

TORCH

NEWSPAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE



VOLUME 7, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 15-NOVEMBER 14, 1980 / 25¢

Iraq-Iran War— U.S. Imperialism the Winner?

By RON TABER

On September 21, Iraqi troops invaded Iran, igniting a war between the two countries. In a matter of days, the Iraqi forces had beaten back the armed forces of the Islamic Republic and had approached or reached the cities of Khurramshahr, Dizful, Abadan and Ahwaz, not far from the Iran/Iraq border.

Since that time, however, Iraqi troops have been unable to follow up their initial victories. Although they have virtually destroyed the Iranian oil refinery in Abadan by artillery attacks, the Iraqis have been unable to occupy the contested cities. Instead, Iranian forces, loyal to the Ayatollah Khomeini and Iranian President Bani-Sadr, have apparently stemmed the Iraqi advance.

At first, the Iranian response to the Iraqi attack was limited to air strikes against military and civilian targets in and around Baghdad (the Iraqi capital) and the oil refinery at Basra (the Iraqi port city on the Shatt al Arab, the combined estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers that constitutes the border between Iran and Iraq at the head of the Persian Gulf). But now the Iranian armed forces appear to be carrying out disorganized but determined fighting, joined by units of the Revolutionary Guards.

For a while it looked as if the fighting might spread to the entire Persian Gulf region and possibly draw

in the major powers. In addition to their claim on land in western Iran, the Iraqis also claimed three islands in the Strait of Hormuz, through which tankers pass carrying 40 percent of the oil of the so-called non-Communist world. To counter this, the Iraqis threatened to close off the strait. After the U.S. announced that it would use force to keep the strait

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Iranian port of Khurramshahr after Iraqi attack.

Elections 1980:

Don't Vote—Organize!

This year's presidential election campaign has had all the fizz and "gusto" of warm beer. While the majority of people are trying to deal with real problems—from the ravages

EDITORIAL

of inflation and unemployment to the possibility of world war and nuclear holocaust—the three main presidential hopefuls have engaged in a shrill war of words that has little to do with the real world, what they actually

stand for, or what they would actually do in office.

Jimmy Carter claims that a vote for Ronald Reagan is a vote for war. Ronald Reagan claims that a vote for Jimmy Carter is a vote for depression. Carter hints that Reagan is a racist, Reagan more than hints that Carter is incompetent...and so the war of words goes on. John Anderson, for his part, warns that the election of either Carter or Reagan spells disaster for the country, but then even John Anderson must know that he doesn't have a prayer.

Most people have not taken kindly

to this "your mother wears combat boots" type of campaign. Polls show that with the exception of the organized right-wing movement, which is pretty solidly behind Reagan, a large percentage of the people who will vote on November 4 will be doing so in the hopes of defeating the candidate they're against, not electing the one they're for. In other words, a big chunk of votes for Carter will in fact represent anti-Reagan sentiment, and vice-versa. So, for example, Black voters are expected to go for Carter something like 9-1, but more out of

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**our
readers
write...**

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

Wanted: a decent place to live

Dear Comrades,

I'm looking for an apartment. So I got a Chicago **Sun-Times** and looked in the apartments-for-rent pages. I could have died. It's getting almost as hard for a working class person to get an apartment as it is to get a job. Ads say, "No kids," "no pets," "references required," "must have job," "perfect tenants only." Three or four hundred bucks for a one-bedroom in what used to be a three-story walkup but is now an "elegant brownstone." Neighborhoods that were residential working class or even skid row a few years ago are now up and coming "villes," "towns," etc. Landlords don't paint between tenants anymore, they "rehab." Then they sell the places—they "go condo"—to "urban pioneers."

This got me down, so I read the rest of the paper. The financial page featured some clown from the real estate owners' association kvetching about the unprofitability of rental housing. His solution was for the federal government to give the real estate industry a pile of dough to build flats for the rich, which would "revitalize the inner city." In the meantime, he said, he and his buddies would continue building shopping centers in the suburbs. Right under this was an article about the plight of the renter of "moderate" means who could only pay four to eight hundred a month!

Nobody talked about where the people who used to live in, say, Lakeview (which has been re-named "Historic Wrigleyville" after the ball park where the Cubs play baseball) live now. A couple of years ago, my parents had to move because their neighborhood got "revitalized" and the landlord jacked up the rent. So they moved a few miles further west. Now they're starting to see the signs again—sandr-blasting crews and kitschy

shops where urban pioneers can buy esoteric coffee beans. It makes me want to blow up a Volvo.

I have been trying to think of ways our class could solve this bogus housing shortage. When the working class took power in Russia in 1917, one of the things they did was appropriate the swell apartments and mansions of the rich, divide them up, and move in working class families who'd been living in the streets. Also, the housing shortage is caused by "unprofitability," not lack of resources. About 50 percent of U.S. construction workers are out of work. Steelworkers and steel mills are idle. The reason that the workers who could build housing and the materials to do it with are not coming together is that the capitalists only care about where they can make the most money. If our class was in power, nobody would be out to make a quick killing. What would matter would be that everybody had decent living conditions. We could take all the resources that are being squandered on bullshit for the rich and use them for things our class needs.

There's no way we can do this under capitalism. If the ruling class gets scared enough, they may put up a few more housing projects, but they can't make any real changes and still make profits. A lot of people are going to freeze to death this winter, or kill each other fighting because they're shoe-horned in together, or get burned up when the landlord does some home-made urban renewal because he's not making as much off of his working class tenants as he could get from his fire insurance. How much longer are we going to let them do this to us?

In struggle,
Laura Wadebay
Chicago

New movie is 'pro-Migra garbage'

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to tell you about a film which is about undocumented workers. I saw the film and it is not the kind of "neutral" film that some liberal writers have said in the bourgeois newspapers. We understand that nothing is neutral and if they or anybody says so, that means they work with the system and the imperialists, and lie to the mass of people consciously.

The film was "Borderline." The star was Charles Bronson, an imperialist movie star who often plays the role of tough cops who happen to catch and kill Blacks and Latinos. But in this film he plays a good-hearted U.S. border patrol agent (Migra) tracking down unscrupulous "polleros" or smugglers. The story followed Bronson's character as he avenged the slaying of a fellow Migra and tracked down a ring of polleros masterminded by a powerful syndicate in San Diego. Along the way he showed special compassion for the "illegal aliens" who lived at the mercy of the ruthless smugglers.

To me, to us revolutionaries, the film is pro-Migra garbage. There is no such "good" Migra and bad Migra. The Migra is an arm of the state and it serves the interest of the imperialists and rich people of the U.S. So the Migra must be smashed, just like the other repressive arm of the state, the cops. The film uses bad polleros to

make the Migra look good. But in the film and in reality, I would side with the polleros. Some polleros are bad and exploit the people they are smuggling. But most of them are poor workers, unemployed, and the only way they find to survive is through smuggling other poor Mexican or Latino workers. So we are on their side, and on the side of anyone who hates and fights against the Migra. We should try to convince polleros to be on our side with a political understanding about why we should be united against the Migra and for the most important thing: **open borders between Mexico and the U.S.**, more jobs for all and less Migras and chotas on both sides of the borderline.

So finally the movie portrays the poor Mexican workers as an ignorant crowd of

stupid, or close to animals. It continues to stereotype Mexican workers in general with all the bad habits and ideas, without saying that U.S. imperialism makes us like that and forces us to leave our home country in order to survive. That's what they forget. They also keep saying that the "coyotes" (polleros) exploit "illegal aliens" (read "undocumented workers") usually by supplying them to growers and bosses who need cheap help or a super-cheap labor force. But the people who are really most to blame are the growers and U.S. bosses themselves.

I could say a lot more about this garbage film like many others, but that's all for today.

Tear down the borders!

Yours,
J. Zapata
Los Angeles

Counts on TORCH for the truth

Dear Torch,

I'm writing this letter to inform you of my current address and ask you to put me back on your mailing list so I can receive your very informative newspaper.

As of this moment, I'm a 23-year-old Black man being held captive against my will in a place where this capitalist system warehouses human

beings in rodent-sized holes they call living quarters. The name of this place is California Training Facility.

I've been in this man-made hell for two years and the only thing I've learned from the California Training Facility, that's supposed to help rehabilitate and reform the people that they illegally kidnapped from their loved ones, is just what this corrupt system is really all about, through self-awareness and the **Torch** newspaper.

Since the time I came to the age of understanding of just what's been going on around me I just about quit reading, listening, and looking at the so-called news media because from my point of view I look at the news media as a form to manipulate and brain-wash the majority of people, nationally and internationally, because there's not too many reliable news sources available that we can count on to give us the news the way things are really happening in the world.

I've read a lot of revolutionary papers in the past but the only one that I feel is printing the truth like it's supposed to be printed, so people like myself will know exactly what's going on in the world, is the **Torch** and as long as I'm living I know I can count on the **Torch** for the facts. So keep up the good job that you are doing.

From a soldier,
TY
Soledad

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Harlem Community Wins Support in Militant Fight to Save Sydenham Hospital

By RICHARD ALLEN and RANDY CONRAD

On Monday night, September 15, 100 community residents and activists from all over New York City occupied Sydenham Hospital in Harlem to protest Mayor Koch's racist plan to close the hospital, one of the few in an area with dangerously poor health service.

The occupation quickly became a rallying point for opposition to the cutbacks that have been hitting New York since 1975. Sick and tired of years of cutbacks and decaying neighborhoods, people of all races united to fight back. As we go to press, it appears that the struggle to keep Sydenham open as a full-service hospital is subsiding with no victory in sight. Yet the struggle already has served notice to Koch and the ruling class that people won't take their attacks without a fight.

The occupation was organized by the Coalition to Save Sydenham (CSS), which had also organized a number of demonstrations in the preceding months to build support for keeping Sydenham open. The coalition had rejected a deal, worked out by Democratic Congressman Charles Rangel of Harlem and Patricia Harris, head of the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare, that would have converted Sydenham into an alcohol and drug treatment center. Instead, the CSS demanded that Sydenham remain a full-service hospital.

The hospital's emergency room was to be closed on September 16—with the final closing of the hospital set for October 15. After a meeting on September 15, the coalition decided to occupy the hospital. Although city officials closed the emergency room September 16, occupiers broke down the door and reclaimed it, staffing it with volunteer doctors and nurses.

Demonstrations grow to 500

The occupation of Sydenham sparked a determined struggle to save the hospital. Militant mass picket lines, often involving as many as 200 people, were organized in front of the hospital, all day and late into the night. The struggle drew hundreds of people from the Black community of Harlem and won broad-based multi-racial support from all over the city. Workers from other city hospitals were bussed in by their union, Local 420 of the Amer-

ican Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

During the first week of the occupation, the cops stepped up their presence and reasserted control over the hospital. They stood at the entrances to keep out all supporters of the occupation and allow only employees to enter. With the cops' help, the emergency room was eventually re-closed.

During this same period, most of the occupiers left the hospital. Some male CSS leaders and Reverend Herbert Daughtry of the Black United Front (BUF) told the women occupiers, including Diane Lacey, head of CSS, to leave. Other people left for various reasons. This left only nine people, including Daughtry, Reverend Timothy Mitchell, Genie Williams of the Association of Black Social Workers, and the Harlem organizer of the Communist Party, inside the hospital. These nine people, who had assumed leadership of the struggle, remained inside the hospital's administrative offices.

The Coalition to Save Sydenham called for a mass rally for Saturday, September 20. That morning the police set up barricades to contain the demonstrators and keep them away from the people inside the hospital. The front of the barricades was 10 feet from the windows where the leaders were, with 20 cops between the barricades and the windows.

Five hundred people showed up for this 2:00 p.m. rally. Many demonstrators were angry at the cops and insisted that they move the barricades. Rev. Daughtry spoke from inside the hospital, also demanding the barricades be removed. People started pushing the barricades; the cops pushed back.

After a momentary quiet, demonstrators pushed in again. Then the cops kicked down the barricades and charged into the crowd, swinging their nightsticks wildly.

One of the victims of the police attack was Anthony Hicks. He received back injuries and a concussion and had to spend four nights in Harlem Hospital. He described the attack for the Torch/La Antorcha:

"You could feel the tension. I was trying to get the women and children out of the way. When that one piece of barricade went, the cops kicked the rest down. Whatever moved got hit. I got hit on the right side first, it spun me around. Then I got hit on the back and the temple and could feel myself going down. The cops kicked me in the ribs. I tried to help the other sister being hit; every time I tried to move they kicked me again."

The police riot shocked people into action. Over 1,500 people turned out for a rally the next day, many from churches all over Harlem.

The growth of the struggle after the police riot forced Mayor Koch to agree to speak with a delegation of doctors and elected politicians from Harlem. At this meeting, Koch agreed to delay the closing two weeks until November 1, so that community leaders could try to get federal funding to keep Sydenham running as a full-service hospital.

The nine occupiers planned to leave the hospital to attend a meeting at Abyssinian Baptist Church to discuss Koch's offer, the city having promised that they could return to the hospital afterward. But when they asked the people on the picket line if they should go, the demonstrators, after some discussion, started chanting "stay in, stay in." They feared that the occupa-



Pickets condemn city's decision to close Sydenham.

tion would be ended without winning and they told the nine to remain inside.

A few days later, in the early hours of September 26, police ejected the nine occupiers. The end of the occupation took away the focus that had kept the struggle at such a high level for almost two weeks. Although the struggle against the closing is still not over, it is clearly on the decline.

Harlem target for health care cutbacks

The closing of Sydenham is a racist attack on the Black community of Harlem. It is the latest in a long series of cuts in social services in New York City. Since the 1975 fiscal crisis, working class neighborhoods have been hit with school shutdowns, hospital closings and a wide range of other service cuts: Transit fares have gone up. Thousands of badly needed municipal workers have been laid off, adding to the decay.

Harlem is the main target of Koch's hospital cutback plan. The original scheme called for a \$30 million budget cut for

the city's 17 municipal hospitals—and the closing of Sydenham and Metropolitan hospitals in Harlem and two other hospitals in Brooklyn. Some \$8.5 million of the \$30 million was to come from cuts in Harlem. This compares with \$670,000 from Bronx Municipal and two other hospitals that service mainly white neighborhoods.

Sydenham serves Harlem, where medical care is extremely bad. There is one doctor for every 15,000 people, compared to the national average of one doctor for 500 people. Nearby hospitals that are supposed to cover for Sydenham once it's closed are reeling from five years of budget cuts; they are seriously understaffed and in need of repairs.

