



Build a fighting anti-racist movement!

Michael Griffith, Noah Roisten, Wayne Williams. The cases of these three black men say it all about the state of racist violence and racist justice in capitalist America.

Michael Griffith was the young black construction worker murdered last December by a racist mob in the segregated Howard Beach neighborhood of Queens, New York. More than a dozen racists beat him and his two companions with clubs, chasing Griffith onto the highway and certain death. The killers are out on the street after the prosecutor and the judge dropped all but the most minor charges.

Noah Roisten is a young black man who was attacked by club-wielding racists in a Boston subway station. After a failed attempt at running for it, Noah finally pulled a knife to defend himself and one of his attackers was killed. Noah has been sitting in jail for over a year and a half now. His trial on charges of first degree murder began last week.

Wayne Williams is another young black man who has been rotting in prison because he was made the scapegoat in the infamous Atlanta child murders. Now the facts about these grisly murders are finally coming to light showing that it was Ku Klux Klansmen that methodically murdered some 30 black children. And Wayne Williams was framed up as part of an effort by police and government officials to cover the bloody tracks of the racist killers.

Systematic Racist Violence

These three cases are different. But

20,000 march in Georgia

-page 3

On the Albanian Party Congress

-page 14

Bitter lessons of the USX strike

-page 5

'America' - prime time war hysteria

-page 9



An angry protest against Mayor Koch and black police commissioner "Uncle" Benjamin Ward for their role in the cover-up for the Howard Beach lynch mob.

they have a common message. They give the lie to the Reaganite fairy tale that racist terror in America is a thing of the distant and forgotten past.

Reagan's Justice Department says it lacks "hate crime" statistics to determine the gravity of the problem. We don't need a government bureaucrat, however, to inform us that there is something wrong.

The racist assaults in Howard Beach

and the Boston subway are shocking outrages. The mass murder of Atlanta's children by the KKK is surely one of this century's most vile crimes perpetrated against the black people. But these things fit into a whole pattern of racist violence in this country.

To be black and in the wrong part of town, or the wrong town, or just to go downtown can mean facing the threats, fire bombs, stones, clubs and even

bullets of racist gangs. This is as true in Boston and Chicago as in Forsyth County, Georgia.

Systematic Injustice

Moreover, there is a parallel pattern of the "forces of law and order" providing comfort and protection to these

Continued on page 15
See ANTI-RACIST

Warships steam towards Lebanon U.S. imperialism, keep your hands off!

There are menacing signs today that Reagan may be planning a military adventure in Lebanon or in the Persian Gulf.

One battleship group is already near Lebanon while another task force remains stationed elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Port calls for most of the ships in the region have been cancelled. Other battleships are in the Persian Gulf or steaming nearby from the Philippines.

Meanwhile, U.S. citizens have been ordered to leave Lebanon, and all travel there has been virtually outlawed.

And once again, in the midst of the latest flurry of hostage taking in Beirut, the sanctimonious declarations against "terrorism" are flying loud from the White House and the State Department.

We must be vigilant against U.S. plans in the Middle East. Reagan is up to no good.

Everyone knows that the White House has been deeply embarrassed by

the Iran-contra scandal revelations. Rambo Reagan's been caught selling arms to the Great Devil Khomeini. Today the reactionary Iran-Iraq war has heated up, and Iran is winning battles — with a good deal of help from the missiles and spare parts the U.S. sold it. This is one more embarrassment for the White House. The Pentagon has been busy trying to minimize the role of the U.S. arms and the recent Iranian military victories.

Under these conditions, it would just be like Reagan to try a military adventure in Lebanon. Whip up some jingoism waving the flag of struggle against "terrorism." Use warships to lob a few shells into the Beirut suburbs or the Bekaa valley. Send in some planes to drop some bombs. Kill some Lebanese and Palestinians. Declare another victory for "civilization" against "terrorism."

And you can bet the Democrats will not be found wanting — they are ready

for a sign of strength from the presidency. Remember their shameful support for Reagan during the last military adventure in Lebanon in 1983. Or in the invasion of tiny Grenada the same year. Or in the bombing of Libya last year.

But another U.S. military adventure in Lebanon will be a crime, just as the last one was.

U.S. Imperialism Has No Business in Lebanon

The situation in Lebanon is a difficult one, with many different contending forces. There has been a long struggle there between the majority of the oppressed Lebanese, both Muslims and Christians, and a tiny crust of rich Christian reactionaries who have ruled Lebanon for decades. A part of the country is under Syrian occupation, who

Continued on page 10
See LEBANON

No to the cover-up for the Howard Beach lynch mob!



Protest at the 106th "stun gun" Precinct.

(The following is based on a Jan. 10 leaflet of the MLP-New York.)

The Howard Beach killers have walked free.

On December 29 Judge Bianchi threw out murder, manslaughter and assault charges on the only three attackers who had been arrested. Now the only charge they face is "reckless endangerment."

The judge, the DA and the police are merrily blaming this travesty on the victim, Cedric Sandiford, and his lawyer, Alton Maddox. But this is a lie.

There was more than enough evidence to sustain the charges. But two days before the hearing Queens DA Santucci announced that the charges would have to be dropped and the judge happily agreed. It seems that in Queens a dead body and three signed confessions don't mean a thing, not when the victim is black and the killers white.

Burying the Evidence

The truth of the matter is that the police and the DA's office have done everything possible to bury the evidence and blow the case. And they have done so with the blessing of the court and of New York's highest officials. The truth of the matter is that this case is being kept alive only by the mass demonstrations and other protests which are giving voice to the outrage of millions at this brutal crime.

Take Dominick Blum, for example. Blum returned to the scene of the death hours after he struck and killed Michael Griffith. At the very least, he was a hit-and-run driver. And what did police do? They did not charge him with leaving the scene of the accident. They did not give him a breathalyzer. They did not measure the skid marks to see how fast he was going. They did not even examine his car or call him in for questioning until Sandiford's lawyer Maddox called a press conference about it.

And Blum is only a small piece of the picture. When the three punks confessed, the police did not get the con-

fessions down in full and they did not videotape the confessions, which should have been standard procedure. They have not found and examined the car the gang took out on the highway. They claimed they couldn't find any eyewitnesses — but failed to mention that 911 had logged over 20 calls.

What the police have not done in this case is matched only by what they have done.

Covering for the Lynch Mob

What the police have done is to treat the victim Cedric Sandiford like a criminal.

When Sandiford was picked up on the highway battered and bleeding, he was frisked, thrown into the back of a patrol car, interrogated for hours about some fictitious shooting, and denied medical attention. From the beginning, the police have tried to intimidate Sandiford and, when he couldn't be intimidated, to discredit him. Why? Because from the beginning the police have been covering up — covering up for the lynch mob and for themselves.

Minutes before the attack, a patrol car went to the pizzeria to check out "three suspicious black men." According to Sandiford, the cops escorted them out of the pizzeria and then drove off as the attack began. As calls began coming in to 911, it was the same police car that supposedly couldn't find the fight. In other words, there is every possibility that cops from the 106th Precinct saw the attack shaping up and winked at it.

There is nothing strange about this. For the 106th Precinct, harassing blacks is business as usual.

Racism Is an Organized Business

Racism in Howard Beach is not just a problem of some punk kids or their parents. It is a highly organized business, run through the local community board and through the Rockwood Park Civic Association, which budgets hundreds of thousands of dollars per year

for a private "security" force whose only job is to harass blacks. Behind this organized racism stand the local real estate sharks, other local businessmen, and the Mafia, who use Howard Beach as a base and maintain a strong hand in local affairs.

The 106th Precinct is up to its ears in this. The 106th patrols the border areas in Howard Beach and Ozone Park like the Texas Rangers patrol along the Rio Grande. Innocent black youth in Ozone Park get stun-gunned while white punks in Howard Beach are free to steal cars and break into houses and blame it on blacks.

Mayor Koch and Police Commissioner Ward, DA Santucci and Judge Bianchi know all this. They know it and are

defending it. That's why they are blaming Sandiford and Maddox for every crime since World War II and meanwhile, the killers go free. Millions of people are outraged at this brutal crime and want to see the killers punished. But what these gentlemen are proving is that the government has no interest in justice, no interest in lifting a finger against racism and racist killers.

The only alternative to this type of cover-up is to build a powerful mass movement against racism. The answer lies with ordinary working people standing up through demonstrations, mass meetings, etc. This is the only way to win justice for the victims of lynch mobs and official injustice. □

Angry marchers demand 'Justice for Michael Griffith!'

On Saturday afternoon, January 21, four thousand angry demonstrators came out onto the streets of New York City to protest the government cover-up for the Howard Beach lynch mob. Their demand was **Justice for Michael Griffith!**, the 23-year old black construction worker who was killed in the December 20 attack by club-wielding racists in a segregated neighborhood of Queens.

The protesters were mostly young and black and in a militant mood. They marched some 30 blocks, filling Manhattan streets with the sounds of slogans and the beating of drums. This was followed by a rally held in front of Mayor Koch's residence in Greenwich Village. Mayor Koch is an infamous racist, who has drawn the wrath of the masses for giving his blessing to the abortion of justice in the Howard Beach case and for lending his voice to the

vilification campaign against the survivors of the attack.

A contingent organized by the MLP took an active part in the demonstration under the banner **MASS STRUGGLE IS THE WAY TO FIGHT RACIST ATTACKS!** The contingent raised a number of militant slogans taken up by a good section of the marchers, such as the popular "Justice, yes! Cover-up, no! Beat back racism blow by blow!" And several thousand leaflets were distributed condemning the Howard Beach cover-up and posing the tasks for building the anti-racist movement.

The January 21 march was the second demonstration bringing out thousands to demand justice for Michael Griffith. Powerful mass action is what can bring the racists to justice and strengthen the anti-racist movement for future battles. □



Denouncing the Howard Beach cover-up in front of Mayor Koch's residence.

Why did Cuomo name a special prosecutor?

The angry protests against the cover-up of the Howard Beach lynching have shaken things up in high places. On January 13, Governor Mario Cuomo finally consented to appoint a special prosecutor in the case. And there are reports leaking out that special prosecutor Charles Hynes may soon reinstate charges against some of the racist killers.

Liberal and reformist boosters of the Democrat Cuomo are praising the governor for his farsighted wisdom. Hogwash! The fiery protests in the street showed even the blind that the outright dropping of the charges and the crude cover-up wasn't going to work. The masses were demanding that the racist killers be prosecuted to the full. And one part of this demand was that

the case be taken out of the hands of the prosecutors who had already shown their eagerness to let the lynchers off scot-free. Cuomo had tried to put off having to name a special prosecutor, but his hand was forced by the mass movement.

Similarly, there are claims that the naming of a special prosecutor shows that the justice system works after all and those who lacked confidence in it have been proven wrong. More hogwash! The capitalists' justice system works on the side of the racists and lynchers. This fact has been burned into the consciousness of the masses through bitter experience. And it was precisely because the black and

Continued on page 12
See CUOMO

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20,000 march against Klan intimidation in Forsyth County

Anti-racists from across the country converged on Forsyth County, Georgia on January 24 to protest the violent attack by the Ku Klux Klan on a small "anti-intimidation" march the week before. Forsyth County has been all white ever since racist vigilantes drove the black people off their farms and out of their homes 75 years ago. The imposing mile and a half march 20,000 strong into the small town of Cummings was a rude awakening to the Klansmen and racist powers of the county. It showed the groundswell of mass resistance that is building up to fight racist violence and segregation.

A Cowardly Assault

A week earlier, despite death and arson threats, a march of 75 protesters from Atlanta and the surrounding counties had come to Cummings January 17 to protest segregation and Klan intimidation. But the racist thugs outnumbered the demonstrators four-to-one and succeeded in blocking and disrupting the march.

The 300 Klan and other low-life scum had come from several states to hurl mud, bottles and rocks, and scream their filthy guts out at the marchers. They waved confederate flags eulogizing the enslavement of blacks and demanded the continued segregation of Forsyth County.

The 75 law enforcement officers from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, the State Patrol, the Sheriff's Department and the local police did little to prevent the Klan assault on the march. Afterwards they claimed that they were just unable to stop the attacks. But by their kid-glove handling of the Klansmen, it appears that these "forces of law and

order" had no intention of allowing the anti-racist march to proceed without a good dose of intimidation and terror. So they gave the Klan room to act like the savages that they are.

Demonstration to Oppose Racist Violence

This Klan "victory" was covered on the network evening news in sickening detail. But instead of frightening people, it provoked a wave of indignation. Within days, 20,000 people came to Forsyth County to protest, with several thousand others left 40 miles away in Atlanta without transportation.

Unfortunately, the Forsyth County march was held in a tight grip by liberal Democratic Party politicians, and particularly by the "old guard" bourgeois black misleaders. Coretta Scott King, Benjamin Hooks, and the others turned the march into a silent vigil. No slogans or even singing were allowed. No anti-racist militancy. And the official leaders extended loving arms of "peace" to the fascist Klan. As well, dyed-in-the-wool white racist officials from the county were put on the platform. And a telegram had even been sent to chief racist Ronald Reagan to come to Forsyth County and show "moral leadership."

But despite the dead weight of the official leaders, the march had its impact. It also humiliated several hundred racist scum who were dragged in from all over the country for the Klan counterdemonstration. This time, however, the Klan was shown up as the puny scum that they are in the face of the army of anti-racist marchers. The march was another sign that it is the black and working masses who have the potential strength to challenge the racist offen-



Twenty thousand march in Cummings, Georgia against segregation and the KKK.

sive of monopoly capital, to crush the walls of segregation and send the KKK

and other racist vermin back into their holes. □

Concentration camps -- Detroit mayor's 'solution' for youth crime

Recently the news media has been spreading horror stories about the hundreds of young people who were shot down in the Detroit streets last year. But never fear, the liberal Democratic mayor of Detroit has found a solution. Coleman Young proposes to have the police sweep the streets clean of youth and park them off to concentration camps in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

"Any plan that I would develop," said Young, "would involve getting large numbers of young people off the street. The removal of as many as 500 to 600 youths could make a lot of difference. ... I think that the frigid zones of the north would help cool some of these hotshots out." (*Detroit Free Press*, January 20, 1987)

How's that for dealing with the problem of youth crime? Out of sight, out of mind, as the saying goes.

Of course Young claims that detaining hundreds of young people for six months to a year in former military camps in the frozen Upper Peninsula would also have the aim of teaching them the "discipline and skills needed to succeed in school and the job market." But if these camps are modeled after the depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, as Young says, what kind of skills could he be referring to? Learning to plant trees is hardly a skill that would help anyone survive in Detroit! No, these proposed concentration camps are not for education. They are to suppress and terrorize Detroit's youth, nothing more.

A Liberal Cover for Attacks on the Youth

In the era of Reaganism the preferred solution to every social problem is to grab 'em and jail 'em. And such is Coleman Young's solution to youth crime. But Young tries to cover up his *Continued on page 8*
See CAMPS

March against racist murder in Middletown, NY

Middletown, New York, December 13. Jimmy Lee Bruce, a 20-year-old black youth, and several of his friends went to the movies. Before the night was over, police had crushed the life out of Jimmy Lee.

Two white police officers, moonlighting as security guards, ordered the youth out of the theater because they were reportedly "talking loudly." Outside a scuffle broke out. One of the police grabbed Jimmy Lee and held him in a choke hold until he collapsed from suffocation. His friends were unable to break him free from the officers.

In Middletown's first demonstration against police brutality, 200 protesters from towns throughout Orange and Rockland counties marched on City Hall demanding justice. The demon-

strators included the parents of Jimmy Lee, who are factory workers.

In the face of the angry demonstration, Mayor Johnson made the empty gesture of suspending the officers (with full pay—that is, a paid vacation). But even a month following the murder, the Orange County D.A., Francis Phillips, refused to charge the police with any crimes, claiming lack of evidence. The fact that the police were white and the youth was black, was only a "coincidence" says Phillips.

