

the TORCH 4

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Newspaper of the
Revolutionary
Socialist League

Reconstruct the Fourth International!

February, 1974

No. 5



Welsh miners march against capitalist attack.

FIGHT THE LAYOFFS!

by Terry Shephard

Government officials who have been gloating over the workers' defeat during the 1973 contract negotiations now fear that they won't be able to keep the lid on during 1974. With the help of labor "leaders" the government was able to contain all 1973 contract settlements well within government guidelines. Now, however, they are afraid the chickens are coming home to roost.

The economy is going into a tailspin despite the bosses' attack, which has reduced workers' real wages by 3.3 per cent during the past year. The energy crisis, the war in the Middle East, and Arab oil embargoes have had a profound effect on an already spluttering economy. Because of massive layoffs, chronic inflation, and rapidly rising consumer prices, the bosses don't expect the workers to sit still much longer. They are caught in a bind and their only way out is a furious attack on the working class and all the gains made since World War II. Accordingly they are preparing themselves for major confrontations with the working class in the period ahead.

Secretary of Labor "Pistol Pete" Brennan—famous for packing a pistol at workers' meetings—is attempting to head off an explosion by putting the bosses on notice that trouble is ahead. After cynically proclaiming that "1973 was a good year for the working people," this ex-union hack warned in a news conference that workers could be expected to seek their "pound of flesh" this year. He wants the government to relax the 5.5 per cent ceiling on wage increases in certain cases in the hope that an immediate confrontation with labor can be avoided. He would rather let the steam out slowly than risk the whole kettle boiling over. His strategy is age-old: "divide and rule." He is quite willing to grant concessions to certain key unions in order later to redouble the attack against all workers.

Already the sellouts of union fakers have guaranteed that the new year will be far from happy. For example, more than 178,000 auto

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Road to Revolution in Britain

by Paul Benjamin

The class struggle in Britain today is rising to great heights. Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath, bent on terrorizing the British proletariat into accepting his "Phase Three" program of wage controls and speed-up schemes, has turned his big guns on the National Union of Miners. In reply, the NUM has called for a strike vote to back up its pay demands. The stage has been set for a full-scale class confrontation.

All eyes are now on Britain—the eyes of the international bourgeoisie as well as of the most advanced workers everywhere.

If Heath's strategy succeeds, it will embolden the

ruling class world-wide. If revolutionary socialists in Britain intervene correctly, however, they can rally the proletariat to defend itself, stop Heath in his tracks, increase their own strength and influence, boost the confidence of the international working class tremendously, and prepare the ground for the British proletariat's future seizure of state power.

HEATH'S OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

Faced with a dilapidated industrial base and the need to squeeze investment capital out of the working class, Heath has deliberately provoked a confrontation with the British trade-union movement.

He has declared a state of emergency in Great Britain.

He has ordered fully two-thirds of the labor force—16 million workers—to accept a three-day work week. As a result, unemployment in Britain more than doubled, literally overnight. Unemployment could soon climb to six million workers, surpassing the levels of the Depression years of the 1930's.

Heath now brandishes the threat of continued and worsened conditions as a weapon against unions fighting for their lives. The miners' union in particular has been singled out for this treatment. All of British capitalism's ills are now blamed on the miners, one of the most underpaid sectors of the British working class.

Heath refuses to grant the miners the minimal wage increases they ask and warns that unless the miners settle on his terms, inflation and unemployment will skyrocket. He is attempting to split

Cont'd. p. 10

INSIDE

NO FUEL	p. 3
THE MID-EAST	p. 8
STATE CAPITALISM	p. 12
L.A. RUBBER STRIKE	p. 2
OIL & REVOLUTION	p. 4

BEFORE U.R.W. LOCAL

Revolutionary Routs Top Hack

by Gerald Ryan

The 11-month strike of United Rubber Workers Local 621 against the R.G. Sloane Company in Sun Valley, California, demonstrates again the inability of the labor bureaucracy to defend the working class against the capitalists' assault. It is particularly in small, isolated strikes, involving blacks, browns, or women—like the Sloane and Farah strikes—that the bureaucrats most cynically expose the workers to the most brutal attacks of the bosses.

The Sloane strike began last March as a defense against the company's subsistence-level wages and its "Merit Plan" productivity scheme. As Sloane's efforts to crush the strike gained ground, it then brazenly put forward an even more vicious productivity scheme—"Continuous Operations." This plan slashed wages by 25 percent and eliminated, with no loss to production, an entire shift of workers. Both of these productivity schemes are easily recognized as part of the capitalists' plan to get more profit by forcing more work on fewer workers for

smaller wages.

Sloane has employed every imaginable tactic to smash the strike through pitting one section of workers against another. Scabs were recruited from the growing ranks of unemployed blacks and "illegal" aliens. The mostly white skilled workers and lead men were lured back by a large wage increase, coupled with appeals to their privileged skill and skin color. Pitting whites against non-whites, U.S. citizens against illegals, skilled against unskilled, is a favored and traditional tactic of the bosses.

Faced with the Sloane Company's determined onslaught, how has the URW bureaucracy intervened to "win" the strike? For the first six months, while the strikers saw scabs crossing the line and 200 of its union members go back in, the URW International did nothing.

The heightened frustration and anger of the strikers expressed itself in a move by some to disaffiliate from the URW and join the IBT—a move which almost succeeded. District 5 Director, Arnold Pipkin sent in field organizer T. Rodriguez to direct and contain the strike.

Rodriguez got Sloane back to the bargaining table, but only by bringing in the Federal Mediation Service. When this failed to gain even minimal concessions from Sloane, Rodriguez informed Pipkin that, "I do not know what more I can do to try to save this local union. I have tried every approach I can think of, all to no avail. Unless we can hurt the company's image through a nationwide boycott, mass demonstrations or in some manner, we are in real trouble."

This was the situation facing the Sloane strikers when 100 of them gathered at a Local 621 meeting on December 17, 1973. URW President Peter Bommarito himself was present to try and explain away the International's six months of silence and salvage his own reputation. But scheduled to speak first was David Wolf, a representative of the Revolutionary Socialist League, who addressed the workers on the strategy and tactics necessary to win this strike.

Wolf began his speech by placing the strike in the context of working class defeats in the 1973 contract round. He pointed out that in the face of the bosses'

offensive the labor hacks are doing nothing to defend workers from massive price rises and unemployment.

The only real solution to the problems facing Sloane workers, he explained, was a strategy to unite the entire class against this offensive. Wolf urged the strikers to carry their struggle to the entire URW, that the entire URW go out to defend the Sloane strike and re-open their own sell-out contract. He argued that they go to nearby auto plants to convince other workers that "the defense of your strike is the defense of their jobs," and call on them to join in a united defense of the Sloane strike.

Only a Labor Party with a revolutionary program, Wolf explained, could fully derail the capitalist offensive by creating a workers' government. Any other program, however "progressive," will only channel the workers' struggle into boundaries acceptable to capitalism and will betray the workers the

moment the struggle threatens the system.

Wolf finished by saying that the League "is willing to work with anybody for a united defense of the Sloane strike and the workers' movement. We are confident that your own experience will convince you through joint struggle that our program offers the only solution."

Bommarito spoke immediately after Wolf. In every instance where the League proposed a tactic to unify the working class in defense of the Sloane strike, Bommarito counterposed bourgeois legality in order to limit and wreck the struggle.

But after his six months of do-nothing leadership, the Sloane workers didn't buy Bommarito's efforts to brand the League as "wreckers." On the contrary, they gave David Wolf and *The Torch* a friendly reception, and a number of workers expressed interest in learning more about the League and its program.

MASS STRIKES IN PERU

by Shelley Kramer

In October and November, workers in southern Peru staged a general strike in defense of trade union rights.

The confrontation with the Velasco military dictatorship began when the teachers walked off their jobs. The teachers' union (SUTEP) has been outlawed for resisting government intervention. The latest wave of teachers' strikes is part of SUTEP's continual struggle to defend itself against Velasco's attempts to replace it with a government-controlled corporatist union.

Workers and students responded to the teachers' struggle by closing ranks and striking together. They shut down factories, stopped transportation, broke off communication services, and attacked government buildings. The Communist Party-dominated trade union federation, the CGTP, promptly declared war on the strike, siding with the government: "We consider the strike to be entirely political and to have a subversive character with the intent of creating chaos and disorder." On November 20, army special forces units attacked a striker demonstration. Again workers and students rallied to the defense of the strike. Barricades were erected to resist the military. Velasco imposed martial law on the cities of Arequipa and Puno. After two days of heroic resistance, the strike was broken.

The defeat of the teachers' strike is the responsibility of the CP. The strike represented the struggle of workers and students to forge a united front against the government's offensive. The CP implemented its own class-collaborationist version of the united front—by uniting with Velasco and the bourgeoisie against the strikers! The CP proudly supports the Velasco dictatorship because of the dictator's demagogic rhetoric, its nationalization of some imperialist holdings, and its friendly relations with the USSR.

The fact that this "progressive" regime challenges US imperialism only to strengthen its own power over the Peruvian working class—that it enforces its rule on the workers through police terror—all this is unimportant to the Stalinists of the CP.



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CAPITALIST STAGNATION

WHY WE HAVE NO FUEL

by Jack Gregory

The energy crisis lays bare the vicious dynamic of the capitalist mode of production. The classical themes of capitalism are echoed here: no matter how vital a product is, it won't be produced if it doesn't bring in enough profit. No matter how abundant the resource, there will be shortages if the rate of return on investment is too low. The central theme of capitalism's epoch of decay is most sharply expressed in the energy sector: the inability to generate sufficient capital to qualitatively develop the productive forces.

There is no shortage of energy resources—in fact, there is a virtually limitless supply of nuclear fusion energy and solar energy waiting to be tapped. There is not even a shortage of available oil, natural gas, and coal—the most conservative estimates show enough oil to last over three decades and enough coal to last for centuries. But the potential of nuclear and solar energy has not been developed for lack of investment capital, while the current oil shortages stem from a falling rate of profit in the oil industry.

The oil industry faces a long-term crisis of capital generation. Fully one year before the Arab oil boycott, Mobil Oil announced in a widely-circulated ad dated October 5, 1972:

"The worldwide capital requirements of the petroleum industry alone between now and 1985 will come to about \$500 billion.

"No oil company will be willing to borrow and invest on this unprecedented scale unless the rate of return—the ratio of earnings to assets—is sufficiently attractive. For the past several years, however, U.S. oil companies' rate of return has been below that of U.S. manufacturing as a whole."

John G. McLean, president of Continental Oil, reached the same conclusions as Mobil. Speaking for the National Petroleum Council on September 21, 1972, he stated:

"Finally, we shall face growing problems generating the enormous capital inputs necessary to provide for our energy requirements. Between now and 1985, the U.S. energy industry will have to invest between \$400 and \$500 billion in new productive and distributive facilities. This works out to an average of about \$30 billion per annum which may be compared to outlays of about \$16 billion per year at the present time. The magnitude of the problem is further clarified when you consider that total capital investments by all U.S. manufacturing industries, plus those of all public utilities for generating and transmitting equipment, are now at a level of only about \$42 billion per year."

The oil industry has invested next



Independent truckers are hard hit by energy crisis. Troopers above break up stall-in in Amherst, Ohio [See

"Teamsters and the Stall-ins," page 7].

to nothing in domestic energy production for over a decade, with one of the lowest research rates in U.S. industry. It must reverse this trend today, it realizes, and attempt to accumulate huge blocks of capital in order to develop alternate energy sources.

Oil resources are drying up, and in the near future the average cost of oil production will soar as all the easily accessible oil is used up.

Even before the Arab governments started jumping the price of crude oil, it was clear that nuclear fission, coal gasification (making synthetic natural gas from coal) and shale oil would soon become competitive with crude oil and natural gas.

The Chicago *Sun-Times* of November 25, 1973, refers to "a dire report circulating at the top of the government" and "prepared before the Arab embargo was even contemplated." This report "warned that fuel shortages would be so severe this winter that ghetto apartments might be intolerably cold. Together with the brown-out of high-intensity, anti-crime lighting, the report declared, the situation might be ripe for 'civil insurrection.'"

This, combined with U.S. government anxiety about overdependence on foreign oil and the companies' own fears of eventual expropriation abroad have made the development of new sources of energy urgent.

FALLING RATE OF PROFIT

But this requires capital, and here

the oil trusts once again run headlong into the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. As the scope of operations increases, each additional purchase of new machinery is more costly than the preceding one, while the rate of return is proportionately lower. The lower rate of return makes it more difficult to generate enough capital to finance new technology. This has been especially true in the oil industry, where the profit rate has fallen from 9.4% in 1963 to 7.4% in 1972 (below the average rate for U.S. industry).

