded Grenada in 1983 to overthrow a government he didn't like. That same year, he sent U.S. forces to Lebanon to back up Israeli aggression and the Lebanese fascists. And he has steadily expanded military intervention in Central America. Meanwhile, the war budget — for nuclear bombs, weapons in outer space, the bloated military, and CIA-directed dirty wars — keeps climbing through the sky.

The war drive of the U.S. government is

not simply the result of a crazed war fiend in the White House. It is in fact the class policy of the monopoly capitalists who rule this country. And this is why the other big party of capitalism, the Democrats, are full accomplices of Reagan's warmongering. From voting for the trillion-dollar military buildup

### Break the blockade:

## Assist the Nicaraguan workers' press!

Today Nicaragua is under siege by U.S. imperialism. When the U.S. government talks of Nicaragua, it aims its propaganda guns against the Sandinista government. But behind the rhetoric, in fact Reagan is taking aim at the workers and poor people of Nicaragua.

It is the workers and peasants who made the revolution in Nicaragua. And with the overthrow of the Somoza tyranny, for the first time, they breathed free of tyranny. They made gains in education and health care. They learned to stand up with their heads high.

The Sandinista government, despite coming to power through the revolution, does not defend the interests of the workers and poor peasants. It is a petty-bourgeois regime which preserves privileges for the rich while demobilizing the revolutionary drive of the working people. The Sandinistas seek to appease imperialism and the Nicaraguan capitalists with concessions. But this only whets the appetite of U.S. imperialism for more. The Sandinista policies only weaken the Nicaraguan revolution.

to supporting each and every one of Reagan's adventures abroad — this is the record of the party that poses in support of "peace."

The times call for vigilance against warmongering. We cannot stop the Reaganite

war drive by looking to the millionaire politicians in Congress. No, the fight against imperialist war requires mass action. And it must be linked with building the revolutionary movement to overthrow the capitalist warmongers from power altogether. □

But there is more to the Nicaraguan political scene than the Sandinistas and the right-wing opposition. There is also a revolutionary party of the working class — the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (MLPN, formerly known as the MAP-ML). It is this party which consistently defends the interests of the toilers of Nicaragua.

The MLPN stands for a firm struggle against U.S. imperialism and both its faces — the contras as well as the bourgeois right-wing forces. Yesterday the Nicaraguan Marxist-Leninists organized the MLPAS militias which fought in the uprising against Somoza. Today the MLPN fights against the contra aggression as well as leads the class struggle against the private employers and the bureaucratic management of the state enterprises. The MLPN works to win the masses away from the harmful petty-bourgeois illusions fostered by Sandinism. Its struggle is guided with the goal of carrying forward the revolution to socialism and the rule of the workers and poor peasants.

The Marxist-Leninist Party of the USA believes that it is important that the class

conscious workers of Nicaragua receive the solidarity of the international working class. In the struggle of the Nicaraguan working class, a vital task is the building up of the workers' press. In Nicaragua, both the capitalist right-wingers and the petty-bourgeois Sandinistas have large resources to spread their views — but the workers face countless economic and political obstacles. For two years now, the MLP,USA has organized a campaign to support the Nicaraguan workers' press with greatly needed material support.

As part of the struggle against U.S. imperialism's war against the Nicaraguan people, the MLP,USA calls on workers and anti-imperialist activists in the U.S. to contribute to this campaign as a concrete act of solidarity with the Nicaraguan workers.

Please send your contributions to:

**Campaign for the Nicaraguan Workers' Press**  
P.O. Box 30272, Jefferson Station,  
Chicago, IL 60630 □

# No more concessions!

May Day arose with the strike movement for the eight-hour day which swept across the U.S. in 1886. Today the workers again face the task of building up the strike movement. This time to beat back the vicious take-back offensive of the capitalists.

Wage-cutting, the elimination of protective work rules, job combination, long overtime hours, and rampant job elimination have spread through every industry like a plague. And if the workers say no to these outrages, the capitalists unleash all of their machinery of class repression. The courts ban mass picketing while Republican and Democratic officials alike order out the police to protect scabs. Even the National Guard is unleashed to suppress strikes, such as at the Hormel meatpacking plant in Wisconsin. Obviously the concessions drive is an offensive of the entire capitalist class against the working class.

