



Kentucky state cops harass mine strikers.

Grace/Sigma

## Coal Miners: Don't Let Miller Lose It Now!

# Throw Back the Sellout!

For two long months America's coal miners have been on strike against the giant energy conglomerates who dominate this key industry. In the dead of a bitter winter they have held out solidly, without a crack in their ranks, in the face of mammoth utility and steel company stockpiles. Not only that, but through their militant roving pickets—and with no help whatever from the International—the ranks of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) have managed to cut the output of non-union coal almost in half, really putting the squeeze on the companies.

The strategy of the coal operators was to starve the miners into submission. Through the determination and fighting spirit of the UMWA membership, this strategy has been checked. Now the coal, steel and energy barons are hurting and their politicians are screaming for federal intervention to bring the strike to an end. With their stockpiles approaching critical levels, their main leverage is the aid of the union leadership itself.

In the longest official coal strike in the U.S. in over half a century, after 63 days on strike by the 175,000 soft coal miners of the UMWA, with victory now clearly in sight—Arnold Miller has come up with an agreement with the companies which would spell *disaster* for the union if accepted.

- In place of the right to strike, the bosses will get the "right to fire" and fine militants who engage in wildcat strikes.
- After allowing the health and welfare fund to run out of money last summer, now they put the knife in the back of the miners' medical plan, one of the major achievements of the UMWA, to replace it with inadequate "insurance" schemes.
- Take away cost-of-living increases and the companies' current wage offer comes out to a measly 3 percent per year, far less than obtained over the life of the current contract.

This Miller contract stinks so bad that it is likely that the district bureaucrats on the UMWA bargaining council will send the negotiators back for more. If the council puts this insulting deal to the membership for a vote, they must throw it back in Miller's face! Not

just by voting it down but by *mobilizing mass protests* and demanding a *special UMWA convention to elect a bargaining committee* that will get what the union ranks want and need.

COAL MINERS! In spite of the total lack of leadership from the International in organizing the strike, in spite of Miller's betrayals at the bargaining table, **VICTORY IS POSSIBLE!** *You can win this strike by sticking to your guns and demanding that there be no settlement without unlimited right to strike, fully funded health fund and a big wage increase. DON'T GIVE IN NOW THAT THE BOSSES' BACKS ARE AGAINST THE WALL!* Redouble your efforts to shut down scab mines. Send mass delegations to steel plants, power stations, rail and truck terminals urging the workers not to handle scab coal.

Workers from industries across the country are carefully following the coal strike. Big business and its government want the strike to end in defeat. They and their loyal lieutenants in the labor movement—the Millers, Meanys and Frasers—want to teach the union ranks that militancy doesn't pay. But the combined efforts of the coal bosses and the UMWA International could not prevent repeated wildcats in the mines sparked by Miller's 1974 sellout contract, and they haven't been able to break the back of this strike.

Going along with Miller's disaster contract, or any "sweetened" version of it agreed to by this bureaucratic bargaining council, means conditions will be *worse* in the mines. Safety conditions will deteriorate as the bosses become less fearful of protest strikes; health care will deteriorate drastically. *You will be forced to wildcat again and again, just as in the past or else watch the guts being ripped out of the union and every gain won in the past.* And next time you are forced out on strike you will be in a weaker position if this strike is just flushed down the tubes.

The miners have suffered plenty through this bitter strike and they have fought hard. There hasn't been such a display of militant picketing in years. And your demands are urgent *necessities*, not only

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## Miller's Disaster Contract: No Right to Strike, No Health Fund—It Stinks!....4

# Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski!

Internationally acclaimed film director Roman Polanski has been driven out of the U.S. by a vicious and vindictive official witchhunt. His legal tribulations began last March 11 when he was arrested in the lobby of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel by Los Angeles police, responding to a woman's charge that he had screwed her 13-year-old daughter. Ever since, Polanski's nightmarish persecution—which included 42 days in the Chino, California state prison for degrading "psychiatric observation"—has escalated.

Polanski was recently released from



Fry/L.A. Times

Roman Polanski

Chino upon completion of the "psychiatric diagnosis," which was reportedly "favorable." However, Superior Court judge Rittenband immediately called the report a "whitewash" and informed the director's lawyer that he intended to sentence Polanski to an additional 48 days in prison, to be followed by "voluntary deportation." "He doesn't belong in this country," proclaimed this state-empowered guardian of the nation's morals. Polanski, who holds French citizenship, fled to Paris on February 1, where he remains while the prosecution plans ways to extradite him.

Rittenband, known locally as a "hanging judge," obviously intends to make Polanski into an example. Douglas Dalton, the defendant's attorney, has pointed out that of the 44 people convicted in Los Angeles County on similar charges in 1976, none ever spent any time in jail. Former state attorney general Younger also sought to make political hay out of the case as part of his general "law-and-order" campaign.

The national press has covered the case with a mixture of pious outrage and amused contempt as another typical "Hollywood scandal." *Time* (28 March 1977) sneeringly referred to the director's "tawdry troubles," while the *New York Post* (2 February) devoted a full-page spread to the "new Hollywood" and Polanski's "rat pack" of sexually swinging friends, making him out to be some kind of exotic, neurotic freak. This is not the first time that the state, gleefully cheered on by the sensation-mongering press, has driven prominent

figures out of Hollywood. Errol Flynn, by all accounts an amiable man who never hurt anyone, was endlessly being dragged through the courts on account of his well-known preference for young women.

Ingrid Bergman was even denounced in Congress at the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt for her nerve in defiling her saintly "Joan of Arc" screen image by bearing a child out of wedlock to the Italian filmmaker Roberto Rossellini. Charlie Chaplin too was driven out of the "land of opportunity"—largely for political reasons, of course, but with a good dose of nasty sexual innuendo thrown in. The news-starved press runs periodic "exposés" of glamorous Hollywood in order to simultaneously titillate the public for the most part trapped in deadly dull, poor and restricted lives—and channel their resentment against the rich and famous into satisfying but empty moral outrage.

What is genuinely "tawdry" and sordid about the Polanski case is not the actual incident itself, but the vile official persecution and the hideous hypocrisy of it all. The national press has carefully "omitted" the real facts of the case. The director had pleaded guilty on August 8 to unlawful intercourse with a minor in return for dismissal of other sex and drug charges against him, including rape, child molestation, oral copulation, sodomy and providing drugs to a minor. However, statements at the trial make it clear that what happened was hardly a case of rape!

The 13-year-old whom Polanski was

accused of raping was described in the *Los Angeles Times* (20 August 1977) as "an aspiring actress," whose mother had known Polanski for over a year and given permission to photograph her daughter for the French edition of *Vogue* magazine. One of those photography sessions with the celebrated director turned into an evening of sipping champagne, nude bathing in a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath and consumption by the girl of part of a Quaalude (a fashionable sedative). Following this there was sexual intercourse (translated in the press as "drugging and raping").

It came out in court, however, that the girl had been "experimenting" with Quaaludes since the age of 10 or 11, and had a 17-year-old boyfriend with whom she had had prior sexual intercourse. A police detective on the case described her as looking to be "between 16 and 18," while the girl's mother at one point described her daughter rather lamely as "precocious in the midst of growing up." Even Judge Rittenband in his probation report was forced to admit the blatantly obvious sexual maturity of the girl: "the prosecutrix was a well-developed young girl, who looked older than her years, and regrettably not unschooled in sexual matters."

The incident occurred in the home of movie star Jack Nicholson, and it was partially on the testimony of Nicholson's current roommate Angelica Huston, who had returned home later that evening, that Polanski was charged. Of course, her eager cooperation with the police could have had something to do with the fact that detectives searching

## AGLU Covers for Nazis

# Court Backs Brownshirt March in Skokie

CHICAGO—A typical fascist tactic, one which is currently used a great deal by the National Front in Britain, is the exploitation of liberal impotence and state protection in order to stage well publicized racist provocations and incitements under the guise of "freedom of expression." Thanks to the courts and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the way was cleared last week for the two-bit Nazis of the National Socialist Party of America to employ this favorite tactic of provocation in Skokie, Illinois.

On January 27 the Illinois Supreme Court "reluctantly" ruled that members

of this organization have a constitutional right to display swastikas at public demonstrations in Skokie, a suburb of Chicago. Over half of Skokie's 70,000 residents are Jewish, 7,000 of them survivors of Hitler's concentration camps. According to the court decision, it is the "burden" of these residents to "avoid the offensive symbol if they can do so without unreasonable inconvenience." "One man's vulgarity is another man's lyric," it added.

Those starry-eyed liberals and reformists who persist in seeking justice in the capitalist courts now have another example of what they can expect: the Nazi thugs and murderers are free to harass, persecute and spew their filth in the midst of the death camp survivors; their victims have the "burden" of avoiding them if possible!

On January 30 the Nazis won a second major victory in four days when the Illinois Supreme Court dismissed a suit filed by an organization called Survivors of the Holocaust, which had sought to bar a Nazi demonstration in Skokie. David Goldberger, legal director of the Illinois Division of the American Civil Liberties Union, which defended the Nazis in court, said:

"While the views of my client are repugnant to me and everyone else, I believe the court did its duty in applying the First Amendment to this case to assure that the rights of all will not be abridged in order to abridge the rights of a few."

—*New York Times*, 28 January 1978



Der Spiegel

Collins (foreground) and his battered Nazi thugs after attempted disruption of speech by Nazi-hunter Wiesenthal.

That even ACLU members cannot swallow this garbage may be gauged from the fact that nearly a fourth of the organization's Illinois membership and more than 20 percent of its national membership have resigned in protest over the Skokie case. Present estimates are that over 40,000 of the ACLU's 200,000 members will resign. Already the Illinois affiliate has laid off four staff members because of the drop in membership dues from protests over the

ACLU's "civil libertarian" cover for the fascists!

### Crisis in the ACLU

The Skokie case has served to deepen, perhaps decisively, the current crisis within the ACLU precipitated by decisions and revelations within the last year, including the decision to defend a group of Marines at Camp Pendleton in California who were members of the Ku

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## WORKERS VANGUARD

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Published weekly, except bi-weekly in August and December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 260 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013. Telephone: 966-6841 (Editorial), 925-5665 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, N.Y. 10001. Domestic subscriptions: \$5.00 per year. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

the place for "evidence" found a vial of cocaine in her room.

Sexual and social life in southern California, with its thriving drug culture and troupes of precocious and sexually active groupies hanging about the fringes of the entertainment industry, produces thousands of "aspiring actresses" (and young male would-be "rock stars") like the one Polanski had the misfortune to run into. Regardless of what one thinks of the scene as a whole, its all-too-obvious reality makes absurd Rittenband's attempts to force rigid morality of the Victorian era into L.A. freeways and bedrooms.

Official repression and enforced standards of sexual activity have brought oppression and pain throughout history, from the cruel feudal "right of the first night" through the Catholic Church's intensely detailed rules on various sexual sins to the Victorians' complete denial of the sexuality of women and children and their artificial prolongation of childhood. The sexual "norms" which the American state upholds today reek with hypocrisy in a society where scientific research into human sexuality is only now beginning to be published on a mass basis; where scientific breakthroughs in contraception have removed the legitimate fear of pregnancy, which for ages stood as a barrier to sexual pleasure; and where rigid taboos based on ignorance have lost much of their force.

