

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

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Carter's role

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Militant/Peggy Winter

HECTOR MARROQUIN

Socialist Workers Party marks 40th anniversary

This week the *Militant* hails the fortieth anniversary of a milestone in the history of the revolutionary socialist movement in this country—the founding of the Socialist Workers Party.

On New Year's weekend of 1937-38, some 150 delegates and observers met in Chicago for the convention that

An editorial

launched the new party. In an interview featured in the *International Socialist Review* this week (see page 13), veteran SWP leader George Breitman recalls that convention and some of its background. The *ISR* also reprints two reports written in 1938 by James P. Cannon, the central founding leader of the SWP, evaluating the first convention.

This New Year inaugurates a series of major anniversary commemorations

for the revolutionary movement.

In October 1928, nearly ten years before the first SWP convention, Cannon and other leaders of the American Communist Party were undemocratically expelled from the CP for "Trotskyism"—that is, for opposing the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet leadership and the world communist movement. They were denied the right to express criticism of Stalin's anti-Marxist policies and dictatorial rule.

The immediate response of the expelled Communists was to begin publication of the *Militant* to disseminate the suppressed ideas of Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition in the Communist (or Third) International. The first issue appeared in November 1928. The *Militant* has been the public voice and indispensable organizer of the revolutionary socialist movement ever since.

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George Breitman

Articles by
James P. Cannon

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PITTSBURGH PROTEST FOR ZIMBABWEAN STUDENTS: On December 31, fifty people protested Carnegie Mellon University's attempts to evict eight expelled Zimbabwean students from university-leased apartments. The eight students have refused to go to classes since they discovered that their scholarships were part of the racist Rhodesian regime's plans to train Blacks to serve as top administrators in a puppet neocolonial government. The eight students were expelled and now face deportation to Rhodesia and possible imprisonment or death there.

The December 31 picket line, which was reported by local newspapers and TV stations, demanded: "Don't evict! Don't deport! Give the eight full support!"

SEATTLE PICKETS HIT DEPORTATIONS: Fifty people picketed Seattle's New Federal Office Building December 17 to protest deportations of immigrants without work or residence permits. Speakers at the protest included Delfino Muñoz of Chief Sealth High School MEChA, a Chicano student organization; Juan Bocanegra of El Centro de la Raza; and a representative of the Ali Shokri Defense Committee. (Shokri is a refugee from the Iranian air force seeking political asylum in the United States.) The demonstration was sponsored by the Seattle Coalition for Human Rights for Undocumented Workers.

No to apartheid!



Jim Paulin

By Lee Martindale

AMHERST, Mass.—When Amherst College trustees left their meeting here December 10, they had to file out between two solid lines of students chanting and handing them literature about the role of U.S. corporations in South Africa. Three-hundred-and-fifty students from twelve colleges braved ten-degree weather and an icy wind to protest Amherst's investments in corporations doing business in South Africa and to demand a total U.S. economic embargo on the apartheid regime.

After the demonstration, representatives from the colleges met and formed the North East Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa.

DEATH PENALTY STILL RACIST, STUDY SHOWS:

A survey by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., has found that although there are now slightly more white than Black prisoners on death row, the number of Blacks facing execution is still disproportionately large. Currently 183, or almost 45 percent, of those on death row are Black; another fourteen are Spanish-surnamed; and two are American Indian.

Another study shows that not only the race of the alleged murderers, but also the race of the murder victim, determines who does or does not get the death penalty. "We found out, for example, that people who kill Blacks seldom get to death row," commented William Bowers of Northeastern University's Center for Applied Social Research.

Meanwhile, in Alabama Johnny Harris and Donald Thigpin—both Black—are still scheduled to be executed March 10.

CAN YOU HELP?: The *Militant* needs a new encyclopedia for verifying statistics, dates, and names. If any readers can donate a recent set of a standard U.S. encyclopedia, or know of one we can buy inexpensively, please write the *Militant* Editorial Office, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.

FOR ANITA, A DAY WITHOUT SUNSHINE: Antigay bigot Anita Bryant had a day without the Orange Bowl Parade on New Year's Eve. Although Bryant has been featured on the parade broadcast for nine of the past eleven years, NBC chose Rita Moreno instead this year.

Bryant has also been unable to find a producer for her new record, "There's Nothing Like the Love Between a Woman and a Man." Bryant's husband insists the record is not part of the antigay crusade: "It's just a good country song about a normal relationship between a man and a woman, the child on the knee and all that stuff."

SOME BRIGHT NEWS FOR GAY RIGHTS: Newly elected New York Mayor Edward Koch announced January 3 that he would sign an executive order barring antigay discrimination by city agencies.

About fifteen gay rights activists gathered at Koch's inauguration on New Year's Day to remind him of his campaign promises to gays. The Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights distributed an open letter to the new mayor demanding that he issue the executive order and give active support to a gay rights bill before the city council.

FBI SUED FOR MURDER OF CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER: In 1965 Ku Klux Klan members shot and killed Viola Gregg Liuzzo, a Detroit civil rights worker, as she drove from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Three Klansmen escaped conviction for her murder. They did, however, get ten-year sentences for violating Liuzzo's civil rights. The conviction was based on testimony of Gary Thomas Rowe, Jr., an FBI informer who was with the Klansmen when they murdered Liuzzo.

Liuzzo's family has now filed a \$2 million claim against the FBI. The suit charges the FBI with negligence in failing to prevent the murder and not instructing its informer in the Klan to deter violence.

BUT WE'VE GOT HIGH HOPES: A recent Harris Survey of 1,498 adults from around the country showed that by an 88-6 percent majority those polled would like to see "equality of Blacks." A 75-17 percent majority favor "desegregation of schools," and a 77-14 percent majority favor "desegregation of housing."

A 98 percent majority would like to see "an end to all wars," but 86 percent don't expect it in their lifetime. Similarly, by 97-2 percent, people want an "end to unemployment." But, 82 percent don't think they will ever see it.

ATTICA BROTHER STILL IMPRISONED: One year ago New York Governor Hugh Carey pardoned seven former inmates who took part in the 1971 Attica prison rebellion. That left an American Indian, Dacajeweah (John Hill), as the last person in prison on charges stemming from the rebellion.

Dacajeweah applied for parole last year. But according to Frank "Big Black" Smith, national director of the Attica Brothers Legal Defense, that appeal was "thwarted by a parole board composed of former sheriffs, guards and a former Attica prosecutor."

Smith cabled Governor Carey in December urging Dacajeweah's release.

—Diane Wang

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Young Socialists pledge fight to save life of Marroquín

By Shelley Kramer

The Young Socialist Alliance, at its seventeenth national convention, voted to launch an all-out campaign to win political asylum for Héctor Marroquín. The convention took place in Detroit December 28-January 1.

Marroquín is a member of the YSA and of the Socialist Workers Party. He is a union activist who helped lead a successful organizing drive for Teamsters Local 949 at the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Houston, where he has lived since 1974.

Today he is fighting for his life against the United States government's efforts to deport him back to his native Mexico.

Marroquín faces a series of political frame-up charges in Mexico. His crime? Being a leader of the student movement at the University of Nuevo León in Monterrey from 1969 to 1974.

In September 1977, Marroquín was arrested in Texas as he returned from a visit to a lawyer in Mexico. He was imprisoned for more than three months and released only after his supporters raised \$10,000 in bail—five times the usual sum required in such cases.

The U.S. government is intent on deporting Marroquín even though this would result in his certain imprisonment and torture, and likely his death. A deportation hearing has been set for January 17—only days away. The U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) is coordinating defense efforts for Marroquín.

The urgency of this defense campaign was uppermost in the minds of the more than 500 members and friends of the YSA who gathered in Detroit. The convention proceedings opened with special presentations on the Marroquín case.

Linda Jenness, a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, introduced Marroquín to his comrades from across the country. In a display of revolutionary solidarity, Marroquín was elected the honorary chairperson of the convention.

Central YSA task

In his political report to the convention, Chuck Petrin, YSA national secretary, continued in this spirit. "One of the most important tasks of the YSA this spring, one which will command all our attention and resources . . . is the campaign to win political asylum for our comrade, to save the life of Héctor Marroquín," he said.



Delegates at Young Socialist Alliance convention (left) voted to carry out broad defense campaign for Marroquín. At right, Marroquín addresses rally sponsored by U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners.



Militant/Anne Teesdale

"Our model for this campaign will be the fight we carried out more than a decade ago in defense of three YSA members in Bloomington, Indiana," Petrin explained. He recalled the government's attempts to jail three YSA activists in 1963 for the "crime" of advocating socialist ideas.

"In those days, the Héctor Marroquín weren't called 'terrorists'—they were called 'subversives,'" Petrin said. "And the State of Indiana was hell-bent on putting our three 'subversives,' and in fact our entire organization, out of business."

"But what these witch-hunters failed to reckon with, was the capacity of the YSA to stand up and fight back."

A massive campaign by the YSA to win broad political and financial support for the Bloomington defendants defeated the frame-up. The Bloomington campaign, Petrin explained, helped build the YSA on campuses across the country.

"We won people to the YSA *because* of this campaign, not in spite of it," he remarked. "Because people saw us as serious about defending democratic rights and standing up for what we believe."

"Public opinion was not on the side of the witch-hunters, but on the side of the defenders of free speech. And through our campaign, the YSA played

an indispensable role in bringing the full weight of public opinion to bear. That is what we must do today in the case of Héctor Marroquín," he concluded.

Convention delegates unanimously and enthusiastically approved Petrin's report. The report proposed that the defense of Marroquín and organizing for the April 15 national march on Washington against the *Bakke* decision be the YSA's main campaigns for the spring.

International support

In fighting for political asylum for Marroquín, the YSA will be joined by the SWP and by thousands of revolutionary socialists internationally who adhere to the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organization.

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with you in your fight for Héctor Marroquín," Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the SWP, told the convention. Barnes presented greetings from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

"The war they have started over comrade Héctor is a war on the entire YSA, SWP, and Fourth International. And, like their war on Hugo Blanco, *it is one they will not win.*"

Hugo Blanco is a living example of the successful defense work the international Trotskyist movement has carried out. A Peruvian peasant leader condemned to death by the ruling military government in the 1960s, Blanco's life was saved by an international solidarity movement in which the SWP and YSA played a major role.

Recently the efforts of USLA—supported by the SWP and YSA—won Blanco's right to speak in this country.

It was highly fitting, therefore, for Hugo Blanco and Héctor Marroquín to share the same platform at a special USLA rally held in Detroit on the evening of December 29.

Standing beneath a banner demanding his right to political asylum, Marroquín thanked his supporters for the victories already won.

"Two thousand dollars bail is the maximum amount 'normally' required of undocumented workers—whose only 'crime' is creating wealth for the ruling class," Marroquín explained.

"It occurs to me we could divide the \$10,000 my supporters raised into two parts: two thousand dollars for the crime of being a worker and \$8,000 for the crime of being a worker with a revolutionary consciousness."

How to help

- Send a telegram or letter urging that Marroquín be granted political asylum to: Leonel Castillo, Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C. 20536. Send a copy to: USLA, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, New York 10003.

- Circulate the Appeal for Asylum (available from USLA) in your community, on the job, at school. Ask unions, student organizations, political groups, and prominent individuals to endorse the Marroquín case.

- Funds are urgently needed to cover legal costs. Ask every supporter to contribute. Make checks payable to USLA, earmarked "Marroquín Defense."

"In jail I had some very happy moments," he continued. "Seeing all of you carrying out my defense work and talking to the brothers and sisters in prison about the meaning of deportation and the Mexican regime."

But, he added, "I also had some very sad moments. One night I saw thirty human beings filing into the jail. They came with their heads down, with mud on their shoes, some with tears in their eyes, asking themselves, 'But what have I done to deserve this?'"

Inspired to fight

Marroquín told the audience that the government's efforts to destroy his spirit had failed. "More than three months in jail did not depress me," he said, "but rather inspired me to struggle even harder for a better world."

"If *la migra* thinks they have rehabilitated me, they are wrong. It is *they* who need rehabilitating. It's the social system that needs to be rehabilitated—and better than that, replaced."

"The only thing I and others like me have done is to fight for a better world where there will no longer exist wars, unemployment, racism, sexism, and borders. To fight for a world of prosperity, equality, freedom, happiness."

"We are optimistic and enthusiastic that we will win and finally be victorious," Marroquín concluded.

Before the applause could die down, Hugo Blanco rose to speak. He spelled out the lessons his own case provided

Continued on page 5

History of a frame-up

- Héctor Marroquín is a socialist activist, a union organizer, and a former student leader in Mexico, who has filed for political asylum in the United States.

- In 1974 Marroquín was falsely accused of assassinating a school librarian at the University of Nuevo León in Monterrey, Mexico.

- Three student leaders were accused with Marroquín. One was shot down while leafleting factory workers in 1975. One was murdered by a right-wing assassination squad in 1974. The third was arrested in 1975, brutally tortured, and has been held incommunicado ever since.

- In April 1974, Marroquín fled Mexico and resettled in the United States, where he has lived for the past three-and-a-half years.

- In June 1974, Marroquín was again accused of carrying out a guerrilla assault in Monterrey. At

the time of the alleged attack Marroquín was lying in a hospital bed in Galveston, Texas, recovering from a serious auto accident.

- In September 1977, Marroquín was arrested in Texas as he returned from a visit to a lawyer in Mexico. At the time of his arrest, the U.S. government tried to "exclude" him—to turn him over to Mexican authorities with only a perfunctory hearing.

- Defense efforts coordinated by USLA forced the government to grant Marroquín a deportation hearing. Through USLA's campaign \$10,000 was raised to pay Marroquín's exorbitant bail. The deportation hearing has been set for January 17.

- The government has denied Marroquín's right to prepare and speak out in his own defense by confining him to Harris County, Texas, as a condition of his bond.

Speech by Linda Jenness

How SWP and YSA fight gov't

The Young Socialist Alliance convention was opened by Linda Jenness, a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, who introduced Héctor Marroquín to the delegates and observers.

Héctor Marroquín is a member of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. He has been indicted by the Mexican government on frame-up charges of terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

Rather than turn himself over to the torturers who run Mexico's jails, or to the special assassination squads led by the Mexican government, or to the cops who have a habit of making prisoners disappear, Héctor fled to this country. He has lived and worked here for three-and-a-half years—along with millions of others who are here without so-called "proper" papers.

In September, after returning to Mexico for a few days to talk to his lawyer, he was caught at the border and thrown into a U.S. jail. *La migra* thought it could quickly and easily dispose of him by turning him over to the Mexican cops—without giving him the right to take his case before the American people and without giving him the right to wage a legal fight for his right to remain in this country as a political refugee.

But thanks to the efforts of the people in this room and others we

and political repression. We have established that we are the people who are willing, and who know how, to mobilize ourselves and others in defense of any victim of American class "justice."

We have worked tirelessly in defense campaigns for dozens of frame-up victims; for the release of the Puerto Rican Nationalists, the Dawson Five, Gary Tyler, the Stearns strikers, Skyhorse and Mohawk, Hurricane Carter and John Artis, the Wilmington Ten, and many others. We understand the importance of defending people even though they hold different views than ours, belong to other organizations, or don't agree with us completely on how to change society. This is one of the great principles of the socialist movement.

But the case of Héctor Marroquín is in a special category. In defending Héctor, we defending one of *our own*. By defending one of our own, we are defending our movement, defending each and every one of us in this room, and defending the right of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party to exist.

The charge against Héctor is that he is a terrorist. But Héctor's not a terrorist. He was never a terrorist. They framed him up because he is a political activist.

According to the FBI we're all terrorists. According to them, everyone in the Fourth International around the



LINDA JENNESS: 'In defending Héctor we are defending our movement and all of our members.'

of the leaders began to support the idea of guerrilla warfare. Héctor disagreed strongly with the idea that armed actions by small groups could bring about basic social change, and he left the group.

He continued his search for an organization that understood the need to build a revolutionary party and the need to mobilize the working masses in their own interests.

But it wasn't until he came to the United States that he seriously came into contact with the Trotskyist movement. He became a Trotskyist and a supporter of the Fourth International.

Héctor joined the SWP and the YSA. He also became a union activist, and helped to organize the Coca-Cola plant in Houston where he worked. After a fight, the workers there, most of them Black and Chicano, established Local 949 of the Teamsters.

'We don't ask for papers'

When Héctor first crossed the border, the immigration officials demanded papers. When he applied for the job at the Coca-Cola plant, the boss demanded papers. When his wife went to the hospital in Chicago to have their baby, the hospital demanded papers.

But when Héctor came to the SWP and the YSA, we didn't ask for any papers. There's only one thing you have to have in order to join our movement—and that's allegiance to the world working class and a commitment to devoting your life to it.

We take our movement seriously. The ruling class takes our movement seriously. And we know that an organization that doesn't know how to defend itself and its members from government attack and frame-up, doesn't deserve to exist—and won't exist.

The tragedy is that we've all seen organizations weakened, and even totally destroyed, because they didn't understand the importance of defense campaigns, or because they didn't know how to combine the legal and political fights for their rights.

As the Socialist Workers Party celebrates its fortieth anniversary in 1978, we're going to be reviewing the accomplishments of our movement and the lessons we've learned.

Tradition of labor solidarity

One of the greatest contributions we've made to the workers movement is our capacity to organize political defense campaigns. Our tradition in this goes back to Jim Cannon who, along with others of his generation, brought into the early Communist Party the tradition of labor solidarity that the IWW had established.

We have a long, proud record. The defense of Leon Trotsky against the Stalinist frame-ups in the 1930s. The defense of Jim Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, Ray Dunne, and the other leaders of the SWP and the Minneapolis Teamsters who were indicted under the Smith Act in 1941. The defense of Jimmy Kutchner, the legless veteran victimized by the McCarthy witch-hunt of the 1950s. The campaign for the three YSA members from Indiana University in Bloomington who were indicted for conspiring to overthrow the State of Indiana in the early 1960s. The fight for Hugo Blanco, whose life was saved as a result of an international defense campaign in which the American Trotskyists played an important part throughout the 1960s.

The defense of Andrew Pulley and the other GIs at Ft. Jackson who were framed up because they spoke out and organized against the Vietnam war. We know how to organize a defense campaign that can win. We know how to wage a defense campaign that can boomerang on the frame-up artists by gaining—through the defense effort itself—a wider hearing for the ideas and point of view that the frame-up was designed to silence.

Now, once again, one of our members is under attack. That means that the party and the YSA are under attack, and each and every one of us is under attack.

So we're going on a war footing to say to the government of *this* country and to say to the Mexican government: "Don't mess with us unless you're prepared for a serious fight. Don't mess with us unless you're prepared to take us on in all our strength."

I know Héctor. I met him in the



Militant/Larry Seigle

Fort Jackson Eight, anti-Vietnam War GIs framed up by Army brass. YSA and SWP participated in successful defense effort.

worked with—*la migra* was wrong. And Héctor Marroquín is here with us today to attend this convention.

This is a double victory. When the government couldn't keep him in jail any longer, they wanted to put him under house arrest. They said he couldn't leave Houston without permission from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Peggy Winter, Héctor's lawyer, asked Joe Staley, the district director of the INS in San Antonio, for permission for Héctor to come to this convention. Staley told Peggy, "I don't think that illegal aliens have the right to go waltzing around the country making speeches."

But after Peggy threatened to raise holy hell, Staley changed his mind and gave Héctor permission. So Héctor just waltzed right into Detroit to make a speech.

Socialists' defense record

Our movement—the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance—is recognized far and wide as being in the front lines of the fight in defense of victims of racist injustice

world is a terrorist. And that's the slander on which they base their claim to have the right to spy on us, harass us, and try to disrupt our organizations.

Student and union activist

Here's a comrade who was a leader in the student movement in Mexico. While still in high school in 1968, Héctor—and thousands of others—were deeply affected by the Tlatelolco massacre, where peaceful student demonstrators in Mexico City were attacked by government troops firing machine guns into the crowd, murdering at least 300.

Héctor entered the University of Nuevo León the following year and participated in the struggles to gain student-faculty control of the university. He continued to participate in and lead student struggles throughout that year and in the early 1970s. He was well known on campus as a student leader and an uncompromising fighter for democratic rights and social justice.

In 1973 he helped initiate a discussion group. After a few months, most

How to defend victims of gov't frame-ups

'Defense Policies and Principles of the Socialist Workers Party'

Two articles:

'Traditions and Guiding Ideas of the SWP in Defense Activities'

by George Novack

'The Capitalist Witch-hunt and How to Fight It'

February 1950 Resolution of the SWP National Committee

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attacks

Maverick County Jail. I admire and love him as a friend and a comrade. I would do anything for him—as I would for any member under attack.

We're not doing this just for Héctor. We're doing this for our movement, because only a movement that can defend itself can inspire the confidence of each and every member. Only a movement that can defend itself can inspire the confidence of the working class and the oppressed, including one of the most exploited sectors, the undocumented workers.

Top priority

The Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party met last week and decided that between now and the



Militant

Bloomington defendant Jim Bingham. YSA mobilized to defend three students accused of conspiring to overthrow the state of Indiana.

time of Héctor's deportation hearing, defense of Héctor and our party will be a top priority. And we're confident that the delegates at this YSA convention will decide to do the same thing.

We decided to go all out to get support, endorsement, and publicity, and to raise money to meet the costs of the defense.

We will need the active participation of every comrade in this campaign. Whether you're on campus or on the job, in your NOW chapter or at your union meeting, whether you teach or study, each and every one of us must defend our movement and help save the life of Héctor Marroquín.

Being a revolutionary is not easy. Our enemies are powerful, ruthless, vicious, and will do anything they can get away with. And that's not just speculation on our part—we've seen it.

We've seen what they've done to others. To the students at Kent State, to the five Puerto Rican Nationalists, to the Black Panthers.

We have no illusions about this government, and we're not playing games.

But we also know that if you're a rebel, a fighter, if your goal in life is more than getting a soft job, a nice apartment, or driving a good car, if your goal is more than finding a quiet niche for yourself—then the *safest* place to be is in the SWP and YSA. It's the safest because then you have thousands of comrades around the world who will fight for you the way they would expect you to fight for them.