## The Workers Have the Power to Fight Back

But the workers have the weapons with which to fight back. Strikes and other forms of mass struggle can turn the great numbers of the workers into a battering ram to break down the concessions fortress. Organization can weld the workers into a single army, spreading the struggle from one factory to the next, from one industry to a countrywide movement. Class consciousness can guide each strike with the knowledge that it is part of the broader struggle, a struggle of the working class against the entire class of exploiters.

These weapons have been employed effectively in the past. One hundred years ago in the fight for the eight-hour day which grew into a general strike of hundreds of thousands of workers. Fifty years ago in the



Striking cannery workers in Watsonville, California denounce the police sent in to suppress their struggle against concessions.

battles against wage-cutting, to help the unemployed, and to organize the unorganized which built up the unions all across the country and shook up the capitalists' business as usual.

## AFL-CIO Hacks Act as Scabs Against Strikes

Today the strike movement is again beginning to emerge. But the supposed leaders of the workers, the trade union bureaucrats, are undermining the very weapons which the workers need to fight back.

They are opposing and sabotaging strikes. Lane Kirland and the other heads of the AFL-CIO have gone so far as to condemn the Hormel strike while the top dogs of the

United Food and Commercial Workers have withdrawn all strike benefits and taken the side of Hormel against the strikers.

The union hacks are breaking up the organization of the workers. This year the national steel contract and the national telephone contract have been split up so that the workers in each company are being forced to fight alone. And in the auto industry and others, the union leaders are letting the companies rewrite the contracts on a plant-by-plant basis.

Meanwhile the capitalists want to pit the impoverished unemployed workers against those who are employed. But the union hacks won't lift a finger to defend the unemployed. Nor will they fight the man-eating productivity drives and automation that are

eliminating jobs and turning the work places into hellholes of overwork.

The union bosses are also maligning class sentiment and demanding instead labor-management cooperation. GM's Saturn project, where even before the plant is opened the United Auto Workers leaders have agreed to a whole slew of concessions and to what amounts to a company union, has become the model for the entire AFL-CIO. Meanwhile the hacks from the United Steel Workers have declared that the concessions shoved down the throats of the Wheeling-Pittsburgh workers are a victory because it gave the hacks a seat on the board of directors. This is just "business unionism" where union bureaucrats become businessmen administering the concessions offensive against the rank and file.

## Get Organized for the Class Struggle

Clearly to build up the strike movement against the capitalists' concessions drive requires a tenacious fight against the union bureaucrats. With such a fight then, each strike, no matter if it wins or loses, can become a vehicle to build up the organization and class consciousness of the workers and to spur on the mass struggle.

Faced with the terrible offensive of the capitalists, the workers have no choice but to fight. But to fight effectively, the rank and file must take matters into their own hands, organize themselves independently of the union bosses, and spread the spirit of class struggle to every corner of the country. **TAKE UP THE SPIRIT OF THE MAY DAY GENERAL STRIKE!**  
**NO MORE CONCESSIONS!**  
**GET ORGANIZED FOR THE CLASS STRUGGLE!** □

# Workers of the world, unite!

May Day is a day of international working class solidarity. May Day began in the U.S. a hundred years ago with the historic struggle for the eight-hour day. And at an historic conference in Paris in 1889, it was proclaimed by the international proletarian movement as International Working Class Day.

Since then, every year workers have taken to the streets the world over in powerful demonstrations of the ties that bind together the workers of the world. In the U.S. however, the labor chieftains of the trade unions do their utmost to stamp out the tradition of International Workers' Day. And it falls on the shoulders of the revolutionary and class-conscious workers to keep alive the militant banner of May First.

This May Day too, workers in every corner of the globe will join together in demonstrations, marches and other actions to raise their class demands and to show their internationalist solidarity. The world will ring with the stirring call: *Workers of the world, unite!*

## The Workers Are Fighting Pitched Battles Around the World

In countless "hot spots" around the world, this May Day will find the workers and other toilers locked in mortal combat with the forces of exploitation and backwardness.

Dictators and tyrants — from Pinochet in Chile to the generals of Pakistan and Bangladesh — will confront the anger of the workers and other toilers. As will capitalist rulers wearing a "democratic" face — from Alfonsin of Argentina to the newly married regime of Corason Aquino and Marcos' generals in the Philippines.

The barbaric regime of Khomeini will hear the rumblings of discontent among the workers across Iran and the guns of the revolutionary partisans of Kurdistan. As will the white racists of South Africa face the angry voices of the black workers and youth.

And Central America remains ablaze with struggle against the U.S.-backed death-squad regimes and the contra war on revolutionary Nicaragua.