A black youth in a casket means nothing to the criminal "justice" system in the capitalist USA. Whether it be in Howard Beach, or Cummings, Georgia, or Middletown, New York, this is a system permeated with racism and rotten to the core. □

IN THIS ISSUE

No to the cover-up for Howard Beach lynch mob	2
Marchers demand 'Justice for Michael Griffith'	2
Why did Cuomo name a special prosecutor	2
A social-democrat accuses Howard Beach victims	13
20,000 march against Klan intimidation	3
Detroit mayor proposes youth concentration camps	3
March against racist murder in Middletown, NY	3

Strikes and Workplace News

Iowa Beef; Wisconsin meatpacking plant; Colt;	
Denver janitors; against homework jobs	4
Bitter lessons at USX; GE layoffs; GM	5

Down with Reagan, frontman of capitalist reaction

No to drug testing of federal workers	6
The drug-free urine business	6
Homeless organize fight for relief	6
Reagan shows contempt for homeless	6
Meese denounced in Detroit	6

Apartheid No! Revolution Yes!

The black people of South Africa fight on	7
Another atrocity by the 'moderate' Buthelezi	7
How to tell when a prisoner is a hostage	7

Contragate Scandal

On the plot to bomb U.S. embassies	
and blame it on Nicaragua	8
Key witness is found dead	8
The CPUSA prettifies 'democracy'	13

Reagan dips his hands in Iran-Iraq war	9
'Amerika' — propaganda for war and reaction	9

The World in Struggle

Indian workers strike; Greek workers strike;	
Students in Mexico and Spain	10

Philippines: Aquino's troops massacre protesters	11
'Modernization' in China and the workers	12

9th Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania —	
Disappointing for International Marxist-Leninists	14

No, 'Platoon' is not the real story	16
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Strikes and workplace news

Workers locked out at Iowa Beef

Nearly 3,000 workers at the Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) plant in Dakota City, Nebraska have been locked out since December 14. The workers overwhelmingly rejected a contract that would have frozen wages for four years, instituted a two-tier wage system, expanded contracting out work to nonunion shops, and gutted seniority. Presently wages start at \$5.90 an hour and rise to only \$7.90 an hour. After the workers rejected the contract, IBP locked out the workers and prepared to replace them with scabs.

The workers are barred from mass picketing by a Nebraska state law that makes it illegal for more than two work-

ers to picket every 50 feet. This law was passed in the wake of the bitter four-month strike at IBP in 1982.

In that strike, the workers defied court injunctions against mass picketing and waged pitched battles against state police and the national guard to prevent scabs from entering the plant. That strike was eventually brought to a halt by the combined action of police repression and betrayal by the union hacks. Nevertheless, this strike showed that mass picketing was a powerful weapon to fight the strikebreaking and to advance the workers' struggle. This lesson should not be forgotten in the difficult situation that the workers face today. □

Rally against scabs at Wisconsin meatpacking plant



On January 10, workers organized a large picket line to stop the scabbing at the Patrick Cudahy meatpacking plant in Cudahy, Wisconsin. The Cudahy workers were joined on the picket line by auto workers, steel workers, machinists, garment workers, and other meatpackers from the area. As well, students from Cudahy High School came out in support. The students carried a big banner made out of a blanket that read "SAS — Students Against Scabs." One of the students stressed, "If it doesn't stop here, what will happen to us when we get jobs?"

The 850 meatpackers at this plant went on strike January 3 against the concessions demands of the owners, the Smithfield Foods conglomerate. Smithfield demanded a wage cut of up to \$3 an hour which would force hourly pay down to as low as \$6.25 for some workers. The workers have suffered wage and benefit cuts in the last two contracts and have had enough.

The workers began to organize mass picketing after the company sent out letters encouraging them to cross the picket lines and to withdraw from their union, Local P-40 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). On

January 9, the company began to take job applications. Police escorted scabs across the picket line. When strikers resisted, several were arrested.

While the rank-and-file meatpackers are determined to stop the scabs, the local UFCW officials are discouraging mass picketing. The international UFCW leaders have repeatedly opposed militant struggle against concessions, such as last year's strike at Hormel. And they have split up the meatpackers so that workers at each plant must face the onslaught of the capitalists by themselves. During the Hormel strike, the Cudahy plant did contract work for Hormel helping it to make up production that was lost at the strikebound Austin, Minnesota plant. But the UFCW refused to call on the Cudahy workers to stop production in support of the Hormel workers. Now the Cudahy workers are also being forced to face their bosses by themselves. The workers must organize themselves independently of the UFCW bureaucracy to continue their militant resistance and to prepare for the united, industrywide meatpacking strike that is needed to smash the concessions offensive. □

Colt strike enters its second year

On January 24, the workers from the Colt Firearms Division plants in Hartford, Connecticut celebrated the first anniversary of their strike with a mass rally. In a major show of support for the strikers, workers from plants and work places all over New England and New York showed up for the action. In all, over 1,000 workers attended.

The rally demonstrated the determination of the Colt workers to continue their strike against concessions and the potential for powerful solidarity by other workers throughout the region. But unfortunately, the United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership, which heads up this strike, did not call for the mass struggle

that is needed to stop the scabbing and win the strike. Instead, they called for a consumer boycott of Colt firearms.

Historically consumer boycotts have been effective mainly when they were connected to powerful mass actions by the workers at the work sites. But not only have the UAW hacks failed to call such actions, their proposed consumer boycott of Colt is in itself next to useless. Colt's only consumer products — handguns and sporting guns — amount to only a tiny fraction of its \$1.6 billion annual sales. Its main customer is the government. Colt is the sole supplier of M-16 rifles to the Pentagon. And the government is backing Colt's strike-



Workers from throughout New England rally on first anniversary of Colt strike.

breaking to the hilt. It has continued to award Colt new contracts since the strike began, despite the begging of UAW officials for them to stop. It seems the UAW leadership learned nothing from the Reaganite strikebreaking against the air traffic controllers.

The main UAW speaker at the rally was Donald Ephlin, international vice-president in charge of the union's GM department. In a disgusting sermon for class collaboration, Ephlin preached that, "Colt Industries should learn from General Motors, and for that matter, from Ford and Chrysler, who respect their workers and ask for their cooperation in helping the company solve some critical problems facing all American industries." Certainly GM showed respect for the workers when it unilaterally announced the closing of a

dozen plants and the elimination of tens of thousands of jobs. And who can for get the respect Ford and Chrysler have shown in repeatedly gouging billions of dollars in concessions out of the hides of their workers. Is this the model Ephlin is calling for Colt to follow?

But Ephlin wasn't really lecturing Colt. Those billionaires already know how to try to drag concessions out of their workers. Ephlin was lecturing the workers, trying to convince them that class cooperation, rather than struggle, is a better way.

But what the first anniversary of the Colt strike shows is not that the workers should put aside the class struggle. Rather, they should organize it better by building a conscious opposition to the traitors, the UAW officials who are undermining this strike. □

Denver janitors win union rights

Seventy percent of the janitors working in downtown Denver recently won a new contract with four employers. The janitors are mostly Mexican nationality women who work for companies that contract to do janitorial work with downtown building owners.

A while back, the agencies broke the janitors' union, eliminated benefits, and cut wages from \$5.10 an hour down to the minimum wage. But the janitors reorganized themselves and have carried out mass marches on various of-

fice buildings since May. They got strong support from the Mexican nationality community and from various construction workers.

The four agencies eventually were forced to sign a contract which will restore the level of the workers' pay and benefits within three years and which provides some job security. The workers are continuing their campaign to organize the rest of the janitors so that, united, they can push forward their demands. □

Garment workers fight rotten homework jobs



Homeworkers picket Norma Kamali's showroom.

Garment workers in New York have been waging a month-long campaign demanding that high-fashion clothes designer Norma Kamali stop using the homework system to produce her clothing line.

Although Kamali sells her clothing

line for hundreds or thousands of dollars per garment, she is paying the 100-200 workers who produce them as little as \$2 an hour. The work is done mostly by Latin and Asian women working in their

Continued on next page
See **HOMWORK**

Bitter lessons of USX strike

The six month strike of 44,000 steel workers against USX is over. But many of the workers will not be returning to their jobs. The rotten contract signed by the leaders of the United Steel Workers (USW) not only cuts wages and benefits by about \$2.45 an hour, it also sanctions enormous job elimination.

How did the workers who fought so long and hard end up with this miserable agreement?

The rank-and-file workers didn't want these concessions. Their sentiment was clear at meetings of some of the largest locals — from Gary, Indiana and Loraine, Ohio to Irvin, Pennsylvania — where the workers overwhelmingly stood up to denounce the sellout. But the USW hacks wouldn't let them vote at these meetings. Instead, they were forced to mail in ballots. And, inexplicably, the tally reported by the USW hacks came out to more than 4 to 1 in favor of the concessions deal. That tally is hard to believe. But then everything done by the USW hacks in this strike

has been hard to believe.

The rotten USX contract is the sorry result of the USW leaders' policy of splitting up the steel workers company by company. The union bureaucrats claimed that because of the crisis in the steel industry it was better to negotiate company by company, tailoring contracts to the particular situation of each, giving concessions to those in "dire situations" while resisting those who showed profits. But all this did was to strengthen the hands of the monopolies. Workers at each company stood alone. And instead of a strike to shut down the steel industry, a strike that could have shaken the economy of the entire country, the USX workers stood alone in a war of attrition with the mammoth USX monopoly. Economic crisis is not a time for splitting up the workers. The results of this strike show that what is needed is more unity than ever.

This concessions agreement is also the bitter fruit of the USW hacks call to "save the steel industry" by uniting

with the U.S. steel monopolies against "foreign competition." Here's where splitting up the workers begins. Instead of unity of the workers everywhere to fight for jobs and a decent livelihood, to fight for their own class interests, the workers are supposed to defend the interests of their "own" bosses. Competition between workers for the sake of their "own" bosses doesn't stop at the border. It's who will go the lowest from country to country, from company to company, from mill to mill. Unity with your "own" boss' dog-eat-dog competition with the other bosses only means getting sucked into competition between the workers. The results of the USX strike shows that what is needed is not class collaboration but, instead, class struggle, the struggle of the working class against the entire class of bosses.

The sellout USX contract is, in short, the product of the treachery of the USW bureaucracy. The USX strike would have been a bitter fight no matter what.

The giant steel monopoly was out for blood and had the backing of the entire concessions offensive of the capitalist class. But the USW hacks sabotaged this strike before it even began, undermined every attempt at building up mass actions, and then forced through a contract that is even worse than concessions deals settled at Bethlehem and elsewhere. As long as these hacks are in the driver's seat the workers' movement is headed for disaster. The results of the USX strike shows that what is needed is to organize the rank and file independent from the union bureaucracy and in conscious opposition to its sellout policies.

The USX strike is over. But it teaches many lessons for the fight ahead. The USX workers, and all the steel workers, must assimilate these lessons quickly and get organized for the looming battles against mill closings and layoffs, against job combinations and overwork. □

HOMEWORK

Continued from previous page

homes for 10 to 14 hours a day. The women receive no medical, disability, unemployment, or other benefits. As well, the workers have to pay for their

Fight the layoffs! Make GE pay!

The January 16 issue of the *Boston Worker* calls for a fight against the layoff of some 2,500 workers planned at General Electric's complex in Lynn, Massachusetts.

GE is planning to shut down its turbine plant in Lynn. But, as the *Boston Worker* points out, "GE is not getting out of the turbine business. It is moving the work to lower-paying, more automated plants — including to non-union operations, such as Bangor, and farmout shops. Faced with a drop in demand for turbines due to the worldwide industrial stagnation, GE is hoping to maintain its turbine profits through laying off 1,950 people and breaking up one of its more militant work forces."

GE is also cutting jobs in its aircraft division. "In Aircraft, the orders from the Pentagon have leveled off, but not GE's productivity drive. Speedup, 'factory of the future' automation, job combination, and farmout have continued allowing them to plan at least 700 layoffs."

own equipment, rent and electricity.

Kamali replied to the workers' demands with racist insults and threats to have security guards physically attack their picket lines. But the garment workers are continuing to picket her stores. □

Instead of mobilizing the rank and file for mass struggle against GE's job elimination, the bureaucrats of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) are scheming on ways to help GE's profit picture. On the one hand they are out begging capitalist politicians for more contracts for GE. And on the other hand they are trying to get the workers in each department to work to prove to its manager that they can do the work cheaper and better than the farmout shops.

The *Boston Worker* reports that "Local 201 officials are scheduled to meet with the New England Congressional delegation on January 28. And what will they ask for? For the politicians to get more contracts for GE-Lynn. This would result in the layoffs being shifted to Pratt or to some other region of the country. This would only help GE to make more money, destroy any solidarity between workers in the same industry, and help automate us permanently out of work faster. By lobbying for contracts, we are supposed to be-

come cheerleaders for higher GE profits instead of fighting to make GE keep us working or provide income for those laid off.

"Our demand on the politicians must be for taxes on GE and the other billion-dollar corporations to provide adequate income for the unemployed. Our demand on GE must be to keep everyone working at their expense. Only

Democrats go to bat for concessions at GM

On January 2, Michigan's Commerce Director Doug Ross publicly demanded that the workers at Pontiac Central give in to GM's demands for local concessions. Ross is a top aide of Michigan's liberal Democratic Governor James Blanchard. Once again the liberal Democrats are going to bat for the Reaganite concessions drive of the auto monopolies.

In the last several months GM has kept up a steady stream of official announcements and leaked rumors of plant closings. Roger Smith's hit list has grown to over 14 assembly and stamping plants and another 20 parts plants. GM's purpose is not only to eliminate tens of thousands of jobs, but also to create a hysterical atmosphere of blackmail. Under the threat of plant shutdowns, workers at each plant are pushed into competing with workers at other plants over who will give GM the most local concessions to "save their

own plant." Such is the case at Pontiac Central. In November, GM Chairman Roger Smith announced that part of the Pontiac Central truck assembly plant would be closed, eliminating 2,000 jobs. Soon after this, GM began to pit the other 2,500 workers at the remaining portion of Pontiac Central against the workers at the Janesville, Wisconsin truck assembly plant. GM demanded that the workers at each plant agree to the elimination of most job classifications and to the gutting of protective work rules and seniority rights. GM promised that which ever gave up the most local concessions "might get" the prize of keeping their plant open with the production of a new line of medium duty trucks.

The workers at the Pontiac plant aren't interested in playing GM's blackmail games. They've declared that they don't want to compete against other GM workers or give up hard-won seniority and job classification protections. The United Auto Workers (UAW) international leadership, however, is going along with GM in this blackmail competition between plants. And in Janesville, the local UAW hacks agreed to concessions to "save" their plant. Meanwhile at Pontiac Central — under the anti-concessions pressure from the rank and file — the local UAW bureaucrats are, momentarily, posturing against GM. They have agreed to negotiate on GM's concessions proposals come September, but are hesitantly resisting the opening up of negotiations now. The workers' shouldn't trust these local bureaucrats a bit.

But Doug Ross doesn't want to wait even a few months. He went through the roof, denouncing the resistance to concessions as being "outrageous" and slandering the Pontiac workers as being "hardheaded and unreasonable." The Blanchard administration tries to make itself look like a friend of the workers with talk of "JOBS, JOBS, JOBS." But all that turns out to be is support for the standard lie of the monopolies that concessions will supposedly save jobs. □

"Smash the bourgeois lies" — a song

*Reagan and the rich have had their day,
throwing workers in the streets,
cutting benefits and pay.*

*But the sound of opposition has begun,
the shouts of "No Concessions!",
like a chorus becomes one.*

*The Party's agitation through the years
has shown the way,
"Concessions won't save a single job!",
"Mass struggle is the way!"*

*While the capitalists try to fool us with their lies,
and promise that tomorrow will be fine.*

[chorus]

*Lies...
Bourgeois lies, their promises are lies!
Lies all lies,
for a promise of a better day,
they tell us we must sweat and slave,
and for their profits we must live and die!*

*What of the workers' history of class war?
they try and teach our children lies,
of our struggle gone before.*

*Distortions cannot keep us from the truth,
with the founding of our Party,
our struggle was born anew.*

*From factory to factory, the goal of the working class,
to put the capitalists in their grave,
will be our glorious task.*

*From our Party we will learn to organize,
the workers' truth will smash the bourgeois lies!*

[chorus]

*No lies...
No more lies, their deception we despise.
Lies, no more lies.
For we will have a better day,
the working class will have its say,
for socialism we will live and die!*

by a supporter of the MLP
(To the tune of "Lies" by Stan Rogers)

Down with Reagan, frontman of capitalist reaction!

'Just say no' to drug testing of federal workers!

Reagan is a liar. Since contragate no one can doubt it. And he's lied again while trying to sell his plan for drug testing of federal workers.