All those laws which define "sex crimes" in America today are fundamentally aimed at glorifying and propping up the obscene and repressive prison of the family, for centuries the main institution for the oppression of women and children. The reactionary sentiment whipped up by the persecution of "sex deviants" is fueled also by recognition that the family is the individual's shelter in a hostile world. Only a broader social vision of the eventual replacement of the family as part of the transition to a classless society can defuse these fears that lumpenization and social collapse are the only alternative to bourgeois morality.

The media's exploitation of the Polanski case is more than mere sensationalism. His prosecution, like the furor over "kiddie porn," feeds into the sanctimonious "Save Our Children" crusade epitomized by Anita Bryant's anti-homosexual witchhunt—a reactionary offensive which hides behind the "innocence" of children to enforce bourgeois morality through the vindictive persecution of "deviants."

The victimization of those held to threaten the prevailing norms of family life often takes the most extreme forms. In November a 23-year-old princess and her commoner husband were executed in Saudi Arabia as "sex criminals." By the traditions of her tribe, which is simultaneously the Saudi ruling class, shooting her and hacking off her husband's head by sword in the public market of Jidda were socially quite "moral." Judge Rittenband was not able to have Polanski beheaded in order to protect the "American Way of Life," but the principle that the state has the right to enforce a "norm" on private sexual activity is equally held by the U.S. bourgeoisie and the Bedouin sheiks. Their methods simply vary a bit.

There are indeed very real and pervasive sex crimes committed in America today, but they are not only nor necessarily the ones splashed across the pages of the tabloid press. Fear, guilt and repression are loaded on the very young for even having sexual thoughts. Adolescent youth are inhumanly and artificially segregated from one another in schools and colleges. The religious strictures of the Catholic church and other religious sects, including orthodox Judaism, keep thousands of women trapped in an endless cycle of poverty, pregnancy and ever more mouths to

feed. The aged are locked into grim and tiny rooms to die as their wardens debate "Should sex be allowed in old age homes?"

In ignorance and shame thousands of poor young women are forced into dangerous abortions without Medicaid, while the wealthy manage as they always have. The more unfortunate must either bear their unwanted children or else be sterilized permanently in government hospitals while great debate rages as to whether the young should be "exposed" to contraceptives and birth control information. There is also the hideous frustration and sexual tension built up within the family itself, with attendant beatings and brutalization of children, including their sexual mistreatment. Rape and these other very real crimes, along with the prostitution which is the eternal companion of enforced monogamy, are the sordid reality behind "public morality."

Polanski has been made the latest public target in the state's vindictive attempts to uphold the puritan myth and hide this reality. Even his brilliant and often powerful films, like "Cul de Sac," "Knife in the Water," "Repulsion," and more recently "Rosemary's Baby" and "Chinatown," have been used against him. As one Columbia Pictures executive moaned, "Roman's got such a bad reputation for being a pervert film maker, he's going to be judged guilty by his work" (*Time*, 28 March 1977).

What emerges from the director's life, however, is a pattern of successful creative achievement in the face of a pattern of violence and tragedy. As a young boy Polanski saw his parents ripped away (to disappear permanently in the concentration camps) by Nazi stormtroopers. At 15 he was beaten almost to death with an iron bar by a maniac. After achieving a reputation as a talented film maker in Stalinist Poland, he emigrated to the West—where his pregnant wife, the actress Sharon Tate, was hideously slaughtered at home along with the couple's friends by the crazed Manson family. And now Polanski has had the humiliation and torture of spending over a month in prison for "psychiatric observation." (If this had occurred in the Soviet Union, where dissidents are barbarously locked up in mental hospitals, the director would already be high on the list of Jimmy Carter's "human rights" campaign.)

Yet to the state of California Polanski is a "sex criminal" and it threatens more prison. It is no wonder why the victim chose to leave America. As he rightly observed, "They spent 42 days trying to drive me bizarre, but thank god I'm smart and rich..." (*New York Post*, 7 February). He went on:

"In America, California, I lose my wife, my baby, my friends, perhaps my sanity and almost my freedom. No, I say, no! The Nazis couldn't take it away from me, nor could the grief of my losses. And this little whore and the California laws won't either. I have given much and they have taken too much from me."

Good for him. We are cheered to see that this ordeal of puritanical witch-hunting has not broken Roman Polanski's spirit.

The Polanski case has stirred up the poisonous fears and vicious repression which underlies bourgeois morality. As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed "norms." The guiding principle for sexual relations between people should be that of effective consent—that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. We hold that any and all consensual relations between individuals are purely their own concern, and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.

Drop the charges against Roman Polanski! No Extradition! Stop the puritanical witchhunt! ■

# Free Santiago Alegría! Drop the Ban on the PORE!

On January 3 Santiago Alegría Sánchez, a corporal in the Spanish army, was arrested by Spanish military police and charged with participation in a robbery of weapons and ammunition at the El Pani air force base where he was stationed. Alegría was arrested along with six other left-wing militants in connection with the purported December 27 arms theft, but the others were subsequently released after beatings and brutal "questioning." The Francoist military authorities have refused to free Alegría, and he remains in their hands, undoubtedly subject to torture and in danger of being summarily tried in a court martial.

While the authorities are clinging to the trumped-up "evidence" against Alegría, both police interrogations and accounts in the bourgeois press clearly reveal that he is on trial for his association with the Partido Obrero Revolucionario de España (PORE—Revolutionary Workers Party of Spain). The military court's charges against the imprisoned corporal include: "there are reasons to believe that the soldier Santiago Alegría is a member of the Central Committee of the PORE, an illegal party whose goal is to take power.... The facts related above constitute the crime of illegal association."

Under the guise of "Spanish democracy" of Juan Carlos/Adolfo Suárez, the state apparatus inherited intact from the Francoist dictatorship has been stepping up repression on the pretext of cracking down on alleged terrorists. This campaign of provocation has been directed in particular against the anarchist union federation (the CNT), Maoist groups and the PORE. Demonstrating outside the Barcelona police headquarters January 8 to demand the liberation of their arrested comrades, four more PORE militants and sympathizers were arrested and later released. A week later, following a CNT demonstration against the "Pact of Moncloa" (a joint program agreed to by the Suárez government, the parliamentary opposition and the principal union federations) nine CNT members were arrested and charged with a terrorist attack on a dance hall (*Le Monde*, 19 January).

Alegría, a member of the PORE in civilian life according to a party declaration, was charged when police claimed they found a PORE leaflet in a mountain region through which the stolen arms are alleged to have passed. In addition to Alegría, the police round-up netted Nuria Marti, Albert Marti and Antoni Rius—all members of the PORE—as well as three other leftists. The latter were released from police custody upon establishing that they were not members of the PORE. The PORE militants, on the other hand, reported that they were released only after being tortured and interrogated about the party's Central Committee (*Truth*, 27 January).

The whole incident of the arrest of Alegría and the other six militants is clearly a frame-up. There is no evidence linking the corporal to the arms theft at all, and he has emphatically denied any involvement. Obviously the authorities simply rounded up every known or suspected PORE supporter in Tarrasa, Catalonia (near the air base), on the basis of a leaflet allegedly found on the side of a road. The other PORE supporters were released without

charges, and Nuria Marti reported that the police interrogators did not even ask questions about the arms robbery. The PORE itself issued a communiqué denouncing the provocation and opposing "terrorism [and] actions separate from the mobilization of the working masses" (*El País* [Madrid], 7 January).

The entire workers movement must demand the immediate release of Alegría Sánchez, dropping of the phony charges against him and an end to the persecution of the PORE. We sharply denounce these arrests of PORE militants, as we have done in the past (see "Free All Class-War Prisoners in Spain!" *WV* No. 113, 11 June 1976). However, we must point out the irresponsible behavior of the Vargaite tendency (the former LIRQI—International League Reconstructing the Fourth International—which now bombastically proclaims itself to be the FI and whose Spanish section is the PORE) on questions of security and defense.

Thus at the height of the repression following the death of the dictator Franco, LIRQI publications ran a photograph of a construction workers demonstration in Barcelona above the caption: "In the first rows certain leaders of the PORE can be recognized" (reprinted in *Truth*, 1 April 1976). No doubt the Spanish police did their best to pick out these militants fingered by their own comrades. Similarly in this case the Vargaite American supporters—the Trotskyist Organization USA first proudly described Alegría as a member of the PORE (*Truth*, 13 January), then in the next issue insisted that he is a former member and referred to the attempt to organizationally link him to the PORE as part of the police provocation!

The U.S. Vargaite have announced the formation of a Committee for the Immediate Liberation of Santiago Alegría Sánchez to organize defense efforts against the victimization of the PORE militants. In a telephone call to *Workers Vanguard* Jon Cohen, national secretary of the Trotskyist Organization, solicited Spartacist League (SL) participation in the Committee, one of whose three central slogans was "Free all political prisoners in Spain!" The SL objected to this liberal civil libertarian demand which would include calling for the freedom of imprisoned fascists, including several members of the Spanish AAA arrested in connection with an explosion last September, which killed one person and wounded 12, at the left-wing satirical Barcelona magazine *El Popus*.

The PORE had previously raised the demand of "free all political prisoners," including as recently as the 16 September 1977 issue of its newspaper, *La Aurora*. Most blatantly, in 1975-76 the Vargaite conducted an international campaign calling for "freedom of political prisoners" in the USSR and Eastern Europe. While genuine Trotskyists oppose Stalinist suppression of dissent in the degenerated and deformed workers states, this opposition is linked to our defense of the proletarian conquests and does not include calling for the liberation of Georgian fascists and similar counterrevolutionary scum. However, recently (evidently in response to the *Popus* atrocity) the PORE has changed its line and now demands

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# Miller's Disaster Contract

## No Right to Strike, No Health Fund... It Stinks!

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 7—What is indisputably one of the worst agreements in the history of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) has been negotiated by union president Arnold Miller and the coal operators, but as we go to press the tentative agreement has failed to surmount its first hurdle: approval by UMWA bargaining council, composed of top district and International officers. After seven and one half hours of a non-stop meeting, 39 grim-faced members of the council walked out of union headquarters at 5:30 p.m. today, having failed to ratify the proposed agreement. The council instead recessed indefinitely, demanding to see the specific language of the agreement instead of the summary "principles" which it was given.

A pale-looking Miller emerged shortly after and gave a curt statement to newsmen who had waited outside all day. Miller refused to answer direct questions on details of the contract, but he did say: "It will take several days until all the language is edited and in final form." This will require further meeting with members of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA). "But there should be no presumption of rejection," by the bargaining council, a worried Miller warned, "I'm not through with them yet."

What is holding up the solution to the longest continuous coal strike since the 1920's is not grammatical clarification nor fine-tuning of sentence structure. Arnold Miller has presented the miners with a contract that cannot be adequately described by the "normal" terms for abominable bureaucratic treachery: "sweetheart deal," "sellout," "betrayal" all seem too mild. The bargaining council is wary, nervous and playing for time to gauge the membership's reaction. For the main items in the tentative contract are clear—and they stink.

- The right to strike has been completely abandoned. Roving pickets and strike leaders can be immediately fired and miners who miss work, even respecting a picket line, will be fined \$20 a day, for up to ten days.
- The virtually total health coverage,

provided to miners and their dependents in recent years, is no more. The union's health fund is reportedly being dismantled and being replaced by a commercial-carrier insurance plan under which miners will have to pay certain, as yet unspecified, deductibles. In addition, there is danger that the existence of the crucially important miners' clinics could be eliminated in this arrangement.

