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the  
Fourth  
International!

# TORCH

Newspaper  
of the  
Revolutionary  
Socialist League

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## DEATH TO THE KLAN! All Out for Greensboro March!

By BRENT DAVIS  
and ROD MILLER

A national demonstration to "Unite to Stop Klan-Nazi Terror" has been called for February 2 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Demonstration organizers hope to bring thousands of people into the streets of Greensboro to protest the November 3 murders of five Communist Workers Party (CWP) militants by the Klan and the growth of Klan violence across the country.

The demonstration will also commemorate the 20th anniversary of the day, February 1, 1960, when four Black students sat in at the "whites only" lunch counter of Greensboro's Woolworth's. The RSL strongly urges all anti-racist organizations and individuals to attend the demonstration.

Plans for the demonstration were set at a national conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, on December 14 and 15. The conference, attended by over 300 people representing more than 70 organizations, was sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). The Atlanta conference grew out of an earlier meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, which set up a National Anti-Klan Network made up of representatives from 30 organizations. The RSL is a member of the network.

The February 2 demonstration in Greensboro comes at a time when Ku Klux Klan organizing is on the rise throughout the country. In the past year alone, the Klan has marched in scores of cities.

Almost daily there are fresh reports of cross burnings, fire bombings or other acts of racist violence in one part of the country or another. This mounting wave of racist terror is part of a growing crisis of capitalism and stepped-up attacks on all working and oppressed people.

The February 2 demonstration offers an important opportunity to begin to fight back. Thousands of people in the streets of Greensboro can let the Nazis and the Klan know that we will not be intimidated by their terror nor divided by their racism. At the same time, we can say to the government and the entire

(Continued on page 4)

1960...



Left: Nation's first lunch counter sit-in challenges segregation, at Greensboro Woolworth's February 1, 1960. Right: Funeral of five Communist Workers Party members murdered in Greensboro last November.

1979



## Russian Invasion Tramples Afghanistan Independence

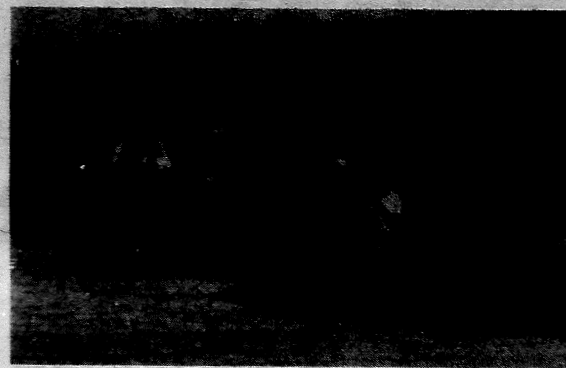
By PAUL BENJAMIN

The Russian ruling class has launched an imperialist invasion of Afghanistan. On December 25, the Russian government began a round-the-clock airlift of troops into Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Two days later these troops overthrew the regime of President Hafizullah Amin and took control of the city. Following the coup, tens of thousands of Russian troops poured into the country. Latest reports indicate there are at least 85,000 Russian troops in Afghanistan, with around

100,000 more stationed in Russian territory just across the Afghan border. Although the Russians installed a puppet government under Babrak Karmal, a pro-Russian Afghan politician, the Russian army is the real ruler of Afghanistan today.

By taking control of Afghanistan, the Russian state-capitalist ruling class is blatantly violating the right of the Afghan people to self-determination. This includes the right of the Afghan nation as a whole to independence, and

(Continued on page 10)



Russian helicopters land troops at Kabul airport.

### CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

#### Part 3: Prospects for Revolution

See page 12

SECCION  
EN  
ESPANOL

**our  
readers  
write...**

Send letters to:  
**TORCH, PO Box 562,  
N.Y., N.Y. 10036**

## Prisoner calls for unity

Greetings comrades,

I am writing to let you know that the prison administration here at Auburn Prison has denied issue No. 28 of the **Forward**.

Attached you will find a copy of the letter I wrote to the superintendent regarding his denial of the paper. Of course I expect very little from him since the official policy of the department of "correction" as of late has been the curtailing of all political activities within the prisons in an effort to neutralize all potential resistance to inhumane and racist conditions that exist throughout all the prisons. And unless a mass political base is developed on the outside to supplement our struggle on the inside those of us that are in the forefront of the struggle in these kamps will eventually be isolated and eliminated. I for one don't see my struggle as a political prisoner, as one isolated from the general struggle of the working class, for the oppressive conditions we are faced with in prison are reflections of the conditions our people as a whole face in fascist

Amerika. The brutal attacks on Black prisoners by prison officials; the murder of innocent Black women and men in our communities by the police and racist para-military forces are all linked together in a strategy by the ruling class to eliminate Black and working class resistance to the racist, sexist and capitalist oppression.

Yours in struggle,  
Comrade K.

## Spectacular?

Greetings!

Spectacular! I received a sample copy of your paper and I'm inclined to express my admiration of the content. After reading several articles, I came across the issue "Capitalism in Crisis, Part I: The Post-War Boom Unravels." Upon examining its contents, I received full clarifications of the economic crisis in the U.S.A. and what generally was the major causes of two world wars. The most extraordinary part was its implications clearly stated from the

## Klan in New York too, says reader

Dear Torch:

Recently my boyfriend and I were riding the LL train from the Bedford stop in Brooklyn to Manhattan. The Bedford stop is in Williamsburg, a mostly-Spanish area, with many Black people and a large nearby Hassidic Jewish population. While waiting on the platform, we spotted a sticker on one of the poles. To our amazement, it was a recruiting sticker for the Ku Klux Klan. We were shocked. We immediately finished scratching off the sticker (someone else had started doing it). A few days later, while riding the same train line, we saw more slogans for the Klan spray painted in white on the seats and another sticker.

Even though I am a revolutionary and have been active in the struggle against the Klan and Nazis (I went to stop the Klan at Barnegat, New Jersey, and was part of the "Remember Greensboro" demonstration in NYC), I was honestly shocked to see this sticker right in my friend's neighborhood. But I/we shouldn't have been so surprised.

In fact, no one should think the Klan and other fascists are only going to stay in the South and rural areas. The truth is, they need to come to the cities to build their organizations. They need to build a movement of racist whites and can't do it without growing strong where the concentrations of people are.

To build their movement the Klan will try to grow by speaking to whites who live on the fringes of mostly-Latin or Black neighborhoods (like around Williamsburg and the LL line) and who are getting freaked out because their standard of living is dropping and their lives in general are getting harder. To speak to these whites who can't understand what is happening to them and society, the Klan will blame all the problems of capitalism—inflation, decaying cities, crime, etc.—on the people who always suffer the most from these things in the first place: poor and working

people. And they will appeal especially to the racist fears whites have about these problems by saying it's all the fault of Blacks, Latins, Jews, gays and others, so why don't we just exterminate them to ensure a better life?

But we can't let them do this. We must be aware of them moving their attack to the cities and be ready to fight them here. And we all must be willing to fight them in every way, whether tearing down their bullshit propaganda or physically smashing them whenever we can. They are a deadly threat to everyone's freedom—and we must get them before they get us.

I will definitely be part of the RSL's next confrontation with the fascists; and my friend hopes to be there too. We must build this struggle everywhere, including in the heart of NYC.

ME  
NYC

## Union-busting at the GUARDIAN

Dear Torch/La Antorcha:

I am writing to ask your readers to support the Guardian Art Room Workers Association (GARWA) in its struggle with the **Guardian** newspaper. GARWA is a union formed by the non-staff production workers at that paper, who unionized because of supervisor harassment, no benefits, health and safety problems, and no raises in three years. In June, the **Guardian** recognized GARWA as the sole collective bargaining agent for its employees and agreed to a contract with it.

Shortly after this, however, the **Guardian** "sold" the shop to two bosses from Philadelphia, Roberts and Churcher, and laid off all the GARWA members. Roberts and Churcher were supposed to do all the production work in the shop themselves, and call in GARWA members when they needed extra help. Because of the **Guardian's** financial problems, GARWA agreed to this.

One week after Roberts and Churcher went into business, however, they started calling workers from a list given them by the **Guardian**. Not one of the people they called was a member of the union. GARWA now thinks that the **Guardian's** "sale" of the shop was a union-busting maneuver, and believes that they have been locked out. It is asking for

support from workers and oppressed people in its efforts to get its contract with the **Guardian** enforced.

All the workers who have been called by Roberts and Churcher have refused to scab on union members. They believe the **Guardian** lockout is an attack on organizing efforts in art rooms and type shops in general, not just on GARWA.

The union is asking people to support their struggle by cancelling **Guardian** subscriptions and writing letters to the **Guardian** demanding that they negotiate in good faith. Letters of support and copies of letters to the **Guardian** can be sent to GARWA, c/o PO Box 40, Bronx, NY 10468.

The fake-left **Guardian** claims to support struggles of workers and oppressed people. But, like any other boss, it brings in new management and locks workers out when they organize. Of what use is its support for any struggle when it refuses workers the exercise of their rights in its own shop? The **Guardian** claims that, because it is "left" and "pro-worker," its practice in this case can't be called union-busting. I think the facts speak for themselves.

CM  
NY

[Editor's note—the Torch/La Antorcha supports the GARWA workers.]

## In this issue . . .

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 3 UAW leaders bail out Chrysler<br>Glydons workers win victory                     | 14 Mormons ban ERA activist<br>Gov't closes border to lesbians, gay men<br>Protests planned for 'Cruising' opening |
| 4 All out for Greensboro march (cont'd)<br>Why is the Klan growing today?          | 15 Behind the split in the USec  |
| 6 Baraka gets 90 days<br>Kamallia Miller fights to keep child                      | <b>Features</b>  |
| 7 Prisoners expose conditions  | 2 our readers write  |
| 8 'City that works' falls apart  | 6 Break the Chains<br>Leonard Peltier . . . Chol Soo Lee . . .<br>South Carolina fire                              |
| 9 Coke plant workers meet on safety<br>Steel bosses guilty in gas deaths           | 8 Labor in Struggle<br>British steel strike . . . Postal worker<br>dies . . . unemployment benefits cut            |
| 10 Russia tramples Afghanistan (cont'd)  | 11 World in Revolution<br>Iran . . . South Africa Ford workers   |
| 12 Capitalism in Crisis: Prospects for<br>Revolution (Part 3 of talk by Ron Taber) |  |

oo,

# UAW Leaders Bail Out Chrysler

## Militants Demand: 'Make the Bosses Pay'

DETROIT—On January 8, militants demonstrated outside the meeting of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Chrysler sub-council demanding: "No More Concessions—Make the Bosses Pay!" The sub-council—made up of presidents and committee-people of all the Chrysler locals—was meeting to vote on a contract proposal renegotiated to take another \$259.5 million in wages and benefits away from Chrysler workers. This renegotiation was demanded—on top of \$203 million already conceded by Chrysler workers in the recent national contract—as part of a \$1.5 billion Chrysler bail-out bill passed by Congress in December. Under the bill, loans to Chrysler will be guaranteed by the federal government protecting the investments of creditors, stockholders, and suppliers of Chrysler. In fact, everyone gets their money—except Chrysler workers who are being asked to sacrifice nearly \$4,500 apiece over the life of

capitalists take the losses!"

The demonstration also voiced support for Canadian UAW workers who have refused to renegotiate as demanded by the U.S. government. This is particularly important because Doug Fraser, UAW president, and other International union leaders have been attacking Canadian Chrysler workers for refusing to bow down to the U.S. government.

Throughout the contract talks last fall, the Congressional debate on aid to Chrysler, and the renegotiation process, the top UAW leadership has acted as perfect flunkies for the capitalists and their government. Not only have they refused to mobilize the union for a fight against the attacks on Chrysler workers, they have actively promoted the whole attack. Their line has been: "When the companies are in trouble, workers have to sacrifice." All Fraser's talk about protecting jobs is bullshit! Over 30,000 Chrysler workers are already on inde-



RSL supporter at January 8 demonstration against UAW concessions to Chrysler.

The plant was permanently shut down on January 4. At a plant meeting on January 7, the day before the Chrysler sub-council met, UAW leaders announced their "solution": merge the seniority lists of the Main and Jefferson plants following a layoff at Jefferson. This will allow higher seniority Main workers to

bump into Jefferson. The lower seniority workers at both Main and Jefferson, like the 30,000 Chrysler workers already on the street, will just have to fend for themselves. After a stormy meeting, the Main workers passed a resolution in support of the new contract. With Main workers pacified, Fraser was ready to take

on the sub-council meeting.

But it is not only Chrysler workers who will suffer because of the betrayals of the UAW leadership. The demand for worker concessions sets a dangerous precedent for the whole working class. If Chrysler workers, who have had a strong union with a militant history, do not put up a united fight against these attacks, the bosses and their government will have the green light for more sweeping attacks. The UAW will be weakened and divided because Chrysler workers will be split off from GM and Ford workers. The racial, sexual, and national divisions among autoworkers will increase because the union as a whole has refused to stop a plan which disproportionately affects Blacks, women, Arabs and Latins. Smaller unions and unorganized workers will face harsher demands for concessions whenever the bosses say they are in trouble.

And in a recession, all capitalists say they are in trouble. No amount of sacrifice on the part of the workers will be enough to satisfy the bosses as their system slips into crisis.

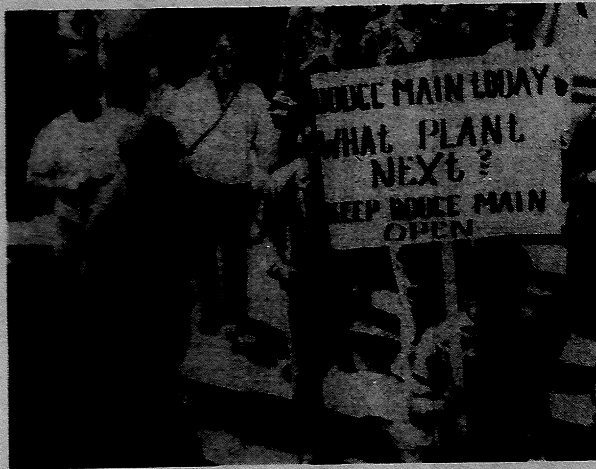
It's time for the working class to close ranks and fight back against the bosses' attacks! Join RAC/RSL in building this fight. Fight for socialist revolution! □

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ditor's note—the Torch/  
Antorcha supports the  
WA workers.]



the contract.

