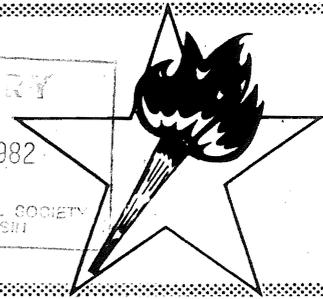


TORCH

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FEBRUARY 15-MARCH 14, 1982

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2 / 25¢

Reagan Budget Declares War on Poor

By ROD MILLER

"This administration has not and will not turn its back on America's elderly or America's poor."

—Ronald Reagan, State of the Union Message, January 26, 1982



Demonstrators greeted Reagan with demands for jobs when he visited Des Moines, Iowa, February 9.

A week after delivering his State of the Union Address, Reagan unveiled his budget for fiscal 1983. In a perverse sense, the president had told the truth: His budget didn't turn its back on anyone; rather, it launched a frontal assault—and not just on the poor and elderly.

The proposed budget, which now goes to Congress for debate, calls for deep cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, food stamps, federally subsidized housing, welfare, aid to education and dozens of other social programs. In addition, it proposes a whopping increase in

(Continued on page 14)

Revolutionary
Strategy
for Women's
Liberation

See page 12



A Tribute
to Malcolm X

See page 7

SECCION EN ESPAÑOL

U.S. Triples Military Aid to Murderous Regime in El Salvador

By WILLIAM FALK

The Reagan administration pledged increased support for the right-wing regime in El Salvador this past month, tripling 1982 military aid to \$81 million and upping all 1982 aid to \$235 million. An additional \$300 million in aid was included in Reagan's 1983 budget just sent to Congress.

The recipient of this money, the Salvadorean junta, is supported only by that country's tiny ruling class and a part of the small middle class. It rules through terror and intimidation, backed up and made possible by U.S. military and economic aid. Over the past year, U.S. attempts to create a more stable basis for the government have largely collapsed.

One result of this is that today the liberation forces,

(Continued on page 5)



An FMLN roadblock near Usulután. In the past month the FMLN has temporarily blocked several of El Salvador's major roads, including the Pan-American Highway.

**our
readers
write...**

Send letters to:

TORCH, PO Box 1288
New York, NY 10116

Worker shoots supervisor

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

I am writing to tell you about an incident that happened January 12 in San Bernardino, California, where a phone worker shot and killed his supervisor on the job. The press simply said GTE employee David Sutton and the supervisor argued twice that day over "internal management." In the interval between the two arguments, Sutton apparently left work and armed himself.

The incident reminded me of the case of Jearl Wood, which the **Torch** covered several months back. As a phone operator in Los Angeles, I can imagine the kind of job pressures and harassment which Sutton was led to retaliate against. On my job, we can be fired or suspended for cutting off an obscene or insulting customer. There are no real "sick days" for workers, and speedup is built into our work and job evaluation. Management has rules for the most

petty aspects of our job—from how we go to the bathroom, to the content, order and tone of everything we say.

Unfortunately there will be no need for Sutton's fellow workers and friends to organize in his defense. After the shooting, Sutton drove three miles away from work, parked his car and committed suicide.

Until we can create a world without demeaning, unsafe jobs, until working class people really control our own lives, jobs and society, this system—capitalism—will force many more working and poor people to act as did Jearl Wood and David Sutton. As a revolutionary, I think the only chance we have to prevent this is if, today, we begin to organize ourselves to defend all working class people against the brutalities of this society, and go on to fight for full and lasting freedom.

A phone worker
Los Angeles

Criticisms of All-Peoples Congress lead to expulsions in NY gay movement

Dear Torch/La Antorcha:

Readers of the paper might be interested in some recent developments in the lesbian and gay movement in New York City. Several weeks ago the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) and Radical Women (RW) were expelled from the Committee of Lesbian and Gay Male Socialists (CLGMS). CLGMS was an independent socialist group that had a part in building the Lavender Left Network, a group of lesbians and gays who are trying to work out the connections between gay liberation and socialism.

Apparently the FSP and RW's sin was to raise some criticisms of the All-Peoples Congress within CLGMS. Workers World Party, the main force behind the APC, and people close to it, have been heavily involved in CLGMS recently, and didn't take too well to these criticisms. They charged that simply by criticizing the APC, the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women were guilty of confrontation tactics, disruption, and manipulation. At a meeting held without people from FSP or RW, the two groups were expelled by the CLGMS pro-APC majority. (The FSP and RW were expelled from PAM, the predecessor of the APC, roughly at the same time the RSL was.)

When the FSP requested that a discussion take place and their expulsion from CLGMS be rescinded—at least until that discussion took place—the majority said that criticism was "anti-socialist" and therefore no dis-

ussion was necessary.

It's pretty clear that once again, the Workers World Party is showing what they mean by democracy and open discussion—democracy and open discussion so long as nobody disagrees with Workers World's line.

The FSP and RW are circulating a statement protesting their expulsion. That statement follows.

ID
New York

Open Statement to the Community

We protest the expulsion of the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) and Radical Women (RW) from the Committee of Lesbian and Gay Male Socialists (CLGMS). By excluding dissenting organizations the CLGMS Majority has set a dangerous precedent. While we, the undersigned, are not taking a position for or against the politics of the FSP, RW, or CLGMS, we agree with the necessity for debate of political issues in the movement.

In a period in which we are subjected to the attacks of a rising right wing, we need more than ever to work together and practice democracy and mutual solidarity.

We call on the remaining members of the CLGMS to rescind their expulsion of the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women and return to a standard of open discussion of

political differences within the lesbian and gay movement.

Laurie Morton, Freedom Socialist Party, Radical Women
Naomi Brussell, independent
Andy Mosso, member, New York Lavender Left
Laurie Ayre, member, NYLL
David France, member, NYLL
Tricia Garlock, independent
Ian Daniels, Revolutionary Socialist League
Fred Goldhaber, former editor, Gay Media Alliance
Maxine Wolf, member, CRASH
Steve Nowling, independent
Emily Woo Yamasaki, RW
Tamara Bower, RW
Susan Williams, FSP, Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party
Maxine Reigel, RW, FSP

Finds TORCH 'fascinating'

To the Publishers, Editors, and Staff:

I really enjoy the **Torch**! Last week was the first time for me to read a radical, and yet intellectual publication. It's fascinating, for me, to see how the rest of the world views the U.S.

I sincerely hope you will send me a subscription until I can make a donation somehow.

Thank you very much.
Sincerely,
A prisoner
Tennessee Colony,
Texas

RSL EMERGENCY FUND DRIVE TOPS \$10,000 GOAL!

We made it! The RSL's emergency 10-week fund drive that ended in late January was a success. Our goal was to raise \$10,000. As of this writing we have received \$10,769 and several RSL branches report they have small amounts of money still to be sent in.

The response of **Torch/La Antorcha** readers played a crucial role in making the fund drive successful. We received donations from friends around the country. One reader enclosed a note with her contribution, saying: "Sorry I can't give more—I have been laid off since the end of October and things are tight." We also received several contributions from abroad. A reader in West Germany wrote: "Included is a small \$10 donation for your fund drive. I hope you'll be able to make financial ends meet. The **Torch/La Antorcha** is a valuable source of information for me, and I hope the RSL/RML will keep up its good work for all workers, small farmers and the oppressed."

All RSL branches raised enough money to meet their targets, set at the beginning of the drive. We would like to particularly commend the Los Angeles branch, which raised 141 percent of its goal.

Unfortunately, the success of this fund drive only smoothes the worst edges off a bleak financial situation. We are still running thousands of dollars in the red. Once again we ask that any readers who can afford to make a **monthly pledge** to the RSL, no matter how small, please do so. And if you want to make a late contribution to the fund drive, that would be more than welcome as well! Write to Christopher Z. Hobson, PO Box 1288, GPO, New York, NY 10116. □

IN THIS ISSUE

FEBRUARY 15-MARCH 14, 1982

- 1 Reagan budget declares war on poor
U.S. triples military aid to El Salvador
- 3 INS launches terror campaign against undocumented
- 4 Review of 'Over the Edge'
Accident at Ginna nuclear reactor
- 6 American nightmare—1982
- 7 Legacy of Malcolm X
- 8 Talks stall at GM
- 9 Benefit planned for Jearl Wood
Belgian steelworkers battle cops
- 10 Poland's rulers face serious problems
- 11 Eritrean freedom struggle threatened with nerve gas
- 12 A revolutionary strategy for women's liberation

FEATURES

- 2 our readers write
- 6 Break the Chains
Racist rampage at Tennessee prison... Killer cops go free in Signal Hill, Cal., and Milwaukee
- 8 Labor in Struggle
Mine deaths... IBT... URW



INS Launches Campaign of Terror Against Undocumented Immigrants

By ALBERT LARY

In a double-barreled assault on immigrant Latino communities, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) recently announced the cancellation of up to 70,000 temporary residence permits (mostly held by Mexicans) and the tripling of factory raids.

"We've been picking up about 20 or 30 illegal aliens a day in the last several months," announced INS deputy district director Omer Sewell of Los Angeles. "Now we expect that to go up to maybe 75 or 100 a day." In the Los Angeles INS district office alone, the number of staff members assigned to raids has increased from 18 to 50. Half of all INS investigators are now engaged in "area control"—the official term for street sweeps and random arrests.

According to Sewell, the new raids will focus on large factories where 200 or more undocumented immigrants are employed. But, he added, "spot checks" will also be made at bus stops, train depots and theaters where undocumented immi-

grants are known to be found.

The initial reaction to the crackdown verged on mass panic. Busy shopping streets in downtown Los Angeles suddenly emptied. Theater owners complained of falling revenue. And even some factory owners complained. According to one report, morale is now so low among the Latino workforce that it is affecting production. There are an estimated one million undocumented immigrants in the Los Angeles area. For them, plus uncounted millions more across the country, the level of daily terror and misery is on its way up.

'Silva letters' canceled

Not coincidentally, at the same time the INS was announcing more and bigger raids, it also canceled all remaining "Silva letters" and began the process of identifying and deporting 50,000-70,000 Mexicans who have been living in the U.S. legally for years.

Tens of thousands of tempo-

rary residence permits, known as "Silva letters," have been issued by the INS since 1977. In that year, a federal court ruled in favor of Refugio Silva, a Mexican immigrant, who claimed that the INS had illegally discriminated against Mexicans and others by granting 150,000 visas to Cuban political exiles and counting them as part of the quota for all of the Western Hemisphere. (Under U.S. law, each country in the Western Hemisphere is allotted 20,000 visas per year.)

As a result, temporary permits were issued to all immigrants who had applied to enter the country before 1977, then later entered illegally. Thousands of undocumented immigrants came forward to claim their "Silva letters," and in the process were forced to reveal the addresses of themselves, their employers and their "sponsors."

Some 145,000 permanent visas were eventually issued to correct the earlier discrimination. But as many as 70,000 more people received temporary "Silva letters." With the overnight cancellation of these per-

mits, all these people have now instantly become "illegals" and the INS, which has their names and addresses, has said it will proceed with deportations.

New attacks denounced

Spokespersons for the National Immigration Coalition denounced the new attacks at a press conference in Los Angeles January 11. "The suspension of the 'Silva letters' is a cruel measure which is causing panic and anxiety among hundreds of thousands of workers and their families," they declared. "After being assured of safety against deportation since 1977, now these people are relegated to the insecurity of being undocumented, exposed to detention and deportation at any moment."

Some observers saw the cancellation of the "Silva letters" as a pressure tactic to force the Mexican government, and especially incoming President Miguel de la Madrid, into shifting Mexico's liberal foreign policy toward one more friendly to the U.S. The new attacks have certainly caused an uproar in Mexico. With the Mexican press charging the U.S. with "aggression" against Mexico, both ambassadors were called home in mid-January for consultations. But both governments quickly decided to quiet the growing controversy before it spread.

For his part, the Mexican ambassador to the U.S., Hugo Margain, declared that Mexico had no complaints against the U.S. over the "Silva letter" affair and that certain Chicano activists, "who are not Mexicans," were interfering in something that was not their business. In return, on January 25 the U.S. State Department recommended new legislation to double Mexico's immigration quota to 40,000 per year.