The oil companies are attempting, and at present successfully, to offset the tendency of the rate of profit to fall in their own industry by extracting additional profits from the hide of the proletariat and the rest of the bourgeoisie. That is what lies behind the call for higher prices, which are already boosting the inflation rate and cutting into workers' living standards. The current price increases are expected to bring the oil companies increased revenues of \$13 billion next year, or a large part of what they need to increase their productive capacity. The consequent inflation, oil shortages, and unemployment, however, threaten to plunge the entire economic system into depression, a risk the oil trusts have no choice but to take.

The immediate short-term crisis of oil shortages is closely linked to the long-term crisis and has the same root, the falling rate of profit. With the prospect of falling rates or

returns on capital investments, U.S. capitalists have increasingly looked for other areas of investment—a broad (where production costs have been lower and profits higher) and in speculation and waste production. The result has been a stagnating productive plant in the U.S., with obsolescent steel, railroad, and ship-building sectors.

Oil has been typical of this trend. The oil trusts have invested chiefly abroad (Persian Gulf, Indonesia) and in speculation (Gulf Oil, for example, owns the giant Gulf Real Estate Development Co.) while letting their domestic machinery rot.

This has shown up most sharply in domestic refining capacity: Just one refinery has been built in the U.S. in the past ten years despite an enormous increase in oil consumption. While refineries were going at full capacity before the Arab oil boycott, over 4 million barrels per day of refined oil had to be imported. Add to this 6 million barrels per day of imported crude oil, and obsolete oil tanker and port facilities were strained to the limit. (Again, these facilities have not been developed for lack of profitability.)

Thus, even before the Arab oil boycott it was clear that if oil consumption increased at the expected pace there would be shortages in the U.S. caused by the lack of refining capacity and transportation facilities. These shortages resulted not from a lack of oil, but from a lack

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Editorial

OIL AND REVOLUTION

Petty-bourgeois apologists for capitalism have produced two seemingly contradictory explanations for the energy crisis. One school argues that the shortage is comparable to an earthquake or a hurricane—that it is a natural disaster for which no one and no system is responsible: "That's life."

The other school—including politicians, journalists, and false revolutionaries like the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and others—disagrees. This school insists that the crisis is the fault of the individual grafters, manipulators, and misers. The logical remedy is to bring these individual evil-doers to heel.

These two pitches have one thing in common—they agree that capitalism as a system of production is not responsible for the crisis. The culprits are either "Nature" or else individual capitalist "bad guys."

The oil companies which withhold production to force up prices are not individual, *unusually* crooked operators. They are part of a ruling class which *routinely* operates in this way. The bourgeoisie allows production to go on only when the profit margins are right. Today, in the epoch of capitalism's decay, this dictates stagnation, shortages, recession, and depression.

To break the back of the energy crisis and of the entire ruling-class assault on the workers requires the smashing, the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism itself, not merely of this or that individual profiteer.

The task of revolutionaries now is to show this to the workers who do not yet see this far. In recent years, the U.S. working class has developed a healthy suspicion about the motives and honesty of the bourgeoisie and its kept politicians. The Watergate and related scandals plus hard evidence that oil companies have been and are conspiring to aggravate the fuel shortage to drive up prices—this shapes the workers' perceptions of the nature of the crisis. That perception is still a petty-bourgeois one, based on rooting out individual crooks rather than of destroying the rotten system which inevitably and continually produces such crooks.

For the class as a whole, this petty-bourgeois outlook is merely a stage which they will pass through if Marxists do their job. For the case-hardened Stalinists and centrists, however, the same viewpoint represents their own permanent capitulation to capitalism.

How do we reach the class as a whole? How do we develop the progressive, proletarian essence of their ideas while destroying the petty-bourgeois illusions which surround them? How do we proceed from the crisis as workers see it today to the need to replace the rule of the parasitic bourgeoisie with the international rule of the working class? Here, the selection of slogans is crucial.

(1.) *Demand a sliding scale of wages and hours!* This slogan has been advanced and explained in *The Torch* regularly since our first issue (See, for example, the lead article in this issue by Terry Shephard.) It is the demand that workers be defended against inflation and unemployment re-

gardless of the cost to the bourgeoisie.

(2.) *Open the books of the fuel producers, processors, and distributors to committees of workers, unemployed, and housewives!* The oil companies are using their "right" to industrial secrecy to hide their own manipulations, hoarding, and withholding. By forcing the oil kings to open their books to workers' representatives, workers will be able to monitor the bourgeoisie's criminal mis-use of resources, and prove our assertion that capitalism cannot produce the necessities of life but turns instead to speculation, waste, and swindling.

(3.) *Nationalize the oil-coal-fuel industries and place them under the supervision of workers' factory committees and elected industry-wide production committees!*

(4.) *Down with Nixon! For a general strike to force new elections! Build a revolutionary labor party! For a Workers' Government!*

Workers are today correctly tying up the question of the Nixon regime with the inability of Nixon's class to run society generally. Once again, though, the dominant tendency in the proletariat is to narrow the problem down to Nixon as an individual rather than as a representative of all capitalist politicians.

We argue the need for a government of the working class, the only government that will speak the truth to the workers and plan production in the interests of human needs, not capitalist profits. The demand to nationalize the fuel network is a particularly pressing case of the need to expropriate the entire capitalist class.

It is absolutely crucial that the demand for nationalization—pointing to the inability of the bourgeoisie to produce—be directly linked to the demand for a workers' government. Otherwise it will only feed into state-capitalist schemes in which unprofitable industries are nationalized, placed in the hands of the capitalist state, and then supported by increasing the taxes imposed on the working class. This bourgeois nationalization demand is designed to narrow the focus of working-class anger and direct it into reformist channels. The bourgeois nationalization demand has already been advanced by Patrick Gorman, chief bureaucrat of the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen.

We are not opportunists. We do not try to win workers' hearts by snuggling up to their current sell-out leaders. We reject the Workers' League declaration that Gorman's "is the first demand for socialist policies to deal with the energy crisis" (*Bulletin*, January 8, front page). It is nothing of the kind! It is a capitalist measure, one which aims to solve the capitalists' problems at the workers' expense.

Bourgeois nationalization schemes must be attacked. Their pitch-men in the labor movement must be exposed as agents of the ruling class.

Nationalization is a critical necessity—but it is the answer to the crisis *only* under a workers' government, and as part of a socialist plan to reorganize production internationally from top to bottom to serve the working class, not the bourgeoisie.

LEAGUE FORUMS

Chicago

FIGHT THE LAYOFFS

3:00 p.m. Sun., Feb. 24, 1974

1200 E. 93rd St.

Los Angeles

ENERGY CRISIS SPEARHEADS

CAPITALIST ATTACK

SPEAKER: James Patrick

8:00 p.m. Sat., Feb. 23, 1974

1910 So. Vermont

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LETTERS

Send letters to:
The Torch, Room 200
13755 Woodward Ave.
Highland Park, Michigan 48203

FIGHTING CYNICISM

Friends,

I received a letter from a good friend of mine from days past. Admittedly drunk, his words rolled and tumbled with an uneven cadence. Howsoever jagged his dialouge, his thoughts were crystal clear. Why (he demanded of me) are things so damned. You work your ass off, just to keep even. Future, tomorrows, beget new worries instead of new hope. "But then," he said, "as you once said, life is but a meager existence."

When a decent worker of this man's stature can no longer find peace and fulfillment in the beliefs we both held dear for so long, and must find consolation in a snide, cynical remark, then surely, change must come.

Despair from such a calm almost benevolent person is more than a single set of values destroyed. It's a cry from the wage slaves of the world. It's half way up the mountain, a steel fence forbidding the rest of your climb, for the greed of so few.

And to comment as to the meager existence of life for some (that is, to allow yourself to accept class society and your place in this society), is more than just degrading, it's suicide. To accept one's role as "worker" and the state as your protector after being confronted with classless politics is unwarranted.

Please send forty copies of your upcoming issue of *The Torch*.

Having had the opportunity to speak with two of your (for lack of a better word) "comrades," I understand the search for more "advanced workers" in relation to *The Torch*. And being just a worker, "layers" in the Proletariat Movement causes some irritation. I understand it, but it does bother me. If it works out the way it was projected to, alright. No other "ifs" are acceptable.

International Socialism,
(name withheld by request)
Mt. Orab, Ohio

LABOR PARTY

Dear Editor:

There was a major problem with the Nixon article on the front page of *Torch* #3 ("Down With Nixon! For a Workers' Government!"). I felt that calling for a "Workers' Government" as a major slogan along with "Down With Nixon" was a serious error for several reasons. First, it is abstract given that there is no mass based Labor Party or socialist party to pose this. Second, because it is at this time posed at the wrong time, it is as ultra-left as the Workers League call in 1971 for a general strike. *It would have been a good slogan for Chile—* a

workers' government. But the major step towards that is to push in the unions for the formation of a labor party and to demand *new elections*.

I felt that the headline should have been "Down With Nixon! Organize to Build a Labor Party!" It would have more effectively pointed to an alternative for the people compared to Workers League mechanical propaganda for a Labor Party, or *Workers Power's* vagueness, or the *Militant's* latest fad, the SWP lawsuit. The article on Nixon, when it got down to alternatives, slighted over the question of how to organize and build that political alternative, the labor party. Calling for a Congress of Labor is also an abstraction. Let's not fall into the abstractions of Wohlforth & Co.

Sincerely,
R.S.
Madison, Wisconsin

Reply:

The Watergate crisis provides revolutionary socialists with the opportunity to expose the bourgeoisie's strategy of strengthening the central state apparatus as a weapon against the proletariat. This is not Nixon's strategy, it is the strategy of the ruling class as a whole. Consequently we call not merely for "Down with Nixon!" but for "Down with all capitalist politicians!" We counterpose the program of the workers' government to the strategy of the "strong state."

The call for a workers' government includes the slogans of the Labor Party and new elections. It also indicates what they will be used for; it creates a political direction. The call for the Labor Party and new elections is abstract because it provides no such direction.

Instead, it opens the danger of a misinterpretation of the crisis, in the belief that it is simply a question of "liberty and democracy" in the abstract, and not one of a defense of the proletariat.

UNION BUREAUCRATS

Editor:

In your book review [of *The Big Swindle*, *The Torch* #4], you write "The sell-outs to the productivity drive today are the result of the failure of revolutionaries in the 30's and 40's to win leadership in the CIO."

At that time Communists were leaders in many CIO unions such as West Coast longshoremen, UE, National Maritime Union, Transport Workers Union, which they had mainly organized.

An easy answer as to why they went phony is to say they were Stalinists. Another reason is that once elected they reneged on their promise to fight for "recall" of corrupt officials and to limit their salaries to those of a worker in the

industry.

Regardless of his revolutionary potential, my 39 years of observance of trade union officials convinces me that only when a union official *lives* like a worker will he continue to act and think like one.

N.C.
New York City

Reply

You imply that the solution is to live, act and think like "a worker." The real key is *program*. In fact workers hold all sorts of opinions and act accordingly. A small but growing number live, act and think as revolutionary socialists.

It is the task of revolutionaries to win all workers to a program of common defense of their own interests, to convince them through joint struggle that in their own defense they must overthrow capitalism and institute a workers' government.

The Stalinists and reformists like Walter Reuther hitched themselves to capitalism and *betrayed* the fight for revolutionary program and leadership in the trade unions. Corruption is a consequence, rather than a first cause, of the betrayal of the working class.

SURREALISM

Dear Comrade Editor:

Our movement has learned too much from Trotsky on the relationship between art and revolution to allow to go unchallenged the deviations contained in Comrade Derek Hirst's review of "O Lucky Man" and in his response to the letter of Comrade Franklin Rosemont [*The Torch* #3 & #4].

The point which Trotsky, as the leading Marxist of his day, made time and time again is that it is necessary to have the most open and friendliest attitude towards artistic tendencies which arise in opposition to bourgeois culture—whatever their weaknesses or strengths.

The purpose of the Marxists in the field of art is not to command, not to order about, not to select one school or movement as the official favorite and then persecute all other tendencies. Quite to the contrary, we favor the fullest expression of all the various forms of artistic expression because, to the extent that they, along with the great artistic works of the past, contribute to raising the cultural and social level of human beings they are laying the groundwork for the only real human culture: socialist culture.

Lenin, as Trotsky remarks in *The Revolution Betrayed*, had personally rather "conservative" tastes in art. Nonetheless, he "... remained politically extremely cautious in artistic questions, eagerly confessing his incompetence..." and remained remote from the idea of converting his literary tastes into law."