The struggle to save Sydenham was a big step forward in New York. It was one of the first times that people fought back against the cutbacks in an organized way. It brought together Harlem residents and people from around the city: the Bronx, Brooklyn, upper Manhattan and the Lower East Side. It involved Blacks and Latins and whites in a united fight. It also drew in support from the trade unions: AFSCME, District 65 of the United Auto Workers, Service Employees International Union and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

However, the coalition leadership failed to take several important steps that could have broadened the support for the struggle to save Sydenham, and turned it into a citywide movement against the cutbacks. For example, the coalition did not systematically organize leafletting teams to go to other communities, hospitals and union locals that are facing cutbacks. At the height of the struggle, they called no mass meetings. Such meetings could have drawn in hundreds

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Police chase Sydenham demonstrators at September 20 rally.

PL's Adventurism Jeopardizes Action

Protestors Clash With Klan in Conn.

ON September 13, the small town of Scotland in eastern Connecticut was turned into a battleground as anti-Klan demonstrators attempted to march on a Klan rally.

The Klan rally in Scotland was the Klan's first public demonstration in Connecticut in 70 years. It was held by the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan on a private farm owned by George Rood, a member of the Minutemen, another militaristic fascist organization. Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson crowned Gary Piscottano, 26, of New Britain as the Connecticut Grand Dragon. Three hundred people, including 50 robed Klansmen, attended the rally Saturday, and another 300 on Sunday.

Widespread opposition to

the Klan demonstration was organized throughout Connecticut. A Coalition Against the Klan came together to organize the counter-demonstration in Scotland. Student groups from the University of Connecticut and Yale were active in the coalition. There were also church vigils, attended by 1,000 people, in New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford and Middletown.

The Progressive Labor Party (PL) and their front group, the Committee Against Racism (CAR), also participated in the coalition. PL rarely works in coalitions and did so only because of the existence of an independent opposition to the Klan which PL could not control. But in typical fashion, PL tried to pass off the demonstration as its own

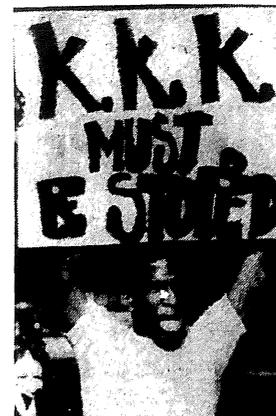
and to keep out other left groups. PLers told a New York City coalition, which included the RSL, first, that they knew nothing about any anti-Klan demonstration and later that the Scotland counter-demonstration was their own and anyone who wanted to join must do so under their discipline. This deception, combined with the distance between New York City and Scotland and the lateness of the preparations, effectively stifled organizing in New York. As a result, only scattered individuals from New York attended.

FIVE HUNDRED people attended the anti-Klan demonstration in the town square in Scotland. Many were young workers, mostly Black and Latin, from Willimantic and

other industrial towns nearby. The Klan had burnt crosses in Willimantic, attacked Blacks and Latins and threatened to burn down the multi-racial Windham Heights housing projects. Many demonstrators were members of PL or CAR, or came through PL/CAR's organizing activity, but many others came independently.

MIDWAY through the anti-Klan rally, PL led a march of 300 people up the road toward the Klan rally, about two miles away. Halfway up the road, the march was turned back by State Police. A series of clashes developed between anti-Klan marchers and Klan supporters. PL marshals attacked individual Klansmen walking up the road to the Klan rally. Three times marchers panicked, scattered into the fields and regrouped. A van drove through the crowd of anti-Klan demonstrators firing a gun, injuring a few people; it was attacked when it tried to drive back through. Someone in a house along the road fired a warning shot into the air. Later, a group of bikers attacked the anti-Klan crowd. Many people became confused and disoriented, and began leaving the PL-led group to return to town.

PL's adventurist tactics had gotten the marchers into a very dangerous situation; fortunately only a few were hurt, none too seriously. The retreat increasingly took the form of controlled hysteria. PL began indiscriminately attacking any



Demonstration in Scotland, Connecticut.

white person walking up the road; Klan members and sympathizers, people just checking out the rally, as well as anti-Klan demonstrators trying to join the march were all attacked. Two anti-Klan demonstrators from New York, carrying a "Stop the Klan" banner, received minor injuries.

DESPITE PL's claims, their actions were no victory. Many militant workers were put in jeopardy with no chance of stopping the Klan rally. Even though a few individual Klan members or supporters were beaten, neither the Klan nor its ability to organize were challenged politically. The Klan rally on Saturday was so successful, in fact, that a second rally was held on Sunday. PL's indiscriminate attacks could only have driven people with a loose interest in the Klan closer to the fascist organization. In addition, PL's mindless and disorganized actions served to discredit the strategy of militant confrontation to many anti-Klan activists. □

Anti-Racists Organize to Stop March by Illinois Nazis

THE best-known Nazi group in Chicago has announced plans for a march into a Black neighborhood. The National Socialist Party of America says they plan to march from their headquarters in Marquette Park into West Englewood, a Black neighborhood, on Saturday, October 25. Their purpose is to organize racist violence against Black people. The RSL is calling on community residents, left groups and labor organizations to mobilize to prevent this march.

These particular Nazis are the Chicago affiliate of Harold Covington's organization, which participated in the Greensboro, North Carolina, killings of Communist Workers Party supporters last November. The Chicago group has held a number of actions over the last four months, none of them very impressive. Most recently, they rallied in the liberal suburb of Oak Park

on September 27. About 10 Nazis faced an anti-racist crowd of about 200, including a large contingent from the International Committee Against Racism and smaller groups from the RSL, the International Socialist Organization and Workers World Party. The Nazis were bombarded with rocks, dirt bombs and firecrackers for about 45 minutes. Police did not interfere.

Several weeks earlier the Nazis rallied in Berwyn, a white suburb where many racists live. The Nazis were bombarded there also. Although the Berwyn crowd opposed the Nazis, many of the people—including most of those who threw rocks—were also racist.

FIVE YEARS ago the Nazis attempted a march into West Englewood similar to the one they are planning now. They mobilized a crowd of several hundred racists, mostly

youth. The police stopped the Nazi march because a left-wing counter-demonstration built by the RSL, the International Socialists, Progressive Labor Party, Spartacist League and the Communist Labor Party, stood in its path. All signs point to a weaker Nazi march this year.

If there is a serious effort by anti-Nazi forces, this year's march should not succeed. □

Chicago 'Take Back the Night' Draws 3,000

By NATASHA BELL

On the night of Friday, September 26, more than 3,000 militant women marched through the darkened streets of downtown Chicago (the Loop) chanting "Stop rape, fight back." The demonstration followed an evening rally in which a series of speakers talked on such subjects as the international womens' movement, on-the-job harassment, and the role of women in the trade unions.

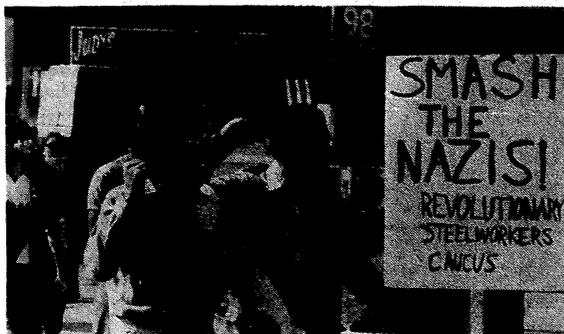
Over the past few years, "Take Back the Night" rallies and marches have been organized in most larger cities in North America and Western Europe. Originally built around the issues of rape and beatings, they have now broadened out politically to address other aspects of womens' oppression.

The Chicago demonstration, like other "Take Back the Night" marches, was planned by its organizers as a women-only event. Though discouraged from participating, a few of the

men who attended the rally were allowed to join the march. Though unwelcomed by the march leadership, their presence showed that there are men who want to join the fight against rape.

This spirited march, with its large size and militancy, was a huge success. However, if men who support this struggle had been encouraged to participate, it would have been much larger.

The important issues that the "Take Back the Night" marches raise—rape, wife-beating and other violence against women—are only part of the misery that women, like other oppressed people, suffer under capitalism. We cannot stop rape as long as we live in a society that thrives on objectification of women and exploitation of workers and minorities. This capitalist system must be destroyed and that can only be done through unity of all those who are oppressed by its ruling class. □



October 1975 demonstration that stopped Nazi march.

By WA

On September 13, a U.S. nuclear missile was launched from a silo near Las Vegas. One of the missiles dropped a thermonuclear warhead. The precautions of attaching the warhead to the silo were not followed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed.

The actual cause of the accident was a failure in the silo's structure. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed.

Eight hours after the explosion, the silo was still smoking. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed.

One Air Force officer and 21 others were seriously injured. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed. The silo was damaged and the missile was destroyed.

Nothing to worry about

Following the explosion, the U.S. government immediately began its investigation.

TITAN MISSILE 'ACCIDENT' EXPLODES FAIL-SAFE MYTH

By WAYNE GORDON

On September 19 one of the U.S.'s nuclear missiles blew up. The evening before, a maintenance team was working on the Titan 2 nuclear missile, which was housed in a 155-foot-deep underground silo near Damascus, Arkansas. One of the technicians dropped a three-pound wrench socket. The simplest safety precautions, such as ropes attaching the sockets to the wrenches or the use of safety platforms, had not been taken to prevent such a mistake. The socket fell 70 feet and broke the thin aluminum skin of a fuel tank. Gas fumes began to spread and build up pressure in the silo. A fire broke out. Automatic safety features failed to work well enough. For example, 100,000 gallons of water were sprayed into the silo, but the water did not cover the engines or the fuel tanks.

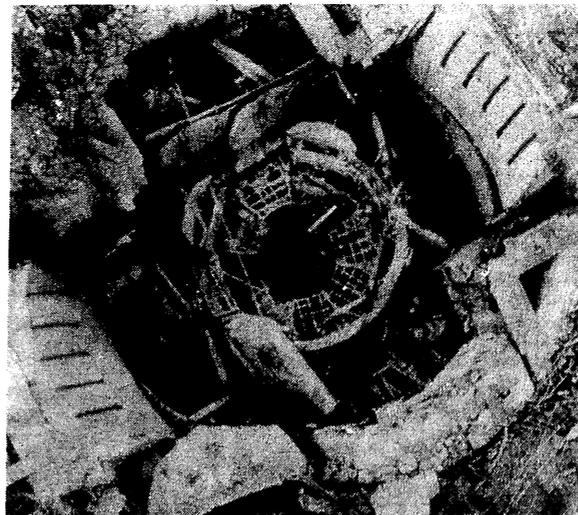
The actual explosion occurred because the capitalist contractor who had built the silo did not want to be embarrassed. An emergency team of Air Force technicians at the silo proposed that the gas fumes be vented before the pressure became too great. But the contractor, the Martin Marietta Corporation, which did not have anyone at the silo, asked that nothing be done. They hoped the situation would stabilize. The Air Force bureaucrats, safe in their headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, accepted the corporation's proposals rather than those of its own people on the scene.

Eight hours after the wrench socket fell, the silo and missile exploded. The poisonous gases spewed out, with flames and debris being blasted 500 feet up. The 750-ton concrete door was shattered. The 6,000-ton hydrogen bomb warhead of the missile was thrown several hundred feet.

One Air Force person died and 21 others were injured, two seriously. The neighboring community of 1,400 people was evacuated for 12 hours. Local people complained of nausea and burning sensations in the nose, throat and stomach, which might have been caused by the fumes from the silo.

Nothing to worry about?

Following the explosion, the U.S. government immediately began its game of



Titan 2 missile silo in Damascus, Arkansas, after recent explosion.

doubletalk. It refused to say what had happened to the nuclear warhead: where it was, what condition it was in, and when it was being removed. In fact, for several days it would not even admit that the missile had had a warhead!

At the same time, it sought to assure people that, whatever had happened, there was nothing to worry about. There "was absolutely no evidence of radioactive debris in the area," said the Secretary of the Air Force, Hans Mark, adding, "The warhead is not in danger of being ignited because it was designed with fail-safe devices." But why should anyone believe the assurances of the Air Force? The "fail-safe devices" of the missile silo, such as the water extinguisher, hadn't worked. The concrete door of the silo, which was supposed to withstand a nuclear bomb, was destroyed by a chemical explosion. So why should anyone assume anything will work the way the "authori-

ties" say it will?

Some evidence of greater dangers appeared. "In the opinion of the U.S. Department of Energy, the 500-foot fireball indicated that some of the conventional explosives went off, possibly damaging the warhead and permitting radioactivity to leak." (Christian Science Monitor, September 22.) In addition, the Air Force has admitted that it does not know if the bottom of the silo has ruptured, permitting poisonous fuels to leak into the ground water.

Eventually, the warhead was found and secretly moved to the Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas, the plant that puts together every nuclear warhead in the U.S. Although owned by the U.S. government, Pantex is run by another capitalist contractor, the Mason and Hanger-Silas Mason Company. Such contractors have a lush situation, with all costs guaranteed, plus guaranteed profits. Like Martin Marietta, Mason is

callous toward its workers and the community. In March 1977, three workers died in a non-nuclear explosion at Pantex. The House of Representatives Appropriations Committee investigated and reported in 1978 that the plant had a "significant safety problem." The result was to give more money to the company.

Nuclear accidents are common

The accident at Damascus is by no means a rare event. The Air Force admits that between 1975 and 1979 there have been 125 fuel leaks in Titan 2 missiles. In 1978, a fuel leak at this same silo caused the hospitalization of several people. Within the last two years, eight other leakage accidents have happened at Titan 2 missile sites in Arkansas alone. In the worst such accident, 53 construction workers were killed in a Titan silo near Searcy, Arkansas, in August 1965. More recently, a fuel leak from a Titan 2 missile in Rock, Kansas, killed two airmen and injured 29 others in 1978.

Other accidents have occurred with nuclear bombs. In 1966, a B-52 bomber crashed into a tanker plane over Palomares, Spain. Two of its bombs fell onto land and let out radioactive debris. A nuclear-armed B-52 crashed in Greenland in 1968. A fire broke out on an armed B-52 just four days before the Titan 2 explosion.

Even more frightening, twice in the last year computers at the headquarters of the North American Air Defense Command in Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado, have accidentally set off false alarms. Missiles and bombers were made ready for takeoff!



Hiroshima, Japan, after being destroyed by U.S. atomic bomb in August 1945. Nuclear war or "accidents" are a constant threat under capitalist rule.



The capitalist rulers of the U.S.—and the other imperialist powers, including Russia—are playing with very dangerous toys. Using complex machines makes it inevitable that accidents will happen—nothing is perfect. The probability and seriousness of the accidents is increased by capitalist greed and military-bureaucratic shortsightedness. These accidents can have frightful consequences. Spilling radioactive debris will pollute the land for centuries. A nuclear explosion will kill and injure hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people. A mechanical accident could trigger a world war.

The capitalists are increasing these dangers by stepping up military spending. The U.S. government is starting to produce poison gases, stopped for years. For the first time since the early 1960s, the government is increasing its production of weapons-grade plutonium. In the past three years they have begun several new military programs that will require the production of thousands of nuclear warheads: the Cruise missiles, the MX mobile missile (which will travel around the countryside on trucks or train tracks), the Trident submarine-launched missile. There are several programs to expand the use of military contractors, such as multiyear purchases and permitting larger profit margins. The profits will go up... and so will the "accidents."