The demonstration protesting the new contract sellout was sponsored by the Committee To Fight The Concessions, a coalition of groups and individuals initiated by the Revolutionary Autoworkers Committee/Revolutionary Socialist League (RAC/RSL). Involved in the demonstration along with RAC/RSL supporters were representatives of the Communist Workers Party, Committee for Revolutionary Unionism, Revolutionary Workers Group, and the Socialist Workers Party. The group leafleted and talked—sometimes heatedly—with members of the sub-council and chanted: "Tax the bankers and the bosses/Make the cap-

finite layoff, and more are on the way. Fraser's real concern is with protecting the profits of the bosses, with protecting capitalism. And he is dragging the whole union down this road with him. The sub-council voted 251-5 to accept the new concessions. The contract will go to the membership by January 20 for a vote. But, with the overwhelming majority of the local leaderships lined up behind Fraser's sellout, a rejection by the membership seems unlikely.

One of the big worries of the UAW leaders in pushing through this sellout has been whether the workers at Dodge Main in Detroit would fight to stop the closing of that plant.

## GLYDONS WORKERS WIN VICTORY

After having endured a whole company offensive designed to destroy their organization, the workers at Glydons Inc., a garment factory in Los Angeles, have voted overwhelmingly to unionize. The victory at Glydons is the latest in a wave of unionization in the LA garment district. Most of the workers in the district are Latin women, many of them undocumented, and many of the shops are non-union.

As we reported in the last issue of Torch/La Antorcha, the workers voted on December 3 to determine whether the International Ladies Garment Workers Union would represent them in collective bargaining. However, days before the voting, the company filed a grievance with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) claiming that the union organizers had trespassed on company property. As a result, the ballot boxes were sealed and the votes were not counted.

Seeing this as a violation of their rights, the workers protested in the offices of the

NLRB on December 11 demanding that the votes be handed over. Finally, on December 18, the votes were counted in the NLRB office. The workers won a complete victory: 149 votes for the workers, 10 votes for the company!

Some hours later the workers received the news with great rejoicing, celebrating the victory right there in front of the factory. Yelling slogans like "Obreros unidos jamas

seran vencidos" (The workers united will never be defeated) and "Unete pueblo, hoy es tu dia" (People unite, today is your day), they promised to continue the struggle to gain a contract. The workers understand that they not only will have to take on the company but the system and the laws represented by the NLRB. And they realize they can win only if they are really united. Forward, sisters and brothers! □



Los Angeles garment workers, most of them women, have been organizing against sweatshop conditions like those in the shop above.

# DEATH TO THE KLAN!

(Continued from page 1)  
capitalist class: No more at-  
tacks on working and op-  
pressed people!

## Reformists dominate march

There are roadblocks stand-  
ing in the way of building the  
kind of struggle that's needed.  
The biggest of these is that  
the National Anti-Klan 'Net-  
work and its "February 2nd  
Mobilization Committee" (of-  
ficial sponsor of the Greens-  
boro demonstration) is domi-  
nated by reformist forces like  
the SCLC and IFCO. These  
groups are not committed to  
building a militant, mass  
march.

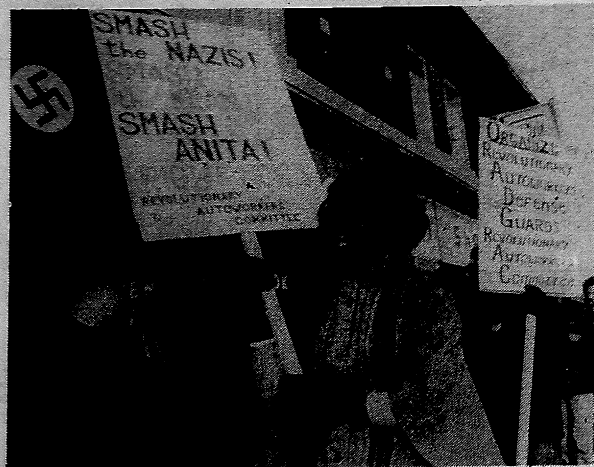
It was only under the enor-  
mous pressure created by the  
Greensboro murders that the  
SCLC and IFCO agreed to the  
call for a mobilization. At the  
start of the Atlanta confer-  
ence, co-chair Lucius Walker  
of IFCO announced that a  
national march "was not on  
the agenda." Anticipating that  
the pressure for a march would  
probably be too great to  
resist, Walker and his allies  
used this position to hammer  
out a backroom deal, an-  
nounced during the final hour  
of the conference.

The terms of the deal were  
that the SCLC would agree to  
a march only on the condi-  
tion that it have total control  
over march organizing. Guide-  
lines were established that  
state that all participating or-  
ganizations are prohibited  
from issuing leaflets, holding  
meetings, or having press  
conferences to build for the  
march—even if these activi-  
ties are conducted clearly in  
the name of individual orga-  
nizations.

In other words, only "offi-  
cial" literature, press con-  
ferences and meetings putting  
forward politics agreed to by  
the SCLC can be used to or-  
ganize for the march.

The primary purpose of  
these "guidelines" is to put a  
muzzle on the left. The SCLC  
demanded that all groups  
building the march be com-  
pletely silenced and their  
members turned into obedient  
foot-soldiers for the SCLC.

Even this was not enough.  
Following the Atlanta confer-  
ence, the SCLC put the dem-  
onstration "on hold," refusing  
to send out letters calling for  
an already agreed upon steer-  
ing committee meeting in  
Durham, North Carolina, on  
December 29. The letters fi-  
nally went out at the last  
minute and then only under  
threats from other groups that  
they would go ahead without  
the SCLC. At the Durham  
steering committee meeting  
itself, attended by about 100  
people, the SCLC made furth-



Protest against opening of Nazi bookstore in Detroit, December 1977.

er demands for control of the  
march—including the right to  
violate the guidelines that it  
had forced on everyone else!

The SCLC also demanded  
that no leafletting for the  
march be done in Greensboro  
itself for an additional week,  
since the SCLC was still

"negotiating" with local min-  
isters. Finally, the SCLC  
threatened that if these and  
other demands were not met,  
it would pull out of the dem-  
onstration altogether. Under  
criticism from most of those  
attending the meeting, the  
SCLC appeared to retreat from

some of its demands.

Right now, the SCLC is  
walking a tight-rope. The  
growth of the Klan, and the  
Greensboro murders in partic-  
ular, have put it under enor-  
mous pressure. Militants all  
over the country are demand-  
ing some kind of national,  
unified response to the Klan.  
This is particularly true of  
Black people, who are feeling  
the heat of a sharply escalat-  
ing racist climate and  
stepped-up government/cor-  
porate attacks. To maintain its  
base and its reputation as a  
militant civil rights organiza-  
tion, the SCLC has to appear  
to be doing something about  
the Klan. The SCLC would  
also like to gently pressure  
the government and the Dem-  
ocratic Party to pay more  
attention to the needs of  
Black people.

At the same time, the SCLC  
is terrified of building a march  
that it might not be able to  
control. The SCLC is a pro-  
capitalist organization whose  
real goal is a bigger "piece of  
the pie" for the Black middle  
class. Its chief allies are

wealthy liberals, Democratic  
Party politicians, "progress-  
sive" trade union bureaucrats,  
a section of the clergy, etc.  
The SCLC is worried that a  
march that is too large, mili-  
tant or radical might offend  
these allies, thereby losing  
it money, influence and the  
ability to bargain for favors  
from the capitalists. The  
government has made it clear  
that it opposes any march that  
defends self-proclaimed  
communists like the CWP. A  
heavy red-baiting campaign  
carried out by the Justice  
Department and the FBI  
successfully pressured  
Greensboro ministers into  
calling off a "prayer meeting  
against violence" on Novem-  
ber 18; even this meeting was  
too pro-CWP for the govern-  
ment's taste.

Thus, while the SCLC has  
fought for near-total control  
of the march, to date it has taken  
no real steps to build it. As of  
this writing, the SCLC has not  
even made a final decision  
about whether it will partici-  
pate.

If the SCLC does go ahead

## Why Is the Klan Growing Today?

The following is excerpted from a speech given at the RSL's  
Midwest anti-Klan conference, December 8-9, 1979.

By STEVE MILLER

Today most people are well aware that the Ku Klux Klan is  
not dead. Rather it is in its third major period of growth. Its  
effective strength has doubled in the past year, it recently  
murdered five leftists in Greensboro, North Carolina, and it has  
capitalized on racist anti-busing sentiment in Boston and  
elsewhere. In addition, it is recruiting prison guards (a special  
version of low life) across the country.

As in the past, the KKK is  
growing in response to social  
crisis or what could be called  
the disruption of the estab-  
lished social order. The KKK  
first came on the scene at the  
end of the Civil War. It was  
organized and led by former  
slave owners and Confederate  
officers. They hated Blacks  
and they especially hated the  
fact that Blacks were now  
free, held land, voted and, in  
some states, dominated the  
legislature. The Civil War was  
the second bourgeois revolu-  
tion in the U.S. and overthrew  
the entire social structure  
based on Black slavery. Not  
only was the wealth and  
power of the slave owners de-  
stroyed, but so was the world  
in which most poor whites  
lived. At least they had had  
their place in white society,  
which told them that they  
were "better" than the Black  
slaves. Now they had to  
compete with freed Blacks, or  
at least this is how far too  
many of them looked at  
things.

The KKK was a counter-  
revolutionary force trying to

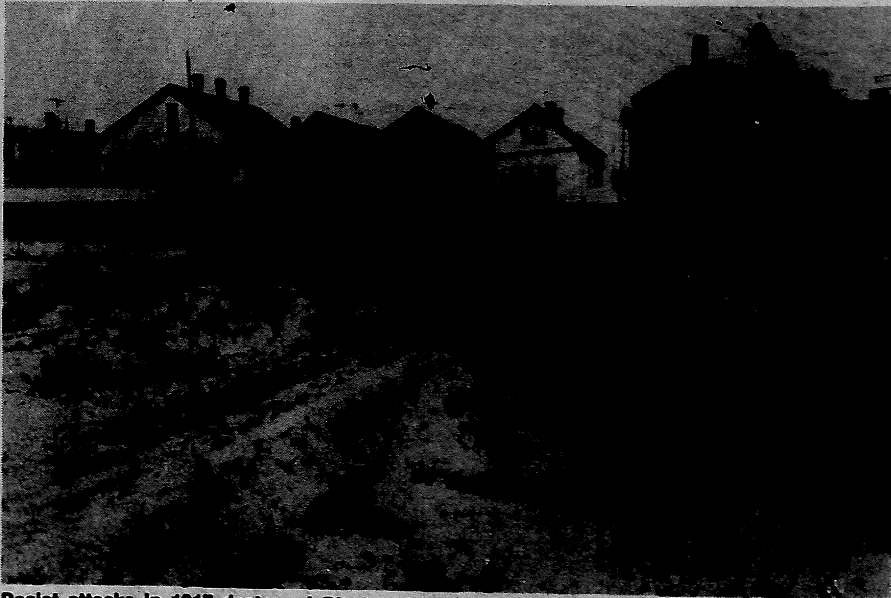
drive Blacks as far back  
toward slavery as they could.

Militias were disarmed, mili-  
tants assassinated, homes  
burned and families driven off  
their land, elections rigged  
and Black voters intimidated,  
and Blacks driven from politi-  
cal office and out of political  
life. The KKK did not accom-  
plish all these things but it  
was the leading force in the  
wave of reaction that swept  
the South and had the compli-  
city of the northern rulers.

While the KKK was led by  
the former rulers and officers,

it also recruited poor whites  
(and there were far too many  
of them) who were so racist  
that attacking Blacks took the  
place of fighting the rulers.  
Moreover, the racism of the  
mass of poor whites created  
the "weight" the handful of  
rulers needed to use against  
the Blacks. Without this  
weight Jim Crow and the  
semi-re-enslavement of  
Blacks could not have been  
accomplished.

Thus the KKK arose as the



Racist attacks in 1917 destroyed Black neighborhoods in East St. Louis, Illinois.

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Black militants confront Klan in Tupelo, Mississippi.

and build the February 2 action, it will try to use its size and influence to dominate any ongoing movement which emerges out of the Greensboro demonstration. Inside such a movement the SCLC and its reformist allies will continue to try to keep the struggle limited. They will raise calls for the government to "Ban the Klan," spreading the illusion that the capitalist government is our ally in the anti-racist struggle. They will prefer court suits and elec-

leading edge of counter-revolution in the South.

After World War I came the second period of KKK growth. The social upheavals of the period were less than during and after the Civil War and the KKK rose and declined rapidly and with less importance. Nonetheless, the pattern is the same.

This time the KKK grew much more in the cities. Blacks from the South and Catholics from eastern and southern Europe came into the cities in huge numbers. The Russian Revolution occurred in 1917 and sent shock waves through this country. 1919 saw the great steel strike. Other organizing and strike battles occurred in the following years. In 1919 the Communist Party was formed. In 1919 and 1920 came the anti-labor and anti-communist Palmer Raids with the beating, imprisonment and deportation of hundreds and thousands of radicals. And the Garvey movement came in the '20s.

The KKK grew as a secret, anti-labor, anti-foreign, anti-Catholic, anti-communist, 100-percent white racist Protestant American organization. The Pope was a special target as were Black people. Workers struggling and trying to organize unions were obviously not 100-percent American.

American capitalism was relatively strong and prosperous in the '20s and the Klan's rapid growth came to a quick end as stability was restored. But we see the

toral activity—telling people to vote for "friends" like Jimmy Carter—to mass, militant mobilizations. And, of course, the SCLC will preach "turn the other cheek" pacifism, opposing any calls for community/labor defense guards.

