



Cops restrain angry workers in Tel Aviv at protest rally against government austerity measures last month.

Ya'acov Katz/Nofim



Cairo riots in January sparked by rising food prices.

Claude Salhani/Sygm

Egyptian, Israeli Masses War-Weary

War Danger Behind Cairo Peace Talks

Five days after his theatrical pilgrimage to the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat posed as a "messenger of peace" before his own rather farcical "People's Assembly." In addition to justifying his *hadj* (holy pilgrimage) to the Mecca of Zionism, he invited the participants in the perennial Near East crisis, including the two "superpowers," to attend a conference in Cairo. Formally this meeting is to prepare yet another conference, that ever-elusive Geneva conference which to the advocates of global détente is the miraculous formula for peace in the Near East.

But so elusive is this elixir that it has proved next to impossible simply to bring the protagonists to the appointed site. The original Geneva Conference, convened by the U.S. and USSR following the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, lasted exactly one day before collapsing with the walkout by one of the main combatants, Syria. Sadat's sojourn in Israel, moreover, rendered Geneva even more remote. It increased his isolation among the Arab states and made it clear that one of the main points in common between Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menahem Begin was opposition to Soviet participation in a peace settlement. Thus when the Cairo conference opened on December 14, the participants included only Israel, Egypt, the U.S. and the UN.

All the developments in the diplomatic uproar unleashed by Sadat's Jerusalem visit point toward a separate peace between Israel and Egypt. But far from bringing real peace to the Near East, such an agreement could threaten to escalate the Arab-Israeli conflict into direct military confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. If Egypt

drops out of the Arab military bloc, Syria then becomes the main "confrontationist" state. Facing the militarily far superior Zionist state alone, Syria would have to become utterly dependent upon Russian aid.

In such a polarized situation the U.S. and Soviet Union could become prisoners of their own client states. In a war between Israel and Syria, the Russians, cut off from the possibility of playing a role in a general Near East settlement, might see themselves forced to intervene ever more directly to prevent the defeat of their remaining allies if they are to avoid being frozen out of this strategic region altogether. But Washington will not tolerate direct Soviet intervention against Israel. Much more so than in the Arab-Israel wars of 1967 and 1973, a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace followed by a military showdown between Israel and Syria could become the spark setting off World War III.

Begin's "Secret Peace Plan"

During Sadat's Jerusalem journey, Begin didn't yield an inch from past Israeli bargaining positions, pointedly denying that the Zionist state had conquered any foreign territories. But he had to offer some pretense of bargaining, and last week the awaited Israeli response came with Begin's trip to Washington to unveil yet another



Sadat and Begin: A butchers' "peace."

Sergio Zalis

"secret peace plan." Begin offered to piece off Sadat for his de facto recognition of Israel by returning the remaining portion of the Sinai desert not previously returned to Egypt in the Kissinger-negotiated 1974 and 1975 settlements.

Of course, Begin intends to keep the densely populated Gaza Strip (with its 400,000 Palestinian Arabs) and surrounding territory as a "security buffer," a corridor to protect Israeli access to the Gulf of Aqaba and especially the strategic Sharm el Sheik. His no less expansionist predecessors had already staked out this claim by establishing 20 Zionist settlements in the Sinai. In addition, Begin announced that he would grant "self-government" to West Bank Palestinians while the Israeli government continues its military occupation and its annexationist policies of

Zionist settlements and land expropriations.

In fact, scarcely had Sadat kissed Golda Meir goodbye when Begin approved two more West Bank settlements by the clerical-fascist Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful). Begin claims that under his new plan West Bank Palestinians will also have the right to settle in Israel. Coming from this anti-Arab genocidal terrorist who murdered and dispersed thousands of Palestinians to "liberate" the land of "Eretz Israel," Begin's proposal may be aptly compared to Eichmann's offer to "resettle" the Jews in central Europe. Will Begin also offer Arabs who want to settle in Israel the site of Deir Yassin, where in 1948 his Irgun gangsters murdered 242 Palestinian villagers?

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An Exchange

RMC: State Department Socialism?/6

Ruling-Class Feminist Hustle in Houston

HOUSTON—The "International Women's Year" (IWY) conference held at the Sam Houston Coliseum over the November 17-20 weekend was a total fraud, even by bourgeois political standards. Amid endless hugging and kissing, the 1,981 delegates predictably passed a liberal "National Plan" supporting Medicaid-funded abortions, the Equal Rights Amendment and opposition to discrimination against homosexuals. They were duly televised and photographed by over 1,000 members of the bourgeois press who covered the event with the banal meticulousness applied every four years to presidential nominating circuses.

The resolutions will now be recommended to the same capitalist government which for the last several years has led an unrelenting assault on the democratic rights of women and minorities. Congress, which bought and paid for the conference, has committed itself only to read the resolutions into the *Congressional Record*, which is probably as far as most of them will go. A more accurate indication of the way the winds are blowing on Capitol Hill is the passage of the Hyde Amendment eliminating government-funded abortions for the poor.

This media event was undoubtedly originally conceived as an attempt to co-opt the women's liberation movement. The conference, sponsored by the State Department, was organized by the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year and funded by Public Law 94-167 (authored by Bella Abzug) to the tune of a cool \$5,000,000. However, with the quiescence of the feminist milieu Jimmy Carter has soft-pedaled his pro-forma support to the ERA and the conference lost its reason for being. Appropriately the ho-hum affair was chaired by Abzug, that perennial spokesman for respectable feminist causes, who recently lost her second election bid in a row.

The conference was modeled on the 1975 IWY conference in Mexico City, which provided a platform for such notorious murderers as Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, who massacred thousands of Ceylonese youth in the 1971 uprising; Imelda Marcos, wife of the Philippine dictator known for his butchery of Communist,

peasant and Muslim rebels; Princess Ashraf Pahlevi, twin sister of the infamous torturer, the Shah of Iran; and Silvia Pinto, representing the bloody Chilean junta. It was entirely in keeping with this precedent, then, that the speakers platform was graced by no less than three "first ladies" of U.S. imperialism, Mrs. Carter, Ford and Johnson.

Don't Have to Be a Radical to Be a Feminist

Nationwide live TV coverage and fancy spreads in the glossy news weeklies struck a note of solemn historic occasion, heralding the conference as the most important women's gathering since the founding of the feminist movement at Seneca Falls in 1848 and as "an end to the psychological isolation" of the women's liberation movement. But no public relations hype could mask the emptiness of the conference. *Time* magazine prominently featured the discovery of one participant: "I didn't have to be a radical to be a feminist." No indeed.

Neither the much-threatened right-wing disruption nor the much-heralded "grass-roots alternative" really materialized outside the coliseum. The more than 10,000 "observers" retreated to an opulent film festival and a program of cultural events, "Briefings from the Top" lectures by successful women bureaucrats, and "skills clinics" conducted by "sisters" who have really made it. Exhibit booths ranged from the Girl Scouts to the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee.

Inside the coliseum delegates engaged in an orgy of imitation of a Democratic Party convention, with signs to denote each state delegation. They draped themselves with stickers, ribbons, buttons, placards, confetti, scarves, babushkas, T-shirts, balloons, apples (the New York delegation) and brassieres (the last waved to a chant of "We didn't burn them"—i.e., feminism has become officially respectable and can shed the old radical stereotypes).

Delegates and alternates included many local, state and federal government officials who exerted a dominating ideological influence over respectable "feminist homemakers," upward-bound professionals and old-time women's liberationists. Together they formed a common-denominator liberal coalition which heavily out-voted the conference's minority of right-wing, "pro-family" forces. The assembled bureaucrats and legislators—aspiring governors and cabinet members one and all—voted for custodial rights for lesbian mothers, establishment of low-cost federally funded child care and opposition to Carter's vicious welfare reform, secure in the knowledge that they were tending their personal constituency at no political cost (or obligation) to the government.

The tightly sewn liberal voting bloc was aided from the podium by a hammer-handed Presiding Committee which rigidly controlled the speakers, the rigged agenda, the press, the band and the floor microphones. This was no idle precaution. Consider the embarrassing effect of a speech on the contrast between Chairman Abzug's support for the conference resolution calling for the



WV Photo
Presidential wives on the podium at Houston conference. From left, Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford, Lady Bird Johnson and Lynda Johnson Robb.



Northup/Time
Susan B. Anthony (left), Bella Abzug and Betty Friedan lead runners.

restoration of Medicaid funds for abortions and her vote in Congress (where it counted) for the Hyde Amendment which took them away! Needless to say this revealing contrast was, politely, never made.

Right Wing Mobilizes

One of the most dramatic confirmations of the bankruptcy of radical feminists' "sisters unite" program was the presence of a sizable minority—roughly 20 percent—of right-wing forces at the convention. Many delegations from the Deep South and western states—including Oklahoma, Utah, Alabama and Mississippi—were composed overwhelmingly of reactionaries. Phyllis Schlafly of Illinois, who spearheads "Stop ERA" forces and had predicted that the turnout by her supporters would "end the women's movement," explained the failure of conservatives to dominate the Illinois state IWY delegation: "Our women didn't want to leave their families for an entire weekend and spend it with a group of lesbians" (*Detroit News*, 1 September).

However, elsewhere reactionary forces did mobilize. At the Utah state conference supporters of the Mormon Church sponsored a resolution calling for repeal of women's suffrage! And the Ku Klux Klan organized heavily for the Houston conference with the complacent tolerance of its liberal sponsors. When one delegate challenged the seating of the all-white Mississippi delegation—including known fascists—she was ruthlessly ruled out of order. And there was little protest over the fact that a known fascist—Dallas Wood Higgins, wife of the Mississippi Grand Dragon of the KKK—was a duly seated delegate.

The right-wingers mainly confined their disruption to delaying maneuvers on the floor of the conference and a large outside counter-rally for "decen-

cy" and "God, Home and America," held across town in the Astrodome. Liberal "hip" journalists like Judith Coburn of the *Village Voice* glibly put down the 15,000-strong fundamentalist moralists and proto-fascists, instead enthusing over a few glamorous media figures like Gloria Steinem and Democratic Party pols like New York City Council president-elect Carol Bellamy. But while the liberals flamboyantly embraced following the passage of every plank of their entirely irrelevant "National Plan," the reactionaries at least singled out (and defended) key institutions that oppress women under capitalism: religion, the family and the "free enterprise system."

As was to be expected the reactionaries eventually resorted to terrorist provocations. At a Saturday afternoon rally held by "Feminists United," Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF), the New American Movement and the International Socialists, frustrated fascists slipped the leash and launched viciously into the demonstrators. About a dozen thugs from the Christian Defense League precipitated the attack, one of them flaunting a badge allegedly from the police. The notoriously Klan-ridden Houston cops, numerous in the area, showed up only after the demonstrators themselves had managed to surround and drive off these hooligans.

Decade of Feminism Leads to Houston

Strikingly absent from the Houston follies was any visible, active, radical movement for women's liberation. The heady days of radical feminism, a by-product of the 1960's New Left, are long gone and the movement splintered and dissipated. In its wake there is *Ms.* magazine—a sort of *Redbook* with a women's lib patina, featuring articles on how to redecorate your apartment and

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EDITOR: Jan Norden

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Karen Allen

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mike Beech

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jon Brule, Charles Burroughs, George Foster, Liz Gordon, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Michael Weinstein

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SL Protests TV Forum for Fascists

"Genocide Is Not Debatable!"

With picket signs reading "Genocide is Not Debatable—No Platform for Fascists!" and chants of "TV 13 Publicizes, KKK Organizes—Stop the Klan Now!" about 30 people demonstrated December 14 in front of New York's Channel 13/WNET television studios protesting the station's planned broadcast of the program "The Extremists: American Nazis and the KKK." Initiated on short notice by the Spartacist League (SL) the demonstration denounced the decision of the "public service" broadcaster to provide a platform for fascist action organizations whose only use for publicity is to recruit more killers to their ranks.

The demonstrators stressed that the issue was not free speech but fascist terrorism. One chant went, "No TV Time for Klan Provocations, Debate Won't Stop Fascist Organizations." They also rejected the treacherous policy of appealing to the bourgeois state to suppress fascists, demanding, "Smash the Nazis, Smash the Klan—Only Workers Defense Guards Can!" The SL initiated a protest mailgram sent to the station signed by a number of labor and left organizations and concerned individuals, including the Partisan Defense Committee, the Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the NMU, the Militant Solidarity Caucus of UAW Local 906, filmmaker Barbara Kopple, professor James Petras and lawyers Gerald Lefcourt and Conrad Lynn.

The Channel 13 program which provided a "respectable" platform from which the mod "Grand Wizard" of the Louisiana Klans, David Duke, and the two-bit "Führer" of the American Nazi Party, Frank Collins, could spew forth their race-hate provocations, had come under heavy fire from the moment plans were announced to show it in New York. The small SL demonstration was an expression of widely felt outrage which produced a flood of literally thousands of protest phone calls from enraged viewers. But the station management proclaimed it would not be "pushed around" by special interest groups of the oppressed, instead providing air time to the fascists' recruiting drive under the guise of "free speech."

Controversy around the show actually began last September when the Philadelphia/Wilmington public television station WHYY (on an episode of the serial "Black Perspective on the News") decided it would be "educational" to pit the fascists in debate against two liberal black professionals, Harvard historian Lawrence Reddick and "human relations expert" Charles King, head of the Atlanta Urban Crisis Center. The result was a disaster, with even the liberal *New York Times* (11 December) concluding:

"...Messrs. Duke and Collins were afforded a relatively unobstructed path for their views on the savage nature of blacks and the manipulative power of Jews. *Variety* described the result as 'appalling' and commented, 'The sum effect is a propaganda coup for anti-Semitic bigots and white racists.'"

While program moderator Reginald Bryant was cooing about the golden opportunity the show afforded killers and victims alike to "sit together and talk about things," the fascists used the air waves to broadcast their message of racist terror. Collins, outfitted in full Nazi regalia, called Hitler "the greatest white man of all times," and added:

"The swastika represents the highest truth that our civilization has known. Hitler was right. Hitler said the white



WV Photo



WV Photo

race was the master race. I think that is the truth of our times.... America will either be an all-white America or a dead America."