These weapons are not temporary. The capitalists have no plan to get rid of them eventually. They no longer pretend to call for "disarmament." Even "arms control" (limiting the arms race in certain areas by negotiations) is being dropped with the abandonment of the SALT II Treaty. Make no mistake, these nuclear bombs are being built for war, and, if things continue on their current course, sooner or later, one way or another, they will go off.

We revolutionary socialists are not pacifists. We fight against the capitalist governments that are threatening to exterminate the human race. This crazy system must be stopped and its rulers overthrown. The working class must take over everywhere, since we have no interest in waging wars against workers of other nations. Our program for world peace and sanity is to make a world revolution and disarm the capitalists—before they blow us all up, whether by "accident" or "on purpose." □



Willie Sanders acquitted

Willie Sanders was acquitted October 2 in Boston at his fourth trial in 12 months for rape. Sanders, a 39-year-old Black man, was arrested and framed in response to racist hysteria following a series of attacks on white women in the Allston-Brighton area. Sanders had worked as a painter in a building where a woman was raped on Christmas Day 1978. The cops got a warrant for Sanders' arrest three days later, but didn't use it because they had no evidence. Then, on February 1, 1979, while a so-called community meeting was in progress, demanding an arrest, the cops picked him up.

Not one of the women was able to identify Sanders as the man who attacked her until after his arrest, after they had seen his picture in the papers and the media had identified him as the alleged rapist. The cops coached the victims to pick him out of a line-up and destroyed a partial fingerprint of the real rapist, which would have cleared Sanders.

Willie Sanders got a lot of support in the Boston area and nationally. Anti-racist as well as women's groups demanded that the cops release him. Even though the prosecution tried to harass his defense committee and subpoena the records of its financial contributors, his supporters organized a militant defense. Willie Sanders was acquitted in his first trial in November 1979. The second case was dropped last April. His third trial ended in dismissal this September 22. But the state still insisted on a fourth trial, which resulted in this final acquittal.

Marion prisoners stage 3rd strike

The prisoners at the federal penitentiary in Marion, Illinois, went on strike September 15, for the third time this year. Their demands include better food and health care, more rehabilitation programs and, most importantly, the closing of the Control Unit. In a letter to the *Torch/La Antorcha* dated October 7, a Marion prisoner writes: "The strike is in its 23rd day with more to come. Also this administration has refused to talk with the general population as a body, which is the only way, since we were denied a grievance committee in our last strike."

On the first day of the strike a group of prisoners drew up a list of demands, which was rejected by the administration because it was unsigned. A signed list was then forwarded to the warden, and "there were 21 men placed on lock-up for it." The letter states that now the general population is "locked down all day just as men on lock-up."

Last March, the prisoners at Marion struck for three weeks. The prison bosses promised some improvements in order to get the prisoners back to work. There were brutal reprisals, but no improvements.

With its mechanized towers, its electronic fences topped by razor wire and its technological punishment apparatus in the Control Unit, Marion is the ultimate maximum security prison. It was built in 1963 to replace Alcatraz and is used for political prisoners and anyone the authorities consider a troublemaker.

Update on Torch bannings

On June 4, 1980, the Florida Department of Corrections reversed its ban on the *Torch/La Antorcha* being sent into Florida prisons. A memorandum from the department reads in part: "Our Bureau of Legal Affairs now advises that an inmate has filed suit in order to be allowed to receive the publication. Legal also advises that we cannot win in defense of this suit. . . . Therefore we have no basis upon which to exclude it under the present criteria." The last we heard the keepers hadn't posted any notice of this ruling.

Meanwhile, prisoners from all over New York State are reporting that they are being denied their copies of the *Torch/La Antorcha*. We cannot fight this unless prisoners appeal the ban through regular channels and send us a copy of both the banning notice and their appeal.

—AL

Sentenced to 150 years

Free Rita Silk-Nauni!

By ADELE LOHMAN

Rita Silk-Nauni, a 31-year-old Native American woman, was sentenced August 18 to 150 years in prison for the self-defense killing of an Oklahoma City airport cop and the wounding of another.

On September 19, 1979, Rita Silk-Nauni arrived in Oklahoma on a flight from Los Angeles. Ten days earlier, she had suffered a mental breakdown, the result of continual beatings and abuse from her husband. Her husband then signed her out of the hospital against doctors' advice. Now, she and her 10-year-old son, Derrick, were running from him, back to her son's father and his people. They had no money left and began trying to hitchhike from the airport.

Two cops spotted her. Two Indians walking along the highway; a small woman and a child—they looked defenseless. The cops stopped her for littering. They manhandled Derrick and tried to force him into the police car. As Silk-Nauni struggled to defend her son, one cop's gun went off, causing a leg wound. Right then Silk-Nauni saw the other cop come at her with his gun drawn. She fired wildly to protect herself, and the cop caught a fatal bullet in the chest.

The distraught woman then fled in the police car. Eventually, six city cops caught up with her and beat her so badly she had to be hospitalized.

Judge bent on conviction

The state charged Silk-Nauni with murder and demanded the death penalty. The trial opened June 2, 1980, before a jury that was all white, middle class and in favor of the death penalty. The courtroom was too small to admit more than a few supporters and so full of deputy sheriffs that it looked like an armed camp. Presiding Judge Joe Cannon issued standing orders to arrest anyone wearing a Free Rita T-shirt or button or distributing literature, even across the street.

But Silk-Nauni's supporters kept jamming the courthouse corridors, forcing the state, on June 5, to open a larger courtroom.

The judge then claimed that the jurors complained of being intimidated by all the Indians in the courtroom. On June 11,

the judge held several Native people in contempt for not standing when he entered and had them ejected for bringing in a sacred pipe.

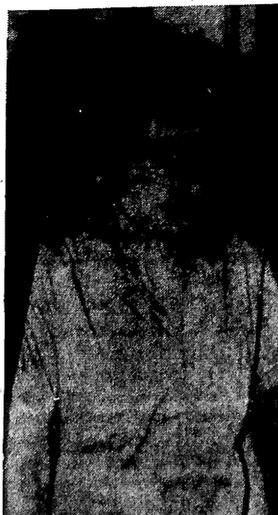
Throughout the trial, Judge Cannon ruled out all evidence

er and use of a deadly weapon with intent to kill, and received the maximum sentence—consecutive terms of 100 years on the first charge and 50 years on the second.

The Silk-Nauni defense committee is planning to appeal. Judge Cannon set the outrageous bail of \$100,000 during the appeal process.

Doug Parr, Silk-Nauni's lawyer, told the *Torch/La Antorcha* in a telephone interview that there has been some success in raising bail money. Meanwhile Silk-Nauni has been transferred to the state's maximum security prison at McAlester, Oklahoma.

In Los Angeles, the Revolutionary Socialist League has joined with other groups and individuals in forming a support committee. On September 19, the group held a 15-hour vigil, which was covered by the media. The committee is planning to bring Frances Wise, from the defense committee in Oklahoma, to speak at a major fundraiser. For more information, call the *Feminist Women's Health Center* at (213) 496-4844 or the *Los Angeles RSL* at (213) 385-6029. Contributions and requests for more information can also be sent to: *Rita Silk-Nauni Defense Committee, Native American Center, 1212 North Hudson, Oklahoma City, OK 73101*. Letters to Rita Silk-Nauni should be sent to *Box 97, McAlester, OK 74501*. □



Rita Silk-Nauni soon after arrest.

of self-defense, "defense of child" or police misconduct. The defense was limited to the question of sanity at the time of the shooting. Despite all this, the state didn't succeed in railroadng Silk-Nauni to the death chamber. But she was convicted of manslaughter.

Important Notice!

Are you being released soon? If so, please let us know where to continue sending your free subscription to the *TORCH/LA ANTORCHA*. We know that when you get out you don't necessarily have the money for a paid subscription, SO WE'LL CONTINUE SENDING THE *TORCH/LA ANTORCHA* TO YOU FOR FREE FOR SIX MONTHS.

And when you hit the street, why not pass your copy of the *TORCH/LA ANTORCHA* around? See if there are others who might like to get the paper. One of the best ways you could help build the Revolutionary Socialist League is by introducing people to our newspaper. Or see if you can find bookstores or newsstands that would carry the paper every month. If you find any, write us and we can set it up.

Finally, let us know what you're doing when you get home. The struggle doesn't end when you walk out of the cage—it only begins on a different level. Continue to struggle! Contact us in any of our branch cities (see the listings on page 16). Or write to the closest branch to you or the National Office and maybe we could arrange to meet you somewhere. There are always lots of activities going on in which your participation and experience could be a big help. Or there are classes on revolutionary politics you could join.

The point is, we don't want to lose touch with you just because you're out now. In fact, we want and need to tighten our relationship with you—and convince you to join our party!

Cuban refugees

Some 2,000 who have come this year as refugees are locked up in camps where they are out for harassment and beatings.

Many of the gay men or lesbians who are having committed crimes or administrative infractions in being honest and confused enough that to U.S. officials.

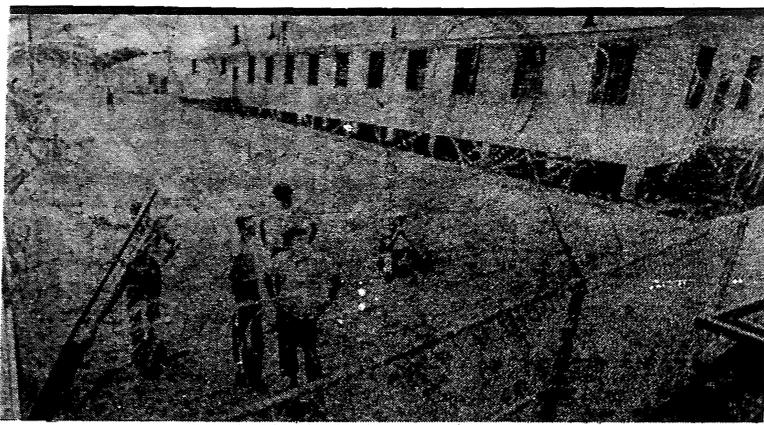
A September *Times* article wide and loose "serious crimes" processing the correct reports from venworth prison the *Torch/La Antorcha* the treatment to getting behind.

On June 7, Pineda issued a direct order to refugees who committed "serious crimes" in and out who they are in gratation and Service (INS—L) viewed the Cuban statements in English-language and then asked for it. The affidavits went back to the refugees.

As a result of the INS procedure, the INS has 2,000 Cubans in camps all over the country. It is now beginning to expel those whose fate will be far, 393 hearings completed, and cases has a Cuban Migrant and won stay in the U.S.

Despite the U.S. government's propaganda lack of freedom in accepting at face value Cuban criminal cases. Some of those in custody of regulatory such as killing you without government sanction.

One prisoner in Atlanta penitentiary cause he admitted Defense lawyers questioning him, he been arrested when for running away from his girlfriend.



Cuban refugees confined behind barbed wire in camp at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

Imprisoned Cuban Refugees Find Out True Meaning of 'American Democracy'

Some 2,000 of the Cubans who have come to the U.S. this year as refugees are now locked up in federal prisons, where they are being singled out for harassment by authorities.

Many of these Cubans are gay men or lesbians. Many others are guilty only of having committed petty crimes or administrative infractions in Cuba—and of being honest or foolish or confused enough to admit that to U.S. government officials.

A September 27 *New York Times* article exposed the wide and loose definition of "serious crimes" used in processing the Cubans, and direct reports from inside Leavenworth prison in Kansas to the *Torch/La Antorcha* detail the treatment the Cubans are getting behind bars.

On June 7, President Carter issued a directive to expel refugees who committed "serious crimes" in Cuba. To find out who they are, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS—La Migra) interviewed the Cubans, converted their statements into a written English-language affidavit and then asked them to sign it. The affidavits were not read back to the refugees in Spanish.

As a result of this procedure, the INS has put over 2,000 Cubans in federal prisons all over the country, and is now beginning to hold expulsion hearings, where their fate will be decided. So far, 393 hearings have been completed, and in only five cases has a Cuban beat La Migra and won the right to stay in the U.S.

Despite the U.S. government's propaganda about the lack of freedom in Cuba, it is accepting at face value most Cuban criminal convictions. Some of those in prison are guilty of regulatory crimes, such as killing your own cow without government permission.

One prisoner wound up in Atlanta penitentiary because he admitted to rape. Defense lawyers found, on questioning him, that he had been arrested when he was 14 for running away to live with his girlfriend.

Almost half the prisoners are guilty of petty theft, mostly of food or clothing. One refugee, who is now in Atlanta penitentiary was sentenced to 30 years in jail in Cuba for stealing fabric when he was 12 and stealing clothes at the age of 16.

The reason many of the gays are locked up is more complicated. U.S. law prohibits homosexuals from entering the country unless they deny they are gay—either by saying nothing or saying "No, I'm not" if the question is raised by someone else. But in the case of the Cuban refugees, the government has agreed to look the other way. Gay Cubans have been allowed into the U.S. although, according to one organization sponsoring many of the gay refugees, they will be in a "perpetual state of being on parole in this country."

The big problem is that just as in the U.S., gay men and lesbians in Cuba are often harassed by the police, and then arrested and convicted

on some trumped-up charge which, on the surface, has nothing to do with being homosexual. As a result of the records created by these arrests a good proportion of the gay Cubans who have arrived here are now locked up as "serious criminals."

Many of the imprisoned Cubans—gay and straight—are very young. "You have Cubans here as young as 15 years old," one prisoner at Leavenworth reported to the *Torch/La Antorcha*. "The pigs don't even place a so-called federal criminal of the age of 20 or 21 years old in places such as Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary: yet they have 15-, 16- and 18-year-old Cubans here. It is an unbelievable sight. It is enough to make you want to do something out of the ordinary...."

"When the Cuban brothers first arrived," another prisoner wrote us, "they were immediately placed in the kitchen jobs in the dining room areas, to work for free, and to

take the places of those U.S.A. prisoners who were working for slave wages...." The prison authorities "wanted the Cubans to 'have exercise' by working for nothing in the place of those assigned...."

"One of the gay Cubans had an Afro brother (who spoke Spanish) translate to me that he was being singled out by the USP guards and was going to be stopped from working in the kitchen, only because of his gayness. Shortly after this was told to me, all of the gay Cubans were taken off the kitchen jobs and other Cubans were put in their place. U.S.A. government oppression against gay prisoners is nothing new...."

The prisoners at Leavenworth were given strict instructions not to talk to the Cubans. "Many of the Cubans who outwardly disobeyed the restriction were locked up in the hole and in the prison hospital.... Many of them are scattered throughout the pris-

on, hidden away in various lockup sections," the reports say. "Many of the Cubans are coming around to realize that America is not what they thought it would be," one prisoner's letter said.