You have thousands of comrades who understand down to the marrow of their bones, that an injury to one of us is an injury to all of us.

An with that introduction, I'd like you all to meet Héctor Marroquín.

Amnesty International hits Mexico repression

By Arnold Weissberg

Amnesty International, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization, has issued a damning indictment of political repression in Mexico.

According to Amnesty's 1977 annual report, "there may still be as many as 100 to 200 political prisoners" in Mexican jails.

The Mexican government denied in December that there are any political prisoners at all, but Amnesty countered with a documented list of 192. In a December 16 news release the group noted that a further list of 300 people who had "disappeared" would also be made available to Mexican Attorney General Oscar Flores.

The Amnesty report expressed special concern "at the degree of violence used by the police and military when making arrests; it frequently results in fatal injury."

Héctor Marroquín's roommate was the victim of such police violence in 1972 in Monterrey.

Further serious violations of human rights documented in the Amnesty report are "numerous cases of people disappearing after being arrested." The report cites the case of a young couple arrested in Mexico City in August 1976. Neither has been heard from since. They were accused of membership in a small guerrilla group called

the 23rd of September Communist League.

The Mexican government has falsely accused Marroquín of membership in the same group. He has also been falsely accused of murdering a university librarian in Monterrey in 1974. Another student accused of the same crime, Jesús Piedra Ibarra, was arrested in April 1975 and hasn't been heard from since.

A year ago, the Mexico City daily *Excelsior* reported that 200 political activists "were illegally detained in Campo Militar No. 1," according to Amnesty. Many of these people were charged with membership in the 23rd of September Communist League.

"According to reports," Amnesty asserts, "prisoners in the Campo Militar No. 1 are maltreated, deprived of food and tortured."

Campo Militar is one of a group of secret prisons maintained by the regime. The Mexican military has denied lawyers access to the facility.

On April 11, 1977, three alleged members of the 23rd of September Communist League were arrested. Two weeks later they were still being held incommunicado, in violation of Mexican law. Amnesty made an urgent appeal on their behalf April 26.

The Mexican government has also dealt brutally with peasants demand-



Mexican police force student to run gauntlet of clubs and kicks.

ing land reform. In February 1977, thirty peasants in the State of Oaxaca were killed. A few days later, government forces fired on a protest rally of 2,000 students in Oaxaca City, killing one and injuring twenty-five.

...YSA

Continued from page 3

for carrying out the Marroquín defense.

"My case was carried out with our own methods," Blanco explained. "By this I mean the methods of revolutionary Marxism—without any trace of sectarianism. We did not ask for full agreement with the Transitional Program [of the Fourth International] to join the defense campaign, but only agreement to save the life of Hugo Blanco. Not surprisingly, we found many more agreed with this than with the Transitional Program."

"It is likely if we had followed other methods I would now be a cadaver," Blanco concluded. "That is, if we had only asked those in political agreement to defend me, or if we had relied only on legalistic methods and not on the mobilization of the masses. You will now understand why I'm so convinced of our methods."

Blanco underscored the international significance of the Marroquín case. "There are thousands of political prisoners in Latin America, Korea,

Iran, and other countries. It is because of this that it is your responsibility to teach how to carry out defense campaigns. The Marroquín case can be an example. That is to say, his defense will not just be for him but for many other political prisoners as well."

In convention workshops particular attention was paid to the importance of fundraising, gaining a broad range of endorsements, increasing media coverage of the case, and immediately taking up the fight to lift the proviso of Marroquín's bond confining him to Texas.

In her report on Saturday, Betsy Farley, national organizational secretary of the YSA, outlined the tasks ahead:

"We want to become known as the people with the petitions," she said. "We want to take these petitions for political asylum everywhere with us."

"We want to spread this case far and wide throughout the campus media, literally flooding student newspapers. . . .

"And we want to raise funds, from donation cans on campus literature tables, from student groups, from professors, and from honoraria for Héctor or other prominent representatives of his case. Every nickel, quarter, and dollar is important to us."

Two YSA chapters that carried out extensive work on the Marroquín case before the convention were Kansas City and Houston.

In Kansas City forty endorsements were gathered in only two weeks. "We went after professors, community leaders, religious leaders, and students," Scott Cooper explained to the *Militant*. "The entire sociology department at the University of Kansas at Lawrence endorsed the campaign. We went to all kinds of departments that had nothing to do with Latin America and got a good response," he said.

"The local Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg Case did not just endorse the case. They have adopted the case

as their own," he reported.

Kim Kleinman added that the Women's Union at the university sent its own letter to INS Director Leonel Castillo demanding asylum for Marroquín.

"The legal costs of appealing this case, up to the Supreme Court if necessary, will be tremendous," Cooper noted. "We can begin with our initial list of endorsers but we must broaden our campaign on the campus, in the community, and in the trade unions—like the Postal Workers, Steelworkers, Auto Workers, and Rail Workers."

Labor support

Rob Roper from Houston said, "Hector Marroquín helped lead the Teamster organizing drive at the Coca-Cola plant in Houston. Several Teamster organizers have already endorsed his case. We have to try to involve more Teamsters and other unionists in the fight for his life."

In both Kansas City and Houston interest was generated in Marroquín's case by Hugo Blanco's speaking tour. Blanco's upcoming visits to other cities will provide similar opportunities.

Dexter Jones from Kashmere High School in Houston said Marroquín "is a leader to us as high school students. My school is 100 percent Black, and everybody wants to sign the petitions for his asylum appeal. Two- or three-hundred students have already said they would sign."

In his convention report Chuck Petrin had said, "Héctor represents the best of our generation—a fighter—and his case will inspire the best in everyone we reach."

That certainly proved to be the case for the YSA activists who met in Detroit. After closing their convention with the traditional singing of the *Internationale*, the Young Socialists, fists raised, filled the hall with one prolonged chant—*¡Asilo político por Marroquín! Political asylum for Marroquín!*



Militant/Charles Ostrofsky

CHUCK PETRIN: "Héctor represents the best of our generation."

Marroquin: 'You are setting a great example'

Following are Héctor Marroquin's greetings to the YSA convention.

On January 17, 1972, my old friend, classmate and roommate, Jesús Rivera, was brutally assassinated by the Mexican police. He was falsely accused of conspiracy and guerrilla warfare—a pretext to justify the assassination.

Two years later, on the same date, January 17, 1974, I was accused of the same type of crimes: conspiracy and guerrilla warfare. Fearing the same fate as my friend, I decided to seek political refuge in the United States.

A little more than three months ago, in September, I was arrested by officers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), better

known as "la migra," and jailed for more than three months on the charge of attempting to enter the country illegally.

But thanks to the immediate legal answer of my attorney Margaret Winter, and the work that was begun by USLA, the YSA, and the SWP to obtain the broadest possible support for my case, the hearing was canceled and I am now threatened with deportation.

So I have won the "right" to be deported, which really means the right to fight this case all the way to the Supreme Court.

Although we are fighting to get the date postponed, my first appearance before the INS judge will be January 17, exactly six years after the assassination of my compañero Jesús, and four years after the Mexi-

can government leveled the same false charges against me.

A serious danger exists that I may be ordered deported. That means that what happened to my roommate can happen to me if my request for political asylum is rejected.

The Mexican regime tried to brand Jesús and me and other political activists as conspirators and terrorists. Nothing is further from the truth.

We have always been opposed to individual armed actions by small groups. We have been opposed to political terrorism and guerrilla warfare as a strategy. Our ideas and concepts were moving toward an understanding of the necessity for organizing the masses to defend their rights and the necessity for

building revolutionary socialist organizations like the YSA and SWP.

I want to thank the YSA for the work you have been carrying out to defend me. You are setting a great example in the best spirit of internationalism. You have contributed to saving the life of a comrade struggling against deportation, struggling to obtain the elementary right of political asylum.

I am sure that we will come out of this convention with positive results. I am sure that the discussion and approval of the political resolutions and their organizational aspects for the next period will permit us to form a stronger and bigger YSA.

Viva el YSA!

Viva el SWP!

Hasta la victoria siempre!

Venceremos!

Attorney addresses rally

'I am confident we will win'

The following is a speech by Margaret Winter, Marroquin's attorney, at a rally sponsored by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners. The rally took place during the Detroit convention of the Young Socialist Alliance.

I've known Héctor Marroquin for three months now, and today is the first time I've seen him out from behind bars.

I was taught in law school that prison serves three purposes. It deters crime. It satisfies society's desire to see crime punished. And it rehabilitates the criminal. Héctor, I've been meaning to ask you: are you feeling rehabilitated?

I hope not.

Héctor's crime was being a student activist in Mexico. His crime was fleeing to the United States because of frame-up charges brought against him in Mexico to silence him.

When Héctor came here, he could have decided that he'd had enough of politics, that the fight for a socialist society was too dangerous. Instead, he joined the Socialist Workers Party and later the Young Socialist Alliance.

So all the evidence is that he has not been rehabilitated.

Héctor was imprisoned in a small whitewashed building in Eagle Pass, Texas. It says "Maverick County Jail" over the door in big black letters. That's where I first met him, back at the end of last September.

Héctor struck me from the first as a brave, serious, and dedicated young comrade, and over the months this first impression has proved true.

He has lived the past three months with the knowledge that he faces imprisonment, torture, and maybe death if the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service succeeds in deporting him. And yet Héctor has never seen his struggle only from the personal side of it.

From the first he has been intensely conscious of the political significance of his case. He knows that its outcome will affect not only himself but thousands of other working people oppressed by *la migra*.

He knows that he's up against a cruel enemy. But he also knows that he has a formidable power on his side: the cadre of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. That's the source of his courage.

On December 15 I made my last trip to Eagle Pass. That was the day Héctor's sentence was up. I drove down there with Pedro Camejo.

But the INS was holding Héctor on a \$10,000 bond, an unheard-of amount in a case like this. And we hadn't been able to raise the money on time. That's because the INS had deliberately refused to tell us whether they would require any bond until two days before the sentence was up.

So our mission was to explain to Héctor that he wouldn't be out by Christmas, and he might well not be out by New Year's.

To make matters worse, the sheriff wouldn't let Pedro in with me to see Héctor. They said they'd



MARGARET WINTER: 'This case will not be won through the majestic neutrality of the courts.'

checked up on him since last time he'd come with me to visit Héctor and found out that this Camejo was a dangerous character.

So I had to go in to the cell alone to break the news to Héctor. I was feeling pretty terrible. But typical of what we've come to expect from Héctor, he told me not to worry. He said, "I don't feel sad and you must tell the comrades not to feel sad about this. I know that the party is behind me."

"Look," he said, "let's divide the labor. You all are working to raise the bond, so the least I can do is make myself available to stay in jail."

It's a very laid-back, little jail. Héctor said you get used to rats gnawing at your bedding near your pillow. One night he and his cellmates killed thirteen rats.

Héctor has told me a little bit about his cellmates at the Maverick County Jail. They were all young undocumented workers. Most of them did not speak English. Most of them had little education. But they had a knowledge of *la migra* born of bitter experience. And they had a fierce class consciousness.

Héctor told me that one night his cellmates were permitted to watch television, so they turned on the local San Antonio news station. There was Hugo Blanco, being interviewed on the six o'clock news. Hugo was talking about the antideportation struggle. And then he spoke of the struggle to free Héctor

Marroquin.

There was an uproar in the cell. Everyone cheered and applauded. These young *mexicanos* had not known much about Héctor's case until then. But from the moment they heard Hugo Blanco, they began to see a connection between their own plight and the larger question, the international question, posed by the oppression of workers by *la migra*.

Héctor was amused because after that night his cellmates called him "our leader." Well, the truth is, Héctor is a leader.

And he is now going to be a leader in an even broader arena. To win his case, Héctor must travel this country from coast to coast to speak out in his own defense. He must help educate the people of this country about the situation of the undocumented worker and the political refugee.

But there's a serious problem with all this. One condition of Héctor's bond is that he can't leave Harris County, Texas, unless he gets prior authorization from the INS director.

So I called the INS district director. When he told me that "illegals" have no right to make speeches, I mentioned that there was this old-time custom—called the First Amendment—and that as far as I could make out even undocumented workers have First Amendment rights.

He finally gave permission for Héctor to come here, but he told me, "I want you to know that we're going to be keeping an eye on the young man. If he's going to Detroit to talk against the government, we might have to take a harder line in the future. We're going to take it into consideration if he says anything that's not in the best interests of the Service."

I've been trying to imagine what Héctor *could* say to you that *would* be in the best interests of the Service. Maybe a little speech titled "Your Immigration and Naturalization Service: The Agency With a Heart." Or maybe, "Nothing Alien is Human to Me: The Story of How One Undocumented Worker Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the INS."

No, the INS is not going to like what Héctor has to say about *la migra*. But if the Service tries to silence him by keeping him under house arrest in Harris County, Texas, they are going to have a fight on their hands that I believe they will lose.

None of us can forget for a minute that this case is not going to be won by lawyers.

It will not be won because of the majestic neutrality of the courts. It will not be won because of Jimmy Carter's crocodile tears about human rights in Latin America. This case will be won because and only because *you* are going to build a nationwide movement for asylum for Héctor Marroquin.

I believe that we are all going to leave this convention committed to the struggle to win asylum for Héctor Marroquin.

I am also convinced that Héctor's own struggle against the oppression of undocumented workers will not end even when his case is won. I know that Héctor is an internationalist and a revolutionary socialist and that he will not rest until *la migra* exists no more.

For a world without borders!

¡Por un mundo sin fronteras!

Palestinians blast U.S. role

Carter praises Begin's phony peace plan

By Peter Seidman

A new round in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations took place December 25-26. This time it was Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's turn to make an unprecedented trip: to Ismailia, Egypt.

World attention focused on what proposals Begin would bring with him to move forward the negotiations begun when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat made his headline-catching journey to Jerusalem in November.

Millions of people—encouraged by speculation in the big-business media—hoped that Begin would offer not only Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territories occupied since the 1967 Mideast war, but also some concessions on the rights of the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

These hopes were based on two assumptions: that Sadat's de facto recognition of the Zionist regime symbolized by his November journey represented a step toward peace, and that Begin—wanting to continue this momentum, or else under pressure from Washington—would make a similarly dramatic concession at Ismailia.

For the millions around the world who made these assumptions, however, the Ismailia talks and subsequent U.S. diplomatic moves were a disappointing Christmas gift.

The shiny wrapping that excited such hopes is being torn away, and the same old Middle East time bomb continues to tick away underneath.

The Ismailia talks quickly stalled. To begin with, the Zionists refused to withdraw from the occupied West Bank, Golan Heights, and Gaza Strip.

They also refused to give Sadat even the face-saving appearance of a concession on what is a key question for the Arab masses: some form of recognition for Palestinian rights. As a result, despite the big buildup to the Ismailia negotiations, Sadat was unable to ne-

gotiate even a separate Israeli-Egyptian accord—at least for the time being—not to speak of an overall Mideast settlement.

Begin's 'peace' plan

Begin's "peace" plan proved to be a scenario demanding undisguised Egyptian acceptance of ongoing Zionist rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

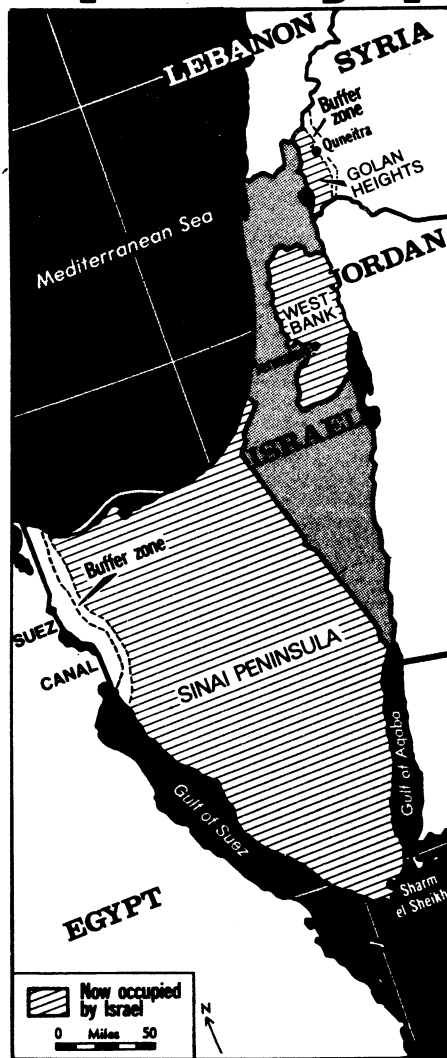
- Security and public order for the 1.1 million Palestinian Arabs living in these areas "will be the responsibility of the Israeli authorities," and Israeli military forces will remain there.

- Israeli military administration in the territories would be replaced by an Arab administration to govern internal affairs. Palestinians would be given a choice of Israeli or Jordanian citizenship. These nations would have veto power over the degree to which the Arab administrative council could regulate life in the territories.

- Palestinian immigration into the territories would be regulated by a committee requiring unanimous agreement between Israel, Jordan, and the administrative council. Thus, the Zionists would have veto power over the entry of politically "undesirable" Palestinians into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At the same time, no restrictions would be put on the right of Israeli Jews to settle in the area. Jews in the territories would be subject to Israeli courts, not to the Palestinian administrative council.

In presenting this plan for approval by the Israeli parliament December 28, Prime Minister Begin underscored his insistence on the maintenance of Israeli troops lest the territories become "dominated by the murderers' organization known as the P.L.O." He described the PLO as "the vilest organization of murderers in history with the exception of the Nazi armed organizations."

In the sometimes heated debate over



Begin's proposal one deputy heckled Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, asking: "How will you prevent a Palestinian state from arising? By force of the army?"

To which Dayan shot back: "By force of the army; this is the first time I agree with you. Any agreement can be broken and there is no court to look after our interests except ourselves. How will I prevent their

refusal to sell land to Jews? How will I prevent the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Lebanon against our will? By force of the army. . . ."

'A step forward'?

This was the "peace" plan that a few hours later Jimmy Carter, at a nationally televised year-end news conference, praised as "a long step forward."

The president said that the United States opposes what he called "a fairly radical, new independent nation in the heart of the Middle East."

Egyptian President Sadat complained that Carter's praise for the Israeli plan "is making my job very difficult. This embarrasses me. What surprises me most, I mean, is ignoring the importance of the Palestinian issue—the core and crux of the whole problem."

Sadat was hoping that Washington would step in and insist that the Israeli regime draw back from its hard-line stance. As one Egyptian official told *New York Times* correspondent Henry Tanner December 30, "We half expected the Israelis to take everything we had to offer and put it in their pocket and ask blandly for more. . . . But we didn't expect the Americans to take the same attitude."

Sadat based his diplomatic maneuverings on the hope that Washington would put some real pressure on Israel in exchange for Egyptian services in reaching and policing a Middle East agreement that would favor imperialist interests.

A bare bone

From time to time the State Department will throw Sadat and other Arab leaders a bone to help keep such hopes alive.

For example, on January 2, U.S. *Continued on page 30*

Arabs in Israel protest police terror

By David Frankel

Three thousand people gathered at the Palestinian village of Majd al-Kurum, in northern Israel, December 17. They came to protest a racist rampage by Israeli police the previous month that left one villager dead and dozens injured.

On November 8, the day of the attack, hundreds of Israeli police arrived at Majd al-Kurum to execute a court order for the demolition of the home of Hussein Awwad Kiwan.

Kiwan, the partially paralyzed father of six young children, had built the house five years earlier with the help of relatives. No prior notice of the demolition was given to the Kiwan family, and the house was bulldozed while most of the family's possessions were still inside.

A statement issued by the municipal council of Majd al-Kurum and the Popular Committee of the village pointed out that following the demolition, "dozens of women, old men, and youths who happened to be at the village at the time moved to the side of the demolished house. At this point the police and Border Police units brutally attacked the people using tear gas and high-pressure water hoses."

The outraged crowd retaliated by throwing stones, and the police immediately opened fire. Hussein Hamdan, aged twelve, was shot in the arm. Ahmad Ali Masri, twenty-



3,000 at Majd al-Kurum rally December 17

Militant/Yossi Ben-Akiva

eight, was shot dead.

Although the police claimed they had fired warning shots into the air and Masri had been hit accidentally, an autopsy found that Masri's body contained eleven bullets.

Nor did the police stop with the murder of Masri. They stormed through the village, beating whom-ever they caught, critically injuring one person, and breaking into houses and smashing the furnishings.

Yehoshua Gilboa, a reporter for *Haaretz*, Israel's most prestigious daily newspaper, described the aftermath of the attack in a November 11 article. "Those who broke into the houses smashed the glassware in the flats, the lamps and the television sets," Gilboa said. "They broke electric equipment and furniture and even spoiled food."

Gilboa summed up his reaction by saying, "Something in the atmosphere reminded me of stories about

pogroms in houses of Jews in Tsarist Russia."

Behind the events in Majd al-Kurum is a situation that is familiar to every Arab in Israel. As part of its policy of attempting to break up Palestinian population concentrations, the Zionist regime systematically denies new building permits for houses in Arab villages.

Those who need housing desperately enough are forced to build illegally, and then their homes are subject to demolition at the whim of the Zionist authorities.

But the injustice goes deeper than that. Majd al-Kurum, for example, is a village of more than 6,000 people. Its population has tripled since 1959, but as a result of confiscation of land the size of the village has shrunk.

Karmiel, the adjoining Jewish town, is expanding through the confiscation of land from the neighboring Arab villages. Thus, there is a housing crisis in Majd al-Kurum, while in Karmiel the Israeli Ministry of Housing builds apartments for Jews only. Hundreds of apartments in Karmiel are empty, but Arabs are forbidden to move there.

The Israeli police would not have dreamed of opening fire on a crowd of protesters in a Jewish town the way they did on the people of Majd al-Kurum. But they were in an Arab village, and they acted accordingly.

Concern for steel union tops

Coal industry pushes for clause to fire strikers

By Nancy Cole

Negotiators for the coal industry continue their drive to impose "labor stability" on the militant ranks of the United Mine Workers of America, who have been on national strike since December 6.

Representatives of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) reportedly walked out of contract talks with the UMWA December 30. They charged that union negotiators tried to reopen discussion on issues already agreed to around "labor stability" and benefit funds.