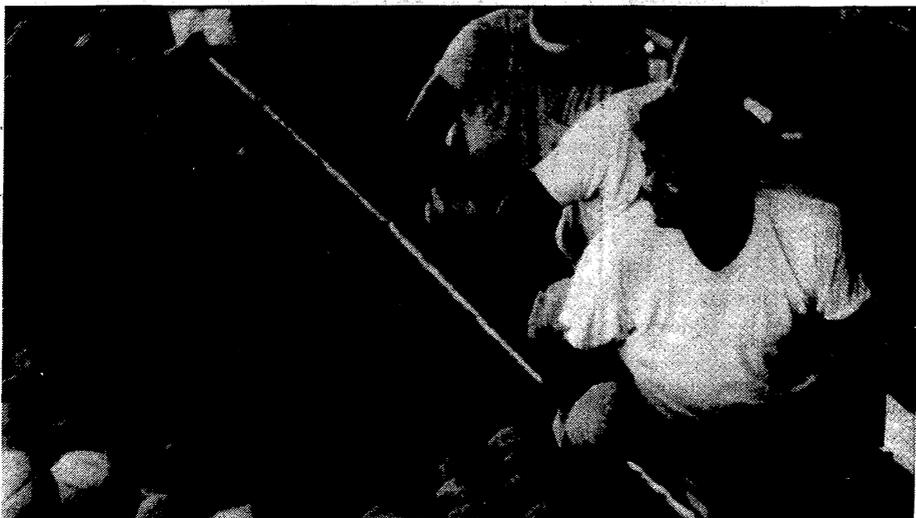
Despite the maneuverings of the two governments, some

immediate effects of the new INS attacks are very clear. The raids and cancellation of the "Silva letters" will increase the exploitation of immigrant workers inside the U.S. The greater threat of deportation makes workers more reluctant to defend their rights through organizing, strikes and protests. Immigrant workers will more readily accept low wages, bad conditions and abusive bosses when they know that a single call from the boss to the INS may mean deportation. Frightened, threatened immigrant workers work for less, and with fewer complaints. This effectively lowers the value of their labor-power, and increases the profits of the bosses.

Intimidation is U.S. goal

Certainly all 70,000 Mexicans holding invalid "Silva letters" will not be deported en masse. Nor will the INS round up all the millions of undocumented immigrants inside the U.S. The INS doesn't have the resources to do it, and they wouldn't do it even if they could. These millions of super-exploited and specially oppressed workers provide essential labor, at very low cost, to keep entire industries, such as agribusiness, garment, hotels and restaurants, in operation.

The real point of the new attacks is not mass deportation. Already about one million immigrants are deported each year with no noticeable effect on the rate of undocumented immigration, as even the INS admits. The real point of the attacks is terror and intimidation—against Mexico to influence its policies, against immigration rights activists to win their support for Reagan's phony "amnesty bill," and, most of all, against immigrant workers themselves, to keep them divided, defenseless and exploited. □



Mexican workers sorting cantaloupe in El Paso, Texas. U.S. capitalists make vast profits by exploiting low-paid immigrant workers.

OVER THE EDGE

—the Movie the Hollywood Establishment Doesn't Want You to See

By ROGER CID

IT would be nice to be able to begin this review with: "This is a terrific movie. Go see it." It is a terrific movie, but unfortunately, you can't see it. The people who own the film won't let you.

True, over two years after it was finished, *Over the Edge* did play for a brief engagement at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in lower Manhattan, and a similar short run at the Plaza in Midtown. But the high-brow types likely to go to the Public Theater or the Plaza were not the people the makers of *Over the Edge* intended to see the film. The distributors of the movie, Orion Pictures, didn't want those people, working class and middle class kids, to see it.

Why not?

Because without saying so explicitly, the movie is about

"America," that is, the United States, and what's wrong with it today. It is, moreover, based on events that actually occurred, a youth riot/rampage in a more-than-comfortable suburban community in the Bay Area of California.

THE town, called New Granada in the movie, is a "white-flight" community made up predominantly of middle and upper middle class people who did not want to raise their children among the rigors of the city (meaning, Black and Latin people, sex, drugs, and rock and roll). So they moved into what was supposed to be a "model" community of private homes, condominiums and comfortable apartments far away, they thought, from the urban jungle.

Originally, the town was supposed to include a movie theater, bowling alley and other recreational facilities for the

young people but, for a variety of reasons, the town's developers ran out of money and these "extras" were never built.

As a result, the young people in the community don't have much to do to "recreate" themselves... except hang out in a quonset hut "rec center" and, like most young people in today's America, listen to rock music, party and get high.

THIS is the setting of the story. And *Over the Edge* fictionally reconstructs the events, culminating in one of the town's bullying cops shooting and killing one of the kids, that led the "privileged" youngsters in this 100 percent "middle class American" community to virtually burn down the town. The movie is made particularly real by the performances of the young people, not one of whom was a professional actor before the film was made, especially Matt Dillon, Michael Kramer,



In "Over the Edge," events like the arrest of Matt Dillon and Michael Kramer early in the movie lead to a violent rebellion against parents, police and school authorities.

Pamela Ludwig and Tom Fergus. The adults, the parents, teachers, cops, businessmen, etc., are good too, but the kids carry the show.

So, why then is the movie dangerous to the motion picture establishment? First, because it is based on real happenings. Second, because the events are shown from the point of view of the young people themselves. This is no *Rebel Without a Cause*, based on psychiatrist Robert Lindner's story that tried to explain why America's alienated youth of the 1950s were into drag racing games of "chicken" and other basically meaningless activities. When you see *Over the Edge*, you know why the kids do what they do, because if you were in their place (which we all are, in a way) you'd do the same thing. Which of course is really why the film is so subversive.

THE movie makers, particularly the screen writers Charlie Haas and Tim Hunter, and director Jonathan Kaplan, make no explicit comment on

the events. The movie just lays out what happened. They also have no positive "moral" of the story to make. But there are some indications. One is the favorite saying of Richie White, the "bad" kid who gets shot by the cop. When being questioned by the police for something he didn't do, he says: "I only have one law—a kid who tells on another kid is a dead kid." The other positive sign occurs at the very end of the movie when, after their rampage, some of the kids are being taken away to reform school, or whatever it is. This is the sound track, with Valerie Carter singing: "Some day, things are gonna be easier... some day things are gonna be brighter."

Perhaps, some day, the people who own the film will let their greed entice them into releasing the film to the general public. There is no doubt the movie will make money. But it may also teach at least part of its audience something Hollywood, or most of it, would like to keep well-hidden. □

Accident at Ginna Nuclear Reactor

By RANDY CONRAD

On January 25, 1982, the Robert Ginna nuclear power plant in Ontario, New York, released radioactive steam into the atmosphere.

The accident occurred when a pipe carrying pressurized radioactive water burst. It released radioactive water at a rate of 700 gallons a minute into the secondary cooling system, which drives the steam generators. The leak raised pressure in the steam generation system and puffs of radioactive steam were released directly into the atmosphere.

PLANT operators lowered pressure in the primary cooling system by opening a valve. The primary cooling system, containing thousands of pipes like the one that burst, carries water that cools the radioactive core and protects the core from over-



The Ginna nuclear power plant "cool-down" after the January 15 leak of radioactive steam.

heating. Lower pressure in the primary cooling system created a steam bubble in the reactor vessel.

Four years ago, at Three Mile Island Unit #2, a similar steam bubble caused the worst reactor accident in U.S. history.

At Robert Ginna, the plant

operators closed a backup valve and turned the steam bubble back into water. After this, the worst of the danger passed and the plant was successfully shut down, although thousands of gallons of radioactive water still needed to be disposed of.

THE recent accident at Rob-

ert Ginna is not a special case—pipe corrosion plagues 37 of the 48 operating reactors in the U.S. The pipes are intended to last for 40 years, but nuclear technicians have not been able to find a metal that will last that long. So each plant is built with extra pipes because the technicians know in advance that pipes will corrode. The Ginna accident is the most recent failure, but it could have happened at any of the 36 other reactors.

Just a few days after the Ginna accident, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) announced that Three Mile Island Unit #1 would stay shut down for at least six more months to correct serious problems with corroded pipes. Next door to TMI#1 is the crippled Unit #2, where a similar problem caused severe core damage.

At the same time, the nuclear power industry refuses to take

the dangers and the early warnings seriously. Ten of the 48 reactors in the U.S. failed to meet the deadline for the installation of sirens and other early warning devices to alert the population to nuclear accidents. Boston Edison was just fined \$550,000 for giving false information to the NRC concerning safety equipment in one of its nuclear plants. And at Robert Ginna, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that an NRC official complained that it was hard to get accurate and timely information about the scope and seriousness of the accident from Rochester Gas and Electric, which owns the plant.

THESE warnings must be taken seriously and all reactors shut down now. Otherwise, we will wake up one morning to hear that one of these nuclear time bombs has gone off, and then it will be too late. □

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U.S. Triples Military Aid to El Salvador

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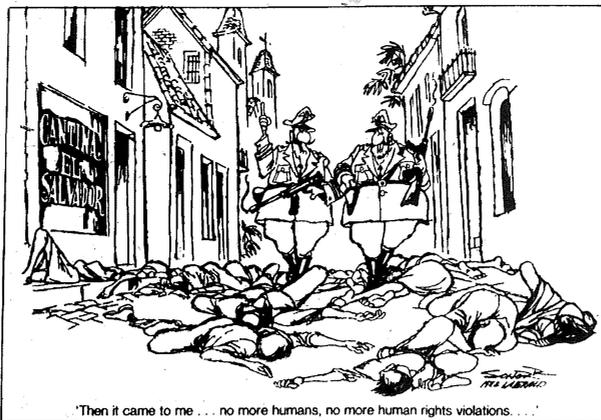
which appear to have the support of overwhelming sections of Salvadorean workers and peasants, are in a stronger position than they have been since the failure of their January 1981 offensive. On January 27 of this year, for example, guerrillas destroyed six of the government's 14 Huey helicopter gunships in an attack on the major military airfield.

The present strength of the rebel forces, the Faribundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), is not enough, unfortunately, to ensure a quick victory. But it is enough to cause panic in Washington over the prospect that the people in another country in Latin America might further weaken the grip of U.S. imperialism.

"There is no mistaking that the decisive battle for Central America is under way in El Salvador," Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders said recently. **"If after Nicaragua, El Salvador is captured [!] by a violent minority [!], who in Central America would not live in fear? How long would it be before major strategic United States interests—the Panama Canal, sea lanes, oil supplies—were at risk?"**

"The basic problem," U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Dean Hinton told the *Washington Post*, **"is that the force superiority of the Army is in the range of four or six to one, depending on your estimate of the guerrillas, and that's just not enough."**

To send the Salvadorean junta new military aid, the Reagan administration was required by law to certify that the human rights record of the regime was improving. This it did on January 28, just days after the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* carried delayed accounts of a previously unknown mass murder: over



"Then it came to me... no more humans, no more human rights violations..."

900 people killed by government troops in a single village in Morazan Province last December.

Moreover, immediately after Reagan certified the junta's respect for human rights, soldiers murdered 19 people after taking them from their homes in a working class suburb of San Salvador in the middle of the night.

Reagan on the spot

This massacre, as well as the murder by troops of over 10,000 civilians this year and other overwhelming evidence of government brutality toward the Salvadorean people, is a major problem for Reagan.

As the facts about El Salvador have become more widely known in the U.S., opposition to the U.S. government's support of the junta has become widespread. This has hampered the maneuvering room of the government. Thus, although Reagan and Secretary of State Haig have made many threats of blockades or even invasions directed at the Salvadorean rebels, and the governments of Nicaragua and Cuba, Defense

are accused of raping and killing the three U.S. nuns and one Catholic layworker murdered in December 1980 were arrested in early February. Although the preponderance of evidence (including death threats made a week before and overheard radio communications on the day of the murders) shows that the killings were carried out on orders from above, the incident is being treated as an aberrant act initiated by individuals.

Also in early February, the junta arrested one well-connected ex-major who had been selling "protection" from kidnapping to members of the ruling class, then carrying out the kidnappings himself, and finally collecting the ransoms in the name of a non-existent leftist group. And the government claimed that the rebels themselves had committed mass murder in a small town in the provinces. But checking out stories that 150-300 civilians had been killed in Nueva Trinidad, journalists found evidence only of a military skirmish: 16 dead soldiers and militia men and one dead FMLN fighter.