"For over nine years, I have been held hostage within the prisons of the U.S.A.," wrote the prisoner who worked with Cubans in the kitchen area. "Throughout the U.S.A., African Americans, and other ethnic Americans (a class of poor white, poor Black, poor third world peoples) are subjected to the same disregard of their human rights as human beings. It is this class that is the most oppressed by the U.S.A. government. The Cuban refugees must be considered a part of this same oppressed class of people. In this context, the Cuban refugees (Cuban brothers and sisters) are indeed now being treated just as this same class of poor people in the U.S.A. are being treated, and in most cases, worse!" □

Trials of Pontiac Brothers Begin

CHICAGO—On September 15, more than two years after the prisoner uprising at Illinois's Pontiac prison, the trials of 16 prisoners began here. The Pontiac case is the largest death-penalty trial in the U.S. in over 60 years. All 16 capital defendants are Black.

The Pontiac rebellion was touched off on July 22, 1978, by extreme heat, overcrowding, and other rotten conditions. Millions of dollars of damage was done, and three guards were killed.

After the rebellion, the state of Illinois launched a huge and expensive investigation. Its purpose was to murder prisoners the keepers didn't like.

The state used intimidation and bribery to construct its case. All its witnesses were interviewed under the pressure of a deadlock that kept all prisoners in their cells. Many



Support rally for Pontiac Brothers in September 1978.

were threatened with the death penalty. Eventually 17 prisoners were charged with being involved in killing the guards. Fourteen other prisoners were indicted on lesser charges. One of the 17, Angelo Robinson, has since turned state's evidence. Of the

remaining 16, 10 are now on trial and the remaining six are to be tried afterward.

The trial of the 10 is now in the jury selection phase. Judge Ben Miller is not allowing defense lawyers to question prospective jurors. He is asking their questions for

them. In addition, court officials have been telling prospective jurors not to answer questions too freely—that is, not to let their prejudices be discovered. On October 3, one defendant was thrown out of the courtroom when defendants and their lawyers protested Judge Miller's refusal to let a prospective juror testify about this illegal coaching. The other nine Pontiac prisoners then walked out in solidarity.

After three weeks, only four jurors have been chosen. A total of 12 jurors and six alternates are to be picked.

In a late development, families of guards killed in the rebellion have announced that they are suing the state, charging that it was responsible for the deaths. While the families do not support the Pontiac defendants, their suit may help expose the rotten conditions that made a rebellion inevitable. □

No to PNP! No to JLP!

RML Statement on Jamaican Elections

The article below is an abridged version of a statement by the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica (RML) on the elections being held in that country on October 30. The RML is the sister organization of the RSL. The full text appears as a supplement to the September 27 issue of FORWARD, newspaper of the RML.

Jamaica's General Elections are due in October. The capitalist politicians of both the People's National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) would like the working masses to believe that the outcome of these elections is crucial to solving the grave crisis now facing the country. They want the masses to believe that a choice between Michael Manley's liberal capitalist, supposedly "democratic socialist," PNP and Edward Seaga's viciously anti-communist, pro-U.S. and hard-line right-wing JLP has something to do with stopping the massive unemployment and shortages, rising prices, political violence, state repression and other extreme hardships that we are facing now.

But nothing don't go so. A vote in the coming elections for either the PNP or the JLP will solve nothing for the working people of Jamaica! Both these capitalist parties bear responsibility for the present severe crisis of the Jamaican economy. Both are responsible for the terrible suffering which this has meant for the country's oppressed masses. Whichever of them wins the coming elections, the working people are going to be exploited and attacked even more as the local and foreign capitalists try to make us pay for their crisis.

The immediate choice facing the Jamaican working class, therefore, is not which party to vote for—PNP or JLP. It is a choice between more capitalist exploitation whichever party forms the next government or revolutionary struggle against the capitalists, leading to socialist revolution and the destruction of capitalist bondage and oppression. **Why do we say this?**

To understand why we say this it is necessary to look carefully at how the working people have made out under both PNP and JLP governments. It is also necessary to look at both parties' programmes and policies and what they will mean for the masses in the future.

Misery, corruption and repression under JLP

In 1972 the working and oppressed Jamaican masses booted out the JLP government of Hugh Shearer. The masses were fed up with the misery, corruption and harsh repression they experienced under that regime. Under the rule of that reactionary government:

- One out of every four working people were unemployed.
- One-half of the population was illiterate.
- Police brutality was widespread and the human rights of the masses were ruthlessly trampled. Rastafarians

were regular victims of these atrocities.

- All radical ideas and activities were brutally suppressed. Black radicals like Walter Rodney and Stokely Carmichael were banned from the country. Similarly, Black literature.

- Government officials shamelessly lined their pockets out of public funds. Remember how JLP government personnel robbed up the money that was supposed to build schools for poor people's children?

- A tiny clique of local and foreign capitalists owned and controlled the land, bauxite, hotels and other resources of the country. Thus, by the



RML rally in industrial area of Kingston.

late 1960s more than half of all economic activity in Jamaica was owned by foreign—especially U.S.—interests. At the same time, 300 individuals owned approximately 680,000 acres of farmland—an average of 2,300 acres each. Meanwhile, some 150,000 people, who made up three-quarters of all the country's farmers, owned farms of less than five acres per person.

- Politically, the country played the role of a lackey of U.S. imperialism. A notable feature of this relationship was the 1963 U.S.-Jamaica Defence Treaty. Under this treaty, the U.S. supplied the Jamaican police force with equipment. More importantly, however, the U.S. was also empowered to intervene militarily in Jamaica.

Dressed-up capitalism under PNP

In 1972 the oppressed masses voted in the PNP because it promised a change for the better. Instead, they got the same old oppressive capitalism dressed up with a few reforms (landlease, crash programme, minimum wage, etc.), a foreign policy slightly independent of the U.S. and a socialist tag. They got the brutal Green Bay Massacre, directly engineered by the PNP's state forces. They also got repressive laws like the Gun Court Act, Suppression of Crime Act and the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act which, in part, limits workers' rights to stage strikes and

other forms of industrial action.

But at no time under the present PNP government has the capitalist exploitation of the working people of Jamaica been more brutal than since 1977 when the PNP signed a loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Under that agreement the PNP launched a vicious wave of attacks on working people's living standards. This wave of attacks included a limit on wage increases, a guaranteed 20 percent rate of profit for the capitalists, cuts in spending on social programmes and public services that benefit the masses, and cuts in imports of food and other basic

- Many basic items are very scarce. Prices of essential goods like cornmeal, milk and soap powder keep going up and up. As a result, during the last two years workers' buying power has been cut almost in half.

- Poor people in the ghettos and parts of the countryside are being regularly butchered by PNP/JLP terrorists.

- Under cover of the Suppression of Crime Act, members of the army are torturing and brutalizing working class youths, including many who support the PNP.

PNP continues IMF/capitalist programme

Although the oppressed masses have forced the PNP to break off with the IMF since March this year, the PNP is keeping up the same IMF/capitalist attacks against the masses even without the IMF. So, for example, the wage guidelines are still effective and the guarantee of a 20 percent rate of profit remains.

If the PNP is returned for a third term in office, the working people will have it even harder than they are having it now. Furthermore, it will not take long for a re-elected PNP government to begin suppressing militant workers and revolutionaries, such as RML members, who oppose its efforts to try and solve the Jamaican capitalist crisis at working people's expense.

PNP supporters who disbelieve this must think back to how D.K. Duncan, one of the foremost middle class radicals in the PNP, was pushed out of the government in 1977 in order to pacify the right wing in the party. This shows clearly that the PNP will not hesitate to crush revolutionary organizing by the masses and genuinely communist forces as soon as they feel sufficiently threatened by this.

A vote for the PNP in the coming elections is, therefore, most definitely not in the interests of the working people or the left in this country.

The JLP is no alternative

But the JLP is no alternative. The only "solution" to the present economic crisis which the JLP has to offer is to sell out the country to the U.S. imperialists, lock, stock and barrel. This is what Seaga means when he talks about "the Puerto Rican Model."

In practice what this involves is that the JLP would try and attract U.S. companies to invest in Jamaica through low or non-existent taxes, special pro-business regulations, freedom to take all profits out of the country, government-sponsored anti-communist witch-hunting, government-enforced low wages and quick suppression of strikes and other forms of workers' struggles.

This economic strategy has been tried before by both PNP and JLP administrations during the '50s and '60s. At that time it was called "industrial-

By WILL

Despite con- employment an- digit inflation economic sta- improvement causing some- istration offici- that the recess- most econom- doubts. The si- current recover- not be very st- long, or bring- people hardest- cession.

THE MAIN claim that a rec- way is that Department's i- economic indi- three months i- percent in June- July and 1.9 p- gust. (The A- were the latest- press time.)

Meanwhile, o- pments seem- view that the e- the upswing. In- rose in August- time since last- production, h- retail sales and- have all increa- months.

At the sam- official unemp- decreased, from- July to 7.6 perc- down to 7.5 pe- tember. In addi- age workweek- workers increas- hours in August- in September.

But the truth- impressive arra- covers up more- veals. "What the- cators do not say- we are moving in- period," the chi- at the Philadelp- Bank told the- Times. "What th- they confirm th- number of plus- August."

One reason t-

ization by invitati- ably to provide an- development for Ja- imperialist corpor- lions of dollars of-

So, for example- the companies at- under this indu- gramme created- Meanwhile, during- there were 100,0- looking for jobs!

If tried again in- form, the only thin- Rican Model" will at- the impoverishmen- enslavement of the- pressed Jamaican n- "alternative" being- working and poor m- by the JLP.

Working people r- the JLP and its pr-

RSL FORUMS

Jamaica in Crisis

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Plus: Slideshow from the Revolutionary Marxist League

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Is the Recession Over?

By WILLIAM FALK

Despite continued high unemployment and near double-digit inflation, a series of economic statistics showed improvement early this fall, causing some Carter administration officials to proclaim that the recession is over. But most economists have their doubts. The signs are that the current recovery will probably not be very strong, last very long, or bring relief to the people hardest hit by the recession.

THE MAIN basis for the claim that a recovery is underway is that the Commerce Department's Index of leading economic indicators climbed three months in a row: up one percent in June, 3.7 percent in July and 1.9 percent in August. (The August figures were the latest available at press time.)

Meanwhile, various developments seem to confirm the view that the economy is on the upswing. Industrial output rose in August for the first time since last January. Auto production, housing starts, retail sales and factory orders have all increased in recent months.

At the same time, the official unemployment rate decreased, from 7.8 percent in July to 7.6 percent in August, down to 7.5 percent in September. In addition, the average workweek for factory workers increased from 35.4 hours in August to 39.5 hours in September.

But the truth is that this impressive array of statistics covers up more than it reveals. "What the leading indicators do not say to me is that we are moving into a recovery period," the chief economist at the Philadelphia National Bank told the *New York Times*. "What they do say is they confirm that we had a number of plus indicators in August."

One reason the numbers

can't be trusted is that some of them were produced by statistical flukes. The head of the Bureau of Labor Statistics in New York, for example, admitted that the main reason the state's jobless rate dropped in August was that young people left the workforce, either because they went back to school or because they moved into the Labor Department's category of "discouraged workers."

A second reason the statistics are deceptive is that other important signs of economic recovery are not present. The layoff rate for September, which would be expected to drop together with unemployment, did not. While housing construction starts improved over the summer, construction as a whole dropped slightly, largely because of a halt in large government building projects. Similarly, orders by manufacturers for raw materials and machinery have continued to drop, while non-defense orders for capital goods went down a whopping six percent in August.

THE REASON the signs of improvement are so spotty is that the limited recovery which has taken place has been the result of an increase in consumer spending based on credit. This is probably the main reason the recovery won't last. The recession began with a credit squeeze, symbolized by a twentieth-century peak of 20 percent for the prime interest rate. After that, interest rates began to drop and Federal Reserve-imposed credit restrictions were allowed to lapse. Home mortgages became cheaper and easier to get, banks resumed offering consumer credit like MasterCard and Visa, and all types of other loans—such as auto financing—became less expensive. Thus, over the last several months there has been a large increase in consumer spending, even though there has



Thousands apply for 75 government jobs in Baltimore, September 15, 1980.

been only a tiny increase in total personal incomes and no increase in real (after inflation) incomes for workers and most middle class people.

This type of recovery, based on renewed increases in debt, is not what the capitalists want. As we discussed in our article at the beginning of the recession ("Recession Arrives; Depression on the Way?" *Torch/La Antorcha*, April 15, 1980), the capitalists began to look forward to the recession in the hope that it would squeeze some debt out of the economy, and thereby help cure inflation.

BUT THIS isn't what happened. By mid-September it was clear that if the debt-based recovery continued, inflation would soon move above 10 percent and head toward the record levels of last year, alarming much of the capitalist class.

In response, the Federal Reserve Board began to force banks to tighten credit. By the beginning of this month, the prime interest rate was 14 percent—higher than in October 1979 and up from an August low of 10.5 percent. "We've got these recent increases in interest rates because the Fed is disappointed by the shortness of the recession."

The Fed feels that a greater slowdown in the economy is needed to make any significant progress against inflation," commented John Paulus, an economist at the investment firm Goldman, Sachs and Company.

The effect of the Federal Reserve's actions has been a credit squeeze that, while only a pale imitation of the one last spring, will probably be enough to stop the incipient recovery.

In addition, the U.S. economy is being hit by a powerful blow from abroad. Japan's growth has slowed to 2.5 percent a year, while most of Europe is now sliding into recession. (The only exception to this is also negative—Britain, which has been in a depression for months.) Together these countries buy over 40 percent of all exported U.S. products, but now, given their own economic problems, orders can be expected to drop drastically. The effect from this will be felt throughout the U.S. economy.

DESPITE the small upturn, the overall shape of the economy remains unchanged. For instance, while a number of laid-off autoworkers have recently been called back to begin production for the new

model year, people looking for work in lower-paying industries have not found the number of jobs increasing.

The week after the chief Commerce Department economist declared the recession over, more than 26,200 people lined up to apply for 75 entry level jobs at the Social Security Administration in Baltimore. In September, the unemployment rate for whites dropped to 6.5 percent from August's 6.8 percent, but the unemployment rate for Blacks increased from 13.6 percent to 14.2 percent.

Meanwhile in August, the inflation rate for food grew at an annual rate of 32 percent, raising the expected 1980 inflation rate to double digits. Last spring, before the effects of this summer's drought were figured in, food price inflation for 1981 was expected to be 15 percent and now will surely be higher.

CONTINUED high and rising prices, continued unemployment, continued expensive and hard to get credit—this is what to expect in the coming months. The economic recovery of this fall has been made up of one credit bubble and one president anxious for good economic news, but very little else. □

ization by invitation." It failed miserably to provide any form of economic development for Jamaica though many imperialist corporations made millions of dollars of profits out of it.

