



Vioujard/Gamma/Liaison

Adolfo Suárez (right) with King Juan Carlos.



J. Bilbao/Cambio 16

Cops in Renteria disperse demonstrators protesting murder of two men by the Guardia Civil during May "Amnesty Week" in Basque region.

After Spanish Elections

Suárez' Sham Democracy

Immediately following the Spanish parliamentary elections on June 15, the first such balloting the country has seen in 41 years, the Western media rushed to praise "a job well done" (*New York Times*) and proclaim Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez the victor. The Spanish liberal bourgeoisie patted itself on the back on being admitted to the "Club of the Democratic Nations of the World" (*Cambio 16*, 26 June), and announced that "henceforth, Francoism belongs to history and it is hopeless to seek to revive it" (*El País*, 17 June).

Having been entered in the social register of imperialist "democracy," the Suárez government has proclaimed its reforms a success, supposedly marking the peaceful transition from dictatorship to freedom. Now it is time to "get on with the job," cleaning up odds and ends such as a new constitution, passage of an austerity plan to meet the burgeoning economic crisis, and granting limited regional autonomy to the Basque and Catalan provinces, all according to the cabinet's timetable. The duty of the Spanish citizenry, consequently, is to get off the streets, leave politics to the politicians and go back to work.

Much of the left has also interpreted the June 15 vote as a victory against Francoism. Suárez' party, the Union of the Democratic Center (UCD), received only 34 percent of the vote and under half the seats in the Cortes (parliament). The Socialists (PSOE), and Communists (PCE), on the other hand, received 29 percent and 9 percent of the vote respectively, and an absolute majority or close to it in the major cities. This augurs well for the municipal elections scheduled for the fall. Consequently, the ostensibly Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel has

concluded that "the Spanish bourgeoisie was compelled to liquidate the Francoist dictatorship" (*Inprecor*, 23 June). *Lutte Ouvrière* (11 June) in France announced in advance that, "tomorrow Spain will have a parliamentary regime, and ultimately little will distinguish it from the traditional European bourgeois democracies."

A Semi-Bonapartist Regime

In reality, the Juan Carlos monarchy has deep roots in Francoism and Suárez' "Spanish democracy" masks a strong-state regime with more than a few holdovers from the Caudillo's four-decades-long rule. While some of the special repressive apparatuses inherited from the dictatorship have been dismantled or reorganized (e.g., the Tribunals of Public Order), others remain (Guardia Civil, armed police, anti-riot brigade, secret police, etc.). Even the *New York Times* (19 June) felt compelled to note that, "Spain has far to go... in excising or remodeling many vestiges of authoritarian rule."

As to what *Cambio 16* termed "almost-free elections," all the "far-left" parties, some separatists and the rival monarchist Carlists were excluded from participating in their own names. This could lead to a post-election crackdown directed at these sectors. Moreover, those groups advocating active boycott of the elections were legally prohibited from holding meetings during the election campaign, and the press law is so stiff that the liberal Madrid newspaper *Diario 16* was seized four days before the election on charges of defaming right-wing boss Manuel Fraga Iribarne.

The electoral law was heavily weighted toward conservative (rural-based) parties, and under the existing

fundamental law the prime minister (whose term does not run out until 1981) is responsible only to the king. The reformists are talking hopefully of the new Cortes "taking on constituent characteristics," but according to this same Francoist constitution it is prohibited from laying a finger on the army, the monarchy or "national integrity."

The American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), as well as the liberal press generally, claim that "the main neo-Francoist party received a humiliating 8.3 percent of the vote" (*Militant*, 1 July). Fraga's Popular Alliance (AP) certainly suffered a sharp defeat, with such luminaries of the Francoist Bunker as former prime minister Carlos Arias Navarro defeated in Madrid. The so-called "ultra-Bunker" alliance of fascists and falangists did even worse, receiving only 0.35 percent of the vote.

However, it is false to view the AP as the only Francoist party, and in any case it is hardly "neo." There is nothing "center" about the UCD except its name, and it is made up of notables and upper-level government officials who have exchanged their blue shirts and Roman salutes for more respectable attire befitting those who today extol the virtues of democracy. Suárez himself was the former head of the Francoist umbrella organization, the National Movement.

The electoral defeat of the far right and the 40 percent of the vote won by the workers parties have certainly encouraged the laboring masses in Spain. However, an evaluation of the significance of the elections must take into account above all the Suárez reform scheme, in which this restricted balloting was the *pièce de résistance*. The vote tally itself was at most a standoff, for while the UCD does not have an

absolute majority it is still close enough to be able to form a minority government. But the fact that the elections were brought off successfully, without disturbances or charges of pervasive fraud and with favorable international reception, represents a major step toward the consolidation of a Gaullist-style "strong state." In this key respect the June 15 elections represented a victory for Suárez.

The Francoist dictatorship was a corporatist regime resting fundamentally on the army (rather than a fascist regime, based on masses of enraged petty bourgeois, as was falsely claimed by sectors of the Spanish left). Now much of the Francoist superstructure has been dismantled, as the vertical syndicates (CNS) are reorganized, the National Movement dissolved, etc. Now there are institutions which at least purport to represent the democratic choice of the population, although their actual powers are slim and a sizable section of both chambers of the Cortes is appointed by the king. Yet the army remains untouched and untouchable, exercising powerful influence behind the scenes and ready to intervene openly on a moment's notice. Like the early Gaullist Fifth Republic in France after 1958 or the Karamanlis government in Greece since 1974, the Juan Carlos/Suárez reforms have established a semi-bonapartist regime in Spain, although still quite unstable.

This is above all due to the defeat of the massive working-class political strikes and demonstrations which repeatedly brought hundreds of thousands into the streets against the dictatorship. It is due to the active cooperation of the reformist misleaders of the Spanish proletariat, who consciously limited and sabotaged these struggles in return for royal assurances of democratic reform. As a result, the Carrillos and González have their seats in the Cortes, but the masses do not have even bourgeois democracy, much less the proletarian democracy which would enable the working people to genuinely intervene in determining and implementing the affairs of state. What the king and the army give, they can also take away. ■

LETTER FROM SOLEDAD

The "Lumpen Vanguard" Myth...6

The Racist Killing Goes On

Soweto Bleeds

On June 16, 1976, police bullets ripped the body of Hector Peterson. The 13-year-old Soweto school boy was the first to die in six months of mass upheaval against the white supremacist South African state.

A year later, the killing goes on, and South Africa's largest urban labor compound continues to writhe in agony. Unemployment and inflation keep climbing, fostering fierce job competition, a staggering crime rate, near starvation and a maelstrom of bitter, violent hatred for the apartheid system.

Soweto youths marked the anniversary of the massacre with memorial meetings and school boycotts, but their non-violence did not prevent police attacks. The students defended themselves with rocks, firebombs and hastily erected barricades, repeatedly clashing with police patrols enforcing a ban on protest demonstrations. The cops even fired tear gas shells into a Roman Catholic church where a commemorative service was taking place.

This year Prime Minister B.J. Vorster's stormtroopers have been praised for their restraint. According to government statistics, they have murdered *only* about a dozen blacks in Soweto and the East Cape township of Kabah in the last two weeks! This so-called "minimum force" policy has involved the massive encirclement of several black townships by police armed with submachine guns and backed by army paratroopers. Nearly 600 militants have been subjected to preventive detention or arrest (many of them sentenced to public flogging).

The most audacious protest took place this week in Johannesburg, the industrial metropolis which taps Soweto's labor supply. Hundreds of young blacks slipped past the police cordons, converging on John Vorster Square where hundreds of their brothers and sisters languish in jail. With fists raised they chanted slogans calling for release of political prisoners, especially 20 Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC) leaders who had been rounded up. Hand-lettered placards denounced



Militant youth protest cop attacks against memorial meetings on anniversary of 1976 Soweto rebellion. UPI

the school system as "education for slavery."

Furious at being caught off guard, police brutally dispersed the march, arresting 146 demonstrators and beating many to a pulp. Inability to contain anti-apartheid protests with an overwhelming military presence prompted the local police commander to announce an end to the "low-key" approach (relying on non-lethal weapons of repression) and a return to the indiscriminate butchery which produced over 600 deaths during the rebellions that convulsed the townships last summer.

As they did several times during last year's unrest, the SSRC called for a three-day general strike. It was reportedly 40 to 50 percent effective on June 16 but quickly tapered off. The failure to strongly mobilize black workers underscores the underlying weakness of the "black consciousness movement"—its lack of a program to link the struggle for democratic rights with the mobilization of the social power of the black proletariat around its class interests.

In the absence of a revolutionary working-class party or even a significant black trade-union movement in the Witwatersrand area, leadership of anti-apartheid struggles has fallen by default to the students. In a city where the majority of the population is less than 25 years old, the crisis of leadership has been perceived as a generational conflict between the high school students and the quisling Urban Bantu Council (UBC), the advisory governmental body which "represents" the masses of Soweto. Worsening living conditions have discredited the UBC to the point that a majority of its members resigned in early June. However, the students have been unable to win the active allegiance of Soweto's 300,000 workers.

Deepening unemployment, as the South African economy languishes in

the third year of recession, has sparked cut-throat job competition. Desperate, hungry workers gather each morning at the Johannesburg Labour Office, thrusting out work permits, begging the chance to work an entire day to earn little more than the price of a meal and railroad ticket back to a crowded, unlit shanty in Soweto. Company labor contractors often recruit on a tribal basis, thereby exacerbating tensions within the black population. During one general strike last August, the police attempted with some success to mobilize migrant Zulu workers against student pickets and roadblocks.

As the dead end of their "strategy" of racial self-assertion and spontaneous urban rebellion becomes increasingly evident, many "black consciousness" militants are joining the outlawed African National Congress (ANC). In recent months, hundreds of young exiles have fled to ANC camps in Tanzania, where they are said to be undergoing guerrilla training. This is part of the two-pronged ANC/Communist Party (CP) strategy for driving the ultrareactionary Nationalist Party from power. They hope that a combination of imperialist economic sanctions and harassing guerrilla actions will disrupt the social fabric sufficiently to panic the ruling class into a change of regimes and liberalized policies in which to pursue by increments the vague ultimate goal of "majority rule." Historic authority allows the ANC to claim hegemony at least among the urbanized blacks in South Africa, but it has not provided a program that can marshal the latent power of the non-white working masses to achieve their liberation from white-supremacist rule.

The forging of a proletarian vanguard party will require the sharpest struggle against these petty-bourgeois nationalists and their Stalinist mentors. Trotskyist revolutionists must point out that the



South African cops armed with tear gas grenades move in on black youth demonstrating in Soweto. AP



Demonstrators flee tear gas barrage last week. UPI

ANC's vociferous denunciation of Vorster's retribalization Bantustan schemes is rendered hollow by its long courtship of Zulu paramount chief Gatsha Buthelezi. It must be made clear that the utter defeat of ANC guerrilla operations during a decade and a half of "armed struggle" demonstrates the impotence of such a strategy against this industrially advanced power with its large oppressor caste armed to the teeth. And it must be repeatedly stressed that the ANC/CP's guerrillaist talk is just as much aimed at prodding the "conscience" of sections of the white bourgeoisie as were the pacifist protests of the 1950's.

Neither the "black consciousness" student movement nor the traditional nationalist leaders can show the way forward to the Soweto protesters. The liberation of the oppressed non-white masses of South Africa awaits the construction of a Trotskyist party rooted in the black and "Coloured" (mixed-race) proletariat. Such a party will centrally pose the struggle for democratic demands—abolition of the pass laws and all racialist legislation, end of job reservations, equal pay at the highest levels, full trade-union and political rights for blacks, destruction of the Bantustan system, redistribution of land and a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage—aimed at destroying the apartheid police-state regimentation which sharply impedes the mobilization of the oppressed blacks. It must be stressed that these democratic demands can be won only through the organization of the powerful working class around the struggle for its own class rule. For a black-centered workers and peasants government which expropriates industry and finance and extends the revolution internationally throughout black Africa! ■

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Silver Jubilee—A Carnival of Reaction

Down with the Monarchy and the Union Jack!

It is 25 years since the coronation of Elizabeth II of England, "Queen by the Grace of God and Defender of the Faith." And her Silver Jubilee is celebrated with royal pomp, nauseating sycophancy and national-chauvinist rejoicing over an institution which should have been abolished centuries ago (and once was, with a headsman's axe).

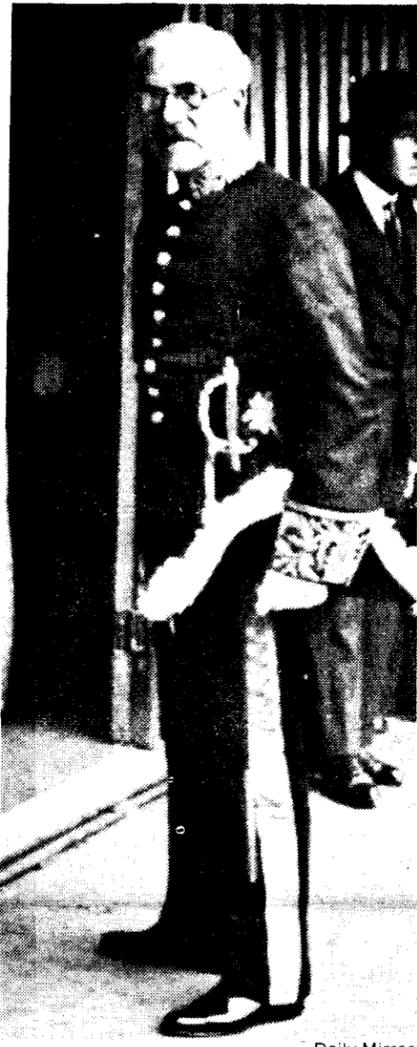
As this impoverished island writhes in the death agony of British imperialism, the Queen's portrait and the Union Jack are everywhere. "Her Majesty"—drawn on mugs, embossed on ashtrays, etched on glass, sewn on clothes—gazes "serenely" down upon her humble "subjects"; the Union Jack, once the arrogant symbol of a great colonial power and still the emblem of imperialist patriotism, waves from the windows of houses and in the numerous street festivals in honor of the Queen.

