

BY STEPHEN DURHAM

Ronald Reagan, with the blessing of Congress, has turned up the fire under revolutionary Nicaragua.

The war faction in Washington has gained the upper hand since April 23 when Congress, mindful of U.S. anti-war pressure, first rejected Reagan's proposed \$14 million in *contra* aid. Undeterred, the president enacted a sweeping trade embargo against Nicaragua on May 1. Then early in June, Congress used Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega's aid-seeking trip to the Soviet Union during April and May as a pretext to reverse itself and approve \$27 million in funding to the *contras*.

In a May 23rd speech, Secretary of State George Schultz for the first time explicitly raised the prospect of U.S. invasion. Recent U.S.-provoked battles along Nicaragua's Honduran and Costa Rican borders raise the spectre of imminent attack to "protect" Nicaragua's neighbors against "aggression." The Reagan administration's growing belligerence may be pushing the Sandinistas to acknowledge finally the impossibility of peacefully co-existing with U.S. imperialism. The trade deal with the Soviets indicates that the Sandinistas foresee the hopelessness of relying on the weathercock of liberal sentiment in Congress to reverse U.S. decimation of the economy.

On April 26 in Managua, Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge delivered a remarkably militant speech that promised the U.S. would have hell to pay should it set foot inside Nicaragua.

Then on June 6, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega pronounced words that had long seemed unsayable by the Sandinistas. He vowed that "popular forces in Latin America will unleash their violence" against the U.S. if it invades. Ortega's statement was a tacit admission that Nicaragua and all the oppressed in this hemisphere share common revolutionary cause against U.S. imperialism. The statement could be construed as an implicit appeal to anti-imperialist forces to unite in preparation for war.

If so, this is a radical policy departure for the Sandinistas who, until recently, have done their utmost to distance themselves from other revolutionary struggles. As late as February, Daniel Ortega was assuring the U.S. that Nicaragua was not a Marxist state, a "Soviet beachhead," or a revolutionary threat to its capitalist neighbors. The Sandinistas' first concern, he insisted, was to achieve final, lasting "peace" with imperialism.

Revolutionary contradictions

The Nicaraguan revolution of 1979 constituted a giant stride toward democracy, social justice, and economic equality—an inspiration to the people of Central America and the world.

Nonetheless, Nicaragua is saddled with terrible problems, the products of its colonial past, current imperialist onslaughts, and many of the class-collaborationist policies of the Sandinistas themselves.

Immediately after dictator Somoza's overthrow and the nationalization of his vast landholdings and personally owned banks, the triumphant workers and peasants pressed for sweeping expropriations of the capitalists. They were opposed by the Sandinistas.

Nicaragua's inherited economic backwardness and the resulting scarcity of technological and administrative knowledge precluded speedy transition to a socialized economy. But the Sandinistas have refused to enunciate even a general strategy toward workers' control of production. Anxious to ally with Nicaragua's "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie, they have expropriated only under mass pressure and when forced to by capitalist sabotage. Today approximately 60% of production remains in private hands. The basic antagonism between anarchic capitalism and the needs of planned state-owned production, and between Nicaragua's workers and peasants and their capitalist exploiters is still unalleviated.

The Sandinistas have attempted to resolve these contradictions by smothering efforts to extend the revolution. They enshrine the concept of a "mixed"

NICARAGUA BESIEGED



private and socialized economy and espouse equal political rights for capitalist and anti-capitalist parties. They invited the bourgeoisie into the government, and plan to institute a parliamentary system of government based on universal suffrage—the bourgeois governmental form par excellence.

The Sandinistas also have declined to extend democracy to those most in need of it: Women's right to abortion is outlawed, and the government continues to refuse Nicaragua's Indians their inalienable right to self-determination. The mass workers' and peasants' organizations are denied the decisive voice in shaping state policy. These failures, along with past efforts to divorce the revolution from other anti-imperialist struggles, are intrinsically connected to the Sandinistas' strenuous efforts to appease and "co-exist" with the imperialists.

Collision course

The armed workers and peasants,

nevertheless, have stamped their imprint on the policies of the state. Their organizations—Sandinista Defense Committees, agricultural laborers' associations, factory workers' committees, the national women's organization (AMNLAE), and the Sandinista youth brigades—maintain civil defense, police neighborhoods, oversee and administer production in many private as well as state enterprises, distribute basic commodities, lead national health and literacy campaigns, and carry out wide-ranging discussions and debate on national policy questions. While their recommendations are not binding on the government, they have input at the highest levels of state. More than once they have mobilized in the cities and countryside to pressure the Sandinistas to implement policies favorable to their interests, such as worker management of industry and land reform.

From the beginning, the Sandinistas
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The Indian Struggle for Autonomy



Interview with Miskitu leader Brooklyn Rivera

Brooklyn Rivera is the General Coordinator of MISURASATA, the organization of Miskitu, Sumo, and Rama Indians fighting for territorial, economic, political, and cultural autonomy within revolutionary Nicaragua. Since 1981, Rivera has led armed Indian resistance against Sandinista (FSLN) attempts to force Indians to leave their homelands and assimilate into the majority Latino culture.

This interview took place on April 28, 1985 in Seattle during a U.S. tour by Rivera to build support for the Indians of Nicaragua. Rivera hopes that if MISURASATA's position is understood by Native Americans and the Central American solidarity movement in the U.S., these groups will help pressure a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The night before the interview, Ri-

vera visited the FSP's national headquarters and addressed a few words to an audience assembled for a public forum. He described the Indians' continuing struggle in Nicaragua, and thanked the FSP for its longterm support of their cause. He expressed the hope that other U.S. progressives would soon realize the justice of the Indians' position.

His words were greeted with thunderous applause.

Rivera is the chief negotiator for MISURASATA at peace talks which have been held with the Sandinistas off and on since 1984. His trip to the U.S. came on the heels of the third set of talks, at which some progress seemed to have been made.

But the fourth round of talks broke down at the end of May, when the Sandinistas refused to discuss the bottom-line issue—the Indians' right to autonomy. Interior Minister Tomás Borge, who oversees all matters relating to Indian affairs, charged that the Miskitus had "no tradition of legal autonomy . . . this is a concept that they picked up from various international organizations"! Responded Rivera, "The government delegation completely refused to discuss the fundamental issues such as land rights, cultural identity, natural resources, and the political organization of indigenous people. They have continued to deny our aboriginal rights."

On June 25, United Press International reported that, according to "rebel radio," MISURASATA and MISURA, an Indian organization identified with *contra* supporter Steadman Fagoth, had joined forces to "overthrow" the Sandinista government.

Since the U.S. bourgeois press and the FSLN have consistently portrayed the Indian struggle as part of the *contra* war—the former to discredit the Sandinistas, the latter to discredit the Indians—we could not trust this report. A call to Miskitu leader Armstrong Wiggins at the Indian Law Resource Center in Washington, D.C. provided the following clarification:

MISURASATA, MISURA and the Southern Indigenous Creole Committee (SICC) have begun working together, and on June 16 announced formation of the ASLA (Unity) Commission to discuss how best to press the Indians' demands on a united basis. The ASLA Commission is composed of Brooklyn Rivera, Wycliff Diego of MISURA, and Jennie Lee Hodgson (SICC).

Wiggins stated that the report that the Indians wish to overthrow the Sandinistas is totally false. MISURA, he said, has broken with the *contras*, recognizing that its depredations are against the Indians' interest. Fagoth's current relations with MISURA are unclear, but he is "not in the picture" as regards the ASLA Commission.

Brooklyn Rivera was interviewed by Guerry Hoddersen, National Secretary of the Freedom Socialist Party and a seasoned and highly respected activist in the Native American movement.

• • •

GH: How would Indian autonomy function in relation to the Nicaraguan state?

Rivera: Autonomy means the exercise of our aboriginal rights on our tradi-

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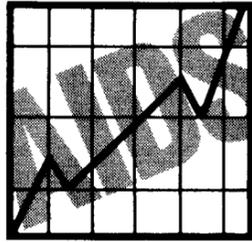
Bay Area women workers of color get the labor movement *moving* in the battle against takebacks, decertification and plant closures. AFSCME member Nancy Reiko Kato reports.

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The 12th World Congress of the Fourth International avoided the issue of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party's abandonment of Trotskyism. Robert Crisman calls for good, honest, healthy debate.



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The medical and political AIDS emergency will either galvanize or engulf the lesbian/gay movement and other progressive struggles. The political remedy is at hand, says Dr. Susan Williams.

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Gloria Martin reviews *Missing Pieces*, an eye-opening book which restores to history the names and deeds of one hundred Irish women fighters and feminists.



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the freedom socialist

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LETTERS

Proper focus

Just a note to tell you I completely agree with your outfit's analysis of the Jackson Movement and himself.

Also let me congratulate you on having the Miskitu issue in *proper* focus! Keep on trying to tell our Left the difference between supporting Sandinistas when they are right and opposing them when they are wrong. You have it right—keep it up! If the Sandinistas concede to Creoles and Indians the right of self-determination—they will return to defense of the country. All other problems are minor.

R.D. Casey
Belize

I have studied prodigiously, and gained a basic understanding of Marxian ideology; the effect of class struggle on human history, the emergence of the capitalist system, and the evolution of the proletarian movement toward socialism. Being an aware member of the working class, I have determined to contribute to the struggle.

Early in the process of my radicalization, I was introduced to the SWP. I was in basic agreement with the Leninist-Trotskyist interpretation of Marxism, so the SWP's program was readily accepted.

A few months ago, I met a new prisoner who introduced me to organizations and publications that I had been only vaguely aware of. Startled by this new world of leftist thought, I set out to gain the full picture of Trotskyist activity in the U.S.

I have read the literature of many different parties and seen many criticisms of the SWP. As a result, I am re-evaluating my commitment to the SWP. Because the FSP was

formed by people who broke away from the SWP following policy disputes, I consider the FSP to be a valuable source of information.

I was introduced to the FSP through the Autumn 1984 edition of the *FS* which contains a particularly informative article titled "The SWP Abandons Trotskyism."

I am in a state of re-evaluation right now and I seek informed opinions with which to temper my decision making. Thank you very much for your assistance.

A Wisconsin prisoner

Thanks for writing. We're glad to hear you're reconsidering your commitment to the SWP. For more on the SWP's degeneration and the crisis in world Trotskyism, please read "Behind the 'Gentlemen's Agreement'" in this issue.

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, news stories, commentary, cartoons, graphics, photographs, and pertinent information on world and national affairs.

We'll be writing!

I am an inmate at a state prison in Wisconsin. When I first came here I befriended a leftist prisoner who helped me turn my general discontent into an interest in understanding the causes of the world's prob-

Correction

In the article "The Ill-Fated Journey of Jesse Jackson" which appeared in the last issue of the *Freedom Socialist*, we inadvertently gave a negative connotation to the term "skin color politics." This mistake may have caused readers to misunderstand the FSP's position on the importance of independent organizing for Blacks and all other oppressed groups.

Autonomous, independent organizing is key to every oppressed group's ability to rally its forces and

make its demands heard. For Blacks and other people of color, such self-organization on the basis of race can be described as skin color politics.

Throughout the FSP's history, we have supported and motivated such organizing. Racism, sexism, and homophobia are so entrenched within U.S. society, the labor movement, and most movements for social change that the most oppressed would be effectively silenced if they did not organize independently.

However, in the Jesse Jackson article we carelessly used skin color

politics as a synonym for cultural nationalism. We oppose the principle of cultural nationalism or separatism because it places the struggles of a particular race or people above and in isolation from all other struggles, especially the basic *class* struggle. This prevents the oppressed from cementing the alliances which are necessary for survival. It disguises the class divisions which exist within every oppressed group. It prevents the adoption of a realistic program for change.

—THE EDITORS

Mila Aguilar

Filipina poet imprisoned

BY LINDA AVERILL

Mila Aguilar, revolutionary feminist poet and political activist in the Philippines, was arrested without a warrant in August 1984 and charged with "subversion and conspiracy to commit rebellion" against the Marcos regime, a crime that carries the death penalty.

Aguilar's "crime" is that she has spoken out against the Marcos regime. Her imprisonment exemplifies the ongoing attempts by the U.S.-backed dictator to stifle dissident teachers and writers and to squelch the Filipino liberation movement.

Aguilar is one of 70,000 who have been arrested in the Philippines for political reasons since 1972. Marcos—to whom the U.S. will send \$900 million this year to protect "democracy" in the Far East—currently holds 3000 political prisoners.

No romance

At 32, Mila Aguilar is a former teacher at the University of the Philippines and journalist for the Manila *Graphic*. A distinguished poet, she has been published in *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Azalea*, *Big Mama Rag*, and *Off Our Backs*. In November 1984, Kitchen Table Women of Color Press published *A Comrade is as Precious as a Rice Seedling*, a book of poetry reflecting her work against the Marcos government.

The poem "Orientation: No Romance" by Aguilar begins: "Let



me tell you about the movement/ The revolutionary twists and turns/ The flow as well as the ebb/Not only my strengths but my vacillations./No romance./ Only the resolute capacity to overcome."

Preventive circumvention

Arrested on August 6 along with a co-worker and a high school student, Aguilar was placed in solitary confinement and interrogated for three days without access to legal counsel. On August 13, a civil court dropped the subversion and conspiracy charges for lack of evidence. The court ordered Aguilar's release on bail for a minor charge, "possession of subversive documents," which carries a maximum penalty of six months.

Bail was posted that same day, but Aguilar was not released. Aban-

doning all pretense of justice, the Marcos regime detained Aguilar under the Preventive Detention Act. This is a catch-all law that allows the military to circumvent civilian courts and hold anyone suspected of "subversion" for as long as the government wants.

Support grows

Despite the attempt to silence Aguilar, the Committee to Free Mila Aguilar, composed of teachers, writers, and political activists, has been formed in Manila and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Thousands of letters and cables of protest have been sent to Marcos, and on September 10 in Manila a large rally of supporters protested the military's ill-treatment of Aguilar and its disrespect for the civil court ruling. As a result, Aguilar was transferred to a regular detention camp where she is now held.

