

Dump Miller!

Elect an Emergency UMWA Convention!

VOTE NO!

MARCH 21—Tens of thousands of angry, frustrated miners, disgusted with their leadership, are preparing to vote once again this Friday on the latest rotten contract being offered them. Rarely has the fine print of a contract been scrutinized with more care. After meetings on Sunday and Monday briefed local officials and rank-and-file members on the contract, the consensus in the coalfields is clear: the new pact is a sellout on every crucial issue the miners went out on strike for over 100 days ago. They have won neither the right to strike, full restoration and control of their health benefits, nor equalization of pensions. The terms the miners face are, in almost every respect, a historic step backwards even from the wretched agreement narrowly ratified in 1974.

Miners must vote no on this cruel hoax! You have spared no sacrifice or effort in fighting the coal bosses to a standstill. You have defied Jimmy Carter and his strikebreaking Taft-Hartley injunction and won the respect and admiration of millions of trade unionists by your courage and determination. You have repudiated your leadership's attempts to sell you down the river one time after another. You can win this strike! Vote no and stick to your demands!

Miners know that the contract they will be voting on is a defeat for the union. The only real debate in the union now is not over the pros and cons of the agreement but is centered on whether the miners can do better while saddled with their current leaders. For over three months the miners have solidly repelled every attack by scabs, state troopers, the courts and Jimmy Carter. But at every turn they have been confronted with Arnold Miller, his hand-picked flunkies and so-called "dissident" Bargaining Council members no more willing to stand up to the federal government and the coal operators than Miller. It is clear that the miners, despite their unmatched militancy and ironclad solidarity, will not fight on indefinitely if they become convinced that all they will see are the same lousy contract proposals presented over and over again.

The mine workers urgently need a militant new leadership to really win their strike! An emergency convention must be called now to dump Miller and his negotiating team, to elect a new Bargaining Council and to coordinate the miners' efforts to keep scab production shut down. It is not necessary to take a poll of the UMWA membership to know what they think of Miller. It is not necessary to guess at what the key demands of this strike are. What is necessary is to build a new strike leadership with a program to take this fight forward to victory.

Miners! Vote no and get rid of the traitors in your union headquarters. Call mass district-wide and sub-district meetings to elect delegates committed to take whatever action is necessary to secure the miners' fighting demands. Coordinate them in district strike committees and through a national convention, to democratically select a militant leadership of the strike.

This is the only way to combat the bitter resignation that is spreading in the coalfields. Many district officials, even those who voted against the contract when it came before the UMWA Bargaining Council, have predicted ratification. Local officials who denounced the last agreement are reluctantly supporting the new one. And union members who burned the previous contract almost immediately and then voted it down by a 70-to-30 margin are trying to figure out if they can possibly live under the new agreement.

These sentiments must be frankly confronted. A good section of the union's International Executive Board and Bargaining Council, composed of IEB representatives and district presidents, is willing simply to throw in the towel, settle for the miserable terms and then try to oust Miller and advance their own fortunes in the union hierarchy. A meeting held in Ohio last weekend drew representatives of seven UMWA districts to plan a special convention after the miners are back to work. One of the participants, Don Nunley of Ohio's

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WV Photo
Miners from District 5 protesting Miller's latest contract proposal outside UMWA headquarters in Washington last week carry banner proclaiming, "We Won't Go Back to the Pits for Peanuts!"

**For Strike Action to
Defend the Miners...6**

Blue Collar is the first film in a long time to take the American working class as its subject. Certainly it is the first to make the Detroit auto plants the background and shaping force in the lives of its heroes. And it is surely the first film to treat the explosive material of racial antagonisms in this context.

Small wonder then that its release has caused something of a stir in left and liberal circles. The *Village Voice*, for instance, devoted its entire February 27 film section to the movie with critic Terry Curtis Fox calling it "the single most overtly political movie made for a major Hollywood studio in a decade." And while there have been mixed reviews in the left press, the primitive workerists of the International Socialists (I.S.) considered *Blue Collar* of such tremendous political import that the February 27 *Workers' Power* ran a front-page rave review under the headline, "A Great Film." But despite this

rotten union bureaucracy, the profit-greedy company and the treadmill of never making ends meet.

Blue Collar suggests the interpenetration of the Detroit auto plants and the city's ghetto street life. It looks directly at the apolitical, escapist, anti-union cynicism of many workers. But if auto workers see themselves in *Blue Collar* it is a reflection distorted through the cracked ideological mirror of Paul Schrader who has a use for his twisted "truths." *Blue Collar* is from beginning to end an ideological tract; Schrader's foremost concern is not portraying the conditions and attitudes of auto workers but reinforcing and exploiting them as a vehicle for the propagation of his politics of despair. And to this end he necessarily centers his fire on the trade unions—after all, who would now expect the company and government to be on the workers' side? But as the workers' instruments of collective struggle, the unions could offer hope for

still he can't make enough to pay for his daughter's braces.

Schrader's real hero, however, is Smokey, powerfully performed by Kotto with a calm intensity and charm, a burning rage frozen as knowing "cool." Fiercely loyal to his friends, this "playboy" bachelor escapes through his cocaine parties, fancy car, red-velvet furniture and black-velvet paintings. Smokey spans the distance between the proletariat of the plants and the lumpen-proletariat of the streets. In the opening scenes it is strongly suggested that his criminal past includes murder.

Blue Collar presents the story of the inevitable corruption of the three, a result of a conspiracy by the company, the government, but mostly the union bureaucracy to set otherwise decent individuals against each other and drive them to personal betrayal. To conform to this schema Schrader creates a series of unbelievable conditions, the most glaring of which is the unusual and

liberal mood in post-Watergate America.

Rare indeed in the movies, *Blue Collar's* footage of conditions in the auto plants is interesting, although pretty laid-back compared to the actual killing pace of production. These scenes impart the complexity, mammoth size and noise of the assembly line—it all looks very industrial—but aside from a crudely pounding (and very slow) musical score, the film gives no sense at all of the single most characteristically oppressive aspect of auto production: the maddening rhythm of the production line.

This omission is deliberate and, given Schrader's purposes, necessary. For he does not want to show the auto workers' misery originating in a system which enslaves men to machines and destroys their bodies and their minds in its ruthless drive for profit. His enemy is "Them"—the conspiratorial "power elite." Instead of zeroing in on the exploitation rooted within capitalist

Anti-Union Blues

by Pat Kincaid

A Review of *Blue Collar*

raving and the claims of writer-director Paul Schrader that *Blue Collar* is sympathetic to the problems of the "ordinary worker," the film is contemptuous of the working class and hostile to its organization of economic defense—the trade union.

Hollywood has periodically made anti-union films: the hero fighting to retain his personal integrity against the big, soul-destroying, mob-run menace has been off-and-on fare for cinematic bourgeois individualism for decades. What is unusual is that *Blue Collar* seems to have struck a responsive chord among many auto workers, one only partly explained by the novelty of a film which departs from Hollywood's near-exclusive preoccupation with the problems of the petty bourgeoisie. In *Blue Collar's* treatment of the experiences of the working class, auto workers see reflected a portion of their lives, their anger and their frustration. In the film's characters and situations—sometimes desperate, sometimes ludicrously absurd—they recognize something of their own bitter feelings as they face the

the future. Therefore, they must be exposed as part of a giant conspiracy—big business/big government/big labor—which oppresses all free-spirited individuals.

Liberal Schemas and Working-Class Heroes

The plot of *Blue Collar* is a straightforward, three-track ride to defeat, death and disintegration. Its trio of heroes—two black and one white—plan and carry out a robbery of their union's safe. They do not find the big cash booty they hoped would alleviate the crushing weight upon their lives. Instead they find evidence of the union's connection to organized mob activity. When the three—dubbed the "Oreo Gang" after the robbery—attempt to blackmail the union, they become the victims of a company/union/government-mafia conspiracy to destroy and corrupt them.

Zeke, played by Richard Pryor, eventually sells out to the union bureaucracy. Jerry (Harvey Keitel), the ethnic white worker, becomes an FBI informer and Smokey (Yaphet Kotto), the unbreakable street-wise black worker, is murdered. As Zeke, Pryor uses his "straight" material to play a family man whose family seems to spend most of its time watching black "sit-com" on a credit-purchased color TV set. In the absurdist style that dominates the first part of the film, Zeke himself seems like a character out of *Good Times* as he creates a "situation" to fool an overdrawn Jewish IRS man who has come to the ghetto to investigate Zeke's cheating on his income tax. Jerry, the other family man, like Zeke is hounded by creditors and bills. He works a second job pumping gas in view of Detroit's grotesque monument to ruling-class hypocrisy, the "Ren Cen" buildings. But



Harvey Keitel, right, having turned informer confronts Richard Pryor who has turned union bureaucrat in the movie "Blue Collar."

unexplained racial rapport of the three protagonists. Before the film's heroes run up against "Them" they are shown as innocents living in social harmony, a Motown Garden of Eden wherein black and white families bowl together in Hamtramck and the guys hold interracial orgies in the heart of the ghetto.

To a certain extent one is willing to grant Schrader the need for this improbable construct in order to discuss the effect on individual lives of living in the U.S. racist society. So vast is the present social gap between blacks and whites that it would be nearly impossible to present a believable common terrain of everyday life. But the audience is asked to accept this relationship as a natural premise, in order that the director can present its inevitable break-up into race hatred. Throughout Schrader's mechanical schema is filled with hollow implausibilities all aimed at arriving at the same conspiratorial conclusions.

Thus to suit Schrader's purposes the union is depicted as a cross between the Teamsters and the Mafia. In fact the UAW bureaucracy is not a collection of gangster cliques at all, but a well-oiled machine whose crimes are fundamentally political. Not the least of these has been its crass indifference to special oppression, an indifference which has led almost an entire generation of black workers to view the union itself as an obstacle in their struggle. But it would be a mistake to confuse the hostility/indifference toward unions of the ghetto, or even the more politically formed syndicalist/black nationalist anti-union views of groups like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, with the product Schrader is pushing. The message of *Blue Collar* is bourgeois individualism. If it seems less virulent and more cynical than in earlier Hollywood fare it is because of the changed

production itself, Schrader substitutes evil men in the form of a carping top-seigeant foreman.

And while the pent-up rage of assembly-line workers often explodes into violent outbursts, not infrequently murder, in *Blue Collar* this finds its expression as comic relief! In a comedy sequence one worker, frustrated with a dysfunctional Coke machine, drives up his forklift and smashes it. In fact, a worker at the Fremont, California General Motors plant was recently fired in a strikingly similar incident (the union won his job back). An even more dramatic case of this sort was the shooting of a foreman by James Johnson in the summer of 1970 at Detroit's Chrysler Eldon Avenue plant. Johnson's lawyer took his jury (which contained many auto workers and wives of auto workers) to see for themselves the inhuman situation at Chrysler. The jury acquitted Johnson, finding that the conditions drove him temporarily insane. But in Schrader's *Blue Collar* this social phenomenon is treated as irrational aggression in "freak out scenes."

Interestingly, one of the movie's better moments is the scene where Zeke is dragged into Labor Relations after talking back to his race-baiting foreman. Although this also ends implausibly with the foreman forced to grudgingly concede and "buy him (Zeke) a bottle of Cutty," the scene reflects the real collusion of management, government and the union bureaucracy to victimize the worker. But while this collusion is real, and union officials often cooperate with management to get rid of "reds" or "troublemakers," this is not the heart of the oppression of factory workers under capitalism.

Not only does the union never fight for the workers in *Blue Collar*—on the contrary, it is portrayed as their most pernicious enemy of all—there are no

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WORKERS VANGUARD

scenes of any social struggle in the movie. We are not Stalinist "socialist realists" who seek a fairy tale of heroic proletarian fighters untouched by bourgeois ideology and without any concerns but the class struggle. In contrast, the Communist Party's *Daily World* (16 March) complains that the workers make "no effort to organize a rank-and-file movement." (The CP is also upset by scenes of drug use, "cheating on their wives" and an "endless stream of sexist gutter language.")

It would of course be absurd to ask that every film about American auto workers end in a general strike. But *Blue Collar*'s "tell-it-like-it-is" account systematically ignores even the low-level job actions which go on in the plants all the time. What about heat walkouts, for instance, which as last summer's experience showed can be pretty explosive. It is not that the film's characters or plot are thin—which they are. Rather, just as Schrader studiously avoids the subject of exploitation, he also cannot show social struggle against it. To do so would go against the central theme of *Blue Collar*: the hopelessness of the individual in the face of the monolith.