- Pensioners are being offered continued poverty. Those who retired before the end of 1975, currently receiving \$225-\$250 a month, are being offered only a miserable \$25 over three years. Those who retired after 1975 will get \$1 extra for every year of service. These tokenistic crumbs will leave miners hundreds of dollars below the pensions of many AFL-CIO and Auto Workers pension plans.

- Wage and fringe benefits increases will amount, even by Miller's questionable figures, to only 37 percent over three years. While this compares favorably to most recent union settlements, it is far less than the 50 percent gained in the 1974 contract.

- There will be no cost-of-living escalator clause. A 7 percent annual inflation is "anticipated" and included in \$2.35 per year wage increase. Thus, after "anticipated inflation" the miners will actually be getting only about 3 percent a year! Should inflation rise more than that, as in the Nixon years, the miners will be completely unprotected.

When Miller announced the tentative agreement last night he was careful not to mention the dropping of the right to strike demand, the penalties on strikers or the loss of full health coverage. He clearly hoped to sell the package as a big wage increase, saying it was an "excellent agreement... by far the best agreement negotiated in any major industry in the past two years." But, while the miners certainly deserve a hefty wage increase, far more than what Miller got, wages were never seen by miners as the central issue in their strike. The right to strike, a life and death matter in the dangerous underground pits, and restoration of full health and pension benefits were the miners' key concerns and it is exactly these that Miller gave away.

### The Right to Strike

Miller's abandonment of the right to strike is surely his most criminal act. Last summer, during the UMWA's fierce presidential campaign, Miller swore up and down that he would win the local right to strike in the upcoming contract. Of course, by this he meant only the "right" of an individual mine workforce, after exhausting the cumbersome grievance procedure, to strike by a majority vote of all the local union's members. He had no intention of sanctioning the roving pickets which had virtually paralyzed the coal industry

in three successive summertime walkouts. But even Miller's extremely delimited "local" right to strike was thrown over in the negotiations.

Instead, miners will face under Miller's terms the most draconian sanctions of any of America's organized unionists. The October 1977 decision of the union management Arbitration Review Board, allowing the summary dismissal of roving pickets and strike leaders, will be allowed to stand. Even the distribution of literature, if it is followed by a walkout, becomes a firing offense. Union members who miss work for an "unauthorized" reason, even respecting the picket line which is sacrosanct in the coal fields, will be fined \$20 a day.

The BCOA could not simply try to obtain a "no-strike" clause from the UMWA bargainers. Miller has so little authority among the miners that everyone knew a no-strike clause in the contract would be patently toothless and unenforceable. So the BCOA insisted on direct financial penalties. Arnold Miller, who virulently opposed all of the wildcats which ripped the coal fields over the last three years, agreed.

Miller had been forced to back off from an agreement to a similar penalty clause earlier in the talks, when protest erupted in the coal-mining areas. To help make their strikebreaking proposal appear more palatable, and hopefully aid Miller in selling it, the BCOA modified its stance slightly in eleventh-hour bargaining. It agreed that if arbitrators later hold that the company was at fault in an unauthorized walkout, the company will pay the costs to the health and pension fund.

For miners, who are all too familiar with the arbitration swindle, this is a bitter fraud. It is this dragged out, bogged-down, pro-company system that has been a main source of the miners' grievances since it was instituted under the last contract. Arrogant mine bosses respond flippantly to miners' complaints: "If you don't like it, file a grievance." The machinery overloads with thousands of unattended grievances. The few that finally get to binding arbitration are usually decided in favor of the coal operators. Piously telling the miners to have further faith in this no-win system would be laughable were it not so criminal.

The major concern of the BCOA going into the coal negotiations four months ago was obtaining stringent measures to curb miners' militancy and impose "labor peace" in the coal fields. With already fantastically inflated profits from the expanding coal market and skyrocketing coal prices in the wake of the 1973 Arab oil embargo, the coal operators flushed with joy at the prospect of more of both under Carter's coal-oriented energy policy. Their financial futures looking rosy, the coal bosses could afford and were able to provide massive increases in wages and benefits. What they strove for most of all, however, was to break the miners' militancy and guarantee high, uninterrupted levels of production. Arnold Miller gave them just the tools they wanted.

There was speculation since before the mine strike began that the coal bosses and their overlapping cohorts in the oil, electric power and steel industries would attempt to buy off the right to strike with restoration of health and pension benefits. But now, under Miller's proposed contract, the miners will get neither. Arnold Miller and the BCOA offer the miners: no right to strike, penalties for walkouts, and—loss of full health coverage.

### Labor Department In, Miners Out

Arnold Miller was the Labor Department's candidate to replace Tony Boyle for the UMWA presidency in the 1972 election. The capitalist government hoped to install a reliable reformer to replace a discredited crook in order to head off a mounting revolt in the coal fields. Miller and Patrick and Labor

Department liberals tried to pawn this swindle off as "union democracy" and "rank and file control." But the miners have found out otherwise, as Miller has sided with the courts and coal operators in strike after strike. And today, as miners conduct their militant strike with no help at all from the UMWA International, they are completely frozen out of negotiations. They have not been consulted once, but instead kept completely in the dark.

Whom has Miller turned to for advice and counsel? The federal government, Carter and Governor Rockefeller of West Virginia! Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) director Wayne Horowitz masterminded the talks, ran back and forth between the negotiating teams, patched things up when the talks collapsed (four times in the last four weeks) and coached Arnold Miller on how to achieve an "acceptable agreement."

It was Horowitz who recommended to Miller that he sign on Harry Huge as one of the key negotiators for the union. (Huge only recently had outraged miners when he voted as the union representative on the Fund to cut benefits last summer.) And it was Jimmy Carter who cued Miller to delay the convening of the bargaining council.

As Miller read off his prepared statement to the media, millionaire West Virginia governor Jay Rockefeller IV (grandson of John D. Rockefeller, the murderer of the Ludlow miners), a personal friend of Miller's who flew him back and forth to Washington from West Virginia in his private jet during the talks, stood behind Miller and then urged miners to accept the agreement. Labor Secretary Ray Marshall later issued a statement boosting the contract as "genuinely good for both parties." Carter's Labor Secretary said he was "optimistic" that the agreement "will help bring stable labor-management relations to the coal industry." If Horowitz, Rockefeller and Marshall had put their signatures to the pact instead of Miller it would have only been a violation of protocol, not a distortion of reality.

It is no accident that the contract being proposed is so favorably viewed by the government. It is a wholesale repudiation of the miners' most deep-felt needs and a boon to big business. The coal operators, Miller and the government want the miners to accept this unprecedented raw deal. The bargaining council, as we go to press, is wavering.

But even were the UMWA's bargaining council to reject Miller's pact, it will be a cheap gesture. The district leaders can posture as more militant than Miller and send him back to the bargaining table for more. But the bargaining council rejected Miller's initial 1974 contract, only to cave in to pressure from Nixon's FMCS director, W.J. Usery, who intervened in the talks pleading "national interest."

Miners must not relax their vigilance now. With their strike beginning to take its toll, they are on the verge of being able to win real gains from the coal operators. But the miners must elect district-wide strike committees and call an emergency national UMWA convention to elect a representative bargaining council. In this way they can extend their picketing efforts, which have proved so effective in shutting off scab coal production, and take the bargaining and conduct of the strike out of Miller's hands.

The coal miners have embarked on massive strikes against the bosses, the courts, the government and their own union "leaders" over the past three years. They have been fined, clubbed, shot at and condemned in the bosses' press for their actions. But they have held their ground. Don't give up now! Down with the no-strike contract! Down with the health and pension giveaway! Miners: organize, demonstrate, elect strike committees! Victory to the miners strike! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

### Australasian SPARTACIST

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# Letter to the Guardian

6 February 1978

To the editors of the *Guardian*:

Last week the Spartacist League submitted an ad featuring a *Workers Vanguard* exclusive, "RCP SPLITS," for publication in the *Guardian*. Although your paper pretends to be a clearing-house of "left" opinion and polemic you refused to print the ad. The "reason" offered by your editors was that the *WV* article was "sensationalist."

Of course, several radical papers, no friends of Trotskyism, including *Challenge* and the *Call* have been forced to "borrow" for their own "reports" from the *WV* article, the first public account of this very real and at times bloody split and the *only* accurate, detailed story on the explosion in the RCP with actual documentation. The most ludicrous effort in this vein is your own! Obviously dying to "leak" the news yourselves, in the latest *Guardian* you report the factual substance of our article, often almost word for word, after the ritual and obligatory denunciations of the "sectarian" SL and its "hatred for all socialist countries." You then, in the most backhanded manner possible, acknowledge that the contents of the *WV* article were confirmed in a *Guardian* phone call to a "RCP spokesperson" thus utterly invalidating your charge of "sensationalism." Yet you still refuse to run our ad. One can only marvel at such temerity and dishonesty.

You have in the past been one of the few Maoist presses to occasionally (and with censorial selectivity) accept for publication some "Trotskyite" forum announcements, ads for literature, etc. Your criteria for acceptance into the *Guardian's* pages have been, if not explicit, transparent in the extreme. Anything *too* Trotskyist (e.g., alluding to the taboo subject of the Fourth International), *too* critical of Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh & Co. or *too* sharply aimed at any of the members of the *Guardian's* "family" (Maoists, Castroites, "Third World" petty-bourgeois nationalists, etc.) was refused publication out of hand.

The proposed ad, which simply replicated the straightforward *WV* headline along with information on price, bulk orders, etc., could not have been construed, even by your fickle editorial board, as committing any of these "sins." Yet your response was predictable. Why? Because your fear of alienating the politically polymorphous (and

ever-shrinking) circles, grouplets and "parties" which constitute the *Guardian's* "family" renders you editorially impotent.

You have generated literally thousands of words on Hua's ascension, Teng's "rehabilitation" and the purge of the "Gang of Four" without coming to a *single* conclusion about the Chinese leadership, past or present. The political irrelevancy of the newsboys' collectives known as "*Guardian Clubs*" is highlighted by your agnosticism on the class nature of the USSR, a question which has been "current" for half a century. Thus when you complain that the *WV* article was "laced with classical Trotskyist rhetoric" (goodness gracious) you are alluding to the fact that we present a Marxist analysis and *revolutionary programmatic conclusions* on the clique fight in the Chinese bureaucracy and the Russian question. You, on the other hand, are struck dumb by the very issues which have ripped up the Revolutionary Communist Party and have been tormenting the Maoist left for the past year.

You hope by your censorship to quarantine the left from the anathema of Trotskyist politics. It simply won't work, just as Avakian's proscription of "outside" reading has not kept our article out of the hands of his followers. Virtually every Maoist group has been knocking on our doors to get bundles of *WV* No. 190 and the follow-up article "Behind the Split in the RCP" (coming next week). So why do you persist? A glance at the *Guardian's* history as soft-core apologists for Stalinist regimes throughout the world makes it clear that the real question is why do you ever make exceptions to your bureaucratic censorship. It is because you seek to be the voice of the amorphous "rad-lib" milieu on the fringes of Stalinist popular frontism that you adopt a more "liberal" policy, occasionally permitting "Trotskyite" ads or announcements to penetrate your pages.

This Stalinist red-penciling is a cynical attack on workers democracy and moreover a double-edged sword. Even the *Guardian*, because of *your* supposed "hatred for socialist countries," has been banished from the newstands of the Peking-connected China Books, as has the RCP's *Revolution*. The SL protests your outrageous and petty censorship of our ad although we should have expected no better from the bootlicking editors of the *Guardian*.