A petition campaign has been organized and letters demanding the release of Aguilar and other political prisoners are encouraged. Letters can be sent to President Marcos, Malacanang Place, Manila, Philippines, and Ambassador Bosworth, U.S. Embassy, Manila, Philippines. For petitions or more information, write: Committee to Free Mila Aguilar, P.O. Box 1726, Cambridge, MA 02238. □

Linda Averill, a journalism student and former president of the Women's Commission at the University of Washington, dove into radical politics at the age of 19 when she joined the anti-draft movement.

Combative strikers rock NYC



Stephen Durham/Free Press Socialist

As 16,000 workers struck 54 of New York's most swank hotels for 26 days in June, the fabled sidewalks reverberated with the rumble of angry, shouting pickets.

Housekeepers, cooks, waiters, bellhops, clerks, bartenders, and engineers represented by Hotel and Motel Trades Council, a coalition of eight unions, rejected a settlement offer June 6 as

the hotels swung into their busiest tourist season. Management, out to bust the union, insisted on a two-tier wage structure, cuts in benefits, a 4% raise, and weakened job classifications.

The hotel workers—overwhelmingly women, people of color and immigrants—organized rallies and street demonstrations, and kept the pressure on the bosses by getting their story out to the

public. And they won on some issues.

They accepted a new five-year contract on June 27, winning a 4.7% yearly wage increase and improved medical benefits. However, they did not win ground on the two-tier wage structure, which they recognize as the bosses' newest tool for dividing workers and lowering the general living standard. They were unable to prevent establish-

Eureka!
We found it! After years of searching, the FSP has acquired a new national headquarters in the Rainier Valley area of Seattle. More in our next issue.

ment of more "flexible" job classifications. And they have yet to see the document they ratified.

But the settlement is not the whole or even the major part of the story. The workers won the most important victory: rather than acquiescing to give-backs, as too many unions are doing these days, they put up a fierce fight that indicates the way forward for U.S. labor. They kept their union intact. And they experienced the immense actual and potential power inherent in workers' united struggle.

This experience has already served them well. When management refused to take back 200 strike leaders, the outraged workers arranged their own media coverage and leafletting to press the union to threaten the hotels with another walkout. At press date all but a handful are back at work. The remaining cases are in the grievance process. Union militant Stephen Durham, a picket captain at the Parker Meridien, said the strikers won "some valuable intangibles. We held the line against union-busting. We're still intact and they can't divide us now! When 16,000 people walk and talk through a hard strike, they gain incredible solidarity. We're still fighting management's unionbusting attempts, but we have a great deal to build on." □

Seattle ordinances threatened

Human rights & gov't wrongs

BY HELEN GILBERT

The battle to save human rights in Seattle rages on. While local government pressures Seattle's human rights agencies to acquiesce in their own destruction, the Ad Hoc Committee for Fair Employment and Open Housing is leading the fight to expose, protest, and stop the city's

mayor, who acts under orders from the City Attorney's office.

Overnight, discrimination victims lost their right to receive full monetary awards and attorney's fees; to refuse inadequate settlement offers; and to amend complaints to include further acts of discrimination, including retaliation for having filed the complaint. Conversely, the HRD Director was empowered to dismiss a charge if the

power to hire and fire HRD directors, and return that power to the Human Rights Commission, thereby protecting HRD's political autonomy. The amendments also strengthen the political ideology and sexual orientation protections of the ordinances. (Won by the civil rights movements in the early '70s, the ordinances were among the first to bar discrimination against sexual minorities and political dissidents.) In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee included for the first time protections in the Open Housing Ordinance for people with mental, sensory, or physical disabilities.

More than 20 individuals from labor, feminist, people of color, lesbian/gay, radical, and civil libertarian organizations met with Councilwoman Jeanette Williams in April 1984 to urge acceptance of the amendments. Over the next year, two public hearings were held which were attended by hundreds of community supporters. From September to December 1984, a Human Rights Ordinance Review Panel, convened by the Council, met and finally voted to endorse the amendments. In January 1985, the Council voted to make the amendments a "priority." No action was taken, however. Then in June 1985, Williams called for a series of work sessions, to gather still more "input" on the amendments.

The bad guys

Williams' stall tactics were clearly designed to give City Attorney Doug Jewett time to gather opposition and beat into submission city agencies that showed signs of rallying behind the amendments. By the first work session, both HRD and the Human Rights Commission were solidly in Jewett's camp. Also lining up against the amendments were the Chamber of

Commerce, various landlords' associations, and rightwing religious bigots.

What a sleazy coalition of human rights opponents! The "liberal" mayor, Charles Royer, and City Attorney Jewett want to make the ordinances unenforceable, since the city is one of the worst human rights offenders (as any cursory check of the city's largest department, City Light, will attest). Landlords' associations are dead-set against having to make alterations to allow for physically disabled tenants. The rightwing homophobes are embarked on a holy war against lesbians and gay men; they prevented a similar ordinance from being enacted by the county, and are determined to totally abolish Seattle's protections. HRD and Human Rights Commission bureaucrats have opted for their own political "career development" at the expense of the victimized and oppressed. The Chamber of Commerce, of course, has always on principle opposed equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.

Bellwether of resistance

Lining up against the reactionaries, however, is a solid phalanx of support for the Ad Hoc Committee. Every sector of the community that has fought to make equality under the law a reality is outraged by the city's betrayal. The Committee's firm stance on behalf of *all* who suffer discrimination has won it broad respect and helped unite the movements for social justice.

Uniting the movements is the key to the Ad Hoc Committee's ultimate success, as it is the key to every struggle against the current reactionary tide. The test of wills over human rights in Seattle will be an indicator of how the battle will go nationally. And the Ad Hoc Committee and its supporters are determined to win in Seattle. □



anti-rights machinations.

The Ad Hoc Committee was formed in March 1984 after the Seattle Human Rights Department (HRD) announced its intention to adopt revised administrative rules which would effectively hamstring enforcement of Seattle's Fair Employment Practices and Open Housing Ordinances. Despite massive community opposition, including 3000 signatures on an Ad Hoc petition, HRD overturned long-standing practices for filing, settling, and amending discrimination complaints. Responsibility for HRD's treachery lies with its director, appointed by the

victim failed to attend a fact-finding hearing or brought a parallel suit in civil court. Also, the HRD Director and the *City Attorney* were granted authority to unilaterally alter or amend a finding after it was issued!

Pressing the fight for rights

In March 1984, the Ad Hoc Committee presented the City Council with amendments to strengthen the enforcement procedures and restore the original intent of the non-discrimination laws. (The Council is empowered to make the amendments law.)

The amendments remove the mayor's

BY TOM BOOT

Massive waves of rebellion in South Africa, increasing in force since August 1984, now threaten the foundations of apartheid as never before.

South Africa is aflame from Cape-town to the Transvaal. The Black ma-



Striking Black workers defiantly face a gauntlet of apartheid's armed guardians.

majority is rising nationwide for racial justice and economic equality. But Pretoria cannot and will not meet these demands. The country is locked in civil war, and revolution looms. The State of Emergency enacted by Pretoria on July 21 underscores the magnitude of the threat to the regime's existence.

Racist exploitation

Apartheid segregates, disenfranchises, and subjugates the 80% of South Africa's 25 million people who are non-white—Africans, Coloureds (people of mixed race), Indians and Asians. The Black majority is virtually enslaved as a permanent source of cheap, captive labor to fuel the profits of white capitalists. ("Black" is used by the movement in South Africa to denote all people of color.)

The lash of apartheid falls most keenly on Africans, who cannot vote, own property in the "white areas," sell their labor freely, reside permanently in the cities, or travel without the most rigid restrictions.

Fundamental to apartheid is the bantustan policy, the segregation of Africans through a program of forced removal to state-designated "independent homelands" constituting a meager 13% of South Africa's territory and located on the fringes of the Transvaal, the country's industrial heart. Penned in these arid, infertile hellholes, African workers must seek employment in "white" South Africa as contract migrant laborers with no citizenship rights, subject at any time to banishment to the "homelands." A key aim of the bantustan policy is to "de-urbanize" the Black workforce; Pretoria fears above all revolt in the massive townships that ring the "white" cities.

Cementing this policy are the infamous pass laws that regulate where Blacks may live and work, where they may travel, and what jobs they may hold, purposely separating huge numbers of Black family members. In defiance of these restrictions, Black work-

ers have established squatters' camps near "white" cities. Fierce resistance to the regime's attempts to destroy these settlements is a large component of the current rebellion.

Much has been made of supposed government "reforms." But these are paper concessions to appease international protest. Pretoria's official policy remains one of racist exploitation and violence. Nowhere in the world do demands for democracy collide so starkly with avowed policy as in this police state.

The current uprising is ringing alarm bells in London and Washington as well as Pretoria. South Africa is an economic, political and strategic *cornerstone* of imperialism. It is a vast storehouse of riches—chromium, manganese, platinum, gold, diamonds—that are vital to capitalist industry and finance. U.S. investments there reap profits double those anywhere in the world. South Africa, moreover, controls the shipping lanes for half the oil imported by NATO countries and serves as a counter-revolutionary military and economic force throughout southern Africa.

With its prosperity and domination

The stayaway, unprecedented in the breadth of its demands, was the first *political* strike by major unions in recent years. Demonstrations rocked the Transvaal, to protest police and troop occupations of the townships, skyrocketing rents and taxes, and jailings of anti-apartheid protesters. Demonstrators demanded reinstatement of dismissed workers, resignation of government-appointed township councilors, and an end to "Bantu education," the segregated schooling that prepares Blacks only for servitude. Students also demanded an end to the sexual harassment of female students by teachers.

Frightened to death by the leadership of trade unions in creating what one commissioner described as a "general spirit of revolution" among Black workers, police killed 24 people and arrested over 20 strike leaders.

Repression and rage

Police routinely charged and tear-gassed protests that grew out of the boycott. With army troops they invaded dozens of townships, made house-to-house sweeps, and arrested hundreds. By the end of November, 96

ity in the townships "has been largely destroyed" and called for "people's committees on every block which could become the embryos of people's power."

Insurgent women

In each of these struggles, Black women have played a major role. How could it be otherwise? Apartheid aims at the genocidal destruction of African culture, family life and community life, as prerequisite to consolidating the enslavement of Black workers. Women are the traditional organizers and guardians of community life, and workers as well, and their struggle is the resistance of the race.

Apartheid afflicts women to an even greater degree than it does men. Women are defined by law as perpetual minors, and restricted to the most menial jobs, as domestic servants and agricultural laborers, in "white" areas. Hundreds of thousands have been shipped to the "homelands" as "economically superfluous appendages." In the bantustans, denied the right to own land because of their sex, they are left to rot; employment there is virtually

South Africa Nation on Fire

threatened, the capitalist west is flooding white South Africa with weaponry, making it clear that democracy in South Africa can be realized only by toppling the profit system.

United they stand

In tempo, scope, and organization, the anti-apartheid revolt dramatically surpasses the student-led Soweto uprising a decade ago. Alliances among Black trade unionists, women, unorganized workers and students have pushed the upsurge to a potent new level.

Revolt was sparked last August by South African president Botha's proposal to add two segregated and powerless houses of Parliament to the government, one for Coloureds, and one for Indians and Asians, in order to divide these groups off from the African majority, which remains completely excluded from representation.

The proposal was met with a nationwide election boycott initiated by the United Democratic Front (UDF), a multi-racial coalition of radical, labor, student, community and women's organizations, many of them affiliated with the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), the Black majority's leading political organization. Despite severe penalties for not voting, only 18% of Coloureds and 16% of Indians and Asians voted. The measure passed because whites retain an overwhelming voting majority.

The boycott broadened into demonstrations and strikes that culminated in November in a two-day general strike organized by students, women's groups and trade unions in the Transvaal. *Five hundred thousand* Black workers and *400,000* students went out.

people had been killed in police actions.

But repression only fueled the revolt. In March, another general strike exploded in the Eastern Cape when workers and students, led by the UDF-affiliated Port Elizabeth Black People's Association, stayed home to protest consumer price hikes. Again, police fired on people in the streets, killing 15.

On April 13, 60,000 people—the largest gathering of oppressed in South Africa's history—came to Kwanobule to bury victims

massacred by police on March 21, the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre. The crowd rallied against apartheid for six hours. Police and the army, afraid their intervention would trigger an explosion, stayed away.

Black rage is increasingly directed against the Black councils that "govern" the townships under the direction of the white regime. Many councilors and Black policemen have been killed and their homes torched in the uprisings. Rejection of stooge councils is so overwhelming that in recent elections to fill vacancies on the Lekoa town council, no candidates stepped forward.

In April, the National Executive Council of the ANC stated that author-



South African women raise fists and voices against apartheid and the white supremacist police state.

nonexistent. Yet in these wastelands, women must somehow support their children, the aged, and the infirm.

Women have led the anti pass-law fight since 1913, preventing the extension of the laws to them until 1956. It took beatings, killings, the burning of homes, and the banning and imprisonment of their leaders to impose the laws.

In the '50s, women stepped up their fight against both the regime's broad policies and special oppression of women. Leaders emerged, such as Lilian Ngoyi, Florence Matomela, and the white Communist Party member Ray Alexander, many from trade unions which had opened to women

during the post-war industrial boom.

These three women were elected officers of the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) at its founding conference in 1954. An FSAW document prepared for the 1955 Congress of the People, "What Women Demand," indicted the apartheid system and was one of the most wide-ranging feminist manifestos to appear at that time. It demanded an end to the pass laws and migratory labor; day care, birth control, and full-paid maternity leave for women of all races; the right to vote and equal pay for women; free quality education for children of all races; proper housing and fair rent in the townships; price controls on basic commodities; equal distribution of the land.