No Kind of Marxism

It is being said that *Blue Collar* has something to do with Marxism, primarily due to a key political statement which Schrader places in the mouth of Smokey: "Everything they do, the way they pit the lifers against the new boys, the old against the young, the black against the white, is meant to keep us in our place." And at the end of the film when the last freeze-frame cliché reveals Zeke, the black bureaucratic sellout, and Jerry, the government informer-sellout, about to slug it out, it is a scene fully loaded with the racial antagonism that Schrader sees as the stuff of inevitable race war. And it is Smokey's voice-over that explains once again how "they" conspire to set "black against white."

According to the *Village Voice* interviewer, Schrader claims that this ending for his film is a "bald 'paraphrase of Marxist ideology,'" and the interviewer agrees, calling *Blue Collar* "a Marxist tract." Similarly Paulene Kael, in a perceptive review for *New Yorker* magazine (27 February), which caught both Schrader's "manipulative cynicism and *Blue Collar*'s "low entertainment value," nevertheless takes Smokey's statement as the basis for her charge of "jukebox Marxism." And Irwin Silber, who to his credit understands that *Blue Collar* is fundamentally a statement of despair in social struggle, strains to compliment Schrader for this "Marxist" finish: "One can hardly quarrel with having such a message be the one that audiences will walk out with freshest in their minds" (*Guardian*, 8 March).

Despite these claims *Blue Collar* is not Marxism, jukebox or any other kind. What Smokey's final statement proves is that the film is a schema, although not a Marxist one, not even of the crude Stalinist social-naturalist variety. It is a statement of conspiracy claiming to explain the ferocious race antagonisms that cripple the struggles of the working class.

Smokey's character is key to the anti-proletarian world-view of Paul Schrader. Schrader, remember, was the script writer for *Taxi Driver*, a film which fortunately for its audience had the talented Martin Scorsese as director. But despite the obvious differences between these films there is similarity of political vision that goes deeper than a compulsive attention to the underside of street life. The nihilistic individualism which pervades *Taxi Driver* is also present in *Blue Collar*, although in different and less effective form.

Just as the hero of *Taxi Driver*, ground down to paranoia by the bleak madness of perceived social reality, must strike out in violent individual action against a hopelessly corrupted society, Smokey, the violent street-wise individualist is the only character who does not sell out. But there is no room in *Blue Collar* for successful heroic action. The social institutions are too pervasive and encompassing and Smokey's murder is seen as the result of a fate born of his essential decency and toughness of spirit. The union, company and mob conspire to destroy him in what must be the most improbable murder sequence since *Goldfinger*.

It is Smokey who recognizes the FBI man in an early rather good bar scene. What is good about it is the way it captures the workers' almost instinctual unwillingness to rat on the union. But Smokey recognizes and exposes the agent precisely because he has the antennae of a lumpen hustler and ex-con. It is Smokey who resists the mob's murderous plans against his friends with club in hand (although the idea that a giant black man can go into Hamtramck, beat up two whites within inches of their lives without having to face the neighbors and the racist cops strains one's credulity). It is Smokey who does not sell out (he is recognized by the conspirators as the "hard case") and so he must die.

In Schrader's view the relationship between the factory and the street finds its moral imperative with the lumpen ethic of the street where life is a matter of personal survival. It is the black street-style and consciousness of the younger black auto workers that Schrader sees as the basis for dignity. *Blue Collar* presents a struggle for survival whose terms—individual and anti-social—are

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More Than 800 WV's a Week to Miners

"It's the Only Paper That Tells the Truth About the Strike"



Stearns mine strike support rally, July 1977.

WV Photo

In recent months, the UMWA coalfields have been uniquely the hot spot of the U.S. class struggle. And *Workers Vanguard* has been there, covering the strike directly from the mining areas. In recent weeks, as the government escalated its direct strikebreaking pressure on behalf of the coal bosses, the Spartacist League intensified its presence with several additional *WV* reporting/sales teams traveling through the Appalachian district. Despite the region's pervasive anti-communism—and despite some good grounds for miners to mistrust reporters (reporters for the bourgeois press have repeatedly been chased out for lying about the strike)—*WV* found a warm reception from miners who appreciate a paper that is on their side and tells their story.

Last May *WV* was the first paper to give national publicity to the then nine-months-old strike of the Stearns, Kentucky miners for a UMWA contract. *WV* No. 160, headlined "Class War in Stearns," called on the entire union to go out in solidarity with the embattled Stearns strikers. At a mid-July strike-support rally there, almost 200 copies of *WV* were sold.

Early on in the present strike, our reporter contacted some of the miners whose roving picket squads had been most active in stopping the flow of scab coal. They were glad to read a sympathetic paper which reported the strike from the miners' side of the picket lines. One local official in northeastern Kentucky remarked, "NBC, ABC, the networks are out because they don't tell the truth." He invited the *WV* team down for a look at the strikers' caravans.

The 24 February *WV* article "State of Siege in Indiana Coal Fields" told how Indiana miners' homes were being buzzed by helicopters; how the guards, attack dogs and scabs armed to the teeth threatened the strikers' lives as they fought to shut down the scab mines. *WV* reported the murder of Potoka miner John Hull by a scab on February 3. An Indiana miner later told a *WV* team: "I'm from the same local as John Hull. I'd read everything from the *Indianapolis Star* and all the little local papers, but you were the only people that had the true account of that story."

Near Cabin Creek in West Virginia's UMWA District 17, one local official bought a *WV*. He sat down and read it cover to cover, then took the *WV* reporter down to a nearby bar to distribute copies to some of his men. "Tell them about that Spanish scab," he said, referring to the story in that issue about Spanish Communist Party head

Santiago Carrillo crossing the campus workers' picket line at Yale University.

At union meetings, strike-support rallies and door-to-door sales in mining communities, *WV* has met with an overwhelmingly positive response. Certainly we have met miners who do not like the paper. But even some of these have come to respect *WV* for daring to tell the hard truth: that the strike is being undermined from within the union by the sellout Miller bureaucracy. When one West Virginia miner was asked whether he liked *WV*'s strike coverage, he replied, "Hell no, I don't like it, but it's the truth."

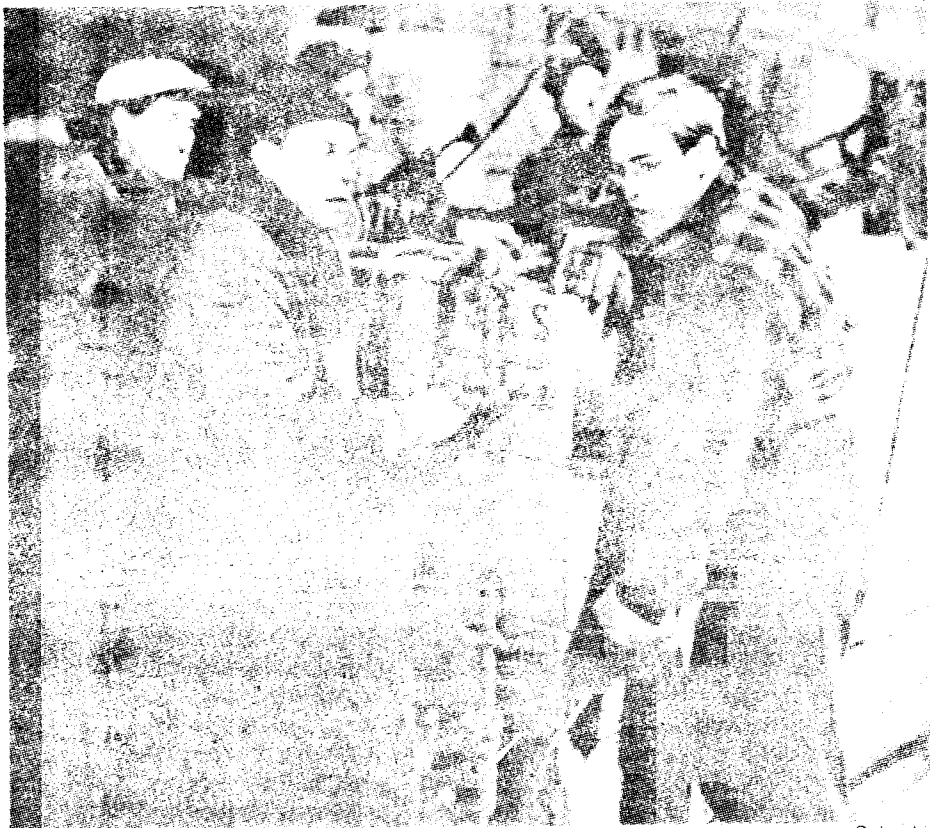
But *WV* is more than a paper that doesn't pull its punches. It is also the paper that has a program for victory and has pointed the way forward each step along the way. One UMWA local official in a District 5 local south of Pittsburgh said the reason he prefers *Workers Vanguard* to the SWP's *Militant* is that *WV* "not only gives you a lot of information, but it gives you ideas about what to do."

WV has insisted on the crucial responsibility of the U.S. labor movement to support the miners—who are fighting on behalf of all workers—with concrete acts of militant solidarity. At a UMWA meeting in the Pittsburgh area last week a visiting Chicago-area steel worker told miners how he was fighting for his union to hot-charge scab coal and go out on solidarity strike. After the meeting, where more than half the miners walked out with copies of *WV*, one striker told a *WV* reporter, "The Teamsters say they're helping us with money. Hell, I don't need the money. Stop the trucks! If the Steelworkers want to help us, don't handle scab coal."

With Carter invoking the union-busting Taft-Hartley law, last week's *WV* demanding "Break with the Strikebreaking Democratic Party!" has been well received in the coalfields. As we go to press, 381 single copies have been sold by *WV* field teams in the mining towns. When a militant steelworker who had been asked to speak at a UMWA subdistrict meeting in West Virginia arrived in Logan, he found some miners were already talking among themselves about ways to get the trade unions together to build a party of labor.

The cowardly UMWA bureaucracy has responded with efforts to whip up anti-communism against those who expose its pro-company sellout policies. On March 14 in the small Pennsylvania town of Nanty Glo, east of Pittsburgh, a District 4 official called the cops over to

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Columbia

Marlon Brando in "On the Waterfront": classic American anti-union film portrays government informer as hero.

WSL Left Wing, London Spartacist Group Fuse Spartacist League Founded in Britain

LONDON, March 5—This weekend the London Spartacist Group fused with the Trotskyist Faction which recently split from the Workers Socialist League (WSL) of Alan Thornett. With this fusion, the British supporters of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) constituted the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B), sympathising section of the iSt. The fusion represents more than simply a doubling of the cadres grouped around the Trotskyist programme of the iSt in Britain. The accretion of the experience of an authentic left oppositional current cohered in struggle within the right-centrist WSL, providing the iSt's British section with real if modest roots in the British left milieu, represents an important gain for the tendency as it seeks to transform itself into an International Trotskyist League in the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International.

This advance was prepared through the iSt's painstaking efforts to intersect leftward-moving forces looking for an authentic Trotskyist alternative to the parochial British centrist swamp. Frankly avowing its regroupment perspective—rejecting the fake "mass work" gimmickry pervasive on the British far left—the iSt established a propagandist presence in Britain and worked to polarise and split the existing fake-revolutionary organisations through counterposing Trotskyist political clarity to muddleheaded centrism. While the little-Englanders who people the British left baited the London Spartacist Group because its initiating cadres were for the most part externally developed, the internationalists of the iSt sought to constitute a pole of attraction for serious subjective revolutionists in and around groupings like the WSL. The present fusion and the fusions of the future constitute the most graphic vindication of the London Spartacist Group's insistence that the struggle for the authentic Leninist and Trotskyist program among already organized far left elements is a crucial tactic in assembling the cadres for the nucleus of an authentic Trotskyist party of the British proletariat.

Britain is one of the more politically important countries in Western Europe, with a working class which has a long history of combativity. In addition, as the centre of a former empire, Britain offers important opportunities for the recruitment of comrades from a whole host of different nationalities. Initiating cadres of other sections of a reformed Fourth International are being recruited in Britain.

Continuity and Internationalism

From its origins in 1961 as the Revolutionary Tendency of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the iSt has struggled to overcome its initial,

involuntarily imposed national isolation. The false hopes held by these revolutionists in Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League—based on such early documents as the SLL's 1961 "World Prospect for Socialism"—were frustrated by Healy's bureaucratic high-handedness: his 1962 splitting of the left opponents to the SWP's headlong rush toward Pabloist centrism (and on to outright reformism) and his expulsion of the Spartacist delegation from the 1966 London Conference of the International Committee. His little Stalin-style organisational machinations soon found their concomitant programmatic expression in accommodation to the so-called "Arab Revolution" and the Maoist Red Guards and political support to the Hanoi Stalinists. Today Healy/Banda's nationally centred militant economism is overshadowed by their slander campaign against SWP leaders Hansen and Novack and their activities as publicity agents for the Muslim fanatic dictator of Libya, Qaddafi. Healyism has become a dangerously cynical travesty of "Trotskyism."