The union charged in a statement that coal representatives walked out "following their rejection, without discussion" of a UMWA proposal on the health and pension funds.

According to news reports, the BCOA's only proposed "solution" to the benefit funds' crisis is a scheme to penalize wildcat strikers by docking their pay and sending the deduction to the health funds.

'Women as coal miners,' an interview with Pennsylvania miner Donna Ratulowski, appears on page 25.

"From BCOA's point of view," reports the Washington, D.C., newsletter *Coal Patrol*, "the beauty of this proposal is that it puts the burden of financing the medical and pension benefits squarely on the shoulders of the miners, rather than on the employers."

Coal Patrol is edited by Thomas Bethell, former research director for the UMWA. The December 15 issue—published before the BCOA broke off talks—also comments on another of the industry's plans to "tame" the miners. Bethell contends it is one of the provisions tentatively agreed to by UMWA negotiators.

"As drafted, the new clause would affect not only miners who initiate a strike but also those who merely honor a picket line. Much more far-reaching than the standard no-strike clause

found in many contracts, it would almost certainly lead to a head-on collision with miners' traditional respect for picket lines," Bethell writes.

The provision would subject any miner who joins a wildcat strike to "discipline including discharge." And the contract's grievance procedures would specifically prohibit any appeal of the "discipline."

"There's nothing mysterious about this proposal," *Coal Patrol* quotes an "industry source" as saying. "We're going to get stability one way or another."

Bethell goes on to say, "By giving management blanket power to discharge strikers, the UMWA appears to have taken a giant step back from the demands initially presented to BCOA when bargaining began in October."

UMWA President Arnold Miller began the negotiations by insisting he would not present a contract to miners for ratification unless it had a right-to-strike clause in it.

The BCOA has adamantly refused to consider any kind of a strike clause. "At their hotel," reports *Coal Patrol*, "industry negotiators were overheard talking about the effect of permitting a strike procedure over local issues. A primary concern was: if the mine workers get it, what happens to Lloyd McBride? The Steelworkers president, a defender of the flat no-strike agreements in the steel industry, had recently defeated Ed Sadlowski, a supporter of the right to strike.

"It may have been no coincidence that U.S. Steel representative William

Miller gradually emerged as the key industry negotiator, far overshadowing BCOA president Brennan."

Bethell later explains that "industry officials freely admit that they're counting on the financial troubles of the UMWA Health & Retirement Funds to undercut UMWA militancy over the tough disciplinary language that they want to build into the next contract."

Other provisions reportedly on the bargaining table include a ninety-day probationary period for new miners, during which they could be fired at the whim of the boss; the right for the companies to operate mines around the clock, seven days a week; continuation of compulsory overtime; and stepped-up disciplinary plans to cut down on absenteeism.

Stearns strikers released from jail

By Nancy Cole

After eight weeks in jail, ten striking coal miners from Stearns, Kentucky, were home with their families for the holidays.

On December 22, without comment, Circuit Judge J. B. Johnson, Jr., released the ten—who called themselves "hostages" and "political prisoners"—four months before their sentences were to have run out.

"I'm sure he was pressured," striker Mahan Vanover told the *Militant*. "People in the county and all over the state put pressure on him to let us out."

The judge's "change of heart" hasn't changed the miners' opinion of Johnson, however. He's still out to "break the strike," Vanover says.

The miners were jailed October 26 after Johnson found them guilty of violating his order limiting their picket line to six. Strikers and their supporters had mobilized October 17—most on private property—to demand that Blue Diamond Coal Company stop running scabs into the mine and instead negotiate. State police attacked the gathering

and arrested more than 100.

Sixty-eight other strikers were also found guilty but were discharged "conditionally." One striker was first jailed then released "conditionally" because of injuries received during the cop attack.

The ten strikers were released on similar conditions, plus an additional one: they cannot picket the mine or even go near the picket line. The other conditions include "good behavior" and strict compliance with all laws, court orders, and injunctions.

For the strikers, who have been fighting for a United Mine Workers contract for nearly eighteen months, the release is a welcome victory. "We're all feeling good about it," notes Vanover.

He says that "people all over the country saw to it that we had a pretty fine Christmas."

Although no coal comes out, the number of scabs entering the mine each day has grown to about twenty, and Blue Diamond still refuses to bargain. Statements of support and contributions can be sent to the



Militant/Nancy Cole
MAHAN VANOVER: 'Judge is still out to break the strike.'

Stearns Strike Relief Fund, c/o Darrell Vanover, Route 1, Whitley City, Kentucky 42653.

Growing pressure to free Wilmington Ten

By Steve Craine

RALEIGH, N.C.—As 1977 came to a close, pressure was mounting on North Carolina authorities to free the Wilmington Ten.

Speaking on the Christmas Day CBS show, "Face the Nation," Patricia Derian, President Carter's Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, admitted that "a great miscarriage of justice is taking place" in the case of the Wilmington Ten.

Derian claimed, "There will be efforts made to rectify it," but refused to explain what these would be, all the while saying the federal government lacked jurisdiction in the case.

The Ten—Rev. Ben Chavis, eight other Black men, and one white woman—were convicted in 1972 of arson and conspiracy. The charges stemmed from 1971 white vigilante attacks on Wilmington's Black community.

The nine men are serving sentences of up to thirty-four years. The woman, Ann Shephard Turner, has been paroled.

Last May, during hearings on a motion for a new trial, the three key state witnesses recanted their testimony against the Ten, explaining they had been bribed to lie by prosecutor Jay Stroud. Despite this, the judge said there had been no "substantial denial"



The Wilmington Ten (Rev. Ben Chavis seated at left). Key witnesses against them have recanted, but North Carolina Gov. James Hunt refuses to pardon them.

of their right to a fair trial, adding that whether they were guilty or innocent was not an issue.

The campaign to free the Wilmington Ten got a new boost at the beginning of November when Amnesty International, winner of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, announced it was investigating the cases of eighteen U.S. prisoners, including the Ten.

Coinciding with the Amnesty International announcement, the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ launched a petition campaign demanding that Gov. James B. Hunt grant pardons of innocence for the Ten.

(Although motions to overturn the verdict have been filed, it could take many years for the courts to act. The

governor has the power to grant a pardon at any time. A pardon of innocence would also constitute an official admission that the Ten were unjustly imprisoned.)

Some 15,000 signatures on the petitions—collected mostly in North Carolina—were given to Gov. Hunt before Christmas.

Repeated protests by supporters of the Ten and developments in the case have kept the story in the local news media on a daily basis.

Ann Shephard Turner addressed a rally of 100 people at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill on December 2.

That same weekend, a meeting of Black student leaders from around the state decided to participate in state-wide coordinated protests in February to demand pardons of innocence for the Ten.

On December 4, six members of Congress from California, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Massachusetts traveled to North Carolina and tried to meet with Gov. Hunt to urge him to free the Ten. Hunt refused even to discuss the case with the legislators.

In mid-December, two nationally syndicated columnists, Mary McCrory and Tom Wicker wrote articles about the Ten.

Continued on page 30

Women, unionists plan protests Jan. 22

By Diane Wang

Gloria Steinem, editor of *Ms.* magazine, and Clara Day, a representative and trustee of Teamsters Local 743 and second vice-president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), have been added to the speakers list at the January 22 rally for the Equal Rights Amendment in Richmond, Virginia.

Among the other speakers scheduled for the rally are Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women (NOW); Joyce Miller, president of CLUW; and Bill Lucy, president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and international secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The January 22 demonstration is being organized by Labor for Equal Rights Now (LERN), a coalition of Virginia trade unions initiated by locals of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters union.

Demonstrators will assemble at Richmond's Monroe Park at 12:30 p.m.



TO SPEAK AT VIRGINIA RALLY: (clockwise from top left) Gloria Steinem, Bill Lucy, Joyce Miller, and Eleanor Smeal.

on January 22 and march to the state capitol for a 2:30 p.m. rally there.

Endorsement for the rally continues to grow. The many trade union locals and women's rights groups endorsing the demonstration now include the Virginia state AFL-CIO; the Greater Washington, D.C., Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO; United Mine Workers, district 28; Teamsters Joint Councils 55 and 83; Virginia Education Association; United Auto Workers, region 8; and national organizations such as NOW, CLUW, the CBTU, and ERAmerica.

For more information or to endorse the rally, contact: Labor for Equal Rights Now, 1022 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 2310, Arlington, Virginia 22209.

* * *

January 22 is the fifth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. NOW and other groups and coalitions plan activities around the date to defend women's right to choose abortion:

- **New York City:** NOW-New York is holding a teach-in on abortion January 21 at the headquarters of District 1199, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees. Speakers include Betty Friedan; Dr. Helen Rodriguez of the Coalition to End Sterilization Abuse; Ruby Jones, president of the New York CLUW chapter; anthropologist Evelyn Reed; Kate Millett; Florynce Kennedy; Alice Chapman; and journalist Ellen Willis.

- **Sacramento, California:** a statewide rally is planned for January 23.

- **Akron, Ohio:** A statewide rally on January 23 will protest an anti-abortion bill being considered by the Akron City Council.

- **Frankfort, Kentucky:** A demonstration is scheduled for January 22.

- **Annapolis, Maryland:** A statewide rally is planned for January 22.

- **Newark, New Jersey:** A speak-out on abortion will be held at Rutgers University on January 29.

Why Carter dumped Burns as 'Fed' chief

By William Gottlieb

At the end of December President Carter named G. William Miller to replace Arthur Burns as head of the Federal Reserve System, the U.S. central bank.

Miller is chairman of Textron Inc., a huge industrial corporation with 180 plants in the United States and abroad. He sits on the boards of directors of Allied Chemical Corporation, Conrail, and Federated Department Stores.

Miller is also a member of the Business Council and the Business Roundtable, two powerful capitalist sounding boards.

Despite the much publicized Carter-Burns "feud," Burns insisted he was "delighted" with Miller as his successor. "The President has chosen wisely and well," Burns said.

So why did Carter replace Burns? And will it make any difference in the economy? To answer these questions we have to look at the role the Federal Reserve System plays in American capitalism.

The twelve regional banks making up the Federal Reserve System take deposits from private banks, hold money for the federal government, and issue currency. The Federal Reserve acts as the pivot of the monetary and credit system, able to manipulate the amount of money and credit available to the rest of the economy.

The regional reserve banks are not owned by the government but by affiliated commercial banks. The Federal Reserve thus combines features of a government agency and a private corporation. It symbolizes the fusion of private corporations with the government, and the domination of government by private business interests.

A key feature of the board is its "independence." That is, there is no pretense that it is controlled by the electoral process or accountable to the public.

This "independence" from democratic control facilitates a division of labor that comes in handy for the capitalist rulers.

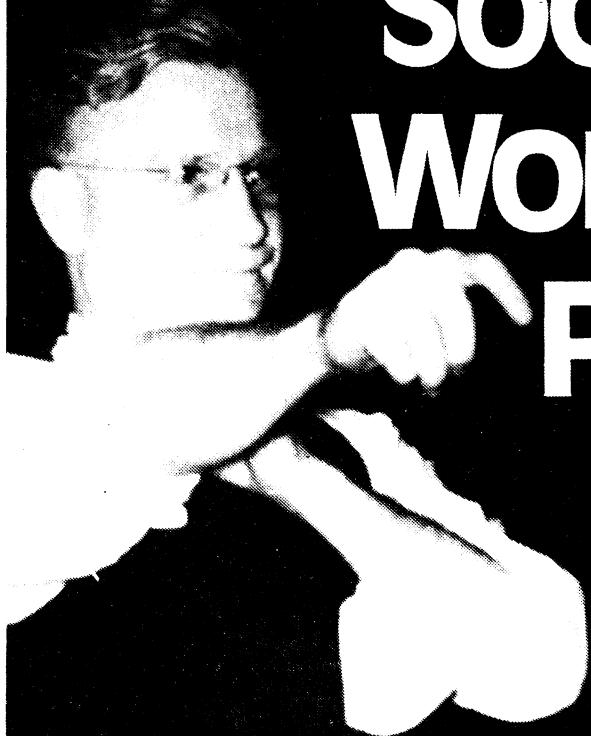
With inflation, unemployment, and cyclical crises growing worse, Democratic and Republican politicians can feign concern for the plight of workers, dodge responsibility for their own antilabor policies, and divert attention from the real cause of these ills—the outmoded and decaying capitalist system—by blaming it all on the "Fed" and especially on the personal predilections of its chairman.

This sham is echoed by procapitalist union bureaucrats. Listening to the AFL-CIO officialdom, one would think that the seventy-three-year-old Burns engineered mass unemployment and inflation almost singlehandedly.

In fact the policies of the Federal

Continued on page 30

The history of the Socialist Workers Party



Books by
James P. Cannon

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International, and the fiftieth anniversary of the *Militant* and American Trotskyism. It's a good time to study the lessons from American socialist history and their application to the problems and political challenges confronting American working people today.

There's no better place to start than with the writings of James P. Cannon, the central founder and leader for more than three decades of American Trotskyism. Cannon's firsthand experience in the American workers movement reaches back into the early years of the century, when he was an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and later a founding leader of the American Communist Party.

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SPEECHES TO THE PARTY

352 pp., cloth \$10.00, paper \$3.95.

Order from: Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014, or visit one of the bookstores listed on page 31.

...40th anniversary

Continued from front page

The outlook of the American Trotskyists was internationalist right from the start. They were active in the International Left Opposition—after it became clear that the Third International was dead as a revolutionary force—and in the movement to establish a new world revolutionary party. In September 1938 the SWP played a prominent role in the first world congress of the Fourth International.

That congress adopted a major programmatic resolution drafted by Trotsky, the Transitional Program. It had been previously adopted by the SWP and was sponsored at the congress by the American party. That document, on which the SWP still stands today, takes up the central strategic problem of this epoch—how to help the masses of workers, in the process of their daily struggles, advance from their present demands and consciousness to the revolutionary conquest of political power. Understanding and applying the perspectives laid out in the Transitional Program remains the single greatest challenge for revolutionists throughout the world today.

In the coming year the *Militant* will present articles, columns, and special features on these and other key events in the history of the revolutionary party. Next week we will feature an article on how the SWP's revolutionary perspective has stood the test of half a century in the American class struggle. Our festival year will culminate next fall with celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Militant*.

For Marxists, the study of history is never an idle academic exercise, but rather a necessary tool for understanding—and changing—today's world. This is especially true of the history of the working-class movement and the revolutionary party itself.

Where we come from is part of what we are. This aspect of history was driven home to millions of Americans when Alex Haley's *Roots* was televised last year, with its searing presentation of the legacy of Black oppression.

The history of the Socialist Workers Party arises from and is part of the history of the American working class. Our story is the story of the Industrial Workers of the World, the early Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs, and the pioneering communists who sought to apply the lessons of the Russian Revolution on American soil.

It's the story of the sit-down strikers and unemployed demonstrators of the 1930s, the March on Washington Movement for Black rights, and the fight against the no-strike pledge in World War II.

It's the story of resistance to the witch hunt, the rise of the civil rights movement, the youth radicalization, antiwar protests, Chicano militancy, and the new wave of feminism.

But the history of the party is something more. It also embodies the lessons, traditions, and principles assimilated from all these past struggles. This is why the study of our own history is a necessary guide to effective action in the class struggle today.

One specific instance stands out in this week's *Militant*. In the campaign to save Héctor Marroquín from deportation to Mexico—where he would face imprisonment, torture, and death—the SWP is drawing on many years of experience in defending political prisoners. (See speech by Linda Jenness at Young Socialist Alliance convention, page 5.)

Another example is the extraordinary usefulness to union militants today of the series of books by Farrell Dobbs on the Teamsters union and the party's role in it during the 1930s and early '40s. (See ad on page 31.) These books are serving a new generation of activists as handbooks of strategy and tactics in the labor movement.

As the reports and reminiscences in this issue of the *ISR* indicate, the founding convention of the SWP was imbued with optimism about the socialist future, confidence in the American working class, and the conviction that this party was crucial to leading the American socialist revolution.

That process has been far more prolonged and contradictory than the party's founders expected.

Today, however, the world capitalist system is convulsed by new crises. Working-class radicalization and defensive struggles are beginning, provoked by the bosses' offensive against the rights and living standards of working people. The SWP is growing and attracting new forces—on a modest scale now, but seeing greater gains not far ahead.

It is no accident that the reports on that founding convention forty years ago have a very "modern" ring. We stand on the threshold of a period in which the expectations and perspectives of the SWP's founders will find accelerated fulfillment.

This is the spirit in which the *Militant* launches this year of anniversary celebrations—proud of our heritage, confident of the future.

Pass it around

I recently received my first copy of the *Militant*. Upon receiving it I immediately passed it around to a number of the other inmates confined here. Their most immediate reaction was shock, surprise, and pleasure at having an opportunity to read a progressive and correct interpretation of events and issues of the day.

On behalf of myself and the many men here who will have an opportunity to read your newspaper, please accept my sincere thanks.

*A prisoner
New York*

Another reader in prison

I'm a captive of the State of Louisiana's prison system. I'm a subscriber to your newspaper, which I've been reading since the inception of my captivity.

I'm grateful to the contributors to the fund-raising drive who make it possible for prisoners to subscribe to and receive your newspaper. And I'm equally grateful to you for your unyielding support to prisoners. Your newspaper is a great help and very informative. Please keep up the good work.

*A prisoner
Louisiana*

The 'Militant's' special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help out, send your contribution to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.

Repression in Ireland

Having spent three months here in Belfast, I can tell you that repression by the British occupiers continues. Early morning raids and harassment of the community—largely aimed at Roman Catholics, of course—is constant. It is particularly harsh for the youth, with young girls often forced to strip while in custody. And broken bones are not an unusual occurrence to either sex.

By Xmas, political prisoners should number 3,000, including 300 women. One can be held up to seven days with no charges made. That's enough time to be beaten, forced to sign a statement, and show no bruises when appearing in court to be charged.

It is very interesting to note that 80 percent of convictions are based on "confessions."

Although there hasn't been any massive resurgence of protests against the repression here yet, there is hope. Early in November workers organized a March Against Torture, the first time trade unionists have come out of the factories on an issue of importance to society at large.

*Barbara Pryor
Belfast, Northern Ireland*

Support Sadat?

The Jews [in Israel] will never accept a secular state, so Sadat's overture of recognizing Israel is a step toward the only possible solution—two states. Give the Israelis secure borders, and then negotiate the same for the Palestinians and Israeli-Arabs. If the people cannot live together (and they cannot if they both expect to rule alone) then provide separate arrangements.

My gut reaction is to support Sadat. Please justify your criticisms of two enemies making peace in more detail. It does not look good for a peoples' party not to support this peace initiative.

*J. B.
Washington, D.C.*

[In reply—The *Militant* has long campaigned for an end to war in the Middle East, consistently explaining that the only road to real peace lies in recognizing the just claim of the Palestinians for a return to their homeland and the establishment of a democratic, secular Palestine. (see articles by David Frankel in the December 23 and 30 issues of the *Militant*).

[For further analysis of the current Mideast negotiations in this issue, see Page 7 and the "Month in Review" column on page 2 of the *International Socialist Review*.]

Supports women's movement

I hope this finds you in the strongest of mind and in the best of spirits. I would like to express my gratitude to my comrades at the *Militant* for relating with the prisoners and their financial situation. I was not able to pay for the *Militant*, but due to the *Militant's* understanding I am receiving it.

I am grateful for the coverage the *Militant* gives the women's struggles.

I had the opportunity to read in your paper an article titled "Hyde the hypocrite." (see November 25 *Militant*.) I also at one time had negative views on abortion, but through my studies I have come to relate with women and their fight for abortion rights. No doubt the imperialist government wants to keep up the image of the American woman who stays home, cooks, cleans, obeys her husband's commands, and sexually satisfies the man. It is due time that the women's movement is making progress. Women play an important part in the struggle for freedom of all oppressed people from sadistic imperialist bondage.

*A prisoner
Kentucky*

On critical letters

Thank you for printing my letter in the November 18 issue of the *Militant*. Some journals would not print even slightly critical letters, but I am glad to see you accepted my views openly.

*D.C.
Miami, Florida*

'Excellent' Chicano coverage

I was exposed to the *Militant* at the beginning of this school year. I find it to be an outstanding paper with excellent coverage of the struggles for human rights in the U.S. and around the world.

I especially appreciate the coverage of the Chicano movement. I attended the national Chicano/Latino conference in San Antonio. I have read several accounts of the conference, but I found the November 11 article by José G. Pérez to be the most accurate account.

I have a question. In the December 2 article by Pérez concerning the conference, he refers to an article by Delfino Varela in the November 16-22 issue of *In These Times*. I have that issue, and the article is by Mario Barrera. Does Pérez have the names mixed up, or was he referring to another article in a different issue of *In These Times*?

Continued on page 23



HOW THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY BEGAN

This issue of 'International Socialist Review' is devoted primarily to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party, held from December 31, 1937, to January 2, 1938, in Chicago, Illinois. Together with the article by Andy Rose that will appear in next week's issue of the 'Militant', the materials that follow aim at providing readers with an overview of the history of the SWP and the role it has played in the struggle for socialism

in the United States.

The party's early commitment to revolutionary internationalism and to the struggles of American working people for jobs and decent living standards provides insight into the role it is playing today in the struggle to beat back the ruling-class offensive against many of the gains won by the working class during the years immediately before and after the founding of the SWP.

Also:

The Suffrage Battle in Great Britain

By Teresa Wocken

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

'In These Times' and Sadat's Diplomacy

In the thirty years since the Zionist state of Israel first established itself in the Middle East, expelling some 700,000 Palestinians from their homes, there have been four major wars and numerous smaller-scale conflicts. Most recently, in November, Israeli air raids against Lebanese villages took more than 100 lives.

The popular desire for peace in the Middle East is certainly understandable. However, the "peace" that President Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin—with the complicity of Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat—are pressing for is no peace at all. They aim at a settlement that will protect and strengthen the interests of imperialism in the region at the expense of the Arab masses—the Palestinian people first of all.