The British are sensitively self-conscious about the anachronism of a monarchy in an advanced industrial nation, a monarchy still maintained in the lavish style to which it became accustomed in ages gone by. The tone for the monarchy's modern apologists was set more than a century ago by historian Walter Bagehot, who provided a rationale for the mission of British imperialism: "Above all things our royalty is revered. Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic." Today, in this corroded empire when the masses of working people find increasing difficulty in putting meagre subsistence on the table, the job of keeping out the "daylight" is more difficult but not less important for the ruling class.

Today "reverence" is mixed with an appeal to the Queen's "decent civility," her sense of "duty" and familial responsibility. She is pushed as a symbol of past imperialist "glory" and the "civilized way" to endure the present hardships of the decayed empire. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* (6 June) editorialized:

"The Queen is a nice woman who likes horses, dogs and children.... A thoroughly nice woman.

"But a slight little figure, too, who is the symbol of Magna Carta and habeas corpus and trial by jury and courage and dignity and responsibility and



Daily Mirror



Syndication International

Top left: Ramsey MacDonald, who headed the governing Labour Party, donned full royal plumage when invited to Buckingham Palace in 1927. In 1931 he would allow the king to help "arrange" the popular front coalition with the Tories.

Above: The queen addresses her "subjects" at her "Silver Jubilee," a festival of national chauvinist reaction.

Below: The monarch rides in a golden coach to and from the palace. Such lavish display helps the British ruling class assert the principle of class privilege.



Paul Harris/Photographers International

doing your duty even when it is boring and even when it is dangerous. Centuries. The Crown. The people. All in the slight figure which, when it passes, blurs the eyes and puts a choke in the throat of even some republicans.

"Our Sovereign Lady the Queen. Bless her. Bless her."

But for some, the "choke in the throat" when the Queen passes might be nausea. So a less obviously sentimental approach to the "magic" of monarchy has been developed: the Queen is good show and a lift for the tourist trade. On U.S. television commercials for British Airways, actor Robert Morley bids for England's piece of the American tourist market. He suggests that the Silver Jubilee, with its solemn ceremonies, palaces and golden coaches, makes England a Disneyesque "Fantasyland" for Americans brought up to believe that kings and queens are creatures like their fairytale counterparts: sorcerers, witches and trolls. Meanwhile liberals slightly embarrassed by the trappings of feudal hierarchy offer a simpler justifi-

cation: "The Jubilee is a benign event. It does no harm" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 12 June).

A Queen for All Reasons?

Does the monarchy do any real harm? After all, says its apologists, it has no power. The monarchy no longer represents feudalism as an economic-social order. The tyranny of kings has been replaced by the tyranny of capital. The *Economist* magazine points out that despite her visible crown the Queen would not dare echo Richard Nixon's "If I do it, it's legal."

But the monarchy performs important functions for the British ruling class. First of all, it serves an ideological purpose as a popular focus for national chauvinism and reaction. British ideologues argue that the Queen is a symbol of an advanced civilization, of general social achievement and—especially—of class harmony. The bourgeois economic order replaced the feudal one, they say, but look how well

we retain our continuity with the past! The English social revolution, which came early and was somewhat truncated, makes for a pretty, if inapplicable, myth of class peace: the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie which supplanted it reached accord and became the Establishment, embodied in the monarchy, the House of Lords and the Established Church.

The Queen thus represents the British counterpart to the American myth that U.S. society is classless. In England it is manifestly impossible to deny the existence of class-based inequality. So the ruling class maintains that while there are classes, and there may be shifts in the class structure, *there must be no class struggle*. The monarchy is the living and familiar sign that there is a grossly unequal social place for everyone, and that this is historical and inevitable. That is why the Queen is treated with such dignity, why this cow is sacred.

There is plenty of talk about the privilege of the monarchy, but it is nearly always cast in the arguments that anti-monarchist liberals have raised since the nineteenth century: it is a waste of money. But it is not the amount of money that makes the monarchy reactionary; the function of the money is to flamboyantly assert social privilege. For the bourgeoisie, it's cheap at the price.

So the Queen, who really believes in the monarchy, maintains a costly, stuffy sense of that privilege. Her "right" to feed her six Corgi dogs out of little silver bowls once derived from "god"; now it derives from capital, but it is all the same to her royal highness. She still has her castles (one with 365 rooms), ornate gold carriage, servants, race horses, royal yacht and airplane, Keeper of the Swans—and of course her personal stock portfolio, tax-free by statute. No one really knows exactly how much the

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Shachtmanite Orphans Look for Home...

RMC Seeks "Fusion" with SWP

The Detroit-based Revolutionary Marxist Committee (RMC), a rightward-moving Shachtmanite formation and one of a series of splits from the now faltering Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL), has announced its intention of seeking to enter the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The rationales for this move are contained in a long and interesting document entitled "For Trotskyist Unity" (*Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 14). For its part the ex-Trotskyist SWP seems willing enough to consummate such a unification if only the RMC will meet several organizational conditions.

Significantly the SWP does not make the "fusion" dependent upon the RMC dropping its deep-rooted opposition to the Trotskyist policy of unconditional military defense of the USSR in conflict with imperialism. Why should it? The SWP long ago abandoned this central plank of the Trotskyist program in deeds if not in words. Especially now, while it is shamefully tailing U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade, the SWP will no doubt find it useful to admit into membership a tendency that holds a position historically linked to a social-patriotic adaptation to American imperialism. Just as the SWP's reformism demanded the expulsion of the pro-guerrillaist centrists of the Internationalist Tendency (IT), likewise the ex-Trotskyist SWP reformists find it convenient to admit these hardened Shachtmanites into their party. This fusion is intended primarily as a statement to the bourgeoisie, the labor bureaucracy and mainstream social democrats—notably the Harringtonite Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC)—of the kind of social-democratic grab bag the SWP has become.

The reformist SWP still finds its Trotskyist heritage to be a useful veneer, however. Trotsky's proletarian revolutionary struggle against Stalinism is falsified and advanced as a justification for what in fact is a Stalinophobic reconciliation with U.S. imperialism. What else can be made out of the solidarity with Soviet dissidents of the stripe of Sakharov, Bukovsky, and Amalrik, all of whom assign to U.S. imperialism the task of struggling against Stalinism in the name of "democracy" and "human rights"? It is precisely for the same reason, to demonstrate their democratic "respectability" and thus hopefully make themselves more acceptable to their "own" bourgeoisies, that "Eurocommunists" such as Spanish Communist Party leader Carrillo flirt with the idea of "rehabilitating" Trotsky.

The SWP is thus compelled, despite the evident congruence between its practice and the Shachtmanite policies of the RMC, to justify, at least internally, a fusion which stands in flat contradiction to its seldom-stated *paper* program. This contradiction is noted early on in SWP leader Larry Siegle's "Report on Revolutionary Marxist Committee Fusion Proposal" (*SWP Internal Discussion Bulletin*, May 1977). Concerning the RMC's position on the Russian question, Siegle notes:

"Their [the RMC's] view on the Soviet Union is not just a matter of what stand to take in the event of a full-scale attack on the Soviet Union by imperialism—which, to be practical, might not leave anybody much time to take a position at all. But this is a question which comes up everyday. It comes up right now. Every issue of the *Militant* that writes about Carter's latest gambit on the arms talks has a line different than theirs'

Everything we write and say about Stalinism, about events in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Vietnam, or East Europe, involves at its heart these basic differences."

Given Joe Hansen's recent writings on "disarmament" in the *Militant* there is a strong temptation to point out that brother Siegle spoke too soon. But as if to adumbrate Hansen's social-pacifistic "third camp" line on the question of Soviet nuclear armaments, Siegle hastens to add:

"We don't believe that their state capitalist theory and the political positions that flow from it pose an absolute barrier to membership in the party." [our emphasis]

Apparently not! Siegle would have been more accurate if he said that the "third camp" positions of the RMC, far from being an absolute barrier to SWP membership, are in fact what makes the RMC/SWP unity waltz conceivable. For the SWP today, an absolute barrier to membership would be, on the contrary, a firm insistence on the Trotskyist policy of unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialism.

The SWP: 1957 and 1977

This is the first group coming into the SWP since the 1957 fusion with the left wing of the Young Socialist League (YSL), the youth group of Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist League (ISL). The comparison between that fusion and the one being proposed with the RMC is instructive. In 1957 the left wing of the YSL broke with Shachtmanism and came over to the Trotskyist program of the SWP, including on Soviet defensism. Both the experience of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the first stages of an anti-Stalinist proletarian political revolution, and the drive by Shachtman to liquidate the ISL/YSL into the "State Department socialist" Socialist Party/Social Democratic Federation (SP/SDF) impelled the YSL left opposition to join the then still-revolutionary SWP.

In 1957, it was the Shachtmanites that raised the slogan of "Down With Totalitarianism, East and West!" Today, it is the SWP's presidential candidate Peter Camejo who tells the U.S. House Intelligence Committee: "We are opposed to totalitarianism everywhere in the world, whether in the USSR or in Spain." In 1957, Shachtman liquidated his organization into social democracy and went on to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by Kennedy's CIA. In 1977, right-wing Shachtmanites, sensing the SWP has no operational differences with the program of Shachtmanism, propose to enter the SWP in order to resolve the few remaining contradictions between the SWP's paper program and its reformist appetites. Once again we see that "third camp" politics lead to adaptation to social-patriotic reconciliation with imperialism.

Between the still-Trotskyist SWP of 1957 and the social-patriotic, reformist SWP of 1977 stands the struggle of the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) of the SWP, the political forebear of the Spartacist League (SL). The RT crystallized in part out of the former leadership of the left wing of the YSL in opposition to the SWP's capitulation to Pabloism which first found expression in the SWP leadership's uncritical tailing of black nationalism and Castroism. Unable to tolerate the RT's revolutionary politics the SWP leadership was forced to dirty its hands and expell the RT for its

political ideas. This 1963 expulsion compelled the SWP leadership to *break* with the historic norms of internal party democracy in the Trotskyist movement and to revise its organizational rules, in effect by outlawing factions.

The justification for the 1963 expulsion of the RT was codified after the fact in 1965 when the SWP adopted the resolution "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party." This resolution, drafted by Cannon, Dobbs and Novack, was intended as an answer to "For the Right of Tendencies to Exist Within the Party," submitted by RT leaders Shane Mage, James Robertson and Geoff White in March 1963. By that time the SWP had taken a long step toward the banning of inner-party tendencies. The 1965 resolution effectively finished the job. Under the guise of reasserting the norms of the SWP guiding the regulation of inner-party discussion, "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party" advanced the following syllogism: 1. Factions are permitted in the SWP. 2. Factionalists are disloyal people. 3. Disloyal people are expelled.

Today in 1977, facing a prospective fusion with a politically aggressive tendency, the SWP leadership turns back to its 1965 resolution. In discussing what the SWP means by fusion Siegle observes: "The party can only be built on loyalty.... It can only be built if its members are loyal to the party, not to some tendency or grouping *inside* the party.... If the RMCers understand and agree with this, then all other problems will work themselves out" (our emphasis). The RMC, which hopes to enter the SWP as a tendency, is worried. Its "For Trotskyist Unity" states:

"We will only accept a fusion which is democratic, a fusion which recognizes our rights as a tendency as well as our responsibilities...."

"The problem we are concerned with in the SWP is a far cry from Stalinist bureaucratism. Certain well established democratic rights are reserved for minorities and are respected. The main problem we see is the majority leadership's refusal to systematically define and honor an entire range of tendency rights—right to exist between conventions, to hold tendency meetings, to circulate internal tendency documents, etc.—which have not been formalized in party procedure. This omission makes loyal behavior on the part of oppositions difficult regardless of the intentions of such oppositions. This kind of disturbing practice can and should be examined in the course of fusion discussions."

"SL Baggage"

The SWP leadership is somewhat worried about the RMC. What are its politics? What does the RMC have in mind? Siegle is especially concerned about "sectarian baggage" the RMC is alleged to have inherited from the SL. Referring to those organizations to the left of the SWP, Siegle launches into a diatribe against the SL:

"This land of Oz is inhabited by groups such as the Class Struggle League, Tom Cagle's Socialist League, the RSL and the Spartacist League. The Spartacist League, the largest of these grouplets, sets the tone of fanatical sectarianism and deep hostility to the independent struggles of the oppressed nationalities and women, and developments like the Steelworkers Fight Back. This milieu is also stamped indelibly with the Spartacists' parasite approach to politics, in which any living struggle becomes merely another occasion for the Spartacists to denounce as opportunists anyone who wants to build any movement outside of the Spartacist League."

What the SWP is howling about is the

SL's principled insistence on the necessity to construct a Leninist combat party to lead the working class in struggle against the bourgeoisie and its ideological agents in the workers movement. The SL's exposure of the SWP's opportunist tailing of labor fakers, petty-bourgeois feminists and nationalist hucksters makes comrade Siegle uncomfortable. Too bad! The SL, contrary to the wishful thinking of the SWP leadership, is not about to go away.