Women currently lead the battles to preserve the squatters' camps, erected in defiance of Pretoria's attempts to "de-urbanize" Blacks and ship them off to the bantustans. Their decades-long intransigence has made the squatters' camps permanent, although officially unrecognized, townships with schools, clinics, and local political administration. The massive battles at Crossroads, outside Capetown, in 1978 and again this February have twice foiled the government's "relocation" efforts.

Women are also fighting in guerrilla struggles and participating increasingly in strikes. And by reaching out to white South African women and feminists internationally, they lead in building a worldwide network of support.

Women's demand for race and sex equality simultaneously attacks apartheid's subjugation of Black labor and the destruction of the African community. Their fusion of social, political and economic issues was the basis for the success of the recent general strikes, and it will carry the liberation movement to victory.

Which road to freedom?

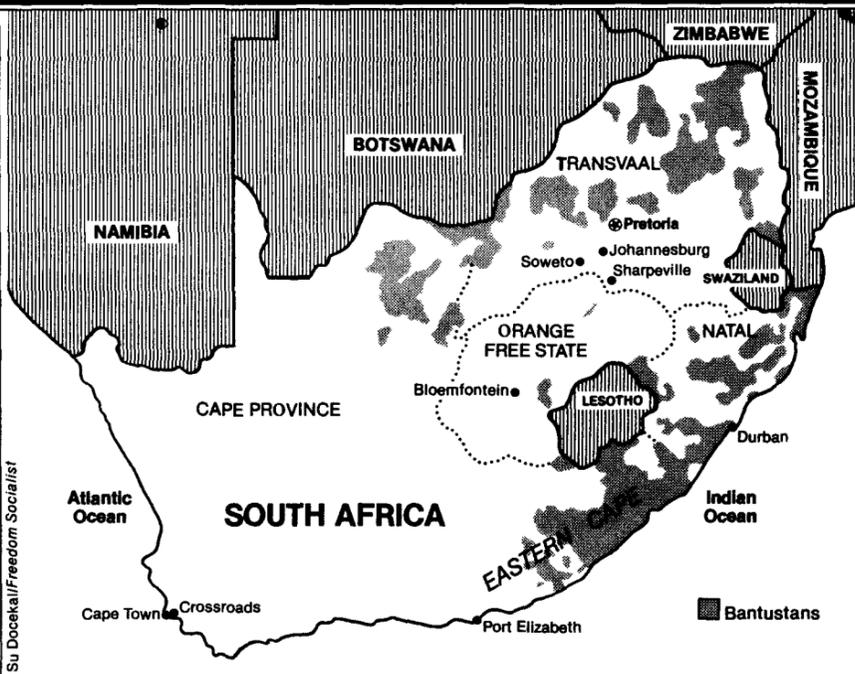
The revolutionary nature and scope of the uprising has split the government between those who favor the preservation of white supremacy through increased repression and a growing sector which argues that negotiated transition

on the ANC. The ANC's vagueness in defining its socialist goals purposely allows for differing political ideologies within it, most sharply defined in the differences between socialists and those who adhere to the limited nationalist demand for majority rule. The latter would be satisfied with a Zimbabwe-type solution, where majority rule was negotiated with the proviso that capitalism would be protected.

The socialists, while currently voicing only democratic demands, realize that civil rights are unattainable in capitalist South Africa and that Black freedom can only be achieved through socialist reconstruction.

The ANC's activities and demands—for nationalization of monopolies and land reform; stepped-up guerrilla warfare; prolonged strikes supported by armed resistance; and "people's power" within the townships—are aimed, according to ANC's president Oliver Tambo, at "seizure of power by the people and the building of a new society in a united, democratic, and non-racial South Africa." But the ANC must come to terms with the fact that the "people's revolution" in South Africa can be nothing less than socialist revolution, and it must educate its constituency accordingly. Attempts to maintain unity at any cost with pro-capitalist elements will lead to a confusion of aims and strategies and provide the government an opportunity to divide and conquer the ANC.

Majority rule for Blacks is a pipe-dream within South Africa's existing economic framework, built as it is on the dispossession and super-exploitation of the African majority. Apartheid is inseparable from South African capitalism. And the struggle leads inexorably to expropria-



ever, equating race with class in the colonial world, and therefore holding the false notion that all whites are capitalist oppressors, it insists that only Blacks can fight for South African liberation. AZAPO takes serious issue with ANC's call for multi-racial solidarity, and rejects all alliances with white South African freedom fighters.

Race, though, is not class, but an artificial construct invented by capitalists

to perpetuate super-exploitation of dark-skinned workers by splitting the class against itself. The ANC's call for white rejection of apartheid has not gone unheard: whites have fought and died for African liberation. These include Neil Dagget, an African Food and Cannery Workers Union leader murdered by police, and Ruth First, communist anti-apartheid fighter killed by a letter bomb. The Black Sash, an organization of white South African women, has been a consistent foe of apartheid since the '50s despite the limitations of its liberal outlook.

Bringing it home

In the U.S., multi-racial solidarity is coalescing in support of South African liberation, and is reviving protest against U.S. injustices as well, especially in the Black community and on college

campuses. The historic relationship of mutual support and inspiration between U.S. Black and South African liberation struggles is once again sparking a radical resurgence in the U.S. Black movement.

Anti-apartheid demonstrations mushroomed after the November elections, focusing on closure of South African consulates and divestment by U.S. firms in South Africa. It is estimated that 3000 people have been arrested for civil disobedience since protests started. In several cities, the consulates have been shut down, and five states and numerous cities have passed divestment legislation of varying strength.

Blacks and other people of color, radicals, artists, Jews, feminists, labor and the lesbian/gay movement have united solidly in the protests. Labor has shown a resurgence of political activism, participating nationwide in demonstrations

and arrests and passing union resolutions denouncing apartheid. In December, an inspiring example of solidarity was shown by San Francisco Bay Area longshoremen who refused for ten days to unload South African cargo.

In April, the divestment issue exploded on campuses from Berkeley to Columbia and brought U.S. protest to a new level, against not only apartheid, but issues as diverse as the Central American war drive and on-campus recruitment of students by the CIA.

The call for divestment brings shrieks of protest from the Wall Street/Pretoria axis. They cry that disinvestment would "take jobs away" from South African Blacks—while having "no effect" on South Africa's economy!

This reaction confirms the good effect of the campaign. Mired in recession, South Africa depends more than ever on the \$15 billion invested there by U.S. business, not to mention the \$4.5 billion in U.S. bank loans. And virtually all South African Black leaders say they will gladly risk economic disruption from disinvestment.

The disinvestment campaign is a growing success and must be stepped up. It must continue to focus outrage more and more on the U.S. banks, businesses, universities, agencies, and government, which profit from racism, sexism and labor exploitation at home and worldwide. These oppressions are just as integral to U.S. capitalism as apartheid is to South Africa, and their overthrow is equally crucial.

Forward!

Worldwide outrage over the abomination that is apartheid stands as a ringing affirmation of all people's right to democratic freedoms.

The anti-apartheid movement must now openly acknowledge that these freedoms can be won only through the destruction of the capitalist South African state, that nothing less than socialist revolution will stop the corporate subjugation of the Black majority.

Only workers' rule in South Africa can ensure national liberation, end economic serfdom, achieve full equality for women and children, and lay the basis for real multi-racial harmony between Africans, Coloured people, Asians, Indians, and white radicals.

All the world's people have a stake in South Africa's socialist upheaval. A workers' South Africa will aid Africa's liberation movements, which will flourish once the apartheid army and economy are dismantled. A free South Africa will hasten the destruction of world imperialism, which is dependent to the marrow on the continued exploitation of Africa's labor and resources.

South Africa's revolutionary leadership can help lay the basis for the ascent of African and all humanity from capitalist barbarism by openly proclaiming and preparing the struggle for socialism.

Amandla! Power! □



Initial organizing by the Black movement sparked anti-apartheid protests across U.S. campuses. Four hundred demonstrators were arrested during three weeks of protests against U.C. Berkeley's South African investments.



Peter Magubane

to majority rule is the only way to preserve capitalism in South Africa.

This wing of the government wants to open talks with the African National Congress, which commands the vast majority of Black political support. But the ANC, from its headquarters-in-exile in Lusaka, Zambia, has rejected negotiations, though it has not ruled out informal talks with individual government representatives if they are based on agreement that apartheid must be totally dismantled.

The ANC is committed to building a broad movement to overthrow apartheid, and only then moving on to the struggle for socialism. This adherence to a sharply delineated two-stage theory of revolution reflects the strong influence of the Stalinist Communist Party

tion of the capitalists and the redistribution of wealth to those who create it. Anything less will mean bloody defeat and unending degradation for Black South Africa.

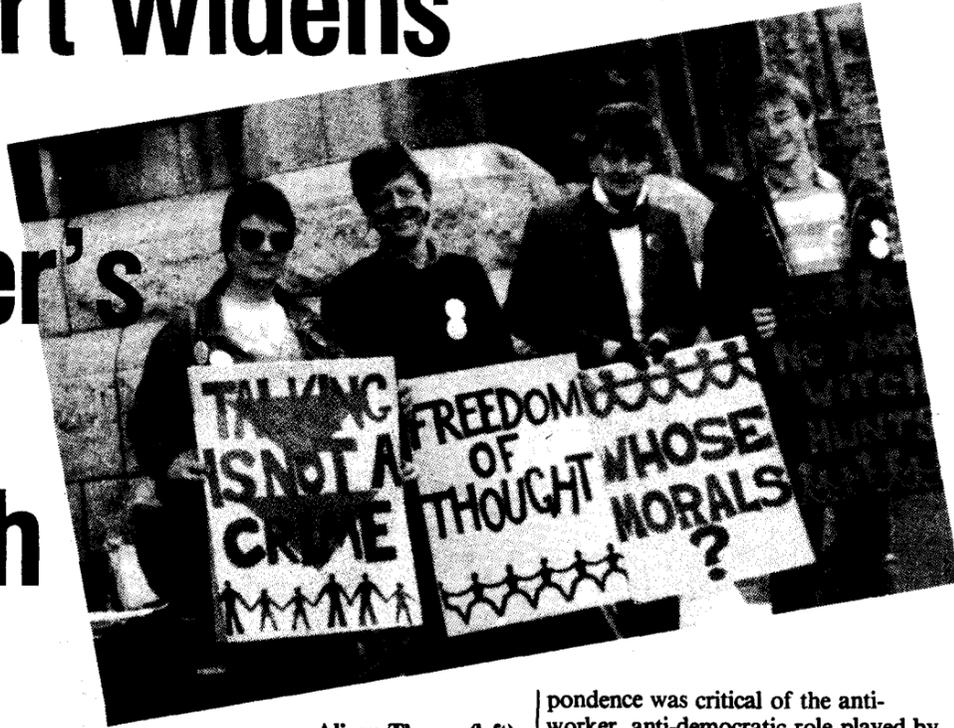
Race and class

Clashes have broken out in recent months between the United Democratic Front, which adheres to the basic precepts of the ANC, and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO). AZAPO, founded in 1979, was influenced by South Africa's Black consciousness movement and its revolutionary spokesperson, Steve Biko.

AZAPO's program admirably emphasizes anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-imperialist demands, the struggle for national liberation and socialism. How-

Australia: the Alison Thorne case

Support Widens for Teacher's Free Speech Fight



Alison Thorne (left) and members of the Gay Legal Rights Coalition protest the antigay witchhunt outside Melbourne Magistrates' Court.

BY DAVID FAGAN

Lesbian educator Alison Thorne's battle for teachers' free speech rights continues to rock the Australian labor movement.

Aligned on opposite sides of the fight are government officials of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and rank-and-file unionists who support Thorne. The rank and file are demanding that the ALP live up to its workingclass program and defend workers' right to speak freely, without fear of boss or rightwing reprisal.

Banished from the classroom

Thorne's fight began in November 1983, when she was forcibly transferred from her teaching position at Glenroy Technical School in Melbourne, Victoria, to an administrative post at the office of the Victorian Department of Education.

Thorne, a socialist, feminist, and spokesperson for the Victorian Gay Legal Rights Coalition (GLRC), had publicly defended members of the Paedophile Support Group who were arrested on charges of "conspiracy to corrupt public morals." Although charges against the men were dropped and the "conspiracy" law revoked, Thorne became a victim of a rightwing assault on democratic rights.

An hysterical media witchhunt led by conservative radio station 3AW, along with denunciations of Thorne in Parliament, goaded Victorian Education Departmental head Robert Fordham and State Premier John Cain—both ALP representatives—into yanking her from the classroom.

The government has persisted in its intention to banish Thorne from teaching despite her excellent record. Attempts by two schools to hire her were thwarted by Fordham.

In December 1984, Thorne was provisionally appointed to a teaching position at Tottenham Technical School. But opposition by Fordham and Cain resulted in a letter to Thorne from Director General of Education Norman Curry denying her appointment in direct violation of the teachers' contract. The letter, invoking Section 63 (2) of the Victorian Teaching Act, asserted—without evidence—that it was not "desirable, in the public interest of efficiency" that she be per-

mitted to take the job.

As a result of a shuffling of Cabinet posts in the wake of the ALP's victory in the March 2 Victorian State Government elections, Fordham was replaced by Ian Cathie as Education Minister. Cathie has shown no more inclination than Fordham to reinstate Thorne, despite the fact that failure to do so is in direct contravention of ALP policy on the rights of public employees and the state's own Equal Opportunity Act.

Battling the bureaucrats

The labor/community campaign to reinstate Thorne has gained great support, especially among fellow unionists in the Technical Teachers Union of Victoria (TTUV). Fifteen TTUV locals have endorsed Thorne's fight and the union is providing legal support. TTUV has produced a 30-minute video outlining the case which was sent to all union branches in the state. In addition, the union has prepared a kit to help mobilize support, which includes a poster, petitions, and a detailed chronology of events.

Nevertheless, rank-and-file militants have had to continually push the union leadership to take a firm stand.

During the recent state elections, Thorne supporters had to fight against censorship of pro-Thorne correspondence in the TTUV paper. The corres-

pondence was critical of the anti-worker, anti-democratic role played by the ALP leadership, which was more concerned with electing Labor candidates at any cost than in supporting a lesbian teacher and possibly losing votes.