In fact, at a planning committee meeting for the February 2 demonstration, the SCLC insisted that "it is the responsibility of the local authorities and police to ensure the peaceful nature of the

pattern of a mass reactionary force, racism and bigotry, and super patriotism complementing official reaction.

As much as terror is a weapon of reaction, a much more powerful weapon is a mass right-wing movement. This is what makes the KKK so dangerous today. It is the broadest, most popular, extreme right-wing, direct action organization in the U.S. It has become a recruiting ground for the Nazis who are also growing. As American capitalism plunges into deeper and deeper crisis, a fascist movement will emerge from this cesspool. We see the beginnings of it in the growth of the Nazis and the re-emergence of the KKK. Transformed into an actual fascist organization, the KKK would be more dangerous than ever.

The goal of fascism is to destroy the working-class movement, slash the living standards of workers, and enslave and terrorize oppressed people. Fascism uses the strength of a mass reactionary movement to do what the bourgeoisie feels it must do to save its crisis ridden system but can't do because it is too weak. Fascism will strip workers of any organized ability to fight attacks. It will kill the leaders and atomize the ranks, kill or enslave Blacks, Latins, gays and other oppressed people. No struggle and no reforms will be permitted as long as fascism has the strength to prevent them. It is the ultimate weapon of the bourgeoisie to save its dying system. □

march and rally." This in Greensboro where just weeks ago the cops collaborated with the Klan to assassinate five anti-Klan militants!!!

Most importantly, groups like the SCLC will fight tooth and nail against any proposals to link the struggle against the Nazis and the Klan to the fight against the capitalists themselves. They will work overtime and use every trick in the book to oppose those who recognize that the enemy is not just the Ku Klux Klan, but the banks and corporations, the government and the entire capitalist system.

## Two-pronged strategy

The RSL believes that revolutionaries should pursue a two-fold strategy in the anti-Klan, anti-racist struggle. This strategy can be summed up as: Unite to Fight the Right!



Above: Cops protect Klan march in Muncie, Indiana. Bottom: Nazis demonstrate in Los Angeles, 1977.



Unite to Fight the Reformists! On the one hand, we need to unite all organizations and individuals willing to struggle against racist and right-wing forces like the Klan. We need to build a powerful movement that mobilizes masses of working-class people and brings the issues of racism and racist terror to even broader layers of the population. Today, the masses of people still look to the reformists, rather than revolutionaries, for leadership. To build such a movement, therefore, one tactic of revolutionaries must be a willingness to work with groups like the SCLC, trade union bureaucrats and other reformists, who will have their own motivation for engaging in limited struggles.

On the other hand, in uniting with reformists to fight the right wing, revolutionaries must be prepared to do political battle with these same forces inside the movement. Given their size, influence and political role in capitalist society, these reformist organizations will tend to dominate the anti-racist movement and to seek to prevent it from becoming radical. A fight must therefore be waged within the movement to expose their treacherous role and build up the strength and influence of the left-wing forces. Those revolutionaries who recognize this task should unite wherever we have specific agreement in order to maximize our strength. If we fail to demonstrate to people in the course of struggle that it is capitalism which is responsible for the growing crisis, if we fail to expose the reformists, leaving them in solid control of the movement, our struggles will ulti-

mately be defeated.

In line with our "Unite to Fight the Right! Unite to Fight the Reformists!" strategy, the RSL opposed the SCLC's "gag the left" guidelines at the Atlanta conference. In local coalitions we have forced a "re-interpretation" of the guidelines, giving left-wing groups considerably more leeway than they originally had. In alliance with the CWP, we fought against the SCLC's attempts to sabotage the march, its blatant red-baiting and bureaucratic manipulation. In doing so, we have consistently tried to explain the deadly role the SCLC's politics represent.

## Build revolutionary contingent

At the February 2 march itself, we will try to build the largest revolutionary contingent we can, in order to advance slogans like: Death to the Nazis and the Klan! No Reliance on the Government, Cops or Courts! For Armed Self-Defense and Community/Labor Defense Guards! Unite to Fight the Right Wing! Unite to Fight the Capitalist Attacks! We call on all militants and revolutionaries to join us in building this kind of contingent.

Unfortunately, many left-wing groups are playing a markedly different role, most notably the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, Revolutionary Workers Headquarters and Socialist Workers Party (SWP). These groups have either fought actively to maintain the SCLC's bureaucratic stranglehold or (in the case of the SWP) remained silent in struggles against the guidelines and SCLC attempts to hold back the building of the march. These supposed socialists prefer to make a deal with the reformists in order to get their "piece of the action," rather than struggle to build the revolutionary wing of the movement. In doing this, they become no different than the open reformists themselves.

The February 2 march in Greensboro will be the first of many important battles to come. The deepening economic crisis is bringing sharp attacks against all workers, the growth of racist and fascist forces like the Klan, stepped-up government repression and plans for new military adventures abroad. It is crucial that we begin to build the kind of anti-racist, anti-capitalist revolutionary working-class movement needed to resist these attacks.

**On to Greensboro!**  
**Death to the Nazis**  
**and the Klan!**  
**No Reliance on the**  
**Government, Cops or Courts!**  
**For Armed Self-Defense!**  
**Unite to Fight the Right Wing!**  
**Unite to Fight**  
**the Capitalist Attacks!**



## Leonard Peltier convicted of escape

Native American activist Leonard Peltier was found guilty last month on felony charges of escaping from prison and possessing a firearm. He escaped from California's Lompoc prison July 20, 1979, and was recaptured five days later. Peltier is serving two life sentences for "aiding and abetting" in the deaths of two of the FBI agents who began a shootout with Native American militants at Wounded Knee in June 1975.

During the trial the defense hoped to prove that Peltier had escaped out of fear of an FBI plot to murder him. Peltier's lawyers had two key pieces of evidence that pointed to this. First, the defense had an affidavit from a Native American prisoner, Standing Deer. It stated that while at Marlon penitentiary, Standing Deer was approached by a prison official and a stranger in civilian clothes, who he believes was an FBI agent. They asked him to help set up Peltier to be killed. He was promised treatment for his bad back, federal parole and dismissal of another case in return for his cooperation.

Second, the lawyers wanted to introduce testimony that when Peltier was recaptured after his escape, an FBI agent tried to shoot him in the head, but was prevented by a deputy sheriff. All this evidence was ruled out of order by the judge. Peltier now faces another seven years added to his original sentence.

## Chol Soo Lee: victim of racism

Chol Soo Lee, a Korean prisoner, sits on death row in California for killing a white racist prisoner in self-defense. On October 29, 1977, at Deuel Vocational Institute, a member of a Nazi-type gang called the Aryan Brotherhood attacked Chol Soo with a knife in the prison yard. Chol Soo fought for his life, and ended up stabbing the racist with his own knife. Despite the clear case of self-defense, Chol Soo was convicted of murder. In California, a prisoner who is convicted of killing another prisoner automatically gets the death penalty, so Chol Soo was sentenced to death April 30, 1979.

Chol Soo Lee has been a victim of U.S. racism since he was born. When he was very young, his mother married a U.S. soldier in Korea and came to this country. But the immigration laws didn't allow her to bring Chol Soo with her. Chol Soo Lee was 12 when he was finally able to join his mother in the U.S. In school, bullies picked on him because he was Korean, small for his age, and didn't know English. There was no bilingual program and no Korean interpreter, so he couldn't explain to the teachers why he got into fights. He wound up in juvenile court and from there went through a series of foster homes and institutions.

In 1973, while he was on probation, he was arrested for an unsolved murder in San Francisco's Chinatown. He didn't fit the description of the suspect. But he was Asian, he had a record, and he couldn't afford a lawyer. So he was found guilty and sentenced to life.

A mass campaign to free Chol Soo Lee finally got this conviction overturned in January 1979—but he is still under death sentence for the self-defense killing at Deuel Vocational. Send letters of support to: **Chol Soo Lee Defense Committee, 1235 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95814;** or to **Chol Soo Lee, PO Box B-151845, Tamal, CA 94914.**

## 10 burn to death in 1824 jail

Ten prisoners burned to death December 27 in Lancaster County, South Carolina. They were locked in their second-floor cells when the county jail caught fire. Eight others were injured.

The jail was built in 1824. A recent inspection showed that it has only one exit, through the sheriff's office downstairs. It has no sprinkler system and no smoke alarm. Inspectors found the hallways cluttered with all kinds of junk. Volunteer firemen say the fire spread so fast that, by the time they arrived, flames were shooting out of all the second-floor windows. The smoke was too thick for anyone to get up there and unlock the cells.

# Amiri Baraka Gets 90 Days in Frame-Up

By RICHARD ARETHORN

On December 28, well-known Black poet, playwright and political activist, Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), was sentenced to 90 days in Rikers Island prison in New York City. Baraka was convicted on November 16 for resisting arrest. He is currently on release pending appeal.

The conviction stems from an incident on June 8. Baraka and his wife Amina were having a family argument in their car when four cops pulled him out and savagely beat him. When Amina Baraka pleaded for them to stop, they beat her also—with their four children watching in horror. Amiri Baraka was arrested on charges of assaulting his wife and the police, obstructing government functions, carrying a knife and resisting arrest. Amina Baraka has repeatedly denied that her husband attacked her.



Amiri Baraka.

The state came down hard on Baraka because he was a prominent figure in the Black liberation movement in the 1960s and is now a member of the League of Revolutionary Struggle Marxist-Leninist (LRS-ML). To get a conviction, the state intimidated

witnesses and mysteriously "lost" photographs showing Baraka being beaten. In the end the only charge they could make stick was resisting arrest.

At the sentencing, the prosecutor asked that a probation department report recommending a non-jail sentence be ignored. People involved in political activities like Baraka's, he openly argued, should be locked up as an example. The judge agreed and gave Baraka 90 days.

This attack has not gone unchallenged. The People's Defense Committee has been organizing a campaign to free Baraka, uniting many political groups—Black United Front, Harlem Fightback, Black and Latino Coalition Against Police Brutality, and the LRS-ML. For more information, write: **PO Box 242, New York, NY 10026.**

**Free Baraka!  
Stop Police Brutality!**

## Anarchist Woman Fights to Keep Child

Kamalla Miller, a poet and an anarchist, feminist and pacifist will go on trial soon in California on charges of kidnapping her own daughter, Valeena Marishka (Ishka) in 1978. She is also charged with burglary—taking Ishka's clothes—and interstate flight to avoid prosecution.

Kamalla Miller "kidnapped" Ishka from the Orange County, California, home of her parents, the Moores. She originally left her two children, Ishka and Jason, with her parents in 1974. Kamalla and her husband Arthur were both out of work, Jason was sick, and they wanted to be free to look for jobs. When they found jobs a few weeks later and went to get the kids, the Moores refused to give them back and sued for custody.

At the custody hearing Kamalla and Arthur Miller were put on trial for their political views. She was considered guilty of being an anarchist, feminist, a rebel. He was labeled a "fanatical IWW communist" and "physically, mentally and economically impoverished." Custody was awarded to the Moores. The judge didn't care that the records show that while being raised by the Moores Kamalla herself had been neglected, abused, and once kept inside the house 24 hours a day for two full years. Nor did it matter to the judge that Kamalla's father was an alcoholic and used to scare her by playing with loaded guns when he was drinking.

What the judge cared about was that the Moores are conservative, upright (!) middle-class citizens who have an income of \$45,000 a year. The judge openly stated that his notion of an ideal parent was John D. Rockefeller.

In late 1977 Jason died, suffocating in a plastic bag, while under his grandparents' care. In 1978 Kamalla Miller took Ishka and fled to Arkansas. She was arrested there in July 1979. Bail was set at \$100,000. On August 6,



Kamalla Miller with her children.

bail was reduced to \$5,000 and she was released. In September, Arkansas Governor Clinton signed California extradition papers. But Miller won a delay until a final hearing November 22, and at this writing we don't know whether she has been returned to California or not. Arthur Miller, although now living separately from his wife, is taking an active part in her defense campaign.

Ishka Miller and her mother Kamalla must have the right to work out their own living arrangements without political state interference. Drop all charges against Kamalla Miller!

Write to: **Kamalla Miller Support, c/o Bayou La Rose, 2115 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119.** □

# PRISONERS EXPOSE CONDITIONS

On this page we are printing selections from some recent letters the Torch/La Antorcha has received from prisoners. These letters discuss conditions in prisons around the country.

For the past decade, there has been much talk of "prison reform." There have been countless investigations, countless "white papers," countless speeches and countless lawsuits. Prisoners themselves have fought for better conditions—many giving their lives. Attica. Atmore-Holman. Marion. Pontiac. Reidsville. Walla Walla. The list is endless.

But nothing has changed. As these letters reveal, conditions in U.S. prisons are as bad as they ever were. This is because conditions inside the prisons are tied to conditions in the rest of the society. And capitalism is falling apart. Unemployment is increasing, the cities are crumbling, the Klan is stepping up its racist violence and the ruling class is planning new wars. Far from there being any "prison reform," conditions in prison—like in the society as a whole—will only grow worse. As MS and IJ write: "Clinton is a place that is worse than any wild dream we had, or for that matter, worse than any hideous dream anyone had. Unlike a dream, this place is real."

There is only one way out. This whole system must be buried. We need a socialist revolution. There is no other alternative.

## Clinton, N.Y.

Dear Comrades:

We are victims of this oppressive corrupt system which has us incarcerated in one of the worst Concentration Camps in New York State—Clinton—which is administered by incest clans, who are members of the Ku Klux Klan organization.

We are currently in solitary confinement, SHU, the notorious "unit 14" where these beasts brutally beat inmates with the club they call "n—r stick." If you fight back, they take you to "OBS," a torture chamber, where these evil racist beasts shoot into your body "Bug Juice," to calm you down. Then they beat on you again. After this, they bring a nurse to look at you, she in turn gives you some tiny "white and red pills" called pain killers, and tells you you are going to be alright. After this, they take you back to "unit 14" where they write you up a so-called misbehavior report. Days after, you go before a "racist injustice tribunal panel" where they take away your good-behavior time and give you extended time in solitary confinement, until they decide to transfer you to another kamp, or let you stay to beat on you some more.