Siegle and the SWP would like to fuse with the RMC. Unfortunately they fear that it has been infected by the SL:

"It is obvious... that the RMC is still carrying some of their [the SL's] sectarian baggage. It often seems that they try to find a position somewhere between us and the Spartacist League. For instance, they disagree with the Spartacists on the question of demanding that federal troops be sent to Boston to defend Black schoolchildren. They say we are correct on that. But then they feel compelled to attack us for not raising forcefully enough [i.e., not at all] the idea of self-defense, and they use the Spartacists' 'labor-Black defense' slogan."

Obviously what the SWP leadership intends, therefore, is to harden the RMC against the SL's authentic Trotskyism, while offering its own abandonment in practice of Soviet defensism as a bridge to absorbing this Shachtmanite clot. And the RMC membership, at least, may well be demoralized enough to go for it.

Fusion à la RMC

The SWP badly wants the fusion with the RMC to prove to the labor fakers and social democrats that they can all coexist happily in the same organizational framework. At the same time it fears it will be politically incapable of handling the hardened Shachtmanite RMC. But what does the RMC intend? After disclaiming any "entry" perspective the RMC lays out its ideas. "We want a genuine *long-term* fusion of our cadres with the SWP's" (our emphasis). "For Trotskyist Unity" proceeds, explaining:

"This is not a proposal for the liquidation of the RMC as a tendency. We continue to have important differences with the SWP and the United Secretariat as a whole.... We have not abandoned these positions but have only changed our estimation of the possibility of coexisting within the SWP and the United Secretariat *despite* these differences and of actively seeking to win support for our views in a loyal and comradely fashion."

Some fusion perspective! No wonder Barnes & Co. stand ready to wheel out

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IMG Turns Lenin into a Menshevik

LONDON—On 9 June the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), changed the name and format of its weekly press. In itself this was not a remarkable occurrence, for these political chameleons have changed hues many times. What is noteworthy is the IMG Pabloists' current "unity offensive" towards other pseudo-Trotskyist centrists, a maneuver in which the appearance of *Socialist Challenge* is intended to play a major part. While the "offensive" appears to be stillborn, this has not stopped the IMG from aggressively attacking Leninist-Trotskyist orthodoxy on the key question of democratic centralism—all in the hope of attracting a motley handful of "state-capitalist" Mensheviks. In the process they have sought, in a series of "theoretical" essays, to turn Lenin himself into a unity-at-all-costs Menshevik.

The Dwarf and the Mole

The new paper will certainly differ less from *Red Weekly* than the *Black Dwarf* and early *Red Mole* differed from their predecessor, the *Week*. The *Week*, a duplicated newsletter reflecting the views of British USec supporters, was a staid paper devoted to entry work in the Labour Party. The rationale for these policies was described by IMG honcho Tariq Ali (the new editor of *Socialist Challenge*):

"The I.M.G. was formally constituted in 1965; its early life was dominated by the Labour Party and its strategy premised on the emergence of a left current inside the Labour Party which would raise the banners of revolt against the Wilson clique. This never took place despite the vicious and reactionary policies of the Wilson administration. Thus the policy of 'waiting for lefty' had to be adjusted."
—*The Coming British Revolution* (1972)

The "adjustment" was certainly sharp. Ali, who joined the IMG in April 1968, immediately took the editorship of an "underground-sixties" style fortnightly, the *Black Dwarf*. The *Dwarf* featured pin-up posters of Che and headlines like "STUDENTS—THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD" (in giant type). Ali opined in an editorial on the *Dwarf*'s first anniversary that the paper should be "audacious and yes, vulgar." Another favourite was "We Shall Fight, We Will Win, Paris, London, Rome, Berlin." Ah, those were heady times, and the IMG became the epitome of New Left student vanguardism which effectively wrote off the working class.

But while, as Ali wrote later of the *Dwarf*, "its politics were similar to those of the I.M.G.," not all members of the paper's staff were IMGers. In March 1970, five members of the *Dwarf*'s editorial crew left to start the *Red Mole*, openly linked to the IMG, though again with non-members on the editorial board and with a style and programme very close to the *Black Dwarf*. It was during the lifetime of the *Mole*, roughly in 1972, that the IMG's present less flamboyant petty-bourgeois workerism took hold. With the inveterate impressionism of Tariq Ali & Co., this shift can be traced directly to the heightening of class struggle in Britain, most notably the fight to free the Pentonville Five (construction workers arrested for militant picketing).

"Euro-Pabloism"

The IMG has advertised its new offspring as a "non-sectarian polemical paper" which would "advocate and fight for the unity of the revolutionary left" (*Red Weekly*, 21 April). In a special four-page pull-out dated 19 May it lamented at great length the divisions in the "revolutionary left"—"expulsions and splits occur daily over tactical questions"—

proclaiming in "non-sectarian" tones, "The main task which *Socialist Challenge* has set itself is the fight for a unified revolutionary organisation in Britain." This aim is spelled out in more detail in the first issue of the revamped paper:

"We believe that there are hundreds and thousands of workers who are responsive to the initiative of the far left, but are repelled by its lack of unity. That is why we will continue to appeal to other organisations to participate on the Editorial Board of this paper and help to shape its future. We do not believe that any revolutionary socialist organisation today is a party or even the sole nucleus of a future party. To pretend otherwise leads to sectarian posturing."

—*Socialist Challenge*, 9 June

Aficionados of the zigging and zagging of the USec will recognize here the unmistakable imprint of the Mandelite majority's endless quest to become one with a fabled "new mass/broad vanguard." When *Rouge*, the newspaper of the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, went daily last year it announced that a "large place" would be reserved for "an open tribune where all those who in some way represent the broad vanguard can express their point of view."

This "vanguard" was once taken to encompass an amorphous body of unorganised radical youth, but with the rise of popular frontism in southern Europe over the last few years USec leaders have increasingly oriented toward "broad" coalitions of organisations to the left of the mass Communist parties. On the continent this has led to participation in the popular-frontist Portuguese FUR, the Italian Democrazia Proletaria, an electoral bloc in France with Lutte Ouvrière and a "critical Maoist" group, and most recently the Spanish FUT. Not inclined to be left out of the action, the IMG in the inaugural edition of *Socialist Challenge* called for "socialist unity candidates," which should be "representative of the class struggle in their area."

But there is another purpose behind this "Euro-Pabloist" "unity offensive." Pledging *Socialist Challenge* to the "battle against sectarianism," Tariq Ali denounced "confusion and incorrect positions" on what the IMG terms the "party-faction question," remarking that, "even where there are differences of a programmatic nature, this does not automatically warrant separate organisations" (*Red Weekly*, 19 May). The considerable political distance between the two main wings of the USec—Ernest Mandel's centrist International Majority Tendency (IMT) and the reformist Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) led by the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—has become so excruciatingly obvious, with both sides denouncing each other in public and following diametrically opposite lines on a host of issues, that the partners in this rotten bloc are having trouble justifying the very existence of such a grotesque parody of the Fourth International.

But neither side is willing to take responsibility for the split or give up the pretension to be the FI. So the IMT and

LTF are now avidly seeking to pack in potential allies. The SWP is pushing for admission of the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste to the USec, while IMT sections are all looking for fusions with other "far left" centrists. To be sure, a genuine Trotskyist vanguard would seek out openings for a Leninist regroupment, on the basis of *hard programmatic struggle for consistent Marxist policies*. But the USec, lacking anything remotely resembling a coherent line, invites all and sundry to join its swamp of permanent factions, tendencies and cliques.

The Bolsheviks: Faction and Party

Attempting to justify this promiscuous unity-mongering, the IMG has undertaken a fundamental revision of the history of Leninism. Lenin—who in 1905 wrote, "go ahead everywhere and in the most vigorous manner with the split, a split, and again a split"—is transformed into a unity-above-all-else conciliator:

"No Bolshevik Party was created in 1903. What was created was the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.

"Furthermore, not merely was no Bolshevik party formed at this time, but Lenin was relentlessly against any split into two parties. His struggle after 1903 was a political and ideological faction struggle against the Mensheviks and simultaneously a struggle for a unified Party against what he termed the 'anarchistic' actions of the Mensheviks, which threatened the Party with a split....

"Furthermore the actual split into two different parties through the expulsion of various elements did not take place because of the Mensheviks' political views, but because of a rejection and violation of the organisational principles of the Party...." (our emphasis)
—*Red Weekly*, 26 February 1976

Later in the year, the IMG started off its theoretical supplement to *Red Weekly* in the same vein. A lengthy article entitled "The Bolshevik Faction and the Fight for the Party" (*Red Weekly*, 11 November 1976) asserted that "the political differences which Lenin and Trotsky considered could be contained within a united organisation were vastly greater than those which divide the organisations of the revolutionary left in Britain today."

This reading of Bolshevik history deliberately suppresses the evolution of Lenin from a revolutionary social democrat and left-Kautskyan to the founder of the Communist International. In practice in Russia, Lenin strove to create a disciplined, programmatically homogeneous revolutionary vanguard. Until World War I, however, he did not break in principle with the Kautskyan doctrine of the "party of the whole class." The resolution of that dialectical contradiction was one of the important elements creating Leninism as the Marxism of this epoch.

The 1903 split, in which Lenin's impulse toward an exclusive vanguard is indisputable, was ragged and explained by him at the time by reference to the particularities of the Russian situation, specifically the need to operate in conditions of total illegality. In 1906, in part under pressure from the authoritative German leadership of the Second International, a formal unity was effected. Lenin accepted this on orthodox Kautskyan grounds, namely that all tendencies in the proletariat should be in the party. For example he wrote at this time:

"And right up to the social revolution there will inevitably always be an opportunist and a revolutionary wing of Social Democracy."

—"The Crisis of Menshevism," December 1906

The unity of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in one party was more formal than real, as both groups organised

most mass activities independently of one another. In one of his last writings, Trotsky commented on the Bolshevik-Menshevik relation as follows:

"The Bolshevik faction led an independent existence.... In essence, the question so far as Lenin was concerned was whether it was possible to remain with Bogdanov in one and the same organization which although called a 'faction' bore all the traits of a party....

"The Bolshevik faction-party carried on the struggle against Menshevism which at that time had already revealed itself completely as a petty-bourgeois agency of the liberal bourgeoisie."

—"From a Scratch—To the Danger of Gangrene," from *In Defense of Marxism* (1940)

In the course of his polemics against the manifold unity-mongers, among whom Trotsky was one of the foremost, Lenin expressed opposition to tolerating non-Marxist opportunists (even if disciplined) in the party:

"There can be no unity, federal or other, with liberal-labour politicians, with disrupters of the working-class movement, with those who defy the will of the majority. There can and must be unity among all consistent Marxists, among all those who stand for the entire Marxist body and for the uncurtailed slogans, independently of the liquidators and apart from them.

"Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers' cause needs is the unity of Marxists, not unity between Marxists and opponents and distorters of Marxism."

—"Unity" (April 1914)

Significantly, Rosa Luxemburg opposed Lenin's de facto violation of the organisational principles of the Second International. Between 1906-11, the Luxemburg-Jogiches group supported what it viewed as the Bolshevik faction of Russian social democracy. But when Lenin moved to exclude the Mensheviks, Luxemburg broke with him on this question. Largely as a result of her prodding, the International Socialist Bureau intervened to effect a unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Lenin regarded Luxemburg's pro-"unity" role in 1912-14 as one of her gravest errors.

As for the IMG's contention that Lenin's and Trotsky's "method" was to reject a split until a historic betrayal on the magnitude of August 1914 (when the German Social Democracy voted for war credits in the imperialist war) had been committed, Trotsky destroys this

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The "Lumpen Vanguard" Myth

We print below an unsolicited article submitted for publication to WV by a black inmate at Soledad Prison, presumably in response to our recent companion articles on the film *Brothers and the politics of George Jackson* (WV No. 159, 27 May). The author had previously been exposed to the views of the Spartacist League and now writes on the test of those views against a particularly hard and brutal reality. We recommend the article to our readers as a powerful, interesting and fundamentally correct polemic against New Left and "Third Worldist" idealizations of the lumpenproletariat as a revolutionary vanguard, a polemic informed and enriched by the author's personal experience.

By way of introduction, we offer some comments on the lumpen question, particularly given the decisive importance of the oppressed black race-caste in American political life. While Marx's writings sometimes refer to the lumpenproletariat simply as criminals and other anti-social parasites (e.g., prostitutes), contemporary Leninism uses the term in a broader sense in referring to that stratum permanently removed from the process of production, the stratum Marx termed the "pauperized relative surplus-population." This is how the lumpenproletariat is described in *The ABC of Communism* by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky:

"The industrial reserve army gives examples of complete brutalisation, destitution, starvation, death, and even crime. Those who are out of work for years, gradually take to drink, become loafers, tramps, beggars, etc.... Here, we no longer find the proletariat, but a new stratum, consisting of those who have forgotten how to work. This product of capitalist society is known as the lumpenproletariat (loafer-proletariat)."

It is evident that in the U.S. chronically unemployed youth, largely black and Spanish-speaking, who have no prospect of steady work, are part of the lumpenproletariat, sharing its characteristic lifestyle and social attitudes.