On March 30, a TTUV Branch Officers meeting voted two-to-one after considerable debate to wage a high-powered public campaign, focusing on the free speech rights of public employees, to win back Thorne's job. The vote also called on TTUV to pressure Education Minister Cathie to reinstate Thorne by the opening of the second school term on May 27. Were Thorne not reinstated by then, the plan called for an open TTUV meeting to consider further action, including a possible strike.

The Branch Officers vote repudiated the union's previous low-key strategy as well as a weak TTUV State Executive Council motion that eschewed a public campaign in favor of backroom bargaining with Cathie. The motion specifically sought to prevent Thorne from speaking publicly about her case.

One month after the Branch Officers meeting, however, the State Executive Council unanimously overturned the March 30 vote, effectively scotching the call for an open meeting and possible strike action, at least for the time being. May 27 has passed, Thorne has not been reinstated, and her supporters are now busy organizing to mount greater rank-and-file pressure on the bureaucrats.

TTUV has the clout to mount a huge public campaign that would quickly win back Thorne's job. But first the leadership must be convinced

that representing its membership is more important than maintaining a cozy relationship with the ALP.

The fight goes on

Pro-Thorne unionists are currently working to build increased support in TTUV branches and among other unions. The New South Wales Teachers Federation (NSWTF) and the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA) have passed resolutions of support and asked that their union journals publish articles on the case. TTUV, NSWTF, and VSTA branches have all written the Education Minister demanding that Thorne be reinstated. Cathie has so far rejected the demands out of hand.

Thorne plans to take her case to the State Equal Opportunity Board in mid-July to gain reversal of the rejection of her application to teach at Tottenham Technical School. Supporters are gearing up for a big publicity blitz around these hearings.

Thorne meanwhile is keeping the case in the public eye through radio interviews and press articles.

Going international

Support for Thorne's case has spread rapidly to Europe and North America.

The last conference of the International Association of Lesbians and Gay Men (IGA), held in Helsinki, made victory for Alison Thorne a priority. IGA also highlighted the case in the first issue of the *IGA Pink Book*, a valuable source of information on the legal, political, and social status of lesbians and gay men throughout the world. Letters of support keep cascading in from Canada, the U.S., Sweden, Austria, Britain, and beyond.

These international supporters recognize the paramount importance of Thorne's case. Workers' free speech rights, after all, are jeopardized in their countries as well as in Australia. They recognize especially the need to expose the ALP bureaucrats' attempted sell-out of Thorne and to push them to reverse course.

Above all, Thorne supporters know that without the freedom to speak out, all other democratic rights—to organize and associate freely, to hold dissenting opinions—are dead letter issues for workers. So they're speaking their minds now in support of Thorne's right to do likewise.

Please send letters demanding Thorne's reinstatement to: Mr. Ian Cathie, Minister of Education, Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne 3000, Australia. Copies of the letters should be sent to: GLRC/Committee to Reinstate Alison Thorne, P.O. Box 35, Fitzroy 3065, Australia. □

Radical Women
*is the revolutionary wing of
the women's movement and the feminist
vanguard of the left. Immersed in the daily
struggle against racism, sexism, antigay
bigotry, and labor exploitation,
RW's history and influence prove
that women are decisive to
the U.S. and to world revolution.*

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New York City: 32 Union Square East, Rm. 307, New York, NY 10003. 212-677-7002.

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Portland: 2114 N.E. 13th, Portland, OR 97212. 503-249-1710.

WASHINGTON

Port Angeles: 512 E. 7th, Port Angeles, WA 98362. 206-452-7534.
Seattle: Freeway Hall, 3815 - 5th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. 206-632-1815.
Spokane: W. 3005 Boone, Spokane, WA 99210. 509-327-9196.
Tacoma: P.O. Box 5847, Tacoma, WA 98405. 206-272-8086.

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne: P.O. Box 334, Fitzroy, VIC 3065. 03-386-3452.

Not surprisingly, the bosses sent their goons after the film makers. During the filming of *Salt of the Earth*, anyone involved with it was harassed and threatened. Many lost their jobs and some were deported. The final scenes of the film had to be concluded without Revueltas, because the INS deported her. The last reels were shot in a state of near-siege; the New Mexico highway patrol had to be dispatched to guard cast and crew from physical attack. Shortly after the film was completed, the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers union hall and the home of one of the actors were burned to the ground in nearby Carlsbad.¹¹⁵

Despite all this, the worker-actors and the professional actors and technicians stuck it out. Together they created a monumental movie that is one of the most powerful working class films ever made.

Not only the production, but the distribution of the film, was hounded by the McCarthyites. It was boycotted by distributors in the U.S. for many years and only shown here in small art film theaters, or virtually smuggled in over the Canadian border to be shown before small groups of workers at unpublicized meetings.

But the boycott could not destroy the movie's fame or impact. Over the years, it has gained increasing stature as a classic labor film which dramatizes a beautiful and heroic Chicano labor struggle and the profound changes it made in the cultural patterns of the community. The conclusion of the film expresses it all:

Ramón: Esperanza. . . thank you. . . for your dignity. You were right. Together we can push everything up as we go.

Esperanza's voice: Then I knew we had won something they could never take away—something I could leave to our children—and they, the salt of the earth, would inherit it.¹¹⁶

Notes to the Text

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22. Mirandé and Enriquez, *La Chicana*, pp. 204-205, 220.
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The Empire Zinc struggle, immortalized by *Salt of the Earth*, retains its galvanizing effect all the more because it was one of very few successful strikes under McCarthyism. It had unbeatable power, against almost overwhelming odds, because it *combined the race and sex liberation struggles within the labor struggle*. As such, it heralded the future course of American labor.

Conclusion

This section has examined early Chicano resistance to Anglo encroachment in the Southwest, as well as Chicano labor history (excluding agricultural struggles). As Mexican farmers evolved into Chicano workers, their center of activity shifted from land struggles to factory, mine, and farm labor battles. And even if labor's story is only partly told here, a clear picture still emerges of the Chicano working class as a whole. Every line of its history attests to the Chicano role as a vanguard of the American working class. Chicanos would not hold this position if they were not fully integrated into that class.

La Raza assumed early leadership in the Southwest fight against labor exploitation, which fell most heavily on Chicanos and other workers of color. Chicanos were among the first to resist the racism of the bosses, which singled them out for special exploitation and divided all workers. And Chicanos struggled against white worker racism and the labor bureaucracy that fomented it. Chicano workers have time and again organized to unite workers of all colors to strike at the common class enemy.

They have led innumerable battles for decent wages and working conditions, for the right to unionize, and for radical and socialist transformation of society. They have proved their mettle during periods of labor upsurge, such as the rise of the CIO, and during the McCarthyite reaction.

Throughout all these events, Chicano women militants and organizers supplied leadership and rank-

and-file intransigence. Feminism and radicalism are an important part of the Chicana and Mexicana heritage, a central asset of the Chicano people.

Chicano workers are indeed a nemesis of capitalists in this country, yet they are even more: their historic and ongoing ties with Mexican, Central and South American workers make them an *international* force. Just as the Mexican Revolution sparked Chicano labor militance early in this century, Chicanos have imparted renewed vigor and creative organizing strategies to Mexican workers across the border. These close ties with Mexican labor make Chicanos the living link between the U.S. working class and the Latin American revolutions.

Chicano labor, like that of Blacks, Asian Americans, women, and other super-exploited workers, is the bedrock on which capitalism was built and maintains itself. But the very factors that shaped the special oppression of Chicano workers, above all racism and U.S. imperialism's domination of Mexico, have fashioned the means of destruction of capitalism itself. Race oppression has made the Chicano labor movement a double-edged weapon, capable of advancing labor's general economic demands and at the same time striking at the political and social color barriers that fetter the U.S. working class.

The Chicano workers' movement incorporates the myriad strands of anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist revolt in this hemisphere. Together with other militant workers and oppressed groups, they will tighten the revolutionary noose around the necks of the exploiters. □

The next installment of *The Chicano Struggle: A Racial or a National Movement* chronicles the organizing done by Chicano farmworkers, from the spectacular unionizing campaigns early in the century to the great mobilizations for better wages and conditions of the '60s and '70s.

About the Authors



Yolanda Alaniz' entire life experience led her to become a theoretician of La Raza.

Raised as a farmworker in the Yakima Valley of Eastern Washington—known as the Little Mississippi of the Northwest—Alaniz was aware from the beginning of the racism and poverty that blight the lives of Chicanos in the U.S.

She became a student activist at the University of Washington in Seattle during the early '70s. Her battles with sexists and cultural nationalists and her experience in helping to organize a campus union led her to become a socialist feminist. She joined the Freedom Socialist Party in 1976.

Alaniz firmly believes in the political integration of all movements for social change. Her staunch defense of her ideas has won her respect at race and sex liberation conferences around the country.

This document is her testament and tribute to the revolutionary power of La Raza.

Megan Cornish was eminently qualified for the task of co-authoring this document. A longtime radical, she was active in the anti-Vietnam war movement during the 1960s, and has been a member of the FSP since 1972.

Cornish has devoted years of study and research, in collaboration with Alaniz, to the question of nationalities. Her paper, *The National Question in the United States*, which applies the Leninist criteria for nationhood to the Black and Native American liberation struggles in the U.S., was presented at the first national conference of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party in October 1978. It was adopted as a resolution at the 1982 national convention of the Freedom Socialist Party.

Cornish is currently a member of the Employee Committee for Equal Rights at City Light (CERCL) in Seattle, battling a management that has gained national notoriety for race and sex discrimination.

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 100. Ibid., pp. 160-161.
 101. Ibid., p. 161.
 102. Ibid.
 103. Ibid., pp. 161-162.
 104. Ibid., p. 338.
 105. Ibid.
 106. Ibid.
 107. Ibid., pp. 331-332, 338.
108. Michael Wilson, screenplay, Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt, commentary, *Salt of the Earth* (Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1953, 1978), p. 118.
 109. Ibid.
 110. Ibid., p. 122.
 111. Ibid.
 112. Ibid., p. 125.
 113. Ibid., p. 126. Radical Women co-founder and longtime FSP leader Gloria Martin, a friend of Virginia Jencks, has often heard her speak on this point.
 114. Ibid., pp. 108, 128.
 115. Ibid., p. 132.
 116. Ibid., p. 90.

Supplement Cover: Design by Kay Eriksen and Helen Gilbert. In the foreground is a detail of a mural in Santa Fe, New Mexico, "Liberty and Education," painted by Los Artes Guadalupeños de Aztlán. The eagle is a popular symbol of La Huelga (the strike or the struggle); superimposed is a section from Diego Rivera's epic mural, "The Mexican War of Independence—1910" at the National Palace in Mexico City.

... Nicaragua Besieged

from page 1

encouraged the arming and self-organization of the workers and peasants, knowing full well that survival of the revolution depended on it. But herein lies the Sandinistas' dilemma: They have also committed themselves to "pluralist," multi-class democracy based on a mixed economy; i.e., they have dedicated themselves to enforcing continued capitalist exploitation of Nicaragua's workers and peasants—the acknowledged life and breath of the revolution.

Nicaragua's contending classes and social forces are in *collision* with one another. The capitalists, tied ultimately to imperialism via the world market, will not long co-exist with a socialist system of planned production that is in fundamental conflict with anarchic market relations. Capitalists sabotage production, support the *contras*, and slander the revolution in their newspaper, *La Prensa*. The popular masses on the other hand, above all the working women, youth, and Indians, are demanding control of their social, economic, and political destiny.

The logic and reality of class contra-

dition inevitably place Sandinista policy on a collision course with itself.

The bottom line

The gathering storm of imperialist attack may speed resolution of Nicaragua's internal contradictions. Whereas Sandinista policy has been shaped by the desire to make "peace" with the U.S., imperialist policy is predicated on the necessity to destroy the revolution. If the Sandinistas replace their policy of accommodation with one based on the necessity to rally united anti-imperialist resistance, they will be forced to deepen anti-capitalist struggle at home in connection with this resistance.

Regardless of what the Sandinistas do, the U.S. intends to destroy the revolution. Wall Street *survives* on the plunder of Third World labor and resources, and by virtue of the military dictatorships it bankrolls. Imperialism must *crush* any move toward real democracy by the exploited millions of the Americas, or pass out of existence.

A step back from disaster

On June 19, Nicaragua rejected the proposed agenda for the latest round of *Contadora* peace talks, saying it was useless to pursue a negotiated peace while the U.S. was sponsoring a war in Central America.

The *Contadora* talks have been sponsored by four key U.S. allies in

Latin America—Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia, and Panama—in an effort to reach a negotiated settlement to the fighting in Central America. These nations want to quell anti-capitalist rebellion before it spreads to their borders.

Until now, the Sandinistas were the biggest boosters of the *Contadora* initiative. In February, Daniel Ortega stated that Nicaragua would comply *unilaterally* with two key *Contadora* provisions: expelling 100 Cuban military advisors and calling an indefinite halt to all new arms purchases.

So eager were the Sandinistas for peace that, according to a March article in *NACLA Report on the Americas*, they were willing to consider a permanent U.S. military base in Honduras as "legitimate" to U.S. security!

The world knows how the U.S. has responded to Nicaragua's overtures!

Negotiating from strength

The Sandinistas' insistence on *détente* has been the surest route to revolutionary suicide. But Defense Minister Ortega's June 6 speech suggests that the Sandinistas aren't ready to give up the ghost. He promises a *Latin American* conflagration should the U.S. attempt to destroy Nicaragua's sovereignty by direct military action. The fact that Latin America is a simmering anti-imperialist cauldron is the hope for Nicaragua's revolution.

The Sandinistas must *seize* this hope and begin immediately to build ties with the revolutionary movement in each country.

They must repudiate the pursuit of a "settlement" that legitimizes U.S. interests in Central America. Such a settlement implies that the U.S. has a *right* to be in the region. The U.S. presence in Central America must be condemned openly and consistently as a violation of Nicaraguan and regional sovereignty.