The response of the interviewers was pathetic. One asked whether Duke had "any sensitivity at all"; the other in response to Collins' call to send the entire U.S. black population to Africa, "I'm concerned as a human being about the venom, the vitriol and the hostility you seem to feel!"

The Philadelphia/Wilmington showing sparked heavy protest, particularly from a number of Jewish groups. Although the program was distributed nationally over the Public Broadcasting Service television network, only 105 of the 270 PBS affiliates aired it with most major northern cities refusing to run the show. So did Channel 13 in New York originally, on the grounds that it was "journalistically unbalanced." But when the American Jewish Congress took credit for keeping the show off the air,



Harris/Liaison

Klan chief Duke with his wife.

WNET decided to run a revised version incorporating much of the original footage and tacking on a half-hour commentary at the end.

This supposedly watered-down version proved, if anything, more provocative than the first. A Houston documentary about the Klan showed a fascist displaying a suitcase full of "Niggers Beware" posters and bumper stickers, and even T-shirts printed with pictures of gas ovens! The only thing missing from this sales pitch for genocide was a mailing address where race-hating

terrorists could send in membership applications. In the commentary sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset ridiculed the notion that "people going around in sheets or Nazi uniforms" could get anywhere. A spokesman for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) defended down the line the fascists' "right" to the air waves, city streets or any other vehicle they could find to advance their deadly aims.

The liberal media consider that aiding the fascist publicity drive is a question of "taste" and "professionalism," while the civil libertarians would like it to be a matter of debate whether all Jews and blacks should be killed! Yet even while the Channel 13 TV program was being aired, the Klan in Houston was in court demanding its "right" to use dial-up telephone recordings calling for race war and offering a \$5,000 bounty for every non-white killed in an attack!

In the recent period the liberal bourgeoisie has been in rapid retreat on every social issue, creating a political climate in which the ultra-right scum breed. The defeat of busing in Boston, racist mobilizations in Chicago and the victory of anti-homosexual bigotry in Miami have emboldened these vermin, long forced underground, to poke up their heads. This is attested to by ever more frequent fascist provocations such as attempts by the Nazis to march into the predominantly Jewish Chicago suburb of Skokie, or recent armed KKK "border patrols" directed against undocumented Mexican workers in the Southwest.

Having created this reactionary climate, the liberals now become the fascists' best defenders in court. Thus the ACLU is defending the Klan and Nazis across the country, from their "right" to terrorize survivors of Hitler's death camps in Skokie to their "right" to organize cross burnings at the Marines' Camp Pendleton. To top it off they make genocide respectable by offering the platform of "debates" on television. Thus the civil libertarians prove that their fundamental loyalty is to the capitalist order, which must protect the fascists as their last desperate defense against proletarian revolution.

Bringing up the liberals' rear are the social democrats of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Mike Kelley, a spokesman for the SWP-led U.S. Committee for Justice in Latin America, when asked to sign the protest mailgram to Channel 13 refused on the grounds that this campaign was a "clear

example of the dividing line" between the SL and SWP attitudes toward fascists. Similarly, when the SL initiated a successful protest to prevent Duke from speaking on the KPFA radio station (where he sought to publicize the Klan's vigilante squads against "illegal aliens") this fall, an SWP spokesman refused to participate, stating, "We don't think they should be deprived a priori of their right of free speech" (see "The Klan Will Not Ride in the Bay Area!" *WV* No. 179, 28 October).

The Channel 13 telecast offered the fascists a platform to propagate their genocidal provocations. In contrast, the documentary film *California Reich* revealed the danger of the Nazis' terrorist threats and gave considerable coverage to the militant demonstration, initiated by the Spartacus Youth League, which drove a Nazi speaker off San Francisco State University campus in 1975. In this case also the SWP lined up with the liberals in decrying infringements on the fascists' "right" to free speech "without qualifications" (*Young Socialist*, July-August 1975).

The Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League and the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle defense organization in accordance with the views of the SL, hold that "Genocide is Not Debatable—No Platform for Fascists!" We do not discuss with murderers! Nor do we appeal to the capitalist government to ban the bourgeoisie's terror squads, for in fact such laws will be used above all to suppress the left. The workers movement and intended victims of fascist terror can rely only on their own strength to smash these genocidal practitioners of capitalist barbarism. ■

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Whitlam Steps Down

Labor Routed in Australian Elections

SYDNEY, 14 December—"A vote against socialism," the *Sydney Morning Herald* (12 December) headed its editorial on Saturday's Australian federal election, the fourth in five years. At last count the ruling Liberal/National Country Party (L/NCP) coalition had romped home with a massive 50-seat majority over the routed Labor Party (ALP) in the 124-seat House of Representatives (although receiving only 48 percent of votes cast compared to the ALP's 40 percent).

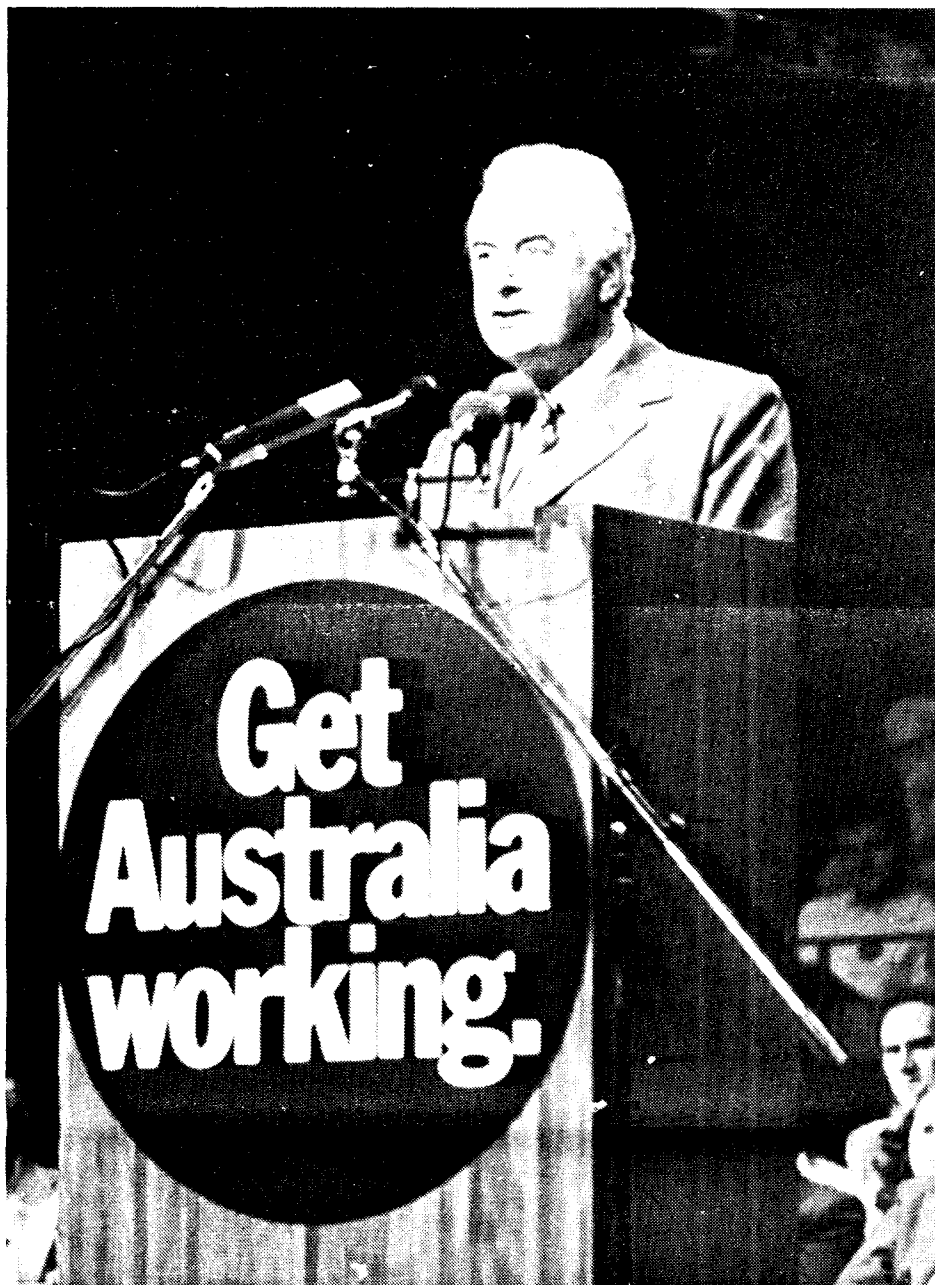
Virtually everyone had expected Labor if not to win at least to take back a substantial number of seats from the record L/NCP majority won in the landslide 1975 election which displaced the ALP government. But, as the *Morning Herald* commented, "The two or three seats won by Labor on Saturday are little more than flotsam from the wreck of 1975, washed up by a favourable redistribution [redrawing of electoral boundaries]."

The result, however, could scarcely be considered a "vote against socialism." On the contrary, the ALP's election campaign was centered around wooing back bourgeois support alienated by the failure of the last Labor government of Gough Whitlam to, as they saw it, adequately control its reformist tinkering or crack down hard enough on the unions. The ALP played down its previous meagre attempts at reform to stress former Labor Treasurer Hayden's austerity budget of 1975. On Medibank, the ALP-introduced national medical insurance significantly downgraded by the Liberals, Whitlam could only snivel that "the task of restoration will be long and difficult" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November).

ALP Grovels Before Bosses

In fact, Labor's main electoral promise was to end the company payroll tax and pay for it by scrapping Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's planned cuts in personal income tax, thus enabling millionaire grazier Fraser (owner of large sheep-grazing properties) to adopt the ludicrous posture of defender of "the man in the street"! In promoting this gimmick, supposedly designed to create more jobs, the ALP's real intention was to demonstrate to the bosses its willingness to rebuff its own working-class base in order to promote higher profits. While unemployment was the main electoral issue, few could have been fooled by the crocodile tears for the unemployed shed by Whitlam and Fraser and their mutual sanctimonious denunciations. Not surprisingly the ALP had trouble eliciting much financial support from the trade unions or firing their ranks with enthusiasm for this uninspiring electoral bid.

For all Whitlam's grovellings, the bourgeoisie preferred not to entrust the helm of state to Labor. Not that they are entirely happy with the record of the aloof, aristocratic Fraser. "It's not much of a choice," press baron Rupert Murdoch commented, "between someone nobody likes and someone nobody trusts" (*Newsweek*, 19 December). The capitalists were hardly more impressed with Fraser's election manoeuvre than they were with his inept handling of currency devaluations or his other political *faux pas*. To make matters worse, shortly after the campaign opened Fraser found himself with a scandal at his doorstep: Phillip Lynch, the author of the Liberals' austerity (for the workers) budgets, resigned as



Gough Whitlam speaking at ALP election rally in Sydney November 17.

treasurer following allegations concerning the dealings of his family trust company.

Union-Bashing Fizzles

Significantly, the demagogic issue of "union power" on which Fraser had earlier hoped to center his election gambit was quietly dropped before the campaign started. This followed the Liberals' defeat in the 5 November Greensborough, Victoria by-election, a week after the conclusion of the eleven-week Victoria power strike, where they had stood primarily on a union-bashing platform. After several years of real wage losses and heightened unemployment, and given the present comparatively low level of industrial disputes, the bosses' attempts to blame the recession on greedy "militant" and "communist" unionists don't hold much water. The Victoria Liberal state government also had little success whipping up sentiment against the LaTrobe power workers' strike which challenged the wage-fixing Arbitration Commission's policy of "wage indexation" (wage adjustments which under the guise of compensating for inflation reduce real wages).

The general distrust of both major parties in this more than usually dreary electoral competition opened the door to the meteoric rise of Don Chipp's ("small-l" liberal) Australian Democrats who gained some 10 percent of the vote—a large proportion in this essentially two-party system—giving them at least one Senate seat. Chipp, a recent defector from the Liberal Party, wisely avoided any policies and instead waffled

about "honesty, tolerance and compassion"—enabling him to cash in on the naiveté, sentimentalism and gullibility of his liberal middle-class supporters.

On election night, when the ALP's ignominious defeat had become evident, Gough Whitlam announced that he would not stand for re-election as Labor's parliamentary leader. After navigating Labor to its first federal election win in 23 years in 1972, only to run aground on the international capitalist recession, Whitlam has now led the ALP to two successive election debacles. From the grandiose vistas of a "new," "reformed" Australia in 1972, Whitlam is now identified in the public eye with the incompetent bunglings of his short-lived social-democratic regime caught in the vice of the recession. His technocratic-liberal policies failed to fit a period where the task of any capitalist government is to rapidly take away past gains of the working class.

Already perceived as a liability, Whitlam had kept somewhat in the background during the election, even promising to step down as ALP leader within two years if elected. Instead the Labor Party prominently featured Bill Hayden as its paragon of economic "responsibility" (read: anti-working-class policies). And it is former cop Hayden who is now the favoured candidate for Whitlam's successor. Meanwhile, Bob Hawke, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and of the ALP—who has been labelled "Houdini Hawke" for his record of negotiating last-minute sellouts of important strikes—waits in the wings

ready to step into parliament at some opportune point.

Left Advises Whitlam How to Win the Election

Ever since the 1975 sacking of the Whitlam government by the appointed, supposedly figurehead, governor-general and the subsequent election of Fraser, the left has resounded with cries of "Bring down the Fraser government!" Uniquely on the left the Spartacist League pointed out at the time that, divorced from any new upsurge in the class struggle, this seemingly militant slogan could mean nothing but a call for new elections and a vote of political confidence in the reformist ALP misleadership of the working class. With the holding of the long-awaited elections the actual content of the fake-lefts' anti-Fraser rhetoric became clearer than ever. The International Socialists' front page headline trumpeted excitedly, "We've waited two years for this..." (*The Battler*, 26 November). With "LABOR CAN WIN" hopefully emblazoned across the front pages of almost every "left" publication, each group predicated a Labor victory on the ALP's adopting its particular shopping list of reforms.