As part of the effort to create a clean image for the Salvadorean junta, elections will be held in March. The newly elected representatives will supposedly write a constitution for the country. But most left opposition parties are banned from participating in the elections and the few who could, aren't, for fear of having their candi-

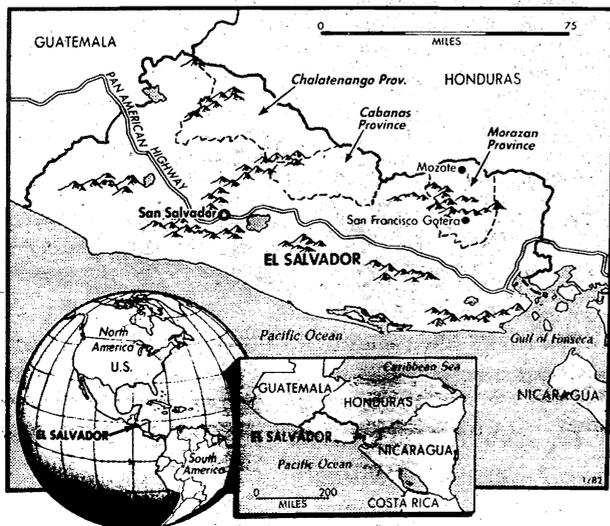
dates and supporters assassinated by the junta's hit squads.

Central American people under the gun

It is likely that after the phony elections there will be a major offensive by the U.S. in Central America. The 1983 budget includes \$250,000 for military training assistance to the regime in Guatemala. In recent years, Guatemala has received no military aid from the U.S. (at least not openly) because of its blatant repression of the people.

The U.S. government is also stepping up its pressure on Nicaragua: In January a CIA plot to bomb the country's only oil refinery and a large cement plant was uncovered. Also in January, Costa Rica, Honduras and El Salvador formed a new regional organization whose purpose is to provide a conduit and a cover for U.S. programs in Central America.

Whatever exactly Reagan, Haig and Weinberger are planning, the Central American people are under the gun. In the U.S., we need a movement that opposes the administration's moves at every turn, that fights and exposes the death and destruction committed by the U.S. government and its stooges and solidarizes itself with anti-imperialist struggles in Central America and throughout the world. **"Military action in the region" must remain "not practical."** □



LOS ANGELES—"U.S. Out of El Salvador, Stop the Death Flights!" chanted the 125 people who picketed Western Airlines' downtown ticket office January 30 to protest the deportation "death flights" of El Salvadorean refugees. Western is the principal airline used by the INS to deport undocumented immigrants. A thousand are flown back to El Salvador each month from Los Angeles alone, where many face arrest and execution by the right-wing Salvadorean junta.

The protest was initiated by the *Park Plaza Chapter of CISPES (Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador)*. It drew support from several other area CISPES chapters, as well as Salvadorean community groups and left organizations, including the RSL. A second action against Western Airlines is planned for February 21. (See "Events" listing on page 13 for more information.)



Racist rampage at Brushy Mountain prison

Seven white prisoners went on a racist rampage February 9 at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Tennessee, killing two Black prisoners and seriously injuring two others. A fifth Black man was able to avoid injury by shielding himself with a mattress that absorbed eight shots from the murder weapon, a .25 caliber automatic pistol. The shootings took place in the administrative segregation section of the prison. The seven white prisoners made no attempt to escape. Their sole aim was to kill Black people.

The warden at Brushy Mountain told reporters that he didn't know how the white prisoners had gotten out of their cells. "They forced the guards into the corridor, took their keys and shot the inmates..." he said. But it is extremely doubtful that the incident could have taken place without guard complicity.

Racism is on the rise throughout the country, and the Klan and other organized right-wing forces are becoming more confident and bold. For Black and Latino prisoners this spells double trouble: from racist guards and from white racist prisoners. The tragic incident at Brushy Mountain demonstrates the need for a united movement that can fight the right-wing and capitalist attacks on every front—on the job, in communities and prisons, and on the street.

KILLER COPS GO FREE:

DA refuses to prosecute for Ron Settles murder

Los Angeles County District Attorney John Van de Kamp announced on January 14 that no criminal charges would be brought against any police officer in the June 1981 killing of Ron Settles. Settles, who was Black, was well known in the LA area as the star running back of the Cal State Long Beach football team. He was stopped for a traffic violation in the Long Beach suburb of Signal Hill last June 2 and, according to witnesses, beaten without provocation and then taken to jail. Later that night, Settles supposedly committed suicide by hanging himself with a mattress cover.

Contradicting the coroner's jury ruling that Settles had "died at the hands of another, other than by accident," Van de Kamp claimed that there was insufficient evidence that a crime had been committed. Admissions by Signal Hill police, both in grand jury testimony and in the press, that Settles had been severely beaten and denied his right to a phone call carried no weight with the DA. Nor did the testimony from Signal Hill prisoners that none of the cells even had mattress covers. Since Van de Kamp also refused to prosecute in other locally infamous cases of police murder—that of Eula Love, for instance, a 39-year-old Black woman shot 12 times in January 1979 after a minor dispute with the gas company, or that of Larry Morris, chased into his house and then beaten and strangled in his bathroom in 1980 because the cops "mistook" firecrackers for gunshots—his decision in this case was not a surprise.

Supporters of justice in the Ron Settles case have not given up the fight. On January 30, over 100 rallied in MacArthur Park to protest the DA's decision and denounce the cover-up. The County-Wide Coalition for Justice, sponsors of the rally, announced plans for a campaign to recall Van de Kamp.

Milwaukee judge dismisses complaints in Lacy death

On January 29 in Milwaukee, Judge Joseph Callan dismissed complaints against police officers Thomas Eliopoul and George Kalt for the murder of Ernest Lacy. Lacy, a 22-year-old Black man, was picked up by police last July 10 for questioning about a rape that later evidence showed he had nothing to do with. According to the verdict of a coroner's jury, Lacy died when a cop jammed his knee against Lacy's back and neck, cutting off the oxygen supply to his brain. Following the coroner's jury verdict the district attorney filed complaints against the two cops and asked the court for indictments. It was those complaints that were dismissed on January 29 for lack of "probable cause."

—WF

The 'American Nightmare' — 1982

As if he were "Mr. Rogers suddenly become president," Ronald Reagan invites us to join him in the land of make-believe whenever he comes on the television. He conjures up images of a mythical America of snug white families of four in white clapboard houses—Daddy with a good clean job, Mommy with a constant smile, Dick, Jane, Spot and Puff playing in the backyard.

But the truth is, Reagan's America has never really existed. Even in Puritan colonial New England, for instance, one-third of all children were conceived before their parents were married. Today, only 5 percent of all U.S. households are made up of married couples with two children, the father working and the mother at home.

Nor has the U.S. ever been a "white country." If it has any culture or ethos distinct from Europe, it is largely the result of contributions from Black people, originally trapped here against their will, Latins and other non-European peoples. And if the U.S. has had the wealth and power to dominate the rest of the world, much of it came from Black slave labor and the wealth of stolen Mexican and Native American land.

Ronald Reagan's America is a joke when compared to the real thing. But the attempts to force real people to conform to the myth are not a joke. They are a cold, cruel mashing of lives.

Child taken away from mother

•Kathleen Blackburn, 26, of Millen, Georgia, has two children: Nicholas, age two and a half, and Jennifer, now nine months. Six weeks after Jennifer was born, Nancy Blackburn, the mother of Kathleen's ex-husband, petitioned a court to gain custody of Nicholas.

Without warning, Sheriff L.C. Williams showed up at Kathleen's door last June 25 and took Nicholas away. Kathleen has since been ruled an "unfit mother" for Nicholas and does not even have visiting rights to see him.

The reason? Nicholas's new sister Jennifer and her father are Black, while the rest of the Blackburn family is white.

"I love my son and I'll fight until the day I die to get him back," says Kathleen Black-

burn. "I love my daughter," she adds. "This town is 100 years behind the times. It's like plantation days. I'm treated like a criminal and I haven't done anything wrong, except by Millen's standards."

40 years in jail for having marijuana

•Last month's "Break the Chains" column reported that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a sentence of 40 years for a man convicted of possession of nine ounces of marijuana. Since then, we've learned more about the case and Roger Davis, the Wythe County, Virginia, man who received the sentence.

A letter sent to the governor of Virginia asking for a pardon for Davis tells the story:

"[While in high school] Roger Davis became a kind of local legend—a black hippie leader with the charm of a Pied Piper. He could often be seen on Main Street surrounded by several of the prettiest white girls in town, all competing for his affection. His popularity became legendary and gradually other blacks followed his lead. The result was a kind of explosion of interracial dating both open and secret and a large number of interracial marriages."

Davis eventually married Carol Breedlove, a white woman from nearby Bland County. A cross was burned on their lawn. And during a local "war on drugs" Davis was arrested for possession of marijuana—and given 40 years.

Davis was sentenced in Wythe County Circuit Court, the same court where 21 years before a white man who killed Davis's father in a traffic accident was fined \$150 and given a suspended sentence!

"I'm trying to find a way out, looking for people to help me," he said recently. "I know in my heart I haven't done anything wrong."

16-year-old kicked out of school

•The following January 28 United Press International dispatch from Whitehall, Pennsylvania, tells the story of Cindy Yetter.

"A 16-year-old 'A' student has been kicked out of high school for failing to marry the

21-year-old man with whom she lives.

"They [school officials] said repeatedly that if we got married, it would all work out," Yetter said. "We talked about it, but it's just too soon to jump into anything like marriage."

"School officials said the high school junior was declared a nonresident of the township and therefore could not attend the school.

"The thing is, they think they can judge what is moral," Yetter said. "It isn't up to them to decide what is moral and what is not."

Toxic waste jobs for handicapped

•And, finally, a somewhat different case, but another example of contempt for people who can't be fitted into the mold.

A letter in the February 13 Nation reports that the city of Niagara Falls has begun a project to improve the area around the former Love Canal dump site that has been abandoned because of high levels of toxic wastes.

Jobs doing this clean-up work were offered to people who have cerebral palsy or are mentally retarded. This abuse of the handicapped "may be taken as symbolic of the treatment of handicapped persons by our society generally," Robert Roth, the father of a Down's syndrome child, writes.

He adds, "Retarded and physically handicapped citizens are routinely denied meaningful social, residential, educational and employment opportunities. They are capable of experiencing and achieving most, and perhaps all, of what is best and most important in humanity; yet inhumane and degrading conditions are forced upon them."

These are just a few of what must be thousands of cases. Next to all the pain and suffering caused by the cutbacks and unemployment of Reaganomics lie the equally terrible human cost of enforcing Reagan-style morality and ethics.

And in response we have to build a movement that not only says "No" to the racism, sexism, profiteering and war mongering of the ruling class, but also says "Yes" to the possibilities and diversity of human life as it really is.

—WF

'I DO
I SEE



Malcolm X was assassinated lives on today—from his fight into an anti-capitalist revolution. U.S. ruling class's brutal murder. But his belief in the rights of oppressed people every

MALCOLM X:

'I DON'T SEE ANY AMERICAN DREAM, I SEE AN AMERICAN NIGHTMARE...'



Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965, at the age of 39. But his legacy lives on today—from his fight for Black pride and Black power, to his evolution into an anti-capitalist revolutionary. Malcolm X's scathing indictments of the U.S. ruling class's brutality and hypocrisy made him a target for harassment and murder. But his belief in equality and true freedom made him a friend and symbol of oppressed people everywhere.