Here in this kamp the administration doesn't have any Black personnel, it's the only prison in this part of the state that doesn't have a Black employee. The only thing Black here are the prisoners.

Clinton is a place that is worse than any wild dream we had, or for that matter, worse than any hideous dream anyone had. Unlike a dream, this place is real.

We the prisoners here appeal to all the workers and oppressed-exploited people of

this country and throughout to help us counteract the conditions here. In this Concentration Kamp it is not welfare, it is guerrilla warfare.

Respectfully,  
Comrades MS and IJ

## Marion

Dear Torch,

I have been in the control unit here for seven months now. In that time there have been 10 different assaults ranging from stabbings to a shooting; there has been one killing in these attacks. It is a violent jungle here with the staff instigating much of the tension. The inmate who was killed here was stabbed twice before his final assault—all

## SUPPORT THE PRISONER LITERATURE FUND

In the past two years, the Torch/La Antorcha has greatly expanded its coverage of prisoners' struggles. The number of prisoners who read the Torch/La Antorcha and correspond with the Revolutionary Socialist League has also increased significantly.

The RSL provides revolutionary literature to prisoners to the extent that we can. Also, large numbers of prisoners receive free subscriptions to the Torch/La Antorcha.

Lack of funds keeps us from sending prisoners all the literature they want. Thus, to increase the amount of literature we can send, we have established a Prisoner Literature Fund. We encourage all readers of the Torch/La Antorcha to donate to this fund so that we can supply prisoners with revolutionary literature. Those who can make a monthly pledge, no matter how small, should do so. This money will be used exclusively for providing prisoners with revolutionary literature.

Send contributions to:  
Prisoner Literature Fund  
PO Box 582  
New York, NY 10036

this in a period of 90 days. It could have been prevented... Always struggling,  
FAM

## Terre Haute

Dear Torch:

It has been estimated that one out of every five prisoners is subjected to rape; this includes men, women, and juveniles, Gay and "straight," by prisoners and by prison guards.

I have encountered some sad cases, but one of the saddest was brought to my attention only this past week. Deroscoe Wright is not only Gay, but he is also Black and very young. He is also mentally retarded, and should never have seen the inside of a prison. Since his incarceration, he has been gang-raped three times, the last time being early this year (1979) in this same prison. He was being held here at that time while en route to another federal prison and was being held in detention where he should have been safe. However, he was raped while prison guards, not content to simply ignore the fact, actually went so far as to provide the opportunity for the rape to be committed.

Wright was transferred to his prescribed destination soon after the rape, but he was returned here, this time to stay, in Nov. '79. Realizing that his assailants are now in this general population, he chose to refuse to enter the population. It must be remembered that he is not only the youngest person in this prison but he is also mentally retarded; yet he is being required to fend for himself in the highly tense atmosphere of the maximum security prison—no easy task for the most experienced prisoner. I do not blame him at all for refusing to do so. He is currently being punished for the infraction of "refusing to accept an assigned program"...

Solidarity!!!  
Russell Smith

## Leavenworth

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

Since I was accused of being involved in an August 1977 murder in the Atlanta penitentiary, the prison officials have joined in a systematic concerted conspiracy to harass me in every way possible. Even though I was acquitted of all charges related to that murder, in November 1978, the prison officials still refuse to restore my 510 days' goodtime, and refuse to expunge the murder from my records. Prison officials say I got lucky and beat the murder charge in court, but that I would be guilty of the murder as long as I am an inmate of the federal prison system and that I would never get my goodtime restored.

The keepers have put me on central monitoring as being a member of the "Aryan Brotherhood," a Nazi organization. They say that I had been confirmed as a member since December 1978—one month after I was acquitted of that murder. I am compelled to fight this false accusation of being a Nazi to the bitter end, regardless of what the end result may be. I wouldn't even associate with a known Nazi, much less be one...

Paul Shaver

[Editor's note—Paul Shaver has corresponded with members of the Torch/La Antorcha staff for over two years. Given his anti-racist and revolutionary political views and activities, the attempt to brand him as a Nazi is a smear and a possible set-up attempt.]

## Columbus

Dear Torch,

A busload of prisoners from Lucasville were transferred here to the old Ohio penitentiary in Columbus. They

wore leg irons, handcuffs, and had chains wrapped around them so they had to walk as if they were sitting down, all bent over. They rode in a bus that way some 75 miles or so. They were forced to walk from the bus to L-block that way. L-block is isolated and is for solitary confinement. I served three years and 10 days in L-block in solitary and know what those men are going through. In cold weather the guards can open the windows which the cells face and a man could freeze to death. At one time I had to sew newspapers between thin blankets one winter when they opened the windows wide in zero degree weather.

The guards are sadistic, they hate the convicts and go out of their way to cause us more torture. I myself was placed between two doors for 72 hours and when I asked for a drink of water, it was thrown in my face. When I was let out, my feet, ankles and legs were so swollen I could hardly walk...

Sincerely,  
RC

## Pontiac

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

...When I returned to my cell it was torn inside out. All my clothes that I wear that I had just washed, well, milk that was in my cell was poured all over them. Powder and crackers were in the toilet and poured all over. Some of my personal hygiene supplies were poured all over.

...I broke the toilet off the wall in case the guards tried to run in on me, but all of them left because they know I mean what I say. All of a sudden, I notice that my hand is cut up and bleeding.

...I got to the hospital and the nurse bandaged me up. When I was leaving the hospital, about six officers picked me up and carried me to the "crank" room, forced me to stay in there with shackles on my hands and body. The nurse brought the needle to drug me, to destroy my mental capacity. They left me in that room all night, shackled from waist down and my hands in handcuffs. I could not eat, sleep, shit. What's all of this for, what's the meaning of it?

What you have read, let it be no surprise. This happens day in and day out. I can't put up with it anymore and I may die to demand respect. I want to be respected like you and everybody else...  
Sincerely yours,  
Joseph Young

## To Our Readers in Prison

The Left Bank Bookstore in Seattle has received a \$1,000 grant so that prisoners can buy books at cost. Write to: Left Bank Bookstore, 92 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101.

The Pontiac Brothers, a group of Black and Latin prisoners indicted for the July 22, 1978, rebellion at Pontiac prison in Illinois, now have a PO box where people can write to them direct. Tell your friends and write to: Pontiac Brothers, PO Box 8185, Chicago, IL 60680.

# 'City That Works' Falls Apart

## Will There Be Schools & Hospitals in Chicago?

By DARRYL CLARK

The extensive subway and bus system was shut down by a strike, the School Board said it was broke and stopped paying the teachers and other workers, the firefighters threatened to strike and the city hospital was announcing cutbacks in service and layoffs of workers. But it wasn't another chapter in the well-known New York City financial crisis. It was all happening in December in Chicago and it meant the end of that city's image as "the city that works."

It was Richard J. Daley—Chicago's mayor from 1955 to his death in December 1976—who built that image. What it always really referred to was a city that worked for the ruling class and some groups of white middle-class people and skilled workers. At the heart of the system were vast public works and construction programs, low property and industrial taxes and government

cooperation with business. In addition, it depended on the creation of a dozen or so distinct white ethnic neighborhoods that were protected from "urban decay." Meanwhile, Chicago police acted as a huge army of occupation in the Black and Latin communities. Without a doubt, Chicago was—and still is—the most segregated city in the country.

Patronage workers, numbering about 35,000, are an important part of this Chicago system. They are white-collar public workers, employees of firms that work exclusively for the city, members of certain unions that are little more than branches of the Mafia, and, in some government agencies and authorities, even the laborers and cleaning crews. These workers get their jobs through political connections and are paid regular union wages or higher. In return, they work long hours, both on and off the job, to produce funds and votes for

the Democratic Party.

Just outside this inner circle of patronage workers are over a hundred thousand public workers, such as the largely Black and Latin transit workers and the public school teachers, who usually get their jobs in a straightforward fashion. They are members of ordinary, nationally-connected public employee unions. In

the past, however, "patronage type" deals were made with these workers through the union leadership. That is, in return for relatively high wages, the union leaders provided labor peace (creating a good business environment) and all-out support for the Democratic Party.

But the whole Chicago system depended on 1) a boom-



Chicago cops protect scab trains during transit strike.

ing U.S. economy that enabled the federal and state governments to set aside vast sums of money for the cities; and 2) Daley's political clout, which made sure Chicago got a large share of those funds.

Now both Daley and the period of prosperity are dead. The rulers of Chicago are faced with a financial crisis just like New York City's. And their solution, just as in New York, is to attack public workers, beginning with those outside the inner circle of patronage.

### Transit workers strike

In mid-December, 11,000 bus and rapid transit ("el") workers struck, shutting down the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). The workers are members of Local 308 (rapid transit) and Local 241 (bus and white-collar workers) of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU).

Bus service was wiped out by the strike. A few subway/el trains were kept running by supervisors—protected by Chicago police in each car! Merchants and employers complained that the strike

(Continued on page 17)

## LABOR IN STRUGGLE

### British steelworkers strike

British steelworkers are on a national strike for the first time in 54 years. On January 1, 113,000 members of the Iron and Steel Trades Federation and the National Union of Blastfurnacemen shut down the government-owned British Steel Corporation (BSC). The workers are also organizing roving picket squads to shut down privately-owned steel mills.

The BSC workers are demanding a 20-percent pay increase to cope with Britain's skyrocketing inflation. They are also fighting BSC's plan to eliminate their "guaranteed week," which provides workers with 80 percent of their basic pay in case of layoffs. BSC has already announced it will lay off up to 50,000 workers by August.

The British working class is mobilizing to support the strike. In Wales, where two-thirds of the steelworkers are slated to lose their jobs, the Welsh Trades Union Congress has called for a general strike starting January 21. Dock and railway workers are refusing to ship any materials going in or out of the mills, and have promised to refuse to handle all steel shipments, including imports. The transport workers have promised to do the same.

This support is crucial to the success of the strike. The steel industry claims to have stockpiled an 18-week supply of steel. This means they could starve out the steelworkers, who are getting no strike pay. But if steel shipments are stopped, the stockpiles won't do the bosses any good.

The steel strike is the first major confrontation between British workers and the right-wing government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In the past 10 years, militant trade union struggles have driven three successive British governments out of office. Thatcher came to

power on a pledge to break the power of the trade unions. The steelworkers are the first target of her anti-labor campaign.

### Postal worker crushed to death

Postal workers at the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center in Jersey City, New Jersey, are learning fast how capitalist control of health and safety means death and dismemberment for the workers.

On December 15 mailhandler Michael McDermott was slowly mangled to death in a conveyor on Bulk Center loading bay #23. The belt on #23 lacked guards and emergency shut-off switches. Management had removed them from the conveyors on almost all the bays in order to make them run continuously and profitably. After McDermott's death, hundreds of workers walked out. Later, at the height of the Christmas mail rush, they slowed down, refusing to work on unsafe equipment.

The Bulk has been unsafe for years. Its accident rate of 31.9 per 100 workers per year makes working there more dangerous than working in a coal mine. Hundreds of grievances have been filed. Congress has investigated several times. In July 1978 the workers at the Bulk wildcatted in part over the hazardous conditions there. Last August, a supervisor, Clyde Dinkins, tried twice to shut down dangerous equipment—including bay #23.

Management responded by ignoring the grievances and the Congressional investigations. They fired 200 workers who wildcatted. They busted Dinkins back to clerk for his actions. At the same time, postal officials in Washington, D.C., faked accident statistics to create the appearance of a rapidly improving safety record. McDermott's death has brought an avalanche of adverse media publicity and yet another

Congressional investigation down on the heads of the postal service management. Management has been forced to fix some of the machinery. Bulk General Manager Alexander Gallone decided to take "early retirement." But the criminals at the top of the postal service bureaucracy are getting off free for the murder of Michael McDermott.

### Unemployment benefits cut

The Carter Administration is cutting back federal extended unemployment benefits by \$800 million over the next two years. The government's new unemployment standards, which take effect February 3, will eliminate unemployment benefits to hundreds of thousands of workers on long-term layoffs.

Carter is resorting to a cheap bookkeeping swindle to disguise the cutbacks. According to the federal Unemployment Compensation Act, workers in states with high levels of unemployment receive 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits from the federal government. Workers in states with lower levels of unemployment receive nothing after they have exhausted their regular 26 weeks of coverage.

Under the new system of judging state eligibility for the federal benefits, the government will no longer count workers who are receiving the extended benefits in state unemployment statistics. This means that in states where large numbers of workers are on long-term layoff, "official" unemployment statistics will actually go down, and the federal government will get out of paying extended benefits. The AFL-CIO estimates that this will eliminate federal benefits to 305,000 workers in 1980, and an additional 690,000 workers in 1981.

—PB, AL & EVL



## Conference Demands: "Shut Down Hazardous Jobs"

# Coke Plant Workers Meet on Safety

By a STEELWORKER  
CORRESPONDENT

CHICAGO—On December 15, 1979, over 80 coke plant workers and United Steelworkers union officials held the first District 31 Coke Plant Conference in East Chicago, Indiana. There are nearly 6,500 coke plant workers working in the steel mills of the Indiana/Illinois area covered by District 31. The conference was called to discuss the conditions of coke plant workers and to propose measures to improve them.

Coke plant workers work under some of the most unhealthy and unsafe conditions created by capitalism. The heart of a coke plant is the "battery," a row of huge ovens for heating coal. From 15 to 25 tons of coal are dumped into each oven and then heated to 2,500 degrees Fahrenheit in the absence of oxygen. Gases, most of them explosive, bubble out of the coal. What is left is a porous and brittle material called coke, which is used to heat iron ore in the blast furnaces. Most of the gas that bubbles out of the coal is drawn off in pipes, but some is always leaking out through the bricks of the ovens. Many coke workers

work on top of the batteries where the floor is hot enough to singe paper and flames of ignited gas are always flashing out of chinks around vent pipes and portholes.