Among avowed socialists in this country, the most enthusiastic endorsement of Sadat's trip to Israel appeared in an editorial in the November 30 issue of *In These Times*, a Chicago-based weekly edited by radicals formerly associated with the "new left." *ITT*'s reasoning embodies many of the illusions of those who hope that Sadat and Begin (with Carter's encouragement) are blazing a trail to peace.

"As socialists, we support direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt and the other Arab states that will lead to Israel's security and the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state," write the *ITT* editors. They propose "Israel should return substantially to its pre-1967 borders," and "treaty-secured normalization of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors."

At first glance *ITT* appears to be simply calling on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, but this is not the case. By demanding "security" for and "normalization of relations" with the Zionist state, *ITT* makes Palestinian capitulation to Israel the condition for recovering a portion of the territory stolen by the Israeli regime.

The rights of the Palestinians and other Arab peoples and the "security" of the Israeli state are mutually exclusive. The state of Israel is a settler state founded on the expropriation and oppression of Palestinians inside and outside its borders. To retain their privileged position, the Zionist rulers require the continual extension of their spheres of control and influence, overwhelming military predominance, and the permanent weakness of the surrounding Arab states.

The emergence of Israel as an imperialist power in its own right intensifies the Zionist regime's need to play an oppressive and repressive role in the Mideast. Expansionist wars are woven into the very fabric of such a state.

(A fuller discussion of the nature of the Israeli regime will be found in "Why Sadat's diplomacy won't bring peace," by David Frankel in the December 23, 1977, issue of the *Militant*.)

The state of Israel came into being and continues to exist because its rulers require such a state to carry out, defend, and extend the oppression of the Palestinians. The Zionist rejection of the Palestinian demand for a multinational, democratic secular Palestine is not based on the inability of Israeli Jews and Palestinians to live together but on the determination of the Israeli colonialists to maintain control over a land stolen from another people.

Sadat's recognition of the "legitimacy" of the Israeli state and its "security" interests means nothing more or less than recognizing the legitimacy of the dispossession of the Palestinians and their continued oppression.

What accounts for *ITT*'s estimate that a peace settlement based on major Israeli concessions is near at hand? The defeats dealt to the Palestinian liberation movement in Jordan and Lebanon? The overwhelming Israeli military superiority vis-à-vis its neighbors? The eagerness of Sadat to recognize the Israeli state without prior concessions? These factors, plus the hardline stand of the Begin regime point in the opposite direction.

ITT's forecast hinges on a positive assessment of U.S. imperialism's course. The U.S. rulers, we are told, are "exerting intense pressure on both Egypt and Israel to exhibit greater flexibility in negotiating." The editors assert that the Israeli rulers "can no longer depend upon unconditional support from the U.S."

The *ITT* editors take a few statements by U.S. officials criticizing Israeli intransigence as indicating a new even-handed policy in the Middle East. In reality, Carter used verbal pin-pricks against the Israelis to win the confidence of the Arab rulers and edge them toward recognition of and collaboration with the Zionist regime. A key U.S. aim in these maneuvers has been the isolation of the Palestinians.

Since Sadat made the concession of recognizing Israel, Carter is pressing Sadat for further concessions. Thus, Carter endorsed Begin's view that the Palestine Liberation Organization must be frozen out of negotiations and reaffirmed U.S. opposition to a Palestinian state.

Such moves were to be expected. U.S. imperialism did not arm the Israeli regime to the teeth in order to desert it once Arab states began to yield ground.

Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, and the establishment of a genuine Palestinian state in these areas would be a gain in the ongoing struggle against the Zionist state's oppression of the Palestinians. However, this is not what the *ITT* editors have in mind.

ITT holds that any Palestinian state would

have to guarantee the "security" of and maintain cordial relations with the oppressors of the Palestinian people. To meet this condition, a Palestinian "ministate" would have to be a disarmed and powerless puppet of the Zionist regime.

Even under such conditions, could the Palestinians be prevented from fighting for their rights, and thus threatening Zionist "security"? They have struggled even under direct Israeli occupation—would they not continue if the occupation were relaxed? Fear of the Palestinian masses underlies the opposition of Carter, Begin, Sadat, and Hussein of Jordan to such an entity.

Perhaps *ITT* would suggest that Begin take a tip from the South African regime—another colonial-settler state—which has offered parallel "concessions" to the Black masses. It has reserved 13 percent of its territory for establishing pseudo-independent "homelands" like the Transkei for the Black majority. (About 20 percent of the territory held by Israel would be turned over to a Palestinian "homeland" if *ITT*'s dreams came true.) In exchange, the "homelands" must guarantee the "security" of the South African rulers and maintain "normal" relations with them.

In the case of South Africa, of course, there is wide recognition that freedom for the Black majority is incompatible with the continued existence of the state established by the conquering white settlers. But the application of *ITT*'s reasoning to the South African situation would lead to the opposite conclusion.

Limited gains like the establishment of a genuinely independent Palestine on territory surrendered by the Israeli state can only be won as part of the irreconcilable struggle of the Palestinians and the Arab masses as a whole against the Zionist state. This will never be won through collaboration with that state.

According to the *ITT* editors, the settlement they foresee "will be most conducive to the next stage in the struggle for socialist democracy in both Israel and the Arab nations." *ITT* presents the heartening spectacle of Carter, the Zionist rulers, and Sadat exerting might and main to prepare new advances toward socialism. One can only wonder why the Palestinian masses are so reluctant to join in this great leap? Are they really more antisocialist than the U.S., Israeli, and Egyptian governments?

ITT's support for Sadat's diplomacy is a further step in its adaptation to the views of liberal Democratic politicians and trade-union officials and of the pro-Israel Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. For the forces *ITT* looks to, support for the Zionist state is part of a policy of supporting the basic goals of U.S. imperialism abroad.

The road to socialism in the Middle East is inseparable from the struggle of the Palestinians for full self-determination and of the other Arab peoples for independence from imperialism. For the Jewish workers of Israel the battle for a socialist future requires full support to the Palestinian struggle and opposition to the death trap set for them by their Zionist rulers—the settler-colonial state of Israel.

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How the Socialist Workers Party Began

The following interview with George Breitman took place in New York City in December 1977.

Breitman joined the Workers Party (a predecessor of the Socialist Workers Party) in Newark in 1935. He was elected as a delegate to the founding convention of the SWP held in Chicago December 31, 1937-January 2, 1938. This convention and its significance are the topics of the interview.

Breitman is presently a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and of the editorial board of 'International Socialist Review.' He is the author of 'The Last Year of Malcolm X' and an editor of the twelve-volume series 'Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929-40),' both published by Pathfinder Press.

ISR. A while ago we asked if we could interview you about the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party, whose fortieth anniversary we are commemorating in our January 1978 issue. You said we could after you refreshed your memory by looking over documents of that period, including two we plan to print, an article and a letter about the convention written early in 1938 by James P. Cannon. Can we proceed with the interview now?

Breitman. Yes, so long as it is clear that the SWP does not have an "official" position which members have to accept on this or most other historical questions, and so I speak only for myself when I express opinions on them.

ISR. According to the minutes, you were a regular delegate to the convention from Newark, New Jersey, and a member of the convention's credentials committee and unemployed commission. Can you remember your impressions at the time?

Breitman. Very vividly, some of them. But you must bear in mind that I had belonged to the movement for only a couple of years and was relatively uneducated and inexperienced. There were many nuances I did not grasp and strengths and weaknesses I was not aware of. It was only the second convention of the revolutionary movement I had attended, and it was difficult for me to make useful comparisons with other conventions or other movements.

But that didn't prevent me from feeling that the convention represented a milestone in the

history of the American revolutionary movement. I am sure most of the delegates shared my conviction that we had participated in something truly significant: the launching—at last!—of the party that would lead the American workers in their coming socialist revolution.

The whole process has proved to be slower and more complicated than it seemed to me in Chicago forty years ago. Hindsight, further experience, study, and a better grasp of theory enable me to see the process more fully and clearly now. But none of these have altered that initial belief. The SWP founding convention did represent something unique in American Marxist history.

I lacked the knowledge to serve as the basis for such an assessment in 1938, but since then I have studied the lives and careers of Debs, DeLeon, Haywood, and other American radical leaders before the Russian revolution of 1917, and of the founders and leaders of the early Communist Party, and I have no hesitation in saying that the revolutionary cadre assembled at the SWP founding convention was superior in understanding, talent, dedication, and all-round ability to anything the working class movement in this country had ever known.

Mind, I am making a comparative judgement: superior, not perfect or without defects.

Continuity of Leadership

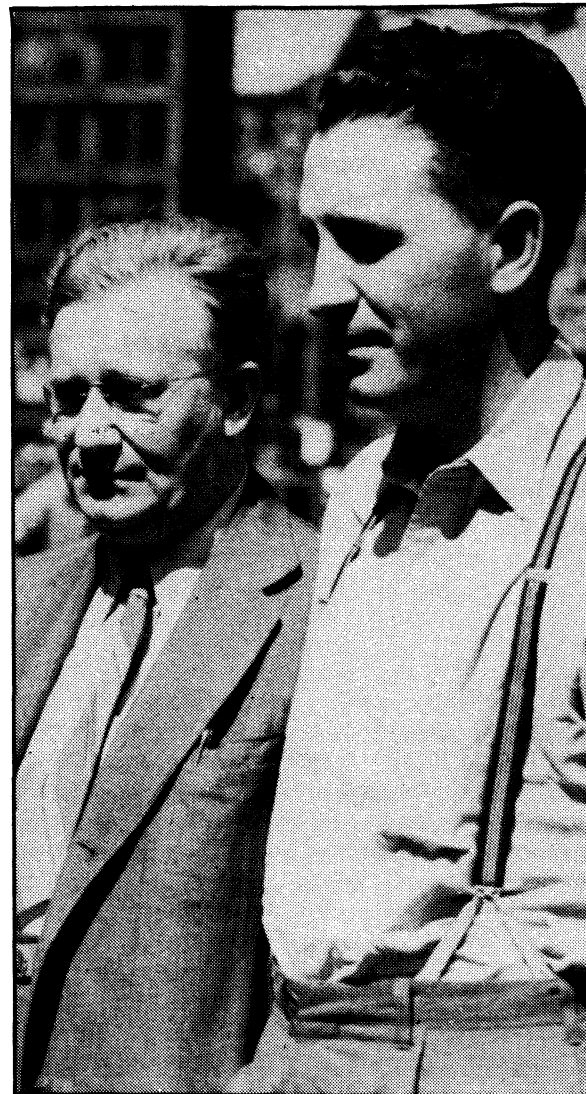
ISR. Doesn't the story of the SWP convention really begin before 1938—as far back as 1928, when James P. Cannon, Max Shachtman, and Martin Abern were expelled from the Communist Party because they said they agreed with Trotsky's criticisms of the Soviet bureaucrats who were running the Communist International? And weren't these three, who then founded the first Trotskyist organization in this country, also the central cadre of the new SWP in 1938?

Breitman. The SWP certainly was rooted in the events you refer to and in others; the delegates did not go to Chicago by accident. The connection between the CP expulsions in 1928 and the SWP convention in 1938 was vital.

But you are barely touching on the links of causality and continuity out of which the SWP evolved.

Before the CP could expel Cannon for holding a minority viewpoint, the Communist International initiated by Lenin and Trotsky after the October revolution had to be bureaucratized and

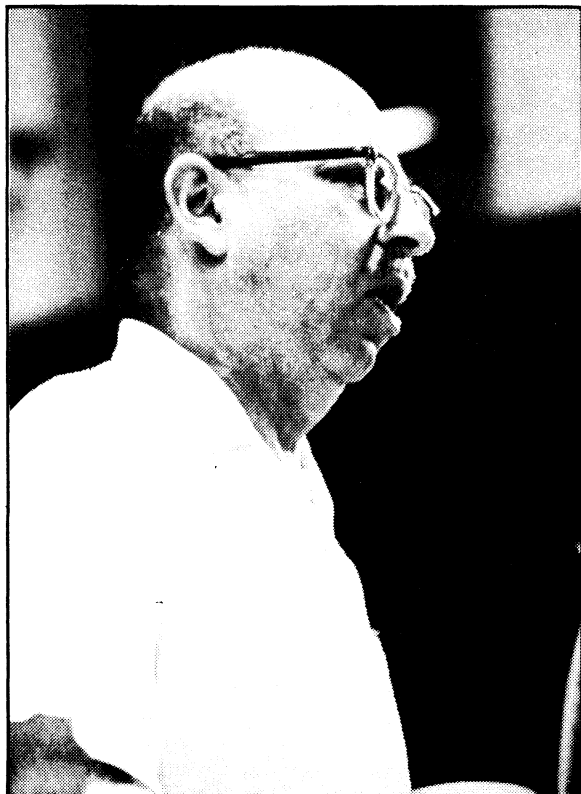
1. Eugene V. Debs (1855-1926), Daniel DeLeon (1852-1914), and William D. Haywood (1869-1928) were central figures in the revolutionary movement in the United States before World War I. Debs was the most popular leader of the Socialist Party, DeLeon was the leader of the Socialist Labor Party, and Haywood was a driving force in the Industrial Workers of the World. The three united for a time to found the IWW in 1905.



James P. Cannon, SWP national secretary, and Farrell Dobbs, a revolutionary socialist leader in the Teamsters union. Cannon and Dobbs were later imprisoned along with sixteen other SWP members for their opposition to World War II.

the minority represented by Trotsky and the Left Opposition had to come into existence. Before the CP could expel Cannon, one of its founders, it first had to be founded in 1919 as a revolutionary party. But before the CP could be founded, there had to be the prewar radicalization that is sometimes called "Debsian," the treachery of the Second International in World I, the development of a revolutionary wing in the American Socialist Party and the IWW [Industrial Workers of the World], the Russian revolution of 1917, and so on.

I am not disputing your point at all, only saying that it can be extended profitably. One of the greatest strengths of the SWP cadre lay in its continuity with the struggles from the start of the century—the IWW and revolutionary syndicalism, Debs's fighting election campaigns, opposition to U.S. entry into World War I, efforts to absorb the meaning of the Russian revolution



George Breitman

and Leninism, the development of a left wing in the SP, the birth of the new CP and its early attempts to adapt to American realities.

Cannon and his comrades, especially the older ones like V.R. Dunne, Carl Skoglund, and Arne Swabeck, had not merely read or heard about these events; they grew up in them and were shaped by them. This was the basic political capital of their movement and explains their ability to avoid many of the costly mistakes beginners are prone to make.

I think you are right to mention that Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern were the central figures in the movement in both 1928 and 1938, but I think it would be wrong to imply that little or nothing had changed, except that they were nine or ten years older. In my opinion, a great deal changed in that time, quantitatively and qualitatively. In 1928 the Stalinists used to deride them as "three generals without an army." In 1929 they did not have more than 100 followers, but in 1938 they could claim fifteen times that number, and the leadership was broader and included a new generation of rebels against capitalism.

Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern themselves were different in 1938—they had grown and matured. It is a mistake to think of them as "Trotskyists" in 1928 merely because they decided that year that Trotsky was right and Stalin and Bukharin² were wrong. Calling yourself something doesn't automatically make you that,

2. Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938) was a leader of the Bolshevik Party who became an ally of Stalin after Lenin died in 1924. Bukharin became head of the Communist International in 1926, holding this post until 1929. Stalin broke with Bukharin in 1928 when the latter resisted the turn to large-scale industrialization and forced collectivization of peasant landholdings. The followers of Bukharin were known as the "Right Opposition" in the international Communist movement.

even if you think you are.

The leaders expelled in 1928 had been miseducated by Stalinist bureaucratism parading as democratic centralism and had acquired some bad habits in the factional jungle that the American CP had become by the mid-twenties. It took work and time to shed all this. Fortunately, they had a good teacher, Trotsky; they learned a lot about principled politics; and they became effective Marxist politicians. It was not an easy thing to do, and they deserve a lot of credit for doing it under circumstances that were often discouraging.

ISR. What was the political climate in this country at the time of the founding convention?

Breitman. Before answering that, we'd better complete the historical background, which I'll condense as much as possible.

Swimming Against the Stream

The founding of the SWP marked the third phase of our movement's development. The first phase lasted from 1928 to 1933, and during those five years the overriding aim of the Left Oppositionists in this country (who named themselves the Communist League of America in 1929) was to reform the CP and the Communist International, to regenerate them along Leninist lines, and thus to make them capable of leading successful revolutions here and abroad. All the other sections of the International Left Opposition, which was founded in 1930 after Trotsky's deportation from the Soviet Union, followed this same "reform" policy.

The CLA educated a cadre of serious revolutionaries, but it did not win many people from the CP and it did not stem the degeneration of the CP and the Comintern. After five years of propaganda work, the CLA had only around 200 members and little influence.

This was during the "third period" of Stalinism, when the CPs said the revolution was just around the corner and then embarked on the most sectarian and ultraleft adventures in the history of the working-class movement, effectively isolating themselves.

It was easy for the Left Oppositionists to show that third-period Stalinism was a perversion of Leninist strategy and tactics, but doing so did not change the relationship of forces. Most radicals, even when they rejected the third-period line, continued to believe that it was "to the left" of and therefore "more revolutionary" than the Left Opposition's line.

ISR. Cannon's book, *The History of American Trotskyism is entirely devoted to the pre-SWP decade, isn't it?*

Breitman. Yes, it is the fullest written account of the events leading up to the 1938 convention, a series of popular talks given in 1942, and is easy to read and follow.

The first phase ended in 1933 when Stalin's pseudoleftism prevented a united front of the German workers against the Nazis and enabled Hitler to take power without a real battle and to crush all the workers organizations and all democratic rights. When the Comintern defended the policy that had produced this defeat, the Left Oppositionists decided that the Stalinist parties no longer could be reformed and that it was necessary to build a new International and revolutionary parties in all countries.

Turn to Mass Work

To accomplish this in the United States, the CLA had to adopt a new orientation. It stopped concentrating almost exclusively on the CP and began to approach other tendencies moving toward the left under the impact of the radicalization stimulated by the repression and of the lessons being drawn all over the world from Hitler's victory. The most promising of these tendencies was the American Workers Party, a left-centrist group led by A. J. Muste.

Simultaneously, the CLA began its turn "from the propaganda circle to the mass work" in the union and unemployed movements, as Cannon phrased it in the letter you are printing. Revolutionary propaganda work was now combined with other kinds of work where CLA members were working with larger groups of people.

The first big break in the CLA's mass work came in 1934 in Minneapolis, where its members led the Teamsters' strikes that set a model for militant unionists throughout the country. Even before these strikes the CLA took the initiative in approaching the AWP for a fusion of the two organizations. The fusion was consummated at the end of 1934 in the form of the new Workers Party of the United States.

The Fourth Internationalists in Europe followed a similar course. In France their approach to leftward-moving forces led them in 1934 to dissolve their own small organization and join the Socialist Party, where they operated as a left wing working for the Fourth International. This was called the "French turn," later followed in other countries including the United States. It led to splits from the movement by sectarian and dogmatic elements, who condemned the new tactic as a betrayal of Marxism.

In the Socialist Party

A left wing had begun to develop in the Socialist Party and Young People's Socialist League in this country. At the end of 1935 the most right-wing elements split from the American SP, and Cannon and Shachtman proposed that the members dissolve the Workers Party and join the SP.

After an intense discussion, this proposal was approved by a national convention at the end of February 1936. In the spring of 1936 we joined the SP, where we constituted a left wing called the Appeal caucus, after our journal, the *Socialist Appeal*.

ISR. Now you're getting to the immediate background of the founding convention.

Breitman. That's right. We remained in the SP until the summer of 1937, when our differences with the coalition of centrists and right-wingers in the leadership of the party came to a head. At bottom were two irreconcilable conceptions of a party, but the disputes centered on the issue of People's Frontism in various forms and places.



Spanish Civil War. Opposition to the betrayal of the Spanish workers by Stalin and the 'popular front' Spanish government led to the expulsion of revolutionists from the Socialist Party in 1937.

People's Frontism, or class collaboration between working class and capitalist parties, was the predominant tendency of the radical and labor movements of that period. Under our pressure the SP had adopted an abstract criticism of People's Frontism at a convention early in the year, but then its leaders embraced the policies of the Spanish People's Front government that was repressing revolutionaries and leading the struggle against Franco to defeat. It ordered us to cease all political criticism of that government, even inside the SP. Here at home it decided to withdraw its own candidate for mayor of New York in 1937 in favor of the People's Front candidate La Guardia (running on the Republican Party and American Labor Party tickets).

Unable to contain our growing influence by other means, the SP leaders tried to gag us and expelled us wholesale when we refused to accept the gag.

The same thing had happened in France in 1935, but our gains here were bigger, partly because our leaders learned from the mistakes of our French comrades, partly because they were able to benefit more from Trotsky's advice than the French leaders had, and partly because they were more competent politicians than their French counterparts.

The SP leaders saved the party from "Trotskyism," but in the process they virtually destroyed it by expelling the best and most active members. We emerged with more than twice the numbers we had on joining and won a decisive majority of the YPSL too. Morale was high, because our self-confidence had also grown as we met the various challenges posed to us by the SP environment and acquired new knowhow from its easier access to the mass movements of the time.

ISR. What was the internal life of the movement like while you were in the SP? How were differences resolved?

Breitman. It was not a normal situation in that respect. Trying to establish ourselves as good party builders, we were discreet at the beginning in order to overcome our reputation as perpetual hairsplitters and in order not to give unnecessary weapons to opponents who were eager to find reasons for expelling us.

Once the Appeal caucus was firmly established and recognized, our policies were arrived at through the mechanism of that caucus. But even then the accent was always on the centralist side of democratic centralism. People who had differences or grievances usually and voluntarily postponed them until a time when raising them would not benefit our common opponents.

Democratic Discussion

It was an abnormal situation in many ways. We had not had a real national convention for almost two years, and all of us, members and leaders alike, did not have a very good idea of what our movement was like, how it had changed, what its caliber was, and so on, until we met at the founding convention. That was one of the reasons for the unusual excitement we felt there—we were about to get answers to questions that had accumulated for two years.

ISR. Why was there such a long interval between the expulsions and the convention?