Last August Reagan claimed up and down that drug testing was not aimed at terrorizing federal workers. Oh no, Reagan preached, "There should be no threat of losing their job or of any punishment. There should be an offer of help, that we would stand by ready to help them take that treatment that would free them from this habit." Sainly aid for those caught in the horrors of a life of drug abuse, this was the promise of the "great communicator."

But less than four months later the regulations for drug testing have come out sounding a little different than Reagan's August pledge. Written by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), under Reagan's orders, the regulations require that **disciplinary action must be taken** against any federal worker who shows positive on what are well known to be extremely inaccurate drug tests. The discipline may include anything from a written reprimand to firing. In fact, workers can be fired for refusing to take a drug test. And they can be fired for not obtaining or successfully completing counseling or rehabilitation (which they must acquire on their own since the government provides no drug treatment program for federal workers under Reagan's program).

A Plan to Intimidate All Federal Workers

Far from helping drug abusers, Reagan's plan is to intimidate and harass all federal workers. It is well known that Reagan has been cutting back the work force while speeding up the work and worsening the working conditions of those still employed. Mandatory drug testing is just another means to this end.

The OPM's definition of the "sensitive positions" to be tested is so broad that it covers virtually every federal

worker (except postal employees). At the same time, the OPM left it up to each agency chief to decide whether to test all workers in that agency or to use random testing or selective testing. And it will be fairly easy for the bosses to manipulate the test results. Thus a threat hangs like a sword over the heads of all federal workers, but the testing can be used to go after militants or other particular workers that an agency boss may want to get rid of.

Navy Study Confirms the Inaccuracy of Drug Tests

As well, the urinalysis that the government plans to use is notoriously inaccurate.

Recently a study commissioned by the U.S. Navy showed that even a person exposed to marijuana smoke secondhand, from others smoking it, can show a positive on a drug test.

Other studies have shown that people who have never taken illegal drugs can test "positive" if they've eaten poppy seeds, drunk tonic water, taken prescription medicine, and so forth. Indeed, urinalysis has a race bias, showing a false "positive" of marijuana usage for many people because of their dark skin. (These tests have a tendency to detect body substances which are related to melanin, the pigment for dark skin coloring.)

But the fact that many workers may be wrongly accused, and even fired, for drug abuse does not bother Reagan. He is simply not concerned for the plight of the masses of workers. Rather, he wants to increase the "efficiency" of the government bureaucracy on the backs of the workers.

But this is not only an attack on the federal workers. It is a model to unleash mandatory drug testing in the work places throughout the country. All workers should join with the federal workers in fighting this new offensive by the Reagan government. □

Job creation in the Reagan era: the drug-free urine business

The spread of drug testing in the work places is becoming a profitable enterprise. The monopolies want to use drug testing to increase their profits by weeding out "inefficient" workers (not to mention militants), cutting absenteeism, and intimidating their entire work force into a more intense pace of work. Labs, set up to carry out the testing, are already reporting that they are raking in bigger profits than ever. And now we hear that a number of new businesses have opened to sell "drug-free urine" to people who are eager to avoid having their own urine tested for drugs.

Several firms — in Texas, Michigan and elsewhere — have sprung up recently to distribute the urine. It is collected from donors for about \$5 a sample. Then it is tested. And the sam-

ples that show negative on the tests are "certified drug free," put into two-ounce bottles, and sold for about \$50. Since drug tests are so notoriously inaccurate, about the only way a person can attempt to insure they won't show up positive on a company's drug test is to use the "certified drug free" urine purchased from such labs. Of course workers can be fired and lose their livelihood if they are caught using such urine in the tests. But the sale of the urine is presently completely legal, and the firms report burgeoning profits.

Capitalist ingenuity strikes again. They long profited off of the workers' sweat. Now some entrepreneurs have found a way to make money off the workers' piss. □

Homeless organize to fight for relief

Homeless people are getting organized to fight against their plight in cities across the country.

In Chicago, on January 19, a union of the homeless seized a vacant house owned by the Veterans Administration (VA). The protesters pointed out that the VA owns over 100 vacant houses in Chicago which could be used to house the homeless. They also emphasized that some 40% of the Chicago homeless

are veterans (and their families) who are suffering, in part, because of the lack of services caused by the Reaganite cutbacks in the VA budget. (One of the protesters had been evicted from his home in December when the VA failed to send him his December disability check. The VA claimed that low funding forced it to postpone sending the check until January.)

In Los Angeles, on January 6,

policemen evicted 200 homeless people from the tent city they had erected one block from city hall in December. Some of the homeless resisted and three were arrested on charges of battery against police officers. The tent city had served as a center of protest. On December 28, for example, people from the tent city demonstrated outside the Century Plaza Hotel where Reagan was staying on his visit to LA. The protesters tried to march into the hotel to confront Reagan, but they were turned away by the police.

In Tucson, Arizona an organization of the homeless also erected a tent city near the Federal Building to protest their plight. Many families of workers have been lured to Arizona by rumors of jobs and the hope of avoiding a cold winter. But once there, the workers discover that the few jobs to be found are at wages too low to support their families. The severe shortage of low-cost housing has forced thousands to live on the streets. The police then attack them, displace them, and arrest many who have tried to camp in the parks. The organization of homeless in Tucson is demanding jobs for all at a living wage, housing for everyone, and an end to police harassment of the homeless.

A vigil by homeless people at the

Capitol in Washington, D.C. lasted for six weeks. It ended when the House, on January 27, approved \$50 million for emergency food and housing programs for the homeless. The bill is now before the Senate. But many of the unions of homeless are denouncing as inadequate and degrading the emergency funds and the temporary shelters which exist in a number of cities. They demand jobs, permanent housing, and an end to police attacks.

Homeless unions in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, and elsewhere are planning to carry out seizures of vacant VA houses in February to press forward their demands. Although many of the unions may suffer from reformist leadership, the fact that these organizations are springing up across the country is a good sign. It is an indication that homeless people are beginning to take their destinies in their own hands and are turning to struggle against the rich and their government. The class conscious workers and revolutionary activists should support the struggle of the homeless and help orient their movement onto the path of independent action against the capitalists and their political parties, the liberal Democrats as well as the Reaganite Republicans. □

Reagan shows contempt for the homeless

The Reagan administration recently demonstrated its arrogant contempt for the plight of the homeless.

The United Nations is producing a film on homelessness around the world as part of its observance of 1987 as the Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The film includes two segments on self-help projects of the homeless in New York City. But even this mild and fairly useless gesture toward the homeless was too much for Reagan. His administration demanded that the scenes on homelessness in the U.S. be cut from the film. The Reaganites claimed that Congress would consider the film unfair because it did not say that some people in the U.S. are homeless by choice.

There are some two million people in this supposedly richest of all countries who do not have a place to live. Most are forced into this situation because of the lack of decent paying jobs and the capitalists' takeback crusade that is

driving down wages, cutting social benefits, and sending housing costs through the ceiling. This capitalist offensive is headed up by the Reagan government. But when protests mount against it, the Reaganites plead that the poor are lazy and the homeless want to live in the streets.

The answer to such callous disregard for those who are suffering is for the workers to take power themselves. Good housing can be provided for all by simply seizing the estates of the filthy rich and setting unused resources to work to build new homes. And with workers' power and the construction of socialism, decent jobs can be provided for all who can work. Poverty and homelessness are not inevitable. Through revolutionary struggle the workers can put an end to all of the evils of capitalist exploitation and build a new, socialist society. □

Meese denounced in Detroit



On the night of January 27th, 400 people demonstrated in Detroit against U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese.

Meese, on hand to deliver the commencement speech at the Detroit College of Law, used the opportunity to try to cover up the contragate scandal and to defend Reagan's dirty war

against Nicaragua. But the demonstration outside the hall lambasted the U.S. imperialist aggression as well as the racist and reactionary domestic offensive of the Reagan government.

Many of the protesters were college

Continued on page 12
See MEESE

APARTHEID
NO!
REVOLUTION
YES!



Glimpses through the news blackout: The black people of South Africa fight on

The South African racists have banned all news of the anti-apartheid struggle. They have banned virtually all forms of protest. But they are unable to make the struggle go away. Even from the small bits of news released through the racist authorities, it is clear that the black and other oppressed toilers are continuing to hurl themselves into combat against the racist oppressors.

The Workers' Movement

The black and mixed-race workers' struggle against the vicious exploitation by the white capitalist rulers has marched on. In January, a strike of 10,000 workers of the O.K. Bazaars department store chain continued. This strike began in mid-December as the workers demanded an increase in their paltry wages. The workers have fought on despite the repression of the government which has detained or arrested scores of strikers. But the only reason news of this strike reached the press was that an unrelated bombing of the department store took place on January 9.

The ferment among the militant miners continued this past month. One sign of this was a walkout and mass resignation by 3,500 workers at the General Mining Union Corporation's Beatrix coal mine near Johannesburg. This action was taken to protest the murder of eight miners and the injuring of 53 more in fighting on January 9. The sparse reports don't tell whether the miners were directly attacked by racist forces or whether the authorities resorted to their often-used method of inciting tribalist gangs against the miners.

In the Black Townships

Despite the news blackout, reports of some of the actions in the black townships has leaked out. The masses have been retaliating against the racist storm troopers who patrol the townships. The armed forces are notorious for gunning down unarmed protesters, mass roundups, house-to-house searches and other terrorist activities. This

Another atrocity by the 'moderate' Buthelezi

Bantustan leader Chief Buthelezi has carried out another despicable crime on behalf of the white South African rulers. On January 21, members of his Inkatha organization set out to murder Victor Ntuli, a local leader of the UDF (a reformist anti-apartheid coalition). They burst into the home of his father, Willi Ntuli, in KwaMakhuta township near Durban. They opened up with machine gun fire. They failed to get Victor, who was in hiding at the time. But when the slaughter ended, Willi Ntuli and 11 others, including seven children, were dead.

past month the government reported several incidents of white police being shot by the oppressed residents.

As well, the black people have continued to punish the police informants and other government stooges in their midst. In Kwanobuhle township near Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape, three black traitors were burned to death.

The School Boycotts

Over the past couple of years, the black students have conducted a series of school boycotts. They have been aimed not only against the racist school system, but also against the occupation of the townships by the racist troops, the "state of emergency," and other features of the apartheid system.

In response to the boycotts and other student activism, the Botha regime has cracked down hard. It has closed down schools where protests occur, posted armed troops on the campuses, instituted an ID system to help track militants, threatened mass expulsions of protesters, etc.

Besides this, the students have faced the treachery of the reformist leaders in the struggle who have urged an end to the boycotts.

Under these conditions the boycott movement has faced some temporary setbacks. But the lid cannot be kept on for long. This past month, as the regime boasted of "very encouraging" school attendance, reporters touring the schools noted that a significant number of high school students are continuing to boycott classes. Meanwhile, the racists are so terrified of the prospects of more student revolt that they have closed down 70 high schools in the Eastern Cape.

Despite the racists' efforts to hide the truth it is clear that the anti-apartheid struggle is still engulfing South Africa. And undoubtedly the movement far exceeds what the few specks of official information reveal. Repression and news blackouts will not save the racists from feeling the wrath of the liberation struggle. □

How He "Avoids Violence"

The Reagan administration and the bourgeois media praise Buthelezi as a "moderate" opponent of apartheid. This "moderation" is advertised as the alternative to violence. Now we see again the grim reality behind this lie. We see that this "reasonable" opponent of apartheid organizes coldblooded massacres in his frenzy to eliminate the opponents of the racist regime. This is what he calls avoiding violence. In his statement on the massacre, he pontificated that "Black-on-black violence stands today as the worst obstacle to

negotiations of any kind."

While claiming to be a force separate from both the racists and the militant activists, Buthelezi has continually unleashed his thugs to kill and brutalize the anti-apartheid forces. But when it comes to the Botha regime we see an entirely different stance. Buthelezi is on his knees when it comes to dealing with the white masters. He has carved himself a niche in the apartheid system as chief minister of the KwaZulu bantustan. He is an opponent of sanctions, even the weak-kneed measures of U.S. and West European imperialism. He is a good pal of Ronald Reagan, the notorious defender of the racist regime. The "moderate opponent" of apartheid, Buthelezi, is in fact a two-bit lackey of the Botha regime.

The Racists Buy Gangs to Attack the Black Masses

The Botha regime thinks it is clever to use a few soldout blacks to kill the black militants. It by no means restricts itself to using Buthelezi and his Inkatha

How to tell when a prisoner is a hostage

Since December 17, an American priest, Rev. Casimir Paulsen has been held in a jail without charges in the South African bantustan of Transkei. Transkei is one of the bantustans that has been formally declared "independent" by South Africa.

According to all accounts this priest was simply a mild reformist critic of apartheid who associated with student activists as chaplain of the University of Transkei. But after two years of protests at the school, the puppet government of Transkei began a crackdown on student protesters. Because of his association with activists, Rev. Paulsen was also rounded up.

There is nothing particularly unusual about Paulsen's arrest. Under the "state of emergency" in South Africa some 22,000 opponents of the Botha regime have been detained. But what is of particular interest is the response of the U.S. government to Paulsen's detention. It has murmured a few things to the South African racists and then fallen silent.

Everyone knows the hysteria being whipped up today over the American hostages in Lebanon by the U.S. government and the mass media. Reagan has even threatened military action to rescue the hostages — or slaughter some Lebanese. One aircraft carrier has already been set into motion. And who

Boston high school protest

(Reprinted from Jan. 19 "Boston Worker," paper of the MLP-Boston.)

Last Friday [January 16] students at English High School walked out of classes in protest against the elimination of yellow bus service and the school committee's program of forcing high school students to take MBTA service to school. This latest move of the school committee has added an extra half hour to 45 minutes each way to the daily commute of the students.

Superintendent of Schools Laval Wilson has stated that the change to MBTA bus service was a money-saving measure. But anyone can see that the extra MBTA bus service will actually cost the taxpayers more than the cheaper yellow bus system. The real reasons that Wilson is trying to eliminate the yellow buses are: (1) to break up the most militant section of school employees, the school bus drivers, with layoffs; (2) to discourage students from attending integrated schools, especially magnet schools, by making it more difficult to get there. If any money is saved it will come from reducing the student population by encouraging a higher dropout rate.

The school committee, with Wilson as their black frontman, is not concerned with the education of the poor and work-

thugs. For example, in early January residents of the Kwanobuhle township reported that a force of over 1,000 black traitors ("witdoeke") was escorted to the township by police armed with helicopters and armored cars. The "witdoeke" were then turned loose to vandalize homes and terrorize anti-apartheid militants. In their rampage they killed two people.

The Struggle Against the Traitors Must Continue

The Inkatha massacre and the activity of the "witdoeke" illustrate for the thousandth time the savagery of the "civilized" rulers of South Africa. Furthermore they demonstrate why the anti-apartheid militants fight the traitors used by the regime to attack the movement. This struggle is not some senseless "black-on-black" violence as portrayed by Buthelezi and the bourgeois media. It is a struggle between the anti-apartheid masses and Botha's henchmen. □

can forget the din over the hostages held in Iran. For well over a year the media raved every day about "America held hostage." Meanwhile the Carter administration launched a failed raid into Iran. And Reagan came to office campaigning against the alleged weak stand of Carter on the hostages.

The reason for such hysteria was that it served as a pretext for U.S. imperialism's military intervention in the Middle East. It was used to justify revenge against the Iranian people who had toppled the Shah of Iran. And it was a convenient smoke screen to support the U.S.-backed Israeli invasion of Lebanon and other efforts of U.S. imperialism to maintain its domination in the Middle East.

But with Paulsen the government has confined itself to a few quiet diplomatic protests. The Reagan administration is not kicking up a fuss over Paulsen because it would discredit their dear friends, the South African racists. It would further expose them as a gang of thugs and undermine Reagan's drivel about "democracy" in South Africa. U.S. imperialism would rather let Paulsen rot in jail than offend their racist brothers. A prisoner is a hostage when Reagan wants a pretext to bomb someone, but is just another body when Reagan's friends are the jailers. □

ing class youth. It is more concerned with making the schools as segregated as possible and reducing expenses for educating poor and working class kids.

The students are right to protest in defense of their education. Every proposal Wilson has come out with in the last year and a half has been aimed at cutting back on their education while feathering the nests of the bureaucrats and their wealthy friends.