“There is another type of Negro on the scene. This type doesn't call himself a Negro. He calls himself a Black man. He doesn't make any apology for his black skin. He doesn't make any apology for being in America because he knows he was brought here forcibly by the white man. It's the white man's fault that he is here. It's the white man who created the problem here in America that they call a race problem.”
(Fall, 1963)

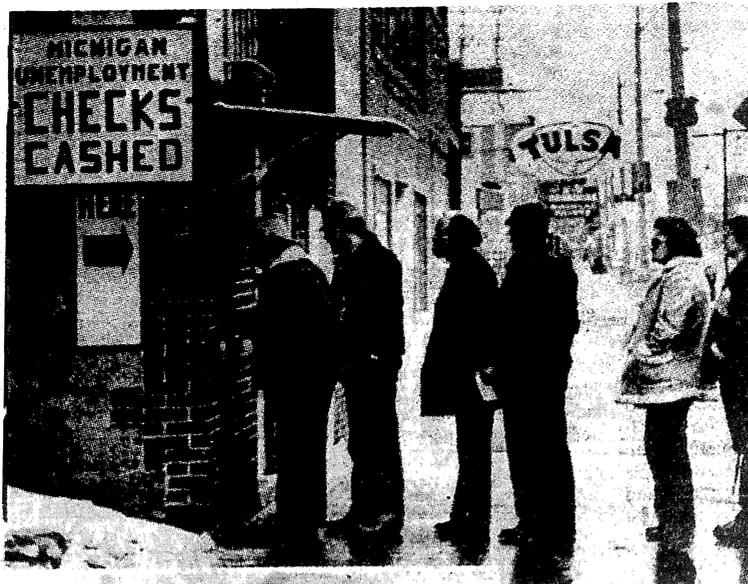
“We won't follow any leader today who comes on the basis of political party. Both parties (Democrat and Republican) are controlled by the same people who have abused our rights, and who have deceived us with false promises every time an election rolls around.” (Spring, 1960)

“All of our people have the same goals, the same objective. That objective is freedom, justice, equality. All of us want recognition and respect as human beings. . . . We have to keep in mind at all times that we are not fighting for integration, nor are we fighting for separation. We are fighting for recognition as human beings. We are fighting for the right to live as free humans in this society.” (Spring, 1964)

“The present American 'system' can never produce freedom for the Black man. A chicken cannot lay a duck egg because the chicken's 'system' is not designed or equipped to produce a duck egg. . . . The American 'system' (political, economic, and social) was produced by the enslavement of the Black man, and this present 'system' is capable only of perpetuating that enslavement.

“In order for a chicken to produce a duck egg its system would have to undergo a drastic and painful revolutionary change . . . or REVOLUTION. So be it with America's enslaving system.” (August, 1964)

“I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation. I believe that there will be that kind of clash, but I don't think that it will be based upon the color of the skin, as Elijah Muhammad has taught it.”
(January 19, 1965)



Above, laid-off workers cash their unemployment checks in Detroit. UAW President Doug Fraser and the UAW vice-president for Ford, Donald Ephin, are negotiating a contract that will leave many Ford workers on the street.

Talks Stall at GM, But UAW Leaders Pursue Early Contract Concessions to Ford

By W.E. SCHWEIZER

Rank and file autoworkers won a temporary reprieve January 28 when their union leadership broke off talks for the second time with General Motors over contract concessions. However, disastrous givebacks remain a serious threat at GM and at Ford, and Chrysler workers already have given up over a billion dollars in concessions.

Both the United Auto Workers union (UAW) leadership and GM had hoped to reach an agreement giving the company hundreds of millions of dollars in givebacks. However, the negotiations broke down when it became clear that GM workers might vote down any agreement. "If [the UAW leaders] don't have control of the team, there's no sense in fooling around," one GM official was quoted as saying.

If an agreement had been reached, it would have been a calamity, both for

UAW members and for other workers who have looked to the UAW as a pacesetter.

Reportedly, GM had demanded cuts of \$5-6 per hour in wages and benefits. At the same time, UAW President Doug Fraser was willing to accept concessions that would have frozen wages and cut benefits 10 percent until September 1983. He was also willing to give up a week of each worker's paid vacation, 13 paid holidays, three-quarters of scheduled cost-of-living increases, and sick-leave and accident payments to workers with "excessive" absences.

In an effort to sell this to the rank and file, Fraser and GM agreed to pass along to consumers all labor-cost savings in the form of lower car prices. They also agreed to let a mutually-acceptable auditor examine the company's books to certify the passalongs.

However, this scheme was precisely

LABOR IN STRUGGLE

Mine deaths continue to mount

On January 16 seven miners were killed in an explosion at the R.F.H. Coal Company near Craynor, in eastern Kentucky. The Craynor mine had passed a three-day federal safety inspection in October 1981 and a spot check in December. But a Kentucky mine safety commissioner found "dozens" of safety violations at the mine after the explosion, including 40 drill holes stuffed with dynamite that had failed to explode and had been left in place.

Deteriorating safety conditions are turning the eastern coalfields into a deathtrap. Already 16 miners have been killed in the first 22 days of 1982. Last year 153 miners died in accidents—the highest total since 1975. Nevertheless, the Reagan administration wants to rip up federal mine safety standards. Last year it froze hiring of federal mine safety inspectors and refused to spend \$2 million allocated to the Labor Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration. This year it called for a 10 percent reduction in the safety inspection workforce as part of the 1983 budget cuts.

But after the Craynor explosion the United Mine Workers union hinted it would call a three-day national protest strike unless the safety funds were restored. On February 8 the administration backed down under the UMW's pressure and announced it would resume hiring mine inspectors and would restore \$15 million in mine safety allocations to the 1983 budget.

Teamsters voting on new contract

As we go to press, over 300,000 truck drivers and warehouse workers in the International Broth-

erhood of Teamsters (IBT) are voting on a new contract, the Master Freight Agreement (MFA), between the union and the trucking industry. The proposed settlement is a complete disaster for the workers. For openers, it includes a three-year wage freeze. On top of that, the workers will receive only one cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) raise a year, rather than two as in previous contracts. Moreover, some COLA funds will be "diverted" to cover the cost of health and welfare benefits.

IBT President Roy Williams also agreed to drop a key work rule designed to protect teamster jobs. Under earlier contracts, long-distance truck drivers had to deliver their loads to freight terminals for shipment to their final destinations by local truckers. The new agreement would force them to bypass the terminals and deliver some shipments directly, thus endangering the jobs of thousands of local drivers and freight handlers.

In return, the companies only promised to accept reopening of the economic issues in the contract if the economy improves. They also agreed to contract language limiting unionized companies' leeway to set up non-union subsidiaries, and extending seniority rights to laid-off IBT members.

Williams claims that drastic concessions by the union are necessary to save teamster jobs. Federal deregulation of the trucking industry set off rate wars that have forced many companies out of business. Deregulation also has spurred the growth of non-union trucking firms that can offer low rates because they pay lower wages and benefits than unionized companies. These developments have combined to throw 200,000 teamsters out of work over the past three years. IBT leaders reacted to this crisis by giving the unionized companies everything they wanted. But Wall Street analyst William Legg believes these giveaways "won't get business back from non-union or private carriers."

URW leaders promise to fight

Contract negotiations between the United Rubber Workers union (URW) and the Big Four tire companies—Goodyear, Goodrich, Uniroyal and Firestone—will begin March 9. The union's current contract with the Big Four expires April 21.

The Big Four are in the midst of a major slump. Since 1973 they have closed 23 plants, including 13 in the past three years. These closings are due in part to the collapse of the auto industry. But they also stem from the Big Four's failure to convert to production of popular radial tires in the early 1970s.

The URW's bargaining clout has been seriously weakened by these events. Over 16,000 URW members, almost 30 percent of the 55,000 workers employed by the Big Four in 1979, are out of work. Meanwhile, Michelin and other overseas companies are producing or planning to produce radial tires in the U.S. with non-union labor. URW officials insist: "We are not going into negotiations to make concessions." They are demanding higher wages and benefits, more compensation for workers whose plants are shut down and are opposed to any weakening of the union's COLA clause.

If the URW does in fact fight to hold the line against demands for contract takeaways, it would mark a step forward for the entire U.S. labor movement. But there are reasons to question the URW leaders' pledge to oppose concessions to the Big Four. In January they agreed to give Uniroyal, the company hardest hit by the industry's problems, up to \$54.9 million in wage and benefit concessions above and beyond the eventual industrywide settlement. And at other companies they have accepted work rule changes when threatened with additional plant closures.

—PB

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that. Even with dollar-for-dollar cost passalongs, GM's rate of profit would still have risen because the company would require less capital to produce the same number of cars. Even more importantly, the linking of concessions to car prices accepts the companies' claims that labor costs—not company errors in choosing what kinds of cars to produce—are to blame for declining auto sales. And any promise from GM to cut car prices could be rescinded—or put up for “renegotiation”—as easily as other signed and sealed contract terms.

Opposition shakes Fraser's plan

Negotiations began January 11, but it soon became obvious that Fraser & Co. would have a lot of trouble selling the givebacks to the union rank and file. Talks broke down the first time January 20 when, according to insiders, four of the 11 members of the bargaining committee came out against the concessions. Fraser then tried to bypass the group by rallying the larger UAW GM Council behind him. But this blew up in his face when dissidents on that body forced an unprecedented roll-call vote over whether to resume bargaining. Although Fraser won the vote 57-43 percent, it was so close by UAW standards that he in fact lost the campaign.

Talks with GM resumed on January 25, but were doomed at the start. GM toughened its position, fearing that if the UAW voted down any settlement now, the company would be in a weaker position when bargaining begins on the regular con-

tract in the fall. As for Fraser, he knew he couldn't possibly sell anything even worse to the rank and file.

Much of the opposition has been led by Locals Opposed to Concessions (LOC), which was hurriedly formed by local officials in December. LOC is now trying to organize opposition at Ford, but it will find rougher going there.

Ford has been hit much harder than GM by the three-year-long auto crisis. Last year the company lost an estimated \$1 billion. Ford workers have been hit even harder. Several plants have been closed. Nearly one in three Ford workers—55,000—is on indefinite layoff. Without any fightback by their union, many Ford UAW members are demoralized and open to Ford and Fraser's giveback strategy.

Reportedly, Ford and Fraser are talking about similar kinds of concessions as at GM. In addition, they apparently have agreed to cut the wages of new-hires below regular scale for their first five years. Instead of offering to cut car prices, Ford is trying to sell the concessions by promising to guarantee all workers with 15 years seniority 50 percent of their pay for life.

Concessions no answer

As at GM, givebacks like these will be disastrous. The real effect of these concessions will be to drastically cut the living standards of Ford workers, and to increase the divisions in the workforce, especially between older and younger workers.

As was pointed out in last month's **Torch/La Antorcha**,

contract concessions are a trap. The crisis which has pummeled the auto industry for the last three years is now spreading to all sectors of capitalism. In auto itself, domestic car production fell to 280,000 units in January, the lowest since 1947. Sales in January fell 18.5 percent from a year ago to the lowest selling rate since 1961. With the entire world capitalist economy unraveling, concessions at one—or two or three—companies will not sell more products or save jobs.

But a successful fight by auto-workers against givebacks could be a big step forward in building a united movement of all workers and oppressed people to defend our jobs, rights and living standards from capitalist attacks.

The formation of LOC was a step forward in building such a movement in the UAW. The breakoff of talks at GM marked the first time in memory that oppositionists had been able successfully to challenge the UAW leadership.

In order to be most effective, any movement against concessions should be controlled by rank and file autoworkers. It should be open and democratic, giving workers the fullest ability to discuss and map out a strategy to fight givebacks as well as other political questions.

Finally, such a rank and file movement should address itself to questions like fighting the companies here at home rather than dividing ourselves from our fellow workers in foreign countries; like nationalization of the auto industry; and like conversion of closed plants to the production of useful goods. These will be discussed in future issues of the **Torch/La Antorcha** □

Jearl Wood Defense Cttee. to Hold Benefit Dance

MARKHAM, IL.—Efforts to keep Jearl “Lucky” Wood, a Black autoworker accused of shooting his foreman, out of prison are increasing in Chicago.

In recent weeks the Jearl Wood Defense Committee has stepped up its campaign to win new endorsers for the committee's demand that all charges

left the plant. A few hours later, he turned himself in to the police and was charged with aggravated battery.

Harrell was out of the hospital and well enough to drive a car a few weeks later. Despite this, in October 1980 the charges against Wood were raised to attempted murder, armed violence, and two counts of aggra-



Jearl Wood, third from left, with his family.

against Wood be dropped. Endorsers now include several union caucuses, such as the United Black Steelworkers Caucus of USWA Local 1014; a number of union officials, including the chief steward of mail handlers' union Local AMF-O'Hare; and a variety of organizations and individuals around the U.S.