Coke workers are always threatened with burns. In May of 1977, this writer suffered severe burns over 40 percent of his body in an accident at the coke ovens at U.S. Steel's Gary Works. Nearly every production worker in the coke plant has been burned to some extent at some time.

In the coke plants, as in other areas of the steel mills, the size, weight and strength of the machinery is a constant hazard. One worker at Gary was killed when she was knocked into an oven by the ram that pushes the coal in. Just a few weeks before this writer was hurt, machinery fell and tore off half the face of one of my fellow topside workers.

Finally, the emissions from the coke ovens cause occupational diseases similar to those suffered by coal miners. Workers on the topside of the batteries are five times more likely to die of lung cancer than other steelworkers. Coke plant workers as a whole die from lung cancer twice as



U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke works.

often, and from kidney cancer seven and a half times as often as other steelworkers. They are more prone to get cancer of the skin, the intestines and the pancreas. They are frequent victims of emphysema, bronchitis and heart ailments.

It is not surprising, given the racist nature of capitalism, that most of the workers the steel bosses send to work in the coke plants are Black and Latin.

Several years ago, the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency issued special regulations for coke plants. For a while, some workers thought that these new rules would bring some relief. As it has become clear that the companies are complying only with those regulations they can use to harass the workers, there has been a small but noticeable increase in shop floor resistance and struggle.

In addition, in August 1979 a national union conference on coke plant workers was held in Pueblo, Colorado. The conference participants proposed eight contract demands, most of them directly related to job safety and health. It also called for organizing local conferences on the conditions of coke plant workers. The District 31 Coke Plant Conference was held in response to that call.

Between August and December, activists in the Chi-

cago/Gary area held several open meetings to involve rank-and-file coke plant workers in planning the conference. At these meetings, there were differences over how to set up the conference. A few of the organizers wanted the workers to just sit and listen to speeches by "big name" union tops. They fought against having discussion periods, workshops, and low registration fees.

A left-wing grouping fought for and won proposals to have discussion periods and workshops on three issues: 1) the fight against discrimination, 2) the fight for job health and safety, and 3) the fight to implement coke plant workers' demands.

Within the left wing, this reporter organized the health and safety workshop and circulated drafts of health and safety contract demands. These motions were discussed at the conference and, except for motion number five, they were passed by the conference participants. (See box.)

In addition, the conference condemned the Experimental Negotiating Agreement, which prohibits a national strike. It also called upon the leaders of all six District 31 coke plants to fight for a common set of local contract demands and demanded that every coke plant be represented by a coke plant worker in the local contract negotiations. Finally, in order to implement its demands and motions, the conference voted to build another conference in 1980 and to hold outreach meetings to organize for it. □

## Steel Bosses Guilty in Poison Gas Deaths

By FRANK HOPKINS

On December 28, six people at the Jones and Laughlin (J&L) steel mill in East Chicago, Indiana, were murdered by the company. Two workers and four foremen died in a carbon monoxide poisoning. One worker, Fred DeHoyas, was just 22 years old. His widow has one small child and another on the way. Seventeen others were gassed; 11 needed to be hospitalized.

What happened was that a fan forcing hot air from a stove into blast furnace No. 3 broke down. Carbon monoxide began to back up into the stove and poured out to the surrounding area. The stovetender tried to close a valve to stop the leaking. Jones and Laughlin has not converted to electrically controlled valves so he had to climb to the top of the stove and pull a chain-link pulley. But the steel bosses not only neglected the fan, the pulley was broken too. The stovetender was overcome by gas before he could do anything. One by one, others rushed to his aid. And one by one, they suffocated.

Rescue squads arrived to find workers tearing at their shirts—trying to breathe and trying to cool off their inflamed lungs. Two dead men hung from the safety ladder. There was so much gas in the air that the people in the rescue squads ended up needing medical treatment. And they were wearing protective masks.

This is murder. The owners of J&L steel (formerly Youngstown Sheet and Tube) have the worst safety record in the mills in the whole Chicago-northern Indiana area. This is saying something that is pretty scary. In this area you are always hearing about steelworkers, losing limbs, getting split in two by trains or being burned to death. There have been at least 12 deaths at J&L in the past five years—and this says nothing about all the workers who are crippled or seriously injured by the steel bosses.

Furthermore, this time the murder is practically pre-meditated. This isn't "just" negligence. In 1968 three workers at this mill died of the very same thing—carbon monoxide poisoning. The company

never put up any air monitoring devices. The company never trained anybody in the use of oxygen tanks and gas masks. The company knew this would happen again. But concern for human life only gets in the way of the drive for profits.

This is an example of what caring about somebody gets you in this society. The victims of this murder died trying to save somebody's life. We need to build a society without steel bosses, or any other kind of bosses; just so that our human emotion and concern is not a weapon that can be used against us.

The local union leadership (Local 1011) stated publicly that the company is responsible for the deaths. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is saying it will hold an inquiry. This is more than what usually happens when steel bosses kill somebody, but this isn't shit. Steelworkers need to take control of their own health and safety. This means safety committees run by the workers themselves. We need to protect ourselves from the bosses' drive for profit. □

### Motions:

1. A safety and health committee composed of a union representative from each area on every shift. The safety committee shall be constituted of both plant, union and community members. Their own safety representatives.

2. The committee shall have the power, through its representatives, to demand of and force the company to stop any unsafe, and any unsafe practice, in health and safety, job openings, etc. The committee may also have the power to demand of the company to stop any unsafe practice.

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Russian troops, tanks and artillery on the move near Kabul.

# Russian Invasion Tramples Afghanistan Independence

(Continued from page 1)

the right of the national and ethnic groups within Afghanistan to determine their own way of life.

Revolutionaries must unconditionally support the right of the Afghan people to self-determination. We must condemn the invasion and demand the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Afghanistan. We must also support the armed struggle of the Afghan people against the invaders.

## Afghanistan a "buffer state"

To understand the motives behind the Russian invasion, it is necessary to understand the nature of Afghan society and the role Afghanistan plays in world affairs.

Afghanistan is a country of high mountains and large desert regions whose people are among the poorest in the world. Around 85 percent of Afghanistan's some 20 million people are poor peasants, shepherds or farmers. Almost all are Muslims belonging to the Sunni branch of Islam.

The low level of economic development in the country combined with the rugged terrain have prevented the creation of a centralized modern state in Afghanistan. Instead, the country is divided into a patchwork of tribal and ethnic groups, including the Pashtuns, the Hazari, the Baluchi and others, who have traditionally resisted efforts by any central government to control their affairs.

Despite its poverty, Afghanistan plays a key role in international affairs because of its geographical position. Its territory includes strategic passes leading into Iran and the Middle East on the west, and Pakistan and India on the east. Since World War II, Afghanistan has played the role of a buffer state between the Russian state-capitalist regime and U.S. imperialism and its allies in the region.

The various governments in Afghanistan have followed a more or less neutral policy and have accepted aid from both powers. Russia, which shares a 1,000-mile border with Afghanistan, has had the greater influence in the country. But both Russia and the U.S. have collaborated in supporting the central government. They have done so in part because they have wanted to avoid a head-to-head confrontation in Afghanistan, and in part because the people of Afghanistan have always risen up against any foreign power which tried to take over their country.

All these factors played a role in the crisis which has torn Afghanistan apart over the past two years.

In April 1978, a military coup overthrew the dictatorship of Mohammad Daud. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), led by Noor Mohammad Taraki, took over the government.

## PDPA not working-class party

The PDPA is a state-capitalist party which is supported by the Russian ruling class. It includes two wings, the Parcham (Banner) faction, which has always closely supported Russian policy in Afghanistan, and the more independent and radical Khalq (Masses) faction. The PDPA is neither a workers' party nor a mass organization. At the time of the coup, it consisted almost entirely of westernized leftist intellectuals and army officers, and numbered 4,000 members at most.

Although Taraki called the April 1978 coup a "people's revolution," the PDPA actually took power without significant mass support. Party leaders made it clear that Afghanistan's small working class had no place in the "revolution." A foreign ministry spokesperson told reporters: "It is not necessary for the workers to be leading. A working class party does not mean that the majority is con-

stituted by workers, but that its members are equipped with the ideology of the working class."

Moreover, the PDPA had no base of support in the countryside where the vast majority of the Afghan people live.

After taking over the government, the PDPA tried to extend its authority over the peasants and other people living outside the cities. These efforts led to a series of bloody faction fights within the PDPA. They also provoked a mass popular uprising against the government.

The first development in this series of events was the Khalq faction's successful effort to take over the party. In June 1978, the leaders of the Parcham faction were sent into virtual exile in diplomatic posts abroad. In August those remaining in the country were jailed as "enemies of the revolution." Meanwhile, real power in the Khalq faction shifted away from Taraki into the hands of Amin, who became prime minister. Taraki remained president and nominal head of state and the PDPA.

Amin represented the radical nationalists in the PDPA who wanted to use the army and state apparatus to ram a state-capitalist society down the throats of the Afghan people. In the fall of 1978 the party introduced various social reforms such as land distribution, legalization of the

trade unions, and the banning of forced "arranged" marriages for women in order to break apart Afghanistan's tribal society.

These reforms were progressive insofar as they attacked some of the most reactionary, oppressive features of Afghan society. But they were imposed from above and enforced by a campaign of repression by the Afghan army, led by up to 8,000 Russian advisors.

## Government alienates masses

As a result, the government's program wrecked Afghan society and thoroughly alienated the mass of Afghan people. For instance, the PDPA cancelled peasant debts to money lenders but failed to provide an alternative means of credit for the peasants to buy seed. Consequently, the peasants could not use the land offered them by the government. Moreover, when the government tried to assume direct control of the countryside, it sought to smash the autonomy of the Afghan tribal groups. The tribes fought back as they have always done when any government has tried to interfere in their affairs.

The result of the government's brutal policies was a popular uprising. Mass resistance to the PDPA regime surfaced in March 1979, when

opposition forces took control of the city of Herat for five days. By August, ethnic groups including the Nuristanis, Hazaris and Baluchis had taken up arms against the government. By December 1979 opposition forces controlled most of the countryside.

The Afghan army collapsed in the face of the rebellion. Army units joined the uprising in Herat. In August 1979, 2,000 members of the Aznar garrison went over to the opposition. In Kabul, troops in the Bia Hissar garrison also mutinied in August, while the Rishkar garrison mutinied on October 14.

PDPA leaders claim the popular revolt is led by reactionary landlords and mullahs who have the backing of U.S. imperialism. This is probably true. Opposition groups like the National Front for the Islamic Revolution, the National Liberation Front, the Islamic Brotherhood and others are dominated by right-wing religious leaders and even supporters of the former Afghan monarchy. These groups maintain bases in Pakistan and are receiving arms and training from China. At least one of the opposition leaders, Ziya Nezi, is a U.S. citizen who met with State Department officials in Washington, D.C., last March.

But this doesn't justify the PDPA's policies or the Russian invasion. The PDPA gov-



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forces took control of Herat for five days in August, ethnic groups including the Nuristanis and Baluchis picked up arms against the government. By December 1978, government forces consisted of the country's army collapsed because of the rebellion. Many soldiers joined the uprising. In August 1979, members of the Aznar went over to the opposition. In Kabul, troops in the Hissar garrison also mutinied in August, while the garrison mutinied on August 14.

Leaders claim the revolt is led by reactionaries and mullahs with the backing of U.S. imperialism. This is probably why opposition groups like the National Front for the Revolution, the National Brotherhood Front, the National Brotherhood and are dominated by right-wing leaders and supporters of the former monarchy. These groups maintain bases in the north and are receiving training from China. One of the opposi- tioners, Ziya Nezri, is a former officer who met with government officials in Washington, D.C., last

is doesn't justify the policies of the Russian. The PDPA gov-



ernment was a capitalist government that never had the support of the people. It tried to destroy their traditional way of life without giving them the slightest choice in the matter. The people themselves responded with a popular uprising. It was precisely the brutal policies of the PDPA government which pushed the Afghan people into the arms of the reactionary landlords and mullahs.

### Russia unhappy with Amin

The Russian ruling class also opposed Amin's policies, but for entirely different reasons. Since the April 1978 coup, the Russian government's chief aim in Afghanistan has been to secure a stable pro-Russian government. They were not interested in reforming Afghan society. On the contrary, they wanted to limit Amin's reform program because it was uniting all sections of the population against Amin's regime. The Russians also insisted that the PDPA ally with those sections of the old ruling

Taraki was killed and Amin took over formal control of the government.

After he thwarted the coup attempt, Amin tried to build up his political base by appealing to "patriotic capitalists" in Afghanistan and doubling the pay of army officers and enlisted men. At the same time, he continued to reject Russian demands that he negotiate a deal with opposition leaders. Meanwhile the popular revolt kept growing. When Amin failed to crush it, the Russian ruling class decided to invade the country. They made Amin the scapegoat for every crime the PDPA and its Russian advisors had committed in Afghanistan for the past two years and denounced him as a counter-revolutionary and an agent of U.S. imperialism.

It's too early to judge the results of the Russian invasion. The most recent reports indicate resistance is continuing in the countryside, and that some army units previously loyal to the PDPA government have turned their guns against the Russian troops. But the resistance movement is weakened not only by its lack of modern



Afghan resistance fighters.

class that were willing to accept a share of political power within the confines of a Russian client state.

Amin, however, refused to negotiate such a deal. This threatened the Russians' traditional control of Afghanistan. They became increasingly afraid that the Amin regime would be overthrown and replaced by a right-wing Islamic government allied with U.S. imperialism. They also feared that such a regime in Kabul might encourage unrest among the oppressed Muslim peoples in the Russian provinces bordering Afghanistan.

As a result, in September 1979, the Russian ruling class began plotting to drive Amin out of power. It got Taraki to engineer a coup within the PDPA, but the plan backfired. On September 16, Amin won a shootout with Taraki and his supporters in Kabul.

weapons, but also by the disunity and conflicting ambitions of its right-wing leaders. A prolonged period of Russian occupation and guerrilla warfare seems likely.