New York Spartacist League



Sandor John at SYL literature table.

Marc PoKempner

## Meeting Against Repression at Chicago Circle Campus

# Drop the Charges Against Sandor John!

As part of a growing wave of protest against the anti-communist ban and arrest of Spartacus Youth League (SYL) spokesman Sandor John, a rally was held January 30 at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC). John was arrested November 22 on charges of "criminal trespass" for distributing socialist literature on the UICC campus.

The rally, which was called by the SYL-initiated Ad Hoc Committee to Stop Administration Harassment, featured speakers representing the SYL, the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), the Socialist Party of Illinois and Circle Women's Liberation, as well as leftist author and professor Richard Libman-Rubenstein, and Paul Bigman, regional vice president of the National Lawyers Guild. A statement of solidarity from Professor Joseph Persky of UICC was read.

John's arrest on the orders of UICC administrators has been the most blatant act in an ominous pattern of growing administration harassment of left and campus organizations at this largely working-class and minority school. This harassment has included the attempted eviction of campus organizations from their offices at Circle Center, petty restrictions on the distribution of literature and harassment of leftist professor Julia LeSage.

The protest campaign organized by the Ad Hoc Committee has scored important gains in recent weeks. Significant new endorsements have been received, hundreds of letters and telegrams of protest have been sent to the administration and the attack on John has gained coverage in the mass media: an article in the black community weekly, *Chicago Weekend*, an interview on radio station WAIT and a full page article in the widely read "alternative" weekly, the *Chicago Reader*.

Conspicuous by their absence from the January 30 protest were the Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB, formerly the Revolutionary Student Brigade—RSB) youth group of the disintegrating Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Their criminal sectarianism—a hallmark of Stalinism—has, in fact, led them to solidarize openly with the administration attack on the SYL (and on the entire left). The RCYBers' response to

John's arrest was "It's good you were arrested!" The schism currently ripping the guts out of the RCP has split the RCYB group at UICC, but neither wing of the internal clique fight represents a break with Stalinism. The anti-communist UICC administration may now have *two* groups of "left" allies to cover for its atrocities!

### Civil Libertarians Defend Nazis

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which has agreed to fight the violation of John's rights by the UICC administration in civil court, decided not to attend the meeting. An ACLU official explained that he was afraid that the meeting would end in an angry protest of its latest "victory" in the Illinois Supreme Court—the Skokie decision, which allows Chicago's Nazis to display swastikas during a provocative march through the streets of the suburb of Skokie, a large number of whose residents are survivors of Nazi death camps.

Mary Jo Marino, a representative of the Partisan Defense Committee, an anti-sectarian class-struggle defense organization which is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, explained why the civil libertarians find themselves defending the fascists:

"Key for us is the fight for the independence of the working class from its enemies. We have to preserve the capacity of the working class to fight against its exploiters. Part of the duty of the Partisan Defense Committee, part of the fight to preserve the combativity of the working class, is a fight against civil libertarianism in all its forms, in the National Lawyers Guild and in the ACLU, which has as its most basic purpose the attempt to tie the working class to its class enemy."

The spineless YSA, youth group of the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), has participated marginally in the SYL-initiated united front at UICC, although opting whenever possible to conciliate the administration rather than struggle against it. At the January 30 rally YSA spokesman Jo Dellagustino publicly endorsed the administration's slander that the SYL "disrupted" the November 18 "open" meeting of the Board of Trustees; i.e., Sandor John attempted to answer the wholesale lying of Chancellor Donald

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## WORKERS VANGUARD



### Case of Four Purge RCP Spartacists

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## PART 1— THE SLP VS. LENINISM

# Was De Leon a De Leonist?



Detail from mural by Diego Rivera showing Debs (center) and DeLeon (below, to the left).

As part of its attempt to rejoin the world of the living after six decades as a moribund social-democratic sect, the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) has been forced to confront fundamental issues which have divided ostensible socialists into opposing camps ever since 1917. Recently the SLP's *Weekly People*, traditionally given over to the most abstract "socialism is the only answer" propaganda, has published lengthy polemics against Leninism and its contemporary extension, Trotskyism. In a six-part series on the class nature of the Soviet Union and another on its relations with the Communist International (*Weekly People*, 26 November 1977-7 January 1978), the SLP tries to take on those claiming the traditions of the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin's Comintern and Trotsky's Fourth International.

An analysis of the SLP's relationship to Leninism is complicated by the discontinuities in the party's history from Daniel De Leon to long-time national secretary Arnold Petersen to the present leadership of Nathan and Stan Karp. The SLP of De Leon, who died in May 1914, was a particular amalgam of revolutionary social democracy and syndicalism. Because of the time and conditions in which he worked, De Leon never substantively considered the questions which later came to be the hallmark of Leninism as distinguished from classic social democracy, centrally the party, state and revolution.

De Leon himself was a pre-Leninist revolutionary social democrat. His successor took some of the master's concepts and transformed them into a purposively anti-Leninist doctrine based on the rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat for advanced capitalist countries. Thus Petersen's SLP got no further than point one of Lenin's famous "Twenty-One Conditions" before turning its back on the Communist International. At the same time, the SLP maintained essentially uncritical support to Lenin's government in Russia, and later to Stalin as well. However, with the 1939 Stalin-Hitler pact Petersen finally broke sharply with Russia, declaring it an "imperialist despotism."

In its general theoretical outlook the present SLP leadership stands in the Petersen tradition. However, confronted with an internal grouping sympathetic to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and fusion overtures toward the SLP as a whole by the putatively Trotskyist (but actually reformist) SWP, the Karp regime is trying to firm up resistance by restating traditional social-democratic objections to the society which emerged from the Bolshevik Revolution. In the quest for a unique position, which would give the party a reason for existence and avoid the glaring problems of traditional "state-capitalist" arguments, the new leadership's analysis differs in significant respects from historic SLP positions.

We therefore propose to deal with the question of the SLP and Leninism in three parts. This section will treat De Leon's general political outlook, particularly his concept of "socialist industrial unionism." A second part will concern the SLP's attitude (both under Petersen and the Karp) toward the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. Finally we will consider De Leonism on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the vanguard party.

### De Leon and His Epigones

Trotskyists do not denigrate the accomplishments of De Leon, the foremost fighter against opportunism among pre-World War I socialists in the U.S. As we wrote in the 1966 "Declaration of Principles of the Spartacist League":

"We also look for inspiration to the example of such revolutionists in the United States as F.A. Sorge, Vincent St. John, Daniel De Leon, Louis Fraina and James P. Cannon."

—Spartacist No. 8, November-December 1966

There is good reason why we include Daniel De Leon among those working-class leaders who contributed to a living revolutionary tradition in this country. De Leon was unquestionably the greatest American Marxist of his day.

Although the latter-day SLP presents De Leon as a doctrinaire system-builder, he was not nor did he claim to be such. De Leon's theoretical generalizations were too abstract, incomplete

and limited to the United States to constitute a distinct doctrine. His strength did not lie in any unique theoretical contribution but in his revolutionary attitude on the principal questions he faced. We honor De Leon for his militant internationalism in the Spanish-American War, for his opposition to the electoral reformism of the Hillquit-Debs Socialist Party (SP) and his condemnation of its organizational amorphousness, for his opposition to racist immigration laws advocated by such chauvinist "socialists" as Hillquit and Victor Berger.

De Leon was one of the few Marxists in the Second International who rejected the orthodox Kautskyan position that the party should include all ostensible socialists, reformists and revolutionaries alike. His 1896 address, "Reform or Revolution," reads like Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* in its insistence on the need for a vanguard organization of committed revolutionaries. If anything, De Leon is even more angular:

"In all revolutionary movements, as in the storming of fortresses, the thing depends upon the head of the column—upon that minority that is so intense in its convictions, so soundly based in its principles, so determined in its action, that it carries the masses with it, storms the breastwork and captures the fort. Such a head of the column must our Socialist organization be to the whole column of the American proletariat.... "Tamper with discipline, allow this member to do as he likes, that member to slap the Party constitution in the face, yonder member to fuse with the reformists, this other to forget the nature of the class struggle and to act up to his forgetfulness—allow that, keep such 'reformers' in your ranks and you have stabbed your movement in its vitals."

—quoted in L.G. Raisky, *The Struggle Against Opportunism in the American Labor Movement: An Appraisal of Daniel De Leon* (1959)

From the vantage point of present-day communists, probably the high-point of De Leon's political life was his principled opposition to socialist participation in a bourgeois government (variously known as Millerandism, coalitionism or, following the later Stalinist practice, popular frontism) at the 1904 Amsterdam Congress of the Second International. In 1899 Alexandre Millerand, a French Socialist,

entered a government of bourgeois republicans with the excuse of defending democracy against a supposed royalist threat. Among the ministers was Gaston Gallifet, butcher of the Paris Commune, and instead of resisting a rightist coup the cabinet aimed its fire at the left. For the next five years "Millerandism" was the dominant issue in the international socialist movement.

At the 1900 Paris Congress of the International, Kautsky put forth a typically centrist resolution to the effect that socialist participation in a bourgeois government is a tactical, not a principled question. The SLP delegation voted against Kautsky's opportunist motion. By the Amsterdam Congress of 1904 sentiment in the International had turned against Millerandism. A new resolution was narrowly passed which opposed socialist participation in a bourgeois government, but simultaneously endorsed the older Kautsky resolution. De Leon put forth a minority resolution stating that socialist participation in a bourgeois government was excluded on principle and openly repudiating Kautsky's 1900 resolution. (De Leon's excellent motion was, however, theoretically marred by exempting backward countries from its scope.)

In contrast to the latter-day SLP, De Leon was not an organizational sectarian. In 1905 he helped found the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) together with revolutionary syndicalists. When the syndicalists forced him out of the IWW in 1908, he realized that the Socialist Party had become the mainstream organization of American socialism and that the SLP was tending to become an isolated sect. He spent the last years of his life seeking to bring his followers into the SP. He was frustrated in this goal by sectarian tendencies within the SLP and by the hostility of Morris Hillquit to the old revolutionary factionalist.

Despite certain peculiar positions (e.g., belief in Lassalle's "iron law of wages"), De Leon prior to 1904 was an orthodox Marxist whose general theoretical outlook did not differ from Kautsky's (In fact, De Leon translated Kautsky's popular expositions of social-

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# In Terminal Crisis ... SLP Goes Trendy

## SWP Invites De Leonists to Build Party of the Whole Swamp

**T**he Socialist Labor Party (SLP), a senile relic of the once revolutionary organization led by the great American Marxist Daniel De Leon, has undergone a significant political shift in the two years since the death of Arnold Petersen, the party's dictatorial leader for over 55 years. A new leadership under National Secretary Nathan Karp and his son Stan has attempted to breathe life into the organization by making a sharp turn away from the complete abstentionism which characterized the Petersen reign.

The Karp regime wants to abandon its self-acknowledged sectarian past and replace the politics of Petersen with an eclectic blend of De Leonist phrases and support for popular radical causes. Far from arresting the decline and disintegration of the SLP, the new turn may well accelerate it. Aside from the tattered remnants of its De Leonist past there is nothing special that the SLP says or does today that other larger and stronger left organizations don't say and do better. In seeking to become relevant to contemporary politics, the SLP has placed a question mark over its future and its very existence.