An endorsement has also come in from Jamaica, West Indies, where Veronica Sicard endorsed on behalf of the Standing Strike Support Committee of the Revolutionary Marxist League.

On August 22, 1980, Wood, an ex-Marine who had served in Vietnam, shot and wounded Cecil Harrell (his general foreman) at Ford Motor Company's Chicago Assembly plant. On that day, Harrell overrode Jearl's immediate foreman to re-assign Jearl to a job which Harrell knew he had had difficulty with and which was being filled by two people in Jearl's absence. Jearl protested the arbitrary job assignment and requested his union representative. Harrell cursed him with racial slurs and then had Jearl sent home without that union representative present, in violation of the contract.

Wood returned shortly, fired two shots, one of which hit Harrell, put the gun away and

vated battery.

Jearl now faces up to 30 years in prison.

Fellow union members, friends, family and concerned organizations and individuals have come together to defend Jearl. The Revolutionary Socialist League and the **Torch/La Antorcha** have been part of the struggle to free Wood since August 1980. Jearl Wood is a victim of racist-capitalist oppression—from the U.S. government that put him through hell in the Vietnam War, to Ford Motor Company's job overloading and layoffs and the abusive Harrell.

Jearl Wood spoke at a Chicago RSL showing of the anti-apartheid movie, “Last Grave at Dimbaza,” on February 8, 1981. He thanked everyone for their support and urged them to continue in the struggle. **Torch/La Antorcha** readers can do this by calling Chicago RSL at (312) 226-5915 and buying a \$5 ticket to the February 28 Jearl Wood Defense Committee benefit. Tickets include admission to the benefit dance and a chance on a 19" color TV. (See “Events” box on page 15 for more information.)

Also, stay in touch with the RSL, as Wood's trial approaches in early March. **Free Jearl Wood! Drop the charges! Put Ford on trial!** □

Belgian steelworkers battle cops



Over 7,000 Belgian steelworkers fought a pitched battle with mounted police in Brussels on February 11. The workers were protesting the refusal of the Belgian government and the European Common Market to provide financial aid to the country's collapsing steel industry. After handing in a petition for aid at the Common Market headquarters, the workers broke through police lines and tried to march on the Belgian parliament building. As they attempted to get through barbed wire fences surrounding the building, police bombarded them with tear gas. When this failed to stop the workers, mounted police charged into them. Sixteen police were injured in the fighting, including three troopers whose horses collided with a car. There were no arrests and no reports of other injuries.

Poland's Rulers Face Serious Problems

By PAUL BENJAMIN

Over two months have passed since General Wojciech Jaruzelski, prime minister and head of the Polish communist party, imposed martial law in Poland. The military crackdown has enabled the Polish state-capitalist ruling class to beat back the immediate threat to its authority posed by Solidarity, the mass workers' organization, and to regain a modicum of control over the country.

But martial law in itself holds out no lasting solution to the deep economic and social crisis that has torn Polish society apart for the past year and a half. While the Polish rulers have won a major victory, they still face the task of reorganizing society so as to cement their hold over the country.

Reports from Poland indicate that the government will have to overcome some serious obstacles before state-capitalist rule is really secure. The gulf between the ruling class and Poles of other classes is deeper than ever. The economy is in a state of collapse. The ruling class's political apparatus is all but shattered. And the ruling class itself is divided over its strategy for stabilizing its rule.

Thousands interned and jailed

In the first weeks after the crackdown the military government concentrated on rooting out political dissidents throughout Polish society.

Today, at least 5,000 Solidarity activists and opposition leaders remain interned in 47 camps around the country. Around 30,000 people face trials for martial law violations, and several hundred have already been sentenced to prison terms of up to seven years.

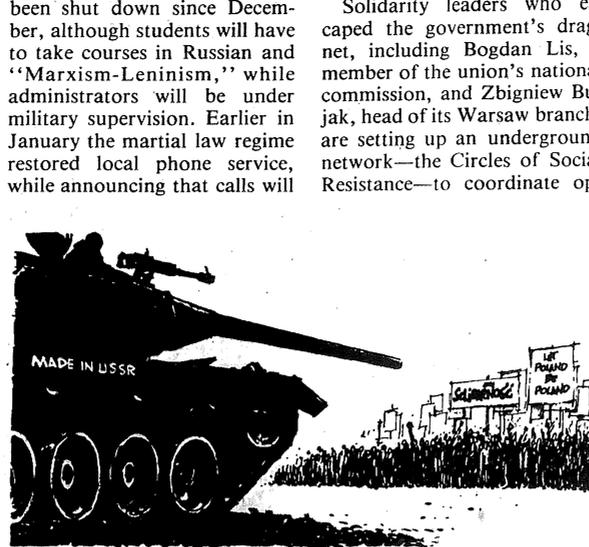
Workers are being forced to sign loyalty oaths to keep their jobs. And the universities, the mass media and other institutions are all being purged of suspected Solidarity sympathizers.

The success of this repressive campaign showed up when the regime implemented huge price increases on February 1. Prices for basic items like sugar, butter and salt shot up anywhere from 200 percent to 450 percent. Similar attempts to raise food prices set off the July 1980 workers' revolt, as well as earlier rebellions in 1976, 1970 and 1956. But the February 1 increases met almost no open resistance from the workers.

The government apparently feels that its authority is secure

enough to slightly relax some of its martial law measures. For example, on February 9 it reopened universities that had been shut down since December, although students will have to take courses in Russian and "Marxism-Leninism," while administrators will be under military supervision. Earlier in January the martial law regime restored local phone service, while announcing that calls will

be monitored or cut off by the government. The regime also loosened restrictions on foreign reporters. In a January 25 speech to the Polish Sejm (parliament), Jaruzelski said that "normalization" was proceeding rapidly, and hinted that other measures such as the curfew and the bans on travel and inter-city phone calls might be removed or limited by the end of February.



be monitored or cut off by the government. The regime also loosened restrictions on foreign reporters. In a January 25 speech to the Polish Sejm (parliament), Jaruzelski said that "normalization" was proceeding rapidly, and hinted that other measures such as the curfew and the bans on travel and inter-city phone calls might be removed or limited by the end of February.

Regime hated by most Poles

Despite its air of confidence the military government has in fact only begun to deal with the fundamental problems confronting it.

First of all, martial law has served only to deepen the intense hostility to the ruling class among workers and other sections of the population. In Gdansk, where Solidarity was born, in Silesia, where workers occupied mines and factories to protest martial law, and in War-

saw slogans on factory walls read: "The winter may be yours, but the spring will be ours." Solidarity leaders who escaped the government's dragnet, including Bogdan Lis, a member of the union's national commission, and Zbigniew Bujak, head of its Warsaw branch, are setting up an underground network—the Circles of Social Resistance—to coordinate op-

erations. The government is also making little progress in reviving the shattered Polish economy. Officials admit that the "production rhythm is erratic" in basic industry. In fact, some factories are hardly producing at all, either because of passive resistance by the workers, or because they lack parts and raw materials. Meanwhile, the country faces a critical shortage of bread and other essential foods.

Economy at near-standstill

Finally, the economy is saddled with some \$28 billion in debts owed to Western governments and banks. The government lacks the cash to even meet interest payments on these debts, let alone pay them off entirely. And it is having difficulty renegotiating its loans because of both the sorry state of the economy and political pressure from the Reagan administration against any financial aid to the Polish regime.

Between them lies a centrist grouping that believes it is impossible to return to conditions before 1980, but that also opposes any meaningful concessions to the working class. These factions actually have been battling for control of the government ever since the workers' revolt began. Today, their differences are reflected in the make-up of the nine-member council of advisers to the military government that actually runs the country. In addition to the centrist Jaruzelski and four other generals, the council includes Stefan Olzowski, a member of the Politburo and an ally of the hardline faction; Kazimierz Barcikowski and Hieronim Kubiak, liberals who are also on the Politburo; and Mieczyslaw Rakowski, a deputy prime minister and centrist who is reportedly one of Jaruzelski's closest advisers.

Party barely exists

Most important of all, the ruling class's own political apparatus has almost completely disintegrated. In particular, the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) was torn to shreds by the Polish revolt. PUWP officials concede that half a million members of the party resigned in the six months preceding the crackdown.

The imposition of martial law has only accelerated the breakdown of the PUWP. According to party leaders, around 17,000 members have resigned since the coup. The actual number may be much higher. In the Warsaw region alone, over 4,000 members reportedly turned in their party cards to protest martial law.

In addition to those quitting of their own accord, thousands of party members have been purged for supporting Solidarity or opposing the crackdown. Officially 4,500 members have been expelled, and another 24,000 have been suspended.

There is also evidence that high ranking officials within the official government structure, who are presumably loyal supporters of the state-capitalist regime, are unhappy over the military crackdown. In early

January, 90 provincial officials who "unfortunately did not cope with the new tasks resulting from the specific nature of martial law" were dismissed from their posts. And on January 28 the *Washington Post* reported that Justice Minister Sylwester Zawadzki tried to resign after the government ordered judges to impose whatever sentences were demanded by state prosecutors for people convicted of martial law offenses.

Hardliners and liberals battling for control

In fact, a near state of war exists within the ruling class between different factions fighting to control the government and set the future course of Polish society. One camp in this struggle is a group of hardliners, who want to turn the clock back to the totalitarian conditions that prevailed before the outbreak of the workers' rebellion.

At the other extreme are liberals who want to defuse the crisis by granting or at least promising sweeping reforms, and who have gone so far as to suggest dissolving the PUWP entirely and forming a new party in alliance with moderate Solidarity leaders.

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While the council has yet to lay out its overall strategy for restructuring Polish society, Jaruzelski has pointed to the policies of Hungarian ruler Janos Kadar as a model for his regime. Kadar was installed in power by the Russian ruling class after Russian troops invaded Hungary and crushed a massive workers' uprising in 1956. At first he was despised by the Hungarian people as a

Prisoners exiled illegally.

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Erit

NEW YORK
Over 100 Eritrean supporters rallied in Nations today to latest offensive Russian-backed Ethiopia against liberation for the October Torch/La An the Eritreans an armed struggle for a spirited demonstration bitter cold we not only the Russian and as well.

Below is a picture of the Ethiopian People's Liberation Front (EPLF) more radical conditional liberation

January 5, 1980
After failing occasions to the People's Liberation of their base Eritrean province Ethiopian military now in the preparations for offensive against freedom fighters

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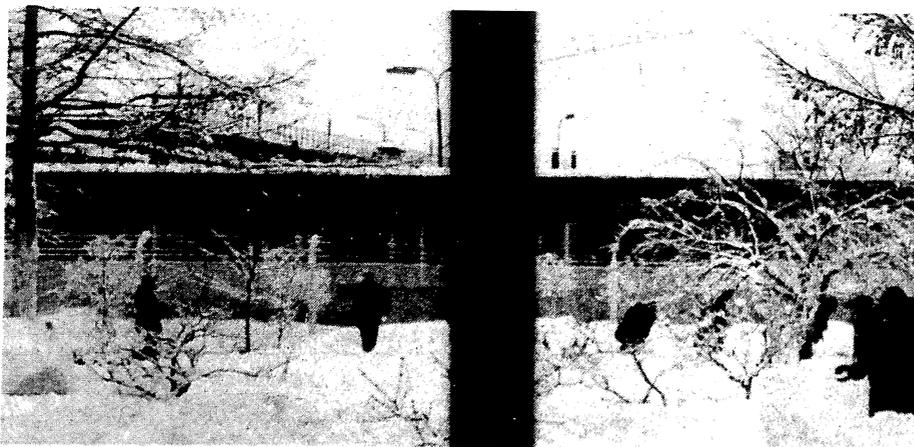
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Prisoners exercise behind barbed wire fence in an internment camp near Warsaw. Photo was taken illegally.

Russian puppet.

But over time Kadar won a degree of popularity by co-opting some of the more moderate demands of the workers, such as providing more consumer goods and granting a limited amount of freedom to the trade unions. He also decentralized the economy and carried out other economic reforms that led to a period of relative prosperity.

Jaruzelski seems to believe that if he can come up with a plausible plan for rescuing Poland's economy, combined with limited political reforms, he can duplicate Kadar's success and gain some acceptance for a rebuilt PUWP regime.