Prominent among these was the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party/Communist League (SWP/CL), that half-fused hybrid of Joseph Hansen's Australian followers and the Mandelite CL, which simply played the role of "left" propagandists for Labor. After a perfunctory disclaimer of confidence in the ALP leadership the SWP/CL declared, "This reactionary, capitalist government must be replaced by a Labor government" (*Direct Action/Militant*, 3 November). Was the Whitlam cabinet any less a capitalist government then? Perhaps not, but it "could have been" according to the SWP/CL!

It "could have," among other things, "legislated a shorter workweek and nationalisation of firms threatening lay-offs to provide more jobs." Like all reformists, the SWP/CL really believes deep down that the bourgeois state is neutral—capable of serving as an instrument to systematically reform capitalist society in the workers' interests if only the right party is in government. After the elections the dejected electoral advisors of the SWP/CL moaned, "The final straw was Labor's low key election campaign as if the ALP leadership didn't really want to win" ("Where did Labor go wrong?" *Direct Action/Militant*, 15 December).

A number of ostensibly revolutionary organisations also stood candidates. The social-democratic Communist Party (CPA) and pro-Moscow Socialist Party candidates, however, presented no alternative to the parliamentary reformist road of the ALP. For communists to urge a vote for these parties, no matter how critical, would only build the authority of these small-time would-be replacements for Whitlam's ALP.

Qaddafi's Messengers on the Election Trail

Also standing three candidates was the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL), which claims to be far to the left of the CPA. But for all its bluster about building the "revolutionary party" to replace the Labor misleaders, the SLL incessantly echoed the reformist plea that the Labor traitors adopt "socialist policies" and contested seats only

against carefully selected "right-wing" ALP candidates. Moreover, the SLL's electoral focus on "Victory to the [Palestinian] PLO" underlined that a vote to these political bandits would have been a vote for their public relations campaign on behalf of anti-communist Libyan dictator, Muamar Qaddafi. It would have been a vote, too, for the SLL's opposition to the mass pickets needed to win the recent La-Trobe Valley strike; and a vote for their incessant cop-baiting, slander and violence against other tendencies in the workers movement. The Spartacist League urged no vote to the SLL.

The ALP is a working-class party enjoying the support of millions of workers. We called for a vote to it on 10 December against the bosses' parties as an expression, however limited and distorted, of the need for an independent working-class alternative to the open political representatives of the bourgeoisie. But the only real benefit of having the Labor fakers in office is that it offers revolutionaries the opportunity to expose their treachery in practice. We do not, like the revisionists, raise the slogan, "For a Labor government," because we do not for a moment lend any support to the ALP's administration in office of the bourgeoisie's state apparatus.

Unlike the revisionists we seek to destroy the influence of the pro-capitalist ALP misleadership within the working class, to build the Leninist vanguard party in counterposition to it—not to refurbish it with "socialist policies." Whitlam, Hawke, Hayden and their ilk must be ousted and replaced with a revolutionary leadership of the working class committed not to the bourgeois parliamentary fraud but to smashing the capitalist state and fighting for a genuine, revolutionary workers government. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE LOCAL DIRECTORY

ANN ARBOR (313) 663-9012
c/o SYL Room 4316
Michigan Union, U. of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

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SAN FRANCISCO (415) 863-6963
Box 5712
San Francisco, CA 94101

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DEMONSTRATION

Protest Milton Friedman— Braintruster for Pinochet and Begin!

Date: December 29

Time: 12:15 p.m.

Place: New York Hilton, Corner of
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NEW YORK

Postal Stewards Still Threatened

Militant Strikers Fend Off Canadian Post Office

TORONTO, 18 December—The six-day strike by members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) Toronto local last week demonstrated the power of labor solidarity in fighting the bosses' attacks. CUPW workers at the large South Central postal facility, which handles nearly half the country's mail walked off the job December 7. They were protesting management's attempt to indefinitely suspend nine members (including two executive board officials and four shops stewards) for leading a sit-down against the use of non-union Christmas help to perform jobs contractually assigned to union workers. Almost from the start of the strike, the picket lines were respected by postal truck drivers in the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC), effectively halting mail service in Toronto and leading to a major backlog throughout the country during the busy pre-Christmas season.

Three days later CUPW voted to launch a full local strike. Management and the bourgeois media responded by stepping up their massive anti-union propaganda blitz. The press, television and radio newscasts screamed that "radical agitators" and "communists" were stirring up labor trouble in the post office in order to foment revolution. Newspapers ran front page articles "exposing" the fact that four of the suspended workers were members of the Stalinist Canadian Party of Labour (CPL). Management tried to obtain an anti-strike court injunction against CUPW and tried to incite workers against their union by red-baiting strike leaders and actively encouraging and organizing scabbing.

But the vast majority of unionists held firm. At least 80 percent of the South Central employees remained out throughout the strike, and virtually all LCUC drivers continued to honor the CUPW lines. Even when management managed to organize a convoy of eleven trucks to cross picket lines and pick up mail on December 12, LCUC members blacked (boycotted) the scab mail and refused to remove it from the trucks to the postal stations. By standing united in the face of the bosses' attacks and provocations, the postal unions forced management to back down on the suspensions, and a return to work was negotiated by the early morning of December 13.

The Toronto strike took place in the context of a postal management union-busting drive across the country. The Post Office is trying to crush CUPW—in the recent past one of the most militant unions in all of Canada—in order to complete the implementation of a massive automation programme, which is eliminating thousands of postal jobs and leading to speed-up and worsened working conditions for the remaining workers. Taking advantage of the bureaucratically-engendered craft divisions among the postal unions (CUPW organizes 24,000 inside workers while LCUC has 18,000 outside workers and others are in smaller unions), the government has sought to isolate the militant CUPW workers in order to push through its automation scheme.

The government has wooed the conservative LCUC national leadership into a class-collaborationist system of union-management consultations aimed at promoting "industrial harmony." Preaching faith in management to solve the workers' problems, LCUC national president Robert McGarry signed an insulting sellout contract last summer, providing outside postal workers with no protection against techno-

logical change and leaving CUPW to go it alone against the government.

In contrast, CUPW president, Jean-Claude Parrot has sought to strike a militant posture, denouncing management's schemes for "industrial peace" as a trap for the workers, and demanding union veto power over technological change. Yet, Parrot's stance is no less class-collaborationist. The union is ham-strung by government anti-labor legislation—the Public Service Staff Relations Act (PSSRA), which prohibits negotiations over technological change and severely limits the right to strike. But rather than confront the PSSRA head-on through the kind of militant national strike action that built the postal union in the mid-1960's, Parrot has merely called for the Post Office to be transformed into a Crown Corporation, placing the unions under the terms of the Canada Labour Code.

While this legislation allows negotiations over automation, it too contains major restrictions on the right to strike, virtually identical to those in the PSSRA. Moreover, CUPW has been without a contract since last June, and Parrot has promised the government that there will be no national strike during the Christmas season despite the fact that this is when postal workers wield by far the most economic muscle to enable them to wrest major concessions from management.

Workers Unity Beats Divide-and-Conquer Schemes

During the past few years the criminal policies of the postal union leaderships have led CUPW and LCUC workers to scab on each others' strikes, weakening their fighting power and further emboldening the government. Management sought to exploit these divisions using the suspensions to attack CUPW and try to drive militants, including the CPL members, out of the Post Office. But the bosses didn't count on the strong show of solidarity and class consciousness by LCUC shop stewards, whose organization of support for the picket lines made the strike effective and gave a great lift to the strikers' morale. This solidarity dealt the key blow to management's "divide-and-conquer" schemes and prevented the strike from being smashed.

Two of the stewards who were most active in organizing LCUC support for the strike, Bob McBurney and Larry Boyes attended the December 10 CUPW mass meeting as invited guests of the CUPW local, McBurney was well received by the 800 or so unionists in attendance when he read an LCUC press statement defending the strike. The statement reported on a motion which had been submitted by McBurney and adopted unanimously by the LCUC stewards' body calling for an LCUC solidarity strike in the event that CUPW stayed out against a court injunction.

Despite arguments against a strike by right-wingers in the union who parroted the redbaiting attacks of the bourgeois press, the workers voted to go out across the city. Several speakers including suspended workers argued that a strike was an absolute necessity, for management was clearly on a union-busting offensive. Its attempt to suspend *elected leaders* of the CUPW local was a wholesale attack on the postal unions themselves—and was a key factor leading both the CUPW and the LCUC leaderships and the union ranks to stand behind the victimised militants.

The Trotskyist League of Canada (TL) distributed a leaflet at the meeting and on the picket lines showing how the

inspiring CUPW/LCUC unity in Toronto pointed the way forward to defeating management attacks across the country. Not only was the CUPW now on strike in the most strategic area in the country but LCUC was supporting the walkout and the postal mechanics union had also been without a contract for nearly a year. A TL leaflet called on CUPW to seize the initiative to lay the basis for a united national strike of all postal unions, which would win a single contract for postal workers.

Such a common contract fight could lead to the creation of a powerful merged industrial union in the Post Office. It could also win key demands like a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to save jobs and make automation serve the workers, a closed shop and union hiring hall to stop management's use of non-union casual and term labor to undermine the strength of the bargaining unit. The TL went on to link postal workers' fight against their employer to the fight of the entire working class against this same government, its institutions and agencies like the PSSRA and the wage-control Anti-Inflation Board, and the capitalist class they all serve.

CPL Takes a Dive

Despite the fact that they were the main immediate target of management's attack, the CPL supporters in CUPW managed to junk their earlier demand that the local stay out until the suspensions were dropped with no reprisals against striking workers. When management and the union leadership agreed on a compromise back-to-work agreement on December 13, CPL's *The Worker* (21 December) hailed the settlement as a victory, won only thanks to its allegedly far-sighted leadership.

Yet the back-to-work accord definitively wiped out only two of the nine suspensions (both CPL members) while the other seven workers face an investigation of their cases by a management review board reporting to the Deputy Postmaster General. Furthermore, since CPL has no influence whatsoever among the Toronto LCUC drivers, its leaflets and *Worker* articles did not even see fit to mention the vital role of labor solidarity provided by the other union. After all, writing about the importance of LCUC support for the strike would have destroyed CPL's grandstanding claim that it alone prevented the strike's defeat.

The refusal of the CUPW bureaucracy to launch a real struggle against the victimizations, violation of union work rules and job-cutting by management has led to demoralization even within the ranks of the traditionally militant CUPW. This was reflected in the low turnout at the strike vote, the narrow margin by which the strike vote passed (50 votes out of 800), and the evidence of scabbing at smaller substations during the strike. A definitive victory can only be achieved by calling a nationwide strike of *all* postal workers. This is precisely what the CUPW bureaucracy refuses to do, and in the CPL's uncritical enthusing over the Toronto strike and its neglect of the need for joint action with the LCUC, it dropped this crucial demand as well.

While today the CPL is clearly under management attack, its supporters in the union have a long and sordid record of betraying elementary working-class principles. Thus CPLers in Toronto CUPW crossed picket lines to scab at a 1975 postal mechanics strike and have refused to defend supporters of other

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RMC: State Department Socialists?

11 October 1977

To the Editor:

Is it permissible to use any stick to beat the SWP? You would undoubtedly say that it isn't since you slam the wretched Healyites for their slander campaign against Joe Hansen. But on the very same page on which you justly attack that campaign ("Healyite Slander Mill Grinds On," *WV* No. 176, 7 October 1977) you show that you are not above mucking around in the sewers of the Stalinist press for what you call "real ammunition" against the SWP. For the nth time Erik Bert has unmasked the SWP as an anti-Soviet, pro-imperialist party. In Bert's tortured reasoning, the third campist RMC [Revolutionary Marxist Committee] has joined the SWP, third campism is pro-imperialist, the SWP is pro-imperialist. I wonder how such reasoning can impress you. There is a lot wrong with it.

Third campism may be a way station

An Exchange

in the evolution of a tendency towards accommodation with imperialism. Then again it may not. It was in the case of Shachtman. It wasn't in the case of the Johnsonites. (By the way, when the SWP took in the Johnsonites in 1947, did that provide "real ammunition" to the Stalinists?) I presume that Robertson, Mage and Wohlforth were all third campists in their Shachtmanite days before joining the SWP. They weren't allies of the State Department, whether then or later. How then can you say that the RMC has entered the SWP to "build a base for State Department socialism"? The intent of your article was to show that the SWP is so compromised that even a Stalinist hack can occasionally aim a telling blow at them. The effect of your article was to show that even you can occasionally reason like a Stalinist hack. You owe the SWP an apology. Remember that the Trotskyist tradition includes the struggle against amalgams and frame-ups. Otherwise you risk stumbling into the path of your former associates, the Healyites.

David Herreshoff

October 11, 1977
Greetings,

I have a few comments and a comradely criticism of your article "C.P. Nails S.W.P." in the Oct. 7 issue of *Workers Vanguard*.

I basically agree with the two main points of your article, one, that S.W.P. with its blatant reformism and its, at best, lukewarm attitude toward defense of the workers states adds fuel to the Stalinist propaganda fire and secondly that groups like Revolutionary Marxist Committee, International Socialists etc. with their false theory of the workers states being state capitalist and their subsequent refusal to defend these states against imperialism is objectively against the interests of World Revolution.

The only problem I have with the article is at the end, when you refer to the R.M.C. as "State Department Socialists."

That term strongly implies that groups like the R.M.C. aren't composed of dedicated militants who sincerely want a socialist world, but whose political theory is incapable of bringing that about, but instead that they are groups that consciously, directly, serve imperialism, C.I.A. or F.B.I. fronts!

I doubt very much if that's what you meant, but in the interests of political

clarity and to avoid even a remote appearance of an unprincipled slander towards honest (but politically wrong) militants I feel that you should avoid that term in the future.

I would be interested to read your comments on the matter.

Communist Greetings,
Stan Woods
Denver, Colorado

WORKERS VANGUARD REPLIES:

Our article, "Even With Lies—CP Nails SWP" (*WV* No. 176, 7 October) has kicked up quite a fuss. We are attacked for it not only in two letters to *WV*, but even in the letters column of the SWP's *Militant*. The SWP and its friends have good reason to be defensive.