Last spring the students successfully stalled Wilson's plans to close Umana High School, Madison Park and other programs that offer better educational opportunities to working class youth who can't get into the more elite exam schools. The school committee is worried that student protests may again upset their Reaganite plans against the youth. And so they have responded to the English High walkout by suspending 15 of the students involved in the walkout. This repression against the students should be condemned. The efforts of the students to build a mass struggle in defense of their education should be supported by all workers. □

On the plot to bomb U.S. embassies and blame it on Nicaragua

The Reagan government has been seeking to strangle Nicaragua. To justify new escalations, it needs a pretext. It needs an excuse. And then the news media and Congress and the entire bourgeoisie will raise a fuss about evil Nicaragua.

Mind you, it doesn't take much to set the so-called liberal news media and the Congress into epileptic fits of patriotic frenzy. Even the trial of Eugene Hasenfus, a man who was caught redhanded flying military supplies for the contras into Nicaragua, was considered a pretext. How dare Nicaraguan courts try an American for merely waging war upon Nicaragua!

How to Manufacture A Big Pretext

Last year there was an attempt to manufacture a really big pretext. The contra network set up a plot to bomb several U.S. embassies in Central America and kill several Americans, including the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica, Lewis Tambs. One of the contras involved in the plot was to be killed by his partners and left with forged papers to prove that he was a Sandinista. Oh, how the U.S. government would have screamed about terrorism, and the liberal Democrats would have whined about how Nicaragua betrayed them (as if Nicaragua had voted \$100 million to exterminate them, and not that they had voted \$100 million to exterminate Nicaraguans).

The plotters were one of the circles of contras, American mercenaries and contra-lovers, and liaison men to U.S. government agencies (CIA, NSC, etc.).

It can also be noted that two journalists, Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, informed officials of the U.S. embassy and Costa Rican security of the plot a month earlier, in June 1985. But this didn't stop the planning for the plot. The only result was that the contra network found out that the plan had leaked and began taking retaliation against those it thought unreliable.

A Threat Against Nicaragua

On July 18, 1985, the U.S. ambas-

sador to Nicaragua, Harry Bergold, delivered a fierce letter to the Nicaraguan government. The letter denounced them for allegedly instigating "terrorist attacks" against Americans throughout Central America. It claimed knowledge of particular preparations, and it threatened an "appropriate reaction from the United States." This letter was publicized in the American press, and the particular "terrorist" actions referred to were never revealed.

This seems to indicate that higher-ups in the government were aware of the plot and willing to use it as a pretext. After all, among the plotters were the men who the contras used as their contacts with the U.S. government. And the U.S. officials had been informed by the journalists. But it is possible that the Reagan administration had a different provocation in mind.

The Plot Unravels

In any case, on July 28 Honey and Avirgan published an article in the *London Times* exposing the bomb plot. This compromised its ability to be presented as the work of the Nicaraguan government. And the plot fell through.

The plot to bomb Tambs had been first revealed by the contra called "David" who was to be killed and planted with false Nicaraguan papers as part of the plan. When it was discovered that "David" had cold feet and had leaked the plan, he was taken prisoner by his former buddies. (He escaped, but was recaptured and killed.) Since then, however, the existence of the plot has been confirmed by various other former members of the contra network, including former Dade County Deputy Sheriff Jesus Garcia, mercenaries Jack Terrell, Peter Glibbery, and Stephen Carr, and others.

Not the First Assassination Attempt

It is notable that the two American journalists, Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, who broke this story in the press, had also been incidental victims of a previous contra bomb plot.

It seems the CIA-contra network also

tries to solve its own internal disputes with bombs. In May 1984 rival contras, now thought to be the same group that would later plot against Tambs, tried to kill contra-leader Eden Pastora with a bomb. The bomb went off at one of Pastora's press conferences, killing eight people and wounding Pastora, Avirgan, and others. (Since then, Pastora has testified against various other contras. While various contras claim high-minded motives for talking about contra crimes, in a number of cases they began talking after suffering death threats from their own contra buddies.)

And Earn Some Drug Money

The CIA-contra network was not only fond of assassination. Besides creating

a pretext for direct U.S. attacks on Nicaragua, the plot was also designed to enrich various individuals. Lewis Tambs was chosen as the target for definite reasons. True, he was a diehard Reaganite reactionary and contra supporter. But he was also hated by the big Colombian drug dealers, such as Jorge Ochoa and Pablo Escobar, for his activities as U.S. Ambassador to Colombia (prior to his Costa Rican posting). These big cocaine kings put a one million dollar price on Tambs' head.

The contras had been financing themselves with drug-running for the Colombian cocaine kingpins. Killing Tambs would not only solidify their connection with these drugdealers, but give them a million dollar payoff. □

Key witness found dead

Have you ever noticed how witnesses against organized crime turn up dead? Well, there is private-organized crime, and there is government-organized crime, for what else is the contra network?

Right in the middle of the Iran-contra scandal, a key witness to contra gunrunning has turned up dead. Stephen Carr was a right-wing adventurer, a mercenary, who had decided to talk about the crimes of the contra network. He was a major witness for a congressional investigation of contra gunrunning. And he was also a key witness for a lawsuit charging U.S. government and contra figures for being part of a terrorist network; this case is being brought by the journalists, Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, with the help of the Christic Institute.

In mid-December, Carr, who was 27 years old, was declared dead of a cocaine overdose. But his brother said that Carr had feared for his life in the last few days before his death. Carr had been afraid that the government would not allow him to repent of his role in the contra underworld. As his brother put it, Carr was afraid that "his country" would assassinate him for telling the truth. (*CBS News*, Dec. 15)

Others have the same idea. Another one-time contra network man, former Dade County Deputy Sheriff Jesus Garcia, is now talking about contra crimes, including the plot to blow up the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica and blame it on the Sandinistas. Garcia says that the contras tried to kill him earlier when they thought he had leaked information on their operations. And now that he is talking, he states: "I'm going to get hit [murdered]. I'm gonna get hit. I know this game. This game is so dirty it ain't funny. I don't know if there is any difference between the KGB and the CIA. I didn't know how dirty this game was until now." (*In These Times*, Dec. 10-16)

The congressional investigators are making a big fuss about how they can't get North and Poindexter to talk. But it seems that someone thinks that the real problem is not silence, but that some people are talking. In Carr's case, his testimony has been annoying the contra network for some time. Last year U.S. officials helped hurry Carr out of Costa Rica before he could testify for the defense in a lawsuit brought by U.S. contra-lover John Hull against journalists Avirgan and Honey. Now he talks no more. □

CAMPS

Continued from page 3

Reaganite program of police repression with a liberal coat of paint.

Unlike the Reaganites, Young will wring his hands over the deterioration of the schools, the high rate of unemployment for youth, the racial discrimination against black young people, and so forth. Indeed, these dismal conditions of capitalism are the source of youth crime. The young people face a life of poverty and unemployment, minimum wage jobs or serving as cannon fodder in the U.S. imperialist military machine. It is little wonder that, while most simply suffer with the miseries of life on the streets, some are forced out of desperation to chase the "get rich quick" illusion of criminal activity.

But does Coleman Young offer a solution to these causes of youth crime? Not on your life! These he calls "long-term" problems which should be dealt with some day. But in the meantime, he calls for the "immediate solution" of building more jails and detention camps to put the youth on ice.

Police repression is really the only program Young has to offer. He made this clear when he was asked about the possibility of mobilizing the community to help the youth. "I think so," Young declared, "but in the end, it means putting them in jail." In other words there is no other solution to youth crime be-

cause, as Young put it, "These kids are, some of them, hardened criminals at 16 and even younger, and to lecture them is not going to do too much." Lecturing or jailing the youth, such are the limitations of Young's imagination.

Young's Anti-Crime Hypocrisy

What is more, Young's tough talk against "crime" is pure hypocrisy. In the same newspaper interview where he calls for sweeping the streets clean of youth, he proposes to bring crime-ridden casino gambling to Detroit.

Young claims that casino gambling is just the thing to create jobs and revenue for the city. Of course, he never mentions that most of these jobs would be minimum wage janitorial and service work. Nor does Young point out that the most obvious effect of casino gambling will be to spread big-time organized crime, prostitution, and so forth. Young even proposes to build the casinos on the Belle Isle park, thus wiping out one of the few places where the youth of Detroit can go to escape the heat of the city streets. Out of the parks and into the casinos and organized crime, how's that for dealing with youth crime.

Coleman Young's "Anti-Crime" Plans Are a Crime Against the Youth

The bottom line is that Young's plan is not so much against crime as against

the youth. The mayor's real fear is that young people, caught in a hopeless situation, will rebel as they did in the 1960's. It's to deal with this fear that Young is proposing police repression to terrorize the youth into submission.

The solution to youth crime does not lie in more police and jails. Rather, the youth must be provided an uplifting education, decent jobs, and hope of a future that has some meaning. But these can only be won by the working people organizing themselves and mobilizing our young people into the fight against the rich and their politicians. Capitalism offers the youth only the promise of poverty and the police repression of the Reaganites and the liberal Youngs. The working people should fight these conditions and develop that struggle into a revolutionary torrent to put capitalism in its grave. This will provide our youth with a bright future in the building of socialism where — instead of a handful of rich — the working people and their children benefit from their labor. It is only under socialism that we the workers will be able to provide our children with an education, the promise of a job with a decent wage and a better life. A life free of capitalist exploitation and its offspring — youth crime. □

STRUGGLE

A Magazine of Proletarian Revolutionary Literature
Vol. 3, No. 1 Winter 1986-7



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Reagan dips his hands in Iran-Iraq slaughter

The reactionary war between Iran and Iraq is again in full swing. Thousands of young men from the two sides are daily falling in battle. The people outside the front lines of battle are also suffering. The Iranian government rains missiles on the Iraqi cities of Basra and Baghdad. And the Iraqis send their aircraft raining bombs on cities across Iran. As soldiers in their multitudes fall in battle, more and more civilians are turned into war refugees.

This is an insane war. It turns the stomach of all decent people. For nearly seven years, this war has gone on, killing and injuring over a million people.

This war is a crime against the peoples of both Iran and Iraq. There is no progressive side in this criminal war. The militarist Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein launched the war with an invasion of Iran in the fall of 1980, attempting to crush the revolutionary upsurge in that country. He was supported by imperialism and the reactionary Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf. Soon afterwards, though, the Islamic clergy who stole the Iranian revolution themselves took full initiative in clamping down on the Iranian revolutionary masses. And in the war with Iraq, the Iranian regime went all out with its own reactionary crusade against Iraq. Khomeini's goal is to overthrow the Saddam regime, impose a client Islamic regime in Baghdad, and to extract huge reparations out of the Iraqi people.

The regimes in Iran and Iraq are both regimes of exploitation. Whether they call themselves "Arab socialist" as in Iraq or "Islamic republicans" as in Iran, they are both regimes of the capitalist bourgeoisie. They are regimes which live on the backs of the workers and poor peasants, and which use the toilers of their countries as mere cannon fodder for their reactionary ends.

Imperialism Also Profits From This War

But the Iranian and Iraqi regimes are not the sole players in this savage war. The Iran-Iraq carnage also cries out for condemnation of the capitalist profit-makers the world over.

After all, where are the weapons of mass slaughter coming from? Dozens of countries — both avowed capitalist ones as well as revisionist traitors to socialism — are making billions by selling weapons to the warring sides. They include American, British, Israeli, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Korean, etc. Some make money by selling to both sides. And while the arms manufacturers and merchants make filthy rich profits from this war, the generals and military planners everywhere get to see how their weapons perform, the hapless soldiers of Iran and Iraq used as just so many guinea pigs.

Reagan Too Has His Fingers In this War

As the exposures emerging from the Iran-contra scandal have revealed, the U.S. government is also involved in the Iran-Iraq war.

In the early days of the war, the U.S. government winked at the Iraqi invasion. Relations between Baghdad and Washington warmed up. But more recently, as the Khomeini regime showed its staying power and consolidated its hold over the turbulent situation at home, and as it won some crucial battles, the U.S. stepped up overtures towards it. Reagan's weapons deals to buy influence in the Iranian regime are now very well known.

It also turns out now, from recent exposures, that the U.S. has been providing intelligence information to both sides in the recent period. And in both cases, this information was doctored.

What cynical game is Washington playing? There is only one explanation: it hoped to buy favors in both Baghdad and Teheran, while behind their backs it has schemed to deliberately prolong the war. The view of the strategic planners in Washington appears to be that the longer this war goes on, the better the prospects for increasing U.S. influence in both Iran and Iraq, and also elsewhere in the region. After all, this is the oil-rich Middle East.

Reagan was caught with his pants

down selling arms to Iran. Reagan first told us, it was only one planeload. But it turns out to have been much, much larger. And these weapons have been shown to be quite important in Iran's arsenal in its latest offensive. But the Pentagon has tried its hardest to minimize the role of the U.S. arms shipments. Here is yet one more example of official disinformation by the U.S. government.

As U.S. Warships Steam Towards the Persian Gulf, the Danger of a Wider War

Today, as Iran appears to be winning its latest battles, the Pentagon has sent a fleet of battleships into the Persian Gulf. Another carrier task force is also being deployed in the region. The U.S. Navy may just be there to show the flag, but there is a real danger of imperialist intervention in some form, should the Reagan administration decide against some particular outcome in the coming battles. In any case, nothing good will come from the U.S. military presence.

The workers of the world should not forget the lessons coming out of the brutal bloodbath in the Persian Gulf. It should serve as a clarion call for struggle against the exploiters, against the capitalist merchants of death, against world imperialism. □

'Amerika'—prime time propaganda for war and reaction

This February, ABC TV will broadcast a 12-hour mini-series called "Amerika" which claims to be about life in the U.S. ten years after an imagined takeover of the U.S. by the Soviet Union. ABC says that this \$32 million extravaganza is meant to have no political implications and is just an innocent examination of the values held by the American people. But on the face of it this is an obvious lie. The fact of the matter is that "Amerika" is nothing but wild Reaganite propaganda for war and reaction.

In reality, the U.S. and Soviet Union are imperialist rivals, both of whom are committing aggression against the rest of the world. But the Reaganites are not really worrying about a Soviet takeover. On the contrary, they believe that they can beat the Soviet Union via "winnable nuclear war" or other means. They raise the spectre of the Soviet takeover simply to panic people, to justify the Reaganite repression of the working class at home and war drive abroad. According to the Reaganites, there are only two alternatives: American-style capitalist slavery or Russian-style capitalist slavery. The working people are not even to think about overthrowing the Reaganites and living without capitalist rulers in a socialist America.

Under the banner of preventing the "evil empire" of the Soviet Union from conquering the world, the Reagan administration has defended an unprecedented build up in the aggressive armed forces of U.S. imperialism, the invasions of Grenada and Lebanon, the contra war against Nicaragua, the arming of fascist regimes worldwide, etc. "Amerika" jumps on the Reaganite bandwagon. By portraying a make-believe Soviet takeover as the future, it merely carries Reagan's pretext for real U.S. aggression today to its logical conclusion.

According to the plot of "Amerika," the conquering of the U.S. was a relatively simple matter because "the only people who were willing to wear a uniform were the elevator operators." There are also hints dropped that Soviet

superiority in weaponry was a factor. Thus the series attributes the Soviet victory over the U.S. to a lack of military resolve. How nicely this blends with Reagan's present fretting about how the Soviets are allegedly getting the upper hand in weapons production, how the U.S. war machine is rotting with neglect due to the lack of vigilance of the Carter administration, etc.

Indeed this TV show cannot resist repeating the idiotic right-wing accusations that the Democratic Party liberals are really dupes of the Soviet Union. In "Amerika" a Democratic Party politician even praises the Soviet domination of the world as the solution to nuclear war. Of course in the real world (a place "Amerika" wants nothing to do with) the Democratic Party liberals only pretend to oppose the war build up while in fact they vote for Reagan's war budgets and haggle with him over which are the best weapons to produce, etc.

Of course while the Democrats only posture against the U.S. war preparations, there is widespread genuine opposition to them among the workers and other progressive people. "Amerika" viciously slanders anyone who is sickened by the U.S. war machine. Could someone simply be opposed to Viet Nam style wars of aggression or to nuclear blackmail? Oh no. According to "Amerika" such people simply no longer cared about political freedom and democracy. What a farce! Opposing U.S. efforts to impose its will worldwide is considered anti-democratic!