So, for example, between 1956-68, the companies attracted to Jamaica under this industrialization programme created 13,000 new jobs. Meanwhile, during the same period, there were 100,000 new workers looking for jobs!

If tried again in Jamaica, in any form, the only thing that "the Puerto Rican Model" will achieve, as usual, is the impoverishment and imperialist enslavement of the working and oppressed Jamaican masses. This is the "alternative" being offered to the working and poor masses of Jamaica by the JLP.

Working people must firmly reject the JLP and its pro-imperialist and

reactionary programme.

The working and oppressed Jamaican masses must break from both bosses' parties—PNP and JLP.

Working people must not vote for either the PNP or the JLP in the coming elections. To vote for either of these parties is to give approval to the capitalists' stepped-up exploitation of us in the coming period.

If a lot of working people refuse to vote in the coming elections this will be a clear sign of rejection of the capitalist politics which both the PNP and JLP defend.

This does not mean that we refuse to have anything to do with capitalist elections on principle. Revolutionary Marxists will participate in capitalist elections in order to expose the workings of the capitalist system and propagandize and organize for revolu-

tionary socialism.

But we don't vote in elections where there is no party that defends our interests to vote for. Nor do we have any illusions about changing capitalism or stopping right-wing coups by voting. In this we are totally different from the Stalinist Workers' Party of Jamaica (WPJ) and like-minded Jamaican left organizations which are telling working people to support the PNP in the coming elections. This is a thoroughly rotten and counter-revolutionary position which encourages the working people to let down their guard and rely on one group of their class enemies, namely, the PNP capitalists. It is a position which weakens the working class in the face of the capitalists of both the PNP and JLP and paves the way for a rightist coup such as occurred in Chile in September 1973.

As revolutionary Marxists we of the RML call on the working and oppressed Jamaican people to build a revolutionary struggle against the capitalists. A struggle to beat back the layoffs, redundancies and other capitalist attacks by factory occupations, strikes and other forms of working class action. A struggle to defeat PNP/JLP terrorist attacks, the brutality of the army and police and any right-wing coup attempt through the organization of armed workers' and community defence guards everywhere throughout Jamaica. Most of all, a struggle to build a revolutionary communist workers' party. That is, a party that can lead the working and oppressed masses in successfully overthrowing the capitalists and imperialists and taking control of the economy and the entire society into their own hands. □

Drop the Charges Against Jearl 'Lucky' Wood!

FORD CHICAGO ASSEMBLY PLANT—Brother Jearl "Lucky" Wood is the victim of a racist management set-up here. Wood, a Black assembler with less than four years' seniority, struck back against company harassment on August 22. He shot and wounded the notorious Cecil Harrell, a white general foreman. The shooting came a few minutes after Harrell railroaded Wood out of the plant on the strength of a phony Breathalyzer test, without a proper hearing and without union representation.

Ford had pushed Wood around one time too many. As a rank and file leaflet stated, "On Aug. 22, Ford reaped what they sowed."

Wood described the final provocation from Cecil Harrell this way: "On August 22 I was told to be put back on the brake line job. I had difficulty with the job. This brought me into conflict with Cecil Harrell. He had been riding me for the past two years. He overrode 'Archie,' my immediate foreman, and took matters into his own hands that day. I have witnesses to the facts. He sent me to Trim office, and I asked for my committe-



Jearl Wood.

man. I waited there an hour, but no committeeman came. I came back to my work area. Cecil Harrell cursed me and sent me back up to the Trim office. He said to me, 'You can't stay down here! Take your Black ass up to the Trim office!!' After this, I did not argue with him. I went back to

Trim office for 30 more minutes, waiting for my committeeman. Still, nobody ever showed up."

Wood gave himself up voluntarily on the night of the shooting. Despite this, the second judge he had to go before made Wood stay in jail until \$500 cash (on \$5,000 bond) was put together. Wood faces charges of "aggravated assault."

UAW tries to stall the struggle

Co-workers have been organizing rank and file support from the jump. But at each step, they have run up against lack of interest from most union officials of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 551. For example, a representative group of workers from all production departments met with the union vice-president on August 25, the first working day after the shooting. He said the UAW couldn't do anything for Wood. Wood is a UAW member, but this union leader didn't think his struggle for justice is respectable enough!

Wood wrote a letter to the Local 551 Executive Board on September 7. He said the union's lack of action on the shop floor set him up to take the rap on the night of the shooting. Wood stated: "Hopefully, this incident should get the union more organized and get the workers together when they'll start representing the people who pay their union dues. This issue would never have happened if I had been represented properly." A thousand copies of this letter circulated in the plant during the week before the September union meeting. His letter helped draw co-workers into the struggle.

Under rank and file pressure, Local 551 wrote a grievance protesting Brother Wood's discharge. But at the same time, President Byron Cooper could have helped turn out many more co-workers to the September 21 general membership meeting. (Local 551 requires a higher quorum—100—than many Chicago-area UAW locals.) Instead, a large number of elected union officials failed to attend the meeting. The resulting lack of a quorum prevented Wood and

his co-workers from voting on motions to push the UAW into an active defense campaign.

On September 25, co-workers from three production departments joined Wood and members of his family at the preliminary hearing. Cecil Harrell, who was already well enough to drive a car, displayed a remarkable memory for details about the August 22 shooting. He even described where the bullet went after it hit him! But somehow he couldn't recall if Wood was

Correction: The letter "Autoworker Shoots Racist Foreman," which appeared on page two of the September 15-October 14, 1980, issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha*, contained a serious error in the last sentence of the first paragraph. The sentence read: "Angry from all this abuse, Wood came back the next night and shot Harrell." What, in fact, happened was that Wood shot Harrell the same night he was abused and disciplined. We apologize to *Torch/La Antorcha* readers and to Jearl Wood for this mistake.

upset at the harassment earlier the same day.

The preliminary hearing continues on Friday, October 17, at 9:30 a.m. Show support for Wood and be there with him at: **Branch 48, 155 W. 51st Street. Free Jearl "Lucky" Wood! Drop the charges! Put Ford on trial!** □

LABOR IN STRUGGLE

Nurses wildcat in NY

Nurses in the New York City area are taking militant action to defend their jobs and living standards. On October 10, registered nurses in the city's 16 municipal hospitals began a wildcat strike in defiance of a court order and their own union leaders to enforce demands for a new contract. The strike has been particularly effective at the city's larger hospitals. For instance, on October 12, almost all the nurses in the Lincoln and North Central hospitals in the Bronx joined the walkout, while only eight of 100 nurses reported for the day shift at Manhattan's Bellevue Hospital.

The 5,500 registered nurses employed at city hospitals have been working since June 30 without a contract. They are demanding a 20-percent pay raise over two years, wage parity with better-paid nurses in private hospitals and improvements in working conditions. After the wildcat began, Mayor Edward Koch and the New York State Nurses Association, which represents the strikers, agreed to emergency arbitration for a new contract in an effort to end the strike. Katie Washington, one of the strike leaders, responded by telling reporters, "The union said we couldn't go out in the first place. We're not coming back now." However, reports from the hospitals as we go to press indicate the union has convinced or forced nurses to return to work.

In Amityville, Long Island, 83 of 199 registered nurses at the Brunswick General Hospital have been on strike for union recognition since July 11. The nurses voted to affiliate with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters last April after

the hospital administration implemented a schedule which forced them to work five out of every six weekends. The Stein family, which owns the hospital, is refusing to negotiate seriously with the union. Meanwhile, assistant administrator Jules Stein patrols the hospital—carrying a pistol and threatening the strikers. The nurses are organizing a support rally for their strike on October 25. Further information about the strike and the rally can be obtained by calling (516) 264-9702.

Labor tops talk jobs march

On October 1, the convention of the Illinois state American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) called on AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland to organize a National March for Jobs in Washington, D.C., sometime next year. A day or two earlier the Minnesota state AFL-CIO issued a similar call during its September 28-30 convention. This marks the first time that any leadership body within the AFL-CIO has supported such a march, although the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, District 31 of the United Steelworkers union, and some local trade union leaders called for one earlier this year.

A march on Washington could play an important role in building a militant workers' response to the effects of the recession. But at this point, the AFL-CIO leadership has not actually committed itself to organizing one.

In fact the labor bureaucracy is playing political games with the workers' need for jobs. It is composed of pro-capitalist officials who want to

keep the workers' response to the economic crisis limited to voting President Jimmy Carter back into office. They are determined to avoid any action—such as a jobs march—which might focus workers' attention on Carter's anti-working class policies and cost him the election. Once the elections are over, they may try to pressure the winner into granting jobs programs by organizing or threatening to organize a jobs march.

NIPSCO strikers face unionbusting

Over 600 people attended a rally in Hammond, Indiana, for workers on strike against the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) on September 25. Some 4,200 NIPSCO workers have been on strike for a new contract since June 10. They include 3,200 production workers represented by United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 12775 and 1,000 clerical workers in USWA Local 13706.

In negotiations over a new contract, NIPSCO is demanding a series of takeaways. It wants to eliminate the workers' cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and reduce pension and medical insurance benefits. It is also demanding that workers give up the plantwide seniority provisions won in previous contracts. To coordinate its campaign, the company has hired consultants from the union-busting law firm of Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather and Geraldson. This is the same firm employed by the Tenneco Corporation in its losing effort to defeat the USWA's organizing drive at the Newport News Virginia, shipyards last year.

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After more than six months on strike against Glydons, a Los Angeles garment manufacturer, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILG) has given up its efforts to win union recognition. The union's support for the strike had been dwindling since May and the final outcome was no surprise. The ILG decision followed a ruling by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in late August that the strike concerned economic issues only and not unfair labor practices, as the union had claimed. Without ongoing strike activity, and with no remaining legal basis for the strike, the ILG had no chance of winning a contract or even of getting back the jobs of the 150 Glydons strikers.

Test of strength

The Glydons strike was one of the longest and most militant strikes in the history of the Los Angeles garment industry. It was, as the *Torch/La Antorcha* described it months ago, a decisive test of strength between a united layer of medium and small garment bosses on the one side, and the ILG, whose faltering organizing drive had to win at Glydons or risk being knocked out of the industry altogether, on the other. To the Glydons strikers—all Latin or Black, nearly all women—the economic demands of the strike barely covered their survival needs. Many of them consciously saw it as something more. To them, it was a fight for self-respect, for the assertion of power by undocumented workers, for a defense of the union movement against a direct attack. And they fought the strike with a militancy and determination which kept the struggle alive even after the ILG had all but abandoned it, even after it became clear that the effort would fail.

The Glydons strike was a turning point for the ILG in Los Angeles. Its two-year organizing drive, aimed mostly at small shops and women machine operators, reached its peak at Glydons. Today the ILG is in retreat. Its local organizing staff is in disarray, plagued with resignations, factionalism and demoralization. Its broad organizing campaign has been effectively ended and, since the Glydons strike, much union energy has been concentrated on fighting off decertification drives. Three recent strikes in already unionized pleating shops all ended in defeat and a loss of the shops to the union. A new union strategy calls for orienting to a different layer of garment workers—the mostly-male cutters who tend to earn more than the women machine operators. But so far this cutters' campaign is still

Organizing Drive Ends in Defeat

Lessons of the Glydons Strike



"Day of Solidarity" demonstration held at Glydons on April 16, 1980.

largely in the planning stage.

The Revolutionary Socialist League and its industrial arm in garment, the Revolutionary Garment Committee (Comite Revolucionario de la Costura—CRC) were deeply involved in the Glydons strike from the beginning. RSL supporters were working at Glydons during the initial organizing drive and helped lead that drive to an election victory for the union in December. When the strike began in February, RSL and CRC supporters took on leadership roles both inside the Organizing Committee and from the outside, with widespread strike support activities—plant-gate rallies, mass pickets, informational leafletting and speaking engagements, media coverage and fundraising.

As Glydons workers and revolutionaries in the garment industry, RSL/CRC supporters had a responsibility to the strike beyond that of critical observers. They had to jump in with both feet. They had to do everything possible to make the strike win.

But to the RSL/CRC, the strike and the support work had a broader goal. It was absolutely necessary to organize at Glydons, to win a contract, to defeat the bosses' union-busting attacks. Freedom, self-respect, and political power for garment workers will only come about by building unity, strengthening workers' organizations and raising the consciousness of workers in struggle to see the need for revolutionary change.

A strike struggle, when led by the present trade union bureaucracy, is essentially a struggle for reform, for one

small improvement for one small group of workers. But revolutionaries don't turn their backs on it. Instead, revolutionaries join in fights for reforms and attempt to build them into militant class confrontations while pointing out that to really win lasting gains, the struggle must not stop at this or that reform. It must grow over into a revolutionary fight for workers' power.

Revolutionaries work inside strike struggles to win the strike. But more than that, they are trying to win the most advanced workers to see the need for socialist revolution and the need for a revolutionary party to lead it. That is what guided RSL/CRC supporters in their Glydons strike activities. Those who went into the struggle already committed to revolution learned a great deal about day-to-day union organizing and strikes. Some of those who began the strike with a limited political understanding emerged more prepared to lead workers' struggles in the future. That is how revolutionary leadership and its party is built—inside the struggles of the working class.

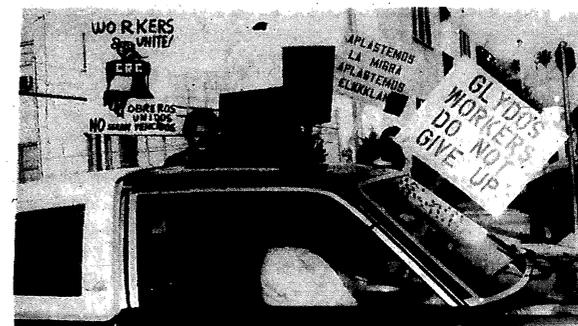
Besides this fundamental lesson of revolutionary union organizing, several other important political questions were raised, and answered, by the strike.

One is the question of organizing among the most oppressed layers of the working class, in this case Latin and Black women in garment. Can such people be organized? Or will the weight of their social oppression keep them always on the defensive,

unable to fight? In the middle of a severe economic recession, 150 mostly-women garment workers, some undocumented immigrants, many with little education or formal job skills, all said: Enough! They fought heroically for six months against the Glydons boss, against their own conservative union leaders, against all the combined threats of the police, Migra (the Immigration and Naturalization Service) and NLRB. And though the strike failed to win, in no way can the responsibility be placed on them.

Role of the state

A second question is the role of the state. Elements of the state include the police, the courts, the NLRB, and the Migra. And despite whatever it may say, the state is not neutral. In this society, the state belongs to the bosses and serves their interests. In a strike struggle, this state will



Scab going through picket line during seventh week of strike.

favor the bosses' side and it will put up as many obstacles as it can to prevent a workers' victory. The Glydons strike provides many examples.