In this context, under Jaruzelski's leadership, the ruling council has been trying to gain popular tolerance for military rule by cultivating an image of moderation. In particular, the council is holding out the hope that it will eventually allow Solidarity to resume functioning, once it has been purged of "anti-socialist elements." But according to government spokesperson Jerzy Urban, "Solidarity as a political structure will not exist." In other words, the council may try to buy workers' support by allowing the re-establishment of a tame Solidarity or other "independent union," run by leaders loyal to the government, without allowing it to have any real

power.

Above all, the council is apparently trying to reach some kind of deal with Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, who is being held under house arrest in a Warsaw suburb. There have been several conflicting reports over these efforts.

Early stories indicated that Walesa was refusing to enter negotiations unless the entire 18-member Solidarity national commission could participate. On January 29 Solidarity sources said Walesa had agreed to begin talks provided that his legal advisers could be present. But these meetings, reportedly scheduled to begin in mid-January, have been postponed three times for undisclosed reasons.

Any agreement the government could reach with Walesa would be an invaluable tool in winning tolerance, if not acceptance, for its policies. Above all it would legitimize Jaruzelski's claim to be a moderate who imposed martial law to head off civil war and reunite the Polish people.

Security forces are hardliners' base

But the council's maneuvers are meeting bitter opposition from the hardline faction in the ruling class. Instead of accepting a "Hungarian model" for Poland, they want to rely on sheer force to crush any resistance to the government, just as President Gustav Husak's regime in Czechoslovakia has done since the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The hardliners' main base seems to be the Ministry of the Interior, which runs the internal security forces and is the one major government department not under Jaruzelski's personal control. As a "knowledgeable source" quoted in the *New York Times* put it:

"The ministry has been taking a beating for the past year and a half, being constrained by all kinds of limitations. Now suddenly the situation has turned around. It is not just revenge outright, but a feeling of 'All right, now we will show

who is really running the place."

The hardline forces are circulating a "Platform of the Left" at party meetings, calling for a purge of liberal and centrist party leaders, and specifically attacking Barcikowski, Kubiak and Rakowski. They may have backing from the Russian ruling class. Articles in the Russian press have urged the rebuilding of the PUWP based on "healthy elements" who opposed any compromise with Solidarity.

Clock ticking for Polish state capitalism

This hardline faction could eventually gain a growing and even decisive influence within the government. The military crackdown has not solved the fundamental crisis of Polish state capitalism. It has simply bought time for the ruling class to find a means to make sure its rule is both secure and more acceptable to the Polish people. If the centrist wing of the ruling class is unable to repair the economy or gain even a limited popular base for its policies—and it is clearly having difficulty doing either—the ruling class as a whole may be forced to abandon even the thin pretense of moderation currently adopted by the military government and rely on force alone to consolidate its control over the country. □

Eritrean Freedom Struggle Threatened With Nerve Gas

NEW YORK, January 22—Over 100 Eritreans and their supporters rallied at the United Nations today to protest the latest offensive launched by the Russian-backed government of Ethiopia against the national liberation forces of Eritrea. As the October-November 1981 *Torch/La Antorcha* reported, the Eritreans have been fighting an armed national liberation struggle for over 20 years. The spirited demonstration, held in bitter cold weather, denounced not only the Ethiopian government (the Derg), but both Russian and U.S. imperialism as well.

Below is a press release about the Ethiopian offensive from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the largest and more radical of the Eritrean national liberation organizations.

January 5, 1982

After failing on five separate occasions to drive the Eritrean People's Liberation Front out of their base areas in the Eritrean province of Sahel, the Ethiopian military regime is now in the midst of intensive preparations for a new general offensive against the Eritrean freedom fighters. The extent of



An EPLF fighter wearing a home-made gas mask to protect himself from nerve gas.

preparations shows this sixth offensive to be the largest to date. In fact this offensive, as the five previous failures indicate, is borne of desperation—military desperation at the incapacity of the Ethiopian army to attain victory on the battlefield and political desperation before the unyielding will of the Eritrean people to secure their elementary rights to self-determination and freedom.

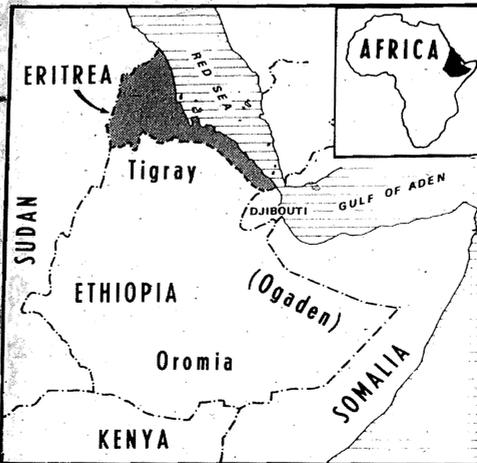
The aim of the Ethiopian military regime is to capture the provincial capital of Nacfa, still a liberated city, and then to go on to drive the Eritrean forces out of their bases in the Sahel and Barka provinces, which are presently liberated areas under the control of the EPLF. They plan to accomplish this feat within a period of 20 to 30 days.

What makes the Ethiopians so confident that they can now

easily succeed where previously they have failed so miserably? The morale of the Ethiopian army is at a lower point than ever before, but what has changed is the extent of military fire power presently directed at our forces: Not only will Ethiopia's Mig 21s and 23s be involved but also older, recently refitted, American F5s. Also to be used for the first time are the 20 MI 24 helicopter gun-

ships furnished by the Soviet Union and piloted by South Yemeni pilots, as well as a Hercules C 14 furnished by Libya. However, the single most dangerous weapon brought forward by the Ethiopians is the Soviet-supplied stock of nerve gas, a highly poisonous chemical weapon never before used and against which our fighters and civilian population have virtually no effective defense. To back up this awesome firepower the Ethiopians have mobilized 90,000 troops.

Even in the face of such destructive forces and weapons the Eritrean people are determined to fight on and to obtain the rights and freedom which are their due. And now as the authoritarian and brutal nature of the Ethiopian military regime weighs more and more heavily on the Ethiopian people, they too wish to see the end of Mengistu's [Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, leader of the Derg—Ed.] military dictatorship. Fearing the continuation of this regime, they anxiously await the outcome of this offensive and give their support to the Eritrean people in the hope that a defeat will bring down the unpopular Mengistu and his military cohorts. □



International Women's Day, 1982

A Revolutionary Strategy for Women's Liberation



A Talk by
Miriam Lee

March 8 is International Women's Day. The origin of this holiday goes back to 1910, when the international socialist movement held demonstrations around the world to honor the struggle of women workers against their oppression. Specifically, the socialist movement was responding to the hard-fought battles being waged at the time by women garment workers in the U.S. for unionization and workers' rights.

For International Women's Day each year, the Torch/La Antorcha prints an article of particular importance to the fight for women's liberation. Past topics have included the nature of women's oppression, the struggles of Black women in South Africa and the issue of how we can fight rape.

This year we are printing an edited version of a talk given by RSL member Miriam Lee at the 1981 Women's Pentagon Action, which was reported on in the December 15, 1981, issue of the Torch. In the talk Lee discusses why many of the gains women won through decades of struggle are under attack

today, and what women can do to defend themselves. She stresses the need for women to unite with Blacks, Latinos, gays and workers in general, who are also under attack, and for women to see themselves as part of an international working class movement that can fight for, and win, liberation for all the victims of capitalist oppression.

The Torch/La Antorcha welcomes feedback and discussion on the important questions Lee addresses in her talk. We also hope that our readers participate with the RSL in International Women's Day activities that will be taking place in a number of cities around the country (see listings in "Events" box on page 15.)

Many of the younger women here grew up able to take certain rights for granted. For example, birth control information and contraceptives are available. Abortion is legal and clinics are advertised in the daily papers. Most of us work, know women who work in

factory jobs or as telephone linemen or other jobs traditionally known as "men's work." Some lesbians are able to live openly with their lovers, and some are still able to keep their children.

Before the women's movement of the 1960s, these rights did not exist. As a result of a massive movement of women demanding their rights, a few concessions were made. The movement demanded free abortion on demand and got legal abortions. The movement fought for the right to equal work and equal pay for equal work and got some access into jobs, including through affirmative action programs. There are still struggles for comparable pay, like in San Jose, California.

What happened to this movement and why wasn't it able to go further?

The dominant leadership of the women's movement believed that if women put their energy into voting for the right people, that "our friends in Washington"—and by this they really meant the Democratic Party—would carry out legislation that benefits us. Our movement was co-opted by the liberals. Loud demonstrations and demanding too much were seen as an embarrassment to supposedly "friendly" politicians, as was anything that could be considered non-respectable.

Thus the leaders of the women's movement argued that the movement should hide its non-respectable parts. Lesbians who built the movement were asked to put themselves into the closet. Black women, Asian and Latin women were told to set their special needs and demands aside; working women were told to strive for manager positions. More and more the movement became one in which women fought for the "right" to blend in with mainstream, white middle class male culture and get some of the benefits capitalist society had to offer.

The radical wing of the movement did not go along with this strategy.

The leadership of this wing mostly came from the political left, who believed that capitalism was bankrupt. But many of these women came from organizations that held up China or Russia as socialist models. They pointed out that women in these countries could be doctors or get abortions. The fact that women do not control any aspect of their lives in these countries was not seen as important.

Much of the left movement at this time was very sexist and cynical; the anti-war and socialist offices had women licking stamps and men making the speeches. Some women split from this overt sexism, but didn't see that the oppression of women was bound up with all capitalist oppression. Some stayed in radical organizations and swallowed the sexism; some stayed in and tried to fight it. Some split and became separatists, forming women's or lesbian organizations. Others dropped out of politics altogether.

The sexism and anti-gay politics of the majority of the left prevented a clear left leadership from being able to speak to radicalizing women who were looking for an all-round way to fight their oppression. At the same time, the left was, by and large, unable to see the struggle for women's liberation as a working class issue, something that was necessary for the whole working class to fight around, that benefited the entire working class. When left groups organized women, they talked about sexism, but when they organized in factories, they didn't raise it or fight around it.

This reflected a fear on the part of the left of raising unpopular issues that raise workers' consciousness, and it turned off many politically sympathetic women.

The alternative that many women turned to, therefore, was separatism or radical feminism.

Now, the separatists see the main enemy, and the main source of women's oppression, not as the capitalist system, but as men. Flowing from this, they think that if women separate and form their own society, oppression will cease. But because the separatists have never developed a viable strategy for getting a women-only society, they in fact end up looking for a "women's niche" inside capitalist society, and not for a way to change the whole thing.

Furthermore, because they don't make the connections between the specific oppression of women and racial and class oppression, they offer Black or Latin or white working class women no way to fight against all the oppression they face. And because they don't draw a class line, working class women are on the bottom and middle class women's concerns dominate.

So the point I've been trying to show is that both the mainstream of the women's movement and the separatists (including women who were in many ways quite militant and radical) sought a better position for women inside the system.

System in crisis — gains taken away

The problem with that approach can now more clearly be seen. Today, the system, capitalism, is in crisis and it can't afford to give the same benefits that it used to. The ruling class is on the offensive. The gains of the '60s are now being rolled back. The women's movement, the civil rights movement and all



Torchfoto/Lisa Gashen

the other movements of the '60s and '70s are not able to keep the gains they won. This is because for too long they have been afraid to be militant, and to strike solid blows against the system.

The capitalist class attacks those who they think are least organized and prepared to fight back. This system is sexist to the core and women therefore have little power and are not well-organized to fight. As a result, women have become a prime target for the capitalists' attacks. Consider the following:

- Two out of three elderly people living in poverty are women.

- Women are 86 percent of the million people receiving the minimum monthly social security benefits to be eliminated.

- Nearly all households with dependent children (AFDC), a program facing cuts, are headed by women.

- Sixty-nine percent of the people receiving food stamps are heads of households. This program is also facing cuts.

- The legal services program has been sharply curtailed. Seventy percent of legal services clients are women, many of whom are seeking redress of issues, like spouse abuse and discrimination in jobs.

- The elimination of CEBA cuts women workers and their families who are not receiving benefits.

- Rape and other violent crimes against women has increased.

- Schools on the high school level are closing down. Colleges are cutting tuition, cutting scholarships and canceling affirmative action programs. Schools for the rural areas are becoming more exclusive, with access to higher education tracked into the military area.