Breitman. Expulsions began in July 1937 with a few people in New York. Most former Workers Party members knew that this meant the whole Appeal caucus would be expelled, but we had to take into account those who still had illusions about the SP leadership. So we appealed the expulsions, demanded a referendum, the calling of a special SP convention, and so on. On Labor Day the SP leaders expelled everyone who wouldn't repudiate the Appeal caucus.

Some of our people thought we should hold our convention as soon as possible, afraid that delays would seem like indecision and produce demoralization. At first, Thanksgiving weekend was chosen as the date for a convention of the suspended or expelled branches and members. But our leaders soon decided to postpone it until New Year's in order to facilitate the broadest possible pre-convention discussion.

This was a wise decision and led to a truly democratic discussion and convention. Differences long bottled up were ventilated. New ideas were openly presented and considered on their merits. The emphasis now was on the democratic

side of democratic centralism. It made a very attractive contrast to the bureaucratic suppression decreed by the SP leadership.

ISR. What were the main differences at the convention?

Breitman. If you don't mind, I'd first like to make a few comments on your previous question about the political atmosphere of the country.

A powerful wave of radicalization had swept the country, generating bitter strike struggles and the formation of the CIO and the first strong unions in many basic industries. The Roosevelt administration offered limited concessions and reforms which the labor leaders, CIO as well as AFL, pointed to as justification for labor support to the Democrats.

Economic conditions improved slowly and gradually after Roosevelt came to office, but then, suddenly, in 1937 came a new economic downturn, which shot the unemployment rate up from about 15 percent to about 20 percent in less than a year. It seemed to us that this would surely sharpen the class struggle and boost the radicalization, which had temporarily been marking time, onto a higher and more political plane.

The ruling class's answer to the 1937 recession was a decision to rearm and prepare for the coming of World War II. This was the meaning of Roosevelt's renunciation of "isolationism" in his famous quarantine-the-aggressor speech in Chicago in October 1937.

From then on, one's attitude toward the coming war became the first touchstone for every

'A powerful wave of radicalization had swept the country, generating bitter strike struggles and the formation of the CIO and the first strong unions in many basic industries.'

working-class tendency. Our convention was, in a real sense, our answer and our alternative to the new policy expressed in Roosevelt's speech.

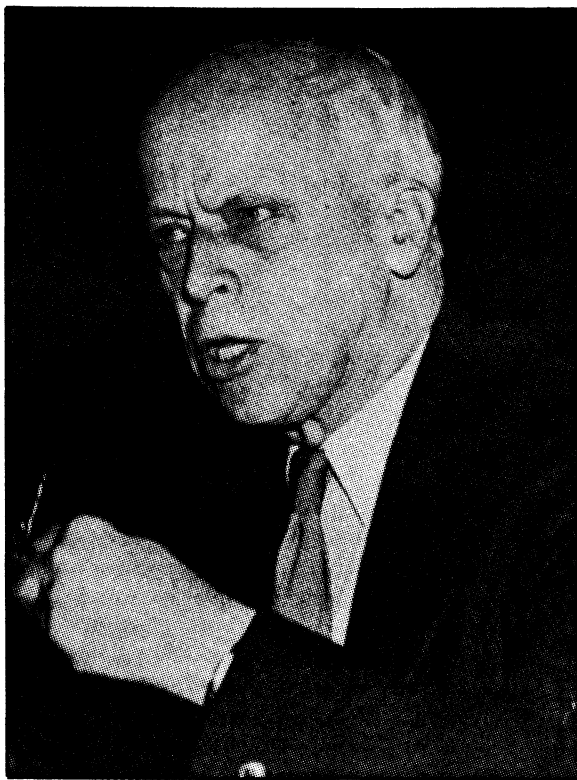
The Impact of Stalinism

The CP had grown into a sizable force, becoming the most abject apologist and supporter of Roosevelt and People's Front class collaboration. In 1938 its membership was between 50,000, the lowest figure I've seen, and 75,000, the figure of a congressional committee. It had strong positions in several CIO unions, controlled the unemployed and student movements, and had a near-monopoly of the American left, which it used to expel and isolate left-wing opponents wherever it could.

By comparison, the delegates to our convention reported a membership of 1,500 plus. This turned out to be an exaggeration because it included people who had sided with us against the SP leadership but who did not actually join the SWP once it was set up and they saw what it demanded of them. A figure of around 1,000 would be more accurate. That means the ratio of the CP's membership to ours was at least fifty to one and maybe seventy-five to one. Since the ratio today is roughly equal, you may have some trouble appreciating what a disadvantage we had. Perhaps you can do it by imagining what American radical politics would be like if the CP were fifty times its present strength.

Besides the CP and the SWP, there were only two other radical groups at the time worth mentioning. One was the Socialist Party. Shachtman dubbed the SP "a head without a body" in 1938, but it wasn't much of a head either.

The other was the Lovestoneites, the Right Oppositionists who had been purged from the Comintern for allegedly sympathizing with Bukharin after Stalin broke with him. In 1938 they called themselves the Independent Labor League. At this time they were engaged in reexamining and then repudiating the Leninism they had avowed since their expulsion from the CP in 1929. Three years later they voted to dissolve and thereafter devoted themselves individually to the defense of capitalism and its labor agencies.



Norman Thomas, leader of Socialist Party when Trotskyists were expelled.

The Lovestoneites were an early example of the ideological retrogression then besetting the radical movement. Two of the big Moscow "confession" trials had occurred in 1936 and 1937 while we were in the SP, where we did important work helping Trotsky prove that they were frame-ups engineered by Stalin; the third took place two months after our convention. It is hard to exaggerate the devastating effect these trials had on most radicals of the time.

Many who knew or sensed that the trials were frame-ups were terribly demoralized by them and by the mistaken belief, which now began to gain currency among radicals, that Stalinism with its bloody purges and repression—in the Spanish Civil War as well as in the Soviet Union—was only the logical continuation rather than the opposite of Leninism. A. J. Muste, for example, quit our movement a week after the first trial in Moscow. So did Peter Schmidt, chairman of our Dutch sister organization.

So on one hand we were in the midst of a deep radicalization, which had been stymied temporarily but was far from having exhausted its potential. Such radicalizations are, of course, the best soil for the growth of a revolutionary party. But on the other hand, Leninism was under severe attack from all sides—from the social-patriotic Stalinist agents of Roosevelt, who were trying to drive us out of the labor movement, and from other renegades and backsliders who not only equated Leninism and Stalinism but sought to cover the tracks of their capitulation by equating Stalinism and Trotskyism.

So it was a very contradictory situation. Of course, you can also say that about the situation we face today and about most of the situations between then and now.

The Example of Minneapolis

ISR. The convention agenda, according to the minutes, was quite long for a four-day convention. Were all the points really taken up and discussed adequately?

Breitman. Almost all were taken up, and most were discussed to the satisfaction of most of the delegates, I think. You must remember that there had been a very thorough pre-convention discussion, and often there was not much new to be said. Of course that doesn't stop some people.

On the last day we had an international report given by Maurice Spector and adopted a resolution to affiliate the new party to the Movement for the Fourth International (the International itself was not founded until later in 1938). I remember that clearly, but I can't remember a single other thing about the report or the discussion. That was because the real decision on this point had been made many months before in the minds of the membership.

ISR. Cannon's article says that a trade-union resolution and plans to make the party membership more proletarian was a major topic of discussion. What kind of union activity was the party engaged in?

Breitman. I can't add anything to what Cannon said on the convention discussion, except that I can personally confirm that many of the branches had been doing good work despite the lack of attention from the leadership center in New York.

Our chief union stronghold was Minneapolis, where our comrades in the Teamsters union, led by Dunne, Skoglund, and Farrell Dobbs, were showing the whole country what a union led by revolutionaries could do. It was our aspiration in Newark, and I am sure elsewhere, to meet the high standards they were setting. The story of their activity can now be read in Dobbs's books about the Teamsters.

Another gain of that time was the organization of our fraction in the maritime industry, starting on the West Coast. Although he was not at the founding convention, Tom Kerry was elected to the national committee at this convention, partly in recognition of his work in this fraction, which also served as a model for the party.

Most of our other activity was centered in the new CIO unions that were being born at the time—steel, auto, electrical, and so on. We helped to sign up workers to join the unions, both in the plants and in their homes; we participated in strikes to win recognition and bargaining rights; we joined forces with others to gain, extend, or preserve democracy inside the unions.

The main difference was that the unions then were less bureaucratized and the workers had a greater interest in their unions than they do today. That made it easier for militants to get a hearing from the members in those days.

'There is a striking consistency in the positions we took on all the major wars of U.S. imperialism in the past forty years—World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We not only opposed them, but we fought against them to the best of our revolutionary ability.'

ISR. The top leaders agreed on most of the issues debated at the convention, but weren't there some where they were divided? For example, in the discussion on the class nature of the Soviet state?

Breitman. Yes. The majority's resolution, supported by Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern, reaffirmed our previous analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state, which we defend against imperialist attack and seek to regenerate through a political revolution against the Soviet bureaucracy.

An amendment was introduced by James Burnham and Joseph Carter denying that the Soviet Union could any longer be considered a workers state but pledging to defend it against imperialist attack as long as its economy remained nationalized. Despite some heat, the differences were seen as largely terminological rather than politically substantive, pending further developments. Shachtman spoke for the majority, supported by Cannon and Abern, and Burnham for the minority.

Two other minority positions were given time at the convention. One, presented by Martin Glee, represented a small group in New York that was against defense of the Soviet Union under any circumstances, and its members withdrew before the SWP's second convention. It got even fewer votes than the Burnham amendment.

A couple of years later, in World War II, the Soviet issue led to a serious split in the SWP. This caused some members to conclude that we had done something wrong at the founding convention, that we neglected our duty to "smoke out" the defeatists there or to take a strong enough position against them politically.

On the contrary, I think the leadership's attitude on this question was exemplary. They took a

strong and clear stand in favor of Soviet defensism, but they did not try to put words into the mouths of the Burnham group or to denounce them for implications that the minority denied holding. As long as the Burnham group said they were defensists too, they were taken at their word, pending further developments. Any other course would have meant forcing a struggle prematurely, before the issues were clear, a sure way to miseducate and disorient a party.

A similar approach prevailed on another important point that Cannon did not directly refer to in his letter or article. This was called the "internal situation" point, where Cannon was slated to speak for the majority of the leadership and Burnham for a minority including himself, Carter, and Hal Draper.

This concerned the party's organizational principles. Cannon's resolution defended the Leninist approach without reservation. The minority resolution was less clear and more diffuse, putting a greater emphasis on dangers of bureaucratism and arguing explicitly that no reprisals against members who held a defeatist position on the Soviet Union should be taken on the basis of their opinions or arguments in the discussion but only on the basis of violation of discipline.

Again it was possible for the more experienced members to foresee all kinds of grave deviations, but at most they were potential rather than present dangers. And when in the course of the convention the minority decided to withdraw its resolution in return for some minor concessions, the majority agreed to the concessions and to postponement of debate over the differences.

One of the concessions reworded the majority resolution's assertion that the party had the right to discipline "dilettantes, do-nothings, phrasemongers, triflers and windbags" (Cannon's language), replacing these with "irresponsible elements." A more serious change stipulated that no positions taken in the preconvention discussion that were not specifically prohibited by the convention could be prohibited after the convention without specific decision through a party referendum or another convention. The Burnhamites here were trying to protect Glee and the other defeatists.

Cannon thought that such people did not belong in the SWP, but his resolution had not called for ousting them on the basis of their ideas, and he did not find the concession difficult to make. In his postconvention letter to the International Secretariat he still maintained his belief that "advocacy of defeatism with respect to the Soviet Union is incompatible with adherence to our movement for the Fourth International."

But he did not propose any disciplinary measures on this point in 1938. During the 1939-40 fight he agreed with Trotsky that defeatists could remain SWP members if they abided by its discipline. And in 1947 he took the initiative in recruiting into the SWP a group led by C. L. R. James that held a defeatist ("state capitalist") position.

I think this episode reflected a maturity, sense of realism, and patience on the part of the central SWP leadership that would not have been possible when they first started the Left Opposition and still had too great a tendency to shoot from the hip.

Other Discussions

ISR. Cannon didn't mention it, and neither have you, but wasn't there also sharp struggle over the Spanish Civil War at the convention?

Breitman. You're right, there was. It was one of the disputes that got deferred while we were in the SP. I've said that we were lucky to lose some of our most hidebound sectarians before we entered the SP. I should have added that we were not so lucky in picking up more of the same kind while we were in the SP.

Their happiest moments came from denouncing us as betrayers of the Spanish revolution, because, among other things, we advocated military (but not political) support to the Loyalist government in the war against Franco. Essentially, they were abstentionists in that war and in colonial China's war against Japanese imperialism, crying a plague on both their houses and trying to dress up their miserable defaults in the class struggle with all kinds of fancy words like "revolutionary defeatism."

Albert Goldman spoke for the leadership's resolution on Spain, and Glee for one of the minorities. The vote was fifty-six for the resolu-



At the time of the first SWP convention, Farrell Dobbs and other founding members were leading an organizing drive that brought over-the-road truck drivers in eleven states into the Teamsters union. At right, members of General Drivers Local 554 of Omaha-Council Bluffs, Nebraska.

SWP members were also active in struggles of the unemployed. Above, a Washington, D.C., protest by employees of the Works Projects Administration (WPA) demands more jobs.



tion, with four abstentions. I think every last one of these ultraleft abstentionists quit the SWP before the next convention, in 1939. The best thing about them was watching them go. But even this experience was not altogether wasted, because it further inoculated the party against dogmatism and schematism.

Some minor points got disproportionate time and attention. One was mentioned in Cannon's letter, the disciplinary action that had been taken by the Chicago leadership against two members: one an agent of a sect that had split away in 1935, the Oehler group; the other a wild man who had joined us by mistake. Under a report by the committee on grievances and conflicts, the convention censured the Chicago executive committee for not following the procedures formally required for bringing charges against members. In the midst of the Moscow trials and on the heels of our own unceremonious ejection from the SP, we were supersensitive to the rights of anybody accused of anything.

Besides the points cited by Cannon, there was also a political resolution, reported on by Shachtman; an unemployed commission report by Art



Preis; disputes over seating of certain delegations; a report on party organization and the party by Abern; a report on the party press by Abern; the reports of the resolutions committee, some of whose proposals were adopted, like the declaration of principles, and some of which were referred to the new National Committee; and a youth report that got squeezed out for lack of time. And, oh yes, a welcoming speech by Goldman and a closing speech by Farrell Dobbs, who also headed the trade-union commission and served as reporter for an unstructured kind of nominating commission.

Unemployed Struggle

ISR. What kinds of things did the report on unemployed work take up?

Breitman. It noted that many of the "new unemployed" resulting from the 1937 recession were CIO members who were putting pressure on their unions to fight for the jobless, and it urged efforts to get the unions involved in this fight along the lines of the Teamster-sponsored Federal Workers Section in Minneapolis.³

It called attention to the good work that some

of the branches were doing in the Workers Alliance of America, the only national unemployed group, which had suffered a serious decline after being taken over by the Stalinists; urged that all unemployed members be assigned to the Workers Alliance; and criticized the national leadership for neglecting this area.

It also recommended against attempts to create "our own" national unemployed movement, while sanctioning independent groups locally where the unions could not be involved and no Workers Alliance existed.

ISR. Under what point was the party's name selected?

Breitman. Under the point on the party constitution, and only after a debate, as usual. The convention arrangements committee favored the name International Socialist Party and all the draft resolutions we got when we arrived referred in their texts to the ISP; but it was explained that we would settle the question on the last day when we took up the constitution.

Five names were proposed, and there was a speaker for each: Shachtman for International Socialist Party; Glen Trimble of California for Socialist Workers Party; Bill Sherman, the convention secretary, for Workers Party; Glee for Independent Socialist Party; and Abern for International Workers Party. A first ballot reduced the choices to two, and the second gave a decisive majority to SWP.

Cannon supported SWP as the name, like most of us, as a way of symbolizing the fusion of the

'The fact that we have made considerable progress . . . since 1938 is not a cause for complacency but is evidence that the party we launched then must have had foundations solid enough to enable us to correct shortcomings.'

forces that had come together from the Socialist and Workers parties. Abern, who had opposed entering the SP, asked to be recorded against SWP as the name.

Opposition to War

ISR. Would you say that that fusion was the major accomplishment of the convention?

Breitman. I would say that it completed a fusion already achieved before the convention on the basis of a program derived from the theoretical and political conquests of the revolutionary movements here and abroad since the start of the century. It fused the revolutionary survivors of the Debsian radicalization and the founding of the CP with the best young workers and students produced by the radicalization of the thirties.

I find it hard to single out "the" major accomplishment. None was more important, in my opinion, than the way the convention armed us politically to meet the test of war, to which we were soon submitted. It was a harsh test. The first blast cost us almost half our members in the 1940 split led by Shachtman, Abern, and Burnham. Then came government persecution that imprisoned most of our top leaders, suppression of the *Militant*, and other moves to silence and isolate us. But we survived and even grew during the war.

We have every reason to be proud of the party's long antiwar and anti-imperialist tradition. There is a striking consistency in the positions we took on all the major wars of U.S. imperialism in the past forty years—World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. We not only opposed them but we fought against them to the best of our revolutionary ability.

Can any other tendency in this country make a similar claim? It can't be done by any of the varieties and offshoots of Stalinism, including the Maoists, because they or their political ances-

tors supported the government in World War II, broke wartime strikes, and called for the imprisonment of Blacks who dared to fight for their democratic rights during the war. And they still think it was correct to do so.

ISR. The convention evidently put a lot of emphasis on the need to improve the party's composition with the stress on class composition, recruiting workers, getting the members into industry and the unions, and so on. Was there also attention given to increasing the number of women, Blacks, and other minorities in the party and its leadership?

Breitman. No, not much and not enough. It was not until the second convention, in 1939, where we adopted our first resolution on self-determination, that we began to understand the centrality of the Black struggle. This led us to greatly expand our activity in the Black community during World War II, where we did some valuable work. But even then our improved understanding didn't sink in all the way until the rise of Black nationalism in the early 1960s. And it wasn't until later in the 1960s with the second wave of feminism that we perceived the combined character of the struggles for women's liberation and workers' power.

Ability to Learn

In most areas the SWP in 1938 was far ahead of both American society and the American radical movement, but in others it was not. The fact that we have made considerable progress in some of these areas since 1938 is not a cause for complacency but is evidence that the party we launched then must have had foundations solid enough to enable us to correct shortcomings. No party is perfect, all parties make errors; the question is whether they can recognize their errors and correct them.

The SWP's ability to do this was demonstrated only a few months after the founding convention when, at Trotsky's suggestion, it corrected positions it had held at the time of the convention on two very important questions: whether or not to support a movement for a constitutional amendment to require a national referendum before the U.S. government could enter any war, and whether or not to advocate the formation of an independent labor party.

I can't go into those changes here, but I recommend the Trotsky book, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, which contains the transcripts of discussions in Mexico between Trotsky and the SWP leaders on these questions three months after the convention. We not only had the best program of the time, but the capacity to make it better.

ISR. Did Trotsky express any opinion about the SWP convention?

Breitman. Yes, favorably, as can be seen in *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38)*. He followed the preconvention discussion closely and wrote articles for the discussion bulletin himself. Then, after getting various reports, he said in a January 1938 letter to the French section, "They have made very remarkable progress. The level of the discussion was very high and the convention ended with nearly complete agreement and heightened authority of the leadership. . . . [T]he American section is the only one that made appreciable progress [in the last year or two] and has shown real political maturity."

It was on this basis that Trotsky collaborated closely with the leaders of the SWP in planning the founding conference of the Fourth International, held in France in September 1938, and in writing the basic programmatic documents of the conference. In Trotsky's view the SWP was the strongest section of the new International politically as well as in other ways.

ISR. How do you answer people who say, "What's the relevance for today of all this old stuff?"

Breitman. "If you don't know your own history, how you became what you are and how you got where you are, it's harder to become what you want to be and get where you want to go." The women's, Black, Chicano and other movements have discovered this truth recently. It's just as true for the Marxist movement.

3. The activities of the Federal Workers Section are described in Farrell Dobbs's *Teamster Politics* (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), pages 177-239.

Leadership and Orientation at the Founding Convention

A Letter from James P. Cannon

The following letter from James P. Cannon to the International Secretariat of the Movement for the Fourth International is being published for the first time. The Movement for the Fourth International was the predecessor of the Fourth International, founded in September 1938. (The SWP was compelled by the passage of reactionary legislation to disaffiliate from the Fourth International in December 1940, although it remains in solidarity with its goals and program.)

James P. Cannon was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party when this letter was written. Born in 1890, he became an activist in the Industrial Workers of the World and later in the left wing of the Socialist Party. After the Russian revolution of October 1917, he helped found the Communist Party, serving for a time as national chairperson of the Workers Party (the name adopted at one point by the American Communists). Cannon also headed the International Labor Defense, which organized efforts to free Sacco and Vanzetti and other frame-up victims.

In 1928 Cannon became the first U.S. Communist Party leader to support Trotsky and the Left Opposition against Stalin. He remained a leading figure in the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1974.

Room 1007
100 Fifth Ave.
New York City.

To the International Secretariat,
Dear Comrades,

By this time you will have received the minutes of the National Convention. This will give you the possibility of checking over the work done there more precisely.

Here I want to give you a few personal impressions which you can take together with the reports you have heard from other comrades and eventually arrive at a general impression of your own.

1. *Representation:* According to the final report of the credentials committee we had 76 regular delegates, 37 alternate delegates and 24 fraternal delegates. This makes a total of 137. In addition, I estimate, there were a couple of score of comrades and very close sympathizers from other cities who were admitted into the Convention sessions. The delegates came from 35 cities in seventeen states. From these figures one can get a fairly clear impression that our organization, despite its comparatively small size, is spreading out over the country and has already the fairly good framework of a national organization. In this respect—which I consider very important for the future—we have long outstripped the Lovestoneites for example, who remain primarily a New York group. The same is true of all the other groups and cliques with which we have had conflicts in the past. Among all the radical groupings ours alone is developing a really national composition.