Sandinista propaganda must use the prospect of Latin American upheaval to convince the world that Nicaragua, as the standard-bearer of hemispheric revolt, negotiates from a position of *strength*. And to show the oppressed Latin American masses that Nicaragua will come to their aid when they rise up.

Can U.S. and Latin American capitalists afford the economic, political, and military consequences should an invasion ignite the hemisphere? Let them imagine the cost in El Salvador, Guatemala, South America, Mexico, and, finally, the U.S.

The capitalists *will* make war, sooner than later, because they must. But meanwhile, the Sandinistas can sow discord among them, and weaken them while simultaneously *galvanizing* the enemies of imperialism.

El Norte

The oppressed will respond to Sandinista boldness, especially in the U.S., where the reformist leadership of the antiwar movement has used past Sandinista timidity as a pretext to blunt the sharp edges of a potentially radical upsurge.

This spring saw mass U.S. antiwar protest, the first since Reagan's reelection. The April Actions for Jobs,

Peace, and Justice were a golden opportunity to build an antiwar movement to match the sweep and depth of the U.S. offensive. They were a start, but they must go farther.

The April actions commendably linked the war drive to cutbacks at home and the hated apartheid regime in South Africa. But they downplayed the connection to other forms of repression in the U.S.: the sexist, homophobic, racist, and redbaiting bigotry that divides the working class and lubricates the war drive. They abdicated on the chance to demonstrate how austerity, repression, and war are necessary products of capitalism. They refused to prioritize organizing the super-oppressed and super-militant U.S. majority—working women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, and immigrants.

The organizers opted to downplay these "divisive" issues which might "alienate" the reformists and bureaucrats who dominate the U.S. labor and social change movements. Setting a dangerous undemocratic precedent, they excluded open socialists from the national steering committee to keep the movement "respectable." And in many cities, political parties were barred from endorsing the marches.

This concern with respectability and the idea that nothing but a single-issue liberal perspective can draw the masses to the movement, signifies that these antiwar leaders attribute to U.S. workers *their own* bigoted and pessimistic outlook. They also fear the kind of movement that could actually stop the war drive—a movement that will fight the capitalists.

The approach of the reformists eerily parallels the Sandinistas' pursuit of "co-existence" with imperialism. Hopefully if the Sandinistas depart from accommodation, they will provoke a similar abandonment of liberalism in the U.S. movement.

Democracy—the key

No matter how Sandinista policy develops, the U.S. movement must radicalize. It must author a multi-issue agenda which recognizes that Nicaragua and the U.S. super-oppressed fight the same enemy, and that their struggles are inseparable priorities.

The movement must be *democratic*, with open discussion, protecting the free speech rights of all, including radicals. Only in this way can the antiwar movement attract and hold the legions of grassroots activists who demand the clarification of issues and strategies that comes when everyone is allowed to express ideas and work out policy collectively.

On the basis of democracy and mutual respect, the movement can develop into a national coalition that embraces *all* the progressive social movements. What began in April can swiftly develop into an unstoppable anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist offensive.

Boldness and democracy in the U.S. movement will ignite not only the hemisphere, but the world. It is the surest—the only—way to defend Nicaragua, ourselves, and humanity's future. □

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BY ROBERT CRISMAN

What now for the world Trotskyist movement?

The 12th World Congress of the Fourth International (FI), the highest body of official international Trotskyism, was held in February. It *should* have been the scene of an intense political clash between the FI majority and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) over the validity of the theory of Permanent Revolution, the programmatic cornerstone of Trotskyism. But the battle remains unfought, boding ill for the future of the world revolutionary organization.

The SWP openly disavows Permanent Revolution, which states in essence that humanity's struggle for real democracy and social justice can only be consummated through socialist revolution and the creation of a workers' state. The SWP now holds that "workers' and farmers' governments" in both Third World and advanced capitalist nations—governments born of revolutionary coalitions between workers and "anti-imperialist" capitalists, and resting on top of a capitalist state apparatus—are a necessary stage in each revolution, and that the achievements of such governments can lay the basis for the peaceful transition to socialism.

In other words, the SWP believes that the dictatorship of the proletariat—the political and economic expropriation

of the world capitalist economy, were tied to imperialism and Czarist reaction. Worker/peasant unity, he said, was necessary to make the democratic revolution and secure the widest possible advantage for the workers' socialist struggle after the seizure of power.

Trotsky agreed with Lenin on the need for worker/peasant alliance. But, he said, the peasantry included well-to-do capitalists as well as landless sharecroppers. Because of their internal class differentiation, and the dependence of the countryside on the cities, the peasants could not play an *independent* revolutionary role. If they did not support the workers, they would fall in behind

task, and indefinitely postpone the socialist struggle. He insisted that workers should form *unconditional* alliances with rich and poor peasants and the bourgeoisie. This meant keeping the revolution within bounds acceptable to the capitalists, and sandbagging the independent interests of the workers and poor peasants.

Stalin hoped in this way to housebreak the anti-capitalist upsurge in the colonial world and thereby achieve détente with imperialism. In return, he hoped to be left in peace to construct "socialism in one country," i.e., a comfortable mode of existence for the burgeoning Soviet bureaucracy.

Subsequently, the 1925-27 Chinese revolution, the great Spanish revolution of the 1930s, the 1970-73 democratic socialist government of Allende in Chile, and the 1979 Iranian revolution, among others, were destroyed by the refusal of Stalinists to yank free from the bourgeoisie and carry the revolution forward to a workers' state.

Today, the SWP uses the Stalinist "workers' and farmers' government" slogan in the same Menshevik way—to uphold the butcher Khomeini in Iran, to support *uncritically* Nicaragua's Sandinistas, and in general to denigrate workers' initiative in world revolution.

tions—it is in no practical way bound by the vote and will ignore it.

In refusing to wage a political fight on this question—the answer to which *must determine the entire programmatic, strategic, and tactical approach of the FI to world revolution*—the majority struck a "gentlemen's agreement" with the SWP to disagree on *fundamentals*. This opportunist bargain defaults to the SWP's anti-Marxist course and drastically erodes the programmatic and organizational integrity of the world party of official Trotskyism.

Jockeying for position

Perfectly reflecting the FI's capitulation to the SWP was the way the Congress dealt with the organizational status of the Fourth International Tendency (FIT) and Socialist Action (SA), U.S. groups composed primarily of ex-SWPs undemocratically purged from the SWP over the last couple of years for starting to oppose the party's abandonment of Permanent Revolution and internal democracy.

FIT and, to a lesser extent, SA have actively sought re-entry into the SWP in the futile hope of changing the party's course. FIT has placed great hopes on the FI's willingness and ability to pressure the SWP to readmit them.

The Congress did vote to demand that the SWP readmit FIT and SA, pointing out that the expulsions were carried out "in bare-faced violation of the statutes of the Fourth International." But the Congress, tacitly recognizing that the SWP will not accede to the demand (and thereby acknowledging that the party is unlikely to alter its political direction), also voted to consider FIT and SA as affiliates of the FI!

FIT, SA, and the party that expelled them for upholding Trotskyism are now all equally affiliated with the world Trotskyist party!

The FI no doubt rationalizes that it is preserving and protecting Trotskyism, while holding open the door for the wayward SWP. But in shunning *political* confrontation, the FI is merely using FIT and SA as organizational counterweights to the SWP within the precincts of U.S. and world Trotskyism. In substituting an organizational maneuver for principled political battle—a *negation* of Trotskyism—the FI has succeeded only in giving up more ground to the SWP renegades.

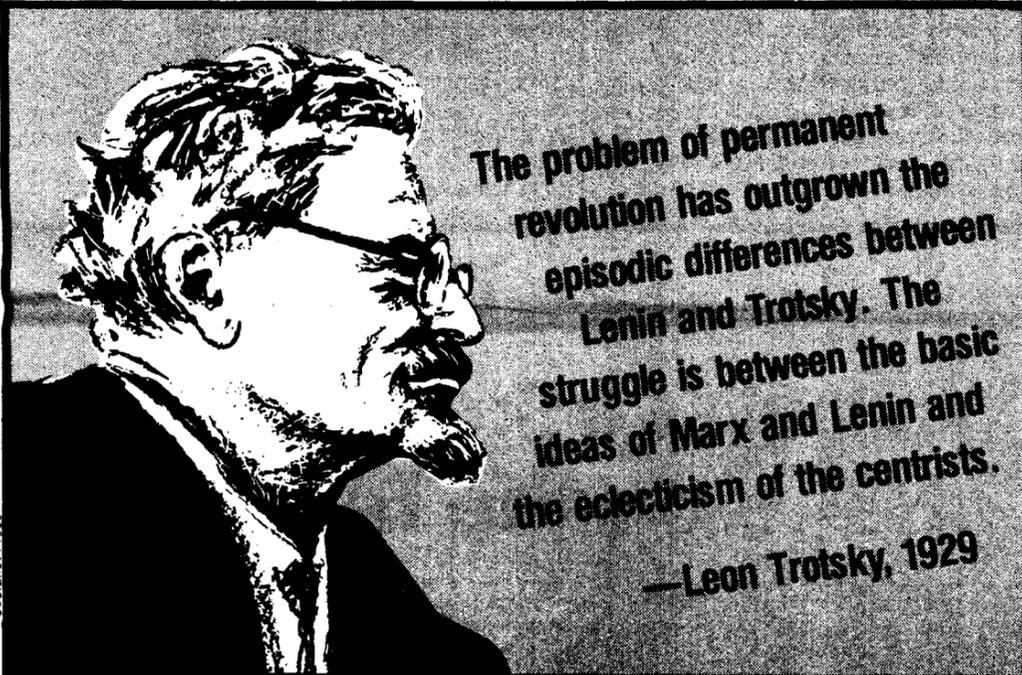
Still, the vital fact that the FI was forced to rebuke SWP transgressions against democracy means that it is not yet ready to abandon outright its political heritage. It might be said that the rebuke was designed only to forestall criticism that the FI cares more for U.S. financial support than for political principle. But even this sensitivity is significant; it indicates the FI still lacks that cynicism that hurled the SWP into Stalinism, that there is still room—however little—to open up a struggle for the spirit as well as the letter of Trotskyism within the International.

In any case, the only way to turn the wrist-slapping of the SWP to good account is for the International, FIT, and SA to stop playing at maneuvers and undertake a serious political campaign against the would-be destroyers of Permanent Revolution.

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12th World Congress of the Fourth International

Behind the "gentlemen's agreement"



tion of the capitalist class by the power of the workers' state—is not a prerequisite to socialism.

Menshevism revisited

The SWP maintains that its call for "workers' and farmers' governments" re-establishes the party's "continuity with Bolshevism," supposedly broken by its 50-year adherence to Permanent Revolution. Hardly. By enjoining workers to hitch their wagons to coalitions with capitalists, the SWP has sloughed off Trotskyism in favor of *Menshevism*.

The perspective of Lenin, as well as Trotsky, was the *polar opposite* of Menshevism, which maintained that the Russian Revolution was bourgeois-democratic in its immediate aims, and therefore the bourgeoisie must lead it. The Mensheviks insisted that the workers could only begin the struggle for socialism after capitalism had consolidated itself in Russia.

This notion of revolution in stages—capitalism first, socialism much later—led the Mensheviks to try to *limit* the revolution to the establishment of bourgeois democracy, and to try to force the bourgeoisie to take power—even as the capitalists were trying to hand the revolution over to the Czarist generals!

What was Lenin's position? He, and Trotsky as well, agreed that the revolution was bourgeois-democratic in its immediate aims. Before the revolution, he called for a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry," i.e., a "workers' and farmers' government"—but *against* the capitalists who, because

the "democratic" bourgeoisie. Proletarian leadership was therefore crucial, and in order to fulfill the democratic tasks of the revolution and smash the bourgeois counterrevolution, the workers must establish a proletarian dictatorship.

It is a matter of record that in April 1917—two months after the overthrow of Czarist feudalism and eight months before the October revolution—Lenin, realizing that his slogan was being used by some Bolsheviks to support the bourgeoisie in the name of democracy, decisively turned the Bolsheviks away from his previous call for a "democratic dictatorship" and called on the workers, *supported* by the peasants, to take power.

It is equally a matter of record that the workers and peasants, led by the Bolsheviks, smashed the capitalist state in October, proceeded to carry out the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution, and *without stopping* initiated the socialist reconstruction of society—entirely in accord with the prognosis laid out by Trotsky in the theory of Permanent Revolution.

Enter Stalin

With the establishment of the workers' state, Lenin and Trotsky effectively buried Menshevism. In 1924, however, Stalin resuscitated Menshevism and the "two-stage" notion of revolution under cover of Lenin's long-dead formula of the "democratic dictatorship." Stalin said that colonial nations that have not yet achieved their capitalist revolutions must *limit themselves in advance* to that

Goodbye Trotsky, farewell Marx

The SWP has tossed not only Trotsky and Lenin, but Marx and Engels—who were the first to proclaim the necessity for proletarian dictatorship—and the entire revolutionary experience of the 20th century out the window. The SWP is no longer a Marxist or a revolutionary party.

Given this, one would have expected a fight to the end over Permanent Revolution at the World Congress—a battle that would have resulted in political agreement, or an organizational parting of the ways, or establishment of procedures for resolution of the dispute through a broad and rich analysis of the counter-positions.

Nothing of the sort happened. The FI majority defended the "historical significance" and "continued relevance" of Permanent Revolution, but avoided the main point—that the SWP's repudiation of Trotsky *codifies its repudiation of the living world revolution*.

At no time was the political basis of the SWP's departure from Trotskyism acknowledged or laid out for honest examination. No one questioned what an anti-Trotskyist party was doing inside the Trotskyist International.

Precisely for this reason, the SWP can claim *victory* over the majority. Though delegates voted overwhelmingly to "uphold" Permanent Revolution, the SWP did not. And while it is still an affiliate of the FI—reactionary U.S. legislation prevents Trotskyists from being members of international organiza-

EDITORIAL

No reliance on the FBI!