At issue is the August 1977 fusion between the SWP and the former Revolutionary Marxist Committee (RMC) which had earlier pulled out of the decomposing Shachtmanite Revolutionary Socialist League, maintaining the latter group's Stalinophobic line on the Russian question. The RMCers continue to hold that the USSR and the other deformed workers states are "state capitalist" and thus there is no class basis for defending them against imperi-

raise the question of "State Department socialism" as though it were an academic dispute whose main purpose was to separate various organizations on the political landscape of the left. It is not simply that one tendency takes a position in defense of the USSR while another does not. These questions are pale ideological reflections of a ferocious struggle between the Soviet Union and U.S. imperialism. Positions on the Russian question are shaped by a powerful reality that explodes on the barricades in Lisbon or the battlefields of Angola. The CIA is real. The entire payload and influence of the capitalist class is weighted and aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union whose industrial and military might—despite the treacherous bureaucracy—stands between imperialism and its dreams of reconquest of the deformed workers states.

It is because of this overwhelming reality of a war which runs hot and cold that political characterizations are not a matter simply of subjective sincerity, as Woods suggests. Under the pounding pressure of the bourgeoisie, subjectively sincere "anti-Stalinists" are caught up in the whirlwind of imperialism's assault upon the USSR. The ruling class knows how to reward its witting and unwitting

writes that it designates "groups that consciously, directly, serve imperialism, CIA or FBI fronts." He takes the term as some kind of cop-bait. But the phrase has a long tradition of usage by Trotskyists to politically characterize a current within the workers movement which supported U.S. imperialism's "cold war" against the USSR. It describes "socialists" with a terminal case of Stalinophobia—those whose active role in supporting imperialist "democracy" against Stalinist "totalitarianism" places them in a political bloc with the U.S. State Department.

The term took hold among the revolutionists after the social democrats had formed a bloc with U.S. imperialism over the Korean war and had led the government-directed anti-red purges in the unions. On 28 January 1957 a front-page *Militant* headline described the merger between the Socialist Party (SP) and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) in just three words: "State Department 'Socialism'." The article quoted the social democrats: "We realize that until universal, enforceable disarmament can be achieved, the free world and its democratically established military agencies must be constantly on guard against the military drive of the Communist dictators!"

These "socialists" had aligned themselves four-square with the war policies of the State Department. In the name of "democracy" and "socialism" they had taken the line that the main enemy was the USSR and its Communist "agents" in the trade unions. As the then-revolutionary SWP said: "The SP-SDF calls itself 'democratic socialist'. Their foreign policy resolution, however, strengthens their title to the label, 'State Department socialist'" (*Militant*, 16 July 1958).

When the Independent Socialist League of Max Shachtman stepped into this merger of right-wing social democrats in 1957, the SWP's Myra Tanner Weiss correctly summed up the Shachtmanites' course, from their 1940 split from the SWP to their embrace of the SP: "When Max Shachtman and the ISL accept this kind of State Department 'democracy' and they try to pass it off as socialism they have passed the point of no return from revolutionary Marxism to reformism" (*Militant*, 21 January 1957). The Shachtmanites took their oath of loyalty to social democracy:

"... We do not subscribe to any creed known as Leninism or defined as such. We do not subscribe to any creed known as Trotskyism or defined as such... We are strongly in favor of a broad party with full party democracy for all, which does not demand creedal conformity on all questions... Such conformity typifies the sect; it is alien to a living, democratic, socialist political movement..."

—*New International*, Spring-Summer 1958

It is from this Shachtmanite "point of no return" that the International Socialists, then the RSL and the RMC, developed.

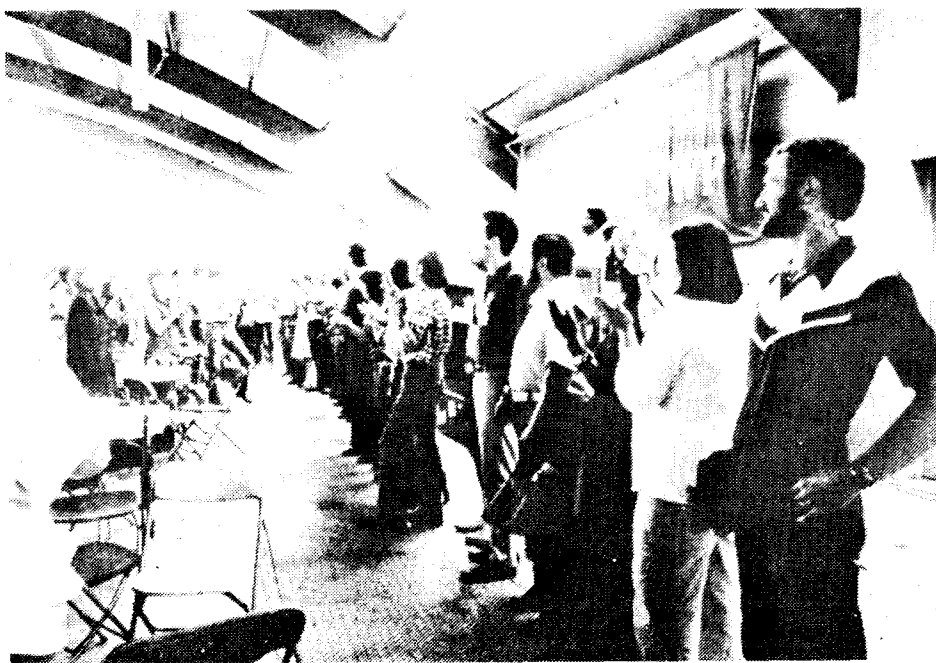
Herreshoff as Historian

David Herreshoff, as *WV* readers may recall, has been a fairly regular contributor to our letters column. We have become accustomed to his selective histories of the SWP, designed to suggest a continuity between yesterday's revolutionary party and today's reformists. We do not mind debating with would-be repositories of Trotskyist history, but we insist that the history be clarified rather than obscured in the process.

Unlike Woods, Herreshoff well understands the use of the term "State Department socialism." What he disagrees with is our assessment of the SWP-RMC fusion as an important

"Muddlers and pacifists of the world, all ye suffering from the pin-pricks of fate, rally to the 'third' camp!"

—L. Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism*, 1940



The Militant

Ex-Trotskyists of the SWP welcome third-camp RMC into party.

alism. Their "Platform" states that "Stalinist Parties...stand for the complete statification of capitalism and the elevation of their own leading strata to the status of state capitalist bourgeoisies" (*Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 11, March 1977).

If the SWP defended this fusion on the basis that it will help the SWP build rallies for "human rights for gays" and cozy up to Jimmy Carter's "democratic" anti-Sovietism, life would be easier and polemics shorter. But the SWP is not ready to so explicitly repudiate the Trotskyist position on the Russian question. Thus it must yell "slander!" at those who expose the SWP-RMC fusion as a signpost of the SWP's social-democratic trajectory.

To justify this open-door policy for Shachtmanites, the SWP and its friends must distort the history of revolutionary Trotskyism. Often, as with Herreshoff's letter, these distortions are tossed off as "common knowledge" and not-so-common "sense." We are taking the occasion of these two letters to *WV* to unravel the knot of self-serving obscurantism by which the SWP hopes to conceal its real program and appetites.

It is a species of political fantasy to

apologists. We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of a Norman Thomas, but neither do we excuse the role that he, an avowed partisan of the working people, played in the service of the State Department. As James Cannon said, describing the political and programmatic content of Stalinophobia:

"The sentiment of hatred and fear of Stalinism, with its police state and its slave labor camps, its frame-ups and its murders of working class opponents, is healthy, natural, normal and progressive. This sentiment goes wrong only when it leads to reconciliation with American imperialism, and to the assignment of the fight against Stalinism to that same imperialism. In the language of Trotskyism, that and nothing else is Stalinophobia... We should tell the party members that Stalinophobia is indeed a deadly disease, and that its germs are carried in the air of imperialist America."

—Letter to Farrell Dobbs, 6 April 1953

"State Department Socialism"

Both our letter writers object to the use of the term "State Department socialism" to characterize the RMC. Woods seems unfamiliar with the Trotskyist movement's use of the term, and

demonstration that the SWP has in practice dumped the defense of the Soviet Union. He lectures us on the nature of third campism, with examples from the gospel of SWP history according to David Herreshoff:

"Third campism may be a way station in the evolution of a tendency toward accommodation with imperialism. Then again it may not. It was in the case of Shachtman. It wasn't in the case of the Johnsonites."

The unsuspecting reader is supposed to conclude that *WV* makes no distinctions—or, worse, that we are making an amalgam in order to smear the RMC. But we recognize an important political distance between those tendencies which reject the defense of the Soviet Union due to pressure from their own ruling classes and those who do so out of a primitive workerism and elemental revulsion against the anti-working-class practices of Stalinism. This latter view assumes the angle of vision of an ultra-left syndicalist who sees only that the bureaucracy daily grinds down the working class and cannot recognize that the bureaucracy also rests upon the gains of a revolution that must be defended.

We recognize two traditions of "state capitalism" within the workers movement: an ultra-left tradition that begins with Bogdanov's Workers Group among the anti-NEP formations in Lenin's revolutionary Russia and continues through the various anarcho-syndicalist groups—including for instance Grandizo Munis, whose split from Trotskyism to state capitalism was in an ultra-leftist rather than a social-democratic direction; and the right-wing tradition which begins with Kautsky's "democratic" critique of "totalitarian" Russia and continues through classic social democracy. At certain conjunctures, of course, these two traditions can come together, as they did in the U.S. over the Korean war.

It is not *WV* but Herreshoff who confuses these two traditions. We have clearly stated that the RMC is in the Shachtmanite tradition. What does he say about the RMC? Nothing. He hazards no defense of the RMC against the characterization of "State Department socialism." Instead he lectures us about "state capitalist" tendencies in general and reminds us that in 1947 the SWP fused with the "third camp" Johnson-Forrest group. Presumably, because the SWP fused with this grouping in 1947, it's okay to fuse with the RMC in 1977.

In describing the RMC as "building a base for State Department socialism" we are discussing a particular group at a particular time on a particular trajectory, and with a particular history on the Russian question. Does Herreshoff mean to suggest that the RMC is politically similar to the Johnsonites? Then let him say so. Does the tradition of State Department socialism impinge on the RMC? He would prefer to lecture us that not all "third camp" groups are the same, hoping to justify the present fusion on the basis of a different fusion in 1947 between a revolutionary party and something which we can all agree was not a "State Department socialist" formation.

The Johnson Fusion in Hindsight

The 1947 Johnsonite-SWP fusion which David Herreshoff raises makes an instructive comparison. At first glance there are some similarities between Johnson-Forrest and the RMC. Both were Detroit-centered cliques inside a clique-ridden Shachtmanite organization. Both were "state-cap" minorities who claimed to base their fusion on unity over "the American question." There the analogies stop short.

The Johnsonites and even the SWP of 1947 believed that the Russian question could be temporarily placed on the back burner in the face of an expected explosion of struggle by the U.S.

proletariat, "the coming American Revolution." Both tendencies underestimated the pervasive political effects of the cold war carried out by a victorious U.S. imperialism with the aid of a treacherous labor bureaucracy pushing the myth of the "American Century." In failing to understand that the Russian question would continue to be a signal test of the revolutionary fiber of any organization, they made a serious miscalculation—as the subsequent fate of the fusion was to demonstrate. The onset of the Korean war blew the SWP-Johnson fusion apart. This group which entered in 1947 with a fundamental difference over the Russian question departed the SWP intact in 1950—over the Russian question.

The political basis for the SWP-Johnsonite fusion was laid by Cannon's 1946 "Theses on the Coming American Revolution." Although flawed by its American-centered focus, the theses presented what the Johnson group recognized as the "open, unconcealed perspective of revolution." Proletarian and combative in thrust, it presents quite a different class axis and spirit than the lukewarm reformism, electoralism and petty-bourgeois radicalism which the present-day SWP markets under the title, "Prospects for American Socialism."

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to say that the fusion with the Johnsonites did not work. As Cannon said in May 1953: "The Johnsonites were personal cultist followers of Johnson as a Messiah... they all left the party at the same hour, Eastern Standard Time" (*Speeches to the Party*). Was the attempt therefore a mistake that should have been recognized by revolutionists at the time? Something closer to political insight than historical hindsight is needed to address that question. The 1947 fusion must be understood within the context of SWP-Workers Party (WP—Shachtman's organization) unity negotiations which had been going on (and off) for years.

These unity maneuvers were quite important for the SWP, as the WP was a centrist party which claimed to be Trotskyist. It was the obtrusive formation which occupied the political terrain between the revolutionary SWP and social-democratic reformism. The unity tactics were meant to produce a period of "clarification" and to pose to the WP membership the stark choice between the revolutionary Trotskyism of the SWP and the "State Department socialist camp" where Shachtman's organization finally ended up in 1957.

Cannon knew in 1947 that the WP was moving to the right, but he apparently acceded to the intervention of the International Secretariat, which directly engineered a unity proposition for Max Shachtman. On the understanding that the WP would abide by the discipline and decisions of the upcoming World Congress of the Fourth International, Cannon and



"State Department socialism" in action: Anti-communist leader Soares praised the "popular uprising" against Stalinism.

Shachtman drew up a unity proposal between the SWP and WP which was published in February 1947. Discussions were carried out with the Johnsonite clique, which at that time was clearly committed to unity with the SWP.

By the summer of 1947 the prospect of fusion with the WP as a whole had gone up in smoke. What had happened? "Along came the Truman Doctrine," explained Cannon to a New York membership meeting in June: a "new violent campaign leading to war with the Soviet Union under the leadership of Truman and Marshall." The Truman Doctrine, enunciated in March, sent the WP right wing on a binge of red-baiting anti-Communist activity. Cannon declared that the political differences, tested in this new crisis, had broken down the perspective of unity with the Shachtmanites:

"... The Truman Doctrine, the central question of the day, the open announcement of American imperialism that they are going to conquer the world with atomic warfare—we wouldn't even think of a joint meeting with the Shachtmanites on that."