The international effects of the invasion, on the other hand, are already apparent. The U.S. ruling class, which in the last 30 years has invaded Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, Korea, Lebanon, Cuba, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic to maintain its own imperialist empire, is screaming bloody murder about the Russian effort to copy its policies in Afghanistan. The largest imperialist power on earth is hypocritically claiming it will defend the independence of weaker nations against the fatal embrace of the "Russian bear."

In fact, the U.S. ruling class cares nothing about the independence of the Afghan peo-

ple. Moreover, it has always recognized Afghanistan as a Russian "sphere of influence." In 1959, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, an arch-Cold Warrior, refused the Afghan regime's request for military aid, in order not to offend the Russian government. While the U.S. and its allies will supply some arms to opposition forces in Afghanistan, they are unlikely to risk a direct military confrontation with Russia at this time.

### U.S. imperialism seeks gains

Instead, President Carter is using the Russian invasion as an excuse to launch an imperialist offensive of his own. He is working for new U.S. bases in the Middle East and Central Asia, providing arms to Pakistan, and speeding up plans to build a quick-strike force of 100,000 troops. While Carter has stopped short of shipping arms to China, he sent Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to China in early January to call for "complementary actions" to counter the Russian invasion.

In addition to these military moves, Carter is cutting off shipments of grain and advanced technology which the Russian leaders need to shore up their weakening economy. He is warning the Russian government that the U.S. ruling class is serious about resisting any further Russian expansion in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Revolutionaries must condemn Carter's efforts to strengthen U.S. imperialism abroad while whipping up Cold War fever in the U.S. But Carter's maneuvers cannot be used as an excuse for supporting Russian imperialism in Afghanistan. Russia claims to be a socialist country and the best defender of oppressed nations fighting imperialist domination. In fact it is ruled by a state-capitalist ruling class which controls an imperialist empire second only to that of the U.S. Its invasion of Afghanistan is a criminal violation of the right of Afghan workers and peasants to rule their own country and determine their own future. □



### Iranian people battle U.S. & Khomeini

The confrontation between Iran and the U.S. over the U.S. embassy takeover in Tehran is entering its third month. U.S. imperialism and its allies in Western Europe are now preparing to enforce economic sanctions against Iran. On January 8 the Iranian government responded to this threat by saying it will cut off oil supplies to any government that supports the sanctions. At the same time, Iranian foreign ministry officials are continuing to look for a face-saving way to end the confrontation. But they admit they have no control over the students who occupy the embassy. The students are refusing to accept any deal unless it is approved by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The embassy takeover has sparked a massive anti-imperialist upsurge by the Iranian people. The U.S. ruling class is trying to strangle this movement through a campaign of economic extortion. Revolutionaries in this country must oppose the sanctions, condemn U.S. imperialism's offensive against the Iranian people and demand that the shah be sent back to stand trial for his crimes.

Meanwhile, Khomeini's own efforts to force national and religious minorities inside Iran to accept his dictatorial "Islamic Republic" continue to tear the country apart. On January 11, Khomeini's Revolutionary Guard stormed the Tabriz headquarters of nationalist militants in Azerbaijan. The next day 11 prisoners captured in the attack were executed for "creating intimidation, terror and chaos among the people," and "having waged war on God and his messenger."

The executions are part of a government offensive against the Azerbaijani nationalists and their religious leader, the Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari. Supporters of Shariat-Madari who are demanding political autonomy for Azerbaijan took control of most of Tabriz in early December. Since then there have been repeated clashes in Tabriz between supporters of the rival ayatollahs.

The latest crisis broke out after street battles in Tabriz and Qom on January 4. Following the fighting Shariat-Madari was placed under virtual house arrest in Qom. When his followers tried to visit him, they were turned back by Revolutionary Guards. This led to a virtual civil war in Tabriz on January 9. At least 70 people were killed and 400 wounded in fighting between Azerbaijani militants and Khomeini loyalists.

Rebellions by other national and religious minorities are continuing to break out in other parts of the country. On December 22 the government was forced to declare a state of emergency in Zahidan after three days of rioting between anti-government Baluchi militants and Seistanis who support Khomeini. Fighting also broke out between Kurdish nationalists and Revolutionary Guard troops in Sanandaj on January 2. And in Bandar Linge, 26 people were killed in clashes between the local Arab population, who are part of the Sunni Muslim minority in Iran, and Shi'a Muslims belonging to Iran's Farsi majority.

Khomeini and his supporters claim the growing revolts against the "Islamic Republic" are all led by agents of U.S. imperialism. This is nonsense. The Azerbaijani people of Tabriz were among the first to join the mass rebellion against the shah. Strikes by anti-imperialist Arab oil workers played a crucial role in breaking the back of the shah's regime. The people of Iran rose up against the shah because they wanted to free themselves from U.S. imperialism and its agents in Iran. They are turning against Khomeini because he is trying to impose a new tyranny under the cover of Islamic theology.

On January 9, 500 Black autoworkers in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, won a significant victory over the Ford Motor Company. Ford agreed to unconditionally reinstate the workers, who had been fired last November after a series of strikes against Ford's racist policies (reported on in last month's *Torch/La Antorcha*). The strikes were set off by Ford's dismissal of Thozamile Botha, a Black militant who is president of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO).

The South African government reacted to the victory by stepping up its attacks against PEBCO, which has grown steadily since it was founded last year. On January 10, South African cops raided a PEBCO meeting, arresting Botha and four other PEBCO leaders.

**RSL FORUM  
DETROIT**

**"Iran Against  
U.S. Imperialism"**

January 27  
7:00 pm  
Highland Park YWCA  
Room 307  
13130 Woodward

Donation \$1.50  
(Unemployed \$ .75)  
Childcare provided

The following is the third and final part of an edited version of a presentation given to an RSL Central Committee meeting this past September by Ron Taber, RSL National Secretary.

In the first part, "The Post-War Boom Unravels," Taber discussed the origin of the post-war boom and the reasons it has now come to an end. He showed how the capitalists reorganized world capitalism in such a way that prosperity was created in the short run at the expense of the long-term health of the system.

In the second part, Taber explained how the developing economic crisis is intensifying the contradictions of the capitalist system. He discussed how both the class struggle and competition within the capitalist class will escalate in the coming period. Finally, he showed how the economic and social crisis would frighten the middle class. Freaked-out people in the middle class—Taber explained—would provide the mass base for a fascist movement on the right and a state-capitalist movement on the left, both of which would be obstacles to the socialist revolution.

Now, as all this should suggest, the coming period will offer tremendous opportunities—as well as tremendous dangers. I want to outline how I think these add up, a kind of balance sheet on what we are facing.

First, the positive side. Probably the most important thing is that the class struggle will increase to a tremendous degree. This is already happening inter-



nationally; look, for example, at the revolutions in Nicaragua and Iran. Although the pace will be slower in the United States, here too we will see a drastic escalation in the struggle. Not only will this shake world capitalism but it will also make more and more people, particularly in the working class, open to revolutionary ideas. It will greatly increase our ability to carry out socialist propaganda and agitation and to explain what we are for in practice, in action, in the course of struggle. And this will give us opportunities to grow and to build our organization.

A second crucial item on the plus side is the fact that the bourgeoisie is economically and politically weaker than it's been in a long time. This flows directly from the fact that the world capitalist system is in crisis and U.S. imperialism is in retreat. The capitalists have no solutions to the crisis. They don't know what to do about energy or the environment. They don't know how to prevent the cities from rotting still further. And they have no answers to the increasing weaknesses in the political system. The temporary solutions they came up with in the 1930s, such as Keynesian pump priming, are now, as I explained, all played out. And they haven't come up with any others. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie is itself more and more divided and incapable of acting in any kind of united manner.

Third, the working class, the international proletariat, is stronger than it's

ever been before. In the imperialist countries, the proletariat has grown as a result of the long post-war boom. In the so-called underdeveloped countries, the proletariat has grown at an even faster rate, in some cases emerging for the first time as a significant economic and political factor.

Moreover, since the immediate post-World War II period, the proletariat has not been defeated in a decisive kind of way. This is not to say that it hasn't suffered setbacks. It received a severe setback in Chile in 1973, for example. And it's been hit hard in other countries, mostly through right-wing dictatorships. But taken on a world scale, the working class has not experienced the drastic, across-the-board defeats it did in the 1930s and during and right after World War II.

Finally, the working class is more literate and in some ways more politically aware than before. More people can read and this, plus the develop-

***The most important thing is that the class struggle will increase to a tremendous degree. This is already happening internationally; look, for example, at the revolutions in Nicaragua and Iran. Although the pace will be slower in the United States, here too we will see a drastic escalation in the struggle. Not only will this shake world capitalism but it will also make more and more people, particularly in the working class, open to revolutionary ideas.***

ment of the mass media—the newspapers, radio, TV—means that working-class people are pretty aware of what's going on in the world and in any given country.

### **State capitalism getting exposed**

The last factor on the plus side I want to discuss at the moment is that state capitalism is getting exposed in the eyes of many workers and middle-class radicals. Fewer militant workers and radicals believe that the state-capitalist countries are socialist or the kind of societies they want to fight for. While this is tied in to a certain demoralization, depoliticization and a decline of the movement, it also gives us the opportunity to build a movement that is really for socialism, for a truly free society, as opposed to state capitalism.

Look at China, for example. During the '60s, a lot of people had illusions in China. Many people thought China was a socialist country that was fighting U.S. imperialism and they looked to it as a beacon of world revolution. As a result, many of the most militant and revolutionary minded people adopted some version of Maoism as their political ideology. These people weren't just middle-class radicals and revolutionaries. They also included a lot of Black and Latin workers, people from other oppressed groups, as well as the most aware white workers. In other words, a whole layer of politically ad-

# Capitalism in

## Part 3:

# Prospects Revolution

vanced workers looked to China and had illusions in the Chinese version of state capitalism.

But since Deng took over and explicitly hooked China up with U.S. imperialism (a direction Mao had been leading the country in for some time, by the way), a lot of these people have gotten disillusioned with China. The more revolutionary of the Maoist groups along with a lot of independent radicals have broken with China, for example. They may not understand what really happened. They may think China had been socialist or a workers' state but that Deng led a counter-revolution or something like that. But they don't look to China anymore.

Meanwhile, Russia can hardly be an inspiring example to hold up, even for those groups who think it is socialist or some kind of workers' state. In fact, you have the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)

trying and fighting for democracy and peace. The revolution appeared to be still going on. Stalin carried out his counter-revolution in the name of Marxism, Leninism, and the working class. Because he maintained nationalized property and state planning, many people thought he really was building socialism. Many people didn't know about the purge trials, the millions killed in forced collectivization, the millions who worked and died in the slave labor camps. Many middle-class people didn't care about the human costs of industrialization or whether the workers and peasants had any control or freedom. All they were concerned with was that Russia was industrializing while most of the world was stagnating, and that this industrialization was based on planning. In short, for a variety of reasons, a lot of people had a lot of illusions in Russia. This made Russian style "Marxism-Leninism" quite popular and it helped the Communist Party establish control over masses of workers and other people.

Today, people don't have these illusions anymore. Russia doesn't look very revolutionary. Most people can see that the workers and peasants don't control anything and aren't free. Russia doesn't look like it stands for freedom, democracy or peace. Meanwhile, the Russian economy is suffering from inflation and is stagnating too; it's predicted that Russian growth rates will be quite low in the 1980s. Russia has an energy crisis and they're polluting the air, the rivers and lakes, with industrial wastes over there just like here. And there's been a big buildup of the use of nuclear power in Russia, with all the

same potential that people have here.

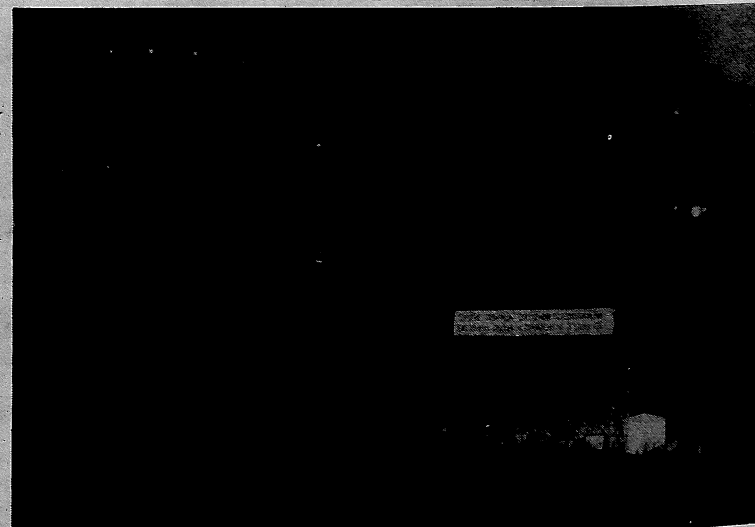
All of this helps us explain why the capitalist countries that are really state-capitalist are really state-capitalist. It helps us explain why the basic laws, as they are, help us explain why the capitalist forces, and the various forms of exploitation, are less and less like the illusions in state-capitalism. It helps us explain why the various social-democratic, semi-Stalinist organizations that see that Russia is really, that it has when the government and uprisings there.

Today, Cuba is a lot of people and milk this for ever what happens and gets worse and afford to give Cas dollars worth of a serve as a showcase in the Western Hemisphere. The world crisis of capitalism continues to increase our ability to build a truly revolutionary movement.

### **Ruling class destroy the**

Those are some positive side. On the plus side, first, that the tools to maintain it did before. They've got more sophisticated computers, the whole got more sophisticated and repress the addition to the new radio and TV, which countries reaches with bourgeois principles, values, etc.

Second, the capitalists accomplished a tremendous damage to the world in a great way in depletion and destroying the polluting rivers, lakes, etc. They've allowed infrastructure to deteriorate. There hasn't been but Detroit doesn't have a comrade remarker New York, the Sou-



Russian nuclear plant in Novovoronezh.