2. *Composition of the Convention:* Precise statistics of the social composition, age, and background of the Convention delegates were not compiled, unfortunately. This was contemplated but over-looked in the rush of things. However, I can state that the large majority of the delegates were proletarian activists and trade unionists. Not only that, the work of the Trade Union Commission and the discussion of the trade union question showed that we have a large number of comrades, sufficiently experienced and qualified in mass work, to be able to discuss all sides of the trade union question, including its most practical aspects, with the fullest assurance, as a result of their experience. I think the composition, and general character of the Con-

vention, must prompt you to make a certain revision in previous impressions of the composition and general character of the Party membership, which it seems to me you entertained. Tourists and letter-writers can give certain impressions of the American movement, and valuable and necessary ones too. But these impressions by no means are representative of the Party and the movement, as a whole. The proletarian activists, as a rule, do not have the time and the means for extensive travel. And as a rule their correspondence is confined to laconic reports. One can also get a one-sided impression of the Party from the Chicago and New York organizations, which despite their merits, have serious shortcomings on the side of social composition and trade union activity. It is necessary to see the Party as a whole, in a representative Convention, to get a clear picture of what it is made of.

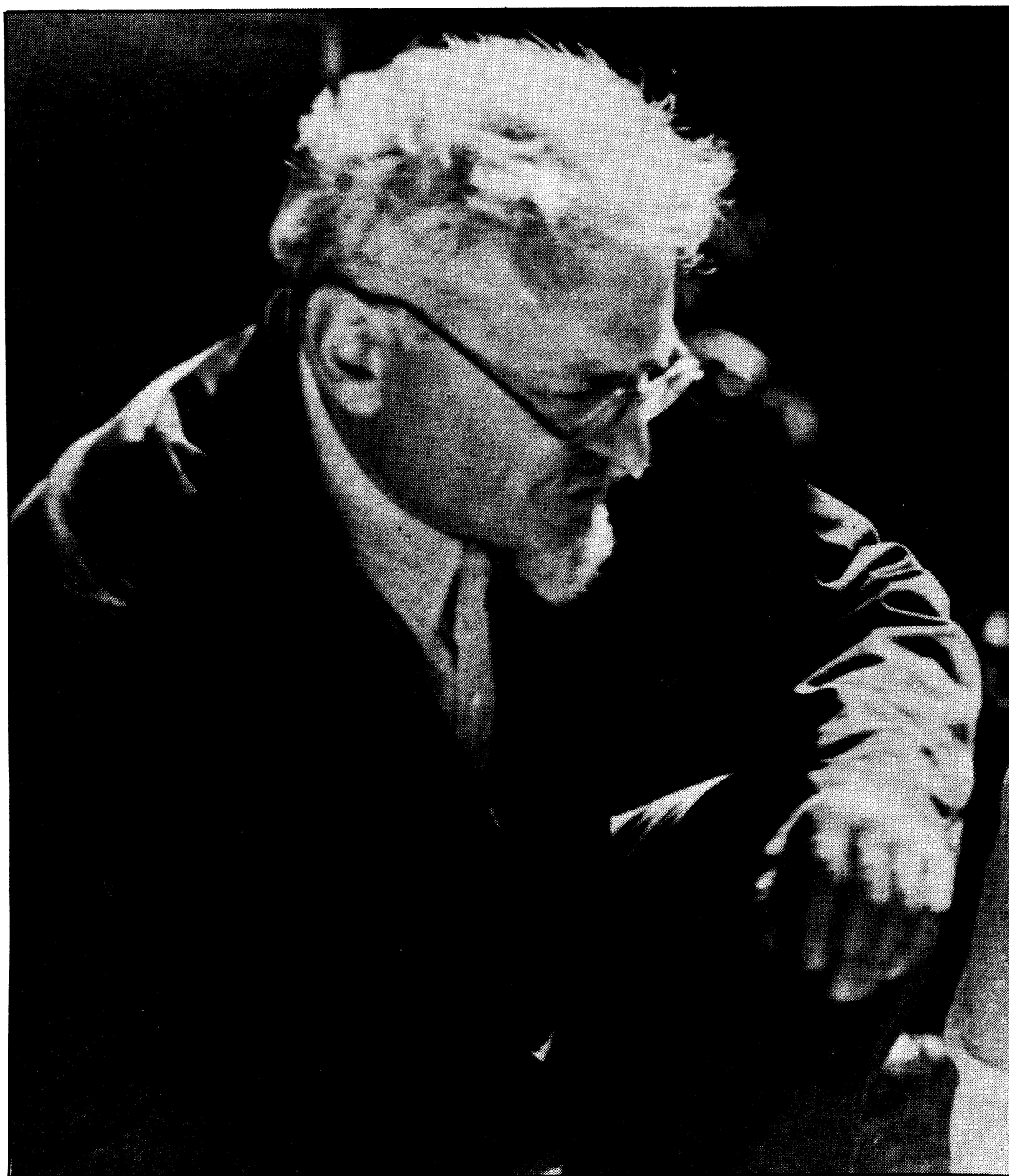
3. *International:* This point on the agenda did not provoke very much discussion. This can be accounted for, to a certain extent, by the fact that no differences of opinion were manifested. The decision to affiliate to the Bureau of the Fourth International was unanimous and likewise the provision to apportion a definite percentage of the Party dues to International Bureau expenses met with universal approval. It was interesting to note, especially on this point, that the divisions between the old cadres of the Workers Party and the cadres of "native" Socialists have pretty well been obliterated in the course of a common work and discussion. Such objections and reservations on the question of 100% "Trotskyism" as we have encountered, have come from individuals of the older cadre and not from the former Socialists. I do not at all wish to maintain that the Party is thoroughly internationalized. But theoretically the victory on this score is already complete in the united organization.

4. *Orientation:* The Convention showed quite clearly that the orientation toward mass work, which began at the time of the French turn, has developed quite consistently. I think it can be said that more progress has been made up 'till now, in this respect, in the ranks than in the leadership. While it is true that the general lead was given by the National Committee, the delegates more or less ran away with this issue and gave it real life at the Convention. During the year or so of our work in the Socialist Party, the leadership put too narrow a construction on the purely factional side of this work and tended to overlook the coordination of the internal faction work with practical activity in the class struggle on a broader scale. Of course, I'm stating here my personal opinion but I do not make much of a secret of it. I consider the leadership on the whole has been very remiss during the past year in this respect, especially during the period of our intense pre-occupation with the internal struggle.

However, the locals and branches, on their own initiative, in various localities developed trade union activity, established contact and broadened their experience and connections in this field. The most hopeful side of the Convention revelations, in this respect, was not the work that has already been accomplished but the fact that it was accomplished pretty largely on the initiative of the local comrades themselves. This gives ground to think that with a more decisive orientation on the part of the Party as a whole, and with a serious attempt at co-ordination and centralized direction, we can hope for still more gratifying results in the next period. Two post-Convention items give special grounds for encouragement: the first is the result of the elections in the Marine Firemen's Union on the west coast. No doubt you have heard that the progressive slate swept out the Stalinites by a 3 to 2 majority all along the line. The second item was the reinstatement of one of our comrades to his position as International organizer of the auto-



JAMES P. CANNON



LEON TROTSKY

mobile workers union at Cleveland. In the reactionary drive of the general executive board of the automobile workers union, he was removed from his position, about three weeks ago. Thereupon the locals in the district raised such a furor, bombarded the national office with so many truculent resolutions of protest, that they were compelled to reinstate him in his position. I think this is a very interesting case. The comrade, who is still a very young man—only 24 years old—got his political education in our New York movement.* Then, in the early days of the Workers Party, he was sent out in the field to see what he could do in the line of mass work, without previous experience. The leadership, perhaps, deserves credit for encouraging him to start out on this course. All the rest he did by himself.

5. *Political Firmness:* The discussion and the vote on the principal questions in dispute should be an eye-opener for anyone who thinks that fundamental positions can be lightly discarded in our Party. After all the furor that was raised around the Russian question in the pre-Convention discussion, with all the groups and grouplets that came forward with new revelations in this respect, and despite the fact that a minority of the National Committee came forward with an opposition point of view—despite all this—the Convention supported the line of the National Committee with a crushing unanimity. On page 14 of the minutes you will see the record of the vote; for the majority, 66, for the N.C. minority 3, for the Glee opposition 2, for a special position of Heisler 1. On page 19 the minutes show the Spanish Resolution adopted by a vote of 56 against 4 abstentions.

It will be interesting for you to study the roll call on the Russian question and see the solid lineup of delegates, delegation after delegation. And they are not routine votes either. There was more than ample pre-Convention discussion and the delegates showed in the discussion that they understand their positions very clearly. *The various sections of our International, who may have got the impression of deep cleavages over*

the Russian question from our Internal Bulletin, should be apprised of these votes.

The decisions of the Convention on the disputed questions have naturally had a stabilizing effect on the internal life of the Party, and have put a stop completely to discussion and controversy. It appears that most of the comrades who have been in opposition are disposed to let the matter rest now until another period of Party work and experience intervenes. On the other hand, it can be said, that the Party rank and file are in no mood to tolerate any infringement of the Convention decisions. The slightest signs of such a tendency would be dealt with promptly and without ceremony. Altho all the opposition tendencies appeared at the Convention, more or less, as isolated individuals, nevertheless there was nothing resembling a crushing or terrorizing policy. Everybody who had a dissenting point of view was given ample time to explain his position to the Convention, in most cases equal time with the majority reporters. Altho we maintained, and still maintain, that advocacy of defeatism with respect to the Soviet Union is incompatible with adherence to our movement for the Fourth International, we found it possible, in view of the unanimity of the Convention, to refrain from any organizational measures in this respect. Consequently all the opposition comrades, including even the three or four who defended a defeatist point of view have the opportunity to reflect further on the matter and to adjust themselves to the firmly established position of the Party.

6. *Party Democracy:* The action of the Convention, overruling and censuring the Chicago City Executive Committee in the cases of Becket and Most, should be noted. This is recorded in the minutes, under the report of the Grievance Committee, on pages 8, 9, and 10 and again on page 17. Here it was not so much a question of correcting a real injustice, as of insisting on the most scrupulous observation of regularity and formality in disciplinary cases. The Convention action gained added force from the fact that the individuals involved, Becket and Most, were without any support whatever in the Convention. I consider these decisions very important from the point of view of establishing precedent: that no kind of summary action is to be encouraged in

disciplinary matters. The delegates were very "touchy" on this point and did not hesitate to demonstrate it, even tho our political friends of the Chicago City Executive Committee were involved and censured.

7. *Leadership:* The Convention made a little shake-up in the leadership when it came time to elect the new National Committee. Several comrades who had been members of the Committee for two years were eliminated and new forces were added. In one or two cases members of the N.C. were reduced to the ranks of alternates, in other cases, members of the Political Committee were elected to the National Committee but not to the Political Comm. this time. In this case also some new blood was infused into the body. Provisions were made for quarterly meetings of the Plenum of the National Committee. The Political Committee is to be subject to alteration at each Plenum of the N.C. The national staff is strengthened by the addition of a full-time Trade Union Secretary.

In my opinion, these measures were imperatively necessary. Some of them were considered drastic and produced a certain shock. But that is good for the Party and also for the individuals concerned, perhaps. Some comrades who are inclined to take a personal view of things have seen in the action of the Convention, on this point, only a shuffling of the N.C. slate. However, it had a far profounder meaning. It marks, I hope, the beginning of a process which is to be carried out relentlessly under a slogan: The subordination of the leadership to the ranks. The isolation of a part, at least, of the national leadership from the rank and file of the Party, the encumbrance of the leadership with honorary and inactive members, tendency of the leadership to develop into a sort of officers' club whose members never offend or discipline each other, and who are free from the discipline of the ranks—all this sort of thing had developed into a crying evil in the Party.

It appeared obvious to me in such a situation that matters could not be remedied by a mere reshuffling of the slate, with the polite agreement of all concerned. It was necessary to deal a blow to the whole system. This could only be done by direct intervention of the active comrades in the ranks themselves. For this reason I declined to participate in the making up of a slate. But I did frankly encourage, and even instigate, the leading proletarian delegations to take matters into their own hands and rearrange the leadership in accordance with merit and activity. I am inclined to think that an error was made here and there in the selection or rejection of this or that individual, but the whole course initiated at the Convention was right and salutary.

The necessary transformation from the propaganda circle to the mass work is finding its full reflection only belatedly in the leadership itself. And since the initiative, for a variety of reasons, could not, or at least did not, come through the National Committee, it had to come from below. Perhaps this is best in the end. I look forward to the next Convention with the hope that a still more vigorous and determined supervision, and if necessary, overhauling of the leading personnel will take place.

In my judgement, this is the most important question. That the Convention delegates showed an alertness to the problem, and a readiness to tackle it head-on, gives me more confidence for the future of the Party than anything else. When it becomes clearly apparent to all that the rank and file activists are watching the leadership all the time—not merely the leadership as a whole but each individual member of it—and requires of them continuous activity and responsibility, we will be on the road to the eventual selection of a leadership that is worthy of its task. The Convention showed very clearly that we have much promising material in the ranks, that we are developing a strong second line of leadership who know how to keep a vigilant and critical eye on those immediately above them, and, if necessary, to substitute for them.

Best wishes,

Fraternally,
National Secretary

P.S. Today's mail brings news of a new branch at New Castle, Penn., and possibly, a new one (from the Stalinists) at East St. Louis, Ill. We are gaining recruits from the Stalinists steadily.

*The reference is to Bert Cochran. Cochran was a leader of the SWP until he broke with revolutionary Marxism in the 1950s.

The New Party Is Founded

By James P. Cannon

The following article is reprinted from the February 1938 issue of New International (predecessor of International Socialist Review).

All the experience of the class struggle on a world scale, and especially the experience of the past twenty years, teaches one lesson above all others, a lesson summed up in a single proposition: The most important problem of the working class is the problem of the party. Success or failure in this domain spells the difference between victory or defeat every time. The struggle for the party, the unceasing effort to construct the new political organization of the vanguard on the ruins of the old one, concentrates within itself the most vital and progressive elements of the class struggle as a whole. From this point of view every concrete step in the direction of a reconstructed party has outstanding importance. The convention of the left-wing branches of the disintegrated Socialist Party at Chicago over the New Year's week-end, which resulted in the formal launching of a new organization—the Socialist Workers Party, section of the Fourth International—thus claims first attention from the revolutionary internationalists throughout the world. For them—and their judgment is better than any other because they foresee and prepare the future—it marks a new milestone on the historic road of workers' liberation.

The reconstruction of the revolutionary labor movement in the form of a political party is not a simple process. In the midst of unprecedented difficulties, complications and contradictions the work goes ahead, like all social movements, in zig-zag fashion. The new movement takes shape through a series of splits and fusions which must appear like a Chinese puzzle to the superficial

observer. But how could it be otherwise? The frightful disintegration of the old movements, on a background of world-wide social upheaval, disoriented and scattered the revolutionary militants in all directions. They could not find their way together, and draw the same basic conclusions, in a day. The new movement is fraught with catastrophic reverses, forward leaps and deadening periods of seeming stagnation. But for all that it is a movement, with an invincible historic motor force, and it moves along. The Chicago convention, which brought all the preceding work of the Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. to a fruitful culmination, is a forceful reminder of this fact.

Victory for Internationalism

The Chicago convention itself was a striking illustration of this contradictory process of fusion and split—and a step forward. It crossed the last *t* and dotted the last *i* on the split of the moribund Socialist Party. At the same time, it recorded the complete fusion of the left-wing socialists with the former members of the Workers Party, just as the Workers Party earlier came into existence through a fusion of the Communist Left Opposition and revolutionary militants of independent origin. The invincible program of the Fourth International is the magnet which attracts to itself all the vital revolutionary elements from all camps. It is the basis, and the only basis, on which the dispersed militants can come together and forge the new movement.

This was demonstrated once again at the Chicago convention when the resolution for the Fourth International was carried without a single dissenting vote. The two currents—former Workers Party and “native” socialists, which were about equally represented—showed complete unity on this decisive question. The 76 regular and 36 fraternal delegates from 35 cities

in 17 states, who constituted the convention, came to this unanimous decision after due consideration of the question and ample pre-convention discussion. Although the great bulk of time and discussion at the convention were devoted to American affairs—and properly so—the great matters of principle embodied in the international question inspired and guided everything.

This significant victory of the Fourth International in America cannot be without far-reaching influence on the international arena. The brief period of struggle as a faction within the Socialist Party comes to a definite end, and the American section of the Fourth International takes the field again as an independent party, with forces more than doubled, without any losses or splits, and with a firmer unity than ever before. Principled politics in this case also has proved to be the best and most effective kind of practical politics.

Those too-clever politicians of the centrist school have sought to avoid clear-cut answers to the international question in the hope of keeping divergent forces together. They have nothing to show for it but disintegration and splits, and the creeping paralysis of blind-alley pessimism in their ranks. The “Trotskyists,” on the other hand, have held their own ranks firm, and have united with other serious revolutionary forces in an expanding movement inspired by enthusiasm and confidence in its future. That is, first of all, because they put the main question of internationalism squarely. Experience showed that the left-wing socialists who mean business—and they are the only ones worth counting—preferred this kind of politics.

When our plenum-conference last July decided to take up the impudent challenge of the gag-law bureaucrats of the S.P. and fight the issue out without compromise, some comrades questioned the wisdom of this strategy, fearing disintegration in our ranks. The convention removed all ground for argument on this score. In the five-months campaign from July to New Year's we not only held our own, but gained. Numerous branches not affiliated to the organized left wing in July, were represented by delegates at the convention. Denver; Salt Lake City; Kansas City; Joplin and St. Louis in Missouri; Rochester; Quakertown, Sellerville and a third branch in Pennsylvania—these were among the new branches enlisted under the banner of the new party at the convention. As for the remnants of the Socialist Party, it did not claim the attention of the convention in any way. Nobody felt the necessity for discussion on this dead issue of the past. All attention was directed to the future—to the problem of penetrating the mass movement of the workers and the struggle against Stalinism.

Working-Class Orientation

The outstanding point of the agenda, and the one allotted the most time in the discussion, was the trade union question. And even this discussion was pretty much limited to the narrower question of practical work and tactics in the trade unions and the exchange of experience in this field. The principles and strategy of Bolshevism in regard to the trade unions were regarded as clearly established and taken for granted.

The predominance of the trade union question in its practical and tactical aspects corresponded to the most pressing needs of the hour, and to the composition and temper of the convention. The slogan “to the masses” dominated the convention from beginning to end. The conception of the Fourth Internationalists as primarily a circle of isolated theorists and hairsplitters—a conception industriously circulated by the centrists who maneuver all the time with non-existent “mass movements” in a vacuum—could find little to sustain it at Chicago. The great bulk of the delegates consisted of practical and qualified trade unionists who have done serious Bolshevik work in the labor movement and have modest results to show for it.

The discussion and reports from the various districts clearly showed that we already have a good foundation of trade union activity to build upon. Our positions and influence in various unions—such as they are—have not been gained by appointment or sufferance from the top, but by systematic work from below, in the ranks. That is all to the good. What is ours is ours; nobody gave it to us and nobody can take it away.



SWP Political Committee meets in December 1938. Clockwise from left to right: Felix Morrow, James P. Cannon, Max Shachtman, George Clarke, James Burnham, Nathan Gould, and Martin Abern. Democratic selection of leadership was a key source of strength for SWP.

It must be admitted that the preoccupation of our national movement with problems of theoretical education carried with it a certain neglect and even a minimizing of trade union work. A serious weakness and danger which should not be concealed. The Chicago convention was one continuous warning and demand to correct this fault and to do it by drastic measures. But if systematic national organization and direction of our trade union work have been lacking, our comrades in various localities and unions, guided by a sure instinct and a firm grasp of their theory, have gone to work in the unions with a will and have achieved good results. In some cases the fruits of their work stand out conspicuously. The convention heard matter-of-fact reports from all sections of the country. In sum total this work and its results, considering the size of our movement and its freedom from "big" pretensions, impressed the convention as fairly imposing.

This discussion, and the concrete program which issued from it, gave the convention its tone and its buoyant spirit of proletarian optimism. Revolutionary activists in the class struggle, in general, have no time for skeptical speculation and pessimistic brooding. Our proletarian convention reflected no trace of these diseases, so fashionable now on the intellectual fringes of the movement. The trade union discussion was a striking revelation that the revolutionary health of a party, and of its individual members, requires intimate contact with the living mass movement, with its struggle and action, its hopes and aspirations.

The whole course of our convention was turned in this direction. It was decided to "trade unionize" the party, to devote 90 percent of the party work to this field, to coordinate and direct this work on a national scale, and to establish the necessary apparatus to facilitate this design.

Our trade union work in the days ahead is concerned, of course, not as an end in itself—that is mere opportunism—but as a practical means to a revolutionary end. In order to aim seriously at the struggle for power a party must be entrenched in the sources of power—the workers' mass movement and especially the trade unions. Our convention could devote itself so extensively to the practical side of this question only thanks to the fact that the theoretical ground had been cleared and firm positions on the important principle questions consciously worked out.

A Live and Free Party

The party arrived at these positions by the method of party democracy. Six months of more or less informal discussion preceded the convention. Three months of more or less informal discussion on the Spanish, Russian and international questions after the July plenum, were followed by another three-month period of formal discussion. This discussion was organized by the National Committee. Internal discussion bulletins were published, membership meetings were held, etc. All points of view were fairly presented. The bulk of the space in the bulletins and approximately equal time in the membership meetings were given over to minorities—which turned out in the end to be tiny minorities.

In a live and free party, where members do their own thinking—and that is the only kind of a party worth a fig—everybody does not come to the same conclusion at the same moment. Common acceptance of basic principles does not insure uniform answers to the concrete questions of the day. The party position can be worked out only in a process of collective thought and exchange of opinion. That is possible only in a free, that is, a democratic party.

The method of party democracy entails certain "overhead charges." It takes time and energy. It often interferes with other work. On occasions it taxes patience. But it works. It educates the party and safeguards its unity. And in the long run the overhead expenses of the democratic method are the cheapest. The quick and easy solutions of bureaucratic violence usually claim drawnout installment payments in the form of discontent in the ranks, impaired morale and devastating splits.