This year will also see a new mood among the workers of Haiti. The desperately poor toilers of Haiti have just emerged from under the shadow of 30 years of oppression



After having brought down the tyranny of Duvalier, today the Haitian masses are demanding the ouster of the military junta which was rigged up to block the revolutionary movement.

at the hands of the Duvalier dynasty. Over the last year, they were able to rise up in a mighty upsurge which brought down the hated Duvalier regime. But the fruits of their sacrifice and struggle have been stolen from them. U.S. imperialism and the Haitian bourgeoisie spirited Duvalier away and put in power a regime that seeks to maintain as much of the old institutions as it can. But the Haitian masses have declared, "It's not over yet!" And they have kept up a storm of protest and struggle. The struggle of the Haitian toilers is a great inspiration on this May Day of 1986.

## Marxist-Leninist Theory — Compass for the Workers' Struggle

In their struggles, the workers carry out great feats, and make incalculable sacrifices. But in order for their sacrifices and achievements not to be frittered away, the working class movement requires the guidance of revolutionary theory. Just as their movement is an international one, so too is the theory for the proletarian movement.

Since the last century, the theory of Marx-

ism has provided this vital orientation for the proletarian movement. True, the historic betrayals by revisionist traitors to communism — represented today by the present-day leaders of Russia, China, Cuba, etc. — have meant serious setbacks for the international working class. The revisionists have distorted the teachings of Marxism-Leninism. But the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism continues to be upheld by the true Marxist-Leninist forces who are active in various parts of the world.

The struggle to rebuild revolutionary Marxist-Leninist parties is an international task facing the proletariat. Already, Marxist-Leninist parties are playing a vital role in guiding the struggle of the toilers — from the factories, fields and battlefronts of Nicaragua where the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua organizes to the factories and mountains of Iran where the Communist Party of Iran is fighting. In the U.S. the MLP, USA is the contingent of the international army of communism.

It is this trend which holds the guarantee for the socialist future of the world working class.

## Support the Revolutionary Struggles Worldwide!

Solidarity with the workers and oppressed people abroad is an essential part of the working class struggle in the U.S.

The fight of workers everywhere is our fight too. The workers in different countries fight in a variety of conditions, facing different stages in their revolutionary struggle. But as their struggle deepens, the workers everywhere turn to thoughts of socialism, which alone can bring liberation from hunger and exploitation.

International solidarity is also important for the many useful lessons that the struggle in other countries teaches us. They show that there is no progress for the working people except through mass struggle and revolutionary actions. They show the need for solid organization that the times cry out for here. They show the treachery of smooth-talking reformist and liberal liars and the necessity to build our movement in an independent revolutionary direction. The struggle in each country is a great reservoir of experience for the whole world working class to draw from.

What is more, the fight of the workers and oppressed masses abroad — particularly within those countries that are part of the far-flung U.S. empire — offers a direct assistance to our own struggle here in the U.S. The blows of the guerrillas of El Salvador, the courageous struggle against the contra war in Nicaragua, the storms in South Africa — all help our struggle against the Reaganite offensive here because they hit powerful blows at our common enemy — U.S. imperialism.

On May Day 1986 let us raise our fists high in support of the revolutionary toilers around the world. □

## MARXIST-LENINIST BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

- OAKLAND: 3232 Grove Street, Oakland, CA 94609 • Phone 853-4840
- CHICAGO: 1631 West 18th Street (one block east of 18th St. 'L' on Douglas line) • Phone 243-5302
- NEW YORK CITY: 66 Watts St. (2 blocks north of Canal St., next to the Film Forum), Manhattan

# Learn from the historic May Day struggle of 1886

One hundred years ago, the American workers' struggle for the eight-hour day spread like a tidal wave across the country. This movement crested with the great general strike of May 1, 1886.

## American Society Split Between Capitalists and Workers

In those days there was still a common wisdom that America was free of the class strife that gripped the Old World. But the eight-hour movement struck a heavy blow to this prejudice. It brought to the surface the life-and-death struggle splitting American society into two hostile camps: wealthy industrialists, bankers and other capitalists in one camp, and the army of wage workers of the factories and mills in the other.

On the first of May, hundreds of thousands of angry workers, skilled and unskilled, native and foreign-born, poured into the streets of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Baltimore and dozens of other cities and towns. They held aloft banners and raised their voices to declare their hatred for the capitalists and voice the common demands of the working class.