Despite Healy's frustration of the early Spartacist tendency's internationalist commitment, the tendency pursued an aggressive regroupment orientation through polemical presentation of Trotskyist positions on decisive programmatic issues facing the international proletariat. The tendency was successful in polarising and splitting a number of centrist formations, outside the U.S. mainly from the United Secretariat orbit, as part of cohering iSt groups in a number of countries. Thus comrades from twelve countries attended the London fusion conference. Greetings to the conference were presented by representatives of the German, French, Australian, Chilean and Canadian iSt sections as well as by a representative of the International Secretariat of the iSt.

While saluting the formation of the British sympathising section, the International Secretariat spokesman noted the immense tasks which lie ahead:

"With all of the pleasures, apprehensions and enthusiasms that I experience in seeing this conference being convened, it has a bittersweet component to it because our tendency has a certain imbalance. This kind of imbalance I first noticed at the end of the 1950's, where the split between the International Secretariat and the International Committee seemed to be between the Europeans and the English-speakers... and you notice they have the same re-establishment of that old division after nearly ten years of faction fighting—that's the present formal agreement between the SWP and the French. And that is of course quite deadly. You can only know the world if you are in it and if you are confined to only a section of it, however big, powerful or broad, you are objectively set up for deformations."

Many speakers at the fusion conference noted the corrosive effects on



Founding conference of the Spartacist League/Britain. WV Photo

internationalist consciousness of the pressures emanating from the intensely parochial, Labourist British left milieu. Members of the Trotskyist Faction have first-hand experience from the workerist WSL of how accommodation to the present consciousness of the working class is an unbridgeable impediment to the fight against the trade-union bureaucracy and to the strategic goal of splitting and destroying the Labour Party, reformist obstacle to revolutionary struggle.

The conference participants stressed that the British centrists' workerist philistinism has deep roots in the history of the British movement. A memoir by a founder of British Trotskyism testifies to the incredible "little England" parochialism of some of the early self-styled Trotskyists:

"As the British section, Left Opposition, we were invited to send someone to an enlarged meeting of the Left Opposition's International Secretariat, to be held from 4 to 8 February 1933, in Paris. On 30 January, Hitler had been appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Hindenburg, and it was felt that we ought to send someone to the meeting. A reluctant delegate, I travelled to Paris, and sat through complex, heavily-jargonized discussions in French and German, with someone whispering occasional explanations in English, on Saturday, and again on Sunday....

"That evening, walking through the streets of Paris with aching head and jaded spirits, I saw newspapers being sold on the streets, the newsvendors carrying placards—'250,000 [anti-unemployment demonstrators] at Hyde Park'. So the movement was on the mend....

"There was, too, something unreal in evening retrospect about the Left Opposition conference solemnly pronouncing on those controversies of the Comintern, and even earlier ones of Russian Social Democracy.... Surely there could be no true renovation of socialist ideas, or renewal of the forces and spirit of rebellion and resistance, in those old, obscure contentions, argued out again in the thick accents of a now degenerate communism?..."

—Reg Groves, *The Balham Group: How British Trotskyism Began*

Another inauspicious tradition recalled at the conference was the shotgun fusion of various warring British factions and fragments engineered by the International Secretariat and the SWP in 1944. Seeking to stand in the best traditions of Leninist democratic centralism on the international plane, the iSt aims to forge an authoritative international leadership through the development of organi-

cally cohered leaderships in its national sections.

Another comrade noted:

"The fusion taking place this weekend is in marked contrast with the realignments that are taking place among the so-called Trotskyist left in Britain.... The comrades who have gone through various political journeys by which they have arrived in this room have seen a number of potentially valuable cadres for Trotskyism either broken, burnt, demoralised or rendered cynical. In my opinion the comrades who come from the Trotskyist Faction represent some of the best of their political generation which the iSt has managed to salvage from the political wreckage that goes under the name of British Trotskyism. The man who is above all responsible for this political debris is Gerry Healy.... In Britain a number of sizeable centrist and revisionist obstacles have been able to flourish precisely because of Healy's criminal political practise and his blinkered sectarianism. Our fused organisation will confront the task of clearing a path through these roadblocks which stand between us and the building of a revolutionary vanguard party."

A major theme of the conference was the centrality of the revolutionary programme in the formation of a Leninist party. The present fusion was firmly based in a thorough exploration of such critical issues as the history of the Fourth International, the workers government, the popular front and the national question.

The conference also adopted a perspectives document, "Tasks in Britain," which outlined major priorities for the SL/B in the coming period. High on the list of tasks for the new organisation is to move toward a regular monthly press:

"We must provide a press in Britain which reflects the political tasks and the organisational strength of the Spartacist League. This must be the *interventionist* press of a fighting propaganda group; it must be polemical, taking up

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Forum—Friday, March 31

Ireland and the National Question

Speaker: JOE JAMISON
Central Committee, Spartacist League/Britain; former member Workers Socialist League Central Committee and Irish Commission

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Ferris-Booth Hall,
Columbia University,
Room 203-204

For more information call (212) 925-5665

NEW YORK CITY

WORKERS VANGUARD

Anti-Union Blues...

(continued from page 3)

those of the street. It is not accidental that for Schrader and his characters the purest act of interracial solidarity is the robbery of the union. For all the film's industrial montage, its portrayal of the workers' social alienation, *Blue Collar* poses survival as an inevitable process of shrinking bands of loyalty that begins and ends with the self and the sellout. In order to survive the worker must join the institutions that conspire to rob him of his humanity and perhaps his life. Ultimately, the ex-minister Schrader has maintained his religious faith. It should come as no surprise that he wrote some of the religious psycho-babble for *Close Encounters* and is planning to do a film on the life of St. Paul.

Certainly in noting the real impact of ghetto consciousness on young black auto workers, *Blue Collar* has done a real service. The concentration of black workers at the heart of American industry is one of the key sociological changes of the mid-20th century. Blacks are generally more open to radical politics and militant social action than corresponding groups of whites, but their forced ghettoization and the astronomical level of black unemployment has also meant the widespread penetration of lumpenproletarian consciousness in the Detroit factories.

But while Marxists understand that this street consciousness must be fought

strategy for militants, Schrader at least is more realistic and presents it as the politics of despair!

"I Coulda Been a Contender, Charlie"

The headline writer at the *New York Times* titled its review of *Blue Collar*, "On the Auto Front." Comparison with the 1954 film, *On the Waterfront*, is inevitable and in fact quite proper.

On the Waterfront is the classic American anti-union film. Where else but America could a government informer, Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando), be the hero? Directed by Elia Kazan, himself a despicable government fink against Communist "infiltration" into the entertainment industry, *Waterfront*—unlike *Blue Collar*—is a great American film. The difference lies not entirely with the respective talents of the directors but also with the times.

The mechanical fatalism and anti-political claptrap of *Blue Collar* has led some to brand Schrader "a propagandist without a cause." In fact he has a cause, the same one that Kazan crusaded for 24 years ago—liberal anti-unionism. But the myths of liberalism have since found some new gods and devils. The political differences between *Waterfront* and *Blue Collar* are the differences between Cold War liberalism and post-Watergate liberal cynicism.

Unlike Jerry of *Blue Collar*, Terry Malloy, the waterfront "bum," is a conscious hero who can choose "right or wrong." But the only scene in which the heroes of *Blue Collar* even pretend that

appreciation of the contradictory character of trade unions—that in spite of everything they are the only instruments of collective struggle available to workers. Kazan the Cold War liberal had to recognize the fact of the importance of the union if he was to help win the ranks of labor to the idea of government intervention. The union was part of the lives of the dockers and they "dummied up" when the G-man came around. Marxists and any good unionists would understand the sentiments of the young boys who kill Marlon Brando's pigeons on the roof after he testifies before the state's crime commission.

Unlike Schrader, Kazan understood there was class struggle because he and the rest of the Cold War liberals were facing it as they built their case. The very year that *Waterfront* was released, 24,000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) struck the East Coast ports against the government/Meany attempt to bust their union and replace it with an AFL affiliate. There is little question that Joe Ryan who was the mobster head of the ILA was the real life model for the murdering gangster-union top of *Waterfront*, Johnny Friendly, played masterfully by Lee J. Cobb.

But unlike in the film the ILA ranks were not buying the idea that the government was going to simply "clean up" the union and throw the gangsters out. They knew that their union was at stake. And when the government used the secondary boycott provisions of Taft-Hartley, the ILA responded with strikes and work-stoppages throughout 1953 and 1954. Eventually, through defiance of the government and its ruse of "cleaning up crime" the ILA retained its position on the waterfront (see Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step*).

The dramatic tension that existed on film existed also in reality. Thus Terry Malloy's decision has to be presented as a way forward for the whole union, not just an individual solution. In *Waterfront* it is necessary for Malloy to win the ranks to his decision in order for Kazan's anti-union message to have power. At the end of the film Malloy stands on the bridge hook in hand, bloody but victorious over the mobster union leader and he leads the ranks into the hold.

In *Blue Collar* there is no victory, even in government informing. In Schrader's film their is neither faith in liberalism nor an understanding of workers' collective struggle. The heroes of *Blue Collar* do not have to win the ranks to any particular view because Schrader does not admit of any possibility of collective struggle.

Schrader's liberalism of the 1970's is not so confident in the "morality" of the government as was Kazan's liberalism of the 1950's. And *Blue Collar* is everywhere punctuated with this post-Watergate liberal cynicism. All institutions—the union, the government, the company—are corrupt. There is a conspiracy afoot by all the big institutions against all the little individuals. The class struggle has given way to race war and all because of a plot to undermine the wholesome instincts of people. The complex sources of the racism deeply rooted in capitalist social relations are treated as if Rosemary Woods had erased the tapes of racial harmony.

Waterfront was part of the propaganda machinery which helped to create the liberal myth of the need to bring in the "neutral" government against the corrupt union. Liberals had to create that myth against the existing trade-union traditions which were hostile to government interference with the independence of the trade-union movement. The real enforcers of course were right there in the bureaucracy of the trade unions helping their liberal pals in the Democratic Party.

The sad truth is that Terry Malloy was successful with the help of Reuther, Meany and the rest. The union-busting

strategy developed in the 1950's as a weapon of the capitalist state (and in consequence also as a cinematic tradition) has been widely accepted. Government informing, suing the unions, calling in the Labor Department has become a standard response of the Millers and Sadlowskis and all the reformist leftists who tail after them. In this sense *Blue Collar* grasps a reactionary aspect of current political reality and presents it as an eternal bind.

Consider Schrader's cynical individualism applied to the striking miners who have also been known to wear blue collars, but who have not been so carefully taught that their union is worthless, that picket lines are meaningless and that the government represents their only chance for survival. Paul Schrader simply does not understand the working class as a historically developing force. The Detroit working class is not the sum of individual aspirations. It is a powerful social force whose members will change in the crucible of social struggle. Workers who today may identify with the despair of a Zeke or Smokey and cheer for Schrader's movie may tomorrow be part of a revolutionary struggle for state power. ■



Universal City Studios, Inc.

Blue Collar heroes: from left, Jerry (Harvey Keitel), Zeke (Richard Pryor) and Smokey (Yaphet Kotto).

because it undermines the proletarian need for collective struggle, Schrader sees it the other way around.

Love the Workers, Hate the Union

The *Workers' Power* review, signed by "Enid Eckstein, UAW Local 51," cannot recognize anything more than the workers' shouts of "right on" in the movie theaters of Detroit. Eckstein sees the film through the eyes of one of its characters—Zeke—who is obsessed with getting his broken locker fixed. Eckstein is obsessed with it too, as she is with the Stroh's beer the characters consume.

But if the I.S. grooves on the sub-political minutiae of working-class life, the main reason *Workers' Power* loves *Blue Collar* is that the film has the I.S.' political program. Thus Eckstein writes that *Blue Collar* "successfully deals with racism, company-union corruption and internal union corruption." Successfully? Of course. Zeke sells out to the bureaucracy. Jerry rats on the union to the government. The I.S. does both, so consequently it finds nothing remarkable about these stark facts. The I.S. reviewer sees Zeke and Jerry as "trying to better themselves and fight for a better world for their families. And isn't that what life is all about?" Is it? While the I.S. presents this program as a

choices exist for them develops into an apology for their miserable actions! Zeke explains that Jerry can go to the government because it is white, but that he, being black, can only join the bureaucracy. Jerry, presented as a "good union man," turns informer only to save his life and that of his family. Like all the other characters in *Blue Collar* he is driven by the sociological furies which in Schrader's view control destiny. Even selling out to the government is not examined as an act that might be seen politically as either a victory (from the standpoint of liberalism) or as a betrayal (from the standpoint of trade unionism). Instead the act is offered as inevitable personal betrayal because there is no decision to be made beyond the one in favor of personal survival.