The remarks directed against Surrealism by Cde. Hirst fall far short of the positions espoused by Trotsky. The remarkably ill-informed character of the review is carried into a deliberate policy of ignorance in his response to Cde. Rosemont. Is it not a little disingenuous to deny that the first article did attack Surrealism? When Cde. Hirst writes that the use of the alleged "surrealist style in a consciously *anti-revolutionary manner*" in the film shows that "the roots of surrealism have come to the forefront in sharp focus," he is attacking an artistic tendency as fundamentally counterrevolutionary!

Is it quite honest to imply that if Cde. Hirst were attacking Surrealism, then the quotation from Trotsky to the effect that all the new currents of the day, surrealism included, have not reached "fruition," would be a good starting point? The facts are different. Trotsky is making the point that bourgeois culture can no longer eventually integrate new currents into itself—this is the "fruition" of which he speaks. Thus, Cde. Hirst's own quotation argues against him. Nor is it correct that Trotsky was attacking Surrealism. Far from it. He had the friendliest relations with the Surrealists and many members of the Surrealist movement also were Fourth Internationalists.

But it is in the argument he advances in regard to the Breton/Schuster "Art Poetique" that Cde. Hirst's eagerness to justify himself takes on its most dangerous character. Cde. Hirst objects to the statement: "I have not imitated those who acquiesce to the desires of the masses..." He characterizes this as "little *except* a petty-bourgeois ideal of style, high above class division..." Thus Cde. Hirst puts forward the idea that the poet is supposed to reflect the desires of the masses. Contrast this to Trotsky's statement: "Personal lyrics of the very smallest scope have an absolute right to exist within the new art... No one is going to prescribe themes to a poet or intends to prescribe them. Please write about anything you can think of."

The greatest poets of the revolutionary past, Blake and Shelley, were not responsive to the "desires of the masses," just as Breton was not and just as future poets will not be. Cde. Hirst, in his subjective opposition to Trotsky's positions, has made a deviation, however unknowingly, in the direction of "proletcult" and "socialist realism."

Fraternally,
Kevin Tracey

The Revolutionary Socialist League takes no position on the artistic questions raised in the dispute over the Derek Hirst review and the attitude toward surrealism expressed in it. The views presented in the Tracey letter, the Rosemont letter, the Hirst reply and the original review do not represent the opinions of the League.

The Editorial Board

FIGHT THE LAYOFFS!

Cont'd. from p. 1

workers have already been given "temporary" or "indefinite" layoffs—and this is only for starters. Auto honchos, who earlier had predicted a 5 per cent to 6 per cent decrease in sales for 1974, are now talking about a full 15 per cent drop this year. And the year is barely a month old! New car sales plummeted a full 18 per cent in December compared to a year earlier. January production targets are 26.5 per cent lower than production levels at the same time last year.

The bottom is dropping out of the auto market because no one can afford to drive gas-hogs with today's gasoline prices. New layoffs in auto are announced weekly. Even before the UAW negotiated national agreements with the Big Three, the auto makers announced that they expected a significant drop in sales in 1974. But the UAW leadership did nothing to protect the ranks from the layoffs that would surely result from a drop in sales. This represents an even worse betrayal than the miserable wage settlement negotiated by grovelling UAW leaders. It means that auto workers are left utterly defenseless as they are mercilessly driven from the plants.

AFFECTS ALL

The problems that can now be most clearly seen in auto are affecting all working people. The energy crisis is finding its sharpest expression in those industries which are most dependent upon fuel and other petroleum products. In addition the major slowdown in auto production means that all major suppliers in steel, rubber, plastics and so on, will have to make sharp cutbacks themselves; even in cases where they have sufficient supplies of fuel and other critical materials. The aircraft industry has announced that it expects to lay off about 150,000 people this year. The construction industry expects widespread layoffs this year because of a significant decline in new housing starts. Teachers and other public employees are facing budget cuts and a direct cutback in personnel. Independent truckers are being driven out of business as a direct result of the energy crisis.

In the last two months of last year alone, unemployment increased by more than 336,000 people! Nixon's economist Hubert Stein has predicted a jobless rate of about 6 per cent for 1974. In human terms, this would mean another 1.5 million workers

thrown onto the streets. And even this figure is far too low. "Private economists" are already predicting an unemployment rate of 8 per cent and higher. The capitalists themselves frankly don't know how high unemployment will go.

In fact, workers are getting it from both ends. Rising unemployment reduces whole sections of the working class to utter poverty. The employed workers are forced to support their class brothers and sisters thrown onto the street. And unemployment is used by the bosses to beat back the wage demands of all workers.

Mounting unemployment is compounded by uncontrollable inflation and sharply rising consumer prices. The government's Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose about 8 per cent in the twelve months that ended October 31st. Food prices alone rose more than 26 per cent during 1973. Skyrocketing prices strip the meager wage gains touted by sell-out union bureaucrats of any meaning.

What does the marvelous "welfare state" have as an answer to the problems facing the workers?

The heralded Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) will do little to protect auto workers from

Students, Teachers Freeze

The icy fingers of capitalist crisis have reached into every corner of society. As the capitalists and their government tighten their grip on the working class, one of their targets is our children's education.

In Gary, Indiana, the energy crisis shut off one-fifth of the heating oil for most of the Steel City's classrooms during November. Temperatures in the classrooms have been lowered and Gary's school board has asked principals to prepare for a four-day school-week on a "stand-by" basis.

In December, the school system's gasoline allocation was cut by one-sixth. The shortage of fuel for school buses has canceled field trips for students. Beginning in January, trucks were scheduled to make fewer deliveries of custodial and instructional supplies to Gary's schools.

The crisis of capitalism is evidenced in Gary schools in another major way. Members of the Gary Teachers Union (AFT Local 4) have seen the government's budget crisis hold their salaries in deep-freeze

Auto assembly lines hit by energy crisis; auto workers head for unemployment office.

longterm layoffs. Workers with less than one year's seniority (the majority of workers in some plants) won't even be eligible for SUB benefits. Eligible workers who expect to receive up to one year's protection during layoff through the SUB plan are in for a shock. The SUB plan, which is supposed to compensate furloughed workers to the tune of about 95 per cent of their regular pay, was only designed for *seasonal adjustments* in employment. The more money the auto bosses make, the lower is the rate that they pay into the fund. And there is a maximum amount after which the bosses pay nothing. This means that even in "good times" it is impossible to build the fund to the extent needed for a major economic downturn.

As of November 1st, SUB fund assets at Ford and Chrysler stood at only 50 per cent to 62 per cent of maximum funding. General Motors

had only 31 per cent of the maximum funding allowed. Even at maximum funding the SUB plan was not designed to withstand a full-blown recession. And now, only one month after the first major layoffs, the UAW refuses to reveal how much money is left in the funds.

The significance of the SUB fund farce goes far beyond auto. About 25 per cent of workers covered under major contract agreements are covered by one variety or another of SUB funding. And of these plans auto has one of the best. Of the nearly 2 million workers covered by SUB, most will receive only a pittance in the event of longterm unemployment.

Workers forced onto the unemployment lines will face a long, cold winter. The Department of Labor has slashed the administrative budgets of state employment services by 17 per cent, forcing a cutback in personnel and services. Already some states have closed offices in outlying areas. More such cutbacks are ahead, precisely when the need for employment services is growing daily.

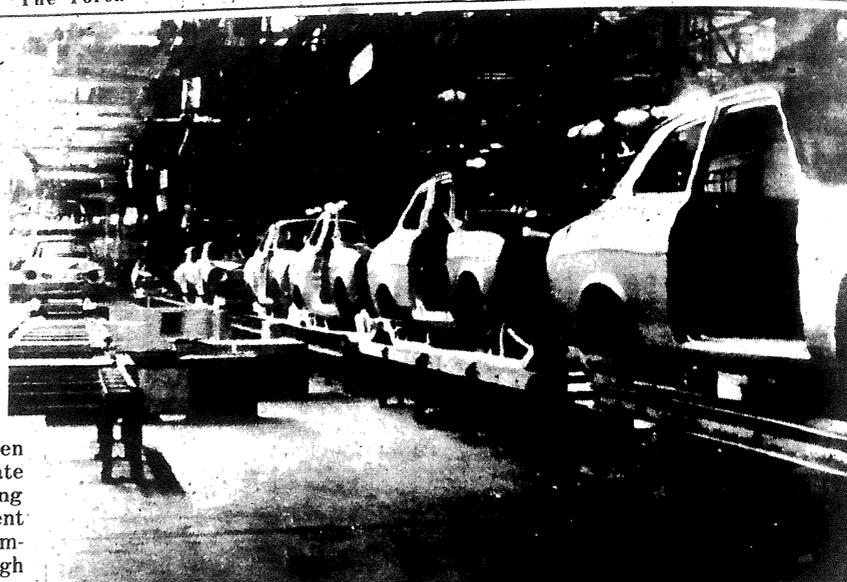
MAKE THE BOSSES PAY

The capitalists are responsible for today's crisis and they must be made to pay for the rot their own system produces. Against the capitalist program of unemployment and high prices the workers must counterpose their own program. A *sliding scale of wages and hours* is needed to protect workers from the bosses' dual attack. The only rational way to organize work in society is to divide all work equally among available workers. This can be accomplished by forcing the bosses to accept a shortened workweek with no loss in pay—*30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay!*

To protect themselves against inflation and high prices, workers need the *sliding scale of wages* to reflect the rising cost of living. The government's Consumer Price Index (CPI) is supposed to reflect rising prices, but it is controlled by Nixon and the capitalist state.

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Teamsters and the Stall-ins

by Jon Myers

In the first organized reaction to the "energy crisis," independent truck owners stopped their trucks on the nation's highway in December. The December stall-ins highlight important trends. They will become even more important as the tactic is repeated in the future.

The owner-operators are in many ways like small businessmen. They own and lease their own trucks. They pay for their gas and maintenance. And they get a percentage of the gross revenue as "profit." Many of them are proud of being "independent" and dream of making it big. But the owner-operators have been caught in the energy squeeze and are struggling just to survive.

They stopped their trucks to demand an end to rising fuel prices. They also protested the lowering of speed-limits, which cuts into profits. Here, especially, the independents

won the sympathy of Teamster drivers, who are paid by the mile. (The 55 mph speed-limit means a 10-12 per cent wage cut for them.)

But as "independents," the truck owners lack the organization and strength of union drivers. When the blockades broke up, one driver said, "It's just about lost all of its steam. We thought the company drivers would stick with the independents on this, but they didn't." With no union support, the owners found that being independent meant being impotent. All they could get out of the government was a couple of empty promises—and the National Guard!

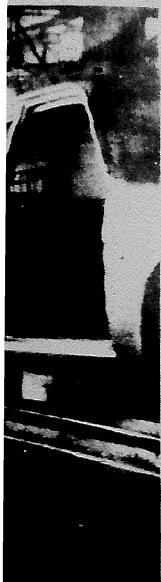
For their part, the Teamsters missed an opportunity to use their organization and power to lead the fight against big business and the government. Rather than wait to see what course the owner-operators would take, the IBT should have fought for a working class solution to

the energy crisis. The failure of the IBT to fight could have dangerous consequences. The owner-operators are impotent only as long as they are isolated. If they are led by the Teamsters on a revolutionary program, they will give the workingclass movement strength. But in the absence of working-class leadership, they may be driven to ally with the state and ruling class against the workers. In Chile, desperate truck owners led the attack on the working class. At the end of the blockades last month in the U.S., the frustration of the owner-operators was channelled into terrorism against union drivers.

To win allies, the Teamsters must smash the Hoffas and Fitzsimmons who are only paving the way for future Chiles.

The last issue of *The Torch* discussed the pro-capitalist mentality

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gauge prices, they must take the task of compiling the necessary facts into their own hands. They must replace the crooked CPI with a *Labor Consumer Index* controlled by committees of workers, housewives, and unemployed. The sliding scale of wages would be based on this index. In this way every price increase could be reflected in workers' paychecks.

The major obstacle to launching this kind of struggle in the workers' movement are the reformist union "leaders," who always smother the initiative of the masses and seek accommodation with the bosses. The present pro-capitalist leadership of the trade unions can follow no other policy than bluster and capitulation as long as they stand for the continuation of capitalism itself.

In the heyday of capitalism, when new productive methods caused the material wealth of society to expand at a fantastic rate, union leaders could tack and veer, playing one capitalist off against the other, and generally increase the living standards of union members. Even during episodic economic crises they could afford to retreat, to accommodate the bosses, because the next upturn would allow them to recoup losses and a little more besides.