The May 1 strike was a demonstration that the workers in the U.S. belonged to the international camp of labor in struggle against capital. Soon afterwards, inspired by the workers' action in the U.S., May First was adopted by a world gathering of anti-capitalist workers as International Working Class Day.

## Need for Independent Organization of the Workers

The eight-hour movement was a great school in class warfare that showed the might of the workers' combined action. It pounded home that the working class was a power in itself, a class with its own independent interests and aims.

In the wake of this mass upsurge, the most conscious workers drew the conclusion that in order to channel this power the working class needed to build up its own independent class organizations. Many turned to the task of building up the workers' political party to steer the class struggle and advance the political and economic aims of the working class.

## Naked Terror Against the Workers' Movement

The eight-hour movement was savagely attacked by the police and company goons. The employers hoped to stem the tide of the struggle with billy clubs and revolvers.

On May 3, six picketers at the McCormick Works in Chicago were gunned down by the police. The next day, a protest rally was called in Haymarket Square. A provocateur threw a bomb, and a struggle broke out leaving several workers and police dead. The capitalists cried for blood. Ten workers were



Graphic depicting clash between workers and police at Haymarket Square rally, May 4, 1886.

framed up for the bombing, as the prosecutors and the press spread hysterical charges that the workers' militant strike movement was part of a grand "terrorist conspiracy." Four workers were hanged, including the outstanding leaders of the movement, August Spies and Albert Parsons.

The infamous Haymarket Affair has taught generations of workers about the nature of capitalist rule. In name there is democracy and freedom for one and all in this country. But as soon as the masses pose a serious challenge to the exploiters' interests, then the capitalist regime drops its mask and bares its fangs of naked terror against the working people.

The men in blue are unleashed to beat sense into the "savage mob." Strikers are shot down in the name of safeguarding private property. And the workers' best leaders are framed up and lynched by the gentlemen of capitalist "law and order."

## "Eight Hours for Work, Eight Hours for Rest, and Eight Hours for What We Will!"

This was the slogan on the lips of the workers who were determined to win relief

from the agonies of 10, 12 and more hour workdays. The eight-hour day was a common demand uniting the working class across all industries, trades, and nationalities. Moreover, it was a reform of particular value to the workers' cause, as relief from overwork was critical if the workers were to live, think, and organize.

In face of the power of the May First strike, many employers conceded the eight-hour day, and many others reduced the workers' hours. But these victories were short-lived. After the Haymarket incident, the bourgeoisie went on a rampage of black-listing and jailings of militant workers. Long hours were restored as the movement was set back. When the eight-hour movement began to pick up steam again, it was undermined by the conservative leaders of the AFL trade unions who condemned the workers of each company or trade to pursue the eight-hour struggle on their own.

A hundred years later, the curse of long hours of overtime still plagues millions of workers. Fifty and 60-hour workweeks are again commonplace from the giant auto plants to the small sweat shops. In fact, with their concessions offensive, the employers and the Reagan government are out to

destroy decades of hard-won victories of the workers' struggle.

But such is the nature of reforms under capitalism. The bourgeoisie gives with one hand, only to take it back with the other. That is why the workers' own organization and mobilization is critical for the defense of the past gains won by the workers' movement.

## Abolition of Wage Slavery!

Nonetheless, this struggle must not be seen as an unending tug of war. In the midst of the class struggle the working class can grow more conscious and more organized. It can hone its political and organizational weapons to give final battle to the capitalist exploiters. It can transform itself into a mighty revolutionary force capable of transforming society, overthrowing capitalism and building a socialist system that will finally secure the needs of the working masses.

In the 1880's, the most politically conscious workers, who formed the militant catalyst of the eight-hour movement, were guided by this socialist standpoint. They understood that the eight-hour demand was not an end in itself. Rather they saw it mainly as a great rallying point for the class struggle.

"Abolition of Wage Slavery!" was their defiant watchword. They spread the truth among their fellow workers that the tyranny of capitalist exploitation could only be abolished through the socialist revolution of the working class.

## Salute the Haymarket Martyrs, Unbending Fighters for the Workers' Cause!

The capitalist rulers have done everything in their power to purge the militant traditions of May First. It has been scrubbed from the history books; and the capitalists and their buddies in the AFL-CIO officialdom curse it as "un-American."