# italism in Crisis

## Part 3:

# Prospects for Revolution

industrializing and fighting for democracy and peace. The revolution appeared to be still going on. Stalin carried out his counter-revolution in the name of Marxism, Leninism, and the working class. Because he maintained nationalized property and state planning, many people thought he really was building socialism. Many people didn't know about the purge trials, the millions killed in forced collectivization, the millions who worked and died in the slave labor camps. Many middle-class people didn't care about the human costs of industrialization or whether the workers and peasants had any control or freedom. All they were concerned with was that Russia was industrializing while most of the world was stagnating, and that this industrialization was based on planning. In short, for a variety of reasons, a lot of people had a lot of illusions in Russia. This made Russian style "Marxism-Leninism" quite popular and it helped the Communist Party establish control over masses of workers and other people.

Today, people don't have these illusions anymore. Russia doesn't look very revolutionary. Most people can see that the workers and peasants don't control anything and aren't free. Russia doesn't look like it stands for freedom, democracy or peace. Meanwhile, the Russian economy is suffering from inflation and is stagnating too; it's predicted that Russian growth rates will be quite low in the 1980s. Russia has an energy crisis and they're polluting the air, the rivers and lakes, with industrial wastes over there just like here. And there's been a big buildup of the use of nuclear power in Russia, with all the

same potential hazards and destruction that people have been fighting about here.

All of this helps us expose state capitalism. It helps us show that the countries that call themselves socialist are really state-capitalist and are subject to the same crises, and the same basic laws, as traditional capitalism. It helps us explain what socialism really is and it helps us fight the various state-capitalist forces, the people and organizations who want to establish one or another form of state capitalism. It's less and less likely for people to have illusions in state capitalism, and the various social-democratic, Stalinist and semi-Stalinist organizations, when they see that Russia is stagnating economically, that it has an energy crisis or when the government crushes strikes and uprisings that the people launch.

Today, Cuba looks pretty good to a lot of people and the SWP is trying to milk this for everything they can. But what happens when the world crisis gets worse and the Russians can't afford to give Castro eight or 10 million dollars worth of aid per day so Cuba can serve as a showcase for state capitalism in the Western hemisphere? In short, the world crisis is hitting the state-capitalist countries too and this increases our ability to expose the middle-class state-capitalist forces and build a truly revolutionary socialist movement.

## Ruling class can destroy the world

Those are some of the factors on the positive side. On the negative side there is, first, that the bourgeoisie has more tools to maintain itself in power than it did before. They've got bigger armies, bigger bombs, better technology, computers, the whole works. They've also got more sophisticated tools to divide and repress the working class. In addition to the newspapers, they've got radio and TV, which in the imperialist countries reaches millions of people with bourgeois propaganda, imperialist lies, values, etc.

Second, the capitalists have already accomplished a tremendous amount of damage to the world. They've gone a great way in depleting natural resources and destroying the environment—polluting rivers, lakes, the atmosphere, etc. They've allowed the basic industrial infrastructure to decay and the cities to rot. There hasn't been a war in the U.S. but Detroit doesn't look so good. Or, as a comrade remarked on his first visit to New York, the South Bronx looks like

what Germany must have looked like after World War II: bombed out, with miles and miles of abandoned and burnt out buildings. The bourgeoisie has done so much damage that if the working class doesn't take over soon, I believe we can reach a point of no return. In other words, the capitalists can mess things up so badly that it will be impossible, or let's say, extremely difficult, to fix it all up again.

Third, and directly related to the point I was just making, is the fact that the world is heading toward an international depression, fascism and world war. Only this time, all these things will be much worse than the last time around. The Keynesian economic policies and



Left: RML-led Standing Strike Support Committee rally in Jamaica. Right: RSL jobs march in the Bronx, New York.



Photo: Eugene V. Lee

*We and the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica exist as an international tendency. We are still small, but we are growing. Every day, we are in a better position to go out and fight for what we believe in—a truly free, equal and democratic society. This is the most important thing.*

state intervention in general hid the contradictions in the short run, but only deferred the crisis. When it comes, all the accumulated contradictions in the system will explode at once. The middle

class will be more freaked out than in the 1930s, creating the social basis for even more powerful fascist movements. What's more, these movements will be armed with the technology developed by the bourgeoisie. Hitler was dealing with toys compared to what they'll have now. LaRouche and his right-wing U.S. Labor Party are fixated on computers, for example. In short, the bourgeoisie and the other pro-capitalist forces have the ability to actually destroy the whole world. This is something new. They did a lot of damage and killed millions of people during World War II, but they didn't have the ability to just demolish everything. Now they do.

Fourth, the working class, especially in the imperialist countries, but in fact all over the world, is extremely divided along racial, national, sexual and occupational lines. People are infected

with racism, sexism and all kinds of chauvinism. In some countries, such as the U.S., the working class is hardly or not at all conscious of itself as a class. If the working class is to make the socialist revolution, it has to be united and conscious of itself. These two conditions go together. Forging this kind of unity will be no small task.

Fifth, as I said before, the middle class has grown tremendously along with the increased role of the state. As a result, its social, political and cultural weight and influence have also increased a great deal. Because of this in general, and because of its specific role in the mass media, its control over mass organizations, such as the NAACP, SCLC, the trade unions, etc., the middle class has a tremendous influence over the working class. In many ways, the middle class; or sections of it, actually lead the working class, that is, they control its organizations, like the unions, act in its name, and manipulate millions of working-class people. But as I said, these middle-class forces

small, but we are growing. Even more important, our political influence is increasing every day. Every day, we are in a better position to go out and fight for what we believe. And what we believe, what we are fighting for—a truly free, equal and democratic society—is the most important thing. When we first formed as an organization, we interpreted this idea in a very abstract and formalistic way. We talked about it as "The Program," "The Transitional Program," "The Permanent Revolution," etc., too much as a series of slogans, demands and formulas. But even though we did this, the basic idea was right; what we stand for, what we are fighting for, is the most important thing we are, even if there were just 10 of us.

But we have to make what we stand for much clearer. We've been improving, but we can still learn how to communicate it better. What we really stand for is not the nationalization of this, that, or the other industry under workers' control, or the shorter workweek, or the sliding scale of wages. We

are for state capitalism, not socialism. They want to use the workers to put themselves in power, not the workers. If we are to actually make a socialist revolution, we will have to break the stranglehold of the middle class over the working class. The working class will have to establish its leadership over the middle class.

The last point on the negative side of the balance sheet is the fact that there is no revolutionary party anywhere in the world. There are, of course, scads of groups that claim to be revolutionary parties, but the overwhelming majority of these organizations are committed to establishing state capitalism. Right now, there are no mass organizations, parties, unions, etc., that are fighting for a truly socialist revolution. This means we'll have to build such an organization from scratch, in the course of struggle.

## RML/RSL stand for freedom

By way of conclusion, I'd like to return to one final positive side of the balance sheet. This is the fact that we and the comrades of the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica exist as an international tendency. We are still

support these things, but they're not what we stand for, they're not the main thing we are fighting for.

We stand for a totally new way of doing things, of living. We stand for people running things, not things running people. We stand for people cooperating with each other, not competing. We stand for a truly free society, not the competitive dog-eat-dog world of capitalism. We are fighting for freedom. This is what we are prepared to die for—not a new form of capitalism, a bigger and better state, bureaucratic planning that helps ruling classes exploit people better. We have to find ways to make this as clear as possible. If we just say we are for nationalization under workers' control, the shorter workweek, or whatever, we won't make the difference between us and the state-capitalist organizations—such as the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and their periphery in the trade union bureaucracy—very clear. To a degree, they all have coopted these demands, so Douglas Fraser is "for" the shorter workweek. If we just limit ourselves to these demands, it won't be clear that those groups are for state capitalism while we are for socialism. What we are really for, people reorganizing society for

(Continued on page 17)

# Mormon Church Bans ERA Activist

By ADELE LOHMAN

What dangerous heresy did Sonia Johnson preach that caused the Mormon church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) to excommunicate her this past December 5, for "speading false doctrine"? Johnson, a fifth-generation Mormon, supports the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). She has fought the anti-ERA campaign of the Mormon church all over the country.

It is no accident that the Mormon church works to defeat the ERA. Its doctrine has always been racist and sexist.

It is run by men; women are barred from all priestly duties. Until 1978 only whites could be full church members.

The Mormon church stands against abortion, birth control, homosexuality, pornography and "permissiveness," as well as alcohol, coffee and tea, and prepared foods.

## Church a political force

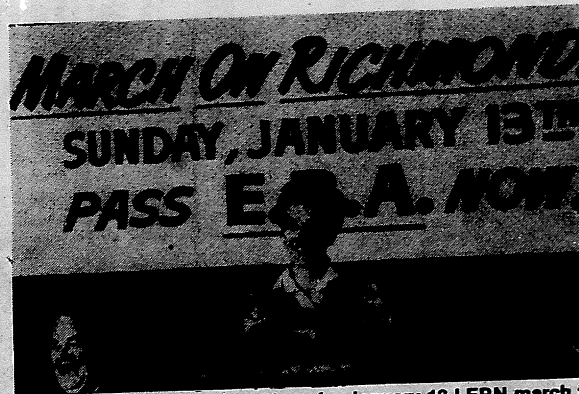
In Utah, where it has its world headquarters, the church owns a big chunk of the state, including hotels, TV

stations and real estate. With most of its businesses being tax exempt, it has managed to become one of the 20 wealthiest corporations in the country. Politically the Mormon church runs the state of Utah.

The church has made the defeat of the ERA its number one priority. The ERA didn't stand a chance of passing in Utah. The church also helped to defeat it in Nevada and Florida and was the major force in the campaign to rescind Idaho's ratification.

Wherever the amendment is due to come before a state legislature, the Mormons mobilize their followers by the hundreds to lobby against it and flood the lawmakers' offices with anti-ERA mail.

Sonia Johnson is founder and co-chairperson of a group called "Mormons and Friends for ERA." She has exposed the Mormons' activity in every state where the church launched its anti-ERA cam-



Sonia Johnson announces plans for January 13 LERN march to support the ERA.

paign. In Virginia, Johnson's group got together with NOW and forced the Mormons to register as lobbyists. Johnson has also gone on speaking tours for the ERA in Utah, Nevada, Arizona and Florida.

## Tried by CIA agent

And so the church attempted to silence Sonia Johnson. They tried her before a bishop's court, which is reserved for women and young boys. Bishop Jeffrey H. Willis, who was both judge

and jury in the trial, is also a personnel officer for the CIA.

When she got his decision to excommunicate her, she said she felt "betrayed" and "disillusioned." But then she got ready for her next speaking tour. "I refuse to stop talking about ERA," she declared in a news conference. "I can't repent that." On January 13, she was one of the featured speakers at the ERA demonstration organized by Labor for Equal Rights Now (LERN) in Richmond, Virginia.

Johnson is appealing the bishop's decision to a higher church court. □

## Government Ruling Closes Border to Lesbians & Gay Men

By BEN FREIBERG

On December 26, 1979, the U.S. government ruled that lesbians and gay men from other countries will be kept out of the U.S. This ruling reverses minor concessions granted between June and December of last year.

On June 13, Carl Hill, a British photographer on his way to the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day celebrations, was stopped by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS—La Migra) at San Francisco International Airport because he wore a gay pride button. Referred to the Public Health Service as a sick person, he filed suit and was allowed into the country until his case was resolved.

After this incident the U.S. embassy in London was swamped with letters of protest from outraged individuals and British lesbian and gay organizations. This pressure, along with protests in the U.S., made the Surgeon General, head of the Public Health Service, announce on August 2 that homosexuality would no longer be considered a disease by government doctors. Therefore, they would no longer conduct examinations on "suspected homosexuals" entering the U.S. The next day the case against Hill was dropped.

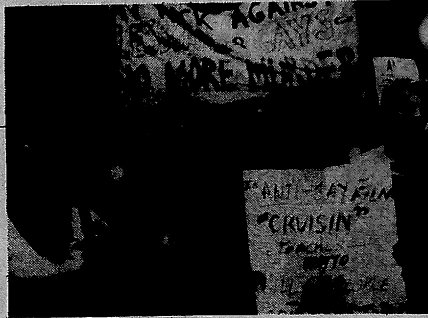
On August 14, INS stated

that it would let gays in on a temporary basis. But, this decision did not really change anything! Only two weeks after the August 14 announcement, hundreds of Canadian lesbians on their way to the Fourth Annual Womyn's Music Festival in Michigan were harassed at the border. Some of their personal possessions were confiscated, and over 50 of them were refused entry.

On December 26, the Justice Department ruled that lesbians and gays will be permanently denied entry whether the doctors consider us sick or not. They want foreign gays kept out—period. This gives the go-ahead to the INS to continue and intensify its harassment of lesbians and gay men trying to enter the country.

Only a few days after this decision, Jaime Chavez Carrillo, a Mexican dress designer, was detained in San Francisco. Carrillo, who speaks no English, was kept for 14 hours in a hotel room until he signed an English-language statement saying he is gay and agreeing to return to Mexico that night. After first being put on a plane and then let off, he had a hearing at which he was granted a two-week "paroled stay" in the U.S. The government knows that San Francisco is not the best place for them to seek a confrontation on this issue. □

# Protests Planned for "Cruising" Opening



New York protest against filming of "Cruising."

The anti-gay movie *Cruising* will be opening for its national premiere in Chicago on February 15. The movie portrays gays as sick, desperate murderers, or equally sick, equally desperate victims. The producers of the movie must realize that in view of the New York City reaction, to open in NYC or San Francisco would be disastrous for them; when the film was shot in New York City's Greenwich Village this past summer, lesbians and gays organized massive protests.

At that time, a copy of the script was leaked to the public by a gay cast member, and several gay groups asked to speak to the producers. All requests were ignored. The gays then appealed to the city government. "To stop the filming of the movie would be to violate the 1st Amendment," said Mayor Ed Koch. But the real concern of the city government was clearly stated by the city's film liaison when she was asked to lift the

movie's filming license on the grounds that the film was damaging to the city's lesbian and gay community. "Anything that brings New York \$7 million is good for the city," she said. Gay people decided to take to the streets.