It is different for Terry Malloy. He chooses to fight. As he says to his brother in the famous scene in the back of the car, "I coulda been somebody, I coulda been a contender, Charlie." But fighting against the mob in *Waterfront* means informing to the government. It is something which Terry Malloy chooses to do against his conditioned reflexes (and of course he couldn't do it at all without the help of the Catholic Church and the love of a "good woman").

Part of the aesthetic superiority of *Waterfront* is due precisely to its partial

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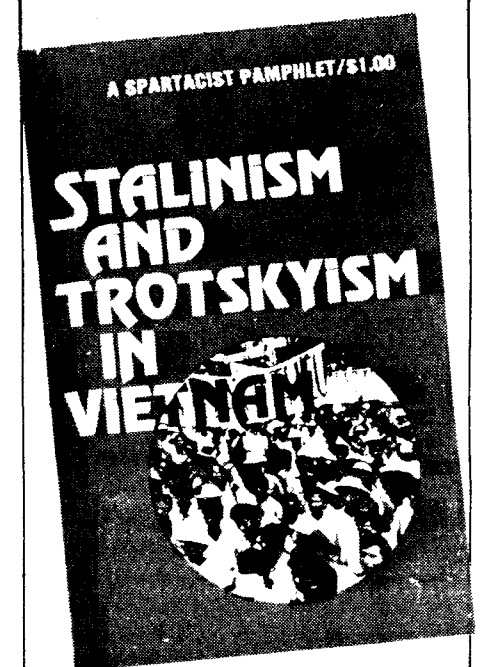
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Reformists Rally Round the Bureaucrats

For Strike Action to Defend the Miners!

The American working class has responded to the coal operator/government attacks on the 160,000 striking members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) with an outpouring of support and solidarity such has not been seen in many years. Stirred by the determination and fighting example provided by the coal miners, workers all over the country are rallying to the miners' cause with financial contributions, donations of food and clothing, caravans into the coalfields and mass meetings in defense of the miners.

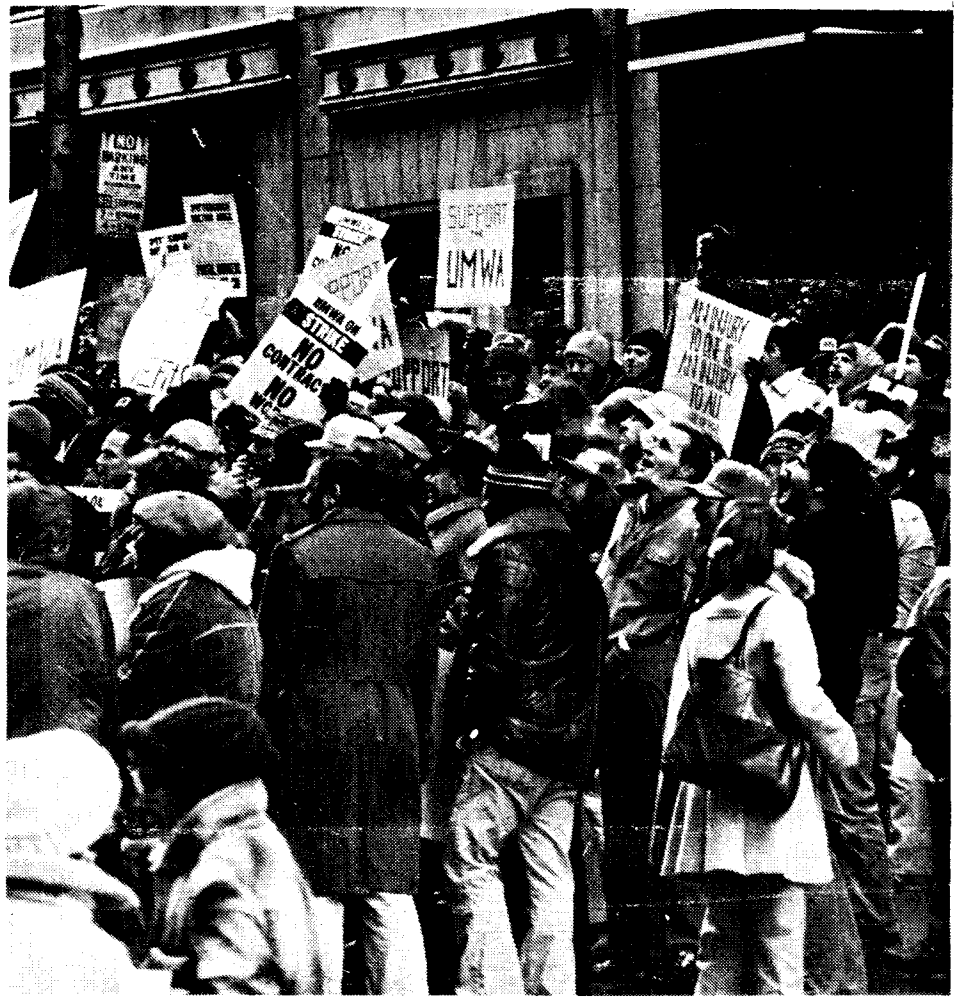
The bulk of the aid to the miners has come from the mass industrial unions, most of which were crucially aided in their early formative years by money and organizers from the UMWA. The Auto Workers, Steelworkers, electrical unions and others have dramatically escalated their assistance to the miners in the wake of Carter's invoking the hated Taft-Hartley strikebreaking law against the more than 100-day miners strike.

In a country where union solidarity is discouraged by legal fiat and bureaucratic suppression, it is clear that the miners strike has gripped American labor. Tens of thousands of workers have dug into their pockets to make contributions. Even labor leaders who are used to breaking strikes and policing the same kind of contracts the mine-workers are resisting have been forced to ante up. The International Executive Board of the United Auto Workers (UAW) voted the miners \$2 million, the Steelworkers gave \$1 million and even George Meany—the AFL-CIO chieftain whose proud boast is that he has "never been on strike and never walked a picket line"—was forced to cough up \$75,000. The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) gave the miners \$25,000 and asked each member to contribute \$1 a month for the duration of the strike. More importantly, the ILWU became the first major national union to call for a one-day strike against imposition of the Taft-Hartley injunction against the miners.

Support for the miners clearly extends beyond the ranks of organized labor. One of the most striking examples was the 150-car caravan of farmers, on "strike" against the price parity policies of the Carter administration, which rolled into Central City, Kentucky on March 6 with tons of food from 14 states. Many farmers, squeezed between low market prices and high interest rates, are just as mad at Jimmy Carter as the miners and decided they'd rather give their food away than sell it at a loss. Seven thousand appreciative miners and their families showed up to greet the farmers' caravan.

These caravans have become an increasingly regular feature of the strike. The largest to go into the coalfields so far arrived in Martinsburg, West Virginia on March 12. Five hundred cars, trucks and vans—stretching over four miles—were packed with 100 tons of food donated and purchased by Baltimore-area unions, led by the large Steelworkers local at U.S. Steel's sprawling Sparrows Point complex. The Baltimore union coalition, which included the Longshoremen, Teachers, Transit Workers, Shipbuilders and UAW, had kicked off the collection a week earlier at a miners support rally that drew nearly 800 participants.

UAW locals have also been active in aiding the miners. Nearly 60 vehicles loaded with food and clothing collected from members of Detroit's Cadillac Local 22 were driven into West Virginia and Kentucky in the first week in March. Local 600 at Ford's giant River



WV Photo

Mine strike support rally in Pittsburgh last month.

more ice with most workers than they did with the defiant miners. In fact, labor support for the miners rose most sharply after Carter invoked Taft-Hartley.

Pressure on the Trade-Union Tops

The intensity of the miners' confrontation with the coal bosses and the federal government has drawn the class line in this country with a sharpness not seen in decades. Capitalist politicians of

is to keep "labor peace" in the plants in submissive cooperation with the capitalists and their state.

The only statements made by the labor skates were almost universally indifferent or overtly hostile to the UMWA cause. George Meany said he "wouldn't criticize" Carter if he invoked Taft-Hartley and called for government seizure of the mines to end the strike, as did Doug Fraser of the UAW. New York City union leaders, facing negotiations with a new city administration intent on imposing more take-away demands on the already chewed-up municipal unions, began openly worrying about "miners fever" among the city workers. Most labor leaders preferred to just keep an aloof silence and pray the miners strike would quickly end.

But as the miners rejected one outrageous "tentative agreement" after another and it became clear that the Carter government would step in to strongarm the miners back to work (or at least try), the bureaucrats came under increasing pressure, from two sides, to do something on behalf of the strikers. On the one hand, there was mounting support for the miners in the union ranks which the bureaucrats feared might get out of hand. On the other side, Carter's use of the Taft-Hartley "back-to-work" injunction (rather than government seizure of the mines, which most bureaucrats preferred) sent a chill throughout the union hierarchy. If Carter could get away with crushing the most militant sector of American organized labor in the most dramatic confrontation between the government and the unions in 30 years, who would be next? Relations between the anti-labor Carter regime and the unions were bad enough already; Taft-Hartley made them worse.

The decision of union leaders to begin raising funds and collecting food and clothing for the miners had another purpose: to direct pro-miner sentiment in the ranks away from more direct and militant action. In 1947, 300,000 auto workers walked out of the plants and rallied in downtown Detroit in opposition to Taft-Hartley and over 200,000 miners struck against its final passage a few months later. Mass protest strikes on that scale today in opposition to Taft-Hartley and in defense of the miners would bring Carter's strike-

continued on page 8



Striking farmers give out food to striking miners in Kentucky.

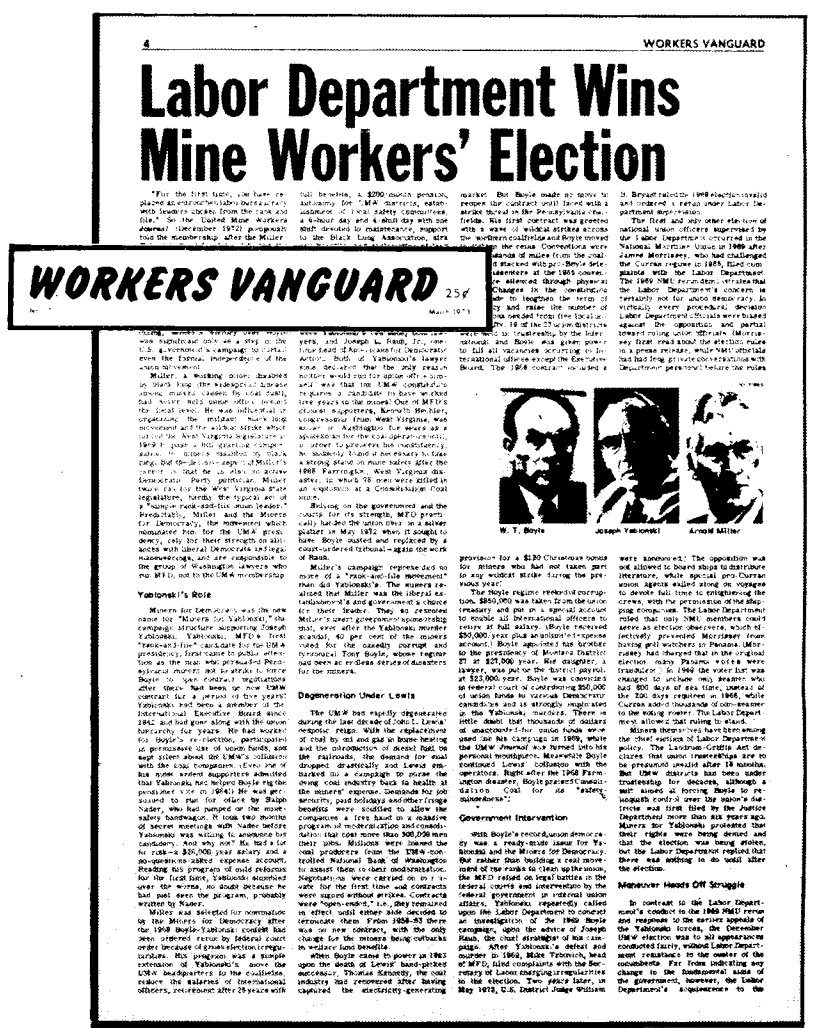
Rouge plant contributed \$10,000 to UMWA District 17 and an additional \$12,000 worth of shoes. Plant gate collections have been held in Detroit at Chrysler's Lynch Road plant, G.M.'s Fisher Body, Dodge Truck and Dodge Main. Chicago UAW locals teamed up with the Meatcutters to send three semi-trailers of food into southern Illinois last week, and Ohio and Pennsylvania UAW locals collected \$15,000 in just one day.