Community defense of abortion rights

As harassment and violence against abortion clinics accelerate, it's clear that an aggressive feminist response to the anti-abortion forces is urgently needed. The "pro-life" terrorists must be stopped before they strip us of our constitutional rights.

The Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women support the National Organization for Women's call for a national campaign in defense of abortion rights. And we applaud NOW's call for full-scale congressional hearings to investigate publicly the rise of assaults against clinics, patients, and staff.

In March and April, the House Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee convened three hearings to investigate attacks against clinics. Panel members demanded that anti-abortion vigilantes be prosecuted under civil rights laws. Testimony from clinic staff and clients from Philadelphia to Yakima, Washington attracted national press coverage.

So far so good. Still needed are well-publicized regional hearings, which would provide a forum for mobilizing broad public support to stop clinic violence and pressure the government to uphold women's constitutional right to reproductive freedom.

Broad support is indispensable to defense of abortion rights. It was precisely community outrage over the rash of clinic firebombings last year that put muscle behind NOW's call for congressional hearings. It was community pressure that resulted in the 20-year sentencing last December of Everett Feminist Women's Health Center firebomber Curtis Beseda in Washington State. It is a safe bet that without massive community organizing for abortion rights, the congressional hearings will in the end come to nothing.

We call for a national united feminist front, open to all and democratically organized, that builds a mass movement embracing the call for hearings as one demand among many. This united front could work out specific demands for defense of the clinics and raise all the underlying issues of women's reproductive rights, including free abortion on demand, no forced sterilization, and quality childcare. It must also show that reproductive rights are a paramount issue in the fight against rightwing attacks on *all* the oppressed, and rally people of color, lesbians and gay men, labor and radicals in a broad offensive to protect the rights of all who are under attack.

Now is precisely the time for feminists to unite around the program outlined above. A mass rightwing movement backed by big business has *already* coalesced to strip women of reproductive freedom and relegate them again to the status of breeders and unpaid domestics in the home, so capitalists can have two workers for the price of one. The current no-holds-barred assault on abortion rights also serves as the front line in the right wing's campaign to nullify women as a social and political force.

• • •

Controversy is raging within the feminist movement over whether or not to support NOW's call for FBI investigations into violence against clinics. We strenuously object to this demand. While we believe open congressional hearings can help build a mass pro-abortion movement, nothing could be more suicidal than to invite secret police investigations into violence against clinics.

The FBI is infamous for its sweeping infiltrations and persecution of activists. It maintains thick files on every feminist organization, including NOW, and has always opposed feminism as a threat to the status quo.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), which has also "investigated" anti-abortion violence, is allied with the FBI in its attitude and actions toward the feminist and other social movements. In the Everett clinic firebombing case, BATF made *pro-abortion* forces the prime target of their investigation. The Bureau, along with local officials, intimated time and again that clinic supporters had bombed the clinic to muster support and sympathy! BATF also stalled the actual investigation for months, meanwhile finding time to bring charges against striking unionists at Everett's Nord Door Factory!

After our experience with the Bureau, it does not surprise us that the BATF, while it had an undercover agent in the Greensboro, North Carolina, chapters of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis, did nothing to prevent the Klan/Nazi assassinations of five Communist Workers Party members.

Experience teaches that U.S. police agencies are out to divide and destroy our organizations and movements, and to promote government policies that are clearly anti-abortion and pro-rightwing.

We urge NOW to drop its call for secret police investigations immediately and instead focus on building an open, united feminist campaign to save abortion rights. We would gladly join with NOW and other feminist organizations in such an effort.

VOICES OF COLOR



Women strikers shake up the Bay Area

unions and crush labor unrest with take-away contracts carrying drastic wage and health benefit cuts, and two-tier wage systems that pay new hires less than other workers.

Many of the strikes are still being fought today. Others have been concluded successfully. Still others have been busted by the bosses, with the collusion of union bureaucrats.

Fighting the onslaught

When the Shoreline South Intermediate Care Hospital in Alameda was sold last year, the new owners fired 51 of 60 members of Hospital and Institutional Workers Local 250 in a blatant attempt to bust the union. The workers, mostly older Black women who had worked at Shoreline for 15 to 20 years, went on strike in November 1984; they are still out and on the picket line *seven days a week!* They demand continued recognition of their union despite the changes in ownership.

On June 19, the regional office of the Reagan-dominated National Labor Relations Board rejected the union's charges that the hospital had committed race and sex discrimination in the firings. Local 250 plans to appeal to the national NLRB office. Given the strong anti-labor bias of that agency, the union must *immediately* organize a labor and community pressure campaign to force the Board to make a just decision. Workers, meanwhile, continue to picket the hospital.

In San Francisco, Local 2 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union voted overwhelmingly to strike against takebacks in September 1984. The local's membership is 50% people of color and primarily female. They voted subsequently by another large margin to *stay* on strike. Their militance was such that it sparked discussion in the San Francisco Labor Council of calling a possible citywide general strike. Frightened by this kind of talk, Local 2 bureaucrats ended the strike in December by okaying a takeback contract the membership had earlier voted

to reject. The officials also denigrated the sacrifices made by strikers for four months by agreeing in the settlement to pay \$100,000 out of *union funds* for scabs' salaries!

This strike brought into clearest focus the conflicting roles and aspirations of the low-paid rank-and-file militants and the labor bureaucrats. Manifest was the enormous potential power of the strikers to ignite the entire workforce in united action against the bosses. No less clear was the bureaucrats' determination to curry favor with management by squelching such action, maintaining labor "peace," and preserving the bosses' profits.

Sold out

The rank-and-file women have been sold out by their supposed leaders time and time again. The Mission Foods strike is a classic example.

Located in Richmond, Mission Foods is the only unionized tortilla factory in California. On July 5, 1984, it was struck by Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union Local 28, whose membership is predominantly Spanish-speaking Chicanas and Latinas who have worked at Mission Foods for over ten years. Fighting against an *average* 30% wage cut and elimination of benefits, the women organized community support for a boycott of Mission Foods products and kept round-the-clock picket lines at the factory.

Local 28 officials did nothing to promote the strike. But community supporters and Chicano students from the University of California at Berkeley set up a strike support committee which organized a series of community rallies to support and publicize the strike. Their call for public support also brought a massive response from unionists, including Chicano labor leader César Chávez, who joined them on the picket line. The picket—a noisy, roving line at a succession of Bay Area supermarkets, convinced store managers to remove Mission's products from their shelves.

Alarmed by the fervor of the strikers and their sup-

BY NANCY REIKO KATO

In the San Francisco Bay Area, constant strike activity marked the 50th anniversary of the 1934 San Francisco General Strike. But in 50 years, the face of organized labor has dramatically changed. The primary impetus for the 1934 strike came from white males in unions such as the longshoremen's union; people of color and women were denied entry into many jobs and, in addition, many unions had discriminatory policies that barred them from membership. Today it is women of color who are the driving force in Bay Area labor actions; although racism and sexism have kept them in lowpaid, "unskilled" jobs, they have entered the workforce in ever-growing numbers and have been the strongest fighters for unionization.

This is not just a local phenomenon but part of a nationwide labor resurgence spearheaded by people of color and women, who, while historically leaders in battles for workers' rights, have only in the last decades gained a foothold within organized labor. The most shunned and exploited workers now far outnumber relatively privileged white males in the workforce. And women of color, trained as fighters by their lives' struggles against bigotry and poverty, are the staunchest of fighters who resist because they *must*.

Over the past year, Filipinas, Chicanas/Latinas, Chinese and Black women have struck Bay Area companies that seek to weaken and bust trade

BOOK REVIEW

Missing Pieces

Women in Irish History

Missing Pieces: Women in Irish History
 Dublin: Irish Information Publications (IFI) and Women's Community Press, 1983. 48 Fleet Street, Dublin, Ireland.

Women in the United States think of Mother Jones as one of their own, but the women of Ireland also claim her. She was born in 1839 in Cork, trained as a teacher, and later journeyed to Memphis, Tennessee. After her children and husband died of yellow fever, she worked in the struggle for workers' rights until her death in 1930. Mother Jones was instrumental in securing passage of child labor laws in Pennsylvania,



Anita Lett

M. Ffrench-Mullen

and her militant words are still quoted by today's activists.

This historical sketch is but one of a hundred brief biographies in **Missing Pieces: Women in Irish History**. Published by feminists in Ireland, it is a welcome addition to women's history, so long obscured by male historians.

Many of the women featured in the book were staunch feminists, like Anita Lett (1872-1940), a pioneer advocate of affirmative action for women. In 1910, she suggested that women should be nominated directly to decision-making bodies without standing for election!

These remarkable women participated just as wholeheartedly in the fight to free Ireland. Kathleen Lynn (1874-1955), a physician who tended suffragist hunger strikers in prison, also served as captain in the Irish Citizens Army during the 1916 Rising against England's oppressive occupation of Ireland. Dr. Lynn was the officer who accepted the surrender of British forces at Dublin Castle.

Another participant in the Rising was Margaret Skinnider (1893-1971), an expert markswoman and a spy for Sein Fein leader Constance Markievicz. Involved in many successful raids to gain explosives for the Rising, Skinnider once crossed from Glasgow to Ireland sleeping on a pillow filled with detonators, with the wires concealed beneath her coat. When British troops occupied the College of Surgeons in 1916, she climbed into the rafters and fired at British soldiers on the rooftops, surviving three gunshot wounds.

Another fighter in Dublin was Madeleine Ffrench-Mullen (1880-1944), a lifelong socialist and nationalist, and a member of *Inghinidhe na hEireann* (Daughters of Ireland), a revolution-

ary women's organization. Also a member of Sein Fein and the Irish Citizens Army, she supervised a medical post during the Rising.

A generation earlier than these brave women, Anna and Fanny Parnell formed the Ladies Land League in 1881 to continue the work of the suppressed Land League which had included their famous brother, Charles Stuart Parnell, among its leaders. The Ladies Land League took a more radical approach than the men and a disapproving Parnell disbanded the group. Anna and Fanny never forgave him for his action against the women and their organization. Anna later joined the militant Sein Fein.

Among those who served the Irish people in less dramatic ways was poet Charlotte O'Brien (1845-1909). Her 1881 exposé of the White Star Shipping Line forced an investigation which brought about stricter control of immigrant ships, thus improving conditions for the poor leaving Ireland.

Another reformer was Dr. Dorothy Stopford Price (1890-1954), a Dubliner who did pioneering work on tuberculosis—for which she was finally accorded national recognition in 1949.

Carrying on the tradition of professionalism by women was Roisin Walsh (d. 1945), a librarian who successfully overcame the difficulties of unifying Dublin's independent district libraries. Under her leadership, the growth of libraries and services was phenomenal.

Missing Pieces gives only a hint of the broad scope of women's activities and deeds of daring in Ireland, but it does contain a valuable bibliography for further research. The book ends



C. Markievicz

D. Stopford Price

with a reproduction of the dedication from Helen Concannon's 1922 book, **Daughters of Banba**:

To the memory of the Unknown Women, faithful and unnumbered, who in every age of Ireland's age long struggle have died of hunger and hardship, but ere they were gathered into their forgotten graves, passed on still living the Unconquerable Spirit of the Irish race.

Missing Pieces rescues 100 women from "forgotten graves" and adds them to the world's proud heritage of brave and committed women fighters.

—GLORIA MARTIN



Clara Fraser

Yellow Woman Captivates

The redoubtable Merle Woo descended on Seattle recently and took the town by storm. One of the people she impressed was my colleague Helen Gilbert, who wrote a glowing account of Merle's visit, to wit:

"Merle is an Asian American socialist, lesbian, feminist, gifted poet, rousing orator, and a model of the joy of revolutionary activism.

"She came here fresh from the Berkeley campus, after winning her monumental free speech and discrimination suit against the University of California. She had a great deal to tell Seattle. And Seattle listened.

"In fact, the entire *nation* listened to her, in a sense. She was a plenary speaker at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in Seattle, where she received a standing ovation for a presentation which bespoke the awesome power of solidarity. It was solidarity which won her case and later ignited the thrilling, multi-issue, anti-apartheid protests at UC Berkeley. Said Merle:

These are times of crisis and opportunity, and we are weeds cracking through cement.

Beginning small; a few UC students demonstrating; then their arrests—and then the explosion! Thousands of students, workers, faculty, community, radicals exercising their right to free speech and association.

Women, ethnic, gay, disabled, re-entry students. Wherever you find the most oppressed, you will find the potential for the best leadership. They are looking at the world with a keen eye. They are change: a barometer of society. They helped bring the apartheid system to the attention of the world and expose the hell out of the university.

"Look to the coalition-building of the anti-apartheid protests for the solution to preserving feminist education, exhorted Merle. "On the following weekend, she made a dramatic address to Seattle's Lesbian/Gay Freedom March and Rally, 10,000 strong.

We are rising up and visible, strong and proud, militant. We have shaken the cornerstone of capitalism—the bourgeois nuclear family and the subordination of women—to its very foundation.

Our situation today demands revolutionary attitudes. We have been on the move, building coalitions on a level never seen before. The coming Third American Revolution will be better than those which preceded it, for its goal is world liberation. We belong to the world!

"Merle's vibrant radicalism won over Seattle's press. 'If you're going to sing the Peace, Jobs and Freedom Blues, you gotta have a chorus. Demonstrators will have to join forces to be heard,' was the lead of an interview by reporter Sally Macdonald in the *Seattle Times*, one of the two daily local papers.

"The *Seattle Gay News* noted approvingly that 'Woo confronts stereotypes by her actions, her attitudes, her way of being in the world. She speaks as a poet; she sees the past, the present, the future as one entity. Political? Of course! She sees politics as all of life.'