Except toward hardened anti-social criminals, proletarian communists are not hostile to the lumpenized population (e.g., welfare mothers, unemployed ghetto youth). However, in sharp contrast to the Black Panthers, revolutionary Marxists have no orientation toward nor program for the lumpenproletariat as such. Rather we fight to eliminate the conditions which condemn a significant section of the black

people and others to desperate poverty, social degradation and even crime. Key to such a struggle are programmatic demands for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to open up more jobs, massive public works at union-scale wages and free, quality, universal higher education with a stipend for students. Only the mobilization of the organized labor movement can realize these demands.

While black lumpenproletarians have a social psychology similar to the lumpenproletariat in other countries, the political role available to them is fundamentally different. Many black lumpenproletarians are certainly corrupt and brutalized enough to sell themselves to political reaction; the number of black cops and prison guards indicates that. However, virulent white supremacist racial chauvinism is the ideological driving force of American political reaction. Militant reactionary movements in the U.S., above all fascism, cannot be racially integrated, just as Hitler's Nazi Party could not contain right-wing, chauvinist German Jews. Black lumpenproletarians, including criminals, will be among the first victims, not the shock troops, of American fascism.

Just as racist oppression prevents the black lumpenized population from being won to fascism, so it gives rise to anarchistic nationalist-populist formations, best represented by the Black Panther Party in the late 1960's. The Panthers were a highly contradictory phenomenon, simultaneously glorifying lumpen rage while retaining elements of a socialist program and morality, including hostility to the pervasive criminal victimization of the black poor. Marxists would seek to win the best elements of the Panthers, like George Jackson, and transform them into proletarian revolutionary fighters through an implacable political struggle against lumpen radicalism with its nationalist-populist ideology and street-gang organizational style. "Sectoral" liberation is a completely empty illusion and radical-rhetoric accommodation to the status quo. We know full well that the socialist revolution in North America hinges upon the commanding presence of a black communist cadre component within the entire working class vanguard. Such black revolutionary militants, coming from that section of society with the most to win and least to lose, must as Leninists make their impact upon this capitalist-imperialist society as a whole.

It is in the context of the social system that crime and punishment must be viewed; seldom do ruling-class courts sentence ruling-class children, and the prisons and jails of capitalist society show clear evidence of the class struggle.

In the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels, Vol. III, Frederick Engels eloquently describes 19th century English justice:

"When a rich man is summoned—or rather invited—into court, the judge expresses regret that the rich man had to inconvenience himself and tries in every way to turn the matter to the rich man's advantage; and if he must, despite everything, condemn him, he again expresses his infinite regret, and so on. But if some of the poor has to stand before that judge, he nearly always has to spend the preceding night in jail with a mass of others like himself; he is looked upon as guilty from the beginning."

Anyone who has been subjected to the arrogant rituals of capitalist courts, that is, anyone who is not rich and powerful, will tell you that conditions today are not so very much different from the ones Engels describes. He or she will tell you, without hesitation, that the state treats common prisoners like objects of social contempt and human defecation.

But one does not have to be poor or black or imprisoned to understand that there is a peculiar kind of justice practiced in this country. It is an understood social reality, like graft and corruption. For the wealthy families and political lieutenants of Wall Street, a cocoon of class privilege and legal impunity protects them from the nemesis of judicial retribution. The penalty of capitalist law and order is dealt out only to the powerless and hungry; for they are regarded to be nothing more than social pests that must be exterminated or hidden away from view.

It is the state which defines the criminal. And it is the social system which creates him and nourishes his development. A society's social health can be measured by the number of criminals it does not have, not the number of criminals in its jails and prisons. An unhealthy social system—based on the exploitation of many by a

few—generates a sick and unstable society of human beings.

Crime and Property

The abject inequality of the judicial and penal system in the United States has sparked recent outcries for reform. But penal reform is not a new concept. And it is ironic that the present and inadequate system of fixed structures used for holding social deviants was derived, originally, from earlier attempts to reform then-existing systems of punishment.

Out of the poverty and general misery of the Middle Ages came a system of justice characterized by its cruelty and barbarism. It was the system of lords and kings, feudalism, which imposed "the fate worse than death" capital and corporal punishment primarily against serfs and peasants.

In the 16th and 17th centuries such barbaric practices as beheading, burning at the stake, boiling in oil, breaking at the wheel, and drawing and quartering were standard ruling-class means of maintaining social law and order. In England, for example, there were over 350 different crimes—including petty shoplifting!—which called for the death penalty. Less serious infractions to feudal law, of course, saw less serious penalties exacted through such public forms of humiliation as branding, flogging, dunking, mutilation, and the stocks and pillory.

It was the weight of these severe kinds of punishment which prompted early social reformers to seek more acceptable forms of punitive treatment. Although their intentions were no doubt sincere and good, these early religious reformists—like their modern-day liberal/radical counterparts—failed to attack the root to crime; the early penal reformers did not dig deep into the basic fiber of a social system which created the lord and serf, much less the court and criminal. Feudal crime was, on the most part like bourgeois crime is, the consequence of the property relations in society which generate and tolerate an economic and social disparity between

those who own the means of production and those who must work it.

Most crimes, historically, point to a direct relationship to property; for the concept of crime and punishment is defined by the social class in ownership of the means of production. The various bourgeois revolutions which overthrew European monarchy redefined the nature of crime, and the old system of crime and punishment was "torn asunder." Under the relentless and intense pressure of the mobilized and armed masses, and influenced by the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment, the new rulers of a newly organized economic system granted certain concessions within the framework of the newly established property relations. Thus bourgeois crime and punishment took its epochal place in human history.

Punishment and "Penitentiary"

In America, attempts to establish imprisonment to replace flat-out corporal and capital punishment of the feudal sort began in 1632; a small wooden prison was erected in Boston to serve the entire Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Other early attempts at penal reform occurred between 1682 and 1718 when Pennsylvania Quakers, whose religious views made no compromise with bloodshed, initiated various reform campaigns to establish prisons as an alternative form of punishment. Labor was generally scarce in colonial America, and the Quakers argued that if criminals were isolated from society—and able to do "penance"—they could eventually be "rehabilitated" and returned to the workforce.

After 1786, largely due to the victorious American bourgeois revolution and later struggles by the American masses which led to the establishment of the Bill of Rights in 1789, most of the barbaric feudal practices of punishment were abolished. The institution of prison gained greater acceptance as a standard form of servitude. Pennsylvania established the Walnut Street prison in 1790; while New York followed its

example in 1797. Other states adopted similar penal systems: Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey, Virginia, etc., instituted the Walnut Street prison model in succession.

But the Quakers firmly believed that isolation was the key to proper repentance, and their model prisons reflected the stern discipline and austere surroundings of a monastery: individual cells, enforced silence, total isolation from other prisoners, and a strict daily regimen of repentance. It is to the dubious credit of these early bastilles of contrition that the term "penitentiary" evolved, and the penitentiary today is an anachronism of its religious and authoritarian model.

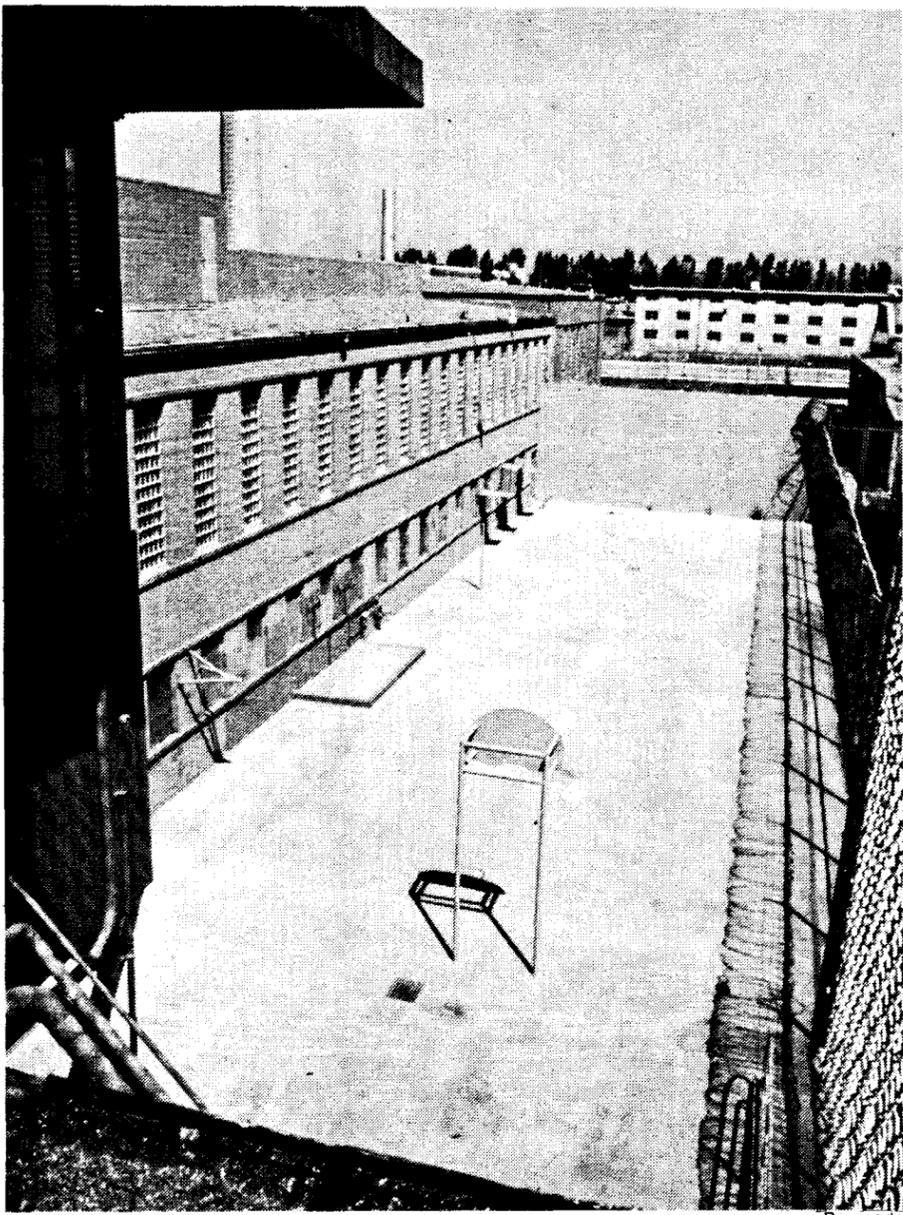
A Lumpenproletarian Vanguard?

The arrest and trial of hundreds of black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and white militants during the turbulent 1960's served to focus much public attention and debate on American courts and prisons.

Such trials as the ones involving the Chicago 7, New York Panther 21, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Erica Huggins, Carlos Feliciano, Los Siete de la Raza, Soledad Brothers, and countless other well-publicized cases generated wide interest and support among many leftists and liberals. This public attention and introduction of politicized elements, into the narrow confines of imprisonment, helped to inject radical politics into the lives of a number of poor and angry young convicts.

The social dynamics of prison life revolve around the mental and material processes of an imprisoned lumpenproletariat. It is here that we find the matrix of much of the largely petty-bourgeois prison attitudes and lifestyle, magnified and exaggerated a hundred times.

In Marxist terminology the lumpenproletariat represents a stratum of society, not a class. It is an amorphous social body which contracts and expands according to the vicissitudes of the capitalist market economy. Its members come from the chronic unemployed, although they may originate



Closed compound at Soledad prison.

from any class. They don't have a direct social relationship to the means of production, nor realize surplus value through the marketing of "commodities" owned by a capitalist, or bought in exchange with a capitalist. Only through a secondary and parasitic form does this social stratum appropriate "wealth."

Dr. Frantz Fanon, the noted black psychiatrist and nationalist, a man of sagacious and international reputation among New Leftists and nationalists during the 1960's, contributed greatly to the exposition of the myth of lumpenproletarian vanguards. His book *The Wretched of the Earth*, an examination of the psychological and political impact of colonialism on its victims in Algeria, advanced the notion of an objectively revolutionary lumpenproletariat and a reactionary working class.

Fanon's purely anti-Marxist view gained a wide audience and won him the blind admiration of the middle-class New Left and nationalist movements of the day. The Black Panther Party saw in Fanon's theories a justification of its largely eclectic and anti-working class outlook; it did not hesitate to seize upon the opportunity to become the lumpenproletariat's chief proponent and apologist in the United States.

These nationalists concluded that their "vanguard" party could be built around a nucleus of "vanguard" black lumpenproletarians: politicized convicts and ex-convicts, radicalized pimps and prostitutes, reformed dope dealers and rehabilitated addicts. This distorted outlook reflected Fanon's general conclusion that the most oppressed were the most revolutionary; an erroneous assumption which catapulted the lumpenproletariat into the mainstream of middle-class radical and nationalist politics.

Karl Marx characterized the lumpenproletariat as capable of "the most heroic deeds and the most exalted sacrifices, as of the basest banditry and dirtiest corruption." And in recent history there is some evidence to show that individuals from this particular stratum of society are, indeed, capable

of heroic and exalted deeds and sacrifices. Malcolm X resurrected himself from the bowels of prison to become a dynamic and eloquent fighter for the rights of black people; George Jackson's courage and determination cannot be denied; Alprentice Bunchy Carter made the ultimate sacrifice when he was assassinated along with John Huggins at UCLA in 1968. The list goes on, naming individuals radicalized and politicized by their own experiences, choosing a *social* solution to their oppression.

But these examples of individuals do not prove any inherently revolutionary qualities of the lumpenproletariat as a social body; they only show that various individuals from various backgrounds and classes will, at one time or another, reject their past and side with the oppressed in common struggle. It is likewise with the bourgeoisie: the mere fact that Engels, a factory owner, was able to break from his privileged class background and become the revolutionary collaborator of Marx does not, one iota, negate or diminish the reactionary and counterrevolutionary character of the bourgeoisie!