The widespread, almost unprecedented and still-growing support among workers for the embattled miners is a sharp slap in the face to Jimmy Carter. Most U.S. presidents have been able to break strikes with Taft-Hartley injunctions by mobilizing public opinion with flag-waving "national security" arguments. But Carter's Sunday-school style lectures on "respect for the law" cut no

both parties have rallied to the side of big business and strikebreaking while the trade unions have more and more lent their support to the UMWA. But the motives of the trade-union officialdom are quite different from those of rank-and-file union members.

While thousands upon thousands of workers have looked to the miners strike with steadily growing enthusiasm, little more than a month ago most trade-union leaders were doing their best to ignore the heroic struggle of the miners. The last thing these piecards wanted to see was the mine strikers' no-holds-barred militant tactics, their open rebellion against their own union leadership or the miners' repeatedly expressed intention to defy the Democratic Party's strikebreaking plans. All of these acts of "indiscipline" are horrifying to the union tops, whose job it

Who Told the Truth about Miller in 1973?



Reformists hailed the Miller victory in 1972. From the top: social-democratic International Socialists' Workers' Power; Maoist October League's (now Communist Party Marxist-Leninist) Call; Revolution, paper of the Maoist Revolutionary Union (now Revolutionary Communist Party); Communist Party supported Labor Today. Right: Workers Vanguard of the Spartacist League refused to capitulate to Miller's popularity.

Excerpts from Labor Department Wins Mine Workers' Election

WV No. 17, March 1973

"For the first time, you have replaced an entrenched labor bureaucracy with leaders chosen from the rank and file." So the United Mine Workers Journal (December 1972) pompously told the membership after the Miller-Trbovich-Patrick slate defeated the incumbents headed by Tony Boyle in the Labor Department-supervised UMW elections last December.

And indeed, at first glance Arnold Miller of the "Miners for Democracy" (MFD) appears to be the archetype of the "honest rank and filer" courageously taking on and defeating the status quo. But stripped of liberal romanticizing, Miller's victory over Boyle was significant only as a step in the U.S. government's campaign to curtail even the formal independence of the union movement...

The Miners for Democracy is the captive creature of the liberal section of the bourgeoisie and has been subordinated to these interests from the start. MFD was founded, built and run by liberal Democratic Party politicians and lawyers. Instrumental in transforming it into a permanent group were Yablonski's two sons, both lawyers, and Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., one-time head of Americans for Democratic Action. Both of Yablonski's lawyer sons declared that the only reason neither would run for union office himself was that the UMW constitution requires a candidate to have worked five years in the mines!...

Relying on the government and the courts for its strength, MFD practically handed the union over on a silver platter in May 1972 when it sought to have Boyle ousted and replaced by a court-ordered tribunal—again the work of Rauh.

Miller's campaign represented no more of a "rank-and-file movement" than did Yablonski's. The miners realized that Miller was the liberal establishment's and government's choice for their leader. They so resented Miller's overt

government sponsorship that, even after the Yablonski murder scandal, 40 per cent of the miners voted for the nakedly corrupt and tyrannical Tony Boyle, whose regime had been an endless series of disasters for the miners....

With Boyle's record, union democracy was a ready-made issue for Yablonski and the Miners for Democracy. But rather than building a real movement of the ranks to clean up the union, the MFD relied on legal battles in the federal courts and intervention by the federal government in internal union affairs. Yablonski repeatedly called upon the Labor Department to conduct an investigation of the 1969 Boyle campaign, upon the advice of Joseph Rauh, the chief strategist of his campaign....

Far from indicating any change in the fundamental aims of the government, however, the Labor Department's acquiescence to the MFD's assumption of power was simply another maneuver in the interests of the capitalist class.

The era of labor peace in the coalfields was over. An exposed and discredited Boyle could no longer effectively discipline the work force. Disgusted with the Boyle regime's corruption and collusion with the coal operators, miners had begun to take things into their own hands. Wildcats had spread over contract settlements and health and safety issues....

Given the liberal view of the state as a class-neutral entity, it is certainly logical that liberals should look with favor upon appeals to the government to intervene to democratize the unions. Avowed Marxists, however, should certainly be capable of understanding that the U.S. government is nothing less than the political embodiment of the U.S. bourgeoisie (including the coal operators). The unions, despite their corrupt and reactionary leaderships, represent the workers' first step in overcoming atomization and impotence at the hands of their employers. Going to the Labor Department to "protect" workers' rights is inviting the class enemy into the workers' organizations. The elementary first principle of a revolutionary proletarian policy toward the trade unions is the struggle for the class independence of the workers....

To "overlook" this principle in the pursuit of opportunist appetites is to cut away the very

basis of communist opposition to the reformist bureaucracy! Scum like Boyle must be thrown out by the organized and conscious union ranks, not by the capitalist government and its courts, whose interests lie not in democratizing the unions, but in destroying them....

But the proletariat develops only trade-union consciousness through...spontaneous struggle. The mobilization of workers in economic struggle, around reformist illusions under the control of left-posturing bureaucrats does not set the stage for the building of the revolutionary party, but is an obstacle to it. Without the intervention of conscious communist cadres, the miners' struggles, no matter how militant, will never go beyond the level of simple trade unionism. Support to Miller, in lieu of posing the necessary alternative of building communist-led caucuses based on a full transitional program, condemns the miners to this path....

At bottom, Miller's program is specious because it is the campaign promises of an individual rather than a systematic defense of the workers' basic interests; he has no ties to a disciplined political caucus but only to an election campaign committee of his friends. When a union oppositionist wins leadership on the basis of a powerful, organized movement among the ranks, he cannot so cheaply betray his program or that movement might sweep him out of office again. But Miller has no real program, and he must keep faith only with the Labor Department/liberal Democrat cabal which installed him at the head of the UMW.

This is the real lesson of the UMW elections. For communists, whose fundamental aim in the labor movement is to transform the unions into a tool of the revolutionary will of the proletariat, no reform can increase the power of the working class if it is won by placing the unions under the trusteeship of the capitalist state, thus destroying the first pre-condition for their mobilization in the struggle to smash that state. Those pretended Marxists who offer excuses for this disastrous policy, posing the MFD's ties to the liberal bourgeoisie as merely a negative item on a linear balance sheet, demonstrate their complete abandonment of a revolutionary working-class perspective.

Defend the Miners...

(continued from page 6)

breaking maneuvers to a screeching halt. But they would also threaten to completely disrupt the labor leadership's desire for a cozy relationship with the bosses and the Democratic Party. For that reason, the union tops prefer the "humanitarian" course of raising relief funds to the class-struggle tactic of militant protest strikes.

For Strike Action to Defend the Miners!

The coal strikers, of course, need all the financial aid, clothes, food, etc. they can get. The UMWA has no strike fund and the miners, already hard pressed by last summer's massive ten-week wildcat strike against health benefit cutbacks, have been forced to live off credit and savings. But it was clear early on in this strike that, faced with armed scabs, vicious state troopers and the National Guard, the miners needed more from the labor movement than food and money. Particularly in light of the Taft-Hartley injunction which the courts threaten to



WV Photo

S.F. Central Labor Council leader Jack Crowley "goes on the record" in support of miners strike. Two days later he endorsed Taft-Hartley.

reimpose with fines and jail terms should the miners reject the latest proposed agreement, the labor movement has an obligation to act in defense of the miners and stay the government's hand. If "you can't mine coal with bayonets," you also can't fight gun-toting strikebreakers with cans of tuna fish and hand-me-down sneakers.

From the very beginning of this strike, the Spartacist League said that the coal miners were in the forefront of the class struggle and must not be allowed to stand alone. We urged railroad, transport and steel workers not to handle scab coal as an elementary act of solidarity with the miners, whose strike—and the very existence of their union—was threatened by the nearly 50 percent of U.S. coal production that is non-union. We called for steel workers to shut down the steel industry, not only in defense of the miners, but to win their own demands: tearing up the no-strike "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" and reversing the steel bosses' layoff offensive. As it became clear that the government would directly intervene against the union, we called for protest strikes by the unions to repulse Carter's assault.

These are the steps the labor movement could take that would really back up the coal strikers, who clearly need and welcome them. Though throughout much of their strike the miners have had their hands full just trying to keep scab operators shut down, they have also made efforts to bring out other unionists. Railroad yards have been picketed in West Virginia along with coke plants in Pennsylvania. Several utility power plants using scab coal have also seen miners picket lines thrown up. Miners know they are up against the combined forces of the coal operators, their big business allies and the federal government and have enthusiastically

greeted proposals for strike action from workers in other unions.

On March 7, 270 miners gathered in a Winslow, Indiana high school gymnasium for the daily strike meeting of seven UMWA locals. The strikers, many of whom were among the 194 arrested earlier in the strike for shutting down a scab coal dock near Rockport, have been facing conditions of a virtual civil war in southern Indiana, with marauding armed scabs, state police and National Guardsmen riding shotgun for scab coal convoys. Many wore black armbands in memory of John Hull, the Indiana miner killed on a picket line by a trigger-happy gun thug.

The miners broke into cheers after a Chicago steel worker told them of his and other militants' efforts to get their union to hot-cargo scab coal and to shut down the industry in solidarity with the UMWA strike. Miners took the floor to denounce the Taft-Hartley law and to support the call for a joint coal/steel strike. One striker, referring to the repeated verbal pledges of support of Steelworker officials, declared, "We don't need just resolutions.... We need a sympathy strike by steelworkers!" When Frank Hicks, a member of UAW Local 600 (Ford River Rouge) in Detroit, spoke about the importance of bringing out auto workers to back up the miners' defiance of Taft-Hartley, the miners broke into another round of applause.

A similar response a few days later greeted Chicago steel worker Jay Frank at a meeting of several hundred miners in Logan, West Virginia. Frank, a member of USWA Local 65 at U.S. Steel's Southworks plant, told the miners of the fight against the hide-bound, anti-strike USWA bureaucracy and read from the resolution he has been backing in his local for hot-cargoing scab coal and going out in defense of the miners. Once again, the miners applauded their approval.

Bureaucrats, Fake Lefts Oppose Solidarity Strikes

That most of the labor bureaucracy would oppose these militant policies is understandable enough. But the bureaucrats have found some allies in their efforts to squash attempts to mount solidarity strikes. Both the Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the two largest organizations on the American left, have teamed up with the labor fakers and, as sentiment in the labor movement grew in favor of strike action in defense of the miners, sought to both head it off and provide cover for the bureaucrats who oppose it.

The CP and SWP share a common political appetite: to become mass reformist parties by carving out a niche for themselves in the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy. The Stalinist CP is slavishly loyal to every sneeze and sneer from the Kremlin while the social-democratic SWP seeks respectability in anti-Communist America by increasingly distancing itself from defense of the historic gains of the Russian Revolution. But their common reformist aims make SWP and CP policies in the labor movement strikingly similar. Thus both supported Arnold Miller for UMWA president in 1972. For the next five years they glossed over his betrayals until this Labor Department-backed "reformer" had become the most hated man in the coalfields, and fawning over him seemed no longer productive. Last year both supported Ed Sadlowski, the Arnold Miller of the Steelworkers, in an unsuccessful bid to ride the coattails of a popular dissident bureaucrat into positions of influence.

When the coal strike erupted, both groups saw an opportunity not to help the miners win this crucial struggle but to ingratiate themselves with an ever-broader layer of union bureaucrats. The CP, with deeper roots in the labor movement, struck pay dirt first, with its supporters helping to put together a

Western Pennsylvania Committee to Support the UMWA composed largely of Pittsburgh-area bureaucrats. This coalition held a 600-strong mine strike support demonstration in the steel capital on February 6. But the SWP, executing its "turn" to the labor bureaucracy, was not far behind, engineering blocs of union leaders who sponsored rallies in L.A. (600 people), San Francisco (1,000) and New York (1,400) in late February and early March.

Featured speakers at rallies backed by the Western Pennsylvania Committee have been UMWA District 5 director Lou Antal and Arnold Miller himself. This was about the only time during the strike that the discredited Mine Work-

came last week in San Francisco. The International Executive Board of the ILWU had voted for a one-day coast-wide dock shutdown in opposition to the use of Taft-Hartley against the miners and called on the rest of labor to join it. When this motion—a potentially significant break in the bureaucracy's anti-strike front—was presented to a meeting of Bay Area labor leaders who had earlier hosted a miners strike support rally, the SWP and CP spokesmen present were in the forefront of the most right-wing, conservative and cowardly labor bureaucrats who opposed it! While embarrassed CPers abstained on a motion to implement the one-day strike call, the shameless SWPers loudly argued and voted



Wide World

Striking coal miners picket deliveries of scab coal near Pittsburgh.

ers president dared to show his face in public in the coalfields...except at company-sponsored prayer meetings for an end to the strike! When Miller became too hot to handle, the CP's *Daily World* continued to hail Antal, even though Antal served on the UMWA negotiating committee, has voted "yes" on every sellout pact and denounced the miners who voted down his agreements as "greedy" men who "want everything." The SWP, for its part, built and advertised a March 3 meeting in New York, chaired by SWP unionist Ray Markey, whose featured keynote speaker was to have been William Esselstyn, the UMWA International secretary-treasurer. Esselstyn is Miller's hand-picked boy and was the key spokesman for each of the giveaway agreements that have been turned down by the UMWA ranks.