—*Writings and Speeches, 1945-1947*

Why, then, fuse with the Johnsonites? Precisely because the Johnsonites did not respond as did the WP right wing, whose main target for attack was Stalinism. As Shachtman swerved right under the impact of the imperialist Truman Doctrine inaugurating the "cold war," the Johnsonites swung left, joining with the SWP in declaring that the main enemy was at home.

With the breakdown in unity negotiations, Cannon forthrightly declared that the original proposal was "an error on my part" in assessing the WP's proposals for unity as a "left turn" and a capitulation to the Fourth International. "To capitulate to the Fourth International," he had said, "that is an honor to any revolutionist and a sign that he doesn't want to capitulate to the American bourgeoisie" (*Writings 1945-1947*). When the Shachtmanites capitulated to the bourgeoisie by solidarizing with imperialist "anti-Stalinism," unity was off the agenda. But the Johnson group did capitulate to the SWP. The 1947 fusion ripped the left arm away from the WP.

The stripping away of the Shachtmanite left wing was a process not finally completed until 1957. Herreshoff distorts history again when he adds Wohlforth-Robertson-Mage (who broke from the Independent Socialist League at the time of its entry into the Socialist Party) into his equation and implies that this was another case of fusions between the SWP and state capitalists. In fact, these comrades came to Trotskyism and the SWP with a *defensist* position on the Russian question. This regroupment was part of the resolution of Shachtmanism into its components: "Trotskyism" on the one hand, "State Department socialism" on the other. As a spokesman for the Trotskyist regroupment which took

place in opposition to the right-social-democratic regroupment of Shachtman, Wohlforth correctly characterized the latter as representing "state department democracy" ("What the Radical Youth Need," *Fourth International*, Winter 1958).

The young Shachtmanites who came over to the SWP understood the political logic of Shachtman's course from "third camp" Stalinophobe to cold warrior:

"In 1951 Shachtman wrote: 'Without hesitation or ambiguity, we can say that the only greater disaster that humanity could suffer than the war itself, which would be disaster enough if it broke out, would be the victory of Stalinism as the outcome of the war.' (emphasis added)

"With this perspective, the ISL was forced to seek a basis for its anti-war policy in the forces existing within the framework of capitalist imperialism. Twist and turn as it would, it was, if tenuously, tied within that framework."

—James Robertson, "Statement of Resignation from the ISL," 12 April 1957

Entrism and Fusions

If the revolutionary SWP of 1947 may have erred in trying to assimilate the cultist Johnsonite state cap-ers despite agreement on the "American question," the present-day RMC is at least free of naiveté about the role of the Russian question in the current fusion. In an important July 1977 document, "Road to Unity" by RMC leader Shelley Kramer, the RMC describes the "dissident" movement in the Soviet bloc as the "critical question which will subject the entire Trotskyist movement to its most decisive test since the 1950's" (*Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 14, July 1977).

In its smug articles on the fusion the SWP takes the tack that the RMC was so impressed by the SWP's American perspectives that it rejected its "sectarian" (read Shachtmanite) heritage and opted for the SWP despite differences on the Russian question. They get indignant over the charge that the RMC—less than enthused over the prospects of independent small-group existence on the fringes of the crisis-ridden centrist left—"gave up" on any impulse toward real Trotskyist politics, embarked on a search for a larger host and found the SWP. And they howl "slander!" when anyone attempts to show (the Communist Party through distortions, the SL through political analysis) that an important political underpinning of the fusion is the SWP's de facto abandonment of Soviet defensism as it sucks up to the "democratic" bourgeoisie.

The RMC came to the SWP nominally on an explicit entry tactic. Whether this was left window-dressing to reassure doubting elements among the RMC ranks that the fusion did not really represent a sellout to reformism, or whether the RMC leaders really believe they can win the SWP to state capitalism, remains to be seen. But the RMC vowed to continue its battle for the "third camp" within the SWP. A pre-fusion RMC internal bulletin discussed the entry tactic (e.g., the "French Turn" carried out by the Trotskyists in the 1930's) and stated:

"Through such involvement we, too, seek to erect the structure of a revolutionary party on the scaffold we now have—our political platform. For us, this effort can begin on a much higher level, since most of the Trotskyist milieu, especially the USec and the SWP, stand on many of the same principles we do."

—"Splits and Fusions in the Formation of the Fourth International," *RMC Internal Bulletin* Vol. III, No. 12, June 1977

Some months previously, the RMC had discussed its reasons, political and otherwise, for eschewing any such orientation toward the SL, which it described as a "monolithic organization with no established tradition of minority rights... an intolerance for long term

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Peace Talks...

(continued from page 1)

The Begin plan is but an empty ploy to sanctify the oppressive status quo in the West Bank. Under the present Zionist military occupation, Palestinian Arabs may already elect their own mayors, except they may not organize parties or nationalist organizations. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is banned and propaganda is subject to military censorship. More militant candidates have been deported or jailed, and any significant decision made by such elected mayors must be ratified by the local Israeli military commander. None of this would change under Begin's phony plans for "self-government" in the West Bank.

Cairo Conference: No Flags, No Names, Empty Chairs

Begin's new-found friend in Cairo remained silent on the merits of the "secret" Israeli plan, but it won for the former Irgun *Führer* a Christmas Day invitation to Sadat's plush villa in Ismailia. Meanwhile the Cairo Conference quickly degenerated into a vaudeville of protocol, held in the ornate Mena House, the former palace of the nineteenth-century Khedives, the Turkish viceroys of the Ottoman Empire. Here under the Giza pyramids Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek came together in 1943 to pledge China to the "democratic" imperialists.

Sadat's conference opened around a table at which five of the chairs remained empty, for the invited representatives of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the Soviet Union and the PLO, all of whom boycotted the conference. But since the Zionists refuse to recognize the PLO, they refused to sit at a conference table even with a name plate for the PLO before an empty chair. After three long and heated meetings the name plate was replaced with one reading "Palestine." Then the Israeli delegation protested about the presence of an "unidentified flag" flown outside. The offending red, white, green and black flag of the PLO was taken down along with the other eight.

After several days of this burlesque the four participating delegations from the U.S., the UN, Israel and Egypt announced that "progress had been made." But there is more involved here than Zionist sensibilities to even the most token expression of Palestinian national existence. Zionism is a racist ideology and Israel is a racist state based on the total obliteration of the Palestinian nation.

The PLO was particularly outraged by Sadat's courtship of the butcher of Deir Yassin, but the Palestinian masses should not have been surprised. The consistent policy of all the Arab states, from the most reactionary emirate to the most radical "socialist" colonel's regime, has been to suppress the national aspirations of the Palestinians as well as the yearnings of their own toiling masses for liberation from exploitation.

Following the failure of the 1973 Geneva Conference, the "progressive" army officers and feudal sheiks and kings held a summit meeting of that legacy of British imperialism, the Arab League. At the meeting held in Rabat, Morocco the Palestine Liberation Organization was named "sole representative of the Palestinian people." The PLO was given all the trappings and none of the substance of state power. Among the trappings are a seat in the Arab League, an observer's seat at the UN and a promise of a seat at any reconvened Geneva Conference.

In exchange the PLO was to settle for a West Bank-Gaza "homeland." This "homeland" has the same meaning in this context as it does when applied to

the Bantustans created by South African apartheid: isolated and economically unviable remnants of their former land. Ironically the land now promised to the PLO as its "homeland," which was conquered by Israel in the 1967 war, was originally annexed by the Arab League states in the 1948 war from the former Palestine. Thus the PLO's job was to convince the Palestinian masses that the butchers of their nation in 1948 would be its liberators today. Now Egypt has once again starkly revealed that the bourgeois Arab rulers are no saviors of the Palestinian people.

"Rejectionists" Reject Each Other

Sadat consulted none of the Arab states prior to his Jerusalem pilgrimage, for obvious reasons. Most vociferous in denouncing his "betrayal" of the Palestinian cause were the so-called "rejectionists": Libya, Iraq and Iraq's clients

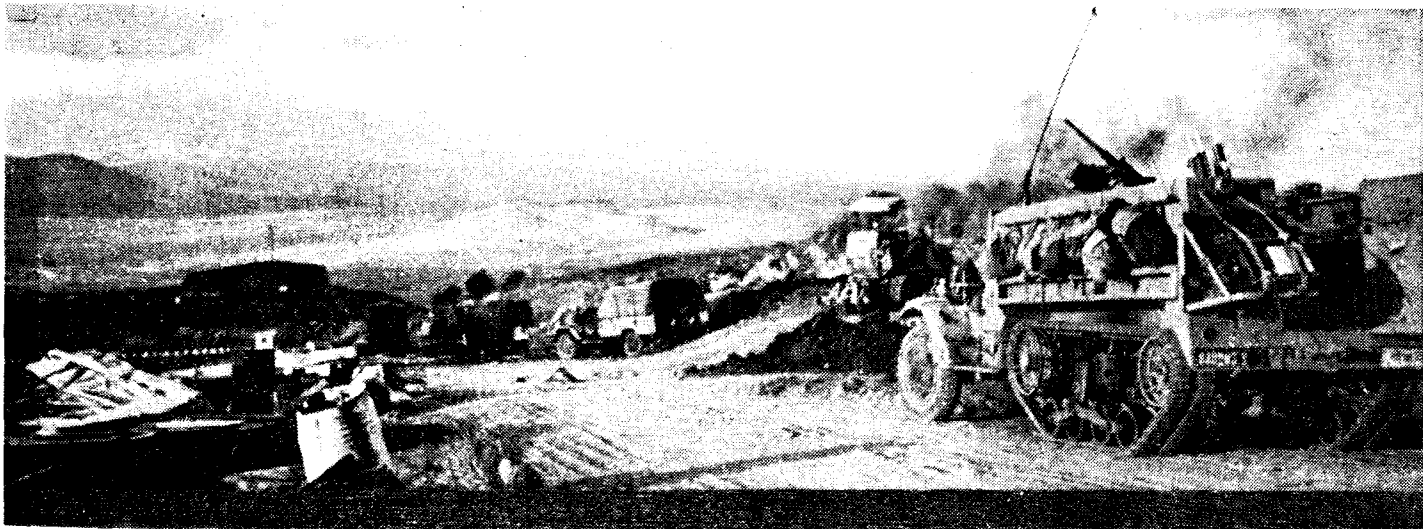
strife, which it feared would spill over into Syria. But these demands are utterly hypocritical coming from the Baghdad colonels, who until they made a deal with the Shah of Iran had the bulk of their army mobilized not to fight the "Zionist enemy" but against the Kurdish struggle for self-determination. Even Iraq's "rejectionist" clients within the PLO—the ALF and PFLP—"rejected" the Iraqi walkout. And the Palestinian "rejectionists" united with the anti-"rejectionist" Arafat leadership of the PLO to endorse a joint communiqué of all the remaining participants proposing a "united front" of the PLO with the Syrian army which has been slaughtering it for the past two years.

"Separate Peace" Is the Road to Global War

While the Tripoli conference denounced the Sadat visit to Jerusalem as an imperialist-Zionist conspiracy, the

U.S. and other imperialist powers refused to recognize the new capital and kept their embassies in Tel Aviv. That is what makes the Sadat visit to the Knesset in Jerusalem particularly egregious to Arab League states: not only does it sanction the existence of Israel, it sanctions Israeli incorporation of the conquests of the 1967 war.

The Jordanian civil war of 1970 which almost brought down the Hashemite throne, as well as last year's Lebanese communal war brought home to the U.S. imperialists the urgency of finding an imperialist solution to the Palestinian question. The 1973 war in which the U.S. and USSR came close to a global nuclear confrontation and the subsequent oil boycott made it obvious to the various imperialist powers that an overall solution to the Near East crisis was in their immediate interests. Consequently the new Carter administration in Washington brought in a coterie of



Israeli half-track passes burning equipment in Golan Heights during 1973 war.

within the PLO, the Arab Liberation Front (ALF) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The "rejectionists" reject any negotiations with the Zionist state and any solution other than total military victory over Israel. The Baghdad colonels called for the overthrow of Sadat and any other Arab ruler who presumes to talk of a settlement with Israel. The latter anathema is clearly directed at their Ba'athist brethren in Damascus.

Sadat disparagingly dismissed the "rejectionists" as "night club militants" whose bellicose rhetoric is inversely proportional to their real military contribution to the struggle against Israel. But the "rejectionists" were joined by Syria, Egypt's main ally in the 1967 and 1973 wars and traditionally a bitter rival of Iraq for leadership of the Ba'athist "Arab Revolution" and for the waters of the Euphrates. Syria's fear of an Egyptian-Israeli separate peace which would leave it militarily isolated drove it to denounce Sadat and at least temporarily downplay its animosity for Iraq by attending the "rejectionist" conference in Tripoli. But Syria, which borders Israel and has the bulk of its army bogged down strangling Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and the rest of its army guarding its borders from its Ba'athist rivals in Iraq, is militarily too weak and too threatened to afford to join the "rejectionists" outright.

At the Tripoli conference, Iraq precipitated its own walkout by demanding that the participants accept a program that was both "rejectionist" and an explicit attack on Syria. In addition to calling for repudiation of UN resolutions 242 and 348 and for no negotiations with Israel, the Iraqis called for a total withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, total mobilization against the "Zionist enemy," "liberation of all Palestinian and Arab land," and "a clear policy to govern relations between the Palestinian movement and Syria to guarantee independence of movement and freedom of action."

Of course, Damascus has massacred thousands of Palestinians in the course of suppressing Lebanon's communal



Jerusalem crowd hails meeting of butchers Begin and Sadat.

rulers of U.S. imperialism acted like very surprised "conspirators." Elements in Washington see stabilization of the Near East as set back by a separate peace between Egypt and Israel in which the Palestinian question is unresolved. Israel still militarily occupies the West Bank and the Golan Heights. That is why Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was opposed not only by "rejectionists" like Libya and Iraq, but also by reactionary feudalistic regimes like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, who fear Sadat's escape may result in his overthrow and the destabilization of the shaky bonapartist regime in Egypt.