But now everything has been stood on its head. Capitalism has long since entered its epoch of decline. Even with episodic upturns and stabilizations the general line of development is down, preventing workers from regaining past positions through "normal" trade union methods. This is especially clear now that the U.S.'s "post-war prosperity" has given birth to crisis.

Today a revolutionary struggle is required to wrest meaningful concessions from the bosses. In general the capitalists must fear that they will lose everything before they will give anything important.

But it is precisely this kind of fight that union hacks refuse to wage. They fight for only what the capitalists can "afford" to give them. But today the capitalists can't "afford" to sustain the present living standards of the working class any longer. They attack the workers not because they are "bad guys," but because their system can no longer generate the profits necessary to satisfy this small bunch of exploiters who control society. In the face of this, the pro-capitalist union "leaders" offer nothing but defeat.

They have had their chance. They have done nothing but sit on their hands. There is no chance to reform this scurvy crew. Unless these fakers are driven out of the workers' movement, the unions will be reduced to dust. To take on the bosses, who have all the power of the army, the courts, and the police behind them, a revolutionary leadership must be built in the trade unions that will fight for the interests of all workers.

The struggle however cannot be confined to the trade unions alone. Only about one quarter of all workers are members of trade unions. The great mass of the workforce still labors at low-paying, non-union jobs under sweatshop conditions. In fact,

union membership as a per cent of the workforce has actually *declined* over the last decade. This in itself exposes the pro-capitalist nature of the trade union bureaucracy, which has systematically refused to organize those workers.

The unorganized workers, including millions of women, youth, and black workers, bear the brunt of the bosses' attack. When the most powerful unions in the country settle for peanuts, the unorganized get nothing at all. As more and more workers are thrown on the street, workers are forced to fight among themselves for each job. The chances for employment become slimmer, and high-seniority workers displace younger workers. The young workers dumped onto the job market force others out of small non-union shops, as the capitalists dump those workers less capable of standing up to the increasing pace of exploitation.

Women workers are among the first to get it in the neck. For example, while the unemployment rate among men jumped 0.1 per cent from November to December, that of women rose 0.4 per cent. The jobless rate among black workers has consistently been twice that of whites and the gap is increasing. The jobless rate of teenage youth is nearly 15 per cent and is certain to go much higher.

THE ROAD FORWARD

The layoffs and firings that have already occurred are only the tip of the iceberg. Even now, in the first stages of recession, some large corporations are showing signs of total collapse. Lockheed Aircraft, which the government bailed out in 1971, is in trouble again.

Chrysler Corporation is also in serious difficulty. Its January production target is down almost 40 per cent from last year's production level. Even more significant than this is the fact that after a year of record profits they must still cut their capital expenditures program for this year

by a full 30 per cent. But without *expanding*—let alone maintaining—capital expenditures in new plant and equipment, Chrysler cannot possibly hope to achieve profitability. The fact that huge corporations are in trouble even now, when the downturn has barely begun, gives a glimpse of what can be expected when things get really rough.

All these signs indicate that the living conditions of the workers will be severely slashed unless a workers' counter-attack is organized. The only way out is to take the bosses head-on. The workers in the trade unions will play a key role, but only if they take the unions into their own hands and bring the millions of unorganized into the unions through a campaign to *organize the unorganized*. Without this the bosses will continue to hammer down all wages by playing non-union workers off against union members. They will try to use the most oppressed as scabs, to hold the condition of the unemployed millions as a threat over the heads of all workers.

The 1974 contract round offers several important opportunities to blunt the bosses' attack and turn the struggle around for a fight against the bosses. More than 5 million workers are covered by major contracts that expire this year or which contain wage reopener clauses. The contracts coming up for negotiation this year include the steel, can, aluminum, construction, communications, electrical machinery, aerospace, longshore, railroad, and mining industries. Any one of these offers tremendous opportunities for the working class.

These are not "normal" times. Routine, "normal" methods of trade union struggle against the bosses threaten the destruction of all workers' organizations, which will be ground to dust in the face of capitalist attack. The capitalists will not sit still for any struggle which threatens their control over society. That is why every immediate struggle and

partial demand must be connected with the building of *Workers' Defense Guards*. The struggle for a *sliding scale of wages and hours*, the struggle to *organize the unorganized*, must be defended against the attacks of scabs, union thugs, and other bosses' men.

The capitalists are preparing to smash the workers by any means necessary. Fascists are marching openly on the streets of Cleveland. They are appearing publicly at School Board meetings in San Francisco. These open enemies of black workers and the whole working class are the advance guard of capitalist reaction. They are small now, but they will grow as a direct response to the struggle of the workers. These vermin have arms and are prepared to use them. Empty platitudes will not stop them. Workers will have to be trained and armed to meet them if they are going to preserve their organizations.

The bosses are not playing around. *Workers' Defense Guards* are absolutely indispensable to any serious struggle against the bosses. There is no other way!

Economic collapse is *not* inevitable. All the material forces of production and the tremendous potential of modern technology created by the workers still exist. They lie idle not because workers refuse to work, but because *the world capitalist class that controls these resources refuses to produce!* For them, production has only one purpose—profit. Without it, the bourgeoisie is prepared to let society rot, to let the living standards of the working class be reduced to animal levels.

The pro-capitalist union hacks and other misleaders of the working class have no answer to this crisis, which threatens to throw workers back to the living conditions of the 1940's. There is no way out for the workers *except* a determined struggle of the international proletariat to overthrow the system which produced the crisis.

LENINIST POLICY IN THE MID-EAST WAR

Statement of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Socialist League

In October, 1973, the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Socialist League resolved to give no support of any kind to either side in the Israeli-Arab war. This position was fundamentally incorrect. It crippled our fight to build an internationalist proletarian leadership and to win the region's workers and peasants to the Marxist program of socialist revolution.

In December, the Political Committee recognized its error and reversed itself, voting to extend military support to the armies of Egypt and Syria in the struggle against imperialism. The Central Committee of the League met soon afterward and ratified the overturn of the old position.

The League is dedicated to cohering and training the vanguard of the working class. Having changed our position on so important a question as this one, we have the responsibility to publicly explain ourselves. This is a principle to which many give lip-service, but almost no one honors.

The resolution below explains why this reversal was necessary, elaborating the Leninist approach to war.

War is the continuation of politics by other means. Leninists determine their attitude toward a given war by evaluating the politics—the class conflicts, the motor forces—which produced the war and which the war represents.

The countries of the Middle East are semi-colonial nations oppressed and exploited by imperialism. For decades the Arab workers and peasants have struggled to free their countries from the grip of imperialism.

Imperialism—especially United States imperialism—has the greatest stake in defeating this struggle. Its grip on the strategic sites and resources of the Middle East is challenged by national liberation struggles.

The role of Israel can only be understood within this context. Israel is an alien, imperialist implantation in the Middle East. Occupying territory torn from the hands of the Palestinian Arabs, Israel necessarily shares the hostility of the U.S. to all attempts among the Arab peoples to modernize, unify, and regain the territory rightfully theirs.

Israel is Western imperialism's junior partner, disciplining the semi-colonial Arab nations when they threaten to become unruly. Indeed, so immediate is Israel's need to suppress the Arab nations that its



Occupied Jordan: modern housing for Israelis overlook slums for Arabs.

leaders are even more aggressive than are its imperialist senior partners in Europe and the U.S.

In a war waged between colonial or semi-colonial nations (on the one hand) and imperialist states (on the other) Marxists never stand neutral. We stand squarely in favor of the anti-imperialist struggle and the wars which it produces. We distinguish sharply between war waged by imperialists and war waged against imperialism by its victims.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION AND THE BOURGEOISIE

In the epoch of imperialist decay, only the international working class can carry out the tasks of the democratic national revolution—including the destruction of semi-feudal ruling classes and forms of oppression and the achievement of true national independence. The working class can only accomplish this if it refuses to respect the sanctity of capitalism itself but instead carries out the democratic tasks through the socialist revolution.

This is the heart of Leon Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1917 provided the most striking confirmation of this perspective.

The Permanent Revolution is the only strategy for Marxists in the Middle East today. Only the Arab working class—led by a revolutionary

party armed with a socialist program—can complete the tasks of the democratic national revolution there.

The Arab bourgeoisie will never do so. It is too small and too weak, its growth and power stunted by the overlordship of world imperialism. It is much too intertwined with imperialism itself. It is dependent upon imperialism and on the semi-feudal sheiks, both for economic support and for defense against the down-trodden Arab workers and peasants. It is much too frightened of the Arab workers and peasants to really mobilize them in an all-out struggle against imperialism generally or Israel in particular.

To break the grip which imperialism has obtained on the Arab peoples requires the overthrow of all sections of the Arab ruling classes and the seizure of state power by the proletariat, leading behind it the peasants and the rest of the petty bourgeoisie. There can be no national solution to the problems of the Middle East. The proletariat cannot content itself with narrow national programs but must instead lead the way through the anti-imperialist struggle to the Socialist United States of the Middle East.

But while the Arab bourgeoisie cannot destroy imperialism and does not dare even try, it cannot simply sit back and accept all of imperialism's dictates, either. As the contradictions

of world capitalism sharpen, the imperialist states move to step up their plundering of the colonial and semi-colonial world. In the Middle East, Israel is charged by the U.S. with punishing any nation which resists imperialism's wholesale rape of the region's oil resources.

If the Arab rulers want to retain any power and wealth for themselves at all, they must try to curb the all-out piracy of the imperialists. Furthermore, if the Arab bourgeoisie wishes to retain any political support at all among the anti-imperialist Arab workers and petty bourgeoisie—and it must retain this support to keep its feet—it must at least seem to oppose the forward march of imperialism. It fears the anger and feels the pressure of the Arab masses.

Even when the Arab rulers do go to war against Israel and its imperialist partners, their goals and motives are far from those of the Arab masses. The workers and peasants fight under the banner of democratic demands seeking to secure for themselves a human existence. The oppressed bourgeoisie does so strengthen its own reactionary rule.

The Arab bourgeoisie resists Israel and imperialism in order to increase its own share of the profits squeezed out of Arab workers. The Arab bourgeoisie fights to arrange a better, less one-sided deal with imperialism. At the same time, the Arab bourgeoisie fights in hopes of attaining imperialist status for itself. Finally, the Arab bourgeoisie fights in order to prepare a permanent deal with Israel without inflaming anti-imperialist sentiment among the Arab proletariat and peasantry and to distract attention from its own domestic crimes.

Thus the Arab bourgeoisie misleads the popular struggle for national freedom. In this it observes the normal standards of behavior established by all capitalist classes, even those of oppressed nations.

The bourgeoisie, Lenin repeated tirelessly, sees different things in national freedom than does the proletariat; its approach to waging the national struggle is alien to ours. "What every bourgeoisie is out for in the national question is either privileges for its own nation or exceptional advantages for it," Lenin wrote. "The proletariat is opposed to all privileges, to all exclusiveness." (*The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*)

Does this mean that Marxists refuse to take sides in a war between an imperialist power and a semi-colonial nation led by its bourgeoisie? Do we equate the imperialist bourgeoisie with the anti-imperialist struggle currently mis-led by the Arab bourgeoisie?

Absolutely not! Such a policy leads to what Lenin called "imperialist economism"—using sectarian phrases to cover a practical surrender to imperialism's world domination.

MILITARY SUPPORT

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ary bourgeoisie resists Israel in order to increase the profits squeezed from Arab workers. The Arab bourgeoisie fights to arrange a one-sided deal with Israel. At the same time, the bourgeoisie fights in hopes of imperialist status for itself. The Arab bourgeoisie fights to prepare a permanent deal without inflaming anti-imperialist sentiment among the proletariat and peasantry and to attract attention from its own classes.

The Arab bourgeoisie misrepresents the popular struggle for national liberation. In this it observes the standards of behavior established by all capitalist classes, even the oppressed nations.

The bourgeoisie, Lenin repeated, sees different things in freedom than does the proletariat; its approach to waging national struggle is alien to ours. The bourgeoisie is out for its own national question is either for its own nation or for its own national advantages for it. Lenin said the proletariat is opposed to all exclusiveness. Lenin said in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that the *Declaration of Nations to Self-Determination*

means that Marxists take sides in a war between imperialist power and a semi-colonial led by its bourgeoisie. We must educate the imperialist bourgeoisie with the anti-imperialist currently misled by the bourgeoisie?

They are not! Such a policy leads to the failure of the revolution. Lenin called "imperialist" the bourgeoisie—using sectarian phrases as a practical surrender to imperialism's world domination.