Throughout the strike the fear of an Immigration Service raid was ever-present. This specialized police force, designed to separate workers into "legal" and "illegal," citizen and "alien," categories, has been used to break many strikes before. The Glydons boss did in fact call on the Migra early in the strike to arrest known "illegals" on the picket line. Because of pressure from other bosses to avoid big raids during the 1980 census count, however, the Migra held back. But no one ever doubted that it was ready and could be used whenever the state decided.

The city police and their Labor Squad were present whenever strike activities took place. They photographed strikers, threatened them with the Migra, held picketers illegally for "not carrying ID," and more. Nearly 50 people were arrested during the course of the strike. One strike leader was arrested four times. And during one strike support rally at the factory gate, police physically attacked the crowd, injuring two women strikers.

The courts and the NLRB both served the needs of their capitalist masters. One after another injunction was issued by the courts limiting the number of picketers and limiting how close to the factory they could stand. After three months, the strikers were being forced to remain 1,000 feet away from the gate. This made picket lines or support rallies virtually impossible to carry out. And the NLRB? After invalidating the union election which favored the union by 149-10, the NLRB sat on the case for over six months while the strike gradually lost strength. When there were no more militant protests or media coverage to embarrass them, the NLRB quietly ruled the strike illegal and gave Glydons the win.

A third question is the role of the existing union leadership. Throughout the strike, ILG leaders (from the in-plant organizer to top bureaucrats) played a conservative role. They wanted to win the

(Continued on page 17)

The following article is an edited version of a talk given by Bruce Kala to one session of a class series on the history of the struggle for Black liberation held by the Los Angeles branch of the RSL.

The first appearance of Black slavery in what is now the U.S. was in the summer of 1526, in a Spanish settlement near the mouth of the Pedee River, in what is now South Carolina. The settlement included about 500 Spaniards and 100 Black slaves. By December, the Black slaves had rebelled, joining forces with the Native Americans in the area and forcing the Spanish settlers to flee.

This was the beginning of the relentless struggle that took place for the next 350 years until slavery was finally abolished. Herbert Aptheker, a noted historian affiliated with the Communist Party, collected documented evidence of over 250 revolts in this period for his book, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, from which much of the information in this talk was taken. The 250 figure is a conservative estimate, since the slave owners often suppressed any mention of revolts, fearing their spread. Almost all of these Black slave revolts were small and often were smashed while still in the planning stage.

We can understand the difficulties faced by the Black slaves by contrasting their situation in the U.S. to that of the slaves in Haiti, where there was a successful revolt (see box). In the U.S., Black slaves were a minority, making up less than one-third of the population in most areas. In addition they were highly dispersed—the average slaveholding was three or four, while a plantation having as many as 20 slaves was considered large and the laws required additional white overseers for any larger number. Finally, communication was extremely difficult—it was forbidden for slaves to learn to read and write, patrols operated constantly, enforcing travel restrictions, curfews, etc. With the partial exception of the last point, all this was drastically different from the situation in Haiti.

Conditions for revolution

But even more important than these technical obstacles was the political situation. Revolutions can't just be made at any time—a revolutionary situation is necessary. What this means is that the revolutionary class must have "nothing to lose"; it must be in a situation where conditions are no longer bearable and revolution is the only way out. For its part, the ruling class must have lost its self-confidence, nerve and cohesion—it must no longer be able to rule. And the whole society, including all the intermediate classes, must be in turmoil.

The first condition was certainly true as a constant factor throughout the history of slavery. But, unlike Haiti, where the French Revolution of 1789 provided the second and third conditions, in the U.S. the ruling slave owners kept their unity, confidence and ability to rule intact and the society was not thrown into turmoil—until the Civil War.

Nonetheless, Black slave revolts

Slave Revolts in the U.S. The 350-Year Revolution

occurred almost continually. Aptheker notes that these tended to happen in waves: 1710-22, 1730-40, 1790-1802, 1819-23, 1829-32 and 1850-60. Wars—with the Native Americans, for independence from Britain starting in 1776, in



Harriet Tubman.

1812, and the war against Mexico in 1846—all led to waves of revolts, as the Black slaves took advantage of the opportunities these provided. And, more often than not, Blacks seized on these openings to ally with anyone fighting the U.S.

This was a marked feature of the war for the conquest of Texas, which was part of Mexico at the time. Slave owners, intent on capturing the territory for the expansion of slavery, moved into Texas in large numbers with their slaves. Whenever the battle lines approached near enough to a plantation, the Black slaves revolted and joined the Mexican forces. Early in the struggle over Texas, in October 1835, over 100 Black slaves along the Brazos River revolted when a Mexican force entered the region.

Also, any democratic ferment in the society—the rise of Jeffersonian democracy, the impact of the French Revolution—aided the possibility of slave revolt and increased the number of attempts. And in between the outbreaks of revolts, resistance was carried out in other forms: slaves fought back against their masters in hand-to-hand combat, poisoned them, burned the "great house" and crops. At other times slaves went on strike—refusing to work, at some critical time for the planter, until some improvement was made in their conditions.

But probably the most common and important form of resistance was flight.

Often this would be a completely individual act. Sometimes small groups of slaves fled, armed themselves and hid in the swamps or mountains, sometimes for many years. More often, especially in the later years, escape was to the Northern states or Canada and organized. Between 1830 and 1860, Aptheker reports, 2,000 slaves a year escaped from slavery through the efforts of the "Underground Railroad."

The Underground Railroad was a secret, highly organized network of anti-slavery forces, including many escaped Black slaves, that arranged the flight of over 75,000 Blacks into the North or, after 1850, Canada. The most famous figure associated with the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman, a very courageous and dedicated Black woman. When Tubman was 15 years old, she risked her own life to physically stop her master from capturing an escaping fellow slave. She nearly died as a result, but her effort was successful. Nine years later she made her own escape. She became a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, returning to the South to guide groups of slaves to freedom. Nineteen times she returned, bringing hundreds of Blacks out of slavery without a single loss. There was a price on her head of \$40,000, but this didn't stop Harriet Tubman; she was armed as she did her work and swore: "There are two things I've got a right to, and these are death or liberty. One or the other I mean to have. No one shall take me back alive."

1800: Gabriel Prosser

There will be more to be said about this heroic woman later, but now there are three important revolts—or more accurately, attempted revolts—that I want to describe in some detail. The first of these is that led by "General" Gabriel Prosser, in 1800, in Virginia near Richmond. Gabriel (known as such because Prosser was the name of his slavemaster) had been elected as the leader by a group of slaves. His wife also had an important role in leadership. The rebels had made swords, bayonets and musket balls. They planned to spare Methodists and Quakers (who were anti-slavery) and French people (because of their association with the democratic ideals of the French Revolution then taking place). The rebels hoped to win the support of poor whites; they had also planned to recruit allies from the Catawba Indians. The conspiracy was very widespread, covering much of Virginia, with anywhere from 2,000-50,000 slaves involved. The immediate target of the revolt was to capture Richmond, and spread out from there. On the night of August 30, 1800, over 1,000 slaves assembled on a field outside Richmond. They were met by the worst rain storm in the history of Virginia and

military operations proved impossible. With the plans revealed, 35 leaders, including Gabriel, were quickly captured, tried and executed. Hundreds more, whether or not they had been connected to the planned revolt, were lynched in a wave of terrorism that followed.

1822: Denmark Vesey

The next major attempt at revolt that I want to go into occurred in 1822 in Charleston, South Carolina, led by Denmark Vesey. Vesey had been born around 1766 in Africa. He had stayed briefly in Haiti before the revolution, where he learned French. In 1800, he bought his freedom and became a carpenter, joining the approximately 1,000 free Blacks in Charleston, who were mostly craftsmen of various types. There was also a much larger number of slave craftsmen. These had more mobility, opportunity for communication and greater awareness than the field slaves. It was first of all from this group that Vesey recruited his adherents. Vesey had been inspired to plan for a slave revolt by the upsurge in Jeffersonianism, the anti-slavery debates then going on in Congress, the French Revolution

and, most of all, by the slave revolution in Haiti, which helped develop skills and provided the planning.

Active planning began in 1821. Vesey began carefully selecting particular, no household slaves to be involved. These slaves were to share the "house" and sharing the master's table, were to be able; Vesey knew that any attempt at revolt had to be by such people.

The Blacks who joined Vesey came mostly from the craftsmen of Charleston. Haitian Blacks who had begun collecting money and hire horses for plantations. Slave owners secretly manufactured pikes, 200-300 bayonets and quantities of fuses and powder hidden. Stable boys were assigned to carry plans for seizing bayonets were prepared. Plans for the insurrection were compared in detail. The companies assigned

Haiti: The Slave Rebellion That



Toussaint L'Ouverture

The Black slaves, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, fought the local whites' army for their freedom. When the masses of Paris pushed the revolution to its most radical point in 1794, slavery was abolished and the San Domingue came the most ardent supporters of the revolution. But their fight was defeated each in turn, only to be faced with a new enemy. The French had gone backwards, Napoleon Bonaparte was in power and determined to re-establish slavery. In 1802, France invaded the island. Now it was a war for independence. The Black saint was captured and imprisoned in France. But Jean-Jacques Dessalines took the leadership of the fight. It took the burning of the whole island and the death of every white for the fight of the former slaves to finally win in 1804.

the U.S.— Revolution

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and, most of all, by the success of the slave revolution in Haiti. He was active in the independent African Church, which helped develop his organizational skills and provided a cover for his planning.

Active planning began in December 1821. Vesey began by recruiting cadre, carefully selected to ensure secrecy. In particular, no house slaves were involved. These slaves, living in the "great house" and sharing the crumbs off the master's table, were considered unreliable; Vesey knew of more than one attempted revolt that had been betrayed by such people.

The Blacks who joined with Denmark Vesey came mostly from the slave craftsmen of Charleston; a group of Haitian Blacks was also involved. They began collecting money to buy arms and hire horses to reach outlying plantations. Slave blacksmiths began secretly manufacturing arms: 100 pikes, 200-300 bayonets, 300-400 daggers and quantities of musket balls. Fuses and powder were stolen and hidden. Stable boys at public liveryes were assigned to commandeer horses; plans for seizing boats were laid. Disguises were prepared.

Plans for the insurrection were prepared in detail. These involved seven companies assigned to strategic tasks

the Slave Rebellion That Won



In 1789, the French West Indian colony of San Domingo (Haiti) on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean supplied two-thirds of the overseas trade of France and was the largest individual market for the European slave trade. It was the most valuable colony in the world. Its wealth was the product of the labor of half a million Black slaves, kept enchained by the incredibly brutal terrorism of 30,000 whites. Most of the slaves were concentrated on the huge sugar plantations of the North Plain, where they worked in large gangs. When the French Revolution began in 1789, turning French society into warring camps, the Black slaves took advantage of the opening.

A revolt broke out on August 22, 1791. The French bourgeoisie, for all its talk about "the Rights of Man," was determined to maintain slavery.

by Toussaint L'Overture, fought the local whites and the French. When the masses of Paris pushed the revolution forward to its peak in 1794, slavery was abolished and the San Domingo Blacks became supporters of the revolution. But their fight was far from over. Britain had invaded the island. The Black armies led by Toussaint were only to be faced with a new enemy. The French Revolution had been overthrown. Napoleon Bonaparte was in power and determined to restore France. He invaded the island. Now it was a war for independence. Toussaint was imprisoned in France. But Jean-Jacques Dessalines took over the fight. It took the burning of the whole island and the driving off of the former slaves to finally win in 1804.



Artist's conception of Nat Turner laying out plans to his followers.

—seizing the arsenal, guard house and magazine, capturing bridges and key intersections, etc. Once the arms had been captured the city was to be torched and a general massacre of whites and disloyal Blacks carried out. All in all, a very good understanding of the art of insurrection was shown. The idea seems to have been to secure a liberated base in South Carolina, centered on Charleston. Plans did not go beyond this. The date for the insurrection was set: July 14, 1822. The attempt was thwarted when one of the ranks disregarded orders and tried to enlist a house slave in the revolt. As Vesey had feared, this person betrayed the Blacks and revealed the plans to the authorities. The leadership was captured and tried; 37 were executed between June 18 and August 9, 1822.

1831: Nat Turner

The final attempt I want to mention in some detail is that led by Nat Turner in 1831, in Virginia, near Southampton. This attempt, unlike the other two, did get past the planning stage. Nat Turner claimed to have visions and had established a reputation as a religious leader, extending to whites to some extent. He began organizing for the rebellion only a few months before it was to take place. The revolt began with six other slaves joining Nat Turner. They started at his plantation, slaughtering all the whites. Marching toward the county seat, they executed all the whites encountered; they were also joined by the slaves at each stop.

By August 23, Turner's band had covered 20 miles, 70 Blacks had joined the rebellion and 57 whites were killed. Nat Turner's plans were to operate in this fashion, spreading terror until a foothold was established for the rebellion. Later they planned to spare women and children and men who did not resist. Even in the initial stage, one white family that owned no slaves and was very poor was spared. By the morning of the 24th, militia companies from Virginia and North Carolina; federal troops, including three companies of artillery, from Fort Monroe; and detachments of Marines from the warships Warren and Natchez had surrounded Southampton. The rebellious slaves were massacred in the extremely one-sided battle that followed. Nat Turner himself escaped capture until October 30. He was tried and hanged on November 11, 1831.

I now want to point out some of the common points in these revolts. First of all, there is the courage and skill of the leaders—Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner. That such heroes rose up out of the fight against slavery, out of those terrible conditions, is proof that the desire for freedom can never be

extinguished and an inspiration for us to continue that fight. Then there is the aspect of internationalism—the role played by the slaves of San Domingo and the workers and peasants of France, in sparking these rebellions. The other common feature, and this is most significant, is the high degree of class consciousness these leaders showed. This was true both in regard to Blacks—with Denmark Vesey understanding the unreliability of the house slaves—and in regards to whites—with Gabriel Prosser hoping to win the aid of poor whites and Nat Turner sparing the poor white family.

I want to mention a couple more brief examples which are important because they show that there were whites—revolutionaries—who fought on the side of Black slaves and helped to organize rebellion.

One example is from June 1853, in Louisiana. A white teacher named Dyson was executed along with 20 Blacks, including several free Blacks, for organizing a "conspiracy" that included 100 whites and 2,500 slaves.

Then on October 16, 1859, there was John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, in Virginia. This was a much more serious attempt than is generally credited. Brown's party consisted of 15 whites and seven Blacks who had worked and trained with Brown in guerrilla warfare in Kansas. Brown had studied extensively on guerrilla war in Spain and Italy. He had consulted with Frederick Douglass and other militant abolitionists to gain backing for his plans. The idea was to seize the arms from the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, raise the slaves on the local plantations and retreat into the mountains to use as a secure base for protracted warfare throughout the South. Harriet Tubman

supported Brown's plan and was not part of the action only because a serious illness prevented her. This was a serious loss and the plans ran into many problems. Still, when the raid was launched, 17 slaves from the local area joined Brown's party and only several serious mistakes in execution and some bad luck resulted in the capture of Brown's group and the defeat of the attempt.