While the U.S. supplied the military hardware for Israel's 1967 victory, it opposed Israel's retention of the spoils of that victory as a threat to stability of other reactionary regimes in the Near East. For example, when Israel moved its capital from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to consolidate the spoils of that victory, the

policymakers, including his "Dr. Strangelove" national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, committed to a "comprehensive solution" incorporating the Rabat decisions (recognition of the PLO and a West Bank-Gaza Palestinian "homeland") and involving the Russians at Geneva.

But this option comes directly into conflict first with Israel, the U.S.' traditional client state in the Near East, and with Egypt, which under Sadat is offering itself up as a new client state to American imperialism. This conflict is utterly inexplicable to New Leftists and other fake-socialist apologists for Arab nationalism who simply equate Zionism with U.S. imperialism. The Zionist ruling class of capitalist Israel will only be able to suppress the enormous social and class contradictions by a policy of continuous territorial expansion and war mobilization, even when this contributes to the overall political

destabilization of the Near East and therefore is directly counterposed to the interests of Washington. U.S. pressure on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, an unacceptable policy for the Zionist establishment, has resulted only in the election of the more intransigent Begin regime.

Sadat drew his own conclusions from the Begin electoral victory: there would be no peace along the lines of Rabat as long as Begin was in power. But having broken his ties with Moscow, he lacked spare parts, technical maintenance capacity, new tanks, artillery and interceptors. Since Egypt was not prepared to fight another war, his conclusion was: a separate peace with Israel. Begin, eager to divide his enemies, has accepted. And the U.S. is reluctantly going along. But an Egyptian-Israeli separate peace would, in the words of the Tripoli communiqué, indeed transform Syria into the "main confrontation state"—and under very unfavorable circumstances. With Israel armed to the teeth with the latest sophisticated heavy weaponry and Begin girding for war, Syria's rulers must escalate their defensive preparations. This means deepening their reliance on their sole benefactor, the USSR, with all that this implies in terms of a spiralling arms build-up in the Near East and increased likelihood of a U.S./Russian nuclear confrontation.

This perilous situation is also the product of the counterrevolutionary policy of the Kremlin, which has sought through military bribery to further its interests by building up a bloc of ostensibly neutral countries not directly linked to Western imperialism. This policy of ephemeral influence peddling has reaped a reactionary whirlwind as the Russians are expelled from one country after another, beginning with Egypt in 1971 and most recently Somalia. Had the military aid gone to the Arab masses instead of their reactionary rulers, had a Soviet government committed to extending the gains of the October Revolution inspired these masses to revolutionary struggle against their exploiters, the threat of a nuclear confrontation over the Near East would have been taken off the agenda long ago by proletarian revolution. The Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence" merely contributes to the threat of a global conflagration.

War Weariness and Class War

Both Begin and Sadat are sitting atop volcanos of explosive social and class contradictions. Both are in fundamental agreement with U.S. imperialism, the International Monetary Fund, the Chilean junta and its advisor, Dr. Milton Friedman, about what to do about these pressing difficulties: denationalization, destatification, removal of fetters on currency and commodity speculation, inflation; cutbacks in social services, subsidies for food and essential services; a wage freeze, and so on.

The Friedman/IMF "shock treat-

ment" has its price, of course. In Egypt this ruthless policy unleashed massive strikes and rioting last January during which at least 79 people were killed. These riots were the most extensive and national in scale as have been seen in the history of modern Egypt. Likewise in Israel, the Begin regime's attempts to institute similar economic policies last month led to a massive strike wave defying once again the petty-bourgeois nationalist myth that the Israeli working class is inseparably wedded to its rulers and incapable of class struggle.

In the past the capitalist rulers of the Near East have been able to periodically dissipate class contradictions in the chauvinist hysteria of wars of "national salvation." No doubt Sadat explored this option briefly with his border clash with Libya earlier this year, and Begin with his terror bombing of South Lebanon. But the Egyptian economy must pay for this diversion with military expenditures amounting to one-fifth of its national budget. In Israel fully 35 percent of the gross national product is devoted to the military, contributing to an inflation which may reach 50 percent this year.

Despite a large economic gap, both Egypt and Israel are impoverished, war-weary nations. The spontaneous jubilation which broke out over the sham "peace" rhetoric of the Sadat/Begin theatrics demonstrates the intensity with which this war weariness is felt throughout the population. Sadat and Begin desperately need distractions to take the minds of the working masses of Israel and the Cairo slums off their destitution and grinding toil. But no matter how many flamboyant conferences they hold, they will not for long be able to distract the workers from the decline in their living standards and the terror and intimidation brought about by constant militarization. They will never for a moment delude the Palestinian youths from the West Bank who bitterly greeted the Egyptian president with the chant, "Sadat Go Home."

The discontent of the Egyptian workers and peasants, of the West Bank Arab youth and the Israeli working class must be harnessed to the program of permanent revolution through the creation of a party of proletarian internationalism, the reborn Fourth International. Not national unity but class unity! Israel out of the occupied territories! For the right of self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs and the Hebrew-speaking people! Land to the fellahin! Down with the reactionary regimes from Tripoli and Riyadh to Cairo and Tel Aviv! For proletarian revolution in the Near East! ■

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Coal Strike...

(continued from page 12)

the three scab mines to close up voluntarily in order to weed out troublemakers, a proposal which the operators spurned. Instead of relying on the militant ranks, union leaders then requested Utah governor Scott Matheson close the mines and, predictably, he refused as well.

All three mines opened December 9. Scabs were helicoptered into the Plateau compound and buses—their windows covered with wire mesh—transported the strikebreakers into the others behind a "human wall" of over 90 Utah Highway Patrolmen. Temporary restraining orders have been passed out to over 1,000 striking miners barring interference with the scabs and a spokesman for the governor stated that the National Guard was being kept apprised of further developments.

Despite the machinations of the Miller regime, the rank-and-file miners have shown no lack of resourcefulness in waging their strike. However, because of the abdication of strike leadership, not only of the Miller bureaucracy but also the district leaderships, these actions, undertaken spontaneously by groups of militants, have remained partial and sporadic.

Most importantly, in order to break their isolation, militants must demand not only that their picket lines be respected, but that active appeals be addressed to non-union miners to join the strike with demands for union recognition. Such an appeal, combined with the fight for real gains such as fully-funded health and pension benefits not tied to tonnage, would have an impact on thousands of non-union miners. One miner in Cabin Creek, West Virginia told *WV* that some of the non-union pits could be organized in 15 minutes if the International would take the time to sign the workers up. But in the West UMWA organizing efforts have virtually ground to a halt.

The criminal passivity of the International is only compounded by its weak-kneed willingness to make miserable concessions at the bargaining table and its refusal to even call out the entire UMWA. Agreeing that miners should pay a portion of their medical expenses, as well as permitting UMWA members to scab on the strike, can only repel non-union miners.

In the western coal fields eight contracts have already been settled and another is expected imminently. These are surface sub-bituminous and lignite mines which in 1974 were part of the Western Surface Agreement with the union. This year they pulled out of the multi-employer group under that contract, forcing the union to negotiate with each company separately. These "independents" include giants like Peabody and Consolidation—the two top producers in the industry—which also own struck mines in the East and Midwest.

Miller claimed that the western mine operators, unlike their counterparts of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, were showing a willingness to bargain on all issues. In several cases the "reasonable" western bosses are the identical companies which are being struck in the East. Furthermore, Steve Galati, UMWA Director of Contract Administration and co-leader of western negotiations, told *WV* that this officially sanctioned scabbing is taking place in western districts where other union mines are on strike. Galati justified the current scab policy by pointing to the same practice during the last strike. First the strip miners worked under a six-day extension while eastern miners struck and were sold out, and then in February, 1975 "...these same miners, these strip miners, was on strike for some five and half months and the deep miners worked..."

Militants must resist this defeatist division among the union ranks. All U.S. and Canadian mines must be

shut down! No union member should return to work until every union local has a contract. This must include both production and construction workers, in deep and strip mines both in the East and West.

Labor Solidarity Key

Despite the huge stockpiles and continuing movement of scab coal, no wing of the UMWA bureaucracy—Miller, Patrick or Patterson, the three warring cliques in last summer's election—has advocated an approach to maritime, rail and steel unions for labor solidarity action. But union militants, nevertheless, have attempted to take steps to choke off coal supplies before they reach the furnaces and boilers of the mills and power companies.

Pickets in Cherry Tree, Pennsylvania stopped a coal train for eight hours which was bound for a Pittsburgh area power plant. On December 15, 30 pickets stood at yard entrances of the Norfolk and Western Railway in Bluefield, West Virginia in an appeal to railroad unionists to "hot cargo" scab coal. Others picketed in Jazewell and Buchanan counties in Virginia. One picket in Bluefield carried a placard inscribed "United we stand, divided we fall" and told a reporter the demonstration would continue until "the N and W stops moving non-union coal" (*Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, 15 December). When UMWA members threw up a picket line at the Utah Power and Light Company in protest of non-union coal shipments into the plant, 200 plant employees honored the lines and returned home.

The allies of the miners are the ranks of the U.S. labor movement, particularly the workers in related industries such as steel and railroads. The railroad contract expires in less than two weeks and management is demanding a wholesale revision of work rules and reduction in crew sizes. Steelworkers are groaning under massive layoffs and the corporations' attempts to rationalize the industry on their backs. A joint strike waged by these unions could crush the BCOA offensive, as well as win the just demands of steel and railroad workers.

The encrusted labor bureaucracy, such as the McBride regime in the Steelworkers, hates and fears the militancy of the miners, and will do everything to seal off its membership from the coal strikers. But a mass appeal launched for a united struggle against the bosses would receive a sympathetic response in the rank and file of the steel and rail unions.

The conduct of the strike cannot be left in the hands of the treacherous Miller bureaucracy, which has shown its willingness to abandon demands for the right to strike and full company-paid health care; which allows sections of the UMWA to scab; which criminally refuses to organize picketing of non-union mines; and which rejects any appeal for solidarity to other sections of the working class. Meanwhile, Miller's bureaucratic opponents in the UMWA, the Patricks and Pattersons, sit on their hands and say nothing, perfectly content to let Miller bear sole responsibility for defeat.

Militants in the UMWA must demand the immediate convening of mass district meetings, where democratically elected strike committees can be established capable of implementing the class struggle policies necessary for victory. No Restrictions on the Right to Strike! Organize the Non-Union Mines! Hot-Cargo Coal! For a Joint Strike of Coal, Steel and Rail Workers! Victory to the Miners Strike! ■

NOTICE

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differences" ("Trotskyist Unification and the Immediate Tasks of the Revolutionary Marxist Committee," *Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 11, March 1977). Of course, the SL is not "monolithic" and the baseless charge that SL oppositionists are not accorded "minority rights" is particularly grotesque coming from a grouping headed toward the bureaucratic SWP. But the RMC was correct that the SL would not consider fusing with an organization which has the RMC's hardened line on the Russian question, especially an organization derived from Shachtmanism which had not broken from that key plank in the anti-Marxist Shachtmanite methodology.

In a Bolshevik organization factionalism is a crucial mechanism of serious programmatic struggle. A disciplined combat party (unlike a social-democratic formation whose "unity" does not derive from program) must be "intolerant" of "long term differences." The RMC had been told in no uncertain terms that the SL would not welcome an entrism maneuver or embrace a "fusion" which included a perspective of permanent programmatic divergence on central questions. In the SWP, the RMC perhaps thinks it has found a suitable culture medium which will nurture it as a more-or-less permanent "state cap" minority.

"Defensism, SWP Style"

But the RMC's primary motivation for selecting the SWP as the target for fusion was evidently political: to "build a base for State Department socialism." This is the charge that rankles Herreshoff so much, not really because of what it says about the RMC but because of what it says about the SWP's reformist degeneration as expressed over the Russian question. A look at the RMC's voluminous written record of its rather brief independent existence will illustrate what we mean. For the SWP's flight from the Trotskyist line on the Russian question is not evident only to us; it is evident to the RMC as well.

In the pre-fusion period the RMC carried out an extensive examination of the SWP's position on the Russian question—and discovered that behind the SWP's formally Trotskyist line (political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucratic caste, defense of the gains of October against imperialism and counterrevolution) lurked another position: the SWP's real orientation toward "democratic" anti-Stalinism as expressed in a host of mealy-mouthed positions on contemporary issues where the defense of the deformed workers states against imperialism is posed concretely. And the RMC found these *real* politics on the Russian question quite congenial.

The RMC concluded its document outlining "fusion tasks" by proclaiming the intention to mount "an assault against the wall which has divided 'revolutionary defeatist' and 'revolutionary defensist' currents within the camp of Trotskyism." In assessing the susceptibility of the SWP to this "assault" the RMC had grasped a fact of central importance: that the SWP's rightist renunciation of Trotskyism in all but name is expressed in real backtracking from Soviet defensism in the concrete. If the SWP were Trotskyist, it would be over Stalinism that the state-cap RMC could expect to find the most serious obstacles to fusion. But it is precisely here that the state caps "have seen positive change in the SWP," declares the "Stalinism" section of the "Road to Unity" document:

"We believe the SWP has moved away from this pattern of adaptation to Stalinism and has returned to a position closer to Trotsky's own. This healthy proletarian response to the rising demands of the class struggle, particularly within the Stalinist states, is interpreted by incurable sectarians like

the Spartacists and the Healyites as a collapse into the arms of the U.S. State Department....

"While the SWP has not re-evaluated its position on the class nature of the Stalinist states, its far more revolutionary approach to the Stalinist parties and to the defense of the USSR allows for greater practical collaboration between us on the tasks of the international class struggle...today the SWP is again leading the most consistently revolutionary opposition to Stalinism within the defensist majority of the world movement...."

The list which the RMC adduces to substantiate this assertion is a political patchwork sewn together by one long thread—the abandonment of defensism for all practical purposes:

"The Feldman-Johnson debate with Rousset on the character of the Viet-

Canadian Postal Strike...