The most immediate threat to the organizational integrity of the SLP are the hustler reformists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who falsely claim the mantle of Trotskyism. An active tendency in the SLP, centered in New York, is openly sympathetic to the SWP. Even more threatening is the fact that the SWP is campaigning for a fusion. The pressure of "Trotskyism" is such that Nathan Karp devoted the last Thanksgiving Day SLP banquet speech to a denunciation of Leninist "vanguardism."

### From Sectarian Social Democracy to Trendy Progressivism

The organization which has suddenly become involved with "Trotskyist" politics is six decades removed from the revolutionary socialism of De Leon. The critical transformation point into a social-democratic sect occurred when his successor, Petersen, rejected affiliation with the Communist International, primarily in opposition to the dictator-

ship of the proletariat as a necessary transition to socialism.

Since then events have completely bypassed the SLP, which has become an ingrown and dwindling sect presenting a dogmatic parody of De Leon's ideas. The SLP condemned or ignored every

**"We can no longer avoid facing the fact that today the Socialist Labor Party is divided to a degree that threatens its existence."**

**—Nathan Karp, Thirtieth National Convention, May 1977**

major social struggle in the U.S. from the rise of mass industrial unions in the 1930's to the civil rights agitation of the 1950's and '60's to the antiwar protests of the late 1960's. The SLP of the early 1970's was a geriatric tract society preaching the peaceful transition to socialism through constitutional amendment.

Like most sects the SLP was a personal despotism. In fact, Petersen ran what was probably the most totalitarian regime of any self-styled socialist not exercising state power. Petersen himself recognized the similarity between his own and Stalin's internal regime. In his 1939 pamphlet, *Soviet Russia: Promise or Menace?*, he defended the Stalinist purge trials by likening them to the SLP treatment of dissidents:

"The SLP is not unduly impressed with the fact, deplorable as that is, of some of the most prominent men in Russia having turned traitors. In our Party we have had similar experiences, yet the SLP has had no qualms in dealing properly and effectively with traitors and disrupters...."

A glimpse into the bizarre totalitarian world of Petersen's SLP was provided by a dissident ex-member, Nathan Dershowitz, writing in Dwight McDonald's long-defunct radical-liberal journal, *Politics* (Summer 1948). Not only were organized factions prohibited (they still are), but so was correspondence and even private political discussion between members! Dershowitz



Jack Barnes

WV Photo



Michael Harrington

WV Photo



Nathan Karp

Weekly People

claims that someone was expelled for inquiring about the national officers' salaries, which were apparently more than generous. Dershowitz recounts the continual purge atmosphere in the SLP:

"In the typical Stalinoid manner, each purge is followed by a required party-wide pledge of allegiance. The appetite of the SLP machine for unanimous approval is insatiable. Any doubts members have had must be suppressed, any idea that the rebels were unjustly executed must be censored from the mind 'without reservation'.... For the 'record,' the wavering members must sign a questionnaire to that effect. Thought-control is an honored SLP practice."

Petersen's retirement in 1969 was swiftly followed by an organizational collapse which forced the transfer of the SLP national office to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1973. The tiny staff which Nathan Karp assembled there began to face up to the organization's long decline and seek means to arrest it. In 1975 the *Weekly People* began to explore new political ground, particularly in its May 10 issue which hailed the victory of "progressive Vietnamese nationalism" over U.S. imperialism. This new line was a sharp break from the third-campist "plague on both your houses" stance of the SLP during the war. (In fact, in 1967 Petersen drove out longtime SLP leader Eric Hass for wanting to support the Vietnamese against U.S. imperialism.)

It was a measure of the SLP's moribund condition that only one local section, in St. Louis, even noticed the changed line over Vietnam and protested it. The SLP National Executive Committee was so ossified that several members denied that there was a change in line and routinely endorsed the National Office's reply to the St. Louis section without discussion.

As significant as the new line on Vietnam, the *Weekly People* (15 November 1975) raised the general question of the legitimacy of revolutionary violence. It reprinted De Leon's comment that in the event of capitalist resistance to the victory of socialism at the ballot box, the working class as a "last resort" would be free to "physically mop the earth with the barbarian capitalist class." This statement challenged the extreme pacifistic legalism of

the Petersen era and met with resistance on the part of some veteran SLPers.

### Old Guard Resistance

The new turn was formalized at the party's 29th National Convention in February 1976. Nathan Karp stated that the SLP "has been in a state of acute crisis" for several years and come "dangerously close to that minimum point" needed to keep the organization alive (Socialist Labor Party, *Twenty-Ninth National Convention* [1976]). The Karp regime then carried resolutions which condemned the SLP's "sterile dogmatic approach to many vital questions" and which confirmed that "there has been a marked shift in the application of Marxist-De Leonist principles and analysis by the SLP" which has "broken with certain traditional habits of thought and re-evaluated its positions on several subjects." The 1976 convention endorsed *ex post facto* the changes embodied in the *Weekly People's* articles on Vietnam, revolutionary violence and support to the movement for workers councils in Portugal.

The new turn did not take place without significant conservative reaction. Far from it. Many old-line SLPers simply quit in protest. Others refused to carry out the new line on intervening in other movements. In his report to the 1977 convention, Karp denounced membership resistance to the turn:

"Some who disagree with recently made Party decisions have continued to contest their legitimacy and have sabotaged them in practice. Others dissatisfied with organizational practices have unilaterally adopted their own. And there are still elements in the Party bending all their efforts to obstructing any new advance and working overtime to take us two steps back for every one forward."

—SLP, *Thirtieth National Convention* (1977)

The 1977 convention saw the last stand of the Petersenite old guard, centered in New York. In effect they accused the Karp leadership of betraying the SLP's "revolutionary" heritage and principle for the sake of attracting a few recruits:

"...if new recruits are appealed to on the basis of incorrect principles, errone-

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# Was De Leon a De Leonist?...

(continued from page 6)

ism into English.) In 1904-05, under the influence of French and American syndicalism, De Leon adopted a position on revolutionary unionism which placed him outside the mainstream of contemporary orthodox Marxism. He regarded industrial unions as both the primary means for overthrowing capitalism and as the administrative structure of a socialist society. But De Leon, who was not modest, never claimed that his position on industrial unionism amounted to a fundamental theoretical extension of Marxism, a new "De Leonist" doctrine.

De Leon's SLP was part of the broader radical current in the pre-war international socialist movement. Like some other left tendencies in the Second International, for example the Dutch *Tribune* group of Pannekoek/Gorter, it shared a certain common ground with syndicalism. Shortly after De Leon's death revolutionary social democracy faced a fundamental challenge. The Socialist International collapsed as its principal parties supported their own bourgeoisies in the war. Under the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin was able to regroup the revolutionary elements in the international socialist movement, and also among the syndicalists. The formation of the Communist International was the world-historic line of demarcation between the revolutionary and reformist forces in the workers movement.

"De Leonism" was created by Arnold Petersen's SLP to ward off Leninism. In particular, the SLP counterposed De Leon's concept of socialist industrial unionism to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For De Leon, in contrast, revolutionary unionism was his answer to the rampant parliamentarism of pre-war social democracy; nowhere does he oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat. In rejecting Leninism and the Communist International the post-De Leon SLP transformed itself from a revolutionary organization into an increasingly right-wing social-democratic sect.

## What Socialist Industrial Unionism Meant for De Leon

De Leon's major exposition of socialist industrial unionism was a 1905 address published by the SLP as "The



1904 Amsterdam Congress of the Second International.

Socialist Reconstruction of Society." It is highly significant that this is *not* the original title which De Leon gave to the address (it was originally published as "The Preamble of the I.W.W."). In fact, the expression "the socialist reconstruction of society" is not even mentioned in the essay.

The latter-day SLP title is highly misleading. De Leon's exposition has little to say about the future organization of society, far less than Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* or Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, for instance. All De Leon says about the organization of society after the overthrow of capitalism is that it will be administered on the basis of industrial constituencies. All this work says about the future social organization is contained in the following sentence:

"The central administrative organ of the Socialist Republic—exactly the opposite of the central power of capitalism, not being the organized power of the ruling class for oppression, in short, not being political, but exclusively administrative of the productive forces of the land—its constituent bodies must be exclusively industrial." [emphasis in original]

There is no discussion about the internal organization of an industrial union government, about how differences will be resolved, about the relationship of the central administrative body to the individual industrial constituencies. Nor is there any elaboration of the principles governing the

distribution of the social product and the transition to full communism. De Leon's address also does not discuss the international nature and goals of socialism.

De Leon's 1905 work is simply too abstract to relate it to the later Leninist position on the state and revolution. Depending upon how one concretely defines the nature and tasks of "the central administrative organ of the Socialist Republic," De Leon's formulation is compatible with either the dictatorship of the proletariat (a government vested with coercive powers) or with syndicalism (the voluntary coordination of self-managing productive units). "The Preamble of the I.W.W." is not primarily concerned with the future organization of society, but with the strategy for overthrowing capitalism. Written in the context of De Leon's collaboration with revolutionary syndicalists (St. John/Trautmann), it seeks to synthesize the traditional social-democratic electoral tactic with syndicalist advocacy of direct industrial action.

In the traditional social-democratic manner, for De Leon a revolutionary situation begins with the electoral victory of the socialist party. One possibility (the most favorable) is that an elected socialist government could legally abolish the capitalist state structure and institute an industrial union government. Should the capitalist state officials tamper with the balloting,

then the socialist industrial unions would enforce the proletarian mandate by seizing the productive forces. A third possibility considered by De Leon is that a socialist electoral victory would be met with capitalist economic sabotage. Here again the industrial unions would resort to "the general lockout of the capitalist class."

## Socialism Through Constitutional Amendment?

The central, overriding weakness of De Leon's schema is his insistence that a socialist revolution in the U.S. would be peaceful. This is based on a superficial historic-psychological argument. The American capitalist class, he writes, unlike the European, has no tradition of feudal military rule:

"Like a coward he will play the bully, as we see the capitalist class doing, toward the weak, the weak because disorganized, working class. Before the strong, the bully crawls. Let the political temperature rise to the point of danger, then, all monkeying with the thermometer notwithstanding, your capitalist will quake in his stolen boots; he will not dare to fight; he will flee."

De Leon's belief in the possibility of a peaceful socialist revolution was based on the supposed exceptional "cowardice" of the American ruling class, not on its loyalty to democratic, legal processes as alleged by reformists. However, De Leon's commitment to a "peaceful road to socialism" did open the door to the latter-day SLP's reformist gimmickry of introducing "industrial government" through constitutional amendment.

From the vantage point of the late 1970's De Leon's illusions about the weak-willed nature of the American bourgeoisie are particularly apparent. Since World War II the U.S. state has become the gendarme of world capitalism. A ruling class which fought a major war to preserve capitalism in South Vietnam will hardly allow itself to be overthrown by peaceful, legal methods in its own national base. The growth of proletarian revolutionary forces in the U.S. will be met with violent capitalist reaction, probably involving a fascist movement as well as escalating state repression. Rather than occurring under a bourgeois-democratic constitutional government, a revolutionary situation in the U.S. will most likely pose the alternative of the democratic workers soviets or a bonapartist dictatorship.

Between 1905 and his death De Leon never elaborated on the nature of an industrial union government. His major writings (*As to Politics* [1907] and a collection of his articles published posthumously under the title *Industrial Unionism* [1920]) deal primarily with the strategy and tactics for the American workers movement, not with the future organization of society. In general, because the prospect of socialist revolution appeared remote, discussions in the Second International about the post-capitalist social organization were highly abstract and characterized by terminological imprecision. A term like "socialist commonwealth" was widely used, including by De Leon, without agreement as to the main defining features of such a society.