Presenting the U.S. as the Victim of Central America

In the Reaganite fantasy world of "Amerika" the Soviet domination of the U.S. is carried out with occupation troops from "greater Cuba" which is supposed to be all of present-day Central America. These troops, who are under Soviet and East German advisors, are portrayed as the worst animals who level shantytowns with tanks, rape women and brainwash children. To top it all off, the occupation troops are

under the banner of the United Nations (called the UNNSU in the show).

Here "Amerika" has completely turned reality on its head. Presently the U.S. is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to finance a war against Nicaragua. The contras they back are well-known for rape, torture and drug dealing. Thousand of U.S. troops conduct war exercises in neighboring Honduras while the U.S. fleet hovers off the coast. The U.S. backs the fascist death-squad regime of Duarte in El Salvador. Reagan invokes the Monroe Doctrine and declares that all the territory on this side of the Atlantic Ocean is within the U.S. sphere of influence.

But in the mini-series the poor defenseless United States is being bullied by the small countries of Central America. The real-life tyrant has become the damsel in distress. This shameless lying is the same garbage Reagan himself dishes out. "We are not aggressors in Central America," states the Great Hallucinator, "we are just defending ourselves from the Cuban-Nicaraguan onslaught."

Militarism and Racism Hand-in-Hand

The TV show does not merely parrot Reagan on the questions of the "Soviet menace" and Central America. It copies his ideas on all social issues. Reaganism holds the racist view that blacks and other oppressed nationalities should stop complaining about discrimination, lack of jobs and cutbacks in social benefits and pick themselves up by their own bootstraps. (Of course it is OK for white racists to complain about alleged "reverse discrimination.")

In "Amerika" one of the ills of the "old America" is said to be that "the idea of equality became such a fixation that no one had to earn it — those with power simply relinquished it." (*Mother Jones*, Jan. 1987, p. 47) This echoes the Reaganite lie that the problem is not the inequalities of the social system but the lack of effort (read: laziness) that is holding back the national minorities. "Amerika's" particularly crude for-

mulation of denouncing a "fixation" with "equality" cuts to the racist heart of Reagan's stand. Is it any wonder that the original script reportedly had blatant racist references to the non-white occupation forces which were deleted only because of complaints from the cast?

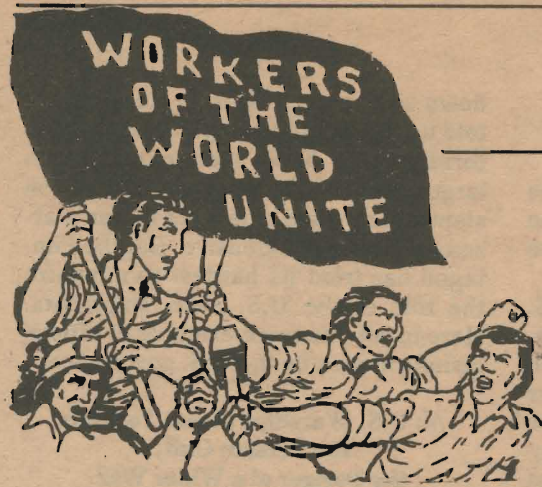
Reaganism is Anti-woman

While the film attacks the idea of equality in general, it apparently focuses on the issue of women's rights. The TV movie preaches that "a man giving up his power to a woman simply because she thought it was time for her to have it" is "some abstract idea of fairness which has no practical value." For "Amerika" the problem isn't blatant actual discrimination against women, but some fairy tale world where women just have to snap their fingers and they can have any job they desire. "See how evil the idea of fair treatment for women is" cries ABC's little examination of values. This stand is sure to warm the hearts of Reagan and his fundamentalist friends who hold that women's place is in the home.

Not a Single Reaganite Catch-word is Left Out

In its effort to promote everything backward, "Amerika" even takes up the cudgel against "secular humanism." Under the banner of fighting "secular humanism" the Christian fundamentalists have been seeking to rid the schools of such things as "The Diary of Anne Frank" because it does not preach that Christianity is the only true faith. They want scientific evaluations of the world thrown out too such as teaching the natural causes of tidal waves. In other words the rage against "secular humanism" is just a means to promote ignorance and bigotry. In "Amerika," by an amazing "coincidence" it just so happens that the curriculum imposed by the Soviet occupiers

Continued on page 12
See AMERIKA



The World in Struggle

Workers strike across India

More than two million public-sector employees in India struck state-run factories, mines and transport facilities on January 21 in the largest mass protest yet against Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's economic policies. The strikers directly violated the Essential Services Maintenance Act, which bans strikes in key economic sectors.

The nationwide strike came a few days after a strike of city bus drivers in New Delhi, which affected three million commuters. There too the government

banned the strike, but the workers went ahead with it anyway.

In the January 21 strike, workers paraded through the streets of Bombay, blocking traffic. And in Hyderabad picketing strikers clashed with police.

The nationwide strike was called to protest Gandhi's "liberalization" policies, which consist of liberalizing the investment climate for foreign multinationals while cracking the whip over Indian public-sector workers. □



Striking bus drivers in New Delhi.

Mexican university students strike

A general strike at the National Autonomous University in Mexico City began on January 29. The strike was called as a protest against the university administration's plan to sharply increase fees and to tighten admissions requirements.

Thousands of students actively participated in the strike. The entrances to classroom buildings were blocked off with barricades. The university complex came to a standstill, and classes for over 300,000 students were stopped.

The strike came one week after a spirited march of 100,000 students in

Mexico City's main square demonstrated support for the student demands. Marchers chanted the word "Congress!" to show their support for a demand that a university congress be set up, which would include student representatives. Officials of the Mexican government have threatened that they would not allow the National Autonomous University to be shut down by a strike, and they have been blaming agitation among the students on "outside agitators." But at last report the strike was proceeding successfully. □

High school students strike in Spain



Spanish secondary school students launched a nationwide strike in mid-January. The strike has kept large portions of the students — often as high as 80% — out of class. Connected with the strike the students have carried out large protest demonstrations in cities across the country. The students are protesting the government's plans to increase university fees and sharply tighten admissions standards.

In an attempt to stop the strike, the government on January 28 offered to increase scholarships to universities and to increase government spending on the schools. It also offered to consult student representatives when implementing so-called "reforms."

Not satisfied with this, students in Barcelona took to the streets and

Spanish students confront police in Madrid, January 23.

marched ten thousand strong. When police tried to disperse the demonstrators, they fought back against the police tear gas with stones. Six policemen were injured.

The Spanish students are feeling their

strength and are not ready to return to class at the first offer by the government. The students are now demanding free and open admissions to the nation's universities. □

Greek workers strike against social-democrats' wage cutting

Industry and transport came to a halt in Greece on January 15 as most of the country's workers staged a 24-hour protest against the austerity policies of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou. The strike was the largest since Papandreou took office in 1981. It signaled that the Greek workers are getting fed up with his 14-month-old policy of "wage restraint" which has held wage raises well below the rising cost of living.

Besides disrupting industry, transport and public services, the strike also closed many stores and banks and caused power blackouts in Athens and other areas. Organizers of the strike estimated the number of striking workers at between one and two million. The strike was highlighted by a rally of 30,000 workers outside the parliament building in Athens.

Social-Democrats Again Yield Before U.S. Imperialism

Besides becoming more and more exposed for his anti-worker policies, Papandreou is also becoming more exposed for his capitulationist stand towards U.S. imperialism.

Papandreou came to power as head of the Socialist Party (PASOK), claiming to represent the interests of the working people. Part of Papandreou's appeal to the masses was based on his criticism of U.S. imperialism. Papandreou had condemned U.S. support for the military dictatorship that ruled Greece in the 1960's and 70's. While campaigning for office Papandreou also swore up and

down that he would close down the U.S. bases in Greece.

But after being elected in 1981, Papandreou reneged. He renewed an agreement for the bases to remain until 1988. But Papandreou promised that after 1988, they would be shut down. However, now that the deadline is drawing close, Papandreou has again announced he is willing to negotiate an extension of the bases' lease.

This announcement comes right on the heels of another scandalous pro-U.S. stand of Papandreou's. This involves the commemoration of the Truman Doctrine. In the late 1940's U.S. President Truman sent massive amounts of military hardware to the rightist government of Greece to help it prosecute a war of extermination against communist-led workers and peasants. As a memorial to this aid the Greek government later erected a statue of Truman in the middle of downtown Athens. This statue was always an affront to progressive Greeks. Last spring this statue was blown up by an unknown group. At the time Papandreou said he would not bother having it rebuilt. But after being pressured by the U.S. Embassy, Papandreou caved in and recently announced that the statue will be rebuilt.

Once again, the true colors of social-democracy in Greece have been shown. Papandreou's anti-worker austerity and pro-U.S. policies are beginning to expose the reality behind the "socialist" rhetoric of his social-democratic party. □

LEBANON

Continued from page 1

first came in to support the Christian reaction but have remained by playing off the various warring sides. Meanwhile, in 1982, Israeli zionism carried out a blitzkrieg invasion of Lebanon, killing tens of thousands, inflicting wide suffering upon the Palestinian refugees and Lebanese people, and seeking to establish a puppet regime based on the Christian fascists.

The Reagan administration's most recent role in Lebanon was to give full support to the Israeli invasion and to the Christian fascists. But both the Israeli occupation and the U.S. efforts turned into a big fiasco. The Lebanese people, along with Palestinian fighters, forced Israel out of most of the country. The U.S. military presence was also ousted. But the situation remains turbulent, and the life of the masses remains a desperate one.

Meanwhile, as things have festered, there have also emerged desperate groups of people who resort to despairing and reckless acts, such as hostage taking, in order to achieve various goals. We do not agree with such acts, but it does not take a sage to see out of what conditions these acts have arisen.

The major problem in Lebanon is not the bogey man of "terrorism." Rather it is the conditions created by the local exploiters and reactionaries, by the Israeli zionists, by Arab reaction, and by imperialism. For progress in Lebanon, these conditions must be overthrown. That requires revolutionary struggle by the toilers. There are many difficult tasks in organizing that struggle, but

that is what is required.

Washington is not part of the solution in Lebanon. Its criminal activities are part of the problem. U.S. imperialism should keep its bloody hands out of the region. □

Our differences with the Party of Labor of Albania

A theoretical issue of *The Workers' Advocate* devoted to examining the stand and views of the Party of Labor of Albania towards controversial questions in the international Marxist-Leninist movement.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The New York City bookstore is closing effective February 1.

In post-Marcos Philippines:

Aquino's troops massacre protesters

On January 22 a brutal massacre took place in Manila during a protest march by peasants. Ten thousand poor farmers and farm laborers had come to the capital for a demonstration. They marched towards Malacanang Palace, the office of President Corazon Aquino. In front of the palace the government had massed thousands of heavily armed troops. When the protesters came up against the troops, the soldiers suddenly opened fire without warning. Eighteen of the demonstrators were killed and over a hundred wounded. Most of the dead were shot in the back or head.

This massacre is reminiscent of the worst outrages of the Marcos dictatorship. After the fall of Marcos, the U.S. politicians and media have lavished praise on the Aquino regime as a humane, democratic alternative to the old tyranny. Some promote her as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize and *Time* magazine proclaimed her as "Woman of the Year." But the massacre of January 22 exposes that behind the smiling face and sweet words of Corazon Aquino, the military guardians of wealth and exploitation still continue to repress and murder the poor, the workers and peasants, the oppressed majority.

The Marcos tyranny may have fallen, but even under the liberal democratic regime of Aquino, the Filipino state remains the armed apparatus of the rich for the oppression of the poor.

Aquino Spurns the Just Demands of the Tolling Masses

On January 22 Aquino stationed troops around Malacanang Palace for definite political purposes — to insulate her regime from the demands of the masses. The new regime is after all a regime of the same wealthy capitalists and landlords who have always ruled the Philippines. Aquino herself is from one of the biggest landlord families in the Philippines.

Even if Aquino did not give the direct order to fire on January 22, for a year now she has given the order to turn away the starving millions in the Philippines who are fighting for a better life. Of course, Aquino has covered up this stance toward the poor with a lot of liberal promises, but as the months go by this rhetoric is wearing thin.

When Aquino came to power, she made many vague promises to help the poor. She made declarations about ending poverty in the countryside. But for a year now she has done nothing. The landlords of the Marcos era — most of whom were loyal guardians of the dictatorship — remain in power in the countryside. The vast majority of the rural population (which makes up 70% of the Filipino population) remains impoverished, comprised of landless tenant farmers and laborers.

Over the last few months peasant organizations have organized a series of demonstrations in Manila to demand land reform. But each time Aquino spurned them, refusing to even meet with them. The week before January 22, peasant protesters occupied the Ministry of Agrarian Reform demanding land reform and better working conditions for laborers. But they still received no response.

So it was that on January 22 they staged a large, well organized and militant march on Aquino's palace. The fact that Aquino's troops gave them nothing but bullets shows that the liberal government is running short of rhetoric and being forced to rely more on the gun instead.

Aquino Cannot Evade Responsibility For This Savagery

After the recent massacre, Aquino, as

usual, was full of hypocritical declarations. In typical liberal fashion, she set up a commission of inquiry. This was the same thing she did when the KMU trade union leader Olalia was murdered last November by a death squad. And her armed forces commander, General Ramos, said that the troops on duty had "overreacted." In a conciliatory gesture, Aquino removed troops from the front of Malacanang Palace on January 26 when there was another left demonstration, this time protesting the massacre of January 22. But she merely stationed the troops nearby on side streets.

None of Aquino's conciliatory rhetoric erases the bloody act of January 22. It may well be that Aquino herself gave no direct orders for the shooting; the military men may have decided on their own to fire on the protesters. But the military assassins are part of the regime she heads up, and she herself has set up the conditions for them to act ruthlessly towards the masses.

On January 22 Aquino herself had placed the troops outside the palace. And they were prepared to use force against the protesters. After the massacre, General Montano, the head of the Manila police force, declared that "As far as I'm concerned, we did exercise maximum tolerance against these wild men.... We have tolerated them for so long. Don't think that we will stand by and wait for them to swamp Malacanang. Over my dead body."

The Aquino Regime Is a Compact Between the Liberals and Military Reaction

What is more, Aquino has been strengthening her political alliance with the militarist reactionaries who helped bring her to power. The Aquino government was from the start a coalition between the liberal bourgeois politicians and the bulk of Marcos' military establishment grouped around Marcos' Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and army general Fidel Ramos. The military has remained the main edifice of the new regime.

Of course, all has not been smooth sailing with this coalition. Some figures of her regime were not pleased with all her policies, and they plotted against her. In response to the threat of a coup from Enrile, Aquino dismissed him from her cabinet in late November. But at the same time she set about putting in place some of the changes demanded by Enrile and other rightists.

She fired some of her more liberal cabinet advisers. She reassured the military that her truce talks with the guerrilla movement did not mean she was soft on the revolutionary movement. She made bloodthirsty threats against the left. And she promised to do nothing against the military officers and troops who took part in the November coup attempt.

The massacre of January 22 was not an accident. It is a logical outcome of the nature of the regime Aquino heads up.