The SWP and CP blocs with the labor traitors have meant more than simply providing them with platforms and refusing to argue for any action the bureaucrats cannot tolerate. In the last two weeks both groups have demonstrated their loyalty to the bureaucracy by sabotaging every proposal to mobilize the labor movement in strike action against Taft-Hartley.

Surely the most shameful and disgusting performance of the CP and SWP



WV Photo

UMWA vice president Sam Church hailed defeated coal pact at Baltimore support rally as proof of union democracy.

against it. These "yellow socialists" thus took up a position to the right of a major national union!

When miners want to know who is really defending their strike, they should remember that the bureaucracy's lap dogs in the SWP and CP have done their best to head off a mobilization of labor strike action in defense of the coal strike. The CP had the gall to then report the ILWU's strike call (while not mentioning its own despicable role in sabotaging it) in the 15 March *Daily World*, while the SWP's 24 March *Militant* doesn't even mention it.

Another disgusting betrayal had been carried out by the Stalinist and social-democratic reformists just days before at a meeting of USWA Local 65 in Chicago. On February 26, at a Local 65-sponsored public meeting, CP and SWP supporters at Southworks had joined in lusty cheers for a representative of the Brookside Women's Club from Harlan County, Kentucky when she called for shutting down steel in solidarity with the miners. But at a regular business meeting of the local on March 8 when the issue was re-posed for a vote, these two-faced opportunists tucked their tails between their legs and ran.

Following the Winslow, Indiana meeting mentioned earlier, two miners had traveled to the Southworks meeting that night to request solidarity action from Local 65. They backed a proposal by USWA militants that steel workers hot-cargo scab coal and call on District 31 to undertake a work stoppage protesting the Taft-Hartley injunction against the miners strike. But "progressive" Sadlowski-ally and Local president John Chico—whom the SWP and CP supported in the last elections—refused to even allow the miners into the meeting! Moreover, Joe Kransdorf, national secretary of the National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee (NSRFC), which is regularly hailed in the pages of the *Daily World*, voted with Chico to keep the miners out of the meeting, while SWP supporters abstained. With such assistance, Chico then maneuvered to keep the hot-cargoing/strike motion off the floor by adjourning the meeting. The next day,

one of the Indiana miners took his message to a miners strike support rally at the University of Chicago initiated by the Spartacus Youth League:

"We're fighting for our lives; they're trying to run over us. They've killed a couple of our brothers already. We've got gun-toting scabs down there. We're fighting local and state cops too. We're fighting our own leadership as well. "U.S. Steel is over here running scab coal. . . . I would like you to know there is blood on that coal. Don't handle it! Hot-cargo it!

Solidarity with Miners

While Local 65 tops managed to squelch the demand for strike action, the miners' call for militant solidarity was heeded three days later at a meeting of UAW Local 6 at the International Harvester plant in Melrose Park just outside Chicago. A motion defending the miners had been circulated in the plant earlier in the week by Marc Freedman of the Labor Struggle Caucus, an opposition group in the Local. The motion called for a UAW-wide two-day shutdown to oppose the use of Taft-Hartley against the miners, a mass labor rally, hot-cargoing of scab coal by the entire labor movement and car caravans to be dispatched to the coalfields to aid the miners in their efforts to shut off the mining and shipment of scab coal. Forty-six members of Local 6 co-signed the motion.

In one of the largest local meetings in months, 175 workers this time defeated the treachery of the bureaucrats and their "left" allies. The entire executive board opposed the motion. Cornelius Cobb, a well-known spokesman for the National Alliance Against Racial and Political Repression, one of the CP's innumerable front groups, spoke against the motion. So did Norm Roth, former president of Local 6 and current president of *Labor Today*, newspaper of "Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy," which parrots the CP line on union affairs. Roth said he was totally opposed to the content of the motion, but would vote for it as he didn't want to look like he was against the miners! However, one Local 6 member after another took the floor in a 45-minute discussion to stress that the plant gate collections and food caravans were not enough. When the final vote came, the motion was voted up by a three-to-one margin.

The same day, a similar motion calling for a work stoppage of organized labor to back the miners was presented to workers at Dodge Truck's UAW Local 140 in Detroit. Though the Local 140 bureaucrats dragged in every hanger-on and hack they could find to the meeting, the militants who stood for strike action in defense of the miners succeeded in polarizing the meeting around their proposal and demanded a standing division of the house. As supporters and opponents of the motion lined up against opposite walls for the vote, who was left sitting alone in the middle of the room, furiously caucusing, but...three self-proclaimed supporters of the SWP's misnamed newspaper, the *Militant*! Realizing they were the only members still sitting in the middle of the hall, the "militants" finally scurried over to support the motion. These hypocrites later told the sponsors of the motion, which failed by a narrow three-to-two margin, that they really didn't agree with it anyway. Indeed not. As one Dodge Truck worker said to *WV*, "They voted their embarrassment, not their program."

Their "Solidarity" and Ours

In the last week CP and SWP supporters have made clear—particularly by opposing implementation of the ILWU's motion for a one-day work stoppage to fight Taft-Hartley—that their quest for a slot in the labor bureaucracy means actively fighting *against* those militant steps which could spell victory for the miners. Supporting the miners strike means more than "explaining the miners cause," especially when the strikers already have widespread working class support.

Smash the Taft-Hartley Injunction! Victory to the UMWA!

The following motion was passed overwhelmingly at the March 12 meeting of UAW Local 6 (International Harvester, Melrose Park, Illinois). Local 6 members and Chicago-area trade unionists, as well as UAW members throughout the U.S., must fight for its immediate implementation to defend the miners strike.

Whereas, President Carter has invoked the reactionary Taft-Hartley law in an attempt to force striking coal miners back to work and thus break their strike; and Whereas, Carter's action is a statement to all labor that any effective strike in this country will be declared illegal and that the resources of the federal government will be mobilized to smash it; and

Whereas, this action by President Carter is a declaration of war on and is an extreme danger to the entire labor movement; and

Whereas, while the coal miners have from the beginning of the coal strike fought a determined battle to shut down scab mines and to stop the movement of scab coal, the state and federal governments together with the utilities and steel companies are continuing to replenish their stockpiles with scab coal; and

Whereas, United Auto Workers and the rest of the labor movement have the power to crush this government/energy/steel trust assault and throw Carter's union-busting injunction back in his face; and

Whereas, as an elementary act of class solidarity steel, utility and transport workers must hot-cargo all steel shipments for the strike's duration;

Therefore be it resolved, UAW Local 6 calls on the International to declare and implement an immediate two-day strike in protest against Carter's Taft-Hartley injunction; and

Be it further resolved, that UAW Local 6 calls on Region 4 to call a mass meeting of Chicago area labor to (a) declare and implement an immediate two-day shutdown of Chicago area industry to demand, (1) Down with the Taft-Hartley injunction! Hands off the miners' strike! (2) Drop all charges against striking coal miners; (b) organize caravans of pickets from Chicago area labor to join with the coal miners in shutting down all scab coal shipments; (c) call on steel, utility and transport workers to hot-cargo coal shipments for the duration of the strike.

Every miner should know that the Spartacist League has stood alone on the left in fighting for a program of militant solidarity with the coal strike. Certainly the CP and SWP reformists talk a lot about strike support, but what have they done to confront government strike-breaking and the bankruptcy of the UMWA leadership—the two main factors holding back the miners from *winning*? Nothing, because even to touch these burning questions would send their plans for braintrusting and providing a left cover for the labor bureaucracy up in smoke.

When the CP disingenuously reports the ILWU 24-hour strike motion and the SWP recalls the mass 1947 strikes against Taft-Hartley, their words should cause them to choke. For these treacherous backstabbers have done their best to fight those in the labor movement who are trying to implement these critical steps *today*! The SWP and CP may get a few jobs out of their marriage of convenience to the bureaucrats, but they deserve the contempt of every militant coal miner and real defender of the union cause. ■

Vote No!...

(continued from page 1)

District 6, told *WV* that "We have to get back to work. Then we can get together and take action on Miller." Nunley said that another meeting is being planned with representation from 19 UMWA districts expected.

This is the program of defeatism and careerism. The miners who have been on strike for over three months have no need of new leaders simply to police and enforce a contract engineered by the now thoroughly discredited Miller. (Militants will recall that Miller defended his betrayals during his first two years in office with the excuse that he was saddled with Boyle's contract.) This scheme is, no doubt, attractive to ostensible "anti-Miller" bureaucrats like Tom Gaston, Jack Perry and Ken Dawes, who jumped on the union bargaining team at the behest of the Carter government only to capitulate within just a few days to Carter's dictated terms. Having seen Arnold Miller climb into power in the UMWA in 1972 through the intervention of the Labor Department, these district officials hoped that they too could get the nod from the government if they demonstrated their loyalty to its orders.

But the contract boosted by the "dissidents" and passed by the Bargaining Council was massively repudiated by an outraged UMWA membership. Though the most recent agreement was passed by a more narrow margin than the previous one (22 to 17), those who switched their votes did so only as a result of the overwhelming pressure of the ranks. This should deceive no one. District 17 president Jack Perry, for example, told the press that he considered the latest contract offer—which he voted against—"a hundred times better" than the previous one—which he voted for! Such flip-flops are simply the result of the crassest opportunism. They would be downright comical were the issues posed not so serious.

It is logical that bureaucrats of this stripe would now favor a return to work on Miller's atrocious terms and *then* seek to convene a convention to replace the UMWA chief. These off-and-on-again "rebels" have no more stomach for a prolonged fight than does Miller. They just want his job. Such a strategy would be a disaster for UMWA members who will have to live with Miller's handiwork for the next three years.

Vote It Down!

For the last three years, the miners have fought massive wildcats for the right to strike, to get court injunctions off their backs and to win back their full health card benefits. This contract surrenders every one of these demands and would mean that all these battles were in vain. The miners will have to wildcat and strike all over again, under much less favorable circumstances, just to win back lost ground that will be sealed in the new contract. Faced with

the mortal threat to the very existence and bargaining power of their union which is posed by the skyrocketing growth of non-union coal production, they will have a contract that will make it doubly hard to organize non-union miners.

The principal issue before the miners ever since the 1974 contract has been the right to strike. Miller traded this off for a cumbersome five-step grievance procedure that culminated in binding arbitration that almost always favors the coal bosses. With the grievance system/arbitration weapon in their hands, the coal operators stepped up their harassment, violation of union rights and disregard of safety precautions. It was the bosses' arrogance that provoked the numerous walkouts under the 1974 contract, as even some of the big business press has admitted.

The coal operators entered the negotiations last fall determined to crush the miners' militancy and win draconian no-strike measures including fines on wildcatters, firings for strike leaders and penalties for miners who respected picket lines, the most sacred tradition in the coal fields. They were backed up in their determination by the Carter administration, which is pushing a coal-oriented energy policy and is vitally interested in "labor peace" in the mines.

After rebelling against one no-strike agreement after another and staying out for over 100 days, the coal miners have forced the operators and government to back off on their demands for explicit no-strike language in the contract. Squeezed between the miners' intransigence and their need to replenish their rapidly dwindling stockpiles, big businessmen began yelping for a "softer" approach to the miners. The 20 March issue of *Business Week*, a major journal of business opinion, wrote:

"The biggest sticking point in the negotiations has been the effort by management to use this year's contract to push through productivity incentives and penalties that would stop wildcat strikes. At this point they should refrain from insisting on dramatic changes in the new contract and agree instead to an easier-to-achieve settlement along the lines of the earlier 1974 agreement."

That the proposed agreement does not contain a no-strike clause or enforcement powers is a real setback for the coal operators, won by the miners' determined drive not to sacrifice their most honored traditions. But by failing to win an explicit unlimited right to strike, written into the contract, the miners are left open to renewed attacks

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by the companies, courts and arbitrators.