Post-1917 Leninism effected a fundamental change in the way Marxists viewed the state and proletarian revolution. Marxists in the Second International had tended to blur the distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat (in which a coercive governing apparatus continues to exist) and socialism (a classless, stateless society) as the lowest level of communism. With the benefit of the Leninist clarity of *State and Revolution*, De Leon's writings on the question appear confusing. For example, in a 1913 article, "Syndicalism," he states that the goal of industrial unionism is to establish a "Socialist or Industrial State." In his 1914 *Fifteen Questions About Socialism*, he projects the possibility of a "co-operative commonwealth" waging a war to defend itself against hostile capitalist states.

So far as we know De Leon never

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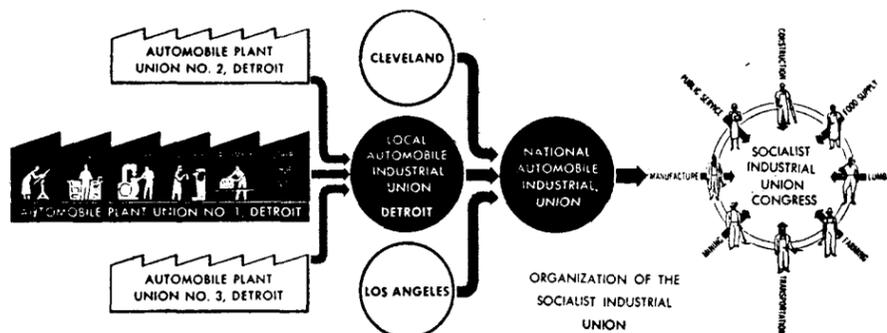
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Blueprint for SLP's "Socialist Commonwealth."

SLP

repudiated the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of socialist industrial unionism. In 1911 the SLP brought out a new edition of the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, for which De Leon wrote a commentary entitled "Did Marx Err?" (De Leon here opposes the 1875 unification of the German Marxists and Lassalleans, but on significantly different grounds than Marx's objections to the Gotha Program.) What is important about this essay is that it does not mention Marx's now famous passage:

"Between capitalism and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." [emphasis in original]

If De Leon believed that his concept of socialist industrial unionism amounted to a rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he surely would have



Arnold Petersen

Weekly People

said so in a commentary on the *Critique of the Gotha Program*. It is almost certain that De Leon never considered the relationship of an industrial union government to the distinct Marxist categories of the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism.

De Leon's concept of industrial unionism was an attempt, influenced by syndicalism, to break away from a purely parliamentarian strategy of the struggle for socialism. In so doing he anticipated certain important Leninist theses: that the capitalist state apparatus cannot be transformed into an organ of socialist administration, and that the workers must govern on the basis of their organization as a proletariat rather than as an atomized electorate. Lenin was more than willing to acknowledge De Leon's foresight on these questions. In several discussions with Americans, among them John Reed and SLP'er Boris Reinstein, Lenin observed that De Leon had anticipated one of the central elements of the soviet system (workers councils). However, this element was limited to the form of a proletarian government, not to its methods in creating the material and cultural conditions for a socialist (i.e., classless and stateless) society.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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## Skokie...

(continued from page 2)

Klux Klan, as well as a group of Klansmen in Mississippi who wanted the use of a public park for an "Americanism" rally.

Equally disturbing to many ACLU members have been the revelations of collusion between the ACLU and the FBI. Last August a pile of FBI documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act revealed that from 1953 to 1959 ACLU officials had been secretly cooperating with the FBI's witchhunt of "Communists and subversives" within the organization. Irving Ferman, head of the ACLU's Washington office, admitted in an interview reported in the *New York Times* (7 August 1977) that the ACLU did the FBI's dirty work in order to convince J. Edgar Hoover that the ACLU was soundly anti-communist in the hope that the organization would escape being labeled "subversive" or a "Communist front."

These documents expose not only the hypocrisy of the ACLU's pose as a champion of the "people" against the abuses of the government, but also the hypocrisy of its claim to an even-handed impartiality toward the politics of those whom it defends. Where was its concern for the civil liberties of the men and women it fingered for Hoover's witch-hunt? Far from being a tribune of the people, the ACLU has often functioned as if it were an arm of the government!

The American Civil Liberties Union has a long history of protecting fascists (see "Why the ACLU Defends Fascists," *WV* No. 157, 13 May 1977). Recently it has been supported in its decision to help the Nazis celebrate Hitler's birthday in Skokie not only by the likes of Jimmy Carter and the *New York Times*, which continues to editorialize on its behalf, but, de facto, by the most vociferous champion on the left of the democratic "rights" of fascist killers—the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Although the SWP—in contradiction to its well-publicized anti-Trotskyist position of "free speech for fascists"—did come out on paper against the Nazis' right to march in Skokie, this thoroughly reformist organization has opposed and refused to participate in demonstrations against such a march. Like its liberal allies, the SWP has refused to learn the most elementary lessons of recent history.

The 7,000 concentration camp survivors in Skokie are a living reminder of the fatal consequences of allowing the fascists the freedom to build their campaigns of mass anti-working-class, anti-Jewish, anti-homosexual and, particularly in this country, anti-black terror. Having won court authorization to march in Skokie, the Nazis, who have already staged numerous racist provocations in the white enclave of Marquette Park, will undoubtedly use this legal victory to spark similar confrontations elsewhere on Chicago's predomi-

nantly black South side. They hope to provoke an outbreak of mass racial hysteria, posing a threat to the labor movement and minorities despite the small size and present disreputability of these Hitler lovers. But the integrated Chicago unions and mass black organizations also provide a framework to organize a combined defense to put a stop to the stormtrooper demonstrations.

The Spartacist League does not call upon the state to ban Nazi demonstrations. Capitalism's cops and courts have amply demonstrated that they cannot and will not protect workers and minorities from fascism. Only the organized working class itself can deprive these vermin of the "right" to promote their genocidal design. That is why the Spartacist League, unlike the SWP, has participated in numerous united-front demonstrations along with the residents of Skokie to stop the Nazis in their tracks and calls for a labor/black mobilization in Chicago to crush the fascist vermin.

*No platform for fascists!  
For labor defense against fascist terror!*

## Alegría...

(continued from page 3)

"immediate freedom for all anti-Francoist prisoners" (*La Aurora*, 21 October 1977 [our emphasis]).

The PORE has never explained this line change and evidently it caught its American co-thinkers by surprise. When the Trotskyist Organization spokesman was informed that his own Spanish comrades no longer raised the liberal-reformist demand of freeing all political prisoners, he quickly did an embarrassed about-face. In the middle of the phone conversation, Cohen changed the demands of the Committee in order to conform with the demands of the PORE and the Vargaite "Revolutionary Youth International" (whose main claim to fame was calling for a demonstration on the East German border around the anti-communist demand "Down with the Berlin Wall!").

The Spartacist League demands that Alegría be immediately released and the persecution of the PORE be stopped. This requires international protest and in Spain these demands should be raised as part of united-front mass actions against Francoist repression. Such a mobilization, however, requires a frontal assault on the class-collaborationist Pact of Moncloa, in which the Communist and Socialist parties join with Suárez in calling for "strengthen[ing] the means of prevention and defense against terrorism"—a veiled call for stepped-up police measures against the more militant left and nationalist organizations.

In addition the demand must be raised for an end to the de facto outlawing of the PORE. The Spanish state, like many Latin American coun-

tries, claims the right to approve or ban all political parties and labor unions, through registration procedures in which the interior minister and the courts determine who can run in elections or negotiate contracts. (In the U.S. less stringent controls are exercised over trade unions under the registration provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.) Organizations are required to submit their statutes for approval according to vague criteria.

At least up through last fall the government refused to approve any party that openly called for a republic, independence for any of Spain's several nationalities or revolutionary overthrow of the regime. The reformists and most of the centrists obligingly removed all such references from their basic documents and were given the official stamp of approval in due course. The PORE refused to alter its statutes and thus has so far been refused legal status. At a press conference in early September interior minister Martin Villa reportedly stated:

"Parties which are for achieving their aims through armed means will not be legalized. This is the case of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario de España. To obtain legalization it is required not to attack the unity of Spain, the monarchy or the legal order."

—quoted in *La Aurora*, 16 September 1977

Thus at present while the PORE is not prohibited, and is able to function rather openly (i.e., it is not semi-clandestine), it is not legally recognized and consequently its precarious status (particularly in view of the fact that the vast majority of the parties have been approved) opens it up to all manner of provocations. While as Marxists we oppose all forms of control by the bourgeois state over the political and trade-union organizations of the working class; while we oppose the approval (registration) of political parties by the state as a means of anti-democratic repression, it is necessary to denounce the de facto outlawing of the PORE represented by the government's refusal to accord it the same legal status as the other parties.

Free Santiago Alegría Sánchez! Free All Victims of Francoist Repression!

Stop the Victimization of PORE Militants! No to the Outlawing of the PORE and any Working-Class and Anti-Francoist Organizations!

Toward a Spanish section of a reborn Fourth International! For a Spanish Workers Republic in an Iberian Soviet Federation and a Socialist United States of Europe! ■

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No. 16, Winter 1977-78

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# Coal Sellout...

(continued from page 1)

for all workers but particularly for coal mine workers. Give up the right to strike and the UMWA health plan and there will be more widows standing at the pit heads mourning their dead. The way to reduce the suffering is not by knuckling under to the companies and the government but by using your strong position to win a decisive victory.

Now is the time to teach the bosses a lesson, the enormously profitable coal-steel-oil monopolies who make millions out of disasters like the Farmington and Scotia mine tragedies. If the UMWA wins the unlimited right to strike it can quickly go on the offensive to sign up miners at the non-union pits who will have seen how militant action can win. The entire U.S. labor movement will be invigorated to resist job-slashing "austerity" attacks from New York to San Francisco. And then the miners will not have to fight alone, as they have repeatedly and militantly done so far.

UMWA members must have no illusions that a victory will be easy, however. As coal supplies fall from 20 days to 19, 18...the bosses, state and federal governments and the International bureaucracy will grow ever more frenzied. They will resort to all sorts of tricks (remember how Miller claimed he won the right to strike in 1974) and increasingly brutal strong-arm tactics to force miners to surrender and crawl back to work. So far Carter has not unleashed the anti-labor arsenal of the capitalist state, but if the bosses become desperate he may attempt anything from Taft-Hartley injunctions to sending in troops.

Remember that during World War II Roosevelt threatened to call out federal troops to crush a UMWA strike against the wartime wage freeze. UMWA president John L. Lewis told FDR, "You can't mine coal with bayonets!" His words are still true today. Successfully defying Taft-Hartley would change this noose around labor's neck into a dead letter and open the door to unionization of millions of unorganized workers through militant tactics (such as labor boycotts) declared illegal by these laws.

It could pave the way to unionizing textile, the key to breaking open the South; it could be the spark for a drive that would bring in the women working for the minimum wage in small shops around the country; blacks and other minorities constantly threatened with unemployment; the illegal immigrants constantly worried that the employer will have them deported. All these sectors—amounting to tens of millions of workers, far more than the unionized working class—are kept from joining the ranks of organized labor above all through fear. The power of a militant union demonstrated by a miners victory could change this dramatically.