MILITARY SUPPORT

The ruling class of an oppressed nation is driven to struggle against its imperialist oppressor

—even in its own treacherous way and for its own reactionary motives—Leninists extend military support to the forces of the oppressed nation.

Military support means that we temporarily ally ourselves with the Egyptian and Syrian armies against Israel and the U.S.. We strive to organize our own forces to fight independently, but if this is impossible we work within the Arab army itself. We are the best fighters against imperialism, we attempt to strengthen the Arab war effort, and we put forward the program of socialist revolution and revolutionary war as the only way to really defeat Israeli and U.S. imperialism.

Internationally, we mobilize the working class to cripple the Israel war effort and to strengthen that of Egypt and Syria. For example, we call for an embargo on all trade with Israel, if possible re-routing material bound for Israel to the Arab camp. We urge the U.S. and European proletariat to prevent their ruling classes from joining or strengthening their paid Israeli generals.

At the same time, we remain irreconcilably opposed to the rule of the Egyptian and Syrian bourgeoisie. We give them no political support whatever. We do not paint them up in revolutionary colors. We do not support their governments. We do not vote for war budgets.

On the contrary, we warn the workers in advance that their rulers will betray them, will capitulate to imperialism, will sell them out, will seek imperialist privileges for themselves. In the course of the war we demonstrate concretely how the bourgeois governments are sabotaging the anti-imperialist struggle, and we thereby accelerate the downfall of the ruling class.

The original position on the war presented in *The Torch* #2 ("Statement of the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Socialist League") was fundamentally incorrect in its approach. It refused to extend military support to the Arab armies, calling instead for a no-support position toward both camps. The errors in the Statement burdened it with the most serious contradictions.

The Statement correctly noted that Israel is "a junior partner of American imperialism and an imperialist state in its own right." In contrast, the Arab states "remain tied to world imperialism as the exploited to the exploiter—whereas Israel is tied as the smaller exploiter to the larger. We defend the Arab states against world imperialism."

Here was a correct distinction and a correct conclusion. Why then did the Statement refuse military support to the Arab armies? Because, the war was not "a war for democratic aims on either side," it declared. "On the Arab side, the war is fought not to overthrow imperialism but to reach a more favorable accommodation with it—for the oil of the Sinai, for the territories lost to Israel in 1967, and to strengthen the Arab states' bargaining position vis-a-vis Israel and the United States."

The motives attributed to the Arab regimes are essentially accurate—but beside the point. As Lenin explained,

every oppressed bourgeoisie fights for democratic rights in a capitulatory manner and even then to secure anti-democratic "privileges" for itself.

Every bourgeois national liberation movement inevitably restricts its goals to "a more favorable accommodation with" imperialism—fighting only to surrender to imperialism on better terms. This is the bourgeoisie's version of fighting imperialism's pressure.

But the key facts remain: it is the democratic right of the Arab nations to regain territory stolen from them in 1967 by imperialism—and, indeed, to eliminate Israel as a state entirely. The rights to Sinai's oil is part of this.

We do not punish Sadat and Company for their treachery by granting them undisputed leadership of the ongoing anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab masses. The treachery of the Sadats does not permit revolutionaries to abandon the oppressed masses to those reactionary capitalist leaders. Instead we show the masses in struggle precisely why they must eliminate the Sadats in order to realize their own goals and aspirations.

Therefore, we attack the Arab rulers for not fighting Israel in a revolutionary manner, for conservatism, for timidity, for capitulating to imperialism, for merely seeking a better deal with Israel rather than thoroughly smashing Israel and imperialism altogether. But we do not attack the Sadats for fighting against Israel in the first place.

Just as important, we must break the workers in the advanced countries from their own imperialist bourgeoisies. This becomes all the more important as the crisis of capitalism leads to an increase in conflict between the imperialist states and the colonial states, and the bourgeoisies of the advanced countries, particularly the United States, attempt to set the workers against the struggle of the masses in the oppressed countries.

The Statement notes that "the bourgeois nationalism of the Arab ruling classes cannot accomplish these [democratic] tasks" and that "Only the revolutionary proletariat, through the Permanent Revolution, holds the key to the completion of the democratic tasks of the Middle Eastern colonial revolution."

This is indisputably correct. But the proletarian vanguard must know how to win the leadership of the colonial revolution away from the bourgeois leaders of today. This is the role of the military-support tactic. In the Middle East today, only this tactic can place the Permanent Revolution, the socialist revolution, on the actual agenda—can transform the Permanent Revolution from a goal, a necessity, into a strategic reality.

SECTARIANISM AND OPPORTUNISM

The complete bankruptcy of the no-support position is most clearly demonstrated by the Spartacist League. All this group can see in the October war is "a conflict between the chauvinist expansionist appetites of the Israeli and Arab bourgeoisies."

(*Workers' Vanguard* #30, 12 October 1973). It is totally blind to Lenin's and Trotsky's distinction between imperialist and colonial or semi-colonial nations. Typically, the Spartacists squeezed the last deadly drop of poison out of their position and then injected it into the labor movement. The Spartacists' favorite, the "Militant-Solidarity Caucus" in the National Maritime Union, called on Russian workers "to oppose Russian aid to the reactionary Arab states as we oppose aid to Israel. . . ." Unable to distinguish between imperialism and imperialism's victims, the Spartacists and their supporters retreated into a "third camp" position—"A plague on both your houses!"—tried to cut off arms to the Arab workers and peasants, and abandoned them to the tender mercies of U.S. and Israeli imperialism and to the treachery of their own ruling classes.

As usual, the Socialist Workers Party and the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" contented themselves with passive cheer-leading for the treacherous governments in Cairo and Damascus. They cynically ignored the task of exposing the Arab bourgeoisies in order to carry the anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist struggle to victory.

The Workers League and the "International Committee of the Fourth International" claim to stand for principled Trotskyism against the chronic opportunism of the SWP. Once again, however, the war in the Middle East only proved the WL to be the "best fighters"—for opportunism.

Throughout the war, the Workers League plastered its paper, the *Bulletin*, with the cheapest, most uncritical praise for the Arab ruling classes. Instead of drawing the sharpest possible line between the revolutionary aspirations of the masses and the reactionary outlook of their rulers, the *Bulletin* simply equated one with the other.

On October 12, for example, the *Bulletin's* front-page article on the war is entitled "Arab Masses Win New Victories." The article declares, "Behind the spectacular advances of the Egyptian and Syrian armies is the revolutionary movement of the Arab workers and peasants, who stand on the verge of decisively reversing the crushing defeats of 1967."

And again: "The rapid decay of the Israeli army expresses in concentrated form the weakness of world imperialism—which Zionism faithfully serves—in the face of the revolutionary movement of the working class." Thus Anwar Sadat, Kissinger's lap-dog and the jailer of the Egyptian workers and students, becomes the instrument of "the revolutionary movement of the working class!"

The rest of the *Bulletin's* coverage of the war follows the same wretched pattern. Lenin and Trotsky used the tactic of military support to expose at every turn the cowardice, the treachery, the criminal misleadership of the masses' bourgeois leaders. Not the Workers League!

The article quoted above is happy just to sing the praises of Sadat and

his generals: "Egyptian armed units have secured a virtually impregnable beachhead on the east bank of the Suez," sang the *Bulletin*. This, of course, was before Sadat's generals allowed the Israeli army to smash through this "impregnable beachhead" and occupy part of the Suez's west bank! See how the Workers League shows the Arab masses the urgent need to overthrow their rulers!

Again: "The crossing of the Suez and the destruction of the supposedly invincible Bar Lev Line [by Egypt] . . . surely rates as one of the outstanding accomplishments of modern military history." It was "a tribute to the raw power of the Egyptian offensive."

And still more: "The Syrian offensive has brilliantly bottled up a large section of the Israeli army on the difficult terrain of the Golan Heights." Thus the *Bulletin* prepared its readers for Israel's subsequent counter-offensive in Syria which opened the road to Damascus—a counter-offensive made possible only by Damascus's entire policy—timidity, compromise, and fear of a revolutionary mobilization of the workers and peasants.

By refusing to use the military support tactic to expose the Arab ruling classes, by choosing instead to bathe Sadat and Co. in buckets of honey-thick praise, both the WL and the SWP strengthened the grip of the Arab capitalists over the Arab masses. They held back the struggle to win the Arab workers to the program of the Permanent Revolution and the construction of revolutionary parties. Despite their claims, the WL like the SWP gave not military support to the Arab ruling classes but direct, unconditional political support.

The Spartacist League capitulates to U.S. imperialism and Zionism under cover of sectarian phrasemongering. The SWP and the Workers League aid imperialism through opportunism, by surrendering leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle to imperialism's own lackeys, the Arab capitalists themselves.

The approach embodied in the present resolution is the only one capable of advancing the class struggle in the Middle East. It is the only one which enables revolutionaries to combat imperialism without prostrating themselves before the Arab bourgeoisie.

WARNING FOR THE FUTURE

As world capitalism travels further and further down the road toward collapse, international wars will become more and more frequent and tightly intertwined with the class struggle itself. By correcting its original errors regarding the October war, the Revolutionary Socialist League trains itself and its supporters to intervene successfully in those future conflicts. Those, on the other hand, who have consistently clung to opportunism and sectarianism during this war have given clear warning to the working class of the disastrous roles which they will play in the future.

BRITAIN...

Cont'd. from p. 1

the working class, to play one sector off against another. By isolating and breaking the miners, Heath hopes to break the resistance of the working class as a whole.

The reformist bureaucrats who lead the British trade union movement have no stomach for fighting Heath. Last year the Trades Union Council (the TUC—Britain's AFL-CIO) issued pious calls for unity while making it clear that it would give no real support to the workers who were fighting Heath's re-introduction of wage controls. Refusing to mobilize

the trade union movement, the TUC in fact capitulated to Heath's strategy of isolating individual unions and picking them off one by one.

The TUC hacks have already given ample notice that in the present crisis they intend to follow the same road to accommodation and defeat. The *Economist*, spokesman for big business in Britain, has welcomed TUC leader Len Murray's "willingness to cooperate behind the scenes."

The reformist leadership of the NUM itself strengthens Heath's hand and that of the TUC tops as well. It

spits in the eye of the rest of the British proletariat, vigorously denies that it fights for class-wide goals, demands greater wage boosts for itself alone, calling miners a "special case."

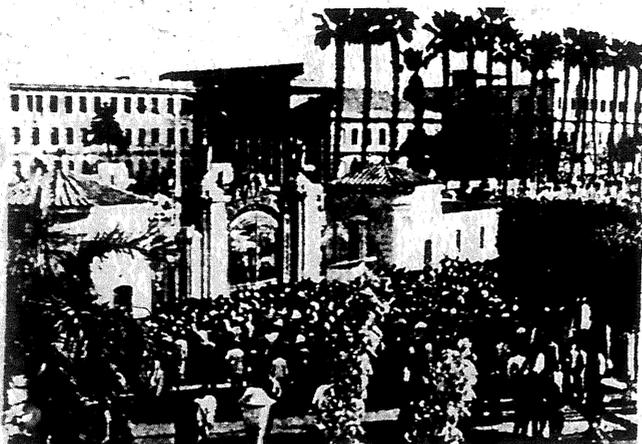
At present, the revolutionary forces in Great Britain represent only a small and isolated section of the working class. The fragmented character of the workers' struggle, widespread demoralization as a result of the TUC sellouts, combine to isolate the revolutionaries still further. To win the support of advanced workers in Britain, to build a revolutionary party, the first task of revolutionaries is to break out of this isolation, to find a road to the masses. They must show the advanced

workers that only revolutionary socialists can advance and fight for a strategy which will unify and defend the working class.

Tactically, this requires placing emphasis at first on limited, defensive slogans and demands. Revolutionaries must make the miners' fight the focus for a class-wide mobilization of self-defense. Concretely, they must initiate a campaign in the working class to force the TUC to call a general strike to defend the miners.

This campaign cannot be limited to revolutionaries; it must draw in as many workers as possible. To this end, Councils of Action must be formed throughout the country to

Cont'd. next page



Students outside Cairo University demand revolutionary war against Zionism.

in the next issue...

In our next issue, Ron Taber, National Secretary of the Revolutionary Socialist League, analyses the nature of the post-war boom and its relationship to the emerging crisis of capitalism. The basis of this stabilization of capitalism in the defeat of the working class represented by World War II and its aftermath, its relative strength derived from the worldwide impact of US imperialism, and the centrality of the increase in state intervention in the economy are all subjected to Marxist analysis. Essential reading to understand the nature of the present crisis.