"Regina Hackett, the astute arts critic for the daily *Post-Intelligencer*, was intrigued by Merle's personal odyssey as a poet and radical:

Merle Woo didn't find her voice as a writer until she found herself as a socialist, Asian American, unionist, lesbian and feminist. Her poems are stories taken from her life and hung on the supple and expansive narrative line that is her trademark. They carry the reader wherever Woo wishes the reader to go.

Woo's poems, like Woo herself, exhort without preaching and describe social forces and injustice without losing a sense of daily life lived with joy.

"The crown to Merle's stay in Seattle was an event in a large art gallery. 'Yellow Woman Speaks' featured her poetry and commentary, plus the dance and song of Bengie Santos, Maria Batayola and Dian Hassel. Merle brought the overflow crowd to its feet with her closing poem, 'Yellow Woman Speaks':

Shadow become real; follower become leader;
 mouse turned sorcerer—
 In a red sky, a darker beast lies waiting,
 her teeth, once hidden, now unsheathed swords.
 Yellow woman, a revolutionary, speaks . . .
 Abrasive teacher, incisive comedian,
 Painted Lady, dark domestic—
 Sweep minds' attics; burnish our senses;
 keep house, make love, wreak vengeance.

"Thank you, Merle, for your integrity, artistry, humor, and political courage. You showed us the power of revolutionary feminism as only you could do. You made a statement and an impact that will long be felt."

And thank *you*, Helen, for capturing the ambience and ideological core of Merle Woo's presence.

Watching and listening to Merle is an existential experience of discovering truths and enjoying it. Merle turns rage into wisdom and learning into fun. That is the universal mark of a great teacher.



.. 4th Int'l

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Radical laborism

The renegade Menshevik/Stalinist course of the SWP is the culmination of more than 25 years of political degeneration, rooted in the protracted period of relative economic prosperity following WWII and the SWP's blind adaptation to the white male labor aristocracy.

This adaptation began in the 1950s under the witchhunting pressure of McCarthyism, which drove radicals, women, people of color, and lesbians and gay men from the labor movement. These purges consolidated bureaucracy in the unions, and profoundly conserved the white male trade unionists.

The SWP leadership, which largely derived from and was tied to the unions, lost touch with the living U.S. class struggle. They failed utterly to recognize that the civil rights, feminist, and lesbian/gay movements—forced to develop outside the unions in the wake of McCarthyism—were and are *central component elements* of the workers' struggle. The SWP thus denigrated the struggles of the *super-oppressed vanguard majority* of U.S. workers, shunting them aside as mere "allies" of the (by definition straight white male) working class.

The SWP fell into a *radical laborite* orientation: *radical* because of the residual influence of its Trotskyist heritage; *laborite* because of its belief that only the unions could serve as the breeding ground for revolution.

In 1965, the Seattle branch of the

demands in the unions was verboten, just as labor issues were not to be spoken of in the other mass movements. This was pure and simple *economism*, so fiercely lambasted by Lenin in the early Russian Marxist movement.

Inevitably, the notion that the most backward, philistine strata of labor was the revolutionary vanguard sapped the SWP's belief that proletarian revolution was possible in the king-pin capitalist country. The party's through-the-glass-darkly perspective was in turn extended to international workers' upheaval.

Pessimism breeds *opportunism*; the SWP began to lust after popularity at any price, first in the U.S. mass movements (especially the reformist sectors of the antiwar, Black, and feminist movements), and then with Stalinist and reformist leaders of revolutions abroad. The search for popularity demanded total accommodation to the conservatism and prejudices of these leaders. Accommodation inevitably demanded the abandonment of Trotskyism.

In this way, *because of its failure to meet the changing requirements of the delayed American revolution*, the SWP came to a parting of the ways with Trotsky, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, and the founders of the SWP such as James P. Cannon.

Hear, see, speak no evil

None of the foregoing was discussed at the World Congress, which is in keeping with the fact that the International has consistently ascribed the SWP's break with Marxism entirely to "theoretical errors."

Errors there are in super-abundance. But where do these errors come from *that in their totality constitute the impudent junking of Marxism?*

"defense" of Permanent Revolution.

Turning the clock back

FIT and SA have so far proved unable to wage a real political battle against the SWP and, with SWP-style sectarianism, have refused to discuss with the rest of the Left the reasons behind that party's degeneration. Both groups in fact maintain that the SWP was politically healthy until the late '70s, that its radical laborite approach of the '60s and early '70s—which greased the slide into Stalinism—was *correct*.

Leaders of both organizations, such as George Breitman and Frank Lovell of FIT, and Nat and Sylvia Weinstein of SA, defended the SWP regime in those years.

Their political path is already murky. FIT and SA started out as a single entity, first as an opposition bloc in SWP, and then for a brief period after expulsion. They split, apparently for organizational reasons. FIT seriously seeks re-entry into SWP; SA, larger and more prosperous, seems more intent on actually establishing itself as an alternative party. Neither group has made public the reasons for that split. There appear to be only nuances and shadings of political differences between them.

Both groups proclaim adherence to a document entitled "28 Theses on the American Revolution and the Building of the Revolutionary Party." This document was submitted in May 1983 by four soon-to-be-expelled members of the SWP National Committee—Steve Bloom, Lynn Henderson, Frank Lovell, and Nat Weinstein—with the intention of forming an opposition bloc within the NC and defending "the historic program of the SWP and the Fourth International."

According to the "28 Theses," the

leaders.

This is exactly the single-issue approach the SWP took in the Vietnam War days in order not to "alienate" the "masses."

History repeats itself. Reports are now circulating of a split in Socialist Action, resulting in a new group called Socialist Unity. Socialist Unity is said to disagree with the SA majority's anti-regroupment stance and "excessive" criticism of the Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua. The Los Angeles SA branch was suspended for a year, by fiat of the national leadership, for exploring regroupment possibilities with other Left tendencies!

Unless SA and FIT can find their way back to the *spirit* of Permanent Revolution and revolutionary democracy, they will repeat—in quadruple time—the SWP's long slow slide into Stalinism.

Trotskyists regroup!

The FI must *break* with the policy of accommodation to the SWP. It must come to terms with the American revolution and *intervene* on the side of the most oppressed workers against the Stalinist, reformist, ex-Trotskyist representatives of the labor aristocracy.

We call on the leadership of the FI to begin an *immediate* political offensive against the SWP, to expose its betrayal of the world revolution, and to eradicate anti-Marxism within the FI. One approach would be for the FI to send speakers to SWP branches to debate the issues. The FI must also open up a literary and face-to-face discussion for the entire world Trotskyist movement.

We call on the *membership* of the FI, especially the women, lesbians and gay men, people of color, and oppressed nationalities among them, to demand that the FI begin this campaign without delay.

We call on FIT and SA to support this educational offensive and political housecleaning, and to establish communication with *all* U.S. Trotskyists who uphold the Permanent Revolution and have much to contribute to an assessment of the SWP's downfall and the prospects for the North American revolution.

Finally, we extend an invitation to all U.S. Trotskyists and leftists interested in regroupment to join the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP). The Freedom Socialist Party helped found CRSP in 1977 to consolidate the forces of Trotskyist feminism as an alternative to the anti-revolutionary SWP. CRSP has since actively sought out discussion, debate, and collaborative work with all those interested in the regeneration of American Trotskyism.

CRSP has assessed the world Trotskyist crisis, most profoundly in the works of its illustrious former National Committee Chairman, the late Murry Weiss. Weiss collaborated with J.P. Cannon in writing the *American Theses (America's Road to Socialism)*. He led the fight against the SWP's opportunism and sectarianism in the '50s, and was instrumental in hammering out the basis for reunification of the FI in 1963. In CRSP documents such as *Crisis in the Fourth International*, he laid bare the growing bureaucratism and sexism overtaking the FI, and outlined the tasks facing revolutionaries around the world.

CRSP, we believe, is a pole of attraction for all those who want to build a party that will meet the demands of the American revolution.

Such a party—a Trotskyist socialist feminist party—is the only hope for U.S. and world revolution, the rejuvenation of world Trotskyism and the Fourth International, and the extension of Permanent Revolution in our time. □

For information on CRSP, contact Dr. Susan Williams, National CRSP Coordinator, at 301 W. 17th St., #2E, New York, NY 10011, 212-929-0210. Or contact your nearest Freedom Socialist Party or Radical Women branch.

The Fourth International's refusal to wage a political fight over the theory of Permanent Revolution defaults to the SWP's anti-Marxist course.

SWP (which broke away shortly afterward to form the Freedom Socialist Party) produced a Resolution entitled **Radical Laborism Versus Bolshevik Leadership** for consideration at the 21st National SWP Convention.

The article laid out in detail the political character and consequences of the SWP's new course. The authors stated that the SWP's vision did not "project beyond the trade union upsurge of the distant future that will lead to the Labor Party." While "not typically syndicalist," the SWP regime nevertheless effectively subordinated the party—which by Leninist definition must carry on all-sided revolutionary activity—to the limitations of the trade union movement. The SWP "does not intervene decisively in the *real political life of the time* so long as the arenas of struggle and motion remain outside the labor movement and sometimes opposed to it."

In addition, "as a consequence of the single-minded unionistic-laboristic blueprint for revolution, the Party has become increasingly constricted... and turned inward. This produces, in turn, deepening errors of theory, program, strategy and tactics in those areas demanding the greatest familiarity and precision of evaluation: the colonial revolution, youth, the peace movement, the Black struggle, the labor movement, women's emancipation and revolutionary regroupment."

At the same time, deepening union conservatism meant that the SWP "neglects probes into the unions, preferring to wait until the time is more patently promising."

At best, the party roused itself only to support unions' bread and butter demands—for higher wages, benefits, and so on. Raising other political

Theory is in the last analysis a product of class struggle and class interests. The SWP's theory, Stalinist in essence, reveals that its interests coincide wholly with the capitalist-fostered prejudices of the labor aristocracy—*against* the revolution.

The FI blithely ignores this. Significantly, though the Congress scheduled programmatic discussion of such questions as Poland, Central America, and the world political situation, no discussion was held on the American revolution. Yet it is just this question which, because of the economic, political, and military weight exerted by the U.S. on all countries, *decisively shapes all* the important questions of world revolution.

The only item that focused specifically on the U.S. was a statement calling for mass U.S. protest against imperialist aggression in Central America. That this statement refused to call for revolutionary initiative at home by U.S. workers reveals by the omission an "approach" by the FI to the American Question that dovetails neatly with the SWP's own.

The keys to the American revolution are the race, sex, and sexual liberation struggles against the *prejudices that divide and debilitate the world proletariat*. Only by grasping these *essentials* can the tasks of revolutionary leadership in the U.S. and the world be understood and dealt with in a dynamic Marxist way. Yet it is precisely these essentials that the FI ignores.

What can this signify but that the *Fourth International* is accommodating to the labor aristocracy and its bureaucracy? And what in light of this can it do but tail after the SWP—and cover its abdication of revolutionary responsibility with a platonic and useless

most burning task of the day is to "advance a program of independent mass action, union democracy, and class solidarity" in order to "build the revolutionary party" and a "class struggle left wing in the labor movement."

Yet the document in no way recognizes that the democratic struggles of women and people of color for sex and race equality are the driving force of U.S. class struggle. The lesbian/gay movement is not mentioned in any connection. And without attacking sexism, racism, and homophobia in the labor movement and in society, how can "mass action, union democracy, and class solidarity"—or the revolutionary party—possibly be built?

FIT and SA, like the SWP, default to the labor aristocracy, leaving themselves blind to the tasks and perspectives of revolution at home, and prey to the demoralization that comes from a laborite fixation on the conservative unions. Little wonder that the "28 Theses" nowhere addresses or recognizes the importance of the U.S. to *world revolution*.

In mass work, FIT and SA have also reshaped the role of the SWP. They played major roles in the U.S. antiwar movement this year, acting as bulwarks *against* radicals and multi-issue organizing. Both supported moves to exclude open socialists from the steering committees of the April 20 mobilizations. They voted to exclude the Left from open participation in the antiwar movement at the Second National Emergency Conference Against Military Intervention in Central America/Caribbean held in Minneapolis in June. And they fought against raising the connection of racism and sexism to the war drive, for fear of offending labor bureaucrats, reformists, and religious

... AIDS

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ka who travels the country to agitate against gay rights.

Many of these vultures describe such measures as "medical solutions" to the AIDS crisis. But advocacy of concentration camps and genocide is rightwing political terrorism par excellence, an essential part of the general repression—against unions, women, people of color, immigrants, political minorities—advocated by the reaction.

Militance, the best medicine

The medical/political crisis spawned by AIDS demands a vocal, organized, militant, and multi-issue response from the lesbian/gay and other social change movements. AIDS is *everyone's* issue

and must be fought by everyone.

The lesbian/gay movement has already launched an impressive response to the AIDS attack. Support groups to help cope with the AIDS trauma are numerous. Money has been raised for direct care, community education and lobbying efforts. Forums, conferences, educationals and discussions abound. Petition and letter campaigns have flourished.

Most common are the AIDS vigils. Vigils are a dramatic—albeit somber—way for the gay community to demand adequate research funding, an end to harassment and discrimination, and other key issues of the fight.

The gay movement must refuse to capitulate to the reactionary "solutions" to the AIDS crisis offered by homophobes. Primary among these is the forced closure of gay baths, a measure supported by some gay leaders.

Closure of the baths would not pre-

vent gay men from having sex and would be as ineffectual in combating the AIDS crisis as closing straight singles' clubs would be in arresting herpes. What it *would* do is hand the right wing a victory, gratis, in their campaign to prove that gays are immoral menaces to society.

The only way to counter the right is with a bold, militant Houston of gay rights. The lesson of Houston is clear: conservative gays refused to fight rightwing attacks on a proposed anti-discrimination ordinance. They allowed the Ku Klux Klan to march *unopposed* through Houston's gay community during the campaign. And the ordinance lost by a 4-1 margin.

The movement can neither wait for the government to declare war on AIDS, nor kowtow to the right wing. We must organize to demand massive increases in funds for AIDS research, medical care for those afflicted, and

public education to promote preventive, safer sex. Health industry profits from diagnostic and screening tests must be put back into research, especially toward development of a vaccine.