Not for a long time has a section of the U.S. working class been in a position to deal such a stinging defeat to the bosses and their state. Coal miners, aided by solidarity action from rail, trucking and steel, must seize this opportunity to push ahead to victory.

Throw back the sellout! Extend the roving pickets!

For a special UMWA convention to elect a bargaining committee that will fight for the miners' demands!

No contract without the right to strike, full health plan and a big pay hike!

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# Trendy SLP...

(continued from page 7)

ous non-revolutionary policies and improper organizational procedures, as are offered them by organizations of the so-called 'left,' which are larger and more emotionally enticing than the SLP, what inducement would there be for them to join with the SLP?... But even more significantly, what sort of SLP would then exist? Surely not the proud, uncompromising, totally [sic] revolutionary organization of the past eight and one-half decades."

Ibid.

The conservative opposition was defeated, being accused among other things of a "cult of Petersen." Since the SLP denies the right of organized factions, the New York Petersenites were also condemned for "unorganizational" practices!

The evolution of new positions continued after the 1976 convention and succeeding months found the *Weekly People* attempting to take a stand on many of the major issues of the day. These positions had to be worked out from scratch as the SLP's program, a sterile dogmatic schema codified half a century ago, has little or no relevance to contemporary social struggle. The basic guiding principle of the new leadership seems to be to place the SLP on the "progressive" side of any question. In practice, this amounts to following the consensus of left public opinion. One has the sense that the editors of the *Weekly People* study the *Militant* and *Guardian* to find out the conventional left wisdom on the Bakke decision, Sadlowski, Angola, etc. before taking a position.

Trotsky observed that sectarianism is frequently opportunism standing in fear of itself. The SLP's new turn is a classic confirmation of that axiom. A party which on paper still advocates socialist dual unionism now supports capitalist state intervention to democratize the labor movement ("affirmative action"). The new SLP also supports liberal "reform" bureaucrats like Ed Sadlowski in the Steelworkers and the reformist-economist Teamsters for a Democratic Union opposition grouping. The *Weekly People*, which once condemned the peasant-based social revolution in Vietnam as reactionary, now uncritically supports left bourgeois-nationalist groups like the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola and the Eritrean Liberation Front. A party which once prided itself on its fealty to scientific socialism now lauds the utopian faddist, anti-technology, anti-nuclear power movement.

On some important questions the Karp regime has taken positions significantly to the left of Petersen's SLP (e.g., the support to the Vietnamese revolution against U.S. imperialism, affirmation of the legitimacy of revolutionary violence). In many other cases the new turn represents a marked shift to the right from the traditional "De Leonist" posture (for example, support to pro-

Democratic Party labor fakery like Sadlowski and to government union-busting "affirmative action" schemes). However, these positions do not derive from any coherent political logic, but from a desire to appeal to the "average" American radical. Lacking intrinsic political coherence, the new turn has thrown the SLP into internal disarray. Unreconstructed Petersenites now co-exist in the same organization with pro-SWP reformists-on-the-make, with the Karp regime seeking to balance between them. The SLP's attempt, after 60 years of isolation, to compete with the rest of the left has demonstrated its utter political (as well as organizational) incapacity to do so. The most likely result of the new turn will be that the SLP will lose its younger members to those harder, more dynamic, more purposive organizations claiming to be Leninist.

## Enter the Operators of the SWP

As we have pointed out there is an openly pro-SWP grouping in the SLP. However, recognizing that the SLP as a whole has lost its political mooring, the SWP has set its sights higher than ripping off 10 or 20 members. It is orienting toward a formal fusion. In a report to the SWP Philadelphia local, Syd Stapleton spells out his party's orientation:

"What we thought at the time... was that some new recruits to the SLP had revolted against the old leadership. We thought these 'youthful activists' were moving the SLP forward through something like a tendency struggle with the official leadership. This was simply a mistake, based on our insufficient familiarity with what was really going on in the SLP.

"Unfortunately, our mistake may have created the impression among some SLPers that we were simply interested in raiding the SLP, splitting off some people and recruiting them to our ranks.

"This is not the case. We are interested in party-to-party discussions with the SLP to determine whether or not the convergence in our views will be sufficient to lay the basis for a principled fusion of our two organizations."

"Our Relations with the Socialist Labor Party," SWP Party Organizer, December 1977

We are inclined to accept Stapleton's statement about a fusion perspective at face value. Given the balance of forces, a fusion would amount to the liquidation of the SLP into the larger and much better organized SWP. However, the SWP's interest in a fusion with the SLP is not primarily to acquire new members and cadre.

Since it became the leading advocate of collaboration with bourgeois liberalism in the antiwar movement, the SWP has aspired to become the respectable party of American reformist socialism, a role played by Norman Thomas' Socialist Party in the 1930's and '40's. The objective conditions which allow the SWP this vaunted ambition are, on the one hand, the degeneration of official American social democracy into an ossified anti-communist sect to the right

of Democratic Party liberalism and, on the other, the limitations imposed on Gus Hall's Communist Party by the pervasive hostility to the Soviet Union among the American people. The main obstacle to the SWP becoming the respectable socialist opposition remains its formal adherence to Leninism and Trotskyism, particularly defense of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state against U.S. imperialism.

The SWP took a significant step toward "State Department socialism" last summer when it fused with the Revolutionary Marxist Committee (RMC), which holds that the Soviet Union is state capitalist and as such does not defend the USSR against American imperialism. (See "RMC seeks 'Fusion' with SWP," *WV* No. 164, 1 July 1977.) However, despite its formally social-democratic position on this key question, Bruce Landau's RMC claims to stand in the Trotskyist tradition.

By contrast, Nathan Karp's SLP is a long-established, American flag-waving, anti-Leninist organization. For the SWP, a fusion with the "De Leonist" Socialist Labor Party would do much to dispel its Trotskyist public image in favor of a broad, loose American-centered socialism. A fusion with the avowedly anti-Leninist SLP would establish the SWP as a legitimate pole of regroupment for non-Stalinist reformist forces in the U.S., notably Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.

Stapleton approvingly contrasts the anti-Leninist SLP to the genuinely Trotskyist Spartacist League:

"On the burning questions of the class struggle, we find a great deal more in common with the 'De Leonist' SLP today than with the 'Trotskyist' Spartacist League...."

Stapleton here not only recognizes the underlying social-democratic nature of the SLP and SWP despite their very different traditions; he also desires to dissociate the SWP from traditional Trotskyism.

Stapleton's report naturally minimizes the SWP's differences with the SLP. While Stapleton predictably criticizes the sectarianism of the Petersen era, he says not one word about its extreme legalism. The main (almost only) agitational issue of Petersen's SLP was the establishment of a socialist industrial union government through amending the U.S. Constitution. The reason for Stapleton's silence on this question is obvious. In the SWP's own last election campaign, its main gimmick was "A Bill of Rights for Working People."

On the decisive question of defense of the Soviet Union, here is what Stapleton says:

"Of course, in some areas there are clearly real differences, as reflected in the recent *Weekly People* articles on the Trotskyist position on the nature of the Soviet Union.... The comrades of the SLP make the point that we call for a political revolution in the Soviet Union while they call for a social revolution. I doubt if that's where much substance



From sterile propaganda... to trendy progressivism.

lies, but it's clearly something we will be discussing." [our emphasis]

Underlying the SLP's call for a social, as distinct from a political, revolution is the position that the Soviet Union is an exploitative class society, a "bureaucratic state despotism." From this sociological premise, the SLP has refused to defend Stalinist-ruled states against imperialism. In World War II the SLP did not support the USSR against Nazi Germany. And in the Korean War the SLP did not defend China and North Korea against U.S. imperialism.

We have long maintained that the SWP has abandoned the defense of the bureaucratically ruled workers states against U.S. imperialism in practice. However, to date no SWP spokesman has been as candid as Stapleton in asserting that the defense of the Soviet Union is a matter of not "much substance." Stapleton both minimizes and obfuscates the SLP's long-standing opposition to the Leninist position on the state and revolution:

"...we both stand for the abolition of the capitalist state apparatus—courts, Congress, the army and police, and the rest—and its replacement with organs of workers power based on industry. Whether you call that a workers government, or a workers state, or a Socialist Industrial Union government, doesn't seem like an earth-shattering difference."

Here Stapleton reduces the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the need for the working class to have a government with *military coercive power* during the transitional epoch to socialism, to a purely terminological question. For its part, the SLP has long recognized that this is a principled question. The SLP rejected affiliation with the Communist International principally because the *first* of the famous 21 conditions for admission was recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the aim of the communist movement.

In asserting that both the SWP and SLP stand for the abolition of the capitalist state, Stapleton covers over the difference between classic social democracy (Kautskyism) and Leninism on this question. In abstract theory Kautsky did not deny the need to abolish the capitalist state; the theoretical dispute turns on *how* this is to be accomplished and precisely *what* replaces it. Probably Lenin's most significant theoretical work, *The State and Revolution* (1917), is mainly an attack on the reformist (Kautskyan) version of "abolishing the capitalist state":

"We have already said above... that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of 'withering away,' but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution...."

"And from it follows that the 'special coercive force' for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a 'special coercive force' for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is precisely what is meant by 'abolition of the state as state'." [emphasis in original]

### The SLP's New Turn and the Road to Trotskyism

That the SLP has broken in part from the dogmatic social-democratism of the Petersen era and is now in uncertain motion is good reason for a Trotskyist vanguard to address that organization at this time. It would seek to win to Trotskyism those members of the SLP who are seriously rethinking what is the road to socialism. Instead the con artists of the SWP have simply invited the SLP as is into a neo-social-democratic swamp.

A desire to break with sectarian abstentionism and abstract propagandism can be the first step toward Leninist politics, toward a real struggle for state power. However, a shift toward activism and intervention in labor and

other social struggles does not *in itself* constitute motion toward revolutionary politics. The decisive question is the programmatic axis around which a party intervenes.

Quite likely the attraction of the SWP for some SLPers lies in its being an effective reformist party. However, it is also possible that some are attracted to the SWP not because of its hard-sell reformist practice but because it claims to be Trotskyist. The SWP is, after all, by far the largest and best-known ostensibly Trotskyist organization in the U.S. Any SLP'er who is sympathetic to the SWP because he is attracted to Trotskyism is being sadly abused.

Such an SLP'er should seriously study Trotsky's major works. Then he should compare Trotsky's politics with the record of the SWP and of the Spartacist League during the past ten years over the major questions of the day—opposition to an imperialist war, the struggle in the unions against the labor bureaucracy, "popular front" governments (e.g., Chile). He will recognize that it is the Spartacist League which today represents the continuity of Trotskyism. That the SWP's politics represent a rightist, reformist revision of



Daniel De Leon

SLP

Trotskyism is manifest and so recognized by many who do not claim to be Trotskyist. For example, Michael Harrington, America's most prominent social democrat, pointed out approvingly that the SWP's antiwar activities amounted to support to Democratic Party doves, like McGovern, despite its formal Leninist opposition to class collaboration.

Opposition to the SWP's fusion overtures within the SLP mainly stems from organizational conservatism and hostility to anything smacking of Leninism. However, opposition among SLPers to the SWP may also express unwillingness to abandon Marxist principles. Daniel De Leon's party stood far to the left of the present-day SWP. Elements of the De Leon tradition survived even through the Petersen era. The SLP has retained a sense of the political-class divisions in American society and the centrality of the labor movement in the struggle for socialism. Many SLPers must therefore be repelled by the SWP's tailing after every petty-bourgeois radical fad—black nationalism, feminism, gay liberation, anti-nuclear movement. Even more repellent to a serious follower of De Leon must be the SWP's watering-down of its program expressly in order to bloc with bourgeois liberals like Bella Abzug.