Union Witchhunt

MILWAUKEE, WISC.—Labor hacks in AFL-CIO Local 19806 here have resorted to the most brazen red-baiting maneuvers to crush political opposition in their local. Up-coming union elections scared the hacks into action.

Thomas Lux, a member of the union's negotiating committee, and James Siesennop, chairman of its legislative committee, have been forced out of office on the grounds that they had once been members of the Communist Party.

Knowing that union militants supported Lux and Siesennop, the union's executive board twice refused to give Blackman the two-thirds

majority vote he needed to force Lux and Siesennop out. So he simply ordered them out on his own. He then engineered a union meeting which less than 200 of the local's 5,200 members attended to back his own witch-hunt. He refused to allow the entire membership to vote on the removal of the two militants by mail ballot.

Blackman's red-baiting tactics are a threat to every union member

"As one worker put it, 'We thought the Joe McCarthy days were over and that witch-hunting was over in America. I take it that in 1974 it is not and that they are still going after people.'

On November 28, 1973, more than 1,500 Arab workers and their supporters demonstrated outside of Detroit's Cobo Hall, protesting the UAW's purchase of Israeli war bonds. While outside demonstrators picketed and chanted anti-imperialist slogans, inside UAW chief Leonard Woodcock pledged his support to the Israeli imperialists to the pleasure of the arch-Zionist Bnai Brith audience. The Revolutionary Socialist League participated in the demonstration, and over 90 copies of *The Torch* were sold.

In December, nearly 700 Arab and black workers at Chrysler's Dodge Main plant received disciplinary warning notices for shutting the plant down on the day of the demonstration. Their union leaders have not only refused to defend them from the company, but have launched their own attack on the protestors in the UAW's newspaper, *Solidarity*.

A few days after the November demonstration, two *Torch* reporters met with a group of Arab workers and students at the Dearborn Arab Center to discuss the war in the Middle East.

We asked Monther, a young Palestinian immigrant, whether he thought the Arab leaders were fighting in order to liberate the Palestinian people in the present war. He answered without hesitation:

"Absolutely not. The Arab governments are not really fighting for the revolution in Palestine, for the Palestinian people. If they really wanted to liberate Palestine, they could liberate it for its people. But they are not working for this." He added that Sadat

moved against Israel in October because of the pressure of the young soldiers who had been continually mobilized for war for nearly seven years:

"People have been on the canal for almost seven years," Monther noted. "They did nothing and they do not even have orders to protect themselves if Israeli airplanes bomb them. The people really got tired of that. When Sadat visited students in Cairo and Alexandria, they said, 'You release our friends from the canal or you let them fight. We won't take this. Our economy is getting worse and worse.' Sadat was pushed by his own people to fight."

One of the *Torch* reporters noted that the Palestinian resistance organizations repeatedly failed to oppose the reactionary Arab ruling classes and governments, instead depending on these governments to lead the anti-imperialist struggle. They tried to make permanent deals, "non-interference" pacts with these reactionaries. Monther recalled one such pact:

"Fatah has said a lot of times that they are not going to interfere with the Jordanian government at all. 'Just whatever they want us to do, we will try to settle with peace and love. We are brothers.' But any such alliance between workers and the bourgeoisie, between victims and their executioners, leads ultimately to bloodshed. Hussein used the guerrillas' truce, in Monther's words, to 'brainwash' the Jordanian army ranks and foster hostility between Palestinians and Jordanians. In September, 1970, confident that he had succeeded in keeping Arab workers divided, Hussein or-

dered his troops to fire mercilessly on the Palestinian refugee camps, killing 20,000 and forcing the fedayeen to their knees. That month, "Black September," as it came to be called, proved once again that such deals with the bourgeoisie can only be on their terms and to their advantage. As Monther said, "It just does not work out."

We also asked opinions about Russia's proposal for an "independent" Palestine restricted to the West Bank of the Jordan River. Here the response was unanimous. Everyone saw through this imperialist attempt to create a Palestinian puppet state. Any such puppet state would actively subvert a revolutionary struggle for Palestinian liberation. As Monther put it, "This is just a gambling game. Who'll be the losers? The Palestinian people." Another worker noted that, "We'd be completely dependent on imperialism just to feed us, let alone militarily, and to give us jobs." Monther added, "This is just the way they want it. But the Palestinian people won't accept that."

Throughout our discussion, these Arab workers emphasized the need to win the most oppressed Israeli Jewish workers to the struggle against Zionism. One comment summarized their attitude:

"Sixty per cent of the Israeli population are Arab Jews. The Europeans, 40 per cent, are privileged. This is a problem for Israel in the future, not for us. The Arab Jews will feel closer to the Arabs in the future because of the way they live and jobs they've got. It's terrible over there in Israel. Whether for the Arabs or the Jews."

DISCUSSION WITH ARAB WORKERS

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organize the campaign through peti-
tion drives, demonstrations, and
localized job actions. The Councils
would mobilize workers at all levels
to force the TUC to abandon its
capitulatory policies, call a general
strike, and convene an emergency
national Congress of Labor to orga-
nize the workers' ongoing resistance to
Heath.

Throughout this campaign, revolu-
tionaries will find themselves in the
closest working relationship with the
best elements of the British working
class. They will have unprecedented
opportunities to patiently explain
their over-all revolutionary program
to their fellows propagandistically.
Later, should these tactics succeed
in bringing the class as a whole into
action, today's propaganda can be-
come tomorrow's agitation.

STRATEGY FOR DEFENSE

Leon Trotsky explained the rela-
tionship between slogans and the
development of the class struggle
well in July, 1921:

"Every serious mass action must
obviously be preceded by large-
scale energetic agitation, center-
ing around action slogans, all
hitting on one and the same
point. Such agitation can lead to
more decisive calls for action
only if it reveals, after probing,
that the masses have already
been touched to the quick and
are ready to march forward on
the path of revolutionary ac-
tion."

"If the events continue to
unfold further, if the masses rise,
if the ties among the workers
grow stronger, if the temper
lifts, while indecision and de-
moralization seize the camp of
the foe—then comes the time for
issuing the slogan to pass over
to the offensive."

Should the campaign prove suc-
cessful, should it tap the anger and
spirit of solidarity of the mass of
workers, should the Councils of
Action swell and the pressure on the
TUC become irresistible, a new stage
will open in the class struggle.

At this point, the TUC top would
have two alternatives. First, it might
resist the proletariat's demands,
come what may. Second, it might
decide to call a general strike—in
order to de-fuse the masses' anger
and then sell out the strike on the day
afterward.

The first response would weaken
the position of the TUC tops
immeasurably. The Councils of Ac-
tion would multiply in number, size
and strength. Depending on the
dimensions of this growth, revolu-
tionaries would then have to judge
whether to demand that the Councils
themselves assume leadership of the
workers' movement, bypassing the
TUC tops and calling and leading a
general strike on their own.

If the TUC retreats, calls a general
strike only in order to betray it,
British revolutionaries would re-em-
phasize to their comrades the need to
maintain and strengthen the Councils
of Action—warning against the
TUC's inevitable treachery, demand-
ing that the Councils take over



The British ruling class is blaming miners for the crisis of decrepit British capitalism.

day-to-day control of the strike
movement themselves.

In either case, the appearance of
the Councils of Action immediately
raise the question of leadership in the
working class. To strengthen the
Councils and give them national
direction, revolutionaries would call
on them to link up nationally and
elect an executive committee. The
Councils would organize the defense
of the strike movement against
fascists and police provocations by
organizing flying squadrons and
defense committees. To talk about a
general strike without preparing the
workers to defend themselves is
criminal pacifism.

If the general strike takes place,
with or without the consent of the
TUC General Council, revolutionaries
will then advance more offensive
slogans, urging that they be made the
demands of the strike itself: "Down
with the Industrial Relations Act!
Down with the Tories! Labour to
Power!"

Revolutionaries will challenge the
Labour Party to take power—to form
a government—with the openly stat-
ed purpose of exposing Labour's
class-collaborationism once and for all
to those workers who retain reform-
ist illusions.

In doing so revolutionaries will put
forward their own interpretation to
the slogans of Down with the Tories!
Labour to power! They will urge the
workers movement to demand an end
to the Industrial Relations Act,
designed to crush the powerful
British shop stewards movement.
They will demand an end to wage
controls, to "austerity programs," to
the entire apparatus of Tory repres-
sion.

Revolutionaries will point out that
the Heath offensive is not merely the
strategy of the Conservatives, but is

the strategy of the ruling class as a
whole as well as of its lackeys. They
remind workers that the Labour
Party opened this offensive, that it
was the Labour Party which intro-
duced the restrictions now codified in
the Industrial Relations Act, that it
was the Labour Party which intro-
duced wage controls.

In calling for the Labour Party to
take power under the gun of the
general strike, revolutionaries will
wipe out the workers' final illusions
in Labour Party reformism.

PROGRAM

The general strike will give
revolutionaries untold opportunities
to present a revolutionary alterna-
tive to the crisis of capitalism in
Great Britain. They will urge the
strike movement to adopt as its
demands the sliding scale of hours,
the division of work among the

available workers with no cut in pay,
as the solution to unemployment; the
sliding scale of wages to defend
workers against Heath's skyrocket-
ing inflation; the nationalization of
industry under workers' control; and
the placing of already nationalized
industry in the hands of the workers'
management. This program will
bridge the gap between the workers'
immediate demands and their solu-
tion through the creation of a
revolutionary government to carry
out the socialist organization of
production.

It is impossible to detail all the
possible turns which events could
take under the conditions outlined
above. The Heath government might
respond to a general strike by
dissolving Parliament and calling
new elections, hoping to divert
proletarian militancy into electoral
politics and daring Labour to take
power.

On the other hand, Heath could
very well choose the tactics of blood
and iron, expanding his campaign of
repression, breaking up picket lines
and workers' meetings, jailing strike
leaders. Britain's army of occupation
in northern Ireland remains on call.

The need for workers' defense
guards in such circumstances would
become a central focus for revolu-
tionaries' agitation. Events would be
telescoped. The question of new
elections would recede into the
background, and a direct confronta-
tion between Heath and the Councils
of Action over who rules—dual
power—would shape up. The only
slogan at that point would be "All
power to the Councils!"

FORWARD TO THE PARTY!

Whether the proposed campaign
succeeds in producing a general
strike or not, the campaign itself will
open up the greatest possibilities for
today's small revolutionary forces to
expand in size and influence. Even if
the NUM and TUC reformists are
able to derail the strike movement,
the revolutionaries would still have
demonstrated to the advanced work-
ers that they alone were ready to
propose and lead a serious fight
against Heath and Phase Three. The
struggle to build a revolutionary
party in Britain would take a major
step forward.

**Chile:
Never Again!**



HOW
THE REVOLUTION
WAS BETRAYED

A TORCH PAMPHLET 275

**CHILE:
Never Again!**

How the Revolution
was betrayed

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Two debates on the class nature of Russia and the Stalinist states were held by the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Spartacist League in November and December in Los Angeles and New York.

The view presented by the Revolutionary Socialist League Central Committee members Eric Olsen and Jack Gregory, speaking in Los Angeles and New York respectively, was that Russia today is a state-capitalist system, as are the Stalinist states in Europe, China, and Cuba, etc. This is the only view fully consistent with the Leninist understanding of the epoch of imperialist decay and with Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. The Spartacist League, in contrast, holds on to what is specifically incorrect in Trotsky's ideas—the view that Russia remains a degenerated workers' state simply because property is nationalized—in order to abandon the core of his outlook, the idea that the proletariat led by the world Bolshevik party is the only and indispensable instrument for overthrowing capitalism:

"The fundamental Marxist principle concerning property and the property forms," Olsen said in his presentation, "is that these simply represent the political and legal reflection of the basic relations of production, i.e., the relationship between classes. Property has no meaning outside of that class relationship of production."

What is private property? Not the ownership of the means of production by separate groups of capitalists. What is "private" about the bourgeois property is that it is held as the property of the bourgeoisie as a class, out of control of the working class. As Marx stated, the means of production "become capital as soon as they have to be advanced to the laborer by a third person, and this is the case from the moment when the laborer owns nothing but his labor-power itself" (*Theories of Surplus Value*, I, 58). This is so whether the property is divided among individual capitalists—the particular historical form in which capitalism originally arose—or held collectively by the bourgeoisie as a class. Marx and Engels understood the possibility of such a system, which would remain capitalist despite nationalization. As Engels wrote in *Anti-Duhring*:

"The modern state, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine; it is the state of the capitalists, the ideal collective body of all capitalists. The more productive forces it takes over as its property, the more it becomes the real collective body of all the capitalists, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage-earners, proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished; it is rather pushed to an extreme." Private property is first and foremost a relationship between proletariat and capitalists, not the relationship between capitalists.