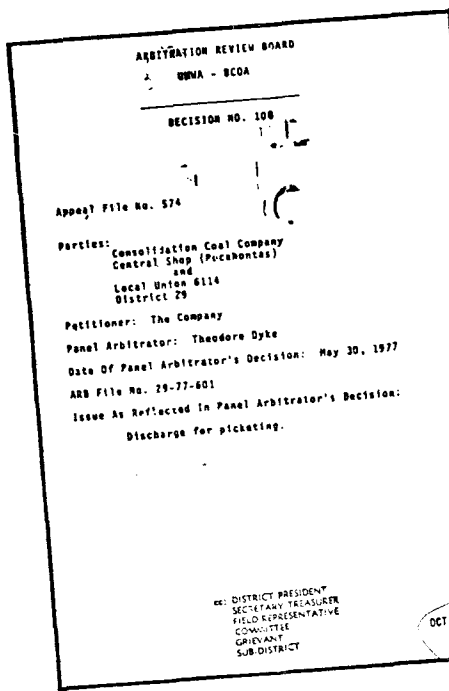
The weapon the coal bosses will now try to wield against the miners is Arbitration Review Board decision No. 108. Handed down last October, shortly before the strike began, ARB 108 ruled that the companies had not only the right to fire their own employees for picketing, but that "roving pickets," one of the miners' most crucial weapons, could be fired. "Picketing" was construed to include even handing out literature at another mine site! This incredible decision deserves to be quoted, since it will now be the major tool the companies will attempt to use to crush the miners' militancy:

"We now turn to the rule which we are declaring with respect to picketing. To begin with, we lump picketing with strike instigation and other strike-leadership manifestations as being of the same gravity. They constitute a capital offense—by which we mean an offense which itself warrants discharge and which Management therefore need not treat as an offense calling for the application of progressive discipline.

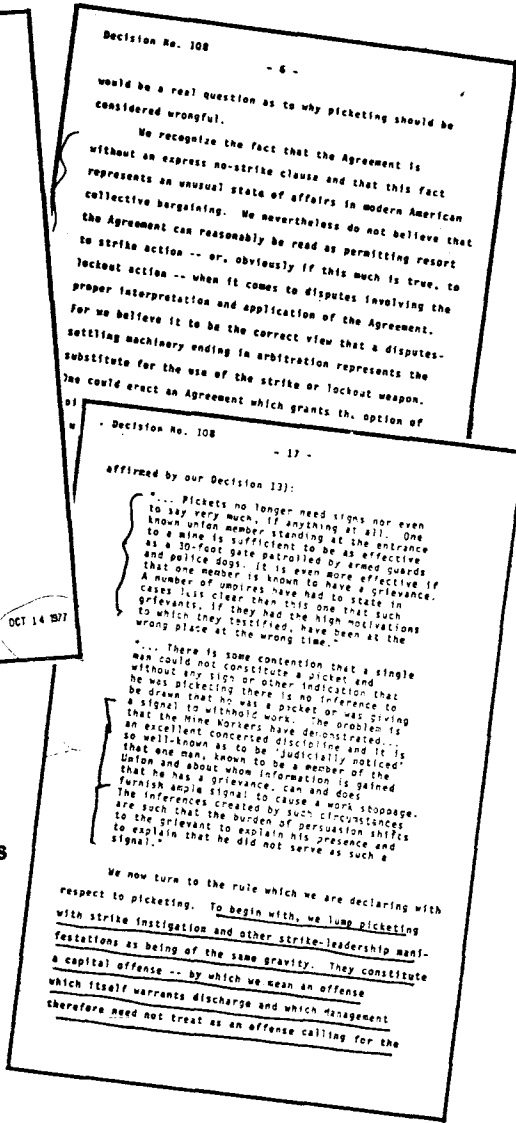
"Next, we do not believe that a distinction can be properly drawn between the picketing of an employee's own mine and the picketing of other mines, be they mines of the employee's Employer or mines of another Employer.

"The choice is the Miners'. They cannot legitimately argue that their survival is dependent on adherence to their picketing and striking tradition. For the shedding of that tradition merely means acceptance of the grievance procedure as the proper disputes-settling forum—which, in turn, amounts to no more than the honoring of the Agreement. There cannot be both pride in the tradition and respect for the Agreement."

The last sentence is certainly true! The miners' powerful traditions are incompatible with the UMWA bureaucracy's sellout contracts and binding arbitration. With ARB 108 continuing in effect, the bosses will attempt to destroy



ARB 108: arbitration decision holds that UMWA contract has implied no-strike clause, allows firing of picketers or even leafletters.



that tradition by picking off miners on the picket lines and firing them until the proud militancy and strength of the UMWA is broken.

Informed sources close to the negotiations told *WV* this week that an initial memorandum of understanding, attached to the contract and endorsing ARB 108, was withdrawn at the last minute. Union and BCOA bargainers alike agreed that its inclusion would be like waving a red flag at the miners and was essentially superfluous, as ARB 108 will continue in full force anyway, without its inclusion in the contract. Without an explicit right to strike in the contract, the miners will still be open to attack from this sweeping decision.

The other major issues of the strike centered on restoration of the miners' health cards and equalization of pensions. On both scores, the current contract doesn't come close to satisfying the miners' demands and needs. The additional health and pension payments the BCOA will make are paltry—they raise the wage and benefit package to a 38.8 percent increase over the 1974

contract, as compared to the 37 percent in the recently rejected proposal.

For the first time since the 1940's, when the miners won their health and pension funds, miners will be forced to pay up to \$200 a year in medical deductibles. The conversion to company-by-company insurance schemes ends the last shred of union control over the health funds. The UMWA historically fought for the right to control these funds, precisely so that the miners would not be subject to the whims of the blackmailing companies. Any time the company says the contract is violated, as in a wildcat or after the contract has expired, the coal barons will seek to cut off benefits. The miners' health clinics, which provided important services not available on a fee-for-service basis, will be doomed.

There will be no pension equalization under this contract. Pensioners who retired before 1975 will get their miserly \$25 increase now, instead of over a three-year period. Yet the older pensioners will still starve.

The UMWA negotiators also gave back what they had earlier rejected under the pressure of the membership: the companies' right to institute incentive speed-up schemes. These will be allowed at the discretion of the companies and the vote of individual local unions, another step towards breaking the solidarity of the miners which is their principal strength. Incentive/productivity drives will produce only more death and injury in what is already the nation's most deadly industry.

The miners' safety is thrown into the hands of pro-company arbitrators. Mine safety committeemen can be arbitrarily removed from their elected positions by the companies, and their fate is left to the notorious arbitrators. Individual miners who refuse to work in unsafe conditions can also be disciplined should the pro-company arbitrators find that they did not exercise "good judgement" in saving their own lives.

These terms are an insult to miners who have fought unstintingly to win their strike and push through to a real victory. And there is no reason for miners to accept now what they have rejected before! Time and time again the enemy camp has been on the verge of collapse. Two weeks ago, when the miners overwhelmingly rejected the last proposal, the *Wall Street Journal*, the leading journal of American finance capitalism, wrote an editorial in which it

stated bluntly, "If we were a coal miner, we'd have voted against the proposed contract, too." Though the *Journal* retracted its editorial a few days later in an embarrassed statement, "Eating Crow," the point was clear enough. The big capitalists were hurting and scared.

Carter jumped into the dispute and also proved unable to make his threats stick. The federal judge who initially issued the back-to-work injunction under Taft-Hartley later refused to extend it, admitting: "The miners are not paying any attention to what I am doing anyway."

The miners' enormous strength has also shaken the coal operators. Hard-liners like Joe Brennan and U.S. Steel's J. Bruce Johnson were removed from the BCOA negotiating team as the major coal firms grew nervous at the miners' rising anger.

Victory is within the miners' grasp. What they need now is to stick to their guns and to replace their sellout leaders with an elected strike committee committed to winning the strike. And the rest of the labor movement can play a crucial role in making sure that the miners are not isolated and beaten down by renewed government threats or corporate resistance. Solidarity strikes now would both freeze the government's strikebreaking ploys and unify the labor movement behind the miners.

Such a decisive break with Jimmy ("Taft-Hartley") Carter's Democratic Party would also be an important step towards the formation of a workers party to fight the capitalist parties politically. This is the next great task on labor's agenda. And there has been no better occasion than the current miners strike. The Democrats stand exposed as a party of strikebreakers. For a Workers Party! For Solidarity Strikes with the Miners! Victory to the Miners Strike! ■

Australian Labour Council Vows to Aid U.S. Coal Strike

SYDNEY—On 16 March the Newcastle, New South Wales Trades and Labour Council approved the following statement of solidarity with striking coal miners in America:

"The U.S. coal miners are currently in the forefront of American labour in their battle to safeguard their union rights and working conditions against the onslaught of the coal bosses and the Carter government. A victory by the miners in their strike is in the interest of the labour movement internationally and all attempts at strikebreaking by U.S. employers and the Carter government must be resisted. We pledge our full support and we condemn the U.S. government union bashing through its use of the Taft-Hartley Act."

The motion was referred for action to the Waterfront Group of Unions in Newcastle, which is a major port for shipment of Australian coal. On 21 March the WGU also passed this motion and sent a cable in solidarity with U.S. miners. Bob Rose, secretary of the Waterfront Group, stated that they are not going to ship coal to the U.S. as an expression of solidarity with the coal strike.

The Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand held demonstrations in support of the American miners strike in front of U.S. consulates in Sydney and Melbourne on 14 and 15 March respectively. At these demonstrations and in its press the SL/ANZ called for a black ban [hot-cargoing] on all coal to the U.S. for the duration of the strike, a demand for which it alone on the Australian left has consistently fought.

Fremont UAW Calls for Sympathy Strike

At an executive board meeting of United Auto Workers Local 1364 (Fremont, California GM) on March 15 the Committee for a Militant UAW put forward the following motion of solidarity with the coal miners strike:

"Motion: That UAW Local 1364 immediately prepare for a sympathy strike of no less than 24 hours in support of striking mine workers who have been rejecting unacceptable settlements and defying Taft-Hartley and all forms of government strikebreaking. And that Local 1364 initiate a mass labor rally the day of the strike and call on all other unions and central labor councils in the area to join us in the strike and rally. And that Local 1364 immediately contact and coordinate activities with RWL Local 13 (Los Angeles), Local 19 (Seattle), Local 10 (Bay Area), and HEU Local 1555 who have already passed similar motions."

Rather than setting a specific date, however, this motion was watered down before being passed by the executive board, by saying that Local 1364 would "get in touch with other unions and the miners on a date and time for a possible sympathy strike."

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Zionists...

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lot with the so-called "Muslim-leftist" warlords. And they are all refugees from the creation of the Zionist state of Israel.

Israeli ground troops have been careful so far not to venture above the so-called "red line" demarcated where the Litani River flows into the Mediterranean 15 miles north of the Israeli border. The red line is the product of the Lebanese civil war and its suppression by the Syrian-dominated 30,000 man Arab "peacekeeping" force. This virtual Syrian occupation army didn't venture below the Litani for fear of confrontation with Israel. As a consequence the Lebanese communal war has continued below the Litani. Israel, through its "open fences," provides military and logistical support to the Maronite Christian militias. Last fall Israeli troops even crossed into Lebanon to fight beside the Maronites' militias but withdrew under U.S. pressure. Israel would like to use these militias as its border guards but even with Zionist military aid they have up to now proven unable to fulfill this function.

Reprisals and Genocide

Begin's defense minister Ezer Weizman rushed back from Washington, where he was begging for more arms for the Israeli arsenal, to take charge of the Lebanese invasion. He called the campaign "not a reprisal operation in the usual sense"—that is, the usual sense of last November's reprisals where 300 Arabs were killed in revenge for three Israelis. These reprisals in fact are seldom aimed at the Palestinians themselves so much as at the governments that give sanctuary to Palestinian refugees. They in turn were supposed to "discipline" and police the Palestinians.

This Israeli strategy proved successful in Jordan, where a series of reprisals in 1968-69 led to the Jordanian civil war and the tragic "Black September" of 1970 in which King Hussein was able to militarily crush the Palestinian resistance. However, this strategy has not worked in Lebanon because its army was too weak or more recently non-existent. Therefore the present campaign is, in Weizman's words, designed to "uproot the terrorist concentrations in southern Lebanon once and for all." But as Arab civilians are indistinguishable from "Arab terrorists" the campaign which has already created 100,000 refugees and countless casualties seeks

Only Paper...

(continued from page 5)

get a visiting trade unionist arrested for selling *WV*. The absurd claim was that since the articles mentioned the miners union by name, the *WV* salesman was "using the name of the UMWA" to solicit funds! The miners on the spot came to his defense and the cops finally had to let him go. Despite the bureaucrats' shameful harassment, 24 subscriptions to *WV* were sold in Nanty Glo that day.

The reporting/sales teams who are touring the coal mining areas to cover the story of this crucial class confrontation are leaving behind them hundreds of readers of *Workers Vanguard*. In less than two weeks of intensive touring, the field teams have sold nearly 200 *WV* subscriptions in the mining communities. In addition more than 30 bundles of 3 to 50 copies are being mailed to miners in five states who have asked to circulate *WV*'s coal strike coverage among their union brothers and friends. At union meetings and strike-support rallies from Illinois to West Virginia, in door-to-door sales in the coal mining regions, *WV* has found a receptive audience among miners who recognize the value of a crusading newspaper which tells the truth from the standpoint of the workers and presents a program to take the class struggle forward to victory. ■

24 MARCH 1978

to uproot an entire Arab population.