For the bulk of the lumpenproletariat its social and economic stake in capitalist society—its largely parasitic relationship *within* capitalist society—is dependent upon the continuance of such an economic system. The general attitude and material position of the lumpenproletariat—as it pertains to capitalism—is not the rejection of capitalist society itself, but rather a desire to benefit from it.

History has seen this stratum of society mobilized again and again in the service of reaction. Its members swelled the ranks of Hitler's fascist storm troopers; and it served with dubious distinction as relentless pursuers of Mau Mau rebels in Kenya for the British. The lumpenproletariat is always readily available to serve as strike breakers. During the 1930's they were used as vicious shock troops against militant workers' meetings and demonstrations; in the 1960's they served as equally treacherous police and FBI informers

and agent-provocateurs, contributing greatly to the large number of illegal COINTELPRO frame-ups and disruptions of socialist, nationalist, leftist and antiwar organizations in the U.S. Today it serves as fodder for the South African and Rhodesian armies, and informers for the secret police. The lumpenproletariat's mercenary nature and extreme individualism makes it an unreliable and undesirable ally of the forces engaged in deadly serious conflict with the bourgeoisie.

There is no escaping the lumpenproletarians in prison; they are all around you. They are the professional and amateur criminals, big and petty, Mafia and independent, declassed and socially demoralized: *all are searching for a substitute version of the elusive American dream.*

A very large number of them are black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican; but that fact, alone, cannot give or take from their dubious social worth. (It can only help to serve as a grand indictment against a racist and ethnocentric social system based on the exploitation of wage-labor, and the accumulation of wealth.) There are also the many white lumpenproletarians, and they too occupy the same space and participate in the same mad rush to escape their personal circumstances. But America has lied to all of them.

The Lumpenproletariat in Prison

Yet this hegemonic influence of lumpenproletarians in prison does not, at all, take away the fact that a large number of prisoners come from working-class backgrounds. According to a LEAA survey in 1972 about 60 percent of people in jail, awaiting trial, were employed (under-employed?) at the time of their arrest; compared with 30 percent who had been unemployed for more than a year. These statistics cover only those arrested who couldn't make bail. It is believed that the percentage of those employed, among those able to make bail, must be far higher.

Although the numbers of proletarians in prison are quite impressive, their social weight is negligible. Prison is lumpenproletarian turf, and they are much more organized and less uncomfortable within these surroundings. Prison-born gangs in California—like the Mafia Mexicana, Nuestra Familia, Aryan Brotherhood, and Black Guerrilla Family—although representing only a small minority of lumpenproletarians in prison—exert influence far beyond their numbers. These men know the power of organization.

Together with imprisoned members of street or motorcycle gangs, such as the Crips and Hells Angels, they are a vitiating influence on the general prison population. With the close cooperation of many prison guards, who smuggle in drugs and other contraband for profit, there is a constant supply and demand for narcotics. Often these illicit activities erupt into violent and fratricidal gang warfare, further degenerating the already tense and uncomfortable conditions inside.

Prison Distorts Politics

Life in a closed compound reflects the political currents of the times like a House of Mirrors. *Prison distorts politics.* It corrupts intellectual growth, stifles political development, and retards the radicalizing prisoner's emerging social consciousness. Politics become obtuse, lost, foreign, devoid of a living and learning relationship with the class struggle. Strong is the prisoner's hostility toward theory; there is a tendency to emphasize impulse over contemplation, action above strategy.

In no uncertain terms, the objective conditions of confinement—where prisoners are isolated and out of touch with the masses—ferment their own distorted view of politics. *Prison distorts reality;* and it is not surprising that the general trend of prison-based politics

often finds itself expressed through reformism and adventurism: the prevailing mood of the incarcerated alternates between resignation and desperation.

Recent attempts to reform penal institutions, and organize convicts along trade-union lines have largely failed. The reformist Prisoners Union finds itself as frustrated and ineffective as its smaller rival, the Maoist-oriented United Prisoners Union. Both groups have been unsuccessful in efforts to penetrate an organizational presence behind prison walls, much less promote even the minimum of reform.

Although many convicts are eager to join organizations which purport to fight for their rights, several important factors contribute to the general impotence of these would-be "unionists." Unlike the factory the prison is not homogenous in its makeup, and convicts are constantly being transferred or paroled. The prison is not a point of production; most convicts are without the crucial worker's power to withhold labor in support of demands. Despite what many prison organizers wish to believe, the prison still continues to be a prison (and function as a prison) regardless of their occasional and insignificant work stoppages.

Furthermore, intense racial and ethnic and regional animosities among convicts have proven to be a major barrier for organization. This weakness in prisoner solidarity is exploited and encouraged by prison officials to keep convict hostilities away from guards and directed at other prisoners. Such a situation provides for a diversion of attention away from the *real* contradiction—between prisoners and guards—lending the false impression that guards are only present to mediate disputes and lessen social antagonisms. (It is interesting that such a rationale is similar to the ones used by the capitalist state in relation to society, and the British army in Northern Ireland.)

Prison organizing is also suppressed by the fact that the Bill of Rights does not fully apply to prisoners. For example: freedom of speech and assembly do not apply to convicts, nor the right to strike and organize; they cannot even vote. Recalcitrant individuals are either transferred to another prison or sent to the "hole" or set up to be killed.

Such conditions as these provide for unfavorable conditions for prison-union organizing, and it is more than likely that prison officials are quite aware of this and will fight tooth and nail to keep things just the way they like them. The recent history of prison struggles has seen the extreme limitations of such struggles. And the forces of state repression will not hesitate to brutally put down any prison strike or rebellion which has gotten out of its control: Attica is a perfect example of the vicious lengths the state will go to prove its point. The curse of the penitentiary is its extreme isolation from the masses; and sporadic and desperate prisoner-resistance to the miserable conditions of confinement can easily be contained.

Revolutionary communists generally support the just struggles of prisoners to improve their living conditions in America's jails and prisons. But there can be no illusions about any qualitative departure from the primitiveness of capitalist law and order without socialist revolution. The institutions of bourgeois society are bound by design to protect and serve the social interests of the employer class over that of the working class. And as long as these special interests conflict—as long as the class struggle continues—the capitalist state will faithfully intervene on behalf of its master.

In the final analysis, the relationship between the capitalists and the working class is the relationship between the parasite and the host. It is a matter of irrefutable and historical record that these two organisms cannot live a symbiotic and beneficial existence. Attempts to change an aspect of class

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UMW...

(continued from page 12)

dents were urging the miners to go back to work so that the "... situation can be alleviated."

In an attempt to appease the striking miners, Perry led an eight-man delegation to UMW headquarters in Washington to demand the return of all funds to the membership, an end to misuse of fund benefits and the replacement of Harry Huge, a Miller supporter and Washington, D.C., lawyer who, though not a member of the UMW, represents the union on the trustee board. Huge incurred the miners' wrath by voting for the benefit reductions along with management and the "neutral" member of the board.

The Washington meeting predictably satisfied none of the miners' demands. Huge claimed his hands were tied by the BCOA's refusal to shift the necessary cash and by federal laws governing fund administration. As in the case of the government's virtual takeover of the Teamsters pension fund, the attack on the UMW shows once again that government regulation ostensibly for "protection" of the workers, along with the labor bureaucracy's groveling capitulation to such legalism, are just another weapon in the employers' arsenal.

Miners should demand that the medical and retirement trust funds be fully funded at no cost to union members and that these monies be administered by the UMW alone. These funds should be contractually guaranteed and not pegged to productivity. The bosses must not be allowed to cut off health or pension payments with complaints about strikes, unnecessary doctor bills or bad weather.

The assault on the miners' medical benefits is the latest of a whole series of provocations by the coal operators designed to whip the union to its knees before serious contract talks begin. To preserve the union and prepare it for the job of organizing unorganized coal mines nationwide, these attacks must be fought head-on! A militant miners' leadership would have met the benefit-slashing with a call to expand the strike nationally, demanding full restoration of benefits.

But the warring bureaucratic factions in the UMW seek to exploit the union's ongoing crisis only to feather their own nests, not to fight the BCOA. Miller above all fears a showdown with the coal bosses and echoes their line that strike action weakens the miners' position. Likewise, his bureaucratic opponents merely seek to take demagogic advantage of the benefit cuts to embarrass the union president and push to overturn his re-election.

UMW secretary-treasurer Harry Patrick, who ran third in the June 14 presidential election, had conceded defeat and called for unity behind Miller. Now he smells a possible comeback. Charging that Miller's "cold-blooded" manipulation of the funds, designed to hold off

the cutbacks until after the election, "poisoned" the race. Patrick has called on the International Executive Board (IEB) to schedule an immediate rerun.

Miller's right-wing opponent, Lee Roy Patterson, chose almost the same moment to announce his determination also to force a new election. Patterson controls a majority of the IEB and may well have enough votes to order a rerun. In addition Patterson filed five separate lawsuits against the UMW prior to the election and believes they establish the basis for an appeal through the courts and the Labor Department. To complete the three-ring circus, Miller also is expected to appeal to the courts or the Labor Department to head off a new election should he be outvoted on the IEB.

The miners have already had far too much experience with government meddling in their union. Miller and his "Miners for Democracy" cronies were elevated into office in 1972 with the crucial assistance of a Labor Department-supervised election. These bureaucratic "reformers" then stood with the courts and cops against the massive miners wildcats which swept the coalfields. Just last summer miners waged a huge strike against court interference in contractual disputes.

The miners must now stand vigilant against any attempt of the capitalist courts or government agencies to interfere in, or rerun union elections under the phony cloak of "democracy." The very same laws of this capitalist "democracy" are used by the BCOA and union tops as an excuse to tie up the miners' money. It is this big business "democracy," with its courts, anti-strike legislation and injunctions—and if necessary troops—which the BCOA and Carter administration will use to throttle and discipline the restive miners.

The Miller leadership is incompetent, cowardly and now more discredited than ever. Patrick and Patterson are no better. Since 1972 the Spartacist League (SL) has refused to lend Arnold Miller any political support, however critical. Unlike our opponents on the left, who supported Miller's first election in a near-unanimous chorus, we pointed to his empty program and his reliance on the government to get into office.

In the 1977 election Miller was so badly discredited that opportunists like the International Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party sheepishly crept into the Patrick camp. The Communist Party campaigned against Patterson (i.e., for Miller and Patrick) while the Workers League came out for Patterson. The SL, however, stated that support for any of the rival pro-capitalist wings of the UMW bureaucracy meant more broken strikes and government intervention into the union.

The proof has not been long in coming. The failure of all three of these misleaders to lift a finger against the latest provocation of the BCOA demonstrates anew that miners cannot look to these fakers to defend even their existing conditions, much less organize the unorganized and win new rights for labor. The slashing of health benefits must be met by a nationwide strike. Placing no confidence in the UMW bureaucracy, such a strike can be run only through democratically elected strike committees.

A show of determined resistance now to BCOA cutbacks can open the way for the miners to take the offensive in the crucial upcoming contract battle and win what is necessary to meet their needs: full cost-of-living protection for wages and pensions; fully paid-for health benefits for working and retired miners; organization of the 50 percent of U.S. coal production that is non-union; a shorter workweek at no cut in pay; union control of safety conditions. But these victories cannot be attained without the forging of a new class-struggle leadership. Otherwise the employers will continue to hammer away at the courageous and combative, but desperately leaderless, Mine Workers ranks. ■

Anita Bryant...

(continued from page 12)

demands that teachers' unions defend the democratic rights of their entire membership *whether or not* ordinances protecting these rights are retained by the bourgeois state.

What the Crusade Is All About

Homosexuals have become the open target of a general assault on democratic rights. The reactionaries hope that the widespread prejudices against these "deviants" will prevent the defenders of democratic rights from rallying to their defense. But democratic rights are not divisible: the reactionary mobilization has blacks, women, "reds" and all varieties of "deviants" lined up in its sights. The most recent such assault has been a Supreme Court decision permitting states to withhold public assistance funding for abortions.

Anti-ERA, anti-busing and anti-abortion forces have all found the Carter anti-Soviet "human rights" moralism a fertile culture medium in which to grow their rightist mobilizations against homosexuals, minorities, women and eventually the working class itself. But the "gay rights" demonstrations—locked into subreformist "life-style" politics—have posed no strategy to overcome the oppression they protest.

The demonstrations were in the main dominated by Democratic Party politics, with central slogans calling for "Human Rights for Gays" and the election of "gay Democrats." All the marches included large components of the clergy and Democratic politicians hustling votes. One aspirant to the NYC City Council asserted, "Vote for your own!" "Not Anita but Bella" went another slogan. All the marches were stamped with the symbols of religious and patriotic backwardness—candles, crosses and American flags. Popular slogans included "God loves Gays," simple-minded chants of "Two, four, six, eight; being gay is better than straight," and "Anita, we would rather fight than switch."

Reflecting the New Left sectoralism of "gay liberation," the demonstrations were wracked by internal dissension as various groups claiming to be the true representatives of the oppressed vied for power. Thus, the New York march was torn by a dispute over whether it would be led by Lesbian Feminist Liberation or a group of NYC bourgeois politicians. The lesbians won out, but other lesbians felt too oppressed as women to participate in a sexually integrated demonstration. They headed for Central Park, where they held their own exclusionist rally for "dykes and tykes" and set up a goon squad to enforce the exclusion of all male "oppressors." The logic of this sectoralism is that radical lesbians must choose between which autonomous oppressed splinter group they belong to, based presumably on which form of oppression they experience most at any particular time. The result of this particularism has been that men rather than women have led the struggle against the attacks on homosexuality. This was particularly true in Dade County.