(continued from page 5)

sions (both CPL members) while the other seven workers face an investigation of their cases by a management review board reporting to the Deputy Postmaster General. Furthermore, since CPL has no influence whatsoever among the Toronto LCUC drivers, its leaflets and *Worker* articles did not even see fit to even mention the vital role of labor solidarity provided by the other union. After all, writing about the importance of LCUC support for the strike would have destroyed CPL's grandstanding claim that it alone prevented the strike's defeat.

The refusal of the CUPW bureaucracy to launch a real struggle against the victimizations, violation of union work rules and job-cutting by management has led to demoralization even within the ranks of the traditionally militant CUPW. This was reflected in the low turnout at the strike vote, the narrow margin by which the strike vote passed (50 votes out of 800), and the evidence of scabbing at smaller substations during the strike. A definitive victory can only be achieved by calling a nationwide strike of *all* postal workers. This is precisely what the CUPW bureaucracy refused to do, and in the CPL's uncritical enthusing over the Toronto strike and its neglect of the need for joint action with the LCUC, it dropped this crucial demand as well.

While today the CPL is clearly under management attack, its supporters in the union have a long and sordid record of betraying elementary working-class principles. Thus CPLers in Toronto CUPW crossed picket lines to scab at a 1975 postal mechanics strike and have refused to defend supporters of other left-wing groups who are under attack by postal management. Despite an occasional dash of "fight for socialism" rhetoric, CPL's trade-union work is infantile reformist economism, centering on issues like (literally) the fight for better chicken sandwiches in the cafeteria, combined with criminal sectarianism, backstabbing against other postal workers, and innumerable opportunist zigzags.

Speaking on the lessons of the strike at a forum sponsored by the Trotskyist League on December 17, Bob McBurney demonstrated how the CPL's sectarianism and economism flow from its Stalinist minimum/maximum program. In contrast to the CPL supporters' work in CUPW, McBurney has been fighting in the LCUC for several years around a full class-struggle program linking the day-to-day struggles of the union to the need for a new leadership of the workers movement and a revolutionary workers party which unlike the social democratic NDP—with its record of breaking strikes, enforcing wage controls and passing anti-labor legislation—will fight for a workers government based on the expropriation of the means of production and a planned economy. ■

name CP, Joseph Hansen's polemics against the decisions of the Ninth Congress, the SWP's final position on Portugal, Les Evans' articles on China, the LTF's evaluation of the nationalist movements in Angola, *Intercontinental Press's* coverage of the Euro-Communist trend, Hansen's recent series on nuclear disarmament, etc.... "On...what attitude to take to the rising opposition movements in Eastern Europe and Russia, the SWP, by virtue of its keen understanding of the importance of democratic struggles, has established one of the most distinguished records among defensists and defeatists alike."

These are the crucial political questions where an organization's position on the Russian question is shown to be more than inherited formulas. Leaving aside for the moment the question of Portugal, let us examine the concrete programmatic positions which the RMC finds reassuring "evidence" of "positive change" opening the door to "practical collaboration" between the SWP and state capitalists.

The SWP spokesmen took Rousset of the French USec to task for his fulsome praises of the "revolutionary" leadership of Ho Chi Minh. However, their purpose in raising "orthodox" criticisms of the Vietnamese Stalinists was to excuse the SWP's liberal-pacifist, *neutral* policies in the antiwar movement, where it ducked the elementary responsibility for American revolutionists *to support the military victory of the NLF-led forces against their "own" bourgeoisie.*

Similarly, Hansen's polemics against the pro-guerrillaist, Castroite line of the USec majority were blows against petty-bourgeois adventurism *from the right*, in the service of the SWP's legalistic search for reformist respectability. The SWP and the USec faction ("LTF") which it led raised "orthodox" criticisms of the left-nationalist MPLA in Angola in order to maintain, almost until the bitter end, a neutralist stance in a proxy war between U.S./South African imperialists (and the Chinese Stalinists) and the Soviet/Cuban-backed MPLA.

- Hansen's "disarmament" articles hid behind the anti-nuclear concerns of eco-radicals and liberal pacifists to imply a "plague on both your houses" position between imperialism and the Soviet bloc. The SWP's apologetic gyrations on behalf of all "dissidents"—from cold-war militarists right up to the most apocalyptic religious obscurantists and pro-tsarist reactionaries—cater to the so-called "human rights" campaign of Jimmy Carter, which is merely the sanctimonious mask of imperialism's strategic perspective directed toward the destruction of the USSR.

Indeed, the SWP is a good place for the RMC to "erect the scaffold" of its anti-Trotskyist third-campism—or, as we said in the vocabulary more common in the Trotskyist movement, to "build a base for State Department socialism." It is a fertile ground for a systematic assault on the defensist residues which nominally stand between the SWP and its appetite to become the mass party of American social democracy.

Portugal: Litmus Test for "State Department Socialists"

The touchstone of "State Department socialism" is its acceptance of bourgeois/imperialist "anti-Stalinism" as a legitimate ally in the fight for "democracy" against "totalitarian dictatorship." The critical test in the past period was Portugal in the summer-fall of 1975. There, the Socialist Party (PS) of Mário Soares consciously played the role made notorious by Ebert/Noske in 1918-19; Soares himself actually made this analogy. And his course not only coincided with the interests of imperialism—he was actually receiving millions of dollars every month from the CIA, funneled through West European social-democratic parties! This is admitted by the American government itself.

The Portuguese revolutionary crisis unmasked those organizations which in

the service of the bourgeoisie pervert the Trotskyists' revolutionary opposition to Stalinism. These groups are Trotskyist in name, social-democratic in action. The SWP-RMC convergence in support of Soares' PS against the Communist Party (PCP) and the so-called "ultra-lefts" (in reality centrists and Maoist reformists) was a major factor leading to the present fusion. It was on the terrain of the living class battles of the Portuguese workers that the RMC and SWP showed that their fusion is rooted in support to the U.S. State Department.

In July-August of 1975 Portugal erupted in anti-Communist demonstrations, some initiated by the Catholic hierarchy, some by ultra-rightist farmers and the largest of them by the PS. Following the burning of a PCP office by landowners enraged by the agrarian reform law in the central Portuguese town of Rio Maior in July, similar actions spread throughout northern Portugal as flames leapt from PCP locals after every "pro-democracy" demonstration. Mário Soares proclaimed, "The resistance of Rio Maior is exemplary" and a member of the PS leadership told a demonstration in the town, "here people showed what had to be done" (Mário Soares, *Quelle révolution?* [1976]).

In this openly counterrevolutionary mobilization the lead was frequently taken by fascist elements linked to General Spínola's ELP. Yet Soares hailed the "popular uprising against the PCP" and openly admitted he was willing to ally with the ELP against the Stalinists. The response of the "Trotskyists" of the SWP? The *Militant* of 8 August 1975 headlined: "Portuguese Masses Take to Streets to Protest Moves Toward Dictatorship." If you want to know what "State Department socialism" is—here it is in practice at a critical flashpoint of contemporary history. In article after article the SWP excused the CIA-financed PS, portraying it as mobilizing the masses in a *left* opposition to the PCP (see "SWP/OCI Tail Counterrevolution in Portugal," *WV* No. 75, 29 August 1975). Some "left" opposition when the fascists are burning Communist Party offices as Soares cheers the "popular uprising"!

And what of the RMC? In a September 1975 article Bruce Landau criticizes the SWP for being too soft on the Portuguese Socialist Party, at one point going so far as to say "The SWP hands them [the PS workers] over to Soares on a platter." But then, to balance the scales so to speak, he attacks the Spartacist League for giving what he calls a "third period characterization" of the PS. The RMC objects in particular to our statement that Soares "has been acting as a front man for this counterrevolutionary mobilization," and we are taken to task for failing to see the "two-sided significance" of PS mobilizations.

Overtly at least, this is the response of people who fail to see political struggle taking place in the real world. We indicated the dual character of the PS as a reformist (i.e., bourgeois) workers party, and that it had won some working-class support on the basis of opposition to the Stalinists' vise on the unions. But while there was a class difference between the PS and the fascist ELP or the reactionary bishops with whom it was in tacit alliance, there was a counterrevolutionary mobilization in Portugal in the summer of 1975 which was patently obvious to reporters of all political tendencies. It was simply not possible to assert that some of those coming to burn down the PCP offices (and those of other leftist groups, by the way) were doing so for rightist reasons, others for leftist reasons. In fact, the RMC tries to carry its fairy-tale dichotomy into the Socialist Party itself, which it claims "represent[ed] a threat from both the left and the right" to the PCP and MFA!

More fundamentally, aside from repeatedly and without a single shred of evidence asserting that for the SL "apparently the greatest danger to

capitalism comes from the MFA and the PCP... the core of the RMC's argument is that the Socialist Party was "able to successfully present itself... as the sole champion of even bourgeois democracy in the labor movement," while "the PCP and the MFA have been trying to set up a bonapartist regime in Portugal to consolidate capitalism on a statist basis" ("Problems of the Portuguese Revolution," *Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 7, March 1976). Thus it saw the CP/left MFA bloc as the principal reactionary force in this period. The Gonçalves Fifth Provisional Government represented, if only in intent, the most reactionary form of bourgeois political rule (save fascism). Against this it defends the Constituent Assembly which was dominated by a PS-right wing bloc.

In point of fact, neither Soares nor the MFA right wing (the Group of Nine) allied with him saw PCP statism as the main danger, but rather the spread of the embryos or germs of dual power. Both said so plainly. Thus in a letter to Portuguese president Costa Gomes, the PS leader stipulated his conditions for re-entering the government. Key to these were:

"D) Reaffirm the principle that the neighborhood commissions and workers commissions are forms of people's power which must be developed, so long as they do not pretend to be a 'parallel power' to the political-administrative apparatus of the state....

"E) Promulgate legislation severely punishing the 'armed militias' which must be suppressed within a maximum of one month's time, along with the 'popular vigilance commissions' and others which have arms in their possession."

—*Portugal Socialista*, 10 September 1975

The Left MFA/CP Fifth Provisional Government had to tolerate at this time these germs of dual power because they were unable to suppress them. The PCP was never a partisan of the workers commissions and sought to subordinate them to the bureaucratic apparatus of the unions. But it could not take them on directly without blowing apart its own power base and thus threatening its position in the government. In time this government would have sought to suppress these bodies. But in the summer-fall of 1975 it was the PS which led the rightist offensive against them. The Spartacist League recognized the danger this posed and called for military blocs with those prepared to defend these proletarian conquests against the reactionary mobilization.

At the time the RMC criticized the SWP's tailing after Soares & Co. However, in its moves toward fusion with the Socialist Workers Party the RMC says "we extended our understanding to democratic struggles in Portugal, Spain..." ("Fusion Conference of the Revolutionary Marxist Committee," *Revolutionary Marxist Papers* No. 14, July 1977). And now it hails as one of the evidences of the SWP's "more revolutionary" approach its "final position" on Portugal. We can assure the ex-RMCers, as will Jack Barnes, that the SWP did not change its line on Portugal. Throughout it was consistent in defending the shadow of (bourgeois) "democracy" against what it characterized as the danger of ultra-left putschism led by those well-known "ultra-leftists," the Portuguese Communist Party! This just happened to be the same line as the Portuguese PS... and the U.S. State Department. The difference is that Mário Soares got paid for his troubles while the SWP worked for free.

CP Nails SWP

The SWP's backhanded abandonment of Soviet defensism—the political basis of the present fusion with the "state-cap" RMC—was perceived not only by the SL, but also by the CP, which exploited it to smear Trotskyism with the "human rights" politics of the SWP reformists. Our article, "Even with Lies, CP Nails SWP," caused particular

irritation to friends of the SWP like Herreshoff, who attacks us for "reason[ing] like a Stalinist hack" and defends the fusion in the name of the high road of Trotskyist journalism. "above mucking around in the sewers of the Stalinist press." Presumably, then, responsible journalism consists of some sort of bloc of all those who call themselves Trotskyist—against the simple political truth, which even the CP knows how to recognize when it serves its purposes.

The SWP replies to the *Daily World* article by exclaiming, "It lies." Of course the Stalinist press often lies. In our article we pointed out some of the CP's distortions. But the cynical CP hit the nail on the head when it asked how an organization which professed any lingering commitment to the defense of the gains of October could crawl into bed with a non-defensist formation to become the "best builders" of anti-Soviet "human rights." For the Stalinists—who preach illusions in "détente" with Jimmy Carter and murder Trotskyist defenders of the Soviet Union against imperialism—to pose the question is sheer hypocrisy. But it is still a good question.

In the U.S., which has no mass reformist workers party, the "human rights" campaign is the analogue of popular frontism—the formal basis for leftists with no social base to collaborate in the service of the "progressive" bourgeoisie. It is worth noting that although Moscow is the target of the anti-Communist crusade, the CP has helped push the "human rights" bandwagon wherever possible. The pop-front appeal of classless "democratic" movements under the sway of Democratic Party politics is tailor-made for the SWP, which hopes to be the new party of American social democracy, and for the RMC, whose main enemy is ultimately the "statist" Soviet Union. As for the CP, if it finds itself temporarily outflanked among popular frontists by the SWP offering support to every Solzhenitsyn in and out of the Soviet Union, it can compete by offering implicit and sometimes direct electoral support to the Democrats.

The real question is not whether the Stalinist press habitually lies about Trotskyism, but whether the SWP has in practice dumped the Trotskyist line on the Russian question as it moves toward reformist reconciliation with the bourgeoisie at home. The SWP can claim in "Why the CP Lies About the Unification of the Trotskyists" that it still stands for Soviet defensism, but not even the *Daily World* hacks should believe everything they read in the *Militant*.

Whether or not the RMC proves capable of winning a section of the SWP to its formal state-capitalist analysis, the host organism has in good measure already accepted a Soviet defeatist position. To be sure, the SWP has some petty factional reasons for embracing the RMC: to strengthen its "unity" appeals for regroupments with other forces, for example from the DeLeonist SLP, within which it already has some open supporters; to strengthen the Stalinophobic forces within the USec now that the USec's major factions have formally dissolved and the former antagonists are licking one another's mutually inflicted political wounds. But the main value of the fusion for the SWP is symbolic: as a gesture to the bourgeoisie that no residues of its Trotskyist past will impede the SWP from bidding for the status of junior partner to U.S. imperialism if the bourgeoisie should find itself compelled to bargain with anti-Stalinist "reds" for a left cover. Right now the SWP is a long way from the mass influence which would make it a candidate for such a deal—it has no real base to sell out. But as it carries out its turn toward the labor bureaucracy, waving its new Shachtmanite fusion as the banner of its commitment to anti-Stalinist "democracy," it is confident that its time will come. ■

Houston Conference...