We must fight for protections against reactionary evictions, firings, and denial of health services, and demand guaranteed confidentiality of screening test results and health records.

Finally, we must coordinate the AIDS reaction with all the other sexist, racist, anti-worker attacks and unite to meet the right wing head on.

Ultimately, the number of lives lost to AIDS will be determined less by the nature of the disease than by how effectively we organize ourselves to fight. □

Dr. Susan Williams is an attending physician at Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem, NYC, and an assistant professor of medicine at New York Medical College.

... Strikes

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porters, Local 28 officials decided to ram through management's take-away contract. They refused to provide a translator when they presented the contract proposal to the membership—and they allowed scabs to vote on the proposal. The contract was "ratified" in February 1985. Some workers have refused to go back under these conditions and are considering a renewed boycott against Mission. Chicano students, appalled at the union's racism and lack of democracy, are continuing their support.

Irreconcilable interests

Nationwide, the gulf between the labor bureaucracy and the rank and file is widening as union officials capitulate to the bosses' unionbusting and take-backs. The bureaucracy has become the

safeguard of *business* interests, rather than an advocate for labor. Based on the privileged white male labor aristocracy, which has traded class consciousness for economic rewards, union bureaucrats foster the racism and sexism that have historically split apart the working class and allowed the capitalists to remain in power. Union officials feather their nests quite nicely under the system that profits from the exploitation of workers. Primarily concerned with carrying out the bosses' wishes, they view the militance of people of color, women, and immigrant workers as a threat they must crush if they are to retain their control and privilege.

The AFL-CIO leadership has supported the Simpson-Mazzoli bill and other racist anti-immigration legislation aimed at controlling and curtailing the rights of dark-skinned immigrant workers as well as intensifying repression against people of color in general. Its "Buy American" campaign pits U.S. workers against foreign workers and en-

genders violence against Asian Americans.

The demoralizing, divisive racism and sexism of the labor skates is the biggest roadblock that must be overcome to prevent the destruction of *all* labor's hard-won gains.

New life for labor

Women of color workers, who are of *necessity* leading labor's resistance against the bosses and the bureaucrats, are charting a course that the entire labor movement must follow if it is to stop the anti-labor offensive. Their courageous fight inspires workers who have been disillusioned by the unending round of givebacks, and shows the strength of a united struggle.

Privileged workers must in their own interest reject the poison of race and sex bigotry. Their future lies in their ability to unite with the rest of their class to stop the wholesale destruction of labor's already eroded rights. White male workers must join women and peo-

ple of color in pressing their demands in the union as on the picket line. To do otherwise is to play into the hands of the bosses and be defeated without a battle.

The survival of the American labor movement lies in its ability to reject the divide and conquer of racism and sexism promoted by the parasitical union bureaucracy. When labor learns to respect and follow the leadership of women of color—the most oppressed and thus the most steadfast fighters—it will cast off its mis-leaders and be on the road to the decisive defeat of the bosses. *Then* we will see the spirit of the 1934 General Strike reborn with a power never seen before! □

Nancy Reiko Kato is a clerical worker at U.C. Berkeley and a member of AFSCME 3211 and the Freedom Socialist Party. Recently elected to the Alameda County Central Labor Council, she has been active in many Bay Area labor struggles, including those mentioned in this story.

... Rivera

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tional land, within the framework of the Nicaraguan state. Indians will have the right to administer our internal affairs on our own land in our own interests, without external imposition.

GH: What do you hope to accomplish at the peace talks?

Rivera: At the very beginning of the negotiations, our delegation presented a written proposal to the FSLN which dealt with our demands for autonomy, land rights, control of our natural resources, and cultural and religious rights for our people. They have not given us any formal answer. Rather, the government wants MISURASATA to accept a cease-fire accord without any concessions, without conditions. That is unacceptable. They just want an end to the fighting, without showing any commitment to our interests. If I agreed to that, I would betray my people's interests. They would kill me, and they would be right.

All people have expectations for peace, but peace with justice. We must achieve a government which recognizes our people's right to internal self-determination. So, what we have been trying to do is solve the fundamental issue of Indian rights at the same time as we work to solve the military conflict.

GH: Has there been progress?

Rivera: I am trying to be optimistic, but the Sandinistas' position is still very

far from our own. Maybe they need more pressure or more time to educate themselves about our interests—which are not necessarily opposite from those of the continuing revolution.

I feel there is a basis for agreement with the Sandinistas because I am convinced that there is more of a chance for us to achieve a just solution than there would be from any other type of government in the hemisphere, whether rightwing military dictatorship, or the so-called democratic countries.

In a genuine revolutionary process, they must resolve the Indian question. The Sandinistas have the historic chance to find a just solution which could serve as a model for other Latin American countries. All the national liberation movements in Latin America need the support of the Indian people. In Guatemala, Bolivia, and Peru, the majority are Indians, and if the revolution succeeds, they will govern those countries.

GH: The U.S. bourgeois press, and even much of the Left, has represented Steadman Fagoth, who is fighting on the side of the *contras*, as the real leader of the Nicaraguan Indians. How much support does he really have?

Rivera: The Sandinistas themselves say Fagoth is the leader. But he is an aberration and we have been fighting to isolate him from the Indian question.

If you talked to our exiles in Honduras, you would see what they feel for Fagoth. He no longer represents Indian people; he is just fighting for personal ambition, for U.S. interests, for *contra* interests. Our people have

learned from that situation and don't want Fagoth.

The *contras* are our enemy. They consider these peace negotiations to be against their interests and they're trying to destroy us. Also, the U.S. government is not happy with this peace process.

GH: The Sandinista government is currently promoting a Miskitu group called MISATAN as the "representative body of the indigenous group." Would you care to comment?

Rivera: All this means is that the Nicaraguans want to get the Indians on their side to justify their position, since the Indian issue is just and has international credibility. The government created MISATAN, which is something like the Bureau of Indian Affairs here, ruled by some Indians who have sold out to government interests.

The Sandinistas say that the assembly that created MISATAN represented 63 villages. They refer to the Tasba Pri forced relocation villages. You can analyze how the Indians would organize themselves if they were in a normal situation.

Also, if MISATAN is the legitimate representative of the Indians, and has the solution to the problem, why are the Sandinistas talking to MISURASATA? MISURASATA is the Indian power.

GH: What do you think of the FSP's position that it's necessary to defend the FSLN against U.S. imperialism while at the same time supporting the Indians against the disastrous policy of the FSLN?

Rivera: I know of no other organization but the FSP which is trying to reconcile the positions of support for

the Indians' interests with protection of the revolution, and trying to bring together the two sides, always maintaining the interests of the people of the region.

The most important thing we can do is protect the revolution. And one of the most sensitive issues in Nicaragua is the Sandinistas' conflict with the Miskitu, Sumo, and Rama. It undermines the ideals of the revolution, and the Sandinistas are losing a lot of credibility by their treatment of the Indians.

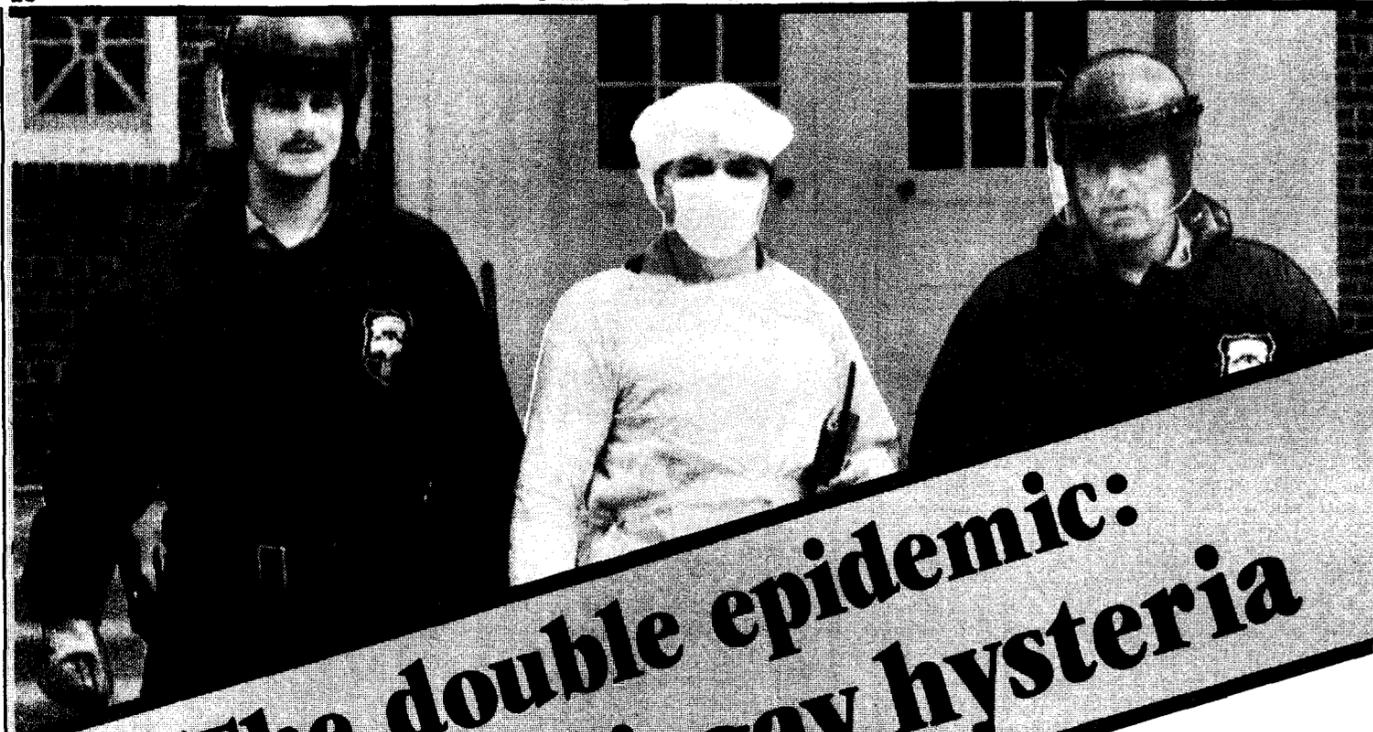
Nicaragua has a particular importance to the whole of Central America. If the revolution fails, then there will be no other revolution in Latin America.

In my opinion, you should continue approaching the FSLN, pressuring them to make a serious effort to make just peace with the Indian people. It's not just a matter of admitting they made a mistake. The real question is what they will do now to demonstrate that the revolution includes the Indian people and their interests.

GH: So you are saying that the way to support the FSLN and the revolutionary process is to defend Indian autonomy?

Rivera: Yes! Oppressed people need to make broad alliances to struggle against the capitalist forces. But if we don't promote mutual respect, the revolution just crumbles in our midst. Our enemy will continue to take advantage of our mistakes.

To the measure that the FSLN solves the Indian question in Nicaragua, they will defend the future of the revolution, not just in Nicaragua but in the other Latin American countries. □



Owen Franken/Sygnma

The double epidemic: AIDS & anti-gay hysteria

Above: Personnel at the county jail in Westchester, New York, gear up to "combat" AIDS.

BY SUSAN WILLIAMS, M.D.

The AIDS death count is rising by leaps and bounds across the nation. Yet the bodies of those who have died could be piling up in the streets for all the U.S. government cares.

Despite the AIDS epidemic's spectacular growth rate and its huge threat to public health and safety, the government has refused to move to bring it under control. Meanwhile, rightwing reactionaries are using the crisis to fuel the destruction of the hard-won gains of the lesbian/gay movement. Like 14th century bigots who blamed the Black Death on Jews, then slaughtered half the Jews in Europe, today's bigots blame AIDS on gays.

They too are laying the groundwork for mass slaughter. Using fear of the disease in tandem with homophobic prejudice, right-wingers are whipping up a pogrom atmosphere, urging everything from quarantines to outright genocide.

The medical front

AIDS—Acquired Immunodeficiency

Syndrome—destroys the body's immune system, leaving the sufferer susceptible to serious infections and tumors.

AIDS is *not* a "gay disease." Although it struck first and hardest at gay males (72% of reported U.S. cases), hemophiliacs, intravenous drug users, Haitians, and many Blacks and Latinos are also at increased risk. In Central Africa, AIDS almost exclusively affects heterosexuals, both male and female. The disease has also killed children.

Over five thousand people have died of AIDS so far. As it spreads, the disease could affect a major portion of the general population. But the U.S. government and medical bureaucracy have *obstructed* investigation.

The epidemic was reported in 1981, but no research was federally funded until 1983. Current AIDS studies are understaffed and underfunded, yet Reagan's February budget proposes a \$10 million *cut* in funds!

The minimal funding is due to the fact that 96% of those with AIDS are also the victims of sexual and racial discrimination. It is also consistent with Reagan's policy of funding the military at the expense of health and social services.

An additional roadblock in research

progress is the capitalist nature of the medical establishment itself. The "health" industry thrives on illness. And the 1985 projected profit of \$100 million from inconclusive screening tests for AIDS does not offer much incentive for finding a *cure* for the disease. In addition, cutthroat competition in medical research has led to wasteful duplication of efforts and esoteric investigations that are not aimed at stopping AIDS.

The rightwing plague

Reactionaries look on AIDS as a heaven-sent boon.

Nationwide, lesbian/gay rights legislation has fallen victim to the AIDS panic. Gay men and people with AIDS increasingly face firings and denial of medical services. They have also been denied entry into the country. Reagan administration officials have "seriously discussed" *mass* job firings and concentration-camp "quarantine" for known gays.

Already, quarantine laws have been used in Connecticut and in Europe to jail those with AIDS or forcibly isolate them in special hospitals. U.S. health officers need only "probable cause" to mandate jail or quarantine for a person they believe could spread disease.

Mass *murder* has been publicly advocated by hate-mongers like Paul Cameron, a self-proclaimed psychologist from Nebras-

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Voice of Revolutionary Feminism

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