Life-style radicalism was abundant at all the demonstrations, but there was very little sense of what the recent attack

at Dade County would mean for homosexuals or how to fight it. In fact, many groups made it clear that they thought it was a good thing that homosexuals were under attack because it made them angry, brought them out into the streets and helped "build the gay movement." Homosexuals, who often live compacted into "communities" within the large urban centers, can develop an exaggerated sense of their social weight in U. S. society. That they are being scapegoated by the right wing is hardly anything to be happy about. Mainly it is dangerous and poses the need to understand that this attack is part of a much broader assault on democratic rights.

The response cannot be "homosexuals of the world unite," or the struggle will surely lose. In fact, the question of sex should not play such a role. It is a product of life-style radicalism that some demonstrators carried banners that read "Heterosexuals for Gay Rights." The point is that a general struggle to defend democratic rights does *not* depend on the sex lives of the participants, but on the mobilization of the social power of the working class to defend the democratic rights of all the oppressed.

Fake-Lefts Tail Lifestylers

A number of fake socialist organizations claiming to represent a working class perspective came to the NYC demonstration to tail after the life-style radicalism that dominated the "gay liberation movement." The Socialist Workers Party, the Shachtmanite Revolutionary Socialist League and the tiny Communist Cadre all attempted to appeal to the "gay socialists" on the basis that homosexual oppression is a strategic consideration for the socialist revolution. The RSL therefore raised the slogan: "Gay liberation through socialist revolution." The Communist Cadre in a similar tailspin behind this section of the petty-bourgeoisie in motion, called for "a united front against sexual repression" and "sexual misery" and put forward the slogan that "The sexual revolution and the socialist revolution are inseparable."

The Los Angeles demonstration had a similar collection of fake-left tailists, life-style radicals and representatives of the bourgeois church and state. Homosexual "solidarity" above politics took on a "free speech for fascists" tinge when a civil libertarian took the speakers platform to protest the exclusion of a group of homosexual Nazis. He was shouted down and forced to leave the platform.

An exception to the anti-working-class tenor of the Los Angeles demonstration—whose organizers requested that the demonstrators thank the police for their tolerance—was the militant joint contingent of the Spartacist League and the Bolshevik Tendency of the Red Flag Union (RFU-BT—formerly the Lavender and Red Union). The Red Flag Union (BT), which represents the most advanced section to emerge from the "gay rights movement," is presently engaged in fusion discussions with the Spartacist League. The two groups carried slogans which stressed the need to fight for democratic rights for homosexuals and chanted "Workers unite to smash the right!"

A speaker from the RFU (BT), which has for years struggled within the homosexual milieu, took the microphone to pose the need for a Bolshevik party embodying the Marxist program, the only program capable of overcoming all forms of special oppression through victorious socialist revolution. To the amorphous and ineffective "gay liberation movement" the RFU (BT) spokesman counterposed the need to build the Trotskyist vanguard. The political development of the RFU was a challenge to the demonstrators to look to the SL and take their places not as "gay rights" activists but as proletarian cadres in the front lines of the class struggle. ■

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Bosses Move to Enforce LWOP

Massive Job Cuts Threaten S.F. Longshore

SAN FRANCISCO—On June 23 the bureaucracy of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) announced the election of Jimmy Herman and Curtis McClain to replace retiring International president Harry Bridges and secretary-treasurer Lou Goldblatt respectively. The succession "contest" was so lackluster that barely 50 percent of the ILWU's membership turned out to vote, and Herman/McClain easily beat their Northwest-based opponents, G. Johnny Parks and Fred Huntsinger. In addition, the former president of Los Angeles Local 13, Rudy Rubio, who had previously posed as an opponent of the International, ran unopposed for a vice-presidential slot on the Herman/McClain slate.

But while the ILWU bigwigs are slapping each other on the back, *the union bureaucracy has openly joined hands with the bosses in implementing a massive workforce reduction on the Bay Area docks.* Citing a supposed absence of job opportunities for S.F. longshoremen, the joint coast Labor Relations Committee (LRC)—a bargaining committee which embraces both the ILWU and PMA, the employers' federation—has declared San Francisco a low work opportunity port (LWOP).

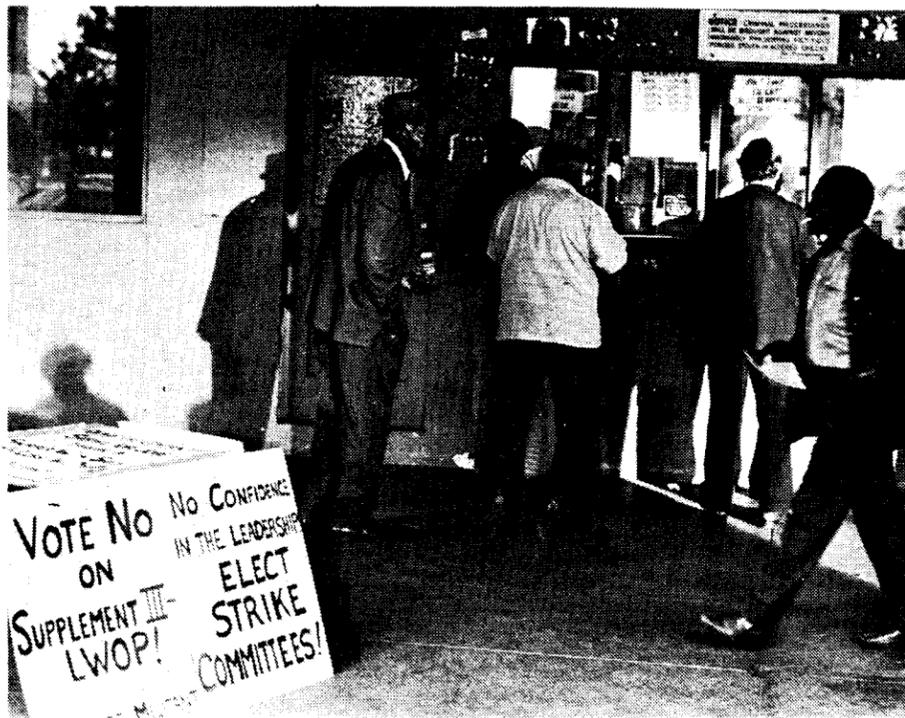
Unless this move is met by militant resistance from the ILWU ranks, the number of longshoremen in San Francisco will be drastically slashed. The gutting of Local 10 is beginning with "voluntary" transfers to other ports, but it will soon proceed to forced deregistrations (permanent layoffs) and forced early retirements.

Originally the president of Local 10, Cleophus Williams, had called on the union to *voluntarily* invoke LWOP! Williams had scheduled a referendum vote on this issue, urging Local 10 members to vote for institution of LWOP. However, shortly before the scheduled referendum, PMA unilaterally declared the "low work opportunity" contract provisions in force in San Francisco. This completely exposed Williams' policy as nothing other than the PMA's.

In the face of an aroused membership at a special union meeting on June 9 Williams was forced to maneuver, while maintaining his essential position. In this task he was assisted by the loyal "opposition" grouped around Herb Mills and Larry Wing. It was Mills who seconded Williams' motion which asserted: "In view of the fact that LWOP has been entered into the grievance machinery we cancel the referendum and will poll the other locals about the number of slots available for voluntary transfers."

The motion was backed enthusiastically by the membership, which thought that it was voting down LWOP and its hated provisions of forced transfers and deregistration. However, the motion was no such thing; it was merely a ruse to smuggle LWOP in through the back door. The implementation of "voluntary" transfers was, in fact, merely the first phase of Supplement III of the contract, which includes mandatory transfers and deregistrations after "volunteers" are exhausted.

The urgently needed strike action against the impending massive cutback in the workforce was deliberately scotched by the combination of Williams and the Mills/Wing clique. Seventy-five Local 10 members had endorsed a call initiated by the class-struggle "Longshore Militant" grouping which demanded a coastwide strike for a



"Longshore Militant" sign at Ferry Building pay line urges militant opposition to LWOP ruling.

shorter workweek at no cut in pay. A motion to implement this policy was bureaucratically ruled out of order by the leadership.

Subsequently the ruse became more evident. As suggested by the arbitrator, the joint coast LRC took up LWOP and on June 15 declared San Francisco a low work opportunity port, invoking Supplement III of the contract. Nonetheless the leadership has attempted to brazen it out. On June 17 Williams and Local 10 secretary-treasurer George Kaye issued a bulletin stating that "This means no one will be forced to transfer. This is what the union wanted all the time."

This is a crude and base deception. Howard Keylor and Stan Gow, Local 10



Jimmy Herman

executive board members and publishers of "Longshore Militant," issued a leaflet June 20 which blasted Williams, Mills et. al. for their back-door implementation of PMA policies. The leaflet cited key passages of Supplement III, including one stating, "After volunteers have been transferred, transfers will be made in order of inverse seniority." Gow and Keylor also pointed out that "Having declared S.F. an LWOP under Supplement III, no additional authority is required to proceed to the next, involuntary transfers."

They also brought to light other provisions of Supplement III which the

leadership had "failed" to inform the membership of: under Item 6, men who sign the "Agreement to Transfer" will permanently lose their "pay guarantee" (PGP) if for any reason they decide not to transfer. Item 7, in turn, declares that those who transfer cannot return to their original port or switch to any other port for three years—unless the port to which they transfer also becomes an LWOP!

Williams, Kaye, Mills & Co. know full well that more than "voluntary" transfers are involved. It is no secret that PMA desires to reduce the longshore workforce in S.F. by 1,100 longshoremen (out of a total of roughly 2,200). But even International officials have made it clear that there are only 150 openings for "volunteers" coastwide. Williams let the cat out of the bag when he issued a second bulletin on June 23 which "promised" that a meeting at the International level would be held before forced transfers are implemented. This clearly shows that the present measures will inevitably be followed by involuntary transfers and deregistrations.

The jobs crisis has stripped the fake-oppositionist mask off the reformist Wing/Mills and Communist Party-backed cliques in Local 10. These groupings had earlier ballyhooed "voluntary" transfers as an alternative to the Williams/Bridges schemes of declaring San Francisco a low work opportunity port. This program was, in fact, adopted at the coastwide longshore caucus in April. Now voluntary transfers are being implemented, but as the first stage of Supplement III and LWOP! The International, Williams, the CP-backed grouping headed by Proctor and Robinson and the Mills/Wing gang have all joined hands in supporting LWOP and

the present contract, and opposing strike action for jobs.

Standing out uniquely from this reformist hodgepodge is the class-struggle grouping around "Longshore Militant," which firmly opposes all transfers, voluntary or otherwise, and demands strike action. The 20 June Gow/Keylor leaflet concluded with the call:

"The membership must make a hard choice. PMA intends to nickel and dime us to death, invoking Sup. III step by step, playing low seniority against high seniority, young against old, skilled against unskilled, black against white, port against port, until we are too weak to fight. The only alternative has been posed by the *Longshore Militant*. We must reject Sup. III by dumping the contract now and throwing out the leadership which enforces it and electing strike committees to organize a battle for jobs for all longshoremen through a shorter work shift at no loss in pay. This call has been endorsed by 75 members of this Local, including 4 members of the Executive Board. If longshoring as we've known it is to have any future, we must stand and fight!"

If Local 10 is gutted, it would be a major step toward the destruction of the ILWU. The outcome of the jobs crisis, however, is far from determined. It is evident that the majority of Local 10 members have yet to free themselves from the illusions perpetrated by the Local 10 bureaucracy's various cliques, which claim that job cuts will stop with the voluntary transfers. But as the PMA game plan unfolds these illusions will be peeled away. The 75 signatures endorsing strike action, while not yet a qualitative shift in the relationship of forces, already show a loosening of the reformist stranglehold on the membership.

The convergence of the International, Williams, the Wing/Mills reformists and the Stalinists behind PMA and LWOP has made the "Longshore Militant" a clear pole in the ILWU. While "Longshore Militant" is still small, the history of the proletarian movement has demonstrated time and again that such groups, provided they do not waver in the struggle against class collaborationism and provided they seize opportunities for militant united struggle, can grow rapidly in situations where the bankruptcy of all wings of the reformists becomes evident to the masses. In the next period the task of "Longshore Militant" and its allies in the Militant Caucus of Local 6 of the warehouse division must be to regroup the best fighters in the ILWU around its banner in preparation for the battles which must be fought to preserve the union. ■

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Silver Jubilee...

(continued from page 3)

Queen is worth because she is the only person in Britain granted exemption to a recent law requiring financial disclosure. *Newsweek* (13 June) estimates the total wealth of the Queen and her eldest son at about \$140 million, excluding an art collection valued at another \$85 million. It further estimates that the Queen and her kin cost the taxpayers about \$15.4 million a year. But far more costly to the working class is the ideological assertion of privilege and its anti-democratic effects.

Even the bourgeoisie puts up with maintaining these symbols of privilege, sometimes at the cost of considerable embarrassment. Cabinet ministers tell of finding themselves kneeling on the wrong side of a monarch and having to scrape and crawl on their knees to the other side of the room. Cabinet ministers do not crawl for nothing!

Influence and Rallying Symbol

It is not just for strictly ideological purposes that the monarchical establishment is maintained by British capitalism. The monarchy has sometimes exercised direct influence. Of course the monarchy isn't about to use its residual governmental powers today. The last time it vetoed a parliamentary act was in 1707 under Queen Anne. And it has been more than a century since a monarch disbanded a government.