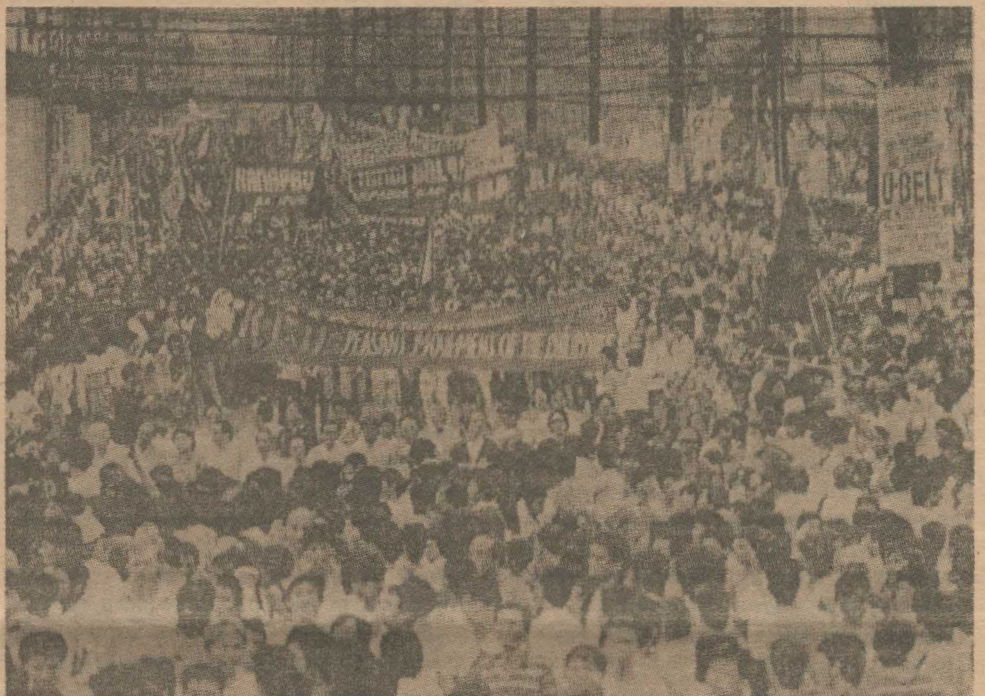
And this massacre hasn't been the only outrage suffered by the masses in the recent period. Death squad killings organized by rural warlords have continued in the countryside. Over 20 workers have been murdered during strikes. And the KMU trade union leader Rolando Olalia was himself kidnapped and savagely murdered, along with the driver of his car. You cannot separate any of this from the Aquino regime. Irrespective of what she is personally responsible for, what good is a regime under which reaction continues to act with impunity?

The Extreme Right Continues To Plot for Restoration

The Aquino regime however remains



Protesting farmers in front of the presidential palace duck soldiers' bullets, January 22.



Thousands march in Manila to protest the killings of 18 demonstrators by government troops, January 26.

in a contradictory position with respect to the rightist political forces. A section of the right, die-hard loyalists of Marcos, never supported her regime. Another section was a cornerstone of the new regime itself. Aquino has been pressured from both these rightist factions for a sterner stand towards the left and a lenient, conciliatory policy towards reaction. While she has remained beholden to the key elements within the military, dissatisfaction with her has grown among the rightists both within and outside her government.

When she came to power, she pledged reconciliation with the supporters of Marcos. But she also had to promote various liberal and reformist maneuvers to pacify the working people who had long struggled against the old tyranny. However, every promise she has made to the masses, every maneuver she has made towards the left — no matter they were empty and aimed at undercutting the left — has only earned her the ire of the right. As a result, while the masses become ever more restive, the right has stepped up its demands for a more repressive government and even stepped up its campaigns for the restoration of a Marcos-style dictatorship.

The extreme right has made a number of coup attempts over the last year. First there was an attempt last July by Marcos' vice-president Tolentino who declared himself president with the help of a number of military men. Then in November, Aquino's Defense Minister Enrile himself made a coup attempt with support from an even larger number of military men. Each time, the plotters were let go scot free. The military officers and troops who rebelled were only punished with a few extra pushups! A few days ago, once again, military

forces associated with Enrile, along with Marcos loyalists, launched another coup attempt. Many of the figures involved in the two prior putsch attempts were also players in this latest effort. And there were signs that this attempt may have even included a plan by Marcos himself to return. This was put down by the government, but it shows the frenzy of the right. The regime is making sterner noises about prosecuting the latest plotters, but the outcome of that is yet to be seen.

The right has been in a certain frenzy over the new constitution which Aquino is presenting to a national vote on February 2. Juan Ponce Enrile has formed a coalition with Tolentino, Marcos' vice-president. They are campaigning against the constitution, not so much because of objections to any clauses in the bourgeois constitution itself, but on the basis that it maintains Aquino in power for six years. Enrile is demanding instead that another presidential election be held. The timing of the latest coup attempt reflected a desire on the part of the right to prevent Aquino from getting her rule legalized for six more years.

This month, the Aquino regime completes its first year in office. As the January events show, the political situation in the Philippines remains unstable. The liberal regime cannot keep the masses pacified forever on empty promises; but neither does it satisfy the right who have long supported a fascist dictatorship as the only legitimate way to deal with the masses.

For the masses, the massacre of January 22 will only serve to open their eyes further. It reaffirms the need for revolutionary struggle, the only real way to achieve the demands of the poor and hungry toilers. □

What does 'modernization' mean for the workers in China?

Once again, China is very much in the news. First there were the student demonstrations. Now the news is all about reshuffling at the top levels of the Chinese leadership and about expulsions of certain prominent intellectuals from the ruling party.

The U.S. news media is busy speculating about the possible consequences of these changes for the Chinese government's policies for the "modernization" of China. They express worry that "modernizers" are being cast aside by "hard-line Marxist" elements within the Chinese leadership.

The unfortunate truth about China is that it is not a socialist country and there are no longer any communists in the ruling Communist Party. China is a country which shows the typical class relations of capitalism, and the "modernization" policy of the ruling revisionists is to speed up capitalist development — by stepping up the exploitation of the Chinese workers and poor peasants and by opening wide the doors of the country to Western imperialist exploitation.

As for the rifts within the Chinese Communist Party, these are not between revolutionary Marxists and reformists. They are merely factional squabbles among revisionist traitors to Marxism, who all stand for the capitalist road but differ merely in the details of how to consolidate capitalist economic and political structures in China. Some among them would like to openly and immediately embrace the Western liberal bourgeois order, while others consider this premature and still believe in the need for a somewhat "Marxist" cover.

Indeed, there is no rift among the Chinese leaders over the basic tenets of the plan for capitalist modernization. A look at what this plan means for the workers of China is useful to go behind the bourgeois news coverage. Let us take a look at some recent "reforms" in China.

Wiping Out Economic Defenses for the Workers

An important part of the Chinese revisionist platform is the elimination of a whole slew of social benefits and rights which were achieved by the working people in the period following the victory of the Chinese people's revolution in 1949.

AMERIKA

Continued from page 9

is called "social humanism."

What "Amerika" attacks "social humanism" for is for teaching such things that in U.S. history there were settlers who killed peaceful Indians.

As well it teaches that in the U.S. there were rich owners of companies and poor workers and that the wealthy people ran the country. The film claims that these things which only the blind can deny are just the invention of the communist brainwashers. In this way "Amerika" glorifies capitalism as a paradise on earth.

At the same time the show paints a completely horrific picture of life under the Soviet occupation. There is a farm crisis, decay of the cities, rampant drug taking, police-state measures, etc. The implication is that all of these ills are the result of the Soviet occupation.

Of course all the things credited to the Soviet occupation are well known features of life in the land of Reagan in 1987. They are the by-products of the capitalist system. But by whitewashing capitalism and slandering socialism, ABC hopes to discourage the workers and oppressed in the U.S. from thinking seriously about the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. True the Soviet Union of today has its own Viet Nam in Afghanistan and is suffering an economic crisis and

A major attack was launched on this front last fall, with the promulgation in September of regulations governing a new "contract system" of labor. This system was first implemented in pilot form over the last several years, and beginning October 1 it was imposed nationwide.

The official publications from China have been full of praise for the new system, lauding it as a "means to tap workers' creativity" and for "promoting greater efficiency and productivity." But in fact it is a vicious attack on the working class. Let us examine the major provisions of this system.

Contracts With Individual Workers

Every worker will now sign an individual contract with the enterprise he or she works for. This contract sets out the length of employment and the obligations, responsibilities, rights and interests of the worker and management.

Chinese leaders say that the contract is the result of "negotiations conducted on an equal footing" between the individual worker and the enterprise. (*Beijing Review*, September 15, 1986) But this is typical capitalist logic, which goes against the entire historical experience of the working class. The only way workers have ever made any steps forward is by overcoming competition in their ranks, by banding together in collective organizations.

Wiping Out Employment Guarantees

Under the new system, a worker's length of employment is stipulated in his contract. This is a change from the old system in which workers were guaranteed permanent lifetime employment. Now an employer can simply refuse to renew a worker's contract when it expires. This gives management a great deal of leeway in eliminating jobs or throwing out militant workers.

Cuts in Benefits

Under the new system, insurance benefits for workers have been cut back. Wages stay the same — for now — but workers will now be eligible for bonuses based on higher production. The Chinese capitalist rulers hope to step up productivity by introducing the rotten bonus system, typical in the capitalist

spiritual decay at home. But this is not due to socialism. These are signs that the Soviet Union has long become a capitalist country.

Another Product of Liberal Cooperation with Reaganites

"Amerika" is one shoddy lie from start to finish. Its only worth is that it inadvertently shows the depths of depravity of the Reaganites. But "Amerika" was not the product of the Reaganites alone. The writer, director

MEESE

Continued from page 6

students, including a number of law students who were graduating that night. They were outraged that Meese had been invited to give the commencement address. Supporters of the MLP also took part. They held a big red banner that declared, "All Out Against Reagan!" and two dozen placards were spread through the crowd denouncing the war on Nicaragua and U.S. aggression against the worker and peasant insurgents of El Salvador.

The demonstrators formed two big picket lines and marched around shouting many militant slogans including, "Reagan and the Ku Klux Klan, Racist Meese Is Their Man!" and "Down With Reagan, Down With Meese!" Although leaders of the American Civil Liberties

factories elsewhere in the world.

In the new plan, workers will also have to contribute 3% of their pay to their pension system. Previously the workers did not have to pay anything for the retirement plan.

Management Rights for Job Cutting and Layoffs

As part of the new system, management is also given "the necessary decision-making powers in the deployment of its work force." (*Ibid.*) In other words, individual contracts will stipulate management's prerogative to transfer workers as they wish from job to job, to combine and eliminate jobs, to throw workers into the street.

Indeed, the power to dismiss workers is openly affirmed for management. Specifically, the enterprises are authorized to fire workers who "violate labor discipline." (*Ibid.*) Previously the managers did have this formal right, but the revisionists complain that they did not exercise it often enough. The new regulations demand that managers be firm in exercising this power.

Grooming a New Class of Capitalist Managers

As the new contract system is put into place, the Chinese revisionists are making a great noise about decentralizing economic management. They are giving individual factory managers the go-ahead to do whatever is necessary to step up profitability. Chinese publications are full of talk about the need to separate management from ownership, and to separate management of the economy from the administration of the state. In this way, while ownership and the state are still said to be socialist, the Chinese revisionists are eagerly promoting a class of corporate managers whose livelihood and authority depend solely on the profits of their enterprises.

Cheap Wages to Attract Foreign Capital

The Chinese government is also publicizing its "labor reform" abroad in its drive for greater foreign investment. The Chinese leaders demand that the management of enterprises where foreign capital is invested be "granted all necessary decision-making power" and should be urged to "make the most of

and producer of the show is a self-proclaimed Kennedyite liberal who claims to have opposed the war in Viet Nam named Donald Wrye. And the "hero" of the film, an ex-Congressman who resists the Soviet occupation, is played by the singer Kris Kristofferson who is supposedly a supporter of liberal and pacifist causes and claims to oppose U.S. intervention in Central America.

At first glance it may seem odd that liberals would support such an openly reactionary project. But not really. After all, the Democratic Party liberals

Union and others tried to narrow the protest, the most popular slogan shouted repeatedly throughout the night was "USA-CIA, Hands Off Nicaragua!"

This demonstration is another indication that the contragate scandal is helping to fan the flames of protest against U.S. imperialism and in solidarity with the workers and peasants of Central America. We must work to build this movement further. □

CUOMO

Continued from page 2

progressive people showed no confidence in this system and came into the streets to condemn the attempts at a cover-up that the case has been kept alive.

Of course, the naming of a special prosecutor, even if he does produce in-

China's low labor costs." (*China Daily*, September 13, 1986)

Clearly, the purpose behind the new "reforms" is not to improve the conditions for the Chinese workers but to profit domestic and foreign capital out of the sweat and blood of the workers.

With Trade Union Leaders Like These...

As we have seen, through the "labor reforms," any collective unity that the Chinese working class had is being completely whittled away. And this is being done by a party that claims to represent the organized proletariat! Meanwhile, the official trade unions are no different.

Indeed, the official union leaders are urging workers to "participate in efforts to solve new problems that may emerge" in implementing the new system. (*Ibid.*) And the union leaders are so enthralled with the new plan that they actually praise unemployment as a good thing!

In an article in their journal *Workers' Daily*, they acknowledge that under the old system, everyone had "a strong sense of job security.... This has long been considered the great superiority of socialism over capitalism." But then they argue that this job security had many negative features, and they go on to extol competition for jobs among the workers as a tool for "rewarding the good and punishing the lazy." And they conclude: "Some say that once job competition is encouraged, there will be an unemployment problem. This is not a bad thing. Once a worker feels a sense of crisis, he will be forced to study and work hard..." (Quoted in *Beijing Review*, September 1, 1986, emphasis added)

The above reforms are merely a sample of the many "reforms" out of which the Chinese revisionist platform of "modernization" is made up. As is quite clear, these are typically capitalist measures and reflect capitalist ways of thinking about the working class. Workers here in the U.S. are quite familiar with such ideas and measures.

The Chinese "labor reforms" once again show that the revisionist leaders of China are nothing but enemies of the working class. The revisionists may feel complacent today, but out of the oppression of the Chinese working class will again come a new resurgence of the rebellion and struggle of the proletariat.

in Congress have not offered any serious resistance to the Reaganite agenda.

"Amerika" should inspire a burning anger against Reaganism among all progressive people. It shows what the real Reaganite agenda is -- war, racism, anti-woman prejudices, and total obscurantism. Its production by a major network, ABC, exposes the lie that American TV and journalism is supposedly progressive or to the left of the politicians. □

dictments, is a far cry from convictions. And no doubt efforts will continue to protect the role of the police in the Howard Beach attack and to let the racist killers off the hook.

The anti-racists must be vigilant. The path for gaining justice for Michael Griffith is through building up the mass struggle. The militant mass meetings and demonstrations must be kept up to demand the most vigorous prosecution of the entire lynch mob. And to accomplish this there can be no illusions about the courts or prosecutors delivering justice without the powerful fist of the mass movement leaving them no other choice. □

The CPUSA prettifies U.S. 'democracy'

Reformists and Contragate

To millions of people, contragate is teaching more about how the U.S. government works than the countless lies which are scribbled in civics textbooks and daily repeated by the capitalist press. In particular, contragate has opened up a window into how foreign policy is really conducted by the U.S. government. On the surface, there is no end to the high-sounding proclamations about "peace," "freedom," and "democracy." The reality however turns out to be quite sordid.

The revelations from contragate add up to yet another big indictment of the capitalist government which rules the U.S. For the revolutionary movement, this is a time to press home the truth about capitalist "democracy" and to affirm the need for revolutionary struggle.

But one finds quite a different approach from the reformist political forces, like the social-democrats and revisionists.

Some are openly dismayed by the crisis shaking the White House. The latest issue of *Democratic Left*, journal of the Democratic Socialists of America, finds it necessary to argue against DSA members who lament contragate with the view that "it damages the very concept of government."

Faced with the weakening of confidence in the government among the masses, the reformists generally seek to shore up faith in the bourgeois state institutions. A particularly shameful example of this stand is offered by the Communist Party, USA, a party which combines slavish support for Soviet revisionism with just as much servility towards the American capitalist liberals.

A look at the CPUSA's stand on contragate is illuminating to see how revisionism contrasts with revolutionary Marxism-Leninism.

The CPUSA on Contragate

According to the CP, what contragate has uncovered is "a conspiracy against democracy." They put forward the view

that, instead of the representatives of the people, a "secret military junta" is running U.S. foreign policy. (See the December editorial in *Political Affairs*, theoretical journal of the CPUSA.)

The same theme is spelled out in virtually every issue of *People's Daily World*, the CP's newspaper. In one major article, Gus Hall, General Secretary of the CPUSA, declared that the Iran-contra affair "is a serious breakdown of bourgeois democracy and government policy." (December 9)

From this perspective, the CPUSA goes on to promote the idea that the other institutions of the capitalist state, namely the Congress, can "secure bourgeois democracy." Indeed, the revisionists claim that, now that the White House is rocked by scandal, Congress may do all sorts of good things, from breaking up the intelligence networks to even "reversing the Reagan policies of cold war and aggression."

The CPUSA's conception of U.S. democracy is a complete illusion. It bears no resemblance with reality. It is ludicrous to suggest that contragate is some extraordinary aberration of capitalist rule in the U.S. It is the norm for U.S. foreign policy to systematically use such methods as disinformation campaigns, covert operations, and assassination plots. Has not every presidency — Democrat and Republican alike — had its share of such criminal deeds?