- Lesbian mothers are facing challenges to have their children. Physical abuse of lesbian mothers and wing harassment of gay babies is increasing.

- Birth control and abortion are becoming higher priced and less available. Laws like the Family Protection Act and the Human Life Amendment are being enacted to take away the right to control our bodies.

- The Moral Majority is targeting the population to see "immoral" behavior and "women stepping out of their given place as wife and mother." The downfall of civilization is being predicted.

- This is part of a climate of fear set to drive all working class people down. The Klan and Nazis are terrorizing women and men.

- Creating a racist hierarchy, dividing the working class, and fearing the men and women and the white, Latin American, and together them. The strategy is to create a climate of sexism to divide our and keep happening patriotism workers aians or I Libyans. encourage Nazis and racists to their camp ror.

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• Women are 86 percent of the three million people receiving the \$122 minimum monthly social security benefit, soon to be eliminated.

• Nearly all households receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a program facing heavy cuts, are headed by women.

• Sixty-nine percent of households receiving food stamps are headed by women. This program is also being cut.

• The legal services program is being sharply curtailed. Seventy percent of legal services clients are women, many of whom are seeking redress on women's issues, like spouse abuse and sex discrimination in jobs.

• The elimination of CETA programs cuts women workers and also services received by women.

• Rape and other violent crime against women has increased.

• Schools on the high school level are closing down. Colleges are raising tuition, cutting scholarship assistance and canceling affirmative action programs. Schools for the ruling class are becoming more exclusive, working class access to higher education is being tracked into the military and the church.

• Lesbian mothers are facing court challenges to have their children taken away. Physical abuse of lesbians, right-wing harassment of gay bars is increasing.

• Birth control and abortion is becoming higher priced and less available. New laws like the Family Protection Act and the Human Life Amendment are threatening to take away this basic right to control our bodies.

• The Moral Majority is rousing the population to see "immoral women" and "women stepping out of their god-given place as wife and mother" as the downfall of civilization.

This is part of a climate that is being set to drive all working class people down. The Klan and Nazis play a role by terrorizing women and men, and increasing suspicion and racial hostility.

The thing the ruling class fears most is seeing men and women, gay and straight, Black, white, Latin, Arab, all together, against them. Therefore, their strategy is to set a climate of racism and sexism to weaken and divide our movement, and keep this from happening. They use patriotism to set U.S. workers against Iranians or Russians or Libyans. This climate encourages the Klan/Nazis and independent racists to carry out their campaign of terror.

All of these attacks on women are not separate from what is happening to women all over the world. Women and girls in Iran are being raped on the streets. Political women are gang-raped in jail. In India, it is reported that women are publicly stoned as a punishment for adultery. And in Poland, where women and men are organizing against the government, the Catholic Church in connection with the state-capitalist government is trying to weaken their struggle by moving to outlaw abortion, legal there since 1958. Depro Provera is a type of birth control proven to be unsafe and made illegal in

this country. It is being dumped into Mexico and Jamaica and being used by women there.

And these attacks are not separate from the general attack going on against all working class and poor people all over the world. Some get it worse. In imperialized countries, like Africa or Jamaica, they have it worse than in the U.S.; in the U.S., women and Blacks or Latins have it worse than white men, and so on.

All oppressed people share common enemy

The reason it is important that women see our oppression connected to the oppression others face is that we all have a common enemy—the world capitalist system.

This world is capitalist, whether we are talking about the capitalist imperialism of the U.S. or the state capitalism of Russia. There are basically two classes worldwide—those that rule and make all the decisions, the capitalist and state-capitalist ruling classes, and those that have no control, even though they do all the work—the working class.

You are in the working class if you need to work in order to live, whether or not you have a job. When there is an economic crisis, the working class bears the burden, through high unemployment, rising cost of living and increased insecure and unsafe living conditions. If you are rich, you can get richer. The more poor you are or the more oppressed, the worse your living standard will get. Any cushion employed working class people have built up is rapidly used up. This insecurity and poverty breeds violence, often directed at women, gays and children. This is all happening in the U.S. Imagine how it is in Africa, Asia or Latin America, where there is no cushion and a greater disparity between rich and poor, have and have not.

The one weapon that working class and poor people have to fight back with is our ability to unite the people on our side—working class and oppressed people from around the world—into a social movement.

As women, we need to see ourselves as part of a working class movement and we have to organize ourselves to resist attacks being waged against the whole working class. This does not mean subordinating our needs. The whole working class needs to fight attacks against women. Part of our task is making these connections conscious and being able to explain them to others. When women in El Salvador pick up the gun, they are fighting for their freedom as women, as workers and as El Salvadoreans fighting U.S. imperialism. None of this gets separated in practice.

Our movement needs to be politically conscious of the fact that the world capitalist system is our enemy and that world socialism can lay the basis for our freedom. Our movement needs to be militant and not afraid to go out into the streets and demonstrate. Also we need to organize self-defense. For example, when the Klan attacked Annie Small, a woman from Cincinnati, Ohio, and she fought back, this was right. We need to be independent from the ruling class and not let them dictate our policies or set our limits based on what is acceptable to them. Our movement needs to look for ways to unite all enemies of the system.

This movement we are talking about will have to take power away from the



Women in Third World countries, like the Eritrean women shown above, are playing a major role in the struggle to free their homelands from imperialist domination.

ruling class, make a revolution, smash the state and completely change the direction and priorities of society.

Ain't no socialism unless women are free

Nowhere in the world do working class people, men or women, make the major decisions that affect their lives, their jobs, their society—living or working conditions. Nowhere in the world is the working class able to use the government apparatus to fight against sexism or racism or anti-gay prejudice or any of the backward consciousness which holds people back and turns sisters and brothers against each other. Nowhere in the world are the resources of society used to better the lives of regular people and not a bureaucratic leadership elite.

China and Russia call themselves socialist and yet women there are not free. In Russia, abortion is the main form of birth control and the abortion rate is higher than the birth rate. In China, abortion is required after the first child. There are five million abortions a year and 17 million births a year. Obviously, the government campaign to control the birth rate is unsuccessful. While such accessibility to abortion would be a step forward here in the

U.S., in these countries it is used by the government to control women's bodies and their lives. The government telling women or anyone what to do is not socialism. In fact, China and Russia and the other so-called socialist countries are state-capitalist, and sexism runs throughout society. The family is held up as the main normal and proper way of living and officially gay people do not exist or are put into jail as criminals, like in Cuba. If these countries were socialist, the whole society would be organized to fight sexism.

Our vision of socialism is working class people taking control and making the decisions which run society. We envision this happening through organizations of factory workers and other workers and neighborhood committees. We see women's organizations as a part of a functioning socialist system. The act of making a revolution brings working class and oppressed people into conscious action—they determine what gets built, what gets distributed, how much, to whom.

Overthrowing the capitalist ruling class does not automatically guarantee women's liberation. Women and men, politically conscious of the need to develop each member of society, must fight for women to be free. Women and men have to fight the sexist ideas that

(Continued on page 16)



Polish women workers in Zyrardow occupied their plant to protest food shortages before the December crackdown. Women in Poland and other state-capitalist countries suffer the same oppression as those in the Western bloc.

Reagan Declares War on Poor

(Continued from page 1)

military spending, hiking the defense budget 18.1 percent to \$215.9 billion—28.5 percent of the entire budget!

Reagan's new budget would:

- Cut Medicare by \$2.5 billion and Medicaid by \$2 billion;

- Cut food stamps by \$2.4 billion;

- Eliminate all new federally subsidized housing projects;

- Cut Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC—the largest welfare program) by \$1.2 billion—reducing the federal government's share of this program by 36 percent;

- Cut federal aid to elementary, secondary and vocational education by \$1.2 billion—a 22 percent reduction. Overall, aid to education would be reduced by one-third; for vocational education it would be cut in half.

These spending cuts, along with many others—\$43 billion in all—follow last year's cuts of nearly \$40 billion. If adopted, they would result in a staggering reduction of essential social services for millions of people.

In his State of the Union Message, broadcast on prime-time TV, Reagan didn't say a word about these new budget proposals.

In fact, he didn't say much about the state of the union. With more than 10 million people out of work and administration officials conceding that the unemployment rate is likely to climb to 10 percent—a post-Depression record—Reagan was reluctant to discuss the economy at all.

Threw out the baby, kept the bath water

Instead, he devoted his speech to a proposal for "New Federalism"—an elaborate plan to turn a host of social programs now funded and administered by the federal government over to the states.



Reagan's proposed 1983 budget includes cuts in medical programs vital for older people. In December members of the Gray Panthers, a senior citizens' organization, protested the administration's policies outside the White House.

New Federalism started out as a scheme by the president's advisers to get a reluctant Reagan to include new excise taxes in his budget proposals. (The advisers told Reagan that the taxes would help finance New Federalism; actually, they hoped they would go to offset the huge and politically perilous deficits in Reagan's budget.) Reagan liked the idea so much that he decided to make it the centerpiece of his State of the Union Message. However, at the last minute, he dropped the excise taxes from the proposal, leaving his advisers empty-handed—and his budget nearly \$100 billion in the red.

Fundamental Reaganism

While New Federalism began as a ploy and may have little chance of being adopted, the proposal is a clear expression of Reagan's reactionary policies.

Its most immediate aim is to further reduce those social programs that Reagan and his right-wing co-thinkers most staunchly oppose.

Cities and states that are already financially strapped would be saddled with 43 programs costing more than \$47 billion. Reagan claims the states would not lose out on the deal because Washington would assume the costs of Medicaid and a \$28 billion "trust fund" would be set up to cover the difference. However, the fund would only pay for the added costs if all of Reagan's new spending cuts are approved—which is highly unlikely.

Moreover, the fund would be phased out over a four-year period beginning in 1987; by 1991 the states would have to shoulder the entire cost, leaving them the choice of raising taxes or slashing the programs.

More important, New Federalism, like Reagan's tax breaks

for segregated schools, aims to eliminate the federal government's role in dealing with poverty and inequality, turning the clock back on the gains of three decades of civil rights struggles.

Under the plan, social programs would be put in the hands of state legislatures, where callous treatment of the poor and systematic racism have long been hallmarks. As a result, poor people, Black people in particular, would once again be forced to struggle on an isolated, local level for the most minimal rights and benefits.

In essence, New Federalism is a summation of fundamental Reagan philosophy, "Let's get the government off the backs of rich, white folks."

Crisis in the ruling class

The focus of attention within the ruling class, however, is not on Reagan's New Federalism, but on his latest economic proposals.

Traditional conservatives were shocked by the huge budget deficits (which fuel inflation, drive up interest rates and choke off any economic recovery); Republicans from the industrial Northeast and Midwest viewed Reagan's proposed reductions in federal assistance to cities and states as politically disastrous; even many long-time "hawks" questioned Reagan's crash program of military spending in light of the record budget deficits. Congressional Democrats, chortling over Reagan's increasing political difficulties, joined in the outcry over Reagan's program.

This growing dissension may prove to be a serious blow to the U.S. ruling class. After suffering through the Nixon/Watergate scandal and then the weak and ineffective presidency of Jimmy Carter, the capitalists thought they had found their man in Reagan. They hoped that Reagan would be able to hold together a coalition made up of most of the ruling class, wide sections of the middle class and a significant portion of the working class, particularly better-off white workers, to carry out a difficult program for economic recovery.

Now, all this may be falling apart. The Reagan program itself is turning out to be a disaster: The economy is mired in a deep recession; the "supply-side miracle" has led to record budget deficits (\$91.5 billion next year, \$250 billion through 1985 according to Reagan's optimistically low projections); and the dramatic boom in capital investment that Reagan promised has simply failed to materialize.

Moreover, these results have



come at a high political price. Significant sections of the ruling class are becoming disillusioned in Reagan, with his dogmatic insistence on "more of the same." They increasingly fear that he may shipwreck the entire economy, perhaps taking the world economy down with it.

In addition, Congress will be forced to wage a pitched battle over the new Reagan budget, with much blood-letting and finger-pointing likely. And, for all the fury, no one will have any viable alternatives to offer.

Where is the 'Reagan mandate'?

Equally important, the bottomless well of popular support that was supposedly Reagan's appears to be rapidly evaporating.