Discussions among the Bolsheviks, sometimes taking the form of factional struggle, are carried on in dead earnest, corresponding to the seriousness of the questions and of the people involved. A philistine reading one of our pre-convention discussion bulletins, or listening by chance at a

membership meeting, might well imagine our party to be a mad-house of dissension, recrimination, revolts against the leadership and, in general, "fights among themselves." But, to get a clear picture, one must judge the democratic process at the end, not in the middle. True, Bolsheviks are in earnest and they readily dispense with polite amenities. They put questions sharply, because as a rule, they feel them deeply. And nobody ever thinks of sparing the sensibilities of leaders; they are assumed to be pupils of Engels who warned his opponents that he had a tough hide.

But it is precisely through this free democratic process, and not otherwise, that a genuine party arrives at conclusions which represent its own consciously won convictions. The discussion is not aimless and endless. It leads straight to a convention and a conclusion—in our case a conclusion so close to unanimous, that its authority is unshakeable. Then the discussion can and must come to an end. The emphasis in party life shifts from democracy to centralism. The party

another. This virtual unanimity is the best assurance for the future theoretical stability of the party. A false position on the question of the Russian revolution, now as always since 1917, spells fatal consequences for any political organization. The revolutionary Marxists have always said they would be at their posts and be the best fighters for the Soviet Union in the hour of danger. As this crucial hour draws near the American soldiers of the Fourth International have renewed this declaration and pledge.

With a firm theoretical position and a decisive orientation to mass work the new party of the Fourth International has every right to face the future with confidence. This confidence is also fortified by the objective political situation and by the present state of affairs in the radical labor movement. All signs point to a mighty acceleration of the class struggle as the country slides into another devastating crisis and the inevitable war draws ever nearer to the point of explosion. Meanwhile the situation among the radical labor groupings and tendencies is clearing up. Stalin-



CIO demonstration. SWP placed a high priority on building the unions and winning workers to the party.

goes to work on the basis of the convention decisions.

The resolutions submitted to the convention by the National Committee on all the important questions, formulating the standpoint which has been advocated in our press, were all accepted by the convention without significant amendments. Much pre-convention discussion had been devoted to the Russian question, as a result of the unspeakable Moscow Trials and the subsequent blood purges. Some comrades challenged the designation of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, although frightfully degenerated, which can yet be restored to health by a political revolution without a social overturn. This minority opinion, however, found little echo in the ranks.

The resolution of the National Committee, which calls for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack—a position which necessarily presupposes an uncompromising struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy in war or peace—was adopted by a vote of 66 against 3 for one minority position and 2 for

ism is self-disclosed as the movement of jingo-traitors. The Socialist Party of Altman, Thomas & Co.—having expelled its vitalizing left wing—presents only the pathetically futile spectacle of an opportunist sect, lacking the merit of consistent principle on the one side or of mass support on the other. The Lovestoneites, the one-time unacknowledged attorneys of Stalinism are now merely the attorneys and finger-men of pseudo-progressive labor bureaucrats in a couple of important unions. The various groups and cliques which challenged the *bona fide* movement of the Fourth International and attempted to fight it from the "left" have all, without exception, fallen into pitiful disintegration and demoralization.

The Socialist Workers Party, unfurling the banner of the Fourth International from the hour of its birth, has no rival in the field. It is the only revolutionary party, the heir of the rich traditions of the past and the herald of the future.

The Suffrage Battle in Great Britain

By Teresa Wocken

Working-class women have always been interested in women's rights. They are potentially the most powerful component of the women's rights movement. The differing roads taken by the English and American suffrage movements illustrate the importance of winning these millions to the struggle.

The American suffrage movement got its impulse from the ferment stirred by antislavery struggles. It was a trade union, the Association of Working People of Newcastle, Delaware, that first demanded women's suffrage in 1831.

The British movement got its inspiration from such working-class upheavals as the Chartist movement of the 1840s and the fight for universal male suffrage.

Both movements went through a period where the leaders rejected working-class allies in favor of a strategy of seeking support of the upper classes and their political representatives.

In Britain many women of the middle classes had expressed opposition to their oppression long before a movement emerged. Thus Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1793) set forth a trenchant critique of patriarchy but ultimately merely appealed to men to bestow rights upon women. Not until the Chartist movement of the 1840s, the struggle for universal male suffrage, and the struggles for the shorter work-day and the right to unionize demonstrated the tremendous power of mass action, did women begin to organize themselves.

The Women's Social and Political Union, founded in 1903, was one of the organizations that resulted. Its leaders, Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, had been working for the Independent Labour Party for several years but decided they would have to fight for women's suffrage on their own.

They remained members of the ILP but spent all their time trying to bring working women into the movement. They organized demonstrations and marches and made speeches in working-class districts. The WSPU's first demonstration was a success due to the large numbers of working-class women who attended. Later, some of these women formed the first London branch of the WSPU.

However, the WSPU leaders soon lost sight of their radical origins and began to reject working-class support. They consciously counterposed the organization of upper-class women with "influence" to the mass mobilization of all women.

Christabel Pankhurst justified this shift in the following terms: "It was evident that the House of Commons, and even its Labour members, were more impressed by the demonstrations of the feminine bourgeoisie than of the feminine proletariat. My democratic principles and instincts made me want a movement based on no class distinctions and including not mainly the working class, but women of all classes." Christabel evaded the fact that a massive social movement of women of all classes could not be built without seeking to mobilize hundreds of thousands of working-class women.

Sylvia Pankhurst, Christabel's sister, put forth a different position: "Not by the secret militancy of a few enthusiasts, but by the rousing of the masses, could the gage be taken up which not merely some cabinet ministers, but history itself had flung to us. The East End was the greatest homogenous working-class area accessible to the House of Commons by popular demonstrations. The creation of a woman's movement in that great abyss of poverty would be a call and a rallying cry to the rise of similar movements in all parts of the country."

The turn of the WSPU toward a minority of

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Ethel Cox, a fighter for women's suffrage, was arrested for breaking windows in London on October 11, 1913.

women was accompanied by the rejection of internal democracy. Some of the members had approached Christabel with the suggestion of writing a constitution and holding meetings where the members could choose a committee to govern them. Christabel was horrified. "The idea of diverting attention from the cause, to constitution making, conference holding, and committee electing struck me as incongruous . . . Why change the existing regime! Unity, harmony, enthusiasm, earnestness, and happiness prevailed in our ranks. No one was obliged to join the WSPU or to stay in it, if she did not so wish. No one need subscribe to its funds or share in its work, still less need anyone share in militancy, save of her own free will. 'Don't you trust the members?' I was asked. What I might well have said was: 'And I hope that they trust mother and me to lead them better than a committee!' After this response fourteen branches left the WSPU and formed their own organization. Eventually, Sylvia Pankhurst was expelled from the union.

The resulting organization was not very attractive to working women, and its acts seemed almost consciously designed to hinder their participation. Although demonstrations continued, they became elaborately staged affairs, which only members of the group could participate in. WSPU colors were chosen, and all persons marching in demonstrations were required to wear them. Huge banners and flags were made in union colors, and the cost and name of the donor were printed in the organization's paper *Votes for Women*. Marches were advertised so the public could turn out and see the display, but they were not expected or encouraged to participate. As time passed the leadership more and more consciously disassociated itself from working-class and radical movements.

However, these moves by no means reconciled the ruling class to women's demands, and the movement became increasingly isolated. Having undermined its chances of gaining extensive popular support, the only way the union could keep its cause alive was through courting publicity by extreme measures.

Although the resulting publicity brought a great deal of attention and some new members to the WSPU, there was a real disadvantage to it. Newspaper audiences tired of reading about the same tactics day after day. In order to hold public interest, the leaders were forced to devise new and ever more daring acts of individual defiance.

These acts provided great stories for the press, but they did not convince the government to extend the franchise to women. As militancy of

this kind increased, the government's response was to increase its legal harassment. By 1912 women were still without the vote, and the WSPU members were becoming increasingly frustrated. Christabel decided that the only way to win suffrage was to create a "crisis" that would force the government to grant the WSPU's demands. Christabel failed to realize that she had excluded the only women who could effectively do this. Her idea of a "crisis" was to organize a window-breaking and stone-throwing campaign in downtown London.

Instead of giving women the vote the government's response was to arrest every union leader it could get its hands on. The only person who managed to escape was Christabel, who fled to Paris and continued to direct the movement from there.

She felt greater violence was the answer and started working out the details of an arson campaign. Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, the union's treasurer, was horrified when she learned of this plan. She felt the window-smashing raid had already turned public opinion against them and further violence would only hurt the cause. Christabel's response to this was to toss Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence out of the WSPU.

In January 1913 the arson campaign began. For the next year and a half the union's members worked by night, planting bombs and starting fires in various homes and abandoned buildings throughout England. The WSPU became virtually an underground organization. Membership and support began to decline rapidly.

Christabel's advocacy of violent tactics had little to do with political radicalism. It was a reaction to the refusal of ruling-class male politicians to be swayed by the appeals of the WSPU's "influential" upper-class members.

This fact is illustrated by the complete about-face Emmeline and Christabel did at the outbreak of World War I. They abandoned suffrage work and began cooperating with the government, making anti-German and other war propaganda speeches urging people to support the war effort. Many members objected to this, but they were told they were unpatriotic. Eventually Mrs. Pankhurst announced that the WSPU was officially disbanded. It was never reorganized.

In 1918, at the end of the war, the vote was granted to women over the age of thirty and men over twenty-one. It was 1928, however, before women won equal suffrage.

After the Civil War the U.S. women's movement also went through a long period of conservatism, denying its early Black and working-class connections, pandering to racist and antiunion sentiment in hopes of winning friends in high places. From about the beginning of the century, however, a significant minority of the movement began to reject this conservatism.

The following account by a man who watched a suffrage demonstration in New York is a vivid example of the effect that the mass actions of women and their supporters had:

"It was Saturday afternoon, and the members had crowded behind the windows to witness the show. They were laughing and exchanging the kind of jokes you would expect. When the head of the procession came opposite them, they burst into laughing and as the procession swept past, laughed long and loud. But the women continued to pour by. The laughter began to weaken, became spasmodic. The parade went on and on. Finally, there was only the occasional sound of the clink of ice in the glasses. Hours passed. Then someone broke the silence. 'Well boys,' he said, 'I guess they mean it!'"

It was such actions that revitalized the flagging suffrage movement, continued the struggle during the war, and won equal suffrage for U.S. women in 1919—years before their English sisters—despite the determined opposition from business interests, the Catholic church, and the traditional leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties.



Continued from page 10

I wish to commend you on your excellent coverage. Your staff is outstanding. I especially wish to acknowledge and commend José G. Pérez and Miguel Pendás for the coverage of the Chicano movement. *M.R.*
San Jose, California

[In reply—The November 16-22 *In These Times* does include the article by Delfino Varela cited in the December 2 *Militant*. The article is on page 21.]

AFL complaints

The *Labor Journal* of Everett, Washington, newspaper of the AFL unions in the area, recently published a guest editorial by Bill Johnston, a local commentator who has occasionally advocated the formation of a labor party by the union movement. His guest editorial, however, is limited to a discussion of the "massive assault taking place on the unions at the present time." He urges them to fight back, but offers no suggestions as to how.

The sad fact is that the AFL-CIO has regressed to policies and positions not much different from those of the AFL prior to the rise of the CIO unions in the mid-1930s. The complaints and sometimes militant-sounding threats of labor officials don't alter this.

The Central Labor Council in both Seattle and Everett are dissatisfied with AFL-CIO lobbying at the federal level. (There isn't enough of it, and it isn't done well enough. Conclusion: George Meany needs to be replaced with a "better" lobbyist.)

In general, union officials here are aware that the union movement is under attack. They don't know what to do about it—except hope for a more "favorable climate" to the unions sometime soon.

H. S.
Seattle, Washington

Confidence in 'younger folks'

I cannot recall just how long it has been since I sent in my subscription—about three months ago. I felt a little ashamed to take advantage of the special offer (which I suppose was intended for new subscribers), but I have been on Social Security for ten years.

I am not able to take part in many activities due to my age—being seventy-five years old slows me up.

I am glad to see younger folks carrying on, because we will sure need a revolution in every respect. Sad as capitalism has been in my generation, I can see it is going to be worse in yours.

H.C.
Mason, Ohio

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if your name may be used or if you prefer that your initials be used instead.

Swing to right?

Year-end surveys by capitalist politicians and professional opinion molders found "a significant swing to the right" in U.S. political opinion in 1977.

One such finding rests on a recent Gallup poll that showed 47 percent of those surveyed described themselves as "right of center," 32 percent "left of center," and 10 percent "middle of the road."

This contrasts with a similar Gallup poll in 1964, when the Johnson administration announced its homefront "war on poverty" and launched its large-scale real war in Vietnam. At that time a poll found that 37 percent said they were liberals, 34 percent conservatives, and 29 percent had no opinion—an apparent 13 percent gain for political conservatives over the past thirteen years.

The new poll's results are subject to many interpretations and contradicted by other recent surveys.

This contradiction can be better explained by examining what the "new conservatism" is. Its indicators are said to be these: rejection of the costly and ineffective programs of the "Great Society;" the current furor over abortion; reaction against the Equal Rights Amendment; support for the case of Allan Bakke, who claims to be a victim of "reverse discrimination"; a perceived "groundswell" against the Panama Canal treaties; and, most significant of all, "the new chill in labor relations," a euphemism for the open attack by the employing class to curb, control, and eventually destroy the union movement.

This is nothing more than a partial list of reactionary campaigns conducted for many years by the John Birch Society and other "far right" groups. The difference now is that many of these unpopular campaigns have, during the past year, gained the open backing of the government, as well as of "respectable" employer organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers.

Capitalist politicians read these "signs" to their own advantage, seeking to represent the shifting needs of their masters in industry and finance. Sen. Gary Hart, the Colorado firebrand who managed the George McGovern campaign in 1972, says there is new "skep-

ticism about the old Rooseveltian solutions to social problems."

Sen. Howard Baker, who hopes to be the 1980 Republican presidential candidate, sees a "definite, measurable shift to the right that I and my colleagues must take account of."

None of this has anything to do with what the vast majority of people want or think. It is, however, a response to what the ruling class wants and is doing.

The ruling class is in trouble because capitalist economy on a world scale is in a new crisis of overproduction, and profits are threatened. The employers seek to retain their high profits by systematically reducing the standard of living of the working class.

They do this in many ways: by cutting services, tightening up on welfare, eliminating jobs, closing plants, speeding up production, holding down wages, inflating prices.

All this requires government help, approved by the Administration, endorsed by Congress, and sanctioned by the courts.

There was a rightward political shift in 1977—in government and in the ruling circles of this country.

The false propaganda that attributes this to "popular sentiment" is part of the coverup. It seeks to make it appear as if the Democratic and Republican politicians are just responding to the shifting moods of the majority of people who, in fact, are their victims.

There is a shift in popular opinion among working people. One expression of it is the political mood of the iron ore miners on the Mesabi range who just before Christmas ended the longest strike in the history of the steel industry, of the striking coal miners, and of the militant farmers who are demonstrating and striking for higher crop prices to pay off their mortgages to the bankers. There are no signs of conservatism here.

These are the signals of a new political awakening that will break the monopoly of the capitalist parties in government, heralding the formation of a labor party that will establish a workers government.

Women in Revolt

Diane Wang



Textbook case

The situation of women in education is—if you'll pardon the reference—a "textbook case" of the discrimination women face in all fields. A look at where women stand in education quickly refutes the argument that affirmative-action programs to upgrade the status of women and oppressed national minorities are "reverse discrimination." To bone up on the subject, consider these facts:

- The number of women attending college rose 100 percent between 1970 and 1975. The number of women who earned doctorate degrees increased 59 percent over that period. But that has not resulted in a similar increase of women on college and university faculties. Women are now 22.4 percent of faculties; in 1974-75 women were 22.5 percent.
- Of all full-time professors, only 7 percent are women; of instructors, 25 percent are women.
- In 1975-76 women faculty members earned \$3,096 less, on the average, than males.
- A study that same year of 18,000 administrators at more than 1,000 schools found that women were paid about 80 percent what men were paid for jobs with the same titles.

This is the situation *five years* after the federal government decreed that institutions of higher education must not discriminate against women!

Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Joseph Califano recently threatened to cut off funds to about a dozen colleges and universities that failed to promise affirmative-action programs for women.

But, as the plight of women in education shows so well, the agreements schools have made to secure their federal contracts have meant little. The promised affirmative-action programs have not been implemented. The Department of Health, Education and

Welfare has a backlog of more than 3,000 affirmative-action complaints against colleges and universities.

The lesson of this textbook situation is simple: Women have a big stake in defending and extending affirmative-action programs. We are certainly not going to achieve equality in education or in any other field without rigorously enforced programs.

In 1977 women lost several antidiscrimination lawsuits against the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Texas, Swarthmore College, and other schools.

That makes it all the more obvious that women need to join forces with Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Asian-Americans who are currently defending affirmative action against the lawsuit by Allan Bakke now before the Supreme Court. Bakke, a white, male engineer, has charged that the University of California's Davis Medical School rejected his application because of a special-admissions program for oppressed national minorities.

If the high court rules that special-admissions programs are "reverse discrimination," as Bakke claims, it will give the go-ahead to end affirmative-action programs for women in schools as well.

Affirmative action, like legalized abortion and congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, was a concession made to the militant and visible civil rights and women's struggles a few years ago. That same kind of movement is needed again today.

That's why women should mark April 15 on their calendars as one of the most important dates this spring for defending our rights. On April 15 the Coalition to Overturn the Bakke Decision is sponsoring a demonstration in Washington, D.C., to defend affirmative action. The full participation of the women's movement can be a big factor in making this action a success.

U.S. tour broadly sponsored

Thousands turn out to hear Hugo Blanco

By José G. Pérez

NEW YORK—The U.S. speaking tour of exiled Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco has been "a tremendous success," according to Mike Kelly, executive secretary of the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA).

USLA and Viewpoint Speakers Bureau (a division of Pathfinder Press, Blanco's publisher) are the national sponsors of the tour that enters its final phase this month.

According to Kelly, by the end of December, more than 12,000 people had attended meetings to hear Blanco on "Carter and Human Rights in Latin America: Myth versus Reality."

And, Kelly added, "millions more have heard his message through interviews on radio, television, and in newspapers, or through media reports of his meetings. In many cities, Spanish-language radio stations have broadcast his whole speech."

Newspapers that have covered Blanco's tour include the *Houston Post*, *Arizona Republic*, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, *Milwaukee Journal*, *Mexico City's Excelsior*, and New York's *El Diario-La Prensa*.

Kelly attributes the tour's success to three factors:

"First, the issue of human rights in Latin America is becoming more prominent." This is partly due, he said, to Carter's demagogic statements aimed at improving the U.S. government's image on the issue of repression.

"Second, Blanco is very well known among Latin Americans and people concerned with political affairs in that continent."

A leader of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organization, Blanco now lives in exile in Sweden. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, he led a land-reform movement among Quechua Indian peasants in Peru. For his political activities he was tried on trumped-up murder charges, imprisoned, and threatened with the death sentence.

It took an international protest campaign to get Peruvian authorities to spare his life. In 1970 the regime there was forced to grant him amnesty.

Since then Blanco has been illegally expelled from his own country and hounded from one Latin American country to another for his political ideas.



Blanco at University of Wisconsin in Madison. Large crowds have packed his meetings all over the country.

The third reason for the tour's success, Kelly said, is that a broad range of groups have participated in organizing meetings for Blanco.

Among those who have cosponsored meetings for Blanco are Black and Chicano student groups; chapters of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization Amnesty International; Latin American, Spanish, and history departments of universities; religious groups; Latin American defense committees; organizations such as the Raza Unida parties, American Indian Movement, Young Socialist Alliance, and Socialist Workers Party.

In mid-December the *Militant* interviewed Blanco in New York about his impressions of the tour so far. He said he's been especially surprised at the diversity of meetings that were organized for him.

Blanco cited the New York tour he had just completed as an example. In addition to speaking on several college campuses, he had a meeting at Casa de las Americas, a Latin American cultural center, that was cosponsored by Derechos Humanos, a Dominican defense committee.

Another meeting took place at the Ethical Culture Society offices with Chilean refugees. "We had a long discussion on the lessons of the Chilean experience, especially since I, too, am in a way a Chilean refugee," Blanco said. Blanco was living in Chile when the 1973 coup took place.

He had to flee the country to escape the junta's death squads.

Still a third evening meeting in New York was jointly sponsored by USLA and the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI) around the theme of "The Politics of Torture." Speakers were Blanco, Iranian poet and former political prisoner Reza Baraheni, and USLA chairperson Dore Ashton.

Blanco remarked on the warm reception given him everywhere by Chicano, *mexicano*, and Native American activists.

He received a standing ovation when he spoke at the National Chicano/Latino Conference on Immigration and

Public Policy held in San Antonio October 28-30. He also gave greetings to a statewide meeting of the Texas Raza Unida Party held in Austin December 10, and his meetings throughout the Southwest drew a high proportion of Chicanos.

He spoke at a national conference of Indian activists hosted by the American Indian Movement, the International Indian Treaty Council, and the Federation of Survival Schools. He also met with members of the Albuquerque-based National Indian Youth Council.

"There are reasons for the solidarity that has been expressed," Blanco told me. "The struggle of Indians and Chicanos here in this country to preserve their own languages and cultures and for better economic conditions is the same struggle we participated in in Peru."

Blanco's tour resumes January 11. Following is the schedule for the rest of the tour:

January 11-16	Puerto Rico
January 17-18	Miami
January 19-20	Atlanta
January 21-23	Chicago
January 24	Bloomington, Ind.
January 25	Cleveland
January 26	Pittsburgh
January 28-30	Washington, D.C. and Baltimore
January 31	Newark

For more information contact: U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, New York 10003.

'Land or Death' back in print

Hugo Blanco's book, 'Land or Death: the Peasant Struggle in Peru' is now back in print, reports Doug Jenness, managing editor of Pathfinder Press.