The CPUSA hides the crimes of the capitalist system. It apologizes for them by promoting the reformist myth that the problem with U.S. foreign policy is only some abnormality.

In a certain sense one could say that the way the U.S. conducts foreign policy is a "conspiracy against democracy." Hasn't it been shown time and again, for example, that a large majority of the people stand opposed to Reagan's contra war in Nicaragua? But it is the normal state of affairs for bourgeois democracy in the U.S. to include such "conspiracies against democracy." Capitalist democracy is designed to reflect the will of the capitalists and imperialists, not the will of the working

people. That is the nature of the system.

This situation cannot be changed by seeking some utopia of "pure democracy," but only by more class struggle. The working people must organize a mass movement against all capitalist parties. And to not simply hinder this or that "conspiracy against democracy" but to end them altogether, the capitalists must be overthrown in a socialist revolution and the working class must take power.

Will Congress Turn Into a Fighter Against Reaganism?

It is also complete nonsense for the CPUSA to promote the illusion that the Democrat-controlled Congress will now turn into a champion of struggle against Reagan and the entire U.S. war drive.

For one thing, it is quite well known that Reaganism has been implemented with ardent collaboration between the Republicans and Democrats. Both in domestic and foreign policies. While there have been quibbles over details, there has always been consensus over the essentials. And even now, despite the noises made by the Democrats over contragate, they have already pledged their support for strengthening the credibility and power of the Reagan presidency.

What's more, the idea that the Democratic and Republican congressmen will break up the U.S. intelligence apparatus is even more absurd. This apparatus is not simply an instrument of one or another president — it is an essential instrument of U.S. imperialism. It has been set up and is maintained with full bipartisan support. The struggle against this apparatus is a struggle against the capitalist congressmen just as much as against Reagan's White House.

The CPUSA — A Miserable Tail of the Democrats

The stand of the CPUSA on contragate is a craven, reformist stand. The revisionist party talks big about "secur-

ing democracy" and "dismantling the secret cabal," but in truth this is merely hyperbole to put three coats of bright paint upon the mild whimpers of the Democrats over contragate.

In fact, the CPUSA is just echoing the Democratic Party's positions, which is to make a lot of noise but not to disturb the essentials of Reaganism. At best, the Democrats only seek to make some cosmetic changes in governmental procedure in order to reinforce confidence in the capitalist state.

The CPUSA's agitation on contragate has enthusiastically promoted the Democratic politicians. The CPUSA even echoed the chauvinist charges of the Democrats that contragate proved that Reagan had become soft on terrorism.

The CPUSA's stand has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism. For revolutionary activists and class conscious workers, the issue raised by contragate is not to prettify the bourgeois state. It is not to portray a myth about contragate being some aberration from regular imperialist rule. It is not to prettify Congress and the Democrats as shining knights. Rather it is to lend clarity and consciousness to the skepticism and disgust that a large number of people are feeling towards the criminal activities of the White House.

The working people do not need myths about perfecting some utopia of bourgeois democracy. They need to be mobilized into struggle against U.S. imperialism.

The revelations from contragate call for stepping up the struggle against U.S. aggression on Nicaragua. They call for exposure and struggle against the CIA and the rest of the terror network.

And in the midst of the mass ferment, true communists spread revolutionary consciousness. They point out that the way to dismantle the brutal edifice of U.S. imperialism is not through some cosmetic tinkering with governmental procedures but through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. □

A social-democrat accuses the Howard Beach victims of 'reverse racism'

A social-democrat knows no shame. He can fancy himself a "socialist" and a "democrat" as he wallows in capitalist and reactionary slime.

A case in point is one Mr. Jim Sleeper, a teacher at New York University who also works with the social-democratic magazine *Dissent*. This Mr. Sleeper has penned a commentary on the Howard Beach case which gives you an idea of just how low a social-democratic scribbler can go. (See *In These Times*, January 21-27.) Entitled "Black Howard Beach Response Feeds Racism," Sleeper's article is racist trash.

Oh yes, Sleeper abhors white racism "the original sin." And you can even glean out of his article a number of condemning facts about the racist nature of New York's capitalist establishment.

He talks of the "many beatings and murders of blacks over the past 10 years by New York whites — including white police officers." He also admits that the pattern is that murder convictions don't come down for a white man who has murdered a black man in New York City.

Sleeper notes the case of the black transit worker Willie Turks who was beaten to death by a racist gang in 1982, that was prosecuted by the liberal Brooklyn DA Elizabeth Holtzman. He raises the Willie Turks case as an example of where the prosecution has supposedly done a good job at going after the assailants. But even here he has to admit that there was no murder conviction and only lesser charges stuck.

Any reasonable person would conclude from these things that a black man cannot expect justice from the criminal justice system in New York City. But not our Mr. Sleeper. His article is one big apology for the racist authorities. It's a big tantrum against the "wild charges" of an official cover-up for the Howard Beach lynch mob and for the police role in the attack.

Sleeper chimes in with Mayor Koch, the mass media and the rest of New York's racist officialdom to blame the victims themselves for the lack of justice in the case. It wasn't the fault of the police who deliberately hid mountains of evidence, or of the DA and the judge who rushed to drop the assault and murder indictments against the killers. Oh no, Cedric Sandiford and Timothy Grimes, the black survivors of the Howard Beach attack, and their lawyers, are to blame for any miscarriage of justice. Queens DA Santucci, according to Sleeper, was trying his best to indict the racist thugs, but the victims' failure to cooperate "didn't let him succeed." (Of course, Sleeper has to omit glaring details like that Santucci let the killers off despite having three signed confessions and a couple dozen witnesses to the murder.)

The real problem in the case, according to Mr. Sleeper, is the contempt for the criminal justice system, the press and other "white" institutions shown on the part of Sandiford and his lawyer. And this, he concludes, is a dangerous expression of "reverse racism ... racism perpetuated."

What rot! This lecture about "reverse racism" sounds like something out of Edwin Meese's script. But that's how low a social-democrat will go in this

alleged era of Reaganism. They will even dip into the sewer of Reaganite rhetoric to make a sniveling apology for racist injustice. □

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THE JANUARY 20, 1987 ISSUE CONTAINS

- Articles from the Third National Conference of the MLP, including the opening speech "Underneath the Stagnation, the Stage Is Being Set for Renewed Struggle," and a speech on building an in-plant distribution network.
- Articles against racism include: Noah Roisten on trial for self-defense against a racist attack and a leaflet against the Howard Beach lynch mob murder of Michael Griffith.
- Articles against the "official" student newspapers' opposition to the anti-apartheid struggle at UC Berkeley and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Articles reporting on strikes and work place struggles including, "Lessons From the Kaiser Strike" and Chrysler gambling with the jobs of the Jefferson Assembly workers.

...and other articles

9th Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania

--A disappointment for international Marxism-Leninism

The Ninth Congress of the Party of Labor of Albania was held last November. It gave its views on the problems of the world working class movement. The next issue of the *Workers' Advocate Supplement* contains a major article analyzing the stands of the Ninth Congress on the world situation. Why is this important?

Socialist Achievements

As the only socialist country in the world today, and because it proclaimed revolutionary stands opposed to the Soviet and Chinese revisionists, Albania has attracted international interest. In the capitalist world, economic crisis has ravaged country after country and the conditions of the workers and peasants have worsened. But in Albania, despite years of bad weather and problems caused by fluctuations in the world market, there were no emergency measures against the masses. The growth rate was less than planned, but the conditions of the toilers continued to improve.

As well, Albania continued to stay outside the imperialist alliances. The working class was free of the threat of being cannon fodder for aggressive war.

Obtained by Revolution

These and other accomplishments of socialism were not just handed to the Albanian workers and peasants as a gift from benevolent overlords. No, they were won in struggle. The Albanian working class had to found its own communist party, now called the Party of Labor of Albania. This party led the working people to win liberation by revolution against the German and Italian fascist occupiers in World War II and against the local, Albanian exploiting classes. And the need for revolutionary vigilance continued after the war, as the Albanian working people had to face both the hostility of the capitalist countries and the treachery of the various brands of revisionism that emerged over the years — Yugoslav, Soviet, and Chinese.

No wonder therefore that the views and stands of the Party of Labor of Albania are of interest to progressive people all over the world. The history of the PLA shows the need of the workers to build a revolutionary party if they are to defeat their exploiters and oppressors. It shows the need to fight revisionist treachery if the revolution is to be safeguarded.

New Times, New Tasks

But socialism is not something fixed and lifeless, established as something perfect on the day of revolution and unchanging thereafter. The socialist system and communist parties must always move forward, must correct weaknesses and errors, and must face the new tasks that emerge in the course of time.

In the 1980's the PLA, as well as progressive people all over the world, has been faced with a world capitalist offensive. At the same time, the world Marxist-Leninist movement has faced the difficult task of repairing the damage caused by the degeneration of the once revolutionary Communist Party of China and of carrying the struggle against both Chinese and Soviet revisionism through to the end. The PLA has faltered in the face of these tasks. The views it has given in the 1980's concerning the international situation and the tasks of communists have been wrong.

Already at the Eighth Congress of the PLA in 1981 these errors had appeared. The Ninth Congress continues these errors. While the Seventh Congress in 1976 also had had certain weaknesses, it had nevertheless breathed revolutionary fire. It had inspired revolutionary deeds around the world. The Ninth Congress has no fire; on the contrary, the revolutionaries around the world will have to give the PLA a transfusion of their own fiery spirit.

What Is True Solidarity?

The true supporters of socialist Albania will not praise the errors of the Ninth Congress. They will strive to help the Albanian communists and working class. No matter how vengeful the PLA leadership is against those who criticize its errors, this cannot justify servile yes-men. Yes-men and sycophants are precisely examples of that bureaucratic rust that is the worst enemy of socialism.

Furthermore, the workers in each country must support each other by building a revolutionary movement in their own country. And it is impossible to build a revolutionary movement according to the views put forward by the Ninth Congress.

Abandoning the Revolutionary Standpoint on World Events

The views of the Ninth Congress are expressed in the *Report* of Comrade Ramiz Alia. The most noticeable feature of his discussion of world events is his abandonment of the revolutionary perspective. Oh yes, he is able to talk about revolution in general. He is full of official optimism and stereotyped phrases when he is talking generalities. But when he gets down to analyzing the particular tasks of the day, revolution flies out of the window.

Comrade Alia is full of talk about diplomatic relations with this or that capitalist country. Indeed, a socialist country must strive to have relations with the other countries in the world. But it can never be forgotten that relations with the capitalist world are a constant struggle between opposing systems. But Comrade Alia now finds that all it allegedly takes to thwart the pressure of world capitalism is to get everyone to agree to ignore each other's social system.

On the other hand, Comrade Alia barely mentions a few revolutionary struggles around the world. He hardly says anything even about the few struggles he mentions. And he rules out the struggle for socialism and against exploitation as a major factor; instead, with respect to those struggles he does recognize, he holds that all of them are to obtain truer independence or are on the issues of democracy.

His report reflects a loss of faith in the revolutionary movement around the world. The PLA is disoriented by the difficulties facing this movement, and the Ninth Congress cannot see the revolutionary factors that are building up under the surface.

This loss of revolutionary perspective reflects the actual orientation of Albanian policy in the last few years. This can be seen in an examination of the international coverage of the bulletins of the Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA). It is full of talk of diplomats coming and going, ambassadors appointed or giving receptions, film showings, and diplomatic agreements. It praises the national day of almost every country in the world and sends messages to the kings of Spain and Sweden and to presidents by the score. But it has little about the revolutionary struggles around the world. It can criticize capitalism in general, but it has abandoned criticism of particular capitalist countries (except for the superpowers, the South African racists, and a few other countries).

Toning Down the Criticism of All Imperialism Except the Superpowers

Take the question of the major capitalist powers. ATA has abandoned criticism by name of any imperialist power except the U.S. and USSR. The other powers are only referred to as "other imperialist powers." For example, ATA recently carried a *Zeri i Popullit* article, "Who Benefits From the Conflict in Chad?" in which it appeals for driving "all foreign military forces out of Chad." (ATA, December 28-30) Chad is a former French colony; it is still dominated by France; and France and Libya are the two countries with troops in Chad. But ATA speaks of the "involvement of American imperialism and other imperialist powers" and of weapons that "may be of American production or of other countries." It also denounces the Soviet social-imperialists in the article, but France remains unnamed. And, for that matter, it is not that common for ATA to write about such current events at all.

Comrade Alia's *Report* followed the same principle. He named the superpowers, but he never explicitly named France, Germany, Italy, Japan, etc. as imperialist. In one place he referred to the competition between the superpowers and the other powers, but that was all.

All That Is Required Is to Break With the Superpowers

Instead Comrade Alia put forward the plan that all the European countries had to do to usher in an era of progress is to break with the superpowers. It is not necessary to overthrow the capitalist regimes of exploitation, racism, and militarism in Europe. The socialist revolution has gone out of the window. All that is necessary is that the regimes agree to treat each other equally, to overlook each other's social system, and to break with the U.S.-dominated NATO bloc and the USSR-dominated Warsaw Treaty bloc. Then there will be "that spirit of trust and understanding which is

lacking in order to establish a fruitful and equal collaboration between the peoples of Europe." (*Report to the Ninth Congress*, English edition, p. 188)

Asia, Africa, and Latin America

The PLA has always paid much attention to Asia, Africa, and Latin America as well as to Europe. But Comrade Alia's view on the struggles in these countries is also wrong. He can't see any struggle for socialism and falls silent on the struggle against exploitation by the local capitalists. He does not like giving class characterizations of these countries either, and prefers terms like "undeveloped nations" and "developing nations."

He talks of "the great efforts of various peoples and nations to defend their freedom and independence and national wealth, ... to rid themselves of the foreign yoke and decide their own course of development." (*Report*, p. 163) But, strangely enough, he leaves aside what "course of development" the workers and peasants of these countries should fight for. Should they fight against exploitation? Should they fight for revolution?

As a matter of fact, unless one answers the question of what "course of development" to fight for and how to fight for it, there will be no fight against foreign domination either. After all, almost everywhere, the local exploiters are the main support for the exploitation of the country by foreign imperialism.

A New Theory of History

Thus the Ninth Congress ruled out the building of the socialist revolutionary movement as the task almost anywhere in the world. In Europe the task is supposed to be independence from the superpowers. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America the task is supposed to be independence from foreign domination, mostly the superpowers and also some unnamed other powers. In the superpowers, the PLA can't really see what movement is going on anyway. And in the international arena in general, the task is supposed to be ensuring the "complete democratization" of relations between states. (*Report*, p. 189)

Comrade Alia replaces the class struggle with the struggle for independence. Comrade Alia goes so far as to elaborate a new theory of history which makes the struggle for independence the motive force of history. It goes as follows: "The right of peoples to be free and independent cannot be denied. It was born together with man and human society and has been an unvarying constant through all the epochs of history. The reactionary powers of all times have tried to deny the people this right, have tried to subjugate and rule them. Mighty empires were created, whole continents were transformed into colonies. Various peoples remained enslaved for centuries on end, but the spirit of freedom and independence has never died." (*Report*, p. 166)

Marxists have a different view of history. The first programmatic declaration to the world of proletarian communism began as follows:

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes." (*Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels).

It is the class struggle, not the struggle for independence, that provides the key to all history since the beginning of the exploitation of person by person.

Comrade Alia's view replaces Marxism by petty-bourgeois nationalism. It looks at history from the viewpoint of the building of nation-states, not from the viewpoint of the workers and peasants. It idealizes the present international situation and dreams of its being purified into a system of absolutely "free and independent" nation-states. (Note: that this freedom doesn't refer to the rights of the working people, which is a matter of the internal "course of development" of the country concerned, but mainly to the rights of the national government in relation to other governments.)

Comrade Alia's new theory of history is also absolute nonsense. First of all, not even the class struggle is an "unvarying constant," but instead constantly changes

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See PLA

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in form and content from one epoch to another. And the same goes for the struggle for independence. The present type of nation-state only came into existence in the last few centuries. History has seen the struggle for independence of various entities (clans, tribes, kingdoms, nation-states, etc.).

Furthermore, history has also seen both the amalgamation of various entities and the struggle for independence. Amalgamation is as important a concept as independence. Even a relatively small people, such as the Albanians, could only have been formed through the amalgamation of a truly huge number of smaller entities. Without such amalgamation, the struggle for the national independence of Albania would have been utterly impossible.