(continued from page 2)

get a good (managerial) job—the National Organization for Women and advertising agency exploitation of "women's lib" jargon. Even the wives of imperialists presidents, military dictators and blood-soaked shahs now feel safe to "come out" as feminists.

But feminism, even in its more radical days, always involved collaboration with bourgeois liberals. "Sisterhood is



Northrup/Time

Bella Abzug

powerful" means denial of the primacy of the class line, excusing blocs with female capitalist politicians and the bourgeois state. Hence the popularity among feminists of union-busting "affirmative action" schemes, which placed a handful of token women in jobs at the expense of overturning hard-won trade-union gains and undermining working-class solidarity.

In keeping with the theme of constituency politics at Houston, "labor" was not entirely ignored. It was represented, however, by union bureaucrats, like Olga Madar of the United Auto Workers, who participated in the infamous 1,000-man goon squad that broke up the Mack Avenue wildcat strike in Detroit in 1973, and Addie Wyatt of the Amalgamated Butcher Workers. The pretense of such misleaders, both of them prominent spokesmen for the moribund Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), to represent the interests of working women is particularly disgusting. At no time during the conference did they or anyone else raise a program for working-class struggle against the oppression of women: for union hiring halls and union-controlled job-training programs to end management discrimination against women and minorities; employer-paid 24-hour child care; a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to provide jobs for all, and a workers party to fight for a workers government.

Left Tails Liberals

Clearly, any self-respecting radical feminist—let alone a self-proclaimed Marxist—should have held her nose at this malodorous farce which the U.S. government staged in Houston. Yet in fact those ostensible socialists who most egregiously picked up the feminist fad have hailed the IWY conference as "progressive." Are they blind? No, they are forced into this ludicrous position by the simple fact that the liberal feminists put forward *their program*. The reformists and centrists had no alternative.

Thus the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee insisted, "It is up to us to unite these women on a progressive basis in Houston." The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the prime exponent of the view that "consistent feminism" equals socialism, asserted in the 2 December *Militant* that the conference went on record "against the anti-women

policies of the very government sponsoring the event." The same theme was echoed by YAWF, with the 18 November *Workers World* claiming that "Many state IWY meetings became forums for progressive women."

Most disoriented of all the "socialist feminists" at Houston as the Democratic Party crowned itself champion of feminism was undoubtedly the Socialist Workers Party. A Saturday night SWP forum drew a paltry 150 people, and its Sunday night talk on "Feminism and Socialism" by Betsey Stone netted only 40, the vast majority of them SWPers. "They're afraid to bring up abortion over there," Stone cried frantically, waving in the direction of the coliseum. When a Spartacist League supporter pointed out that only two hours before, the conference had passed a "reproductive freedom" plank for legalized abortion, Stone could only respond, "Well, if that is true, then all I can say is 'right on.'" Not a word about *free* abortion on demand.

This response fairly sums up the SWP's program: "right on!" to bourgeois feminism. Its response to the Houston IWY conference was determined by the fact that the liberal "National Plan" contains virtually the entire SWP program for women's liberation, though more attractively packaged by the U.S. government. In contrast, the SL program will never be adopted by the class enemy, even in the meaningless for-the-record-only form as at Houston, for its strikes at the heart of the institutions which oppress woman and are vital supports of the capitalist system.

While supporting democratic rights and reforms that must be wrested from



WV Photo

Dallas Higgins, wife of KKK grand dragon.

the bourgeois state, Marxists point out that such rights can be guaranteed and consolidated only by united working-class action to overthrow the rotten capitalist system which requires the oppression and exploitation of women, minorities and of all working people. Full and equal participation of women in all aspects of social life requires smashing the bourgeois state and replacement of the nuclear family. The task of proletarian revolution is to lay the basis for a socialist society that will do away with the oppression of women once and for all.

Forward to a women's section of a reborn Fourth International! Women's liberation through proletarian revolution! ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

UMWA Ranks Shut Scab Mines

Miller Selling Out Miners' Right to Strike

DECEMBER 20—As rank-and-file members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) strive for the means to win their strike, shutting down scab coal operations from the Appalachians to the Rockies, Arnold Miller is betraying their struggle with equal vigor at the bargaining table. On December 14 the UMWA president reportedly caved in on the decisive issue of the right to strike. Asked after that day's bargaining if an agreement could be reached without a right-to-strike provision provided the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) makes some concession, Miller blithely replied, "That's what collective bargaining is all about."

Though details of the deal reached have not been formally released, UMWA and BCOA negotiators have reportedly agreed that miners who cause wildcats at their own or other mines can be summarily fired. Miners who even respect picket lines can also be disciplined. In line with the mid-October decision of the Arbitration Review Board that "roving pickets" could be automatically dismissed, the agreement is aimed at crushing the miners' key weapon in the wildcats which ripped through the coal fields over the last three years.

Agreement on this "right to fire" clause is not only a criminal betrayal of the miners' most important demand; it also betrays the historic traditions of the coal mines. Miller and the BCOA are out to bury the miners' watchword: "Never cross a picket line."

In return for the UMWA tops' effectively abandoning the right to strike, BCOA chief Joseph Brennan is prepared to drop his demand that the new contract contain an explicit no-strike clause. And why not? With the right to fire, the BCOA has all its needs. As *Business Week* (26 December) gloated: "If this clause is in the contract, the operators have little need for a no-strike provision and so the BCOA has not surrendered very much."

Brennan has also offered to reduce demands for financial penalties against wildcatting miners. The BCOA's original stand amounted to outright robbery: the coal companies would pocket 40 percent of strikers' wages in any ten-day period in which a walkout occurred. Brennan now proposes a more disguised form of theft: a \$22-per-day fine, payable into the health and pension trusts. This novel clause has the additional benefit of shifting financial support of the funds from a tonnage royalty directly to the miners' paychecks. Also part of the this "stabilization" package is a new draconian absentee policy: six unexcused missed days could result in firing.

It was widely anticipated that Miller would attempt to trade off the right to strike in exchange for restoration of

health and pension funding which was cut back by the BCOA last summer, a provocation that sparked a ten-week, 85,000-man wildcat. But to make their capitulation to the coal operators even more abject, the UMWA negotiators themselves are now proposing that miners pay a portion of future medical bills.

Undoubtedly all the details of the sell-out being prepared for the miners have not yet been hammered out behind the closed doors in Washington, D.C. But the main outlines of the union's articles of surrender are clear. If a tentative agreement is not announced soon it is merely a reflection of Miller's fear that such a rotten pact will be rejected by the ranks, particularly only three weeks into the strike.

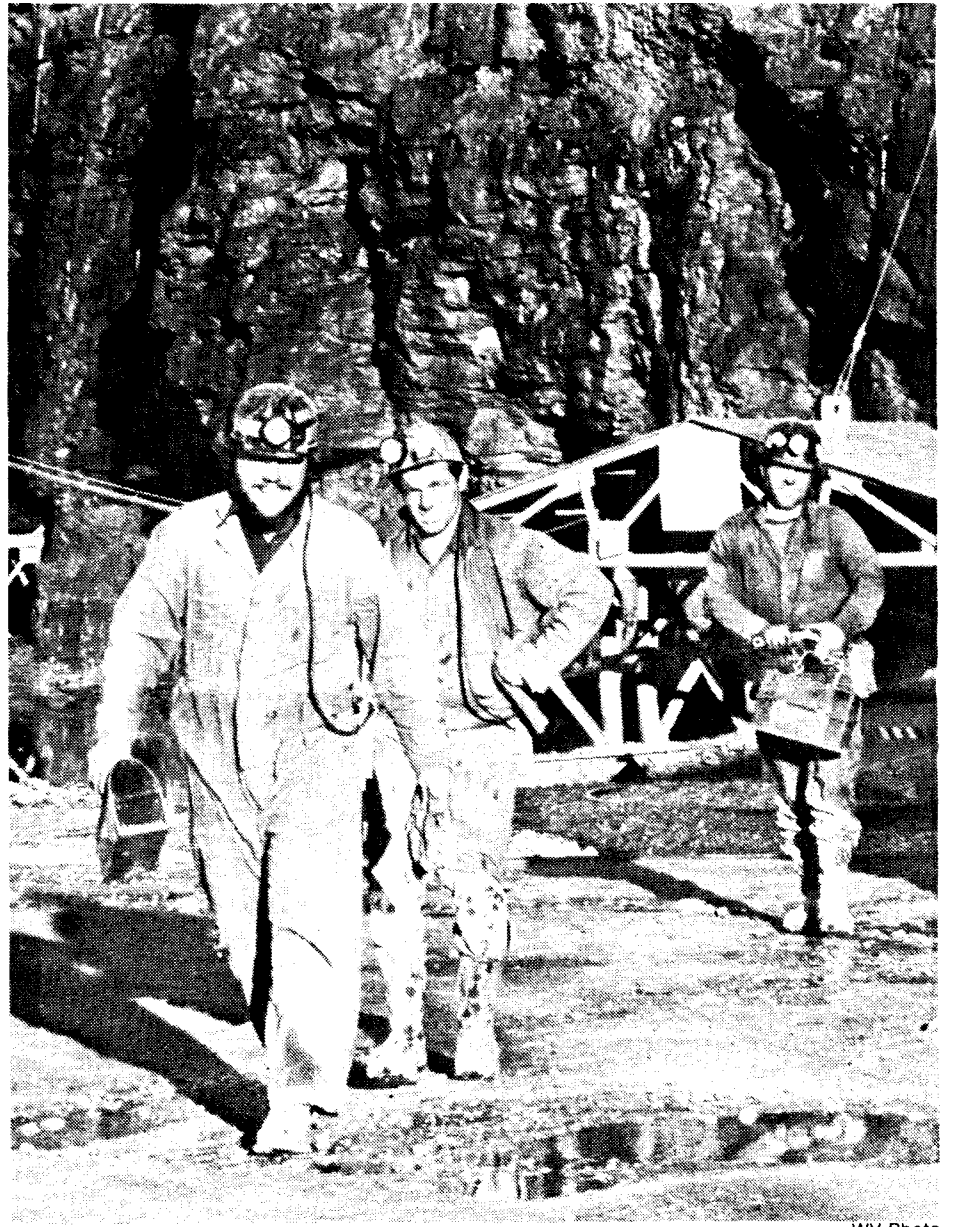
Furthermore, the BCOA itself is not anxious to settle. The steel mills and power companies have plenty of coal stockpiled and Brennan is no more eager than Miller to rush into an early and risky ratification vote. Well aware that the UMWA has no strike fund and that health benefits ended when the strike began, the bosses want to let the miners get hungrier and colder. The renegade Brennan—a former research director for the union and now the coal operators' main spokesman—wants to teach the miners a lesson.

Miners Hit Scab Coal

But while Miller and his cohorts have been shaping up a sell-out, UMWA members show no desire to give in. They have tried to make their strike effective, mainly by attempting to shut down the non-union operations that account for nearly 50 percent of U.S. coal production. In the union stronghold of West Virginia, with over 65,000 union miners, little picketing has been required: sheer fear of trying to run coal trucks on the roads has convinced most scab operators to shut down.

But in many areas UMWA control has been seriously eroded. In Pennsylvania UMWA coal has fallen from 72 to 60 percent of state production in five years; in Ohio from 75 percent to 50 percent in ten years; in Kentucky a ten percent drop to 42 percent in five years. In Tennessee the union controls only 13 percent of the total. Most serious is the situation in the West. The rapidly expanding western mines are only 32 percent UMWA and that fraction is fast declining. It is in these areas that union miners have been forced to mobilize to prevent scabbing on their strike.

On December 8 an \$180,000 mining auger was dynamited in Virginia. In Indiana 50 strikers charged a mine and company officials complained that a cache of guns was discovered missing from company buildings. At a nearby coal dock 300 strikers fought bulldozer operators who tried to force the pickets off the road with their machines.



WV Photo

Miners leave last shift in Cabin Creek at beginning of UMWA strike.

While most scab operations in southern Ohio have been closed, it has not been without effort. Shots were exchanged between pickets and supervisory personnel at one mine; at another, pickets trapped foremen inside. In Pennsylvania strip mine machinery was destroyed at one scab mine and 30 miners defied a court order December 14 to warn scabs under local and state police escort not to return to work at two non-union mines.

The same day pickets appeared at a working mine in Oklahoma for the first time. The next day 300 strikers invaded the only working coal dock in Illinois, where shipments from western U.S. fields were being transferred onto Ohio River barges. Thirty scabs on hand fled the scene: some rode barges downriver while others simply ran.

On December 13 at least five truckloads of coal were dumped alongside eastern Kentucky highways as 400 roving pickets covered that state, Ohio and West Virginia in a 100-car caravan. The contingent made a stop at the Justus mine in Stearns, Kentucky, where 150 miners have been on strike for nearly 17 months seeking a UMWA

contract. A hundred riot-equipped state police were rushed to the scene. But unlike last October, when the cops beat and arrested over 100 strikers and union supporters for trying to stop scabs, this time the outnumbered cops made no attempt to remove the pickets. A crucial demand of the striking miners must be that no national contract be settled until the Justus mine is UMWA!

The Western Threat

The high and increasing percentage of non-UMWA coal in the West, where over 50 percent of U.S. coal reserves are located, is a mortal threat to the miners union. The UMWA's weakness in the West has made the struggle to stop scab production particularly bitter.

A bridge leading to the Plateau Mine in Utah was burned December 8 and 40 scabs were trapped overnight. Heavy equipment was needed to clear the highway of 500-pound boulders and four-inch spikes had been driven into the road to deter scabbing. Pickets also stopped operations at the neighboring Swisher and Soldier Creek mines. Union officials asked representatives of

continued on page 9