But at critical moments the monarchy has gone beyond its role as advisor to and mouthpiece for the ruling party. At the Jubilee ceremony the Queen created a minor shock wave by attacking the Scottish nationalists: "I cannot forget that I was crowned queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain." But this attempt to influence politics is dwarfed by more dangerous attempts by monarchs to exert reactionary influence.

Queen Victoria, who openly detested any form of republicanism, exerted enormous influence, including choosing personnel for the foreign service, vetoing cabinet appointments and urging a free hand for imperialist policy in Ireland, the Sudan and elsewhere. George V considered dismissing the government over the Home Rule question lest Parliament hand Ulster "to the Pope." George VI proclaimed simply that "India must be governed," urging that Gandhi and Nehru be kept in prison.

Recent British monarchs have intervened in domestic politics as well. In 1931, Ramsay MacDonald's "Great Betrayal"—the National Front coalition government with the Tories and Labour MP's—was arranged by George V, exercising his "right to be consulted and encouraged." Discussions between the Duke of Windsor and the Nazis in Germany placed the Duke as the rumored likely prospect to head a quisling government in England.

The House of Lords has also raised its be-wigged and powdered head from time to time. Just last year it used its vestigial "right" to approve all legislation by vetoing a Commons-approved bill to nationalize the port of Felixstowe. Then on November 22 a Labour proposal to nationalize the aircraft and shipbuilding industries was blocked by a vote of 197 to 90 in the Lords.

The House of Lords is not elected, the bulk of its lifetime members being drawn from the hereditary "peers" and from bishops and archbishops of the Church of England. Since 1958 the government has held the right to appoint Lords under the "life peerage" system. In addition to the big businessmen, aging Labour Party leaders can expect to become "Labour peers," rewarded for their service to the bourgeoisie by being put out to pasture in this powdered-wig grazing ground.

These vestiges of feudalism do not often attempt to overstep their bounds,

nor would their removal in itself alleviate the oppression of the British working masses. But these relics are not merely an affront to the working class. Under particular circumstances they could become a real military danger to the proletariat.

Remember that the British officer corps is drawn from the petty aristocracy and owes its traditional allegiance to the Crown. The Queen is nominal head of all the armed forces. As the *London Times* (11 June) reported: "To mark her Silver Jubilee the Queen has appointed herself and other members of the Royal Family to a total of 18 honorary commands in the army and RAF, and 19 more in the Commonwealth armed forces." While these commands are merely honorary, the very real officer corps is very clear that its loyalty is to Queen, not Parliament. In a future crisis situation it is quite conceivable that a right-wing bonapartist coup attempting to restabilize the bourgeois order would seek out the monarchy as a buttress to reactionary mobilization, and as a sign of "legality" and legitimacy against a weak bourgeois-democratic Parliament.

The Left and the Monarchy

Though the monarchy is a constant anti-democratic outrage and potential military focus for reaction, the institution goes on unimpeded by the British fake-lefts. The primary responsibility lies with the Labour Party, which has a programmatic election plank to end the monarchy but has supported this reactionary institution as part of its more general commitment to capitalism. As early as 1927 former Labour Prime Minister McDonald allayed any apprehensions about Labour's "democratic" pretensions when he accepted an invitation to the royal court and donned the traditional blue and gold-braid costume of the peerage.

The Labour Party helps to make manifest Lord Balfour's famous dictum that whatever party is in office, the Conservatives are in power. Even as Labour helps launch the Silver Jubilee, it is clear that the Tories are the natural beneficiaries of the royal festivities.

At the official launching ceremony of the Jubilee, the Queen walked the length of Westminster Hall while her more notable "subjects" applauded. She paraded past the Yeomen, Gentlemen of the Household, State Trumpeters and Household Cavalry, each clad in his special livery and holding the pikes and staves and halberds in the proper heraldic fashion. The Queen smiled. But there was one smile in this audience that was even wider than the Queen's. It belonged to Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Tory opposition.

Coincidentally (perhaps) Thatcher was wearing precisely the same color dress as the Queen, and the same hat, and seemed not the least bit embarrassed. The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (15 May) speculated that "Mrs. Thatcher clearly has friends in high places or else impeccably royal taste." No doubt she has both. It is no wonder that she is beaming about the Jubilee and its reactionary momentum. Mrs. "Let-them-eat-cake" Thatcher and her Tories await their moment to supplant the government of James Callaghan, whose Labour Party is becoming ever more pitifully discredited by its enforcement of the wage-freezing "social contract."

But it is not just the Labour Party that refuses to challenge the British Establishment. All leftist and radical strata maintain a formal opposition to the monarchy but, despite self-congratulatory mock-rejection of the Crown, the populist appetite to associate with the spirit of Jubilee "good cheer" is evident.

The most bizarre and profitable form of mock-rejection of the Jubilee is the punk-rock version of "God Save the Queen" recorded by Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols. This number, which attempts to be deliberately arresting and pornographic, has become a raging

controversy and despite (or because of) a government ban is the number-one hit song in Britain. The Sex Pistols sing that they live under a "fascist regime" which has turned them into "morons" (the latter seems undeniable on the face of it), but they finally explain that they like the Queen after all.

It is not just the Sex Pistols, with safety pins on their noses, who feel ambivalent about the Silver Jubilee. The Communist Party, for instance, is holding "People's Jubilees." But the real Sex Pistols of the left are the state-capitalist Socialist Workers Party (formerly International Socialists). These workerists are running a big campaign under the slogan "Stuff the Jubilee—Roll on the Red Republic." Their newspaper, *Socialist Worker*, is filled with radical-chic playful rejection of the event and calls for organizing "red" Jubilee celebrations. Of course they explain how many hospitals could be constructed with the money wasted on the Crown jewels, but the real message is: join the Jubilee. If the workers are being encouraged to have fun to celebrate the reign of the Queen, then these "socialists" will show the workers how they may have even more such "fun":

"There's lots of things that socialists can do about the Jubilee. But the key is: Don't be a killjoy. Add to the fun.

"We're for street parties, but we're also for pointing out that we must live in a strange sort of society if we only get to have them every 25 years.

"And do we really need a bunch of royal scoundrels if we're to enjoy ourselves? If we were without them and all the other would-be captains and kings in society we could take over our streets and cities and towns and enjoy ourselves all the time...."

Socialist Worker, 4 June

Amidst the carnival of reactionary sycophancy, we must recall with fondness the beheading of Charles I in 1649. Oliver Cromwell, at the head of the bourgeois revolutionary army, not only got rid of an intractable monarch, but for a time also abolished the House of Lords and more than a few bishops. By 1660, however, the son, Charles II, was returned to the throne along with the lords and bishops. Cromwell's corpse was dug up from his grave and hanged at Tyburn. And the British have had a monarch ever since. The arch-conservative Edmund Burke favorably compared the Glorious Revolution of 1688 with the "dangerously democratic" French Revolution of 1789, which occurred when the social forces were more fully matured and which swept out the monarchy so resoundingly that bonapartism and restorationism could never really refurbish it.

It is to the reactionary spirit of Burke that the Silver Jubilee is really dedicated. For Marxists, jubilation awaits the day when the proletariat, led by its vanguard party, uproots the bourgeoisie and its entire rotten retinue of feudal remnants. The instruments and symbols of repressive imperialist power have no place outside the museums. In one of the world's first modern capitalist societies, even minimal demands of the bourgeois revolution await the revolutionary proletarian victory: Down with the Monarchy! Down with the House of Lords! Down with the Established Church! ■

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IMG...

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myth in a self-criticism of his own role in putting together the anti-Bolshevik "August bloc" of 1912:

"I was against the Leninist 'regime' because I had not yet learned to understand that in order to realize the revolutionary goal a firmly welded centralized party is indispensable...."

"Lenin subjected the August bloc to merciless criticism and the harshest blows fell to my lot. Lenin proved that inasmuch as I did not agree politically with either the Mensheviks or the *Vperyodists* my policy was adventurism. This was severe but it was true."

—"From a Scratch—To the Danger of Gangrene"

The Vanguard Party Principle

The betrayal of official German Social Democracy, particularly Kautsky, with the outbreak of World War I caused Lenin to fundamentally reassess the principles underlying the Second International. It was only then that he definitively broke with the concept of "the party of the whole class" and came out for a new revolutionary international. Lenin's definitive break with Kautskyism is signaled by his June 1915 article, "The Collapse of the Second International":

"The old theory that opportunism is a 'legitimate shade' in a single party that knows no 'extremes' has now turned into a tremendous deception of the workers and a tremendous hindrance to the working-class movement. Undisguised opportunism, which immediately repels the working masses, is not so frightful and injurious as this theory of the golden mean, which uses Marxist catchwords to justify opportunist practice.... Kautsky, the most outstanding spokesman of this theory, and also the leading authority in the Second International, has shown himself a consummate hypocrite and past master in the art of prostituting Marxism."

Lenin's pre-war belief that the Mensheviks were to the right of Kautsky turned out to be wrong; the opposite was the case. Martov/Axelrod took an anti-defensist position and on that basis participated in the Zimmerwald movement. Between the outbreak of the war and the February revolution, the main barrier to unity of the Bolsheviks and the Menshevik Internationalists was the latter's refusal to break with the social-patriots and the Second International.

The Communist International excluded not only reformists, but also centrists (like the Italian Serrati) who refused to break with the reformists. The famous 21 "Conditions for Admission to the Communist International" adopted by the Second Congress in 1920 were unambiguous on this point:

"7. The parties belonging to the Communist International must recognize the necessity of a complete and absolute rupture with reformism and the policy of the 'center,' and they must carry on propaganda in favor of this rupture among the broadest circles of the party membership. Otherwise a consistent communist policy is impossible."

And if a break from the centrists is a requisite for a mass revolutionary party, the programmatic homogeneity necessary for a communist propaganda group, which still stands before the task of assembling the vanguard of the class, is far greater still.

Is Defense of the USSR a Split Issue?

The IMG's proposed unity with all the many and strange breeds that inhabit the universe of British "Trotskyism" includes some which maintain that the Soviet Union is "state capitalist" and consequently do not defend the USSR against Western imperialism. For example, the International-Communist League (I-CL) was created in early 1976 through a short-lived fusion of the left-Pabloist Workers Fight group with the state-capitalist Workers Power group. To justify this ill-starred marriage of convenience, the I-CL proclaimed that "the Russian question is a tenth rate question." In addition to being a cover

for a rotten bloc, this attitude reflects the Little England insularity characteristic of the British left. The conflict between U.S. imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state is a decisive axis of world politics shaping events from southern Africa to Germany.

Pseudo-Trotskyists like those of the IMG invariably justify unity with non-defensists by pointing to Trotsky's advice to the Cannon wing of the SWP in the 1939-40 fight with Burnham/Shachtman/Abern. Trotsky advised his faction not to split the party even if the petty-bourgeois opposition gained a majority. This was, as he made clear, purely a tactical manoeuvre conditioned by the heterogeneity and instability of the anti-Cannon rotten bloc. The Abern clique maintained a defensist position, Burnham was openly defeatist and Shachtman was then agnostic. Trotsky wrote to John G. Wright (December 1939):

"You have not the slightest interest in a split, even if the opposition should become, accidentally, a majority at the next convention. You have not the slightest reason to give the heterogeneous and unbalanced army of the opposition a pretext for a split...."

"A majority composed of this opposition would not last more than a few months. Then the proletarian tendency of the party will again become the majority with tremendously increased authority."

—In Defense of Marxism

The defense of the Soviet Union is, in fact, one of the decisive lines of demarcation between Trotskyism and social democracy. Trotsky categorically stated that Soviet-defeatists can not exist in a revolutionary party as a permanent tendency; much less can one fuse with such an organisation:

"The whole course of the world workers' movement, beginning with July 1914, demonstrates that defeatists and defensists cannot remain in the same party.... The basic task of the present discussion consists in demonstrating the full incompatibility of defeatism in relation to the USSR with membership in a revolutionary proletarian party. Only such an energetic—a Marxist and not a lawyer's—campaign is capable of compelling the better part of the defeatists to reexamine their viewpoint."

—"Defeatism vs. Defensism,"
December 1937

The IMG's Not-So-Grand Unity Manoeuvre

The IMG has offered the British "Trotskyist" swamp a deal which, by and large, the latter has refused to accept. For example, Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL) denounced the IMG for its revisionist rewriting of Bolshevik history. However, their own version of the question is no more dialectical. They argue that Lenin formed the Bolshevik party in 1903—end of story. This gross oversimplification, evidently drawn straight from Zinoviev's *History of the Bolshevik Party*, unfortunately allows the IMG Mensheviks to dismiss all opposition to their false-unity mongering as based on Stalinist distortions.

The IMG's immediate appetite in its unity campaign is to sign up the Workers League (WL), a right split from Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (formerly International Socialists). The WL is state-capitalist and deeply opportunist, with a membership that is, for the most part, relegated to the political graveyard. (The main obstacle to a fusion appears to be difficulties in convincing the WL that the IMG's current rightward motion will not be abruptly reversed, as these ultra-impressionists have so often done in the past.) The value of such a fusion would be primarily symbolic. It might encourage other clumps in the pseudo-Trotskyist asteroid belt to take the IMG's unity-mongering seriously.

But in the end, it is obvious that organisational seriousness and the IMG are mutually exclusive. The new *Socialist Challenge* is a fit organ of a group for which Bolshevik hardness, programmatic homogeneity and revolutionary intransigence are, as Trotsky put it, a hook with seven seals. ■

RMC...