A January Newsweek poll (taken before Reagan's budget cuts were announced) indicates that so-called "Main Street" is rapidly deserting the president. According to the poll, Reagan's overall approval rating now stands at 52 percent—lower than that of Carter after his first year in office. Moreover, Reagan's disapproval rating is 38 percent—significantly higher than the comparable figure for Carter.

When asked whether federal spending should be cut, increased or kept the same, a majority of respondents opposed cuts in food stamps, welfare, aid to education, medical and health care, laws protecting the environment and job training programs. (In fact, a majority favored increasing the funding for the latter four programs and only a tiny handful—one out of eight people—favored cuts in spending for job training.)

Responses to questions on a number of key social issues also suggested dwindling support for Reagan's right-wing ideological crusade. When asked, "Would you be more or less likely to vote for a candidate who opposed abortion for almost all

reasons," the response was "less likely" by better than two to one. When asked the same question in regard to a candidate who favored affirmative action plans for minorities and women, more than three times as many people answered "more likely." Similarly, questions on the ERA and environmental protection laws produced virtually identical anti-Reagan responses.

Perhaps most striking—given the barrage of propaganda about the "Red Menace"—the poll showed that by a two-to-one ratio, people would be less likely to vote for a candidate who favored large increases in defense spending. In fact, 71 percent of the respondents said it was more important for the U.S. to encourage the development of democracy in Latin America than to support so-called friendly anti-communist military dictatorships! Clearly, Reagan's saber-rattling in El Salvador enjoys little support.

Polls are certainly not the most accurate measure of people's complex and highly contradictory political views. And, it is important to note that Reagan undoubtedly continues to command the support of a well-organized, right-wing minority. But it is also fair to conclude from the polls that, as we have argued in the past, a large measure of Reagan's support was based on false hopes for economic improvements rather than any deep agreement with his specific programs, policies and ideological positions.

State of the working class movement

Unfortunately, despite the weakening of the "Reagan mandate," the disarray within the ruling class has a parallel within the working class. In particular,



The Reagan administration's "cure" for the misery caused by its policies is to hand out five-pound boxes of cheese to poor people like those above in Vineland, NJ.

a class consciousness movement, with cohesiveness achieved by the Right/Moral Movement does not yet exist.

Working people, hard by the recession of people are unemployed million more a lose their jobs months. Wages the cities are facing the impact of the budget cuts is just be felt.

For Blacks, gays and other sections of the the situation is the increasingly political climate miseries of the

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This will begin increasing number recognize that the worse, not better is no alternative back. It is difficult just how quickly op, but we can ex class movement coming period.

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response was better than would be expected for a candidate with affirmative minorities and in three times the number of questions answered. And, to note that daily continues support of a right-wing minority to con-rolls that, as we past, a large gan's support else hopes for ements rather agreement with rams, policies positions.

Working people are being hit hard by the recession. Millions of people are unemployed and a million more are expected to lose their jobs in the coming months. Wages are declining, the cities are falling apart and the impact of the first round of budget cuts is just beginning to be felt.

For Blacks, Latins, women, gays and other more oppressed sections of the working class, the situation is even worse, with the increasingly racist and sexist political climate adding to the miseries of the economic crisis.

All this has had a stunning impact. Most people are just trying to get by, to survive. Better-off, more organized sections of the working class—the less than 20 percent now organized into unions—are by and large accepting the strategy of concessions put forward by the gang of corrupt business agents that today heads the trade union movement. In general, there is widespread demoralization, fear and confusion among poor and working people.

This will begin to change as increasing numbers of people recognize that things are getting worse, not better, and that there is no alternative to fighting back. It is difficult to predict just how quickly this will develop, but we can expect a working class movement to grow in the coming period.

It is not clear, however, what its political direction will be. Some workers, for example some better-off white workers, are likely to turn to the radical right for solutions. But it is likely that a far greater number of workers will begin to move leftward.

Given the resources and influence of the Democratic Party, this developing movement is likely to initially orient to it and, in many cases, to be under the leadership of pro-Democratic Party liberals.

Already the Democrats are aggressively painting themselves as "champions of the people." They are denouncing Reagan's policies (particularly now that his programs are not working) and promising that if they were in power, things would be much better.

Meanwhile, pro-Democratic Party liberals are gearing up to convince people that the best strategy for change is electing "friends"—that is, Democratic Party politicians.

Such a perspective offers no solution to the misery that poor and working people are facing today. The problem is not simply this or that specific policy—Republican or Democratic—but the fact that the entire system is in crisis. Unless capitalism is overthrown, the only future for working people is economic depression, fascism, war and the threat of nuclear holocaust.

The Democratic Party is as committed to this system as are the Republicans. They might administer it somewhat differ-

ently—in particular, the Democrats have historically been more aware than the Republicans of the need to pacify popular movements in order to head off mass rebellions. But whatever the small differences, the Democrats' basic aim is to keep the system as a whole intact. They have always done and will ultimately do whatever is necessary to defend and preserve capitalist rule.

Build a revolutionary party

The alternative to looking to either of the two capitalist parties is for working and oppressed people to build their own party—a revolutionary party. Such a party would fight exclusively for the interests of the working class and oppressed people. It would not start from the needs of the capitalists and their system, but rather from the needs and desires of working people themselves.

A revolutionary party would be an alternative to the misleadership of the capitalist parties and their pro-capitalist allies in the trade union movement and other social movements. It would intervene in the struggles of working people, both to strengthen those struggles and, most importantly, to explain that the only lasting solution to capitalist oppression is socialist revolution.

The task of building such a party cannot wait until the overall level of struggle is



A dejected man waits for attention in a Michigan welfare office.

higher. The capitalist class is already well-organized and has enormous resources. It will be using these resources to mislead, co-opt or crush working people's struggles. The right wing—from the Klan and the Nazis to the Moral Majority—also is increasingly well-organized and will be aggressively promoting its divisive, racist

policies inside the working class.

The Revolutionary Socialist League believes that working and oppressed people need to begin building our own party now. As the economic crisis deepens, the right wing gains strength and the ruling class grows more desperate, this task becomes increasingly urgent. □

Working movement

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Administration's misery caused by hand out five-cheese to poor above in Vine-

E V E N T S

Chicago

BENEFIT FOR JEARL WOOD
—Sunday, February 28, 4:30 p.m. until 1 a.m. Hitching Post Lounge, 2975 W. 159th St., Markham, IL. Sponsored by Jearl Wood Defense Committee. Donation \$5, includes raffle for color TV.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CITYWIDE EVENT—Resource fair and program. Saturday, March 6, noon to 5, Roberto Clemente High School, 1147 North Western Ave. Sponsored by the Planning Committee for International Women's Day.

RSL FILM SHOWING—For International Women's Day. March 13. For more info, call (312) 226-5915.

Detroit

TEACH-IN: CRISIS IN POLAND
—Saturday, February 20, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wayne State University Student Center Bldg., Rm. 289. Speakers include David Herreshoff and

Martin Glaberman (WSU professors), Katherine Ryllien (RSL), Andy Phillips (News & Letters). Panel discussion on the lessons of the Polish workers' movement, with speakers from RSL, News & Letters, International Socialists, International Socialist Organization.

Los Angeles

STOP DEATH FLIGHTS—Sunday, February 21, 2 p.m. CIS-PES Refugee Committee will picket the Western Airlines ticket counter at LA International Airport as part of an ongoing campaign to stop the deportation "death flights" of El Salvadorean refugees. For more info, call (213) 660-4587 or (213) 385-6029.

MARCH & RALLY TO STOP DEPORTATION & IMMIGRATION RAIDS—Saturday, March 13, 11 a.m. Gather at Olympic and Broadway. Sponsored by Coalition for Visas and Rights for the Undocumented. To march with the RSL, call (213) 385-6029.

New York

RSL FORUM: Harriet Tubman, John Brown & Malcolm X—The Anti-Slavery Movement & Today's Struggle for Freedom. Saturday, February 20, 7 p.m. Workmen's Circle Cultural Center, 369 8th Ave. (at 29th St.), Manhattan. Speaker: Wayne Gordon, RSL. Donation \$1; childcare provided.

PROGRAM & DISCUSSION ON SOLIDARNOSC & THE POLISH RESISTANCE—Saturday, February 27, noon. Workmen's Circle Cultural Center, 369 8th Ave. (at 29th St.), Manhattan. Speakers, panel discussion, open discussion. Sponsored by the Coalition to Support Solidarity. For more information, call (212) 695-6802.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH—Saturday, March 6. Assemble at Union Square, 11:30 a.m. Sponsored by International Women's Day Coalition. For information on other IWD events, please call (212) 695-6802.

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A Revolutionary Strategy for Women's Liberation

(Continued from page 13)

have pervaded society for centuries.

This means, on a practical level, organizing 24-hour free quality child care and community laundries and kitchens. Equal job training and good paying jobs. It means allowing women to make the choice about whether or not to have children, how many and when. Free safe birth control, abortion on demand. It means letting each person decide how they want to express their sexuality without putting value judgments on married or single, lesbian or straight, promiscuous or monogamous. It means allowing children to explore their own sexuality, without subjecting them to abuse. It means equality in the fullest sense of the word.

How do we get there?

Building a revolutionary party our main strategy

The depth, organization and seriousness of the capitalists and the right wing means that we too need to be serious, organized and prepared. Our main strategy is to build a mass revolutionary party. We realize none exists today. The RSL is a small core group trying to build

the kind of party that we see is necessary. The kind of party we need tells the truth about what we see happening in the world. Only from dealing with what is really going on, without hiding unpleasant facts, can we really figure out what best to do. Our party needs to unite the most conscious revolutionaries, women and men, Black, Latin, Native American, Asian, white, gay and straight, young and old, on the basis of a common set of politics. A revolutionary party fights all the capitalist attacks and all oppression and tries to move each struggle as far ahead as we can. We look to involve ourselves in the day to day struggles of working class people. This is the best way to train working class people to lead themselves to socialism. The party has to fight sectarianism and look to unite with everybody who wants to fight back. The struggle against racism and sexism goes on inside the party as well as in society. Full equality of all members inside the party is one way to do this. We train and educate each member equally. We are not liberal, and don't believe in token women or Black leaders, but real leadership.

Leadership is something that has become a distasteful word among sections of the women's movement. But

whether or not it is admitted, leadership exists. We do not want a new elite. We need a leadership that is different. In capitalist society, working class people are told that they can't do for themselves. A revolutionary party exposes this lie through education and training working class people to lead their own fightback. We need a leadership to train leaders. We need to educate, train and struggle with each other, both inside and outside the leadership organization, the party. Leadership must be responsible and not blame others for its mistakes.

A party is best known by its deeds. The RSL and our sister organization, the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica, are active in a wide range of struggles. When two gay women were threatened by their landlord, we helped organize the Gay Rights Defense Committee to organize their struggle within the auto plants in Detroit; when the Livernois Five were being framed up on murder charges, we organized a defense which freed them after three jury trials; when Glydons workers in Los Angeles organized for a union, the RSL and the Comité Revolucionario de la Costura (Revolutionary Garment Workers Committee) helped their organization; when the Committee to End Police Brutality and the Republic of New Afrika held a

demonstration to protest the lockdown at Jackson Prison, the RSL participated and fought for the open participation of Lesbian and Gay Community Services people.

Whether against the Klan and Nazis or other right-wing or racist attacks, Gay Pride Day, Take Back the Night, union, community, prisoner struggles, the RSL tries to unite working class people around each of these, and push each struggle as far as we can. We bring our ideas everywhere—not just women's liberation to women, or gay liberation to gays, but in unions, anti-racist struggles, etc.

The RML is active in similar movements, industrial strikes and strike support work, community organizing, for gay liberation and against police harassment. The RML Women's Committee is very active in a wide range of work—and a majority of **Forward** sales are to women. (**Forward** is the newspaper of the RML.)

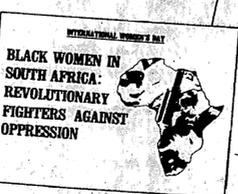
We train ourselves and those who work with us in this way. We are preparing for world revolution as the only way to totally destroy capitalism. We are building a world party of socialist revolution because this is the only way we see of gaining true women's—or anyone's—liberation. □



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