The class conscious workers and communists understand the revolutionary significance of progressive national liberation struggles. They not only oppose national oppression in general, but they make a special point of opposing the chauvinism, racism, and imperialism of their "own" bourgeoisie. It is their task to be the foremost champions of the liberation movements of the peoples oppressed by that bourgeoisie.

But they also understand the importance of the amalgamation of peoples — but not by force. One of the main reasons the proletariat supports the national liberation movement and the struggle against all na-

tional oppression is precisely to encourage the voluntary amalgamation of peoples. The working class movement is a world movement, an internationalist movement. Proletarian internationalism, the world character of the working class struggle, is one of the greatest driving forces of the struggle for the new, communist society.

Abandoning the Marxist-Leninist Parties of the World

One of the repulsive features of the Ninth Congress is its lack of concern for the international Marxist-Leninist movement. Comrade Alia barely managed to mouth a few platitudes about the world movement. And ATA has all but forgotten about the world movement. It barely refers to one or another party a few times a year; it spends far more attention on photo exhibitions in various countries and the comings and goings of professors and rectors of universities.

You wouldn't know it from Comrade Alia's *Report*, but there are important developments in the world anti-revisionist movement. There is a struggle against liquidationist and petty-bourgeois influences, but the PLA actively opposes this struggle. And there are important struggles in various countries. For example, the Communist Party of Iran (the party that opposes the pro-Soviet Tudeh party and the other revisionist groups in Iran) is organizing against the Khomeini regime, and it has armed forces in Kurdistan. But one of the glaring

mistakes of the PLA has been its support for the blood-stained regime of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP). Recently the PLA has fallen rather silent about events in Iran, but it has not renounced its previous views and expressed support for the heroic struggle of the Iranian workers and peasants against the barbaric, clerical regime. (As a result, some sycophants of the PLA pretend that the PLA never supported the IRP regime, while others are still denouncing those who oppose the IRP regime as supposedly Trotskyites, pro-imperialist, etc.)

Of course, it is logical to forget about the Marxist-Leninist parties if one's standpoint on the international situation is to avoid the question of the internal "course of development." The Marxist-Leninist parties are the tool of the working class to spearhead changes in the internal "course of development." Comrade Alia's failure to support the Marxist-Leninist parties is a dramatic sign of the nonrevolutionary stand on world events of the Ninth Congress.

But the class conscious workers and revolutionary activists around the world will not abandon the struggle for socialism, for revolution, for Marxist-Leninist organization. They are not going to liquidate the movement in the face of the world offensive of the bourgeoisie. The struggle continues. But it cannot be waged according to the mistaken views of the Ninth Congress. It can only be successfully waged according to the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. □

Build a fighting anti-racist movement!

Continued from page 1

racist criminals. More often than not, the police themselves either wink at or even have a hand in the racist gangs. And the police, in and out of uniform, wage their own campaign of racist harassment, beatings, and murders.

But even when the police do make an arrest, then the racist justice system takes over. Racist hoodlums seldom have more to fear from this system than a tap on the wrist. Murder convictions for a racist killing of a black person are as common as snowstorms in July. And a racist killer has a good chance of never seeing the inside of a jail.

What's more, often it's the victims of racist violence who are put on the dock.

Noah Roisten is facing a long prison term because he righteously defended himself from a brutal racist attack.

The two survivors of the beating by the Howard Beach lynch mob, Cedric Sandiford and Timothy Grimes, are the targets of a holy inquisition, led by the Queens prosecutor, because they have refused to go along with the cover-up for the lynchers and of the role of the police in the attack.

And the case of Wayne Williams is a most cynical perversion of justice: a black man has been condemned for life in order to save the hides of the KKK criminals who police and other officials have known all along killed Atlanta's children.

The Black and Working People Fight Back

The black and working masses, however, are not just passive victims. Time after time, they have shown the racists and their government protectors that they can't get away with murder and injustice.

The Howard Beach incident has rekindled the fires of anti-racist struggle in New York. Thousands of angry black youth and other progressive people have gone into the streets to condemn the murder of Michael Griffith and the government's abhorrence of justice.

The racist authorities have also failed in their attempts to hush up the Noah Roisten case and conduct the railroad in the quiet. The MLP took up the case and spread the facts of the case in the factories and across the city. Transit workers and other workers and students have rallied to Noah's defense. Militant demonstrations have been organized in working class communities. And a defense committee has been set up and legal defense has been organized.

At the time, far from covering the



Protesters condemn the killing of Michael Griffith during a rally at a New York City High School on December 31.

black community, the Atlanta child murders stirred it to struggle. Armed patrols were set up around housing projects where the children had been snatched from. Angry protests broke out as Atlanta became a powder keg. The authorities hoped to put a lid on it with the frame-up of Wayne Williams. But the mothers of the victims and others have refused to let the case die, and the pressure is again mounting to punish the real killers of Atlanta's children.

Systematic Treachery

There is another common thread in these three cases. That is the shameless role of the capitalist liberals, the Democratic Party champions of "human rights," and the bourgeois black misleaders.

In the Noah Roisten case the treachery of these forces is straight up. They won't come near the case with a ten-foot pole. After all, "respectable" bigwigs don't get involved when a poor black man is on trial for the death of a white man. (Even if it's a clear-cut case of self-defense against a clearly racist attack.)

The Atlanta child murders is a ticking bomb for these forces. What is the frame-up of Williams doesn't sink? What if the cover-up for the Klan is exposed? The whole capitalist establishment is implicated. That includes the former black mayor Maynard Jackson and the rest of black politicians at the

head of Atlanta's city government. No wonder Andy Young, the present mayor, says there's no point in reopening the case and "crying over spilled milk."

In the Howard Beach case, a whole section of New York's liberal and social-democratic "reform" politicians, including a number of black misleaders, have joined in the barking against the victims of the attack. They are angry because Sandiford did not share their total faith in the prosecutor and the rest of the racist judicial system. The leaders of the NAACP and others are also peeved because Sandiford has accused the black police commissioner Benjamin Ward of condoning the police cover-up.

After all, the liberal and reformist misleaders have their priorities. Why go out on a limb for the poor and oppressed victims of racist violence? Why stick your neck out just to protest injustice? Why risk the heat and risk such high and noble causes as securing cushy government positions and building "clout" in the Democratic Party?

A Challenge to All Working People

But the working class has different priorities. The rise of racist terror is a life and death question for the black masses. It is also a threatening challenge to all working and progressive people, who realize that every unanswered outrage adds a link to the chains of their slavery.

A militant movement of the working masses is needed to confront the racist gangs and their government protectors. The mass struggle is a powerful weapon in the fight for justice for Michael Griffith, Noah Roisten, or Wayne Williams and the children of Atlanta, or any other victims of racist terror and injustice.

The anti-racist struggle is an essential part of building the revolutionary working class movement: a movement aimed at the revolution which will scrap the capitalists' whole "law and order" apparatus of racist injustice and oppression. A movement aimed at the overthrow of capitalism, which drives on racist reaction. And a movement that is aimed at building a new socialist society through the united efforts of the emancipated workers of all races and nationalities. □

The cover-up of the Atlanta child murders continues. However, bits and pieces of the new information which expose the railroad of Wayne Williams and implicate the KKK Klan Klan are making their way into the capitalist media, including ACB's *Nightline*. The *Workers' Advocate* discussed the evidence exposing the cover-up in its December issue.

No, 'Platoon' is not the real story

Hollywood is said to be entering a "new phase" in its treatment of the Viet Nam war. *Rambo* and other recent pro-war flicks were revenge fantasies. The war in Indochina was fought out again on a Hollywood set — this time victorious as Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris and other bloodlust killing machines proved America invincible.

Now, we are told, Hollywood is correcting for this *Rambo* fiction by producing "the real story." Director Oliver Stone's *Platoon* is the first in a new batch of films that are said to avoid the pitfalls of political statements (either for or against the war) and just give the straight stuff about what it was like over there. As the cover of *Time* magazine puts it: "*Platoon*, Viet Nam As It Really Was." (January 26, 1987)

Platoon may well have a certain appeal for Viet Nam veterans and others who gagged on *Rambo* and can't take the steady diet of films which glamorize and sanitize war. *Top Gun* portrays war as a big thrill in the sky. *Platoon* brings you down into the mud, blood and horrors of warfare. And unlike *Rambo*, you see the GI's painted as near-believable characters. The grunts in the field are portrayed as poor working class guys facing real fears and dying real deaths — black plastic body bags and all.

That, however, is about as close to reality as *Platoon* gets. Stone advertises his film as a "completely nonpolitical" tribute to the GI's, to the grunts at the bottom who did the fighting and dying in Viet Nam.

But in 1987, just like in 1967, the U.S. war in Indochina won't let you sit on the fence. And Stone's film shows that you can't make a feature length statement on GI's in Viet Nam without giving some opinion about the war the GI's are fighting.

The film shows that, yes, the war was a nightmare for those who fought it. But what it doesn't show is the real monster behind the war. In fact, the film backs up the government's Big Lie about what the U.S. invasion of Viet Nam was all about.

War Is Hell

The principal figure in the film is Chris Taylor, a kid from a well-off family who drops out of college and volunteers for combat in the infantry. He arrives in Viet Nam full of illusions. He hopes to become "something I can be proud of" by joining the lot of the poor and unwanted "fighting for our society and our freedom."

The other main figures are the two sergeants of the platoon. Barnes is a hard core lifer, a cruel tyrant and killer. Alias, on the other hand, has grown disillusioned after three years of combat in a war he says can't be won.

The loyalty of the platoon divides between these two sergeants. A spineless bootlick and a mindless sadist are among those who stick with Barnes; Taylor and others support Alias, who is portrayed as trying to preserve a degree of humanity in the midst of the slaughter.

On landing at camp near the Cambodian border, Taylor and the other "cherry" troops are treated like so much fresh meat to be used as bait in terrifying nighttime ambushes. Quickly enough Taylor finds that "war is hell."

The film zooms in on this hell of death, savage insects, and human cruelty. The dehumanization of combat breaks down morale. The GI's get stoned in Alias' bunker to escape the pain and terror. And they become consumed by the desperate struggle to just survive and get out of there in one piece.

Never Poses "Why?"

But the film simply cops out of the question that so tormented the GI's at the time: What are we doing here in the first place? Why has our government



GI's came home from Viet Nam filled with hatred for the U.S. government and for its criminal war. Returning GI's hurl their medals at the steps of Congress, April 1971.

sent us halfway around the world to kill and be killed? This is the real mental hell that the troops went through, a hell which the film fails to probe.

What the GI's experienced in Viet Nam ran smack against all the lies (and Taylor's illusions) about a U.S. war for "freedom." But that side of the GI experience that sharply posed "Why?" is simply cropped out of the picture. So instead of insight into the reality of the war, Stone provides what's really an absurd and oversimplified picture: something like what a frog might see from the bottom of a well.

Never Questions, "Who Is the Enemy?"

This is most glaring in the film's treatment of the Vietnamese. The GI's of the platoon never challenge the propaganda about the "gook enemy." And the Vietnamese liberation forces are portrayed as a faceless, brutal, and implacable foe.

The audience is treated to what seems an endless series of firefights cut from the typical Hollywood mold. Just like old films about World War II battles in the Pacific or the Korean war, courageous American heroes mow down the Asian "Charlies" by the dozen. Taylor himself never loses his eager-beaver desire to do his part in killing "the enemy." And his hero Sergeant Alias (almost *Rambo*-like) is the platoon's most efficient one-man killing machine.

Between battles, there is a scene where the U.S. troops brutalize peasants in a village. Barnes shoots a woman point-blank and nearly unleashes a massacre except that Alias puts a stop to it. But far from condemning the savagery that the U.S. forces rained down on the civilian population — after all, that would be "political" — the film sets up a whole apology for it.

On the outskirts of the village the GI's had found the corpse of Manny, a black GI, who had been gruesomely killed and pinned on a tree by the Viet Cong. (Viet Cong was U.S. military slang for the guerrillas of the National Liberation Front.) Then they discover that the village is swarming with Viet Cong who have turned it into a base for stockpiling Czech machine guns and "enough rice for a whole NVA (North Vietnamese Army) battalion."

In other words, the brutality against the villagers is portrayed as the natural outcome of the GI's legitimate fear and anger. (Even the idealistic Taylor finds himself emptying his M-16 at the feet of a helpless villager.) And the burning of the peasants' harvest and village is

painted as a military necessity. Anyone who lived through those days will recognize that these are the same bullshit apologies that the Pentagon came up with after every exposure of another horrifying atrocity. In fact, the script for this scene could have been written by the defense attorneys for William Calley, the mass murderer of Mi Lai infamy.

The truth is that "search and destroy" missions to burn villages and brutalize the villagers were basic Pentagon strategy. Such inhuman methods of warfare turned a section of soldiers, especially the lifers and officers, into sadist monsters. At the same time, such methods told hundreds of thousands of GI's that there was something deeply wrong with this war.

The GI's learned fast that they had been lied to about "freeing" the people from "communist aggression." They could feel all around them that the people that they were supposed to "save" were as hostile to the U.S. presence as they were to the corrupt and vicious regime that the U.S. military was propping up.

Moreover, they discovered that the liberation forces were not the cruel savages they were made out to be. The GI's found that the liberation fighters had broad popular support, from small children to grandmothers. And respect and even sympathy grew among the U.S. troops for the liberation forces and the incredible courage they showed in the struggle to free their land from the U.S. jackboot.

It should also be noted that the liberation forces deliberately went after the U.S. officers, while they considered the poor and working class grunts to also be victims of the U.S. government's war. It was particularly well-known that the liberation forces sympathized with the plight of the black soldiers. And this helped the black GI's make the link between the racist oppression at home (and in the army) with the racist genocide being unleashed against the Vietnamese.

The GI's came to realize that they were being used as part of a hated occupying army and that the "enemy" they were supposed to fight was the Vietnamese people themselves. *Platoon* denies this. But this is a critical part of the Viet Nam reality.

Yes, war is hell. Viet Nam, however, was a war of a particular type. It was an imperialist war of conquest. It was a war launched by the U.S. capitalist ruling class in which the sons of the working people were dragged against their will to put down the liberation struggle of the workers and peasants of a foreign

land. Without this dimension it is simply impossible to understand the depths of dehumanization and demoralization suffered by the GI's. Nor is it possible to understand the righteous rebellion that grew up in their ranks against this criminal war.

The GI Revolt

This rebellion is also strikingly absent in *Platoon*. It doesn't show the GI's resistance to the arbitrary, brutal and racist regime of the military brass. Nor does it show the lengths to which GI's went to avoid combat: mass refusals to go out on the murderous (and murdering) patrols; fraggings of gung-ho officers; and fraternizing with the Vietnamese liberation fighters (sharing smokes instead of bullets).

In place of the just, militant struggle of the rank-and-file soldiers against the war, the plot in the film revolves around the conflict between the platoon's two lifer sergeants. Barnes is the voice of the imperialist "hawks" — military victory without regard to human cost. Alias is the voice of the imperialist "doves" — while never retreating from the war effort, worried about the social impact of a war that can't be won.

Through the thoughts of Taylor, the film comments that it is the GI's tragedy to be caught in the middle of this conflict. And as he is evacuated from a body-strewn battlefield, Taylor sadly concludes: "We didn't fight the enemy, we fought ourselves."

This, of course, is the cliché of the ruling class assessment of Viet Nam: the GI's in the field were crucified on the anti-war/pro-war conflict. From their different angles, this refrain is repeated by both the Reaganites and the liberal capitalist mouthpieces, both of which bemoan the undermining of the "national will" in Viet Nam.

In short, under the guise of not taking a stand, Oliver Stone has produced a Viet Nam film that fits comfortably within mainstream capitalist opinion. This, in turn, leads the film right off the rails of realism towards another Hollywood apology for this barbaric war of the U.S. imperialist government.

No, the Hollywood movie corporations have not and will not bring the truth about the GI's experience in Viet Nam to the big screen. The job of keeping this experience alive rests with the veterans who bravely resisted the war, with those who fought the war on the streets here at home, and with all the working class and anti-imperialist activists. The lessons of this experience will prove invaluable in the struggle as our government lurches towards a new Viet Nam-style war in Central America. □



(Masthead of the GI newspaper 'FTA')

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