"The same point," Olsen went on, "is true with respect to economic planning. By posing the question in the petty bourgeois fashion of Proudhon, i.e., as the abstract

question 'Is there economic planning in the USSR,' the Spartacists refuse to approach the question from a materialist standpoint. The real question is; what is the class content of the economic planning? That is, what is being planned, who is planning it, why is it being planned that way, in whose interests, for what ends, etc.? Anyone who approaches the question from that standpoint, the Marxist standpoint, will readily recognize that the Soviet Five Year Plans are capitalist plans—i.e., plans whose very purpose is to accumulate capital through the exploitation of the alienated labor power of the proletariat, through the domination of dead labor over living labor. And thus the bureaucracy is necessarily a capitalist class since it represents the personification of capital in terms of its relationship to the proletariat.

"What then defined Russia after 1917 as a workers' state? Just this—that it was the dictatorship of the proletariat within Russia, which was seen as the beginning of the process of creating the international workers' state. What made Russia a workers' state was not the fact, in and of itself, that property was nationalized and economic planning undertaken, but the fact that, first, this was done by the workers themselves through the organized vanguard of the Bolsheviks, and secondly by the fact that it was consciously done as part of the process of furthering the international workers' revolution."

Despite the existence of the workers' state, Lenin warned that it was impossible to ignore "the Russian and international markets with which we are connected and from which we cannot escape." Within Russia it was possible only to gain time while "our foreign comrades are preparing thoroughly for their revolution." Given the incompleteness of the world revolution, Olsen argued, within Russia "the fundamental basis of production remained production according to the capitalist laws of motion, i.e., production according to the law of value. . . . Even the state-owned industries were required to produce according to the law of value."

What was, for the workers' state, the social law of the surrounding capitalist world imposing itself on the workers' state, became through the restoration of capitalism the internal law of Russia and its class relations. Originally a weapon of the proletarian vanguard, the state property was torn from the vanguard's hands and became a weapon of exploitation as the vanguard was crushed and the workers' state destroyed. The consolidation of the bureaucracy as a

Spartacist League Revises Marxism

Socialist Revolution and State Capitalism

by Chris Hudson

ruling class began in the struggle against and the defeat of the Trotskyist Left Opposition, 1923-27. It continued as the bureaucracy constructed and consolidated the capitalist economy in 1929-33, the period of the first Five Year Plan and forced collectivization of the peasantry. It was finally completed in the period of the Great Purges which rooted out of the CP all existing and potential nuclei of opposition to Stalin's rule and thus completed the destruction of the proletarian revolutionary vanguard that made the October Revolution.

Finally, Olsen emphasized, "if one understands the basic Marxist notions of the nature of capitalism and the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rise of state capitalism in China, Cuba, etc., presents no problems of analysis.

Briefly, given the correlation of class forces internationally following World War II, with the smashing of the world revolutionary workers' movement, it was possible in a number of backward countries for the leadership of national movements for liberation to be seized by sectors of the petty bourgeoisie around a program of capital accumulation and industrialization through nationalized property and economic planning. Given the weakness of the comprador national bourgeoisies in many of these countries, along with the political quiescence of the proletariat, it proved possible for these petty bourgeois movements based upon peasant upheavals and military conflict to carry out a political revolution, smash the existing national comprador bourgeoisies, and put in their place a new bourgeois class organized around the nationalization of property. This analysis is not only a clear and logical explanation of the historic events, but is also the only one which does not in any way contradict the fundamental Marxist principles concerning the nature of capitalism and the workers' revolution."

The same cannot be said of the Spartacist position, presented by SL Central Committee members Judith Shapiro in Los Angeles and Joe Drummond (with a little help from his friends) in New York.

As presented by Shapiro, the mode of production in the USSR is a workers' state because it has "a nationalized and planned economy, and this mode of production is

uniquely suited to the rule of the proletariat, and to it alone." Instead of analyzing the property forms as the merely formal expressions of specific class relations—the Marxist method—the SL infers the social relations from the property forms. When it came to describing the "proletarian" nature of planning, Shapiro as expected retreated into middle-class moralising. Planning "represents the triumph of consciousness over anarchy." It represents, in the USSR, Cuba and China, "a qualitatively higher form of rationality." "Planning, no matter how poorly done, is consciousness triumphing; in that sense, it belongs to the working class in the future."

Comrade Shapiro should know that Keynesian economic policies under monopoly capitalism also constitute a form of economic planning, although "poorly done" to be sure. Does this form of planning, or does bourgeois nationalization, represent "consciousness triumphing," or does this kind of planning merely recreate on a higher level the contradictions of capitalism, which flow from the basic production relations? Comrade Shapiro's praise for planning is correct only when it is the workers' dictatorship that plans; used by an alien class, planning represents irrationality, the irrationality of capitalism's domination over the working class. To Comrade Shapiro, however, planning is above the classes, the viewpoint of petty-bourgeois theories from Robert Owen to Eduard Bernstein.

The Revolutionary Socialist League presented a concrete analysis of the law of motion of the state capitalist economy. Jack Gregory summed it up in New York: "The bureaucrats cannot escape the law of value, which is really what plans in the Soviet Union."

In other words, where production is for the sake of accumulation, where the workers are paid in wages just enough to live and reproduce (that is, at their labor-power's value), where production of means of production dominates over the production of means of consumption, and where the means of production are held privately from the working class—there capitalism dominates as does the law of value, whether there is a "free" market or not.

Though they called the Russian economy "a very specific mode of production," the Spartacists were

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KRESTINSKY
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SMILGA
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STASSOVA
Disappeared



DZERZHINSKY
Dead



BUBNOV
Disappeared



SOKOLNIKOV
In Prison

STALIN, ALONE, REMAINED. These 24 constituted the central committee of the Bolshevik Party in 1917. The fate

of each, as it was known nearly 1938, is recorded beneath the pictures.

anything but specific about what made that economy tick. In fact, the Spartacists came up with four (count 'em, four) different answers to this question.

Judith Shapiro argued that the law of value did exist in the USSR, but was controlled by the plan. Prices, she insisted, "do not have to follow the law of value when the plans choose not to, but they may also choose to." (Her example was that the planners might let the market determine the prices of 1-ply vs. 2-ply toilet paper.) Joe Drummond in New York, on the other hand, boldly declared, "We do not at this time have a programmatic position on the law of value in the Soviet Union." (League speaker Jack Gregory then pointed out, "The SL says 'We do know that the essential laws of capitalism do operate in the USSR, but we do not know if the law of value operates.' Obviously to the SL, the law of value is not an essential law of capitalism.")

This was too much for Spartacist Chairman James Robertson who now sprang to the floor with Spartacist Line No. 3: the law of value operates in distribution, not production. By the time the report of the New York debate reached the pages of the Spartacists' newspaper, a more cautious Line No. 4 had been devised: the law of value "continues to operate in sectors of the Soviet economy," though which sectors were not identified. (*Workers Vanguard*, Jan. 4, 1974, p. 3)

Challenged to identify the law of motion of Soviet economy, the SL speakers (and later *Workers Vanguard*) coolly replied that there is no law of motion in the USSR! Here the Spartacist analysis comes kissing-close to that of Max Shachtman. It was Shachtman who argued that without the free market there was no law of value, that there is no wage labor in the USSR (Shapiro takes this position), that there is no law of motion, and that the purpose of production in the USSR was simply "production of use values" for the bureaucracy (*New Internationalist*, Nov.-Dec. 1952).

Does the Spartacist League, which accepts Shachtman's particular positions on trade-unionism, war, the Proletarian Military Policy, and numerous other questions, also agree that "production of use values" applies in the USSR? Speaker Drummond *did* state in New York that "Shachtman's theory in more ways than state capitalism's theory takes into account the nature of the Soviet economy."

The Spartacist speakers in the end produced *no* analysis of the Russian economy. Nor did they produce an analysis of Stalinism outside the USSR. But on this point they did reveal their own unbridled Pabloism. "In Russia, in China, in Cuba, in Eastern Europe," according to Drummond, "the bourgeoisie was smashed, they were sent packing, their state smashed, and the nationalized property forms filled up that vacuum."

Vacuum? In *class war*? And, by *what class* was all this done? In Russia, we know, by the proletariat, led by the Bolshevik Party. In other countries, according to the SL, it was the *petty bourgeoisie*, led by Stalinists. But this is the theory of Pablo—that the Stalinist parties under mass pressure can "roughly outline a revolutionary orientation," that they are "blunted instruments" of revolutionary socialist leadership—doing the job badly, but still doing it. It is hostile to the theory of Lenin and Trotsky, who saw the petty bourgeoisie as capable of either following the proletariat or following the bourgeoisie, but never of smashing the capitalist state and putting a workers' state in its place. That, for Lenin and Trotsky, was a task which only the working class could fulfill, and only under Bolshevik leadership. Oh well, who's picky? Echoing Pablo, the Spartacists argue (as Shapiro put it) that nationalized property is a "half step" toward socialism and that "the proletariat isn't necessary for taking that half step."

And these people claim to be Marxists! The proletariat, you see, "isn't necessary" for the proletarian

revolution, for smashing capitalism and expropriating the bourgeoisie; for making the working class the ruling class!!! For Marxists, nationalized property can only be a step (or even a half step) toward socialism when the capitalists are expropriated and the means of production placed in the hands of the working class. Only the working class can do this. If not, what were Marx and Engels doing? Why their polemics with Proudhon, with the Utopian Socialists who argued that the "cooperative commonwealth" could be brought into being by "wise men" for the benefit of the "helpless, ignorant masses"? If Marx and Engels were wrong, as the SL in fact maintains, the proletariat, the revolutionary party, the Fourth International all become simply nice ideas, morally desirable, but materially unnecessary—a typical petty-bourgeois stance. In short, the Spartacists toss Marxism out the window.

After the death of Lenin, the Stalinists seized Lenin's incorrect theory of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" and used it as theoretical justification for the counterrevolutionary policy in China and elsewhere. Similarly, after World War II, the Pabloites seized Trotsky's incorrect theory that Russia still remained a degenerated workers' state and used it to cut the revolutionary heart out of Trotskyism. In doing so they bowed to the class pressure of the petty bourgeoisie on the working class in a period of working-class retreat. The Pabloites destroyed the revolutionary Fourth International. But "orthodox Pabloism" was only the most extreme and consistent expression of these class pressures. The Spartacist League is one of a number of groupings which have fled from the most blatant atrocities of Pablo while brazenly defending Pabloism's method.



Political Resolution of the Founding Convention

\$.35

The Political Resolution passed at the Founding Convention of the Revolutionary Socialist League is now available to readers of THE TORCH. Written to guide the League's work in 1973-74, the Resolution amplifies the theory of the Permanent Revolution and applies it to the United States. The present crisis of capitalism is analyzed and the political crisis of the U.S. ruling class—especially its drive toward strong-man rule—is examined in this context. The Political Resolution marks an important step forward in the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International on a revolutionary program.

Haymarket Books, 160 North Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606

NO FUEL...

Cont'd. from p. 3

of sufficient profit for the oil industry to build refineries desperately needed.

Domestic oil production followed a similar pattern. The actual known oil reserves in this country total close to 300 million barrels, but the actual "recoverable" reserves are listed at less than 40 billion barrels because the oil companies consider it unprofitable to bother with the remainder, whose production cost is too great. In fact, lack of investment in oil production has meant increasingly obsolescent equipment, whose inefficiency in turn makes more and more of our oil reserves "unrecoverable" because of too great production costs.

The oil industry, however, does see a way to increase domestic production—yes, that's right, higher prices. Oil industry consultants writing in the *Wall Street Journal* of December 26, 1973 happily announced, "A few dollars per barrel price increase would likely have the effect of tripling U.S. oil reserves." The oil magnates feel even more strongly about the price of natural gas.

No matter where one turns the situation is the same. Production, research, exploration and refining of oil and natural gas were cut back for lack of profit. The oil companies, taking advantage of the impending shortages created by their own lack of investment, then embarked on a huge propaganda campaign demanding immediate price increases to avert an energy crisis.

Additionally, the monopolists hoped to crush the growing demands for pollution and environmental controls which had grown out of the accelerating destruction of the environment by the energy conglomerates and the major utility companies. Mobil, this time in an ad printed last April, again summed up the industry's attitude:

"Exaggerated environmental fears have effectively prevented oil companies from obtaining satisfactory sites for new refineries. And the wholesale prices we get for gasoline and other products do not recover the increased cost of building refineries."