(continued from page 4)

the 1965 organizational resolution designed to muzzle oppositionists. With such a bald statement of an entry perspective, we have a measure of the importance the bureaucratized SWP places on this fusion which clearly is of no numerical significance for them.

RMC Perspective—"We Give Up!"

Of the several fragments which together once made up the hypervolatile RSL, the RMC evidenced the most political seriousness and thoughtfulness. This was demonstrated both by its actions in presenting both sides of the dispute which exited it from the RSL and by its publication of a number of technically competent and literate bulletins, the *Revolutionary Marxist Papers* (obviously modeled after the SL's *Marxist Bulletin* series), in which they tried to come to grips with a number of critical issues facing the workers movement. However, unable to transcend its Shachtmanite origins the RMC now finds itself impelled, willy nilly, into the arms of the reformist SWP.

Following its expulsion from the RSL, the RMC had set for itself the task of struggling for "the theoretical and programmatic revival of the Trotskyist movement, the re-establishment of its link to the revolutionary traditions of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky" ("Introducing the Revolutionary Marxist Papers"). Listing the dangers facing the new organization in the coming period, a document entitled "Our Next Tasks" (*Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 4) warned of the possibility of "an un-political collapse into another, seemingly more 'successful' tendency."

"We have discussed the foolishness of such desires.... Individuals become impatient with the job of clearly and carefully elaborating the Marxist program themselves and seek shortcuts, become increasingly willing to abdicate their responsibility to think questions through to the end themselves in favor of joining a larger, seemingly successful group without first analyzing and honestly subscribing to that group's program. The unprincipled character of such an attitude and such behavior is obvious. What is just as true, however, is the fact that such a shortcut can only result in yet another political crisis within the newly adopted organization as the old and never really resolved disagreements and doubts re-emerge, differences widen, and the pressure of the class struggle shatters the new group's illusory image of success and certainty."

Poor RMC! Scarcely 18 months later we are told, "...the present polarization of Trotskyism is unfavorable to our independent growth. There are simply too many Trotskyist organizations which are too old, too large, and too well known for the RMC to be able to sharply distinguish itself in the eyes of many..." ("For Trotskyist Unity"). So the RMC then poses for itself the question: "With Which Group Should We Fuse?" In other words—"We Give Up!"

It is clear from reading "For Trotskyist Unity" that the RMC considers anyone a "Trotskyist" who calls himself one. Thus the felt orphan RMC spends a fair amount of time shopping around the "family of Trotskyism" in search of a rich foster parent. The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) is rejected out of hand: "This tendency constitutes one of the worst possibilities for fusion; it is a dead end. First of all, the iSt is one of the smallest international tendencies."

This is simple Kautskyan philistinism and an expression of the fact that the RMC is not interested in a genuine fusion based on deep programmatic agreement, but in an entry operation where its main consideration is to find the biggest swamp to fish in. The RMC then adds a second reason ruling out

fusion with the Spartacist tendency: the alleged "ingrained sectarianism and ultra-leftism" of the iSt causes it to "dismiss the SWP and the entire LTF as 'reformist'. They [the iSt] are open to fusion only with groups which will accept their own program." Horror of horrors! You are quite right, comrades of the RMC. We will not turn our Leninist organization into a social-democratic garbage heap in which there are one, two, three, many "programs." While recognizing the rights of factions and tendencies to struggle for their views within the party, under the norms of Leninist democratic centralism, (long since discarded by the bureaucratic SWP), we do so as part of our struggle to build a politically homogeneous Bolshevik combat party, not a dilettantish discussion group.

"For Trotskyist Unity" also raises some other considerations:

"First...fusion with the iSt is almost certainly impossible, even if we wanted it. According to its leadership, the SL will not even consider allowing those with a state capitalist position into either the iSt or a 'reborn' Fourth International. And secondly, we have no reason to believe from past history that the SL's internal life is conducive to oppositions. The SL has long been a monolithic organization with no established tradition of minority rights and a series of splits, expulsions, and failed fusions which indicate an intolerance for long-term differences."

The stumbling block to a fusion with the iSt, comrades of the RMC, is program. You refuse to unconditionally militarily defend the USSR against imperialism. It is that position and not your state capitalist rationales for such a programmatic stance that is the barrier to any possibility of a fusion. He who touches the Russian question touches the 1917 October Revolution. Your incorrect position on that question has catapulted you to the brink of joining the party of latter-day U.S. versions of Scheidemann, Ebert and Noske.

With regard to the SL's "intolerant" internal life, the statement is ignorant if it is not consciously slanderous. The SL which has an unblemished record defending workers democracy externally also has an impeccable record internally. We challenge the RMC to prove their charges concretely. Comrades of the RMC, the organization you are about to join not only in effect bans factions, but it flaunted the expulsion of a tendency (the IT) before the bourgeois courts to prove itself free from any taint of "violence." And you have the nerve to term the SL's practice of democratic centralism "intolerant"!

The reference to "failed fusions" is simply incredible. Both the SL/U.S. and the iSt as a whole have been built principally through a series of regroupments and fusions around the Trotskyist program. It is because of the iSt's programmatic hardness and homogeneity embodied in its cadre won through sharp political struggle from many organizations that it has been able to go forward while many of its erstwhile opponents have fragmented and gone spinning off into political limbo.

Into the Swamp!

In November of 1975 the RMC termed the SWP "apologists for Soares and the Portuguese social democrats" whose alibiing of reformism in Portugal

was "reminiscent of the SWP's policy toward reformists and liberals in the U.S. anti-war, black, and women's movements in the 1960s and '70s.... Then, as now, mass unity (with the right against the left) is placed above the struggle for leadership..." ("National Committee Theses on Portugal," November 1975).

With regard to the two contending wings of the USec these same theses proclaim: "And now the SWP and IMT—respectively the skills of the social democrats and the Stalinists—find themselves headed for a full-scale rupture in the outfit which out of habit, cynicism, and bad taste continues to style itself the Fourth International."

Now, during the summer of 1977, the RMC is rushing to embrace this "outfit." Further, they have the gall to counterpose it to the "sectarian and ultra-left" iSt which we are told has an utterly anti-Leninist approach to the national question. Yet it was the SWP, not the iSt, which adopted a policy of criminal neutrality in the face of the 1975-76 invasion of Angola by the South African imperialists!

It is indeed a measure of the sharp rightward swing of the RMC and the deep cynicism borne of its political bankruptcy and desperation that impels it to link up with the gang it had so aptly described just a year and a half ago. The SL consistently warned all the various left spinoffs from the I.S. (the RSL and its fragmentation products) that "third campism" leads inexorably to social democracy. Now the RMC provides another squalid example with a proposed fusion whose respective partners are so deeply reformist, opportunist and anti-Soviet that it would be difficult to describe their combination as unprincipled. For the SWP it represents another milestone on its road to mainstream social democracy, the organizational codification of its abandonment in practice of Soviet defensism. Clearly the SWP and RMC deserve each other's company (for a little while). Bon appetit! ■

Soledad Letter...

(continued from page 7)

society through reforms—without changing its basic and degenerate material basis—is superficial and cosmetic. Prison reform—within the context of capitalist society—is destined to fall short of expectations, and is tantamount to failure. The solution, therefore, is to remove the tapeworm from the environment.

But the only social force in society capable of such an historic and monumental task is the working class. And at every stage of the developing class struggles, the workers and their allies must be guided by a political leadership with a concrete and principled communist program. The Spartacist League has accepted the responsibility for building a mass revolutionary party, militantly opposed to the class collaboration of trade-union bureaucrats and Stalinists, dedicated to the principles and traditions of Leninist-Trotskyist politics. Its scientific analysis of world events and exemplary communist work afford the Spartacist League a unique opportunity to win the broad masses of workers and oppressed over to the program of socialist revolution.

Some day, all social barriers shall fall; national boundaries will be erased from the maps of the world; and classes and the prison that is bourgeois society shall fade into oblivion. Yet, in the meantime, intense class conflicts and social struggles are on the agenda; a bourgeoisie is yet to be defeated; and the revolutionary Spartacist League is fully committed to the life and death struggle for socialism in our lifetime.

Smash the state, smash the prisons!

FORUMS

Marxism vs. Feminism

Place: SFU, 3159 AQ
Date: Thursday, July 7
Time: 12:30 p.m.

Women in Struggle

Place: Britannia Library
1661 Napier Street
Date: Saturday, July 9
Time: 7:30 p.m.

SPEAKER: Sheila Delany

Sponsored by the Trotskyist League
For more information call 291-8993

VANCOUVER

WORKERS VANGUARD



New York City demonstration for homosexual rights last Sunday.

Paul Hasefros: New York Times



Chicago cops drag off protestor at June 14 demonstration against Anita Bryant.

WV Photo

Massive Nationwide Protests

Stop Anita Bryant's Bigotry Crusade!

Tens of thousands of demonstrators, angry over the anti-homosexual, right-wing crusade of Bible-spouting bigot Anita Bryant, took to the streets this weekend in record numbers in cities across the U.S. New York City saw its largest homosexual rights demonstration ever, estimated at 40,000 participants, with marchers forming an unbroken mass for 27 blocks from Washington Square to 34th Street.

Huge demonstrations commemorated the "Stonewall riot" of 1969—a symbol of homosexual resistance to police harassment—which was touched off when cops raided a Greenwich Village gay bar and were met for the first time with sharp resistance. Marches also

took place in San Francisco, Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Kansas City, Seattle and Providence. In San Francisco, Mayor George Moscone ordered flags to be flown at half mast in memory of Robert Hillsborough, stabbed to death last week by four men who allegedly yelled "faggot" as they murdered him and beat his companion.

All of the demonstrations were sparked by the recent victory of Anita Bryant's right-wing "Save Our Children Campaign" in Dade County, Florida, which was successful in repealing a law prohibiting discrimination against homosexuals. Bryant has vowed that she will take her crusade wherever "God sends me," and that seems to be wherever

reactionary forces can be organized for god, country and the family.

On June 14 Bryant went to Chicago to sing for a Shriners' Flag Day celebration at the Medinah Temple. She was greeted by more than 3,000 angry demonstrators. The Chicago cops showed that they were prepared to give the Bryant campaign a brutal boost, attacking and beating several demonstrators and arresting eight, including supporters of the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). Witnesses saw one cop drag a demonstrator across the pavement to a paddy wagon by the hair while other cops beat him with billy clubs.

Homosexuality is a touchstone of

social attitude in the U.S. Bryant's crusade depends on a number of primitive fundamentalist lies about homosexuals and consequent fears among more socially backward Americans. The idea that homosexuals are child molesters is a lie more powerful than all of Anita Bryant's sermonizing.

This vicious slander hits particularly hard at teachers. The effect, therefore, of Bryant's campaign is to set up an employment test for teachers on the basis of the most backward notions of "social deviance" and to open up homosexual teachers to blackmail, because they could lose their jobs if "discovered." The Spartacist League

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Post-Election Benefits Cuts Enrage Ranks

Miners Strike Against Miller

Within eight days of the reelection of Arnold Miller as president of the United Mine Workers (UMW), 35,000 miners were on strike against the union leadership. Underscoring the complete bankruptcy of the Miller regime, the strike centered in the big West Virginia districts which, along with the retiree vote, had given Miller his slim margin of victory just days before.

Furious over the post-election announcement of big cutbacks in health benefits—which had long been rumored but adamantly denied by Miller during the campaign—thousands of miners in West Virginia walked out and within 48 hours spread the strike with roving pickets through eastern Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Local and district bureaucrats managed to get some miners, including five locals in southern West Virginia, back on the job by June 24, but as the annual two-week vacation began, 22,000 were still on strike.

The strike exploded in response to the June 20 declaration by trustees of the Health and Retirement Fund that

821,000 beneficiaries will have to start picking up the tab for a good part of previously fully paid health care. Working and retired miners will now have to pay the first \$250 of hospital costs in addition to 40 percent of doctors' fees up to \$250.

The attack on miners' medical benefits is a calculated provocation, designed to batter and weaken the union prior to vital negotiations over the national contract which expires December 6. The employers' Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) has indicated that it is gearing up for a showdown to break the strength of the UMW. Using the fact that nearly half of all coal mined in the U.S. now comes from non-UMW mines, the BCOA is talking of junking the nationwide contract and bargaining on a company by company basis.

On June 16 the BCOA, which had twice earlier approved cash shifts among separate trusts to assure continued benefits, refused a third union request to do so, precipitating the crisis. While fund administrators claim that



Jack Mahoney

Arnold Miller

three of the funds are low on cash, a fourth one has plenty of money, reportedly taking in \$14 million more per month than is required for solvency. Moreover, the cutback announcement was carefully timed to fall just before the June 24 beginning of the annual two-

week vacation shutdown, in hopes that anticipated walkouts would fizzle out.

Outraged at the militant wildcats that have ripped through the coal fields, the BCOA is also determined to teach the miners a lesson: knock off the strikes or lose your benefits. Payments to the fund are made by the coal companies on a productivity basis, according to coal tonnage and man-hours worked. Fund trustees claim that strikes since the 1974 contract have cost the fund \$65 million with another \$20 million loss blamed on shutdowns caused by last winter's bitter cold. The BCOA is screaming about the 869,000 man-days lost to strikes in the first five months of this year, up 92 percent from last year, and wants to make the miners pay.

As Miller chimed in with the coal bosses to blame the reductions on strikes, local officials in Miller's home base, District 17, called a meeting to try to quash the wildcat. District president Joe Perry announced that he, the district executive board and the local presi-

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