Now, looking at these various attempts, each in isolation, it seems pretty discouraging. We see these heroic figures—Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, and John Brown, too—and they're worth knowing about. And we see again the importance of international influences—Haiti and the French Revolution. And there's the kind of negative lesson of the importance of political conditions for a successful revolution. But were these lessons, and the benefit of having fought, even if the fight failed, the only gains from these struggles? Did they do nothing to bring an end to slavery?

Resistance helped end slavery

The answer is that as isolated, individual actions, they didn't; if they had any effect at all on slavery, it was to make the conditions even worse as the slave owners tightened the chains in response.

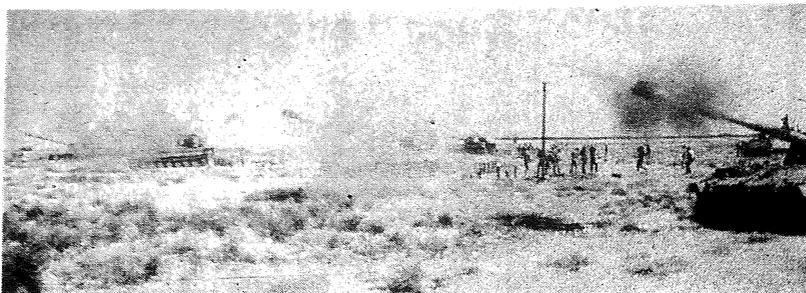
But taken as a whole, the slave revolts had everything to do with the end of slavery. You can look at the history of slavery in the U.S. as a 350-year-long revolution against it—a fight that has its ups and downs, its lulls and fiery upsurges—but it never, ever stops. Perhaps it's stretching things to talk about a 350-year-long revolution, but the slave revolts—both the organized rebellions and the other resistance, like escape—did play a vital role in finally ending slavery.

First there were the economic costs—the flight of slaves, attempted rebellions and the efforts to suppress them were all very expensive. These costs tipped the balance against slavery in the Northern states, making it unprofitable, and were a constant, weakening drain on the slave owners in the South.

The rebellions and escapes also inspired the anti-slavery forces, and provided both moral ammunition and (Continued on page 17)



Rebellion in Miami, May 1980.



Left to right: Iranian howitzers defending Ahwaz; the Shatt al Arab, which Iraq now demands total control of.

Iran-Iraq War: U.S. the Winner?

(Continued from page 1)
open, however, the Iranian government backed down on October 1, declaring that the straits would be kept open. During all this, both the U.S. and Russia announced their intentions to remain strictly neutral in the conflict.

While such neutrality masks their real intentions, both powers seem committed to keeping their own troops out of the present fighting, preferring to exploit the situation through non-military means.

Though the immediate danger of a major escalation appears to have been averted, an early resolution of the conflict is unlikely. After initial successes, the Iraqi Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein proposed a ceasefire on October 1. The Iranian government, recognizing that accepting such a truce would mean accepting the Iraqi conquests, turned down the offer. For the same reason, it rejected the offers of Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq to mediate the conflict. Given the present stalemate between the forces of the two sides, it seems likely that the conflict will continue on a limited scale for the foreseeable future.

The Iraq/Iran war is not easy to decipher. Few of the stated aims of either side provide answers as to what really is going on. Moreover, neither side in the conflict is fighting for fully progressive objectives. To a great degree, the roots of the war lie in the continuing maneuvers for power, prestige and influence by the various nationalistic regimes of the Middle East.

Despite this, it is necessary to recognize that it is Iranian self-determination and the Iranian Revolution, even though the reactionary Khomeini stands at its head, that are threatened by the conflict. This makes it necessary to defend Iran against the range of forces which are allied against it. Such defense is limited; it is crucial to point out that the Khomeini regime is fully intent on continuing the oppression of national minorities such as the Arabs in the oil-producing province

of Khuzistan, whose land has become the battleground between the two countries.

Iraqis try to justify invasion

Following the invasion, the Iraqis initially justified their attack on Iran by contending that they merely wished to regain territory that was taken away from them or is "rightfully" theirs. This includes the left bank of the Shatt al Arab. This, Hussein said, was seized by Iran in 1975 when the former shah forced Hussein to cede it to Iran in exchange for Iran ceasing aid to the Kurds' struggle against Iraq. Hussein also argues that

prove Hussein's self-serving contentions, Kurdish guerrillas blew up an oil pipeline that carried Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean Sea on September 27. Four days later, on October 4, the chief Kurdish liberation organization, the Kurdish Democratic Party, launched offensive operations against Iraqi forces.

Hussein's claim to be fighting for the liberation of the Arab people of Khuzistan is equally false. While there is evidence that some Arabs in Khuzistan have been fighting with the Iraqis, it has also been reported that when Iraqi forces invaded Khuzistan, they were not, as they expected, met by the people with open arms. Instead, many Khuzistani Arabs fled

in manner, while the "socialist" leaders of the ruling party utilize the state apparatus to augment their power and line their pockets. To divert the hostility of the oppressed Iraqi people, the Baathist rulers have often sought to mobilize them against external enemies, including Iran.

The Iranian Revolution has made such an approach both necessary and inviting. The majority of the people of Iraq are members of the Shi'a branch of Islam as opposed to the dominant orthodox Sunni branch. Hussein and the other leaders of the Iraqi Baathist Party, however, are Sunnis. Complicating this situation, the Ayatollah Khomeini, the other leaders of the Iranian government and the majority of the people in Iran are Shi'a. To make matters worse (from the point of view of the Iraqi regime) Khomeini has been calling on the Iraqi Shi'a to overthrow their "infidel" government and set up an Islamic government on the Iranian (Shi'a) model.

This appeal has made Hussein rather nervous. From his point of view, what better way to counter it than to mobilize the Iraqi people in a struggle to win back "Arab territory" and to free "brother" Arabs and Kurds from Iranian domination? The fact that the Iranian Revolution has weakened Iran's once-formidable armed forces and spurred the struggles of oppressed nationalities within Iran gave Hussein reason to believe that this gambit would be successful, perhaps even enabling him to get rid of the worrisome Iranian government altogether.

That Hussein's goals extend beyond the desire for more territory is suggested by the activity in Iraq of exiled right-wing opponents of the Iranian Islamic regime. General Gholam Oveissi, the former military commander of the shah, has reportedly been training an Iranian counter-revolutionary army, which is based in 20 camps inside Iraq on the Iraq/Iran border. Some reports put the number of these forces at 45,000, with another 25,000 in Bahrain and Oman and 3,000 in Egypt. Further, Shahpur Bakhtiar, prime minister in the final

days of the shah's rule and now living in Paris, visited Iraq in June to confer with Iraqi leaders and various Iranian exiles. At the time, Bakhtiar reportedly said that Iraqi leaders had assured him they had no designs on Iranian territory. Moreover, reports in the Western press have claimed that counter-revolutionary Iranian forces have actually been fighting behind Iraqi front-line troops since the invasion of Iran.

That Hussein's ultimate goal is the overthrow of Khomeini has been explicitly acknowledged by officials at Iraq's mission to the United Nations who are in daily contact with the Iraqi government. "Our goal is nothing less than to bring down Khomeini," said one Iraqi official. (Wall Street Journal, October 1, 1980.) The plan, they say, is to take Khuzistan from Iran and use it as a sanctuary for Iraqi-supplied Iranian Arabs and Kurds who could then launch frequent guerrilla raids and terrorist actions against Iran.

Hussein turns toward U.S.

Hussein has an additional objective in the current war. Prior to the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Iran under the shah was the prime policeman for U.S. imperialism in the area. The shah's overthrow, however, left a vacuum in the area.

Although the Saudis are pro-U.S., they have been unwilling to play as aggressive a pro-imperialist role as the U.S. ruling class would like. As a result, it is possible that the U.S. will now turn to Iraq to fill the vacuum. Hussein recognizes that this would inevitably increase Iraq's power and influence in the region.

Since 1958, when the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown, Iraq has had friendly ties with the Soviet Union, supporting it in international affairs and getting military and other forms of aid in return. In 1974, however, the Iraqi regime began to shift away from Russia and move toward closer ties with the United States and other Western imperialist powers. Although



the islands in the Persian Gulf which Iran seized in 1971 are Arab and belong to Iraq, which is an Arab nation, instead of Iran, which is Persian.

Hussein has indicated that he is also interested in "liberating" two of the oppressed nationalities within Iran: the Kurds in the northwestern part of the country and the Arabs in Khuzistan in the southwest. These lofty claims are hollow. It is true that the Kurds have fought for their freedom from Iranian domination for many years. But they have also fought Iraqi regimes for the same reason, since Kurdistan, the Kurds' homeland, is occupied by both Iran and Iraq, as well as Turkey. As if to dis-

into Iranian territory.

Hussein's primary purpose in attacking Iran is certainly not his concern for the rights of oppressed people in Iran. Nor is it simply a desire to chomp off a chunk of territory—although this is a factor. Instead, there is every reason to believe that the chief objective of the Iraqi Baathists is to overthrow the Islamic Republic and roll back the Iranian Revolution.

This goal stems in part from Hussein's desire to stabilize his repressive but shaky rule. The Iraqi Baathist government claims to be nationalist, anti-imperialist and even socialist. Yet, like other governments of this kind, it maintains its power in an extremely brutal

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there are not yet formal diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Iraq, trade between the two countries has soared, accompanied by increasing "unofficial" contact. Moreover, several U.S. companies are building projects in Iraq and U.S. universities are advising Iraq's education authorities on technological institutes. Hussein, meanwhile, has lessened Iraq's military dependency on the Soviet Union, turning to France and Italy to equip the Iraqi armed forces. He has also refused the Russians a naval base at Ulm al-Qasr at the head of the Persian Gulf and has purged Iraqi communists organizing clandestine groups in the Iraqi armed forces.

To complete this change in alignment, the Iraqi leader had to prove his reliability to U.S. imperialism by some concrete act—the attack on the arch-enemy of U.S. imperialism in the area, the Iranian regime, seemed to fit the bill.

Who benefits?

Although the U.S. claims to be neutral, it has every reason to be secretly giving encouragement to the Iraqis while it publicly offers to mediate between the two countries. Having tried unsuccessfully to prevent the Iranian Revolution when it occurred, and having invaded the country in an abortive attempt to free the hostages, the U.S. was in no position to act in its own name.

At the same time, it had little to lose by supporting the Iraqis and the Bakhtiar-ite Iranians. The U.S. imperialists may not want Khomeini to be overthrown at this time out of fear that the resulting chaos might give the Russians the opportunity to step in. But the U.S. stands to gain significantly by having the Iraqis "soften up" the Iranian regime, hoping this will pressure Iran to agree to a deal on



Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

the hostages and to take other steps to ease its anti-U.S. stance.

Already, the war has increased the influence of the moderate Iranian President Bani-Sadr, who has been decrying Iran's international isolation and urging the country to start communicating with the rest of the world, including, presumably, the United States.

The real stance of the U.S. government in the present conflict is suggested by several facts.

First, Carter took advantage of the fighting to send four Air Force radar command aircraft and several hundred support personnel to Saudi Arabia, adding to the existing U.S.-made F-5 fighters in the Saudi air force and the 31 U.S. ships already in the region. According to State Department spokesmen, the Saudis requested the planes to defend their eastern oil fields from Iranian attack. Yet, the only reason the Saudis have to fear an attack by Iran is that they are supporting Iraq in the present conflict.

Second, on October 2, the U.S. quickly seconded the Iraqi call for a ceasefire when it was obvious that such a truce would recognize Iraqi

military gains as accomplished facts.

Finally, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat, presently number two policeman for U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, announced on September 25 that the fighting between Iran and Iraq was a perfect opportunity for the Iranian army to overthrow the Tehran regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and that the U.S. should support such a takeover.

But the best indication of the U.S. position in the current war is the answer to the question, **qui bono**—who benefits—from the Iraqi attack? The answer should be—we hope—clear.

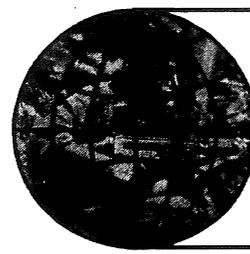
For their part, the Russian imperialists seem to be the odd men out this time around. While they are losing ground in Iraq, they have been making no progress in courting Khomeini; according to unconfirmed reports, Russian offers of arms and aid were turned down by the Tehran regime. As a result, the Russians have little choice but to maintain a pose of neutrality and accuse the U.S. of trying to exploit the conflict to further its own interests, while they make various overtures to whichever side appears most open to responding positively. So far, they have had no takers.

Self-determination ignored

Throughout all this, the interests of the Khuzistani Arabs and the Kurds, the people whose homes and lands are being decimated, are being ignored. The Kurds, oppressed by Iraqi and Iranian regimes, and the Arabs in Khuzistan must have full rights of national self-determination, up to and including the right to set up independent nations. Neither Hussein nor Khomeini are fighting for these rights.

While making this point clear, revolutionary socialists should defend Iran from the Iraqi/Bakhtiar-ite attack. The Khomeini regime is no model of social progressivism, but the Iraqis and the Iranian counter-revolutionaries are not attacking Iran for this reason. They are attacking the country because the Iranian regime is fiercely nationalist and firmly opposed to both the U.S. ruling class and their Russian cousins.

Whatever we may think of the Khomeini regime, the Iranian people have the right to choose their own government without being dictated to by outside powers. This right, the Iranians' right to self-determination, must be defended. Such a stand will further the struggle for socialist revolution in Iran, as well as in the other Middle Eastern countries—the only road out of continued nationalist power struggles, rivalries and wars. □



WORLD IN REVOLUTION

French neo-Nazis bomb synagogue

Neo-Nazi gangsters in France have staged a series of terrorist attacks against the country's Jewish community. On October 3, a bomb explosion outside a Paris synagogue killed four people and injured 12 others. A group called the European Nationalist Fascists claimed responsibility for the bombing. Earlier, the same group machine-gunned a synagogue, day-care center and school on September 26, and another synagogue on September 28. In response to the bombing, hundreds of thousands of people joined the Jewish community in huge protest demonstrations in Paris and a dozen other cities on October 5. However, President Giscard d'Estaing's government is trying to play down the neo-Nazi threat, while at the same time condemning the bombings.

Despite the government's assurances, racist theories are becoming increasingly "respectable" within the French ruling class itself. Alain de Benoist, the ideological leader of the French "New Right," openly proclaims that "Intelligent racism is less harmful than intemperate, leveling, assimilating anti-racism." He is a regular contributor to the weekly magazine supplement to the conservative *Le Figaro*, one of the largest newspapers in France. Yvon Blot, another "New Right" leader, declares that "Socio-biology [racist genetic theory] is making spectacular progress. It cannot be ignored just because it is close to certain Nazi themes." Blot is an official in the *Rassemblement pour la Republique*, a major party in the ruling government coalition. He also heads a leading right-wing group, the Club de l'Horloge. According to the *Economist* (July 14, 1979), "A high proportion of the club's members serve in the administration, several as close aides to cabinet ministers."