Egypt's foreign minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamel did not exaggerate when he stated, "The Israeli invasion aims at the complete annihilation of the Palestinian people." The government-controlled Egyptian press also chimed in, denouncing Begin as a "new Hitler." But today's "new Hitler" was yesterday's "good friend" of Egyptian president Anwar el-Sadat's "peace initiative." Ironically, Sadat's pilgrimage to Jerusalem where he fawned over all the leaders of Zionism, including the butcher Begin, took place in the aftermath of Israel's last brutal anti-Palestinian "retaliation," the November air strike against Lebanon.

"Steadfastness Front?"

Meanwhile, those Arab states which joined with the PLO to oppose Sadat's "peace initiative"—Syria, Algeria, South Yemen and Libya—and which formed the so-called "steadfastness front" has up to now remained "steadfast" in doing nothing to materially aid the PLO in the face of the Zionist genocidal aggression against the Palestinian people. Syria, which was crowned the "main confrontation state" since it is the only member of the "steadfastness front" which borders Israel, has kept its troops north of the Litani River and away from contact with Israeli ground forces. The Syrian forces, the butchers of Tel al Zaatar, are as much the policemen of the Palestinian commandos in the north as the Christian Maronite militias are in the south!

Syrian president Hafez al-Assad, ever willing to fight bombs with bombast, declared Saturday, "Syria will remain the big power forming a spearhead in the resistance to every invasion and aggression against the Arab nation." He then proceeded to offer the rights of passage over Syrian land or airspace for any Arab who wanted to go to the aid of the Palestinians in Lebanon. Abstractly, such an appeal has meaning only for Iraq, but in reality such an offer is utter nonsense as Iraq and Syria are in a state of war with one another, and each has troops tied down guarding its respective borders from the other.

Beneath the bombast Syria's real line is to appeal, along with its puppet government in Beirut, to the real "big powers" on the United Nations Security Council to "assume their responsibilities" and force Israel to withdraw to be replaced with UN "peacekeeping" forces. Such forces have ringed Israel for 28 years and have permitted four full-scale wars and countless border incursions. In fact, there are already UN "peacekeeping forces" in southern Lebanon! This is probably the solution preferred by both the United States and the Soviet Union. However, Israel is not about to withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon unless under substantial U.S. pressure and not until it finishes "uprooting" Palestinians and the Lebanese that it does not consider friendly.

For now Syria and Israel are staying on their respective sides of the "red line." Nonetheless the Zionist invasion of Lebanon and the placing of 25,000 Israeli troops directly on the other side of the Litani tremendously destabilize what is already a volatile situation. The Israeli invasion already has the magnitude of a fifth Near East war. It could rapidly escalate into a major confrontation between Israel and Syria—again threatening to drag in their respective patrons, the United States and the Soviet Union—thereby sparking a global confrontation and perhaps nuclear holocaust.

Consistent Nationalism Is Genocide

Fatah and the PLO hailed the March 12 terrorist raid as a "big success." Even a spokesman for the reactionary Kuwaiti sheikdom stated that it was "natural that the Palestinian revolution should

carry out actions to prove its presence and effectiveness." And the Saudi Arabian state radio labeled the operation a "courageous action."

The Fatah raid was timed to occur on the eve of Begin's trip to Washington. Clearly, the PLO wanted to disrupt the present round of negotiations sparked by the Sadat "initiative" and U.S. pressure on Israel to make some token concessions to Egypt while leaving out the PLO. This was Fatah's answer to U.S. national security strongman Brzezinski's remark, "Bye, bye PLO." In forcing Begin to postpone his trip to Washington for one week Fatah has won a pyrrhic diplomatic victory indeed.

Yasir Arafat also sought to call world attention to the existence of the Palestinian question and to reclaim for the PLO the designation of "sole representative" of the Palestinian people. The suicide raid was most certainly a desperate act by self-sacrificing elements of an oppressed people abandoned on all sides by their self-proclaimed allies and with no other prospects but another 30 years of poverty and the squalor of refugee camps in hostile countries. But the raid was an act of indiscriminate terrorism in which the guerrillas simply killed at random-whomever they came across, from the first person they encountered on the beach where they landed, a 19-year-old girl, to the young children captured in a hijacked tourist bus.

It is no accident that the Fatah guerrillas were launched from and probably trained at Damur. Damur was considered the most militant of the Palestinian camps, the reason why it has received such brutal punishment from the Israeli air strikes. This town was brutally sacked and its entire population, mainly Christian, massacred by the misnamed "Muslim-left" gang whose bosses happen to be Muslim rather than Maronite religious leaders. They are no more left-wing than different families in the Mafia could be distinguished between left and right. The resettling of the Tel al Zaatar survivors at Damur was at best another macabre episode in the cycle of vengeance and countervengeance that characterized the squalid Lebanese communal war.

Thus it is not surprising that the Palestinian refugee concentration at Damur spawned the desperate indiscriminate terrorism of the recent raid. But it makes that terrorism no less criminal. Indiscriminate terror—whether it is aimed at the Hebrews, Maronites or Palestinians—asserts that a whole people, rather than its ruling class and organized state power, is the enemy. Fatah's rampage on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway asserts that the liberation of Palestinian people requires not just destruction of the Israeli state and ruling class but the annihilation of the Hebrew people, just as Zionism asserts that survival of the Hebrew people requires annihilation of the Palestinians.

The program of Palestinian nationalism—which is the program of all factions of the PLO, from Habash to Arafat—is no different from the program of Zionism carried out to its logical conclusion. The program calls for "national liberation" through genocide. The difference is that the Zionists have the means to implement their program, the Palestinian nationalists do not. But this does not mean that we support the program of the victim, the program of Palestinian nationalism. We consider utterly *indefensible* the Fatah atrocity on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway.

What must be supported are the real struggles of the Palestinian masses against the real enemies of the national liberation of the Palestinian people: in the first instance the Zionist ruling class, its army, police and prisons. Therefore, we unconditionally defend (irrespective of their present political leadership) the

struggle of the Palestinians against the Israeli armed forces in Lebanon and in the occupied territories. We also defend the struggle of the Palestinian refugees against their Arab oppressors, from U.S. client Hussein to the "militant" Assad, who are no more interested in the national liberation of the Palestinian nation than is Israel. While taking a defensist position on the side of the Palestinians under Israeli attack in Lebanon and exposing the hypocrisy of the Arab regimes which have turned their backs on the embattled guerrillas, we point out that if Syria directly enters the fighting the conflict would be transformed into another reactionary nationalist war not different in kind from the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars.

The Hebrew workers must be broken from their Zionist rulers, a task made much more difficult by the tactics of indiscriminate terror practiced by the Palestinian nationalists. Israeli workers must be made to see that the Begins, Allons and "left" Zionists can lead only to more war and destitution. At the same time the Palestinian people must be broken from the PLO, its militants won over to the perspective of the class struggle and internationalism. They must seek their liberation not through the dead-end nationalist policies of genocidal terrorism and reliance on reactionary Arab League regimes or imperialist diplomacy, but in the class unity of the Hebrew and Arab proletariat. An internationalist communist leadership must be forged in the Near East that fights for the realization of the self-determination of both the Palestinian and Hebrew nations in a socialist federation of the Near East. Israel out of Lebanon and all the occupied territories! For Trotskyist parties in the Near East! For the Rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

SL/Britain Founded...

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the inadequacies and betrayals of our opponents; it must deal with the broad theoretical questions of the workers movement internationally; it must show how the class struggle can be intersected by the communist vanguard and the way forward for particular struggles."

Another important task will be to accelerate the polarisation process among the myriad fake-Trotskyists in Britain. The present fusion must point the way forward for subjectively revolutionary militants who, in the absence of a strong Trotskyist pole of attraction, have not yet broken from the opportunism of the decomposing centrist organisations.

Thus a decade after Healy's International Committee proved its decisive inability to combat the Pabloist revisionism which politically destroyed the Fourth International, the British nucleus of authentic Trotskyism has been founded. But whereas then the Spartacist tendency confronted a period of involuntary national isolation, today the British section is born as part of a small but real international Trotskyist tendency. Recognising the need for careful determination of priorities in the context of deepening organisational consolidation, the conference participants saluted the fruitful possibilities for work in Britain in the period ahead. And as the first ripples of the present fusion spread across the cesspool of British fake-Trotskyism, the *ist*'s opponents as well as its supporters demonstrate their recognition of the significance of the principled programmatic struggle of the Trotskyist Faction of the WSL and the subsequent principled fusion which make possible the formation of the Spartacist League/Britain.

Forward to the International Trotskyist League!—For the Rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

Zionists Grab Southern Lebanon

**Criminal PLO Attack
Used as Pretext**

**Butcher Begin:
A Terrorist with
State Power**

MARCH 20—On Saturday, March 12 an eleven-man Palestinian guerrilla squad armed with automatic rifles and hand grenades went on a terrorist rampage along the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway, abducting two busloads of passengers and randomly firing on passing cars. By the time the Palestinian kamikaze attack came to a bloody end in a hail of gunfire from an Israeli ambush 37 Israelis had been killed and another 76 wounded along the way. Fatah, the largest Palestinian guerrilla group and the backbone of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), immediately took credit for this massacre.

The world nervously awaited the Israeli response. Zionist vengeance was swift, murderous and massive. Unlike the poorly armed Palestinian guerrillas it can and does mobilize all of the resources of a state power equipped from the arsenals of U.S. imperialism with the most advanced weaponry in the world. To give but one stark contrast, the PLO guerrillas of course have not one single plane whereas Israel has the third most powerful air force in the world equipped with, for example, F-15 Eagles (which cost \$17 million apiece).

The last Zionist "retaliation" took place in November after rockets launched from southern Lebanon killed three Israelis in the coastal village of Nahariya. Israel responded by launching massive air strikes which leveled whole Lebanese villages, murdering 300 civilians.

The March 12 Palestinian raid was the largest in Israel's history. And its response was this time not limited to the usual mass cruelty of Zionist "justice" which takes 100 eyes for any eye. Israel is today led by that genocidal maniac Menahem Begin, the Zionist terrorist whose murderous atrocities against the Palestinian population in the 1940's brought about their physical dispersal and the creation of the Zionist



Israeli 175-millimeter gun fires into Lebanon from border position.

state over the dismembered body of the Palestinian nation.

Begin's outfit, the Irgun, was an embarrassment even to the blood-stained official Zionist movement. It was disarmed and integrated into the Israeli army, an integration facilitated by the fact that long before the creation of the Israeli state this army (then the Haganah) had adopted the Irgun's methods. In dividing the spoils of state power Begin and his fellow gangsters became the official opposition and re-emerged as the right-wing political party, Herut. Last May's elections elevated into the premiership the man who personifies the most sanguinary, racist and genocidal aspects of Zionism.

Torrential rains and gale force winds that pounded the Levant early last week prevented an immediate Israeli military response. But the respite was filled with

Begin's furious call for Arab blood. Claiming that their crimes were equal to the Nazis, who killed six million Jews, Begin vowed to "cut off the evil arm of the PLO."

Prior to the raid Begin was under increasing pressure from the more "moderate" wing of the Zionist movement for his intransigence in dealing with the U.S. and Sadat's "peace initiative." But now yesterday's "moderates" try to outdistance the butcher of Deir Yassin in murderous fanaticism. One of Begin's harshest critics, Yigal Allon, a former foreign minister and leader of the "Labor" Party, today calls for the "use of active defense in order to break the strength of the PLO." Even the self-proclaimed "left-wing" Zionists in Mapam trumpeted:

"The hand of Israel will reach them wherever they may be and they will be punished."

Israel Invades

On Tuesday rains and winds relented and Israel launched its massive air, naval and ground attack. Gunboats bombarded the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre, and fighter bombers strafed and bombed villages and Palestinian

refugee camps including Sabra on the outskirts of Beirut where 15,000 Palestinians are concentrated. Damur, 15 miles south of Beirut, whose present inhabitants are the survivors of the long Syrian siege of the Palestinian refugee camp Tel al Zaatar, was reduced to rubble.

After the bombing, strafing and artillery attacks had "softened up" the area Israel launched an armored and infantry invasion along the full length of its 65-mile border with Lebanon, securing an area six miles into Lebanon from the Mediterranean coast to Arkoub, where Israel, Syria and Lebanon meet. The Zionists added more than 215 square miles to their "occupied territories." By March 20 Israeli ground forces had advanced beyond the six-mile *cordon sanitaire*, occupying most of southern Lebanon up to the Litani river. Though the campaign is not over yet the Israeli war machine has already claimed thousands of casualties and produced over 100,000 refugees streaming out of southern Lebanon. Many of these latest Palestinian refugees, like those who now flee Damur, are in turn refugees from the 1975-76 Lebanese communal war in which the PLO guerrillas threw in their

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