Spontaneous riots occurred as hundreds of lesbians and gay males attempted to halt the filming of the movie and were attacked by the police. Instead of coordinating the protests, the gay leadership attempted to quell them. They quickly called some demonstrations and led crowds to insignificant areas for "peaceful, non-violent sit-ins." Violent and valiant though the riots were, the film was completed.

Now the movie is set to open in Chicago. None of the city's large "respectable" gay rights groups has done anything about it. The Illinois Gay Rights Task Force is too busy with one of its perennial lobbying efforts to be bothered. The Gay and Lesbian Coalition, a group formed initially to disavow the actions of gay activists and apologize to Chicago's Democratic Party machine, voted to send a stern letter to the producer. But it was later discovered that their rules say such a vote requires a two-thirds majority, not a simple majority by which the vote was passed, so the letter was not sent after all.

The initiative has been taken by the Gay Revolutionary Discussion Group and the RSL, who have called for a community meeting for January 16. The call has been endorsed by Chicago Gay and Lesbian Illini (a group at the University of Illinois' Chicago Circle Campus) and the Rogers Park/Edgewater Gay Alliance (a neighborhood organization). At the meeting, a proposal for an opening night protest at the McClurg Court Theatre will be presented. □

By SUSAN EDMUNDS

Differences over the nature of the Nicaraguan revolution, its Sandinista leadership, and the role of revolutionaries in Nicaragua have resulted in a major split in the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec).

The USec reports that the Bolshevik Faction (BF) and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (LTT) took 25-30 percent of the USec's membership when they quit in early November, shortly before the USec's world congress. The BF, led by Nahuel Moreno, originally of the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party), took many of the USec's sympathizing sections in Latin America, as well as parts of the Spanish and Italian sections. The LTT had several hundred followers in the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League), the USec's section in France.

Even with the loss of the BF and LTT the USec is still the largest of those international organizations that claim continuity with Leon Trotsky's Fourth International.

The USec was formed in 1963 as a reconciliation of what had been the two main wings of the Fourth International after it shattered in 1953. However, this did not lead to a genuine political unity of the groups calling themselves Trotskyist. Several significant organizations refused to join the USec. These included what are now Gerry Healy's International Committee of the Fourth International and Pierre Lambert's Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).

Nor was the USec itself politically unified. For over 15 years, it has been in a state of near-constant factional warfare. It has repeatedly been on the verge of a major split. Its national sections have split, and in some cases reunified, without leaving the resulting formation noticeably more cohered than before.

Moreover, the lines have never been clear between the USec and its satellites. Many of these groups have made and broken alliances with each other and with groups in the USec, only to make new alliances later on with groups they previously attacked.

This has been true in the current USec split as well. The BF and LT made some left-sounding criticisms of the USec's line on Nicaragua, but have since hooked up with the OCRFI. The OCRFI, which until recently had been holding fusion talks with the USec, is known for its reformist opportunism. The BF, LTT and OCRFI have now set up a "parity committee" to "reorganize/reconstruct the Fourth International." The USec has been invited to join the committee.

# Tailism Takes Its Toll Behind the Split in the USec



Left: Nahuel Moreno.  
Center: Ernest Mandel.  
Right: Jack Barnes.



The reason for the disarray in and around the USec, as we shall see, is that all these organizations share a fundamental political method: Pabloism.

## Issues in the current split

The immediate issue in the split was the nature of the new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. In this dispute, the BF and LTT put forward the view that the Sandinista front (FSLN), through its alliance with the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, was betraying the revolution and attempting to consolidate capitalist rule in Nicaragua.

[Readers of the *Torch/La Antorcha* may notice that this bears some similarity to the position of the RSL—with several key differences. First, we believe there was never any possibility that the Sandinistas, who are a petty-bourgeois force dedicated to "national reconstruction," i.e., the rebuilding of the capitalist economy, would carry through the struggle against Somoza to the seizure of power by the working class and poor peasants. Second, we have pointed out that the FSLN could carry out "national reconstruction" in one of two ways. Either it could strengthen its alliance with the bourgeoisie, in which case the economy would tend to function along the lines of traditional, shareholding capitalism (in this case some form of mixed economy where statified sectors would co-exist with private enterprises). Or the FSLN might establish a more completely statified economy (take over the bulk of industry, finance and agriculture), in which case Nicaragua would become a fully developed state-capitalist society. From our point of view, it is still not clear which capitalist path the

Sandinistas will follow.]

The most vociferous opponent of the BF/LTT position was the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP), led by Jack Barnes. The SWP argues that the Nicaraguan regime is a workers' and peasants' government, though not yet—a workers' state. Furthermore, it argues that far from betraying the revolution, the FSLN represents a true revolutionary leadership for the Nicaraguan masses, one that is capable of eliminating capitalism and establishing a workers' state.

Taking more middle positions in the USec were a variety of forces grouped around USec leader Ernest Mandel. These include Mandel himself, who contends that the class character of the new Nicaraguan regime can not yet be determined. They also include several Mandel-oriented groups, such as the International Marxist Group of Britain, which, like the BF/LTT, argue that the Sandinistas are playing a class-collaborationist role.

However, these opposing assessments of the Nicaraguan regime were not the issue that provoked the split. Rather, the split occurred over the conclusions the respective groupings drew from their analyses. The actual split question was what USec supporters in Nicaragua, as well as internationally, should do vis-a-vis the FSLN: Enter and support the FSLN (unconditionally, according to the SWP, and apparently agreed to for the sake of an alliance by the whole of the Mandel wing), or maintain an independent USec presence to combat the FSLN's class-collaboration (the line of the BF/LTT).

This was no idle question of "position" for the USec. For Moreno's BF had organized the Simon Bolivar Brigade (SBB) last June to intervene in the Nicaraguan revolution.

Not long after the FSLN came to power, however, it expelled the non-Nicaraguan members of the SBB from the country, for attempting to organize the workers to fight for their own interests. The FSLN also jailed the SBB's Nicaraguan members, as well as the supporters of the USec's sympathizing group in Nicaragua, the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (LMR—Revolutionary Marxist League).

The USec majority's reaction to the expulsions and jailings was to publicly denounce the SBB and LMR as "adventurers" and "ultra-left sectarians." They denied that the SBB members were "Trotskyists," implying that they had no connection to the USec. And they raised the charge, apparently with some amount of justification, that the SBB had misrepresented its relation to the FSLN.

What the USec majority was really so hysterical about, however, was that the SBB had opposed the disarming of the workers by the FSLN, the refusal by the Sandinistas to grant wage increases already promised to the workers, etc. For raising these basic class demands, the USec majority accused the SBB of "attempting to force the pace of the class struggle."

At a meeting of the USec in September, the SWP put forward a motion that not only called for the USec to denounce the activities of the SBB, but to actually endorse its repression by the FSLN. When an amendment put forward by Mandel, which contained some tepid criticisms of the way the FSLN had handled the situation, passed, the SWP proceeded to vote against the entire motion.

Also at this meeting the BF was ordered to stop acting as a public faction of the USec.

Then, getting to the heart of the matter, the USec called on all of its supporters to act "as loyal militants of that organization which led the overthrow of Somoza." In other words, the USec ordered its Nicaraguan militants to disband their independent organizations and join the FSLN, that is, to liquidate into the FSLN.

The BF and LTT called these actions and the threat of further ones at the upcoming world congress tantamount to expulsion, denounced the congress as "undemocratic" and made their exit.

It should be clear that this most recent split in the USec was not fundamentally over differences on the nature of the Nicaraguan revolution; the groupings that remain in the USec continue to disagree on this question. Rather, the split was the direct result of the powerful tendency of the United Secretariat to politically and organizationally liquidate its independent presence in the face of non-socialist, petty-bourgeois nationalist, social-democratic, and often Stalinist organizations.

This liquidationism is the logical outcome of the erroneous position—held by nearly all the so-called Trotskyist organizations—that non-proletarian forces can overthrow capitalism and establish workers' states.

To see why this is so, we need to briefly sketch how the current position on the so-called workers' states (actually state-capitalist societies)—Russia, China, Cuba, Eastern Europe, etc.—developed inside the Trotskyist movement.

## Dilemma over Eastern Europe

Following the consolidation of the Stalinist ruling class in the late 1930s, the Fourth International (FI) failed to realize that Russia had become a state-capitalist society. Rather, using Trotsky's mistaken conception that nationalized (state) property brought about by a workers' revolution was inherently a proletarian form of property even after the proletariat had long ceased to have any control over the state, the Fourth International maintained that Russia was a "degenerated workers' state."

As a result of this position, the FI was extremely disoriented when, after World War II, the Eastern European countries—Poland, Hungary, Rumania, etc.—were transformed into state-capitalist societies. At first, that is before major nationalization of industry had been carried out, the FI correctly concluded that these countries

(Continued on next page)



Factions of former Fourth International reunited in 1963 to support state-capitalist regime in Cuba (above: Fidel Castro at rally). In 1970s they were on opposite sides of barricades in the Portuguese revolution (right: Socialist Party supporters attack Communist Party headquarters, 1975).

(Continued from last page) were still capitalist. This judgment was in large measure based on the fact that the Russians originally tried to maintain the native bourgeoisie as an important factor in the economy, a policy which the FI believed would continue.

However, soon the Russian rulers changed their line and began taking a number of measures to bring the Eastern European economies more in line with their own: nationalization of most of industry, finance and agriculture; the creation of a state monopoly of foreign trade; the introduction of bureaucratic planning. At this point the FI faced a dilemma. What position to take? There clearly had been no workers' revolutions in these countries; in fact workers' struggles had been ruthlessly suppressed by the occupying Russian forces. Yet by 1948 there was little to differentiate the Eastern European countries from Russia, which the FI called a workers' state.

The contradiction had to be resolved one way or another. The FI could re-examine its position on Russia and correctly decide that since the workers had been deprived of all political and economic power (which are fused when the state owns most of the means of production), Russia was no longer a "degenerated workers' state" but a state-capitalist country.

Or it could seriously compound its error and conclude that the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia—which Trotsky had branded an agent of counter-revolution internationally—and Stalinist forces generally could overthrow capitalism and set up "workers' states" without, and even against, the working class. This would throw out the basic idea of Marxism that the emancipation of the proletariat has to

be the act of the proletariat itself.

After a several-year struggle, the FI chose the latter course. In 1951, the Trotskyist movement declared that other forces besides the working class—specifically, acknowledged petty-bourgeois forces grouped in the camp of International Stalinism—could accomplish this overthrow.

### FI abandons Marxism

This position had enormous implications for the Trotskyist movement itself. As long as the FI had believed that the Stalinists were incapable of smashing capitalism and setting up workers' states, the FI's erroneous position on Russia was an inconsistency in a basically Marxist world outlook. But once the FI accepted that other class forces could overthrow capitalism, it had abandoned the very heart of Marxism, leaving everything up for grabs.

What inevitably flowed from this was questioning the necessity of building Trotskyist parties to lead the working class in successful seizures of power. For if petty-bourgeois forces could eliminate capitalism, then their parties and organizations were no longer enemies but revolutionary leaderships. And if they were revolutionary leaderships, then why build your own—proletarian—parties, particularly when "history" seemed to be on the side of the petty-bourgeois forces?

Michel Pablo, the head of the International Secretariat of the International, was one of the first to embrace this conclusion and to elaborate its political and organizational consequences.

Pablo argued that "deformed workers' states" along



the lines of Eastern Europe were an inevitable "transitional" form which would last a whole historical period, probably for centuries. In the meantime it was the job of the Trotskyist forces to aid in their creation, by liquidating their independent organizations and joining—loyally—those of the Stalinists, social democrats, petty-bourgeois nationalists, whoever seemed most likely to create a "deformed workers' state."

Large sections of the FI drew back from the most openly liquidationist aspects of Pablo's views. A big split occurred over these in 1953. However, none of these sections challenged any of the basic assumptions of which liquidationism was the logical conclusion. This meant that while the Trotskyist movement retained a formal belief in the revolutionary role of the

proletariat, and a formal position in favor of building Trotskyist parties (and indeed the various groupings did retain their own apparatuses), the political method of the groups claiming to be Trotskyist has been Pabloism, i.e., apologizing for, tailing after and liquidating into petty-bourgeois, pro-state-capitalist forces. In this way, "Trotskyism" has become the left face of state capitalism.

In 1963, the two main wings of what had been the FI joined together to form the USec. The political basis for this reunification was the two groups' uncritical support to the radical nationalist regime of Fidel Castro in Cuba. The USec termed state-capitalist Cuba a workers' state, and said that its leadership was the most advanced of any of the so-called workers' states.

Since that time, the USec

has been a swamp in which different factions, groupings and cliques slug it out. In the 1960s, for example, the Mandel wing of the USec became the virtually uncritical cheerleaders for third world guerrilla struggles, while the SWP wing preferred more reformist, pacifist types. In the revolution in Portugal in the mid-1970s, these same two wings found themselves on different sides of the barricades—the Mandel wing of the USec supporting left-wing army officers and the Communist Party, while the SWP wing hailed Mario Soares' Socialist Party. These differences and the faction fights in general all flow from the fact that while everybody agrees to chase after petty-bourgeois forces, nobody agrees on precisely which ones to chase.

In the intervening time, some of the line-ups have changed. Some of the phraseology has also changed—the SWP now preferring to cover its capitulations with talk of "workers' mobilizations," ignoring the fact that, unfortunately, too many of these mobilizations are under the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie, when they exist at all.

But the fundamental political method—Pabloism—has not changed. The belief that the state-capitalist countries are workers' states, that non-proletarian forces can eliminate capitalism and establish such states has not changed. The tailing after, capitulating to, and liquidating into these forces has not changed.

The recent split is only the latest episode in the pathetic saga of the United Secretariat. A significant split has occurred, yet all sides refuse to call into question the political outlook that inevitably leads to such splits.

Perhaps the greatest irony in the latest USec split can be summed up in the words of FSLN leader Victor Torado: "We believe that the Trotskyist current has been eliminated historically." Trotskyism has not been eliminated. But its mutant children, the Pabloites of all varieties, are working overtime to make Torado's words come true. □

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