At present the out-and-out fascists represent a tiny minority of the population, while Benoist and Blot draw their main support from younger right-wing intellectuals and civil servants. The ruling class as a whole will not turn to fascism as long as its traditional institutions—the police, the army, parliament and the capitalist parties—are sufficient to preserve their control of society. But its right wing is more than willing to provide the "respectable racists" with government posts and outlets for their racist anti-Semitic filth in the national press. By doing so they are encouraging the neo-Nazi gangsters to continue their terrorist campaign.

Mugabe orders PF troops disarmed

On October 6, Robert Mugabe, the Black prime minister of newly-independent Zimbabwe, sent his army into action for the first time—against the Patriotic Front (PF) liberation forces which brought him to power. Government troops were ordered to round up and disarm PF soldiers who had left their assembly points in the countryside. The vast majority of the PF troops have remained in the assembly points since the December 1979 cease-fire. They are increasingly angry over being cooped up in tents while the white minority maintains possession of the surrounding farmland and continues to hold high government posts. Some of them have resumed raids against white plantation owners and police. Between September 22-26, at least 10 such raids occurred in the countryside around Goromonzi, about 20 miles from Salisbury, Zimbabwe's capital.

The PF forces and the Black population as a whole believed they had gained control over Zimbabwe after PF leader Mugabe won the national elections held last February. In fact Mugabe is a pro-capitalist politician who wants to build a capitalist state in Zimbabwe in alliance with the whites and their U.S. imperialist allies. To carry out this policy, Mugabe has to dissolve and disarm the militant PF troops. However, growing sections of the Black population, including some of Mugabe's supporters in the PF leadership, share the rank and file soldiers' frustration with the limited gains they have won since independence. In early September, the government announced it would begin transporting PF contingents to Chitungwiza in order to guard them more closely. On September 9, a white-owned Chitungwiza newspaper claimed the local Black population was afraid of the PF troops. The next day 500 Blacks from the area burned copies of the paper, while 1,700 in another demonstration carried signs reading, "We Want Our Comrades Back With Their Arms." Even some PF officials demanded that the government ban publication of the paper.

—PB



Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr (bottom center) visiting troops at Khurramshahr.

Don't Vote—Organize!

(Continued from page 1)
hostility to Reagan than enthusiasm for the president, whose record of sensitivity to Blacks' needs is poor indeed.

Moreover, as we go to press just three weeks before election day, the polls reveal that while Reagan is ahead, there are still huge numbers of people who plan to vote—but haven't been able to decide who in hell to vote for. Nor are the candidates' programs—if they can be called that—expected to be what determines their choice. Instead, factors like the state of the economy, what happens with the U.S. hostages being held in Iran, and how successfully the candidates are packaged (what is known as their "campaign strategy") are all expected to play the key role in who the "undecideds" decide to vote for.

All this indicates that neither Carter nor Reagan (nor, obviously, Anderson) has been able to convince very many people that he has a workable solution to the mess the U.S., and indeed the whole world, is in. Perhaps most important, while the right wing has had the initiative in defining what the problems are, and proposing some solutions, hardcore right-wing ideology has not gained the kind of hegemony over the political scene that its proponents had thought or hoped.

The result is that Reagan has had to do an about-face on a number of his more right-wing positions that could cost him votes, particularly those of workers and certain layers of middle class people. He has, for example, backed off his opposition to the mini-

mum wage and OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Act) which gives some small measure of protection to industrial workers. He has also softened his support for anti-union "right-to-work" laws, and "changed his mind" about his long-standing opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These changes, Reagan hopes, will suffice to swing undecided—more moderate—voters to his side.

In addition to the growing number of people who will vote without enthusiasm in this election are the predicted record numbers of individuals who will just sit this one out entirely. Already, of the so-called "Free World" countries, the U.S. has one of the lowest percentages of its eligible voters actually voting. In the 1976 presidential elections, just under 55 percent of those eligible to vote did so. This is way below the 88.7 percent who cast their ballots in the recent West German elections, for example.

Nor is this simply a question of numbers; studies show that class, race and age are the crucial factors. "The typical voter is a white male 25-64 years old who is married, has a white-collar job... earns more than \$15,000 a year... lives in the suburbs." (New York Times, September 21, 1980, p. 62.) Almost three-quarters of the "white-collar workers" voted in 1976, as against just under half of those holding "blue-collar jobs." And 60.9 percent of eligible whites voted, compared to 48.7 percent of Blacks and 31.8 percent of Latins.

Some bourgeois commen-

tators fear that this time around, only something like half of all those eligible to vote will do so, marking a monumental rejection of the choices in this particular election and, more broadly, the electoral process as a whole.

Reasons not to vote

The question that arises with the same tedious regularity as the elections themselves is, then, what should people do on election day? Our basic approach can be summed up in three words: **Don't vote, organize!** There are a number of reasons for this.

Voting won't make much of a difference. The only vote that supposedly counts in the election is the one for either the Democratic or Republican party nominee. And we don't believe it will make a hell of a lot of difference whether Carter is re-elected or Reagan replaces him in the White House. We're not saying they're exactly the same but, as we discussed several months ago, whoever is elected will follow roughly the same right-wing ruling class program, one which caters to the needs of U.S. capitalism in this period of decline. ("Election '80: Ruling Class Shifts Right as Crisis Deepens," *Torch/La Antorcha*, July 15-August 14, 1980, p. 12.) Whatever their campaign rhetoric or actual differences, what they will do in office is defined by the needs of the system and the dominant thinking in the ruling class. Those who are afraid of Reagan would do well to remember that when he was governor of California he pursued mainstream ruling class policies.

Not voting is a more effective way of making it clear where you stand than voting. The more people who vote,

the more the results appear to be legitimately the "will of the people" and the more the ruling class will feel it has support for its anti-working class program. The more people who vote, the more the ruling class thinks people fall for the line that this is really a democratic system.

The fewer the people who vote, on the other hand, the more the ruling class knows that there are millions of people who feel totally alienated from the electoral process and the capitalist system it represents. By not voting, we tell the ruling class that we recognize that their elections, which force us to choose one of their straw bosses to run their plantation, are a pile of crap.

Change will come through organizing to fight, not the ballot box. History has shown time and again that only when workers and oppressed people get themselves organized to take direct action in their own interests will they make any kind of real gains. The eight-hour day, the right to unionize, even women's right to vote—all these things were won in the streets and only afterward codified into legislation as a result of the struggle. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, for example, wasn't passed because people voted for Lyndon Johnson, Lyndon Johnson supported passage of the act because there were tens of thousands of people, Black and white, out fighting against racism, segregation and discrimination.

Build the workers' movement

For all these reasons, we think the best thing people could do on November 4 would be to stay away from the polls. But if some people feel strongly that they should vote, we would suggest they vote "protest"—vote for one

of the candidates or parties that is running a socialist campaign. Whatever you do on election day, however, we urge you to think about this:

Today the capitalist system is in deep trouble, on a scale not seen since the last world war. Whatever the immediate state of the economy, overall it's in bad shape and getting worse. Moreover international tensions are increasing daily—and a world war could mean that humanity would pass the point of no return.

At the same time, the workers' movement in this country is in poor shape. In the face of near-runaway inflation—particularly of the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, clothing and shoes—in the face of mounting unemployment and declining social services, and in the face of a growing and increasingly vicious right-wing movement—in other words, in the face of one of the worst situations the working class has been in since the Great Depression and World War II, there has barely been an organized response from any section of the working class. This is the question we believe people should be addressing themselves to, not whether one vote more or less, here or there, will make a difference in the upcoming elections.

Now is not the time for lesser-evil choices that are all evil. Now is not the time to get involved in meaningless election campaigns that will have little effect on the future. Now is the time for the working class and all those who are being chewed up by the crisis to organize to fight for our own interests. Now is the time to recognize that an attack on one section of the working class is an attack on the entire working class and that we should all support each other's struggle. Now is the time to start building a strong and united working class movement that can defend all of us from the capitalists' attacks that are only going to increase in the months and years to come. □

Sydenham

(Continued from page 3)
of community residents who were out on the picket lines. The first meeting was called only after the occupation ended, when support was beginning to ebb.

The reason the coalition leaders and ministers failed to take steps to broaden the struggle at Sydenham is that they were looking to negotiate a deal with some liberal politician. This is why they invited Herman Badillo, a former deputy mayor under Koch, to speak on the platform at the largest rally. Similarly, Daughtry, at a press conference, said: "If we could get some kind of assurance before November, it would allow us to make an impact on the Presidential campaign." (New York Times, September 28, 1980.)

The invitation to Badillo and the overture to Carter were part

of the political strategy of the coalition leaders. They want to build demonstrations, occupations and rallies only as bargaining chips for back-room deals. They are not trying to build a mass movement in New York that is completely independent of all capitalist politicians. Instead, they hope to win deals by threatening to "call out the masses" and offering to send them home in return for some concessions.

Despite these problems with the leadership, however, the fight to save Sydenham Hospital points in the right direction: the building of a citywide mass struggle against the cutbacks, with real roots in Black and Latin communities and among workers in the labor movement. The occupation of Sydenham could be the start of such a movement. □

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Slave Revolts

(Continued from page 13)
the most steadfast activists—
the slaves who escaped.

And the slave revolts were important as a driving force toward the Civil War. They made expansion of slave territory essential, serving as a constant reminder to the slave owners that they dare not allow the concentration of slaves to grow too great. This need to expand was the primary source of the conflict between the Southern slavocracy and the Northern industrialists, who would have been perfectly happy for slavery to continue as long as it made no imposition on their own drive for profit and expansion.

Finally, the efforts to stop the slave revolts and the Underground Railroad necessitated vast political repression generally. The slave owners demanded and got the right to intercept the mails, to use the army for slave control duty, to capture escaped slaves in free territory, to arrest and imprison anyone

aiding an escaped slave. In order to maintain slavery, a general police-state climate was needed. Democratic rights for anyone in the society were a threat to the slavery system. This meant that white workers, for example, had to oppose slavery to defend their own rights.

The Civil War, when it came in 1861, created the split in the ruling class and the general turmoil in society that had previously been lacking. Slave rebellions were an important part of the war itself. Aptheker quotes a Confederate newspaper as saying that it was "difficult to find words of description... of the wild and terrible consequences of the negro raids in this obscure... theatre of war... In the two counties of Currituck and Camden, there are said to be from five to six hundred negroes, who are not in the regular military organization of the Yankees, but who, outlawed and disowned by their masters, lead the lives of banditti, roving the country with fire and committing all

sorts of horrible crimes upon the inhabitants. This present theatre of guerrilla warfare has at this time, a most important interest for our authorities. It is described as a rich country... and one of the most important sources of meat supplies that is now accessible to our armies."

Dozens of similar examples occurred in every Southern state. This was not what Lincoln and the Northern industrialists wanted. They had no intention of disturbing slavery; they simply wanted to establish their own unchallenged rule. But Blacks, despite the resistance of the bourgeoisie, intended to make the Civil War into their war—a revolutionary war for their

emancipation. When the military situation forced Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation and admit Blacks into the Union army, the slaves rushed to take advantage of the opportunity.

Harriet Tubman, for example, joined the Department of the South (Union forces operating from the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina). On the night of June 2, 1863, she led a force of 300 Black troops in a guerrilla raid up the Combahee River; over 750 slaves revolted, set fire to their plantations and joined the guerrilla force.

In all, over 120,000 Blacks joined the Union armies. One measure of how hard they fought was the blood they

shed—over 40,000 of them, more than a third, were killed in action.

Slavery was finally abolished because Blacks and their revolutionary allies succeeded in influencing the Civil War, making it in part a revolutionary war for liberation. But they did not succeed in making it their war—and Black people are still not FREE. And so Black rebellions, with Miami as the latest example, continue. It will take a new revolutionary civil war to win real freedom for all. As we work for that day, the spirits of Harriet Tubman, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner and John Brown will be marching on alongside of us. □

Glydons

(Continued from page 11)

strike because it was clearly a decisive test of strength for them. But they weren't willing to do what was needed to win it. At every opportunity they held back the spontaneous militancy of the strikers. They urged conciliation with the boss when he hinted at a settlement. When he turned on them with tougher injunctions, they quietly obeyed. They never even attempted a serious legal challenge to the injunctions. When the strike began to lose ground, they blamed the revolutionaries. But when these same revolutionaries gathered dozens of influential endorsements and hundreds of dollars for the strike, the ILG leaders said they didn't need any help. Finally, when the NLRB ruled against the strike in August, the cowardly ILG bureaucracy was quick to declare an end, hoping to cover the fact that their own timid tactics had gutted the strike and guaranteed its failure weeks before.

RSL/CRC supporters tried throughout the strike to form and maintain a united front with local ILG leaders in order to win union recognition and a union contract at Glydons. But to the union bureaucracy, winning at Glydons—impor-

tant as it was—was less important than their main task: defending capitalism. When it became clear that revolutionaries from the RSL/CRC had both a base and leadership positions among the rank and file strikers, the ILG began to sabotage and neglect its own strike.

The pro-capitalist role of the union leadership raises another issue. Should revolutionaries work inside the conservative trade unions at all? One thing the Glydons strike showed is the tremendous desire for unionization on the part of garment workers, who are among the lowest paid and most oppressed of all industrial workers. To them the union represents an organization of defense—to hold back the effects of inflation, to resist Migra raids and deportations, to remove racist supervisors. And they are right. The union, however corrupt its bureaucratic leadership, is a basic weapon which workers can use in their struggle for a decent life. The bureaucrats are obstacles in that struggle and must be thrown out. But the union itself must be defended and built. Revolutionary work inside the unions means organizing to take power away from the bureau-

crats and to put rank and file workers in control. The fight for workers' democracy inside the Glydons Organizing Committee was one example of how this can be done.

Much has been learned from the experience of the strike. Yet the strike lost. Could something have been done different, sooner, or better? Could it have won? Possibly, though it is difficult to see what more could have been done given the relation of forces. The boss was determined to resist and had solid support from other garment owners. The union leadership was unwilling to wage a real fight. The revolutionary nucleus among the strikers was small and newly organized. The wonder is that the strike ever happened at all—and lasted six months!

The Glydons strikers are now dispersed in dozens of other shops across the garment district. Some went to new jobs in small groups to maintain political and friendship ties established during the strike. A few are considering possible unionizing efforts in the new shops and how best to work within the union. These advanced workers will not forget the lessons of the Glydons strike and when the struggle breaks out again, they will be there. A strike is a school for revolution. We will see more clearly the results of this one in the years to come. □

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