The contrast between the revolutionary socialism of De Leon's SLP and the reformist class-collaborationism of the present-day SWP is most clearly revealed in their opposition to U.S. imperialism's wars. The SWP prides itself on being the "best builder" of the anti-Vietnam War movement. In practice this amounted to being the organizers and publicity agents for the bourgeois liberal antiwar Democrats, like Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern.

In contrast, De Leon's opposition to

the Spanish-American War was imbued with a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist outlook. In his 1898 "A Word to the Proletariat of Spain" he wrote "...the working class of all nations has but one enemy—the capitalist class of all nations, its own at the head of the list" (reproduced in *Capitalism Means War* [1940]). It is inconceivable that De Leon would have formed a "Committee to End the Spanish-American War" in bloc with the bourgeois opponents of McKinley/Roosevelt's imperialist adventure, like William Jennings Bryan. Quite the contrary! De Leon argued that Bryan could not be a serious and effective opponent of imperialist war given his general support to capitalist class rule. He wrote: "When Bryan attacks 'militarism' and yet upholds the capitalist system, he is fighting an effect while defending the cause" (*Ibid.*). One can look long and hard without finding anything approaching such revolutionary internationalism in the SWP's antiwar propaganda.

Even on some contemporary issues the SLP's recognition of the capitalist nature of American "democracy" places it in principled opposition to the SWP, which desires above all to achieve a respectable image among liberals. Thus the SLP rejects, as do we, defending the democratic rights of fascists. A *Weekly People* (20 August 1977) editorial which attacks the American Civil Liberties Union for defending the Nazis right to march in the largely Jewish suburb of Skokie, Illinois could just as well have been directed against the SWP:

"The reason socialists and liberals part company on this question has to do with fundamental differences in their social outlooks. Liberals take a 'classless' view of society. They believe that democratic rights for all can be protected under this system through the 'neutral' supervision of the courts and the state...."

"For socialists, real democratic rights are of too much practical importance to reduce them to abstract formulas. While class conscious workers must jealously guard and fight to extend all the genuine democratic rights that exist, we do not take up the defense of fascists' 'right' to terrorize blacks, Jews and others, any more than we defend the 'right' of capitalists to keep their property."

The Marxist understanding of the class nature of the state and of bourgeois-democratic rights expressed in the above passage finds its contemporary embodiment in Leninism, the revolutionary Marxism of the imperialist epoch. Revolutionary Marxism, upheld by Daniel De Leon in the pre-1914 era, is today represented neither by the disoriented relic of a party which calls itself "De Leonist" nor by the latter-day Hillquits of the SWP but by the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League. ■

#### SPARTACIST LEAGUE FORUM

##### Anti-Apartheid Revolt and Imperialist Moralism — The Main Enemy Is at Home

Speaker: JOSEPH SEYMOUR  
Spartacist League Central Committee

Time: Friday, February 17  
7:30 p.m.

Place: Wilder Hall

**OBERLIN COLLEGE**

For information call (216) 566-7806

#### FORUM

##### The National Question in North America

Speaker: JOSEPH SEYMOUR  
Spartacist League  
Central Committee

Time: Saturday, February 18  
7:30 p.m.

Place: 19-14 Lounge  
Thwing Student Center  
Case Western Reserve University

**CLEVELAND**

## Sandor John...

(continued from page 5)

Riddle (see *WV* No. 184, 2 December 1977). For the civil libertarians of the SWP/YSA any attempt to confront the administration with the truth becomes a "disruption."

Speaking for the SYL, in defiance of the administration's ban on him, Sandor John addressed the question of why the SYL has been singled out for attack:

"What it comes down to is the building of a revolutionary movement and the response of the ruling class and its representatives to the activities and the program of revolutionaries. We state quite clearly that this is an anti-communist ban, an anti-communist arrest.

"...as opposed to the strategy of the YSA and the RSB and the Coalition of Concerned Students and Staff, which was essentially to have coffee klatches with the administration... we say that the role of the university is to serve the bourgeoisie. We call for the nationalization of elite private institutions like the University of Chicago and the running of all universities under student-teacher-worker control, which means the abolition of the trustees and the administration.

"We publicized the Bennie Lenard case, unlike the other organizations on this campus. We put forward a response to the pattern of racist violence in this city, to the school crisis in which the city maintains the schools in this city as the most segregated school system in the country and to the racist mobs which run wild against black school children. We put forward the program of the full, immediate desegregation of the schools, including by means of busing and the extension of busing to the suburbs. In response to the racist attacks we put forward the idea of labor/black defense. "So we make it quite clear that we are the communist organization on campus, and we think that's why we have been victimized first...."

February 28 has been set as John's next court appearance. Defenders of democratic rights must demand that the administration drop all charges against him and end its outrageous attempt to ban socialist youth from campus.

Funds are urgently needed for the defense—for bail, legal fees and expenses for publicity and protests. The PDC and the Spartacist League urge friends and supporters to join this protest against a ban which threatens the democratic rights of all leftists and contribute to the PDC-administered defense fund. Make checks payable to the Partisan Defense Committee, earmarked Sandor John Defense Fund, and mail to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 6279, Main P.O., Chicago, Illinois 60680.

*Defend Sandor John! Drop the charges! End administration harassment of left and campus organizations! Stop the administration's anti-communist ban of Sandor John! ■*

#### SL/SYL FORUM

### Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution

Speaker:  
Ron Anderson  
Spartacist League

Saturday, February 18 at 7:30 p.m.  
Room 2408, Ackerman Union  
UCLA

**LOS ANGELES**

Donation: \$1.00

#### SYL CLASS SERIES

### Revolutionary Marxism: The Struggle For State Power

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7:30 P.M. every Wednesday  
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UC Berkeley, 146 Dwinelle

For more information call (415) 835-1535

**SAN FRANCISCO**

7:30 P.M. every Tuesday beginning  
February 7

For more information call (415) 863-6963

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## 1,000 Strikers in Shooting War with Alabama Cops

# Miners on the Attack

CABIN CREEK, West Virginia—As the weather broke last week and rumors of a giveaway deal at the bargaining table in Washington filtered back to the coalfields, militant picketing of scab mines has picked up sharply and at one point, in Oakman, Alabama, reached the proportions of a shooting war between strikers and the state police. There is a message in this militancy. Morale among the miners is high and there is a clear sense that victory is within grasp. They are determined not to give the bosses the slightest breathing space to launch a counteroffensive.

It's now crystal clear that the UMWA strikers' efforts to shut down non-union operations have been succeeding. Jimmy Carter has been beseeched almost daily by requests for help from government officials, power and rail companies complaining that they will have to cut back service because of dwindling stocks. Last week Indiana governor Bowen joined Ohio governor Rhodes in demanding federal intervention. Nearly half of non-UMWA coal has been choked off by the militant action of rank-and-file miners.

These victories have been won against rioting state troopers, company-paid gun thugs and armed scabs. On February 3 UMWA member John Hull of Patoka, Indiana was killed by a scab at the Bowersock Mine where 35 militants attempted to close the pit which has operated throughout the strike. In Cabin Creek, West Virginia miners told *WV* that on a 200-man caravan last week, strikers' cars were hit by rifle, shotgun and pistol fire within 15 minutes of crossing the Kentucky state line. And a Pike County miner reported that more reinforcements are desperately needed in Kentucky, whose state cops have a reputation as the most vicious in coal country.

But armed strikebreakers have not deterred the miners. In Alabama, where two weeks ago Governor George Wallace's state troopers dispersed 500 miners with tear gas, union miners came back with redoubled forces. On February 3 some 800-1,000 Alabama miners trapped seven scabs at a pit in Oakman, in the northwestern part of the state. At first a smaller number of strikers asked the scabs to honor the picket lines, but when they refused union reinforcements were summoned by CB radio. According to a UPI dispatch: the scabs holed up in the house "were told in the presence of troopers 'They would not be allowed to leave alive'."

Eventually more than 200 state troopers were called in to rescue the seven. The same news account reported: "Several police cars were riddled with small-arms fire, and the pilots of two National Guard helicopters that went aloft with lights to illuminate the area reported that they had been fired on in the predawn rescue operation. Lieut. Roy Smith said that the strikers had also exploded two sticks of dynamite near the officers, and a third stick was tossed under a patrol car but did not go off."

"The troopers then drove in convoy down the dirt road to the house, receiving small-arms fire from miners in the woods. 'We had to gas them going in and coming out,' Lieutenant Smith said.

"Fifteen patrol cars were damaged in the assault, the police said. The windshields on three cars were smashed, and there were bullet holes in several others."

Such militant mass picketing, organized on short notice, clearly caught the bosses, scabs and cops by surprise. Scabs will think twice before they show their face in that area again.

The miners and their roving pickets have done a magnificent job in shutting down the non-union pits. This must be extended into a concerted UMWA organizing drive, now! One Ohio local official put it precisely: "We're shutting these goddamn mines down, send the organizers in." In Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee and southern Ohio, the bulk of the unorganized miners would join the UMWA now if they knew that the union would broaden the strike to include them. After all, they're already going through the privations of the strike by being out of work. But Miller & Co. refuse to raise their little fingers to sign them up.

Here in West Virginia militants turned out last week to picket the John E. Amos power plant in St. Albans, where scab coal deliveries are being made by rail. In the process they aided members of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Local 8261, who have been on strike since January 18 in an unfair labor practices dispute. Supervisors from other power stations have been imported to run the plant during the strike, and members of the Ironworkers and other craft unions have crossed Local 8261's lines to work. As a result of a company lawsuit for illegal picketing activities against the USWA, the Steelworkers International has instructed the Local not to block traffic into the plant.



Above: A striking miner was gunned down by company thugs atop this hill outside the Bowersock Mine near Petersburg, Indiana. Below: Coal miner looks through one of the wrecked trucks at Oakman, Alabama where strikers fought the cops.



Last Wednesday night, however, 200 West Virginia miners arrived at the struck plant which is owned by the Appalachian Power Company, part of the multi-state American Electric Power system. AEP companies not only consume coal but also own UMWA-organized mines. Miners were astounded at the USWA ban on militant picketing. "What the hell's the point of one goddamned picket," one miner said, referring to the limit of three to a gate. "But we just told them to step back, we'd show them how to set up a picket line."

Sure enough, no one did cross the line that night, but 27 would-be scabs claimed that their cars were damaged or destroyed. "The mine workers said there weren't any card-carrying scabs going in there," an admiring USWA member told *WV*. The plant guard fled, and when other watchmen inside called the guard shack to see what had happened a coal miner answered and told them they'd have to stay put.

"I'd like to see them come out here again," another plant worker remarked.

The strikers at this power plant have learned something that they will not quickly forget. Where leaky picket lines and knuckling under to court injunctions will lose strikes, militant mass picketing can win them. And it is precisely because of their militancy that the miners strike is perceived as a threat by class-collaborationist bureaucrats throughout the labor movement. The miners can spark a militant labor offensive throughout the country. If miners win the unrestricted right to strike now, it will encourage thousands of auto workers, steel workers, rail workers to throw off the no-strike clauses and ENA's negotiated by the labor fakers. Victory to the miners strike is crucial to every section of the American working class. Steel workers, rail workers, transport workers must hot-cargo scab coal. ■