Here the long-term and short-term crisis meet. In each case the oil industry must increase prices to offset its falling rate of profit—in the long term to generate the massive capital outlays it needs, in the short run to make increased domestic production profitable. And in both cases it must eliminate the environmentalists, whose control measures have increased the industry's overhead costs, making it more difficult to generate capital and lowering the rate of return on current production.

The energy industry used a few scare tactics to go along with their propaganda last winter and this summer. Having run down refining capacity to the point where oil products were becoming tight, it arranged distribution so that sharpest shortages would occur in states

with the strongest environmental restrictions. Colorado, the state with the toughest controls, was hit hardest last winter. Industry demands for higher prices to avert shortages were stepped up intensely.

NIXON

This campaign met with immediate success. Last April, Nixon removed price controls on newly-discovered natural gas, abolished quotas and tariffs on imported oil, and (most importantly) suspended the environmental controls in the coal sector for at least two years. In other words, he legalized strip mining for the indefinite future. This fall, before the oil boycott, successive price increases granted in oil amounted to a 40 per cent rise in the price of crude oil.

The price increases and other government handouts paid huge dividends to the industry. In the first nine months of 1973 profits soared 47 per cent above 1972 industry-wide. This only whetted the appetite of the ravenous oil magnates, who demanded still higher prices and larger profits.

The oil companies had brought up controlling interests in nuclear energy and coal corporations—they controlled uranium milling and had begun to develop coal gasification and shale oil processes. But even with the

Stall-ins...

Cont'd. from p. 7

of Hoffa and Fitzsimmons. They proved it in practice last month.

Hoffa was content to issue a short statement saying that he "supported" the stoppages. It was mere rhetoric to confuse those Teamsters who still look to Hoffa. He didn't bother to outline strategy, a course of action to protect those drivers who observed the stoppages from company or union harassment. He couldn't; he has no strategy.

Fitzsimmons' role was even worse. His first response was to condemn the blockades. Then he ran to Washington D.C. where Nixon covered him with praise, saying, "Well, we got the blockades down, thanks to you." Fitzsimmons must be proud of the fact that Nixon has recognized him as the chief cop in the labor movement.

The December issue of the IBT's magazine, *Teamster*, also shows that Fitzsimmons' earlier promise to fight for a wage reopener for over-the-road drivers in order to regain the cut in pay caused by the lowered speed limits is phony as well. The magazine reports Fitzsimmons' new strategy. Fitzsimmons went to Congress and "fought" for a "universal 60 miles per hour speed limit" instead of 55 mph. The leader of the largest and most powerful union in this country went to Congress and fought only to soften a cut in pay for his membership!

inflated September prices of \$3.50 per barrel, oil was still half as cheap as these methods.

Into this picture came last October's Arab boycotts. Refinery shortages would have meant some oil shortages this winter in any event, but the boycotts accelerated the process. Saudi Arabia has cut back production by about 3 million barrels per day, Kuwait by 1.5 million, and other Arab producers have cut back comparable amounts. The shortages do exist.

The Arab governments know that within two or three decades their oil reserves will be fully depleted. They're anxious to get the most out of it while they can, and also to stretch out the length of time before their oil is completely gone. Production cutbacks and increased prices serve both of these needs.

But while the oil companies didn't engineer the oil boycotts, they've been eager to take advantage of the opportunity they've been handed. This is the price increase they've been demanding for so long, and they've used the chance to double the price of domestic crude (to \$7 per barrel). The panic situation generated by the Arabs made the price increases possible, and the oil industry helped the panic along by overestimating the shortages by millions of barrels per day.

The result of the new round of price increases has been to put the oil companies in the driver's seat. With oil selling at \$7 per barrel, nuclear fission, coal gasification, and shale oil production are competitive. Now the

energy czars can use the domination they've built in these sectors over the past few years. Profits are soaring from increased prices, and oil wells in the U.S. that had been abandoned for lack of profit have now been reopened. The increased domestic production and new forms of energy under their control have eased the industry's fear of Arab expropriation. Once more, their control over energy is complete.

What will be the ultimate social cost of the oil barons' drive for increased profits? Already millions throughout the world have been thrown out of work. A world-wide depression looms. Should the capitalists manage to avoid depression, the savage inflationary increases and pollution brought on by doubled energy costs will spearhead a permanent inroad on the proletariat's living standards.

WORKERS' SOLUTION: REVOLUTION

The potential exists for cheap energy; as the potential exists for qualitatively raising the living standards of the working masses in this country and throughout the world. Just as solar energy lies undeveloped, so similar processes in other areas, processes that together could forever free mankind from want and exploitation, lie dormant because of low rates of profit.

There is only one solution for the proletariat: the abolition of the capitalist system and its profit hunger and the establishment of the rule of the working class—socialism.



TORCH reporter talks to striking Teamsters in Detroit. Local 337 struck for two weeks to defend union rights.

Fitzsimmons openly demands the working class bear the cost of the energy crisis. "Higher prices will seriously effect the poor while not having much effect on the rich. And to that I say, *we all got into it together—rich and poor alike and we all should get out of it together....* I believe what we in the IBT propose in regard to a universal 60 mile speed limit, addresses itself directly to the problem of fuel conservation, while at the same time coming together with the *American principle of fair play for all.*"

Congress turned a deaf ear on this lackey, but the membership of the Teamsters must continue their fight for a reopener in the contract. With a revolutionary leadership, Teamsters could lead the labor movement in reversing the contract defeats of 1973. The explosiveness of the owner operators will be reflected within the working class. By posing the solutions to today's crisis with a clear program of action for the working class, the Teamsters could channel this explosiveness into a fight for all the exploited in this society.

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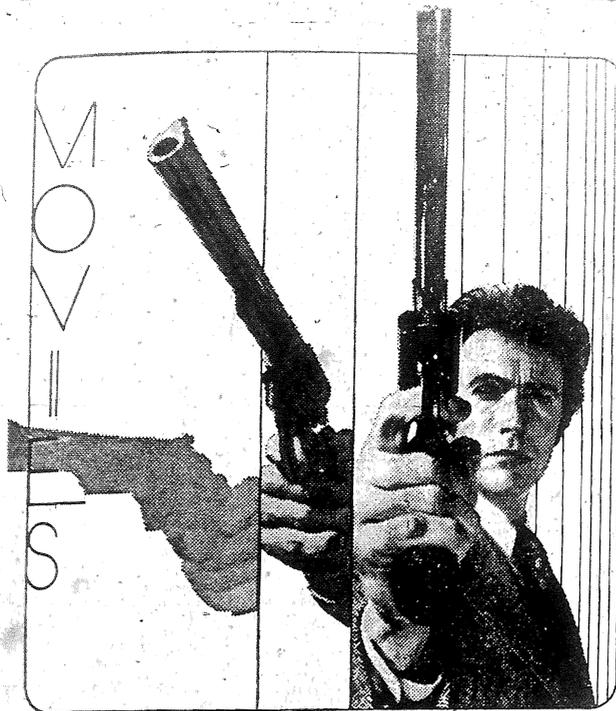
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MAGNUM FORCE

by Linda Moore

In January of 1972, Clint Eastwood was *Dirty Harry*. He was called "dirty" because he was a cynical cop who did the dirty work for the people of San Francisco whose civic leaders were all a bunch of silly liberals. The police department and the courts were hamstrung by the liberals.

So Inspector Harry Callahan had to go outside the law to track down a homosexual, hippie-maniac-killer-rapist-kidnapper. The courts kept letting this threat to women, children, and the American way, get away on technicalities. *Dirty Harry* was a vigilante hero who took the law into his own hands. He and his gun made justice where the San Francisco police department wouldn't.

Now, two years later, Inspector Harry Callahan reappears in *Magnum Force*. "Magnum" refers to Harry's gun. The movie opens with the audience staring into the barrel of this gun while Harry impresses us with: "This is a Magnum 44, the most powerful handgun in the world and it could blow your head clean off."

What follows is murder after murder—of corrupt labor leaders, racketeers, pimps, and their associates. They are all shown as filthy swine who deserve to die. Somebody dressed like a cop is filling them with lead from a Magnum.

Is it Harry? No. *This* time Harry is not taking the law into his own hands. Now it is a group of rookie cops — ex-servicemen and skilled marksmen under the direction of a man at the top of the police force—who are doing the "dirty work" for the people of San Francisco.

These cops and their leader are

frustrated with justice through the courts. This illegal cop squad is infected with the same purpose that motivated Harry himself before, but this time Harry aims to fight the vigilantes. The new Harry says: "I hate the goddam system—but until somebody comes along with some changes that make sense I'll stick with it."

Why has Harry changed? *Dirty Harry* was a reactionary fantasy, where evil was represented in a single hippie criminal. To wipe it out, the he-man hero had to go outside a system that was hamstrung by liberalism.

In *Magnum Force*, crime is not localized in one character. It's like a spreading social disease. True, the prime victims of the proto-fascist cop gang are still "rotten" criminals. But their lawless crime-fighting leads the cop goons to shoot a veteran police officer, to blow up Harry's partner, and to try to kill Inspector Harry himself.

Harry asks, "When the police start becoming their own executioners, where will it all end?"

Today, the system is in trouble. The men who made *Dirty Harry* pull back from the logical consequences of the first dirty Harry's vigilantism. Violence outside the law is too threatening, "right" or "left." So, Harry guns down both dark-complected plane hijackers and vigilante cops.

But we don't root for Harry because he protects and upholds the system. The audience is made to approve of his new "values" because he is still the stud with the big gun. Magnum force is the axis on which the movie turns. We are pulled through the movie by the exciting

PIGS AT PLAY

"It's the most extraordinary, lascivious and decadent place in the world," crooned the president of Habitation Leclerc, a new fabulous fun spot resort hotel for the bourgeoisie and their lackeys located in Haiti. For \$150 a day, guests receive a bungalow, three black servants, meals, liquor and a chauffeured jeep.

Meanwhile, just outside the resort, Haitians with an average annual income of \$80 live in shacks which equal the world's worst slums for squalor. Ruled by the whims of an absolute dictator, "Baby Doc" Duvalier, the natives are kept in line by his personal assassination squad (known as the police) and the state religion, voodoo.

The boundary between these two worlds is a stone wall studded with broken glass. On opening night 2,000 Haitians stood outside this wall to watch the rich enter. One 15-year-old was run over by a limousine.

The party crowd inside included government officials

from around the world, American TV and movie hacks (George Hamilton, Alexis Smith, etc.), real estate shysters and almost the entire Haitian ruling class. "Finally Haiti has something no other country has," beamed "Baby Doc's" sister while looking around the resort. What she meant to say was that finally Haiti has what every other country has always had.

American guests were quick with the "but the natives are really very happy" line. One, who insisted that he "can't stand" poverty in the U.S., said, "Look, here the people are smiling. If nothing else they can always pick fruits and vegetables when they get hungry."

A New York socialite, decked out in a glowing bib of imitation diamonds, chimed in with, "It's tropical poverty as opposed to cold poverty, which is much worse." Which doesn't keep her kind from building ski resorts in the midst of French-Canadian



"Sister Doc" and thug grunt over "unique" resort.

shantytowns.

Who are the financiers for this new well-guarded fantasy land? A bank, the Agency for International Development (the U.S. "foreign aid" bureaucracy), the Baron Edmund de Rothschild, a prince, and the king of shoot-up-and-let-it-be rock, Mick Jagger.

motion of violence—not by any moral theme.

The quick and brutal murders of the hideous and self-satisfied criminal element are thrilling. Even more thrilling is the final chase in cars, on foot, and on motorcycles. Eastwood pulverizes one of the gang, drives another into the bay, and a steel beam smashes through the face of another. Finally Harry's commanding officer, the ringleader of the gang gets blown to smithereens by a bomb originally meant for Inspector Harry. After all this, Eastwood says, "A man's got to know his limitations." He's referring to the carcasses around him.

At the end of *Dirty Harry*

Inspector Callahan tossed his badge into the same waters that the beaten hippie maniac was floating in. He had no respect for the law, and being a cop placed too many limitations on his big gun crime-fighting.

For *today's* Harry, the limitations aren't with the law that coddles criminals, but with the vigilantes who go outside the law. However, Harry's change of heart doesn't make him a "Soft liberal" hero. He's still the hero because he's a stud—and the cop gang are effeminate punks. He's the hero because he carries the Magnum 44 and the "punks" use only the Magnum 357. The biggest gun is still the winner, and the winner this year "sticks with the system."

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