The bourgeoisie wants to paint the working class as a class without a history or a future. To check the spread of ideas of class struggle today, they systematically blot out the great class battles of yesterday. To combat the revolutionary class spirit, they are silent about the fact that the working class has given rise to such heroic figures as the Haymarket martyrs — workers who gave their all to organize the class struggle against exploitation, and who went to the capitalists' gallows unbent and confident in the workers' cause.

But for the workers, the legacy of May First will always be a source of strength. This fiery chapter of working class history is filled with lessons for the present struggle. And from the unbending spirit of the Haymarket martyrs, today's class conscious workers and revolutionaries can draw inspiration for building up the revolutionary movement that will ensure the workers' socialist future of tomorrow. □

## NICARAGUA

### Continued from front page

was a major blow at U.S. imperialism and inspired revolutionary struggle across Central America. Washington has found this situation intolerable.

If one hears Reagan today, you would think that the U.S. government sided with the Nicaraguan revolution and showered the new government with support. The truth however is that Washington supported Somoza to the bitter end. As for U.S. aid to the new government, which was given for a brief period of time, it was simply a means to funnel money into the hands of the right-wing bourgeoisie when it was taking part in the government. Today the aid for the same bourgeois counterrevolution goes through other channels.

Somoza's tyranny was based on the terror of the U.S.-organized National Guard. When Somoza fell, the Guard collapsed. It is the former leaders of this savage force that are the core of the contras. Under the direction of the CIA, the remnants of Somoza's National Guard were put together into the contra army. And like the National Guard, the contras have made a reputation for rape, murder and pillage. Their goal is not democracy but the restoration of a Somoza-style dictatorship. And this is what the U.S. government seeks to bring back in

Nicaragua.

## The Democratic Party — Partners in Reagan's Crimes.

During the recent debates over contra aid in Congress, much has been made about the Democratic opposition to Reagan. But, despite all the sound and fury, everyone in Washington admits that a funding package for the contras will go through — and it will go through with Democratic support.

As if to underscore this, when Reagan launched his latest hysteria campaign over a so-called Nicaraguan invasion of Honduras, the Democrats eagerly jumped on Reagan's bandwagon. They applauded Reagan's proposal for emergency military aid for the Honduran military.

If another lesson has been drawn home by the latest debate in Washington, it is that the Democrats are no real opponents of Reagan's war drive in Central America.

In Congress, the Democrats have sworn over and over again that they are fully behind Reagan's goals in Central America. Everyone agreed on Capitol Hill that the U.S. must force a change inside Nicaragua — no one questioned the U.S. government's right to intervene in Nicaragua, no one spoke of respecting Nicaragua's right to self-determination.

The goal of the U.S. capitalist rulers is counterrevolution in Nicaragua. Reagan

believes that the contra war is the centerpiece of that effort today. The Democrats merely have quibbles over the speed of Reagan's plans. They support military intervention no less; but they speak more of diplomacy and negotiation. They want to see if it is still possible to pressure the Nicaraguan government to come to a deal with the contras.

Today the difference between Reagan and the Democrats has come down to this. Reagan wants \$100 million in aid for the contras right away, while the Democrats are in favor of some aid right away, and the rest to follow in three or six months if the Nicaraguan government refuses to capitulate to the U.S. dictate. Some opposition!

The Democrats' concern is not that the contra war is part of an unjust aggressive policy, but it is the worry that the contras are not an effective enough force. Indeed, this theme is repeated over and over again in the speeches of the Democrats.

But the problem with the contras is not that they are flimsy warriors. It is that they are brutal terrorist thugs, the spearhead of an unjust imperialist war against the revolutionary people of Nicaragua. This is the perspective with which Reagan's war drive in Central America must be fought.

The latest wranglings in Washington once again show that we cannot look to the Democrats to oppose U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. It is up to us — the workers, the

oppressed, the young people of the U.S. We need to counter the lies of the Reaganites, which are so dutifully echoed by the news media. We need to build up mass actions in the streets. We need to get organized. As Washington prepares for its new Viet Nam-style adventure, let us use the movement of the 1960's against the Viet Nam war as our guide. □

## The Workers' Advocate

Theoretical-Political Newspaper of the Central Committee of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA

Editorial correspondence: The Workers' Advocate, Box 11942, Ontario Street Stn. Chicago, IL 60611

Orders and subscriptions: M-L Publications, Box 11972, Ontario Street Stn. Chicago, IL 60611

Rates: From vendor: 25¢  
Via 1st class mail (U.S./Canada):  
75¢ for single copy; \$4.50 for 6 issues; \$9.00 for 12 issues

ISSN 0276-362X