Jenness explained that before Blanco began his U.S. speaking tour in October, Pathfinder had 1,000 copies of the paperback edition and a few hundred of the hardback edition in stock. After a few weeks of Blanco's tour, these stocks had been completely depleted. Reports from Pathfinder's distributors indicated

continuing high demand for the book.

This third printing brings the total number of English-language copies of 'Land or Death' to more than 12,000. Pathfinder also distributes a Spanish-language version of 'Land or Death' as well as two books coauthored by Blanco, 'Disaster in Chile' and 'Chile's Days of Terror.'

'Land or Death' is available in paperback at \$3.45 or \$12 for the cloth edition from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York, 10014.

Free speech the real target

Why 'Arizona Republican' slanders Blanco

Although Peruvian Trotskyist Hugo Blanco has been warmly received by thousands of people at his meetings and many news media representatives, this response has not been unanimous.

The December 4 issue of the *Arizona Republican* headlined its lead editorial "A Terrorist in Tempe." The editorial—appearing after Blanco spoke at Arizona State University—attacks him as "a Peruvian terrorist who has been convicted of leading a raid in which three Peruvian policemen were killed."

The editorial also attacks the recently enacted McGovern amendment which, in the *Republican's* view, is to blame for "dangerous kooks" like Blanco getting U.S. visas.

The editorial links Blanco's case to that of Wilfred Burchett, foreign correspondent for the *Guardian*, a Maoist-leaning weekly. When Burchett toured the U.S. last fall, a reactionary smear campaign against him was whipped up in the columns of newspapers like the *New York Post*.

The *Republican* editorial echoes these attacks, calling Burchett a writer

"for whom communist governments have always rolled out the red carpet." It leaves no doubt that political ideas—not "terrorists"—are the editors' real target.

The *Republican* editorial was followed up the next day with a letter to the editor by professional witch-hunter Phillip Abbott Luce. Protesting Blanco's speaking appearance, Luce ends his letter, "I wonder when the taxpayers will begin to question the use of state universities for the promulgation of violence by admitted murderers."

There is nothing new to the slanders that Hugo Blanco is a "terrorist" and "murderer." This was the pretext used by the U.S. government during the two-and-one-half years it refused to grant Blanco a visa to visit this country.

A detailed refutation of these charges was made in a statement by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners after they were first raised.

Blanco was convicted on two charges stemming from his political

activities in Peru in the early 1960s: organizing peasant unions and killing two police officers. As he explained at his trial, "in all senses and at all times, we had acted only in self-defense. . . ."

The military, which acted as judge, jury, and prosecutor at Blanco's trial, simply ignored the evidence showing he was innocent of wrongdoing and sentenced him to prison. After several years of protests, Blanco won an amnesty.

The *Republican* and Luce resurrect these discredited slanders to bolster the idea that the U.S. government's thought-control visa policies should be strengthened. The target of their attack isn't only Blanco's right to speak in this country, but the right of the American people to hear all points of view.

The McGovern amendment, far from repealing the thought-control provisions of immigration law, is simply a congressional admonishment to the State Department. It urges that one provision be enforced more flexibly to

spare the Carter administration unnecessary embarrassment on the human rights front.

The amendment was designed to placate protests around cases such as Blanco's, where prominent individuals had been barred from the vaunted U.S. "marketplace of ideas."

But in Blanco's case, even after the McGovern amendment went into effect, the State Department looked for ways to keep him out. He was reclassified as ineligible under a section of immigration law not covered by the amendment, and a final decision to admit him wasn't made until after numerous protests were sent to the government.

The real threat to the democratic rights of the American people doesn't come from people like Blanco and Burchett, who come to this country to write or lecture. Rather, it comes from the government and right-wingers like the editors of the *Republican*, who are trying to deny the American people the right to consider all viewpoints.

—J.G.P.

Women as coal miners

'I couldn't see living on a secretary's pay'



DONNA RATULOWSKI

Militant

By Martha Hill

WAYNESBURG, Pa.—Donna Ratulowski is singled out by Duquesne Light Company as a model employee at their Warwick Number Three coal mine near here. The company magazine has featured photographs of Ratulowski and two other women miners who work with her.

"She's the best buggy operator in the mine," admits the mine superintendent.

But if the company had had its way, Ratulowski explained in a recent interview with the *Militant*, neither she nor any other woman would be working for Duquesne Light.

The company finally hired the three women to avoid the public embarrassment of a court case they were sure to lose.

"I first applied in January 1975," says Ratulowski. Her divorce had left her as the sole support of her son. She was working as a secretary but couldn't get along on the low wages. So she decided to become a miner.

"I knew some of the guys at the mine, and I knew they didn't have any women there. My car wasn't working, and I had to bum rides to the mine and back. But I kept going every two weeks. I wanted to let them know just how serious I was about getting the job."

She thought it was just a matter of time before she would get a job. "I knew that the big mines were hiring a few women."

The mine superintendent led Ratulowski to believe that she would be called in when there were openings. But in September 1975 Donna heard the company had hired some men who had applied after she had. She wasn't even called.

"I blew up," she recalls. "I went down to the mine the next day, and I said to the superintendent, 'You hired some guys and didn't hire me. I feel I can do just as good as any of the guys.' Before I left, I told him 'You will hire me. You will!'"

Didn't know how to sue

"I phoned all over trying to find out how you file a sex discrimination suit. I knew you could do it, because I had read in the papers about a woman here, Rosie Lane. She filed against the Buckeye Mine, took them to court, and won."

Ratulowski eventually learned she had to go all the way to Pittsburgh—about fifty miles north of here—and file with the Human Rights Commission.

"They told me that it wasn't easy to fight a case, that the company would fight hard. They asked me if I was sure I wanted to go ahead with it."

"I didn't want to make waves. But I wanted the job. I couldn't see living on a secretary's pay or getting food stamps and relief. I've been through all that. And I won't go back to it."

She filed her discrimination suit on September 23, 1975. "Once the suit was filed, the company couldn't hire

anyone until it proved why it wasn't discriminating against me."

In January 1976, one full year after Ratulowski applied, the company broke down and hired her. She withdrew the case.

"But they're still against women," she adds. "They would like to hire a couple of women and forget about it for six months. Out of 500 to 600 workers there, there are still only 3 women."

That policy also applies to Blacks. Ratulowski says that only four Blacks—one of whom is a woman—work at the mine.

Having been a miner for nearly two years now, she believes she is "accepted by most of the guys."

"Oh, I'm still on trial because I'm a woman. I guess I always will be. The bosses keep a pretty close eye on me."

'Fraternizing'

"The other day I was on the next-to-last haul. I stopped for one second to talk to the roof bolter, and the section boss came back and yelled at me for 'fraternizing.' Yeah, when the men talk it's just talking, but with me it's fraternizing."

She describes the harassment the women are subjected to with an example of another woman hired at the same time that she was. "Evelyn got every shit job. They had her carrying cement blocks all day for a while. She couldn't take it. She said she cried every day. Finally she quit. Ratulowski's confidence in herself and her sense of humor has helped with all the ribbing she has to take."

"Once a state mine inspector told me that I should be somewhere else—not in the mines," she recalls. "I said, 'Hey, if you guys paid your secretaries decent, I'd be glad to be a secretary.'"

"But they don't. I've never worked as a secretary for a company that paid you what you're worth. They might phone you up in the middle of the night for advice, but they never think of paying you for overtime."

They think it's okay to have you work like that for \$2.50 an hour. Even those lawyers who handle sex discrimination suits treat their secretaries like that."

She complains mildly of the dirt of her job, of the monotony and exhaustion. But she is proud of her work as a "buggy boy."

"We haul the coal from the continuous miner at the face to the conveyor belt. If you're lucky you haul coal all shift. But if they have to service the miner [machine] or if the belt breaks down, you have to do other things, like shovel coal around the feeder."

"We haul a lot of supplies too, roof bolts, oil, rock dust. Basically, if there's anything that has to get done, we buggy boys have to do it."

Her buggy is about thirty feet long and fourteen feet wide. The mine entries are close to eighteen feet wide. "So you have to be careful as you come around those corners." She checks her route thoroughly before she begins.

She considers herself very careful on

the job. "Most of the guys work as safe as they can." But the company has little regard for the miners' safety or health.

Safety

Recently, she explains, "we were eating dust off the belt. The boss had turned off the water that keeps the dust down because the belt was slipping. It was slowing down production, so he just turned the water off. We complained about the dust, but he just shrugged it off."

"But if the state inspector comes in—that's a different story. They turn on the water for him, all right."

In the area where Ratulowski works there are a lot of roof falls, because it has a bad top. "It's twelve to fifteen feet high there, so the falls are really dangerous."

"Thank goodness I have a metal canopy on my buggy. Once a big piece of slate fell down right on top of me." She was saved only by that canopy.

Ratulowski's family has been slow to accept her job as a coal miner. At first, her mother was upset. But for her last birthday, her mother made her a ceramic ash tray with a miner's hat, boots, and pail on it. "Her way of showing acceptance, I guess," Ratulowski says.

"I lost most of my old friends when I went into the mines. We didn't have the same interests anymore."

"My grandmother—well, you can't even talk to her about mining." She believes her grandmother reflects

many of the media-fostered prejudices against miners and the right to strike for their demands.

"My grandmother asks, 'How can you do this?'—as if we had no right to strike at all."

In the next United Mine Workers contract Ratulowski is particularly concerned with medical benefits and a cost-of-living raise. She has been saving for months and is prepared for a long strike.

"A TV reporter asked a guy at the mine if he didn't think it 'un-American' to go on strike," she relates with a smile. "He answered, 'Well, the oil companies sure didn't think it un-American to up their prices.'"

More women miners

She is confident that the number of women miners will increase. "I think there are more and more women in this area who are thinking of becoming coal miners."

"The problem is the companies. They are reluctant to hire women, and nobody is policing them. They might hire just a token woman or two. Women still have to push to get jobs in the mines."

Ratulowski is raising her eight-year-old son Stephen to think of his coal-mining mother as "somebody to be proud of."

Stephen seems to have no problem accepting what Duquesne Light finds so hard to swallow: Donna Ratulowski, twenty-seven years old, five feet tall, 100 pounds, and a woman, is in the mines to stay.

Coalfield 'justice'

By Nancy Cole

U.S. District Judge H. David Hermansdorfer has shown once again he can be a friend to both federal agencies and the coal companies despite the continuing squabble with the government over his efforts to suppress a report on the 1976 Scotia mine disaster.

Early last month, Hermansdorfer ruled against the lone survivor and the families of twenty-five of the thirty-eight miners killed in the December 30, 1970, mine explosion in Hyden, Kentucky. They had filed a \$6.8 million suit against the Bureau of Mines, now the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA), charging the bureau failed to inspect the mine as required by law. This meant federal inspectors did not discover the excessive accumulations of coal dust that caused the blast.

The judge pooh-poohed their claims, saying the excessive coal dust was only circumstantial evidence. And besides, he whined, how was the Bureau of Mines to know that "by the failure to complete the four mandatory inspections required

by the act, the mine operators would have abandoned good mining practices and employed the inexcusable practices described in the evidence?"

He concluded it was the coal operators' primary responsibility to observe proper coal dust levels.

It's safe for him to say that, of course, because under Kentucky law employers who pay into the workmen's compensation fund are exempt from damage suits.

Widows of miners killed in the Scotia explosions tried to sue the Blue Diamond Coal Company, contending it was a separate company from the Scotia Coal Company even though Blue Diamond advised Scotia on mine safety. Hermansdorfer quickly came to the rescue and threw the widows' case out of court.

As he was pondering this brand of coalfield justice, the judge heeded Blue Diamond's request and suppressed a MESA study on the Scotia disaster. Months after he dismissed the widows' suit, Hermansdorfer still insists on banning the report, which pins blame for the twenty-six deaths on Blue Diamond.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN 1889-1977

Charlie Chaplin died December 25 at the age of eighty-eight. Between 1914 and 1967 Chaplin—as actor, writer, and director—made more than eighty films. Today this work is being richly praised in the capitalist media.

Almost ignored in these appreciations is an aspect of his artistic career vaguely dismissed by 'New York Times' obituary writer Alden Whitman as "some notoriety" based on his "political misadventures."

The U.S. government sent Chaplin into forced exile during the McCarthyite witch-hunt of the 1950s.

Chaplin, a British national, was denied a reentry permit after he left for a European vacation in 1952.

As a front-page article in the September 29, 1952, 'Militant' explained:

"A spokesman for (Attorney General) McGranery . . . told reporters that the accusation against Chaplin would be advocating overthrow of the government, and added, 'in my opinion we have a pretty good case.'"

"Chaplin, one of the few geniuses that the film industry has produced, has long been a target of bigots and witch hunters. . . . His last film shown in this country, 'Monsieur Verdoux,' angered the Roman Catholic hierarchy, whose campaign against it forced its withdrawal from showing in the U.S."

"In addition to the social satire in most of his films, Chaplin was among those artists who hailed the Russian Revolution in its early days under Lenin and Trotsky. Since then he has from time to time been suspected of vague sym-

pathy with liberal movements and has expressed antiwar sentiments. Thus in 1947 he told the House Un-American Activities witch hunters: 'I am not a Communist. I am a peace-monger.'"

Chaplin was told he could not return to the United States unless he proved his "moral worth." The artist refused to degrade himself in this manner, choosing instead to live out the rest of his life in Europe.

Chaplin did return briefly in 1972, however. It was not to prove himself, but to taste approval—a special Oscar award and a tribute from New York's cultural establishment.

Fortunately, the verdict of history has reversed the reactionary "guardians of the border" who sought to exclude Chaplin and his work from this country. (Although Chaplin's bitter commentary on McCarthyite hysteria, 'A King in New York,' was not shown here until 1973!)

Unfortunately, the border cops of ideas and people still have not been retired.

Chaplin's conquest of the hearts and minds of millions, despite the official doorkeepers who tried to keep him out of this country, stands as a tribute to the power of his art.

We are reprinting here as a further tribute excerpts from "The Lynching of 'Monsieur Verdoux'" by James P. Cannon, originally published in the May 10, 1947, 'Militant.'

Cannon was the founder and central leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1974. This review is taken from his book, 'Notebook of an Agitator' (Pathfinder Press, 1973).

'The Lynching of Monsieur Verdoux'

By James P. Cannon

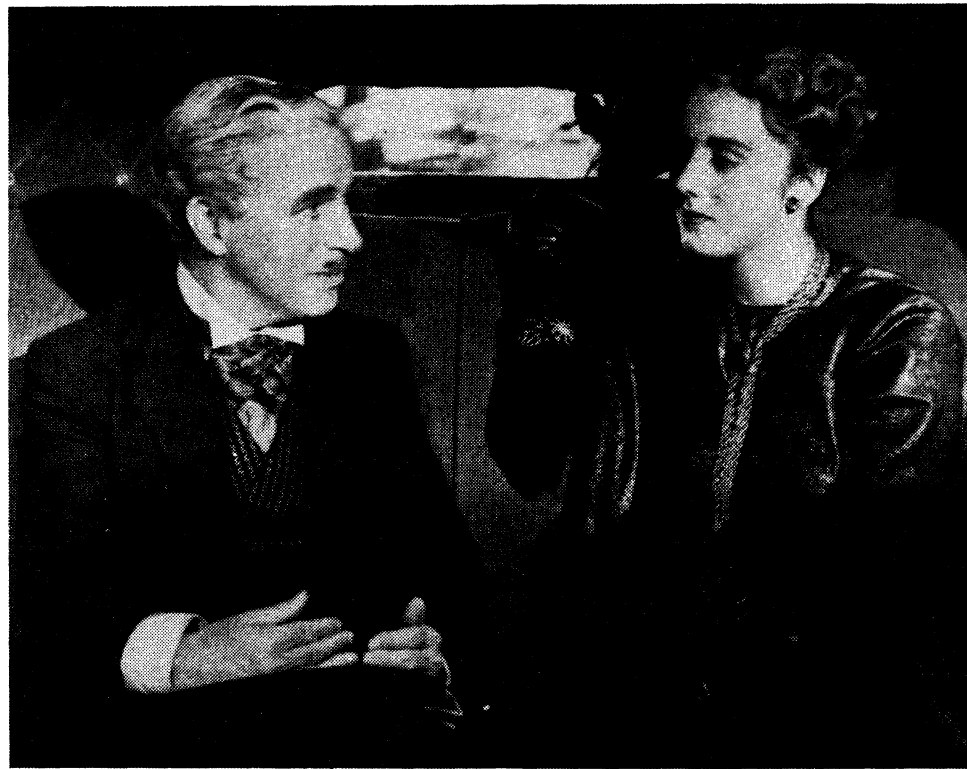
About a year ago I made a firm resolution to boycott all movies unless the picture has a horse for the hero.

Dominated by this mood, I was fully prepared to remain indifferent even to the announcement of a new movie by Chaplin, until I noticed the hatchet job most of the critics of the big press were doing on the picture. With almost one voice they denounced Chaplin for introducing social criticism—and deadly serious social criticism at that—into a medium which has become almost universally dedicated the prettification and falsification of life, and maintained that he wasn't even funny any more.

In *Monsieur Verdoux* the supreme master of the screen discards the familiar role of the little tramp with the

baggy pants and flopping shoes to play the part of a suavely mannered, impeccably dressed sophisticate. Monsieur Verdoux had been a bank clerk for 25 years or so, and was ruthlessly dismissed from his position when the depression came. He had to make a living somehow, so he went into business for himself—the business of marrying women for their money and then disposing of them. He does it all to support his family to which he is deeply and tenderly attached.

It is this theme of the picture, this merciless satire on business in general, and the business of war in particular, that has roused up so much antagonism from those who do not want the truth to be told to the people. Deprecation of war and its mass killing is deemed to be out of season by the powers that be. The bland insistence of



Charlie Chaplin in 'Monsieur Verdoux'

Monsieur Verdoux that he is only doing on a small scale what others do on a big scale and are acclaimed as heroes for, has set the subservient critics after him like bloodhounds on the trail.

And the justification he gives for his crimes—that he has a dependent family—that is too much like the plea offered in self-defense by all social criminals in our decadent society to be accepted as a joke. It is the truth that hurts. I personally know a man who betrayed his socialist principles and entered the service of the war-propaganda machine, and then excused his action on the ground that he had a wife and child to support.

I don't doubt that he shrugged his shoulders, perhaps a bit regretfully, when the bomb fell on Hiroshima and destroyed a whole city-full of families who also had a right to live and to be supported. That is what Monsieur Verdoux did when the police inspector read him the list of a dozen or so women whom he had done away with in the line of business. "After all, one must make a living." Killing is a recognized business in the world as it is organized today.

From the beginning of the picture up to its supremely tragic denouement, this macabre thesis is sustained. How, then, could comedy be introduced without disintegrating the whole structure into farce? The answer is Chaplin. The comedy in this picture is unsurpassed, even in the movies of the Chaplin of old. But the comedy never runs away with the picture. The somber theme dominates the comedy from beginning to end.

The best comedy parts are those which depict the numerous and always unsuccessful attempts of Monsieur Verdoux to liquidate one of his numerous wives, a dizzy dame with a raucous, rowdy laugh and a lot of money she had won in a lottery. She simply couldn't be liquidated. Luck was with her every time. The unexpected always happened. This part is played by Martha Raye, and she is terrific. The scene where Chaplin tries to poison her, and the wine glasses get accidentally switched around, and he thinks he has poisoned himself instead, is funny beyond imagining.

From there the hilarious comedy fades out like a dying echo and the tragic drama mounts in power and suspense to the final catastrophe. There is the stockmarket crash in which all the money Monsieur Verdoux had accumulated in the course of his business is wiped out overnight. Through mortgage foreclosure, he loses

the home which he had provided for his family. He loses the family. He is apprehended by the police, tried, convicted and executed.

But never once does Monsieur Verdoux step out of character, never does he bend an inch to comply with the Hollywood formula. In court after his conviction he admits his crimes but denies his guilt. "All business is ruthless. I only did on a small scale what others do on a big scale." Then he receives his death sentence and, with ominous reference to the prospect of an atomic war, ironically bids adieu with the words: "I will be seeing you all very soon."

In the last scene of all, in the death cell awaiting the end, Monsieur Verdoux remains true to himself. The inevitable priest comes to hear his confession and administer spiritual consolation. It is a vain errand. There was no repentant sinner waiting for him. Verdoux rises from his cot to meet the priest with the sprightly manner of a welcoming master of ceremonies. "Father, what can I do for you?"

He is taken aback; no Hollywood priest was ever received that way before.

"I want you to make peace with your God."

"I am at peace with God. My trouble is with my fellow men."

The priest is obviously losing ground, but he tries again.

"May God have mercy on your soul."

"He ought to. It belongs to Him."

After that, there was nothing left for the priest but to start praying aloud in Latin, which he promptly proceeded to do, as the executional squad solemnly surrounded Monsieur Verdoux and marched him, the small-time, unsuccessful murderer, to his doom.

The picture had to end on a note of defeat and despair which was implicitly foreshadowed from the beginning. It is not a call to arms, but only a protest and a warning. The lesson is negative but, for all that, powerful in its indictment of contemporary society.

Monsieur Verdoux is dead, but in my opinion, his picture will live; the vindictive and mendacious critics will not succeed in "killing" it. Perhaps they have condemned it to a slow start by their brutal lynching bee. But the truth about *Monsieur Verdoux* will be advertised by word of mouth, and it will make its way. It is a great picture and a brave one, too, hurled in the face of the Truman Doctrine and all the war-mongering. The people will receive it gladly, not only in America, but all over the world.

Canadian rulers begin 1978 in grim mood

By Bret Smiley
and John Riddell
From Intercontinental Press
"Woe Canada."

That's the mood of Canada's capitalist rulers today, as expressed by an editorial headline December 15 in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

The editorial summarizes statistics that portray an economy in shambles.

Even more ominous is the struggle for Québec independence, which puts in question the survival of the Canadian state in its present form.

The Parti Québécois (PQ) took office in Québec in November 1976—a bourgeois-nationalist party pledged to achieve Québec's sovereignty by breaking from Canada's federal state.

Canadian politics in 1977 were dominated by the massive propaganda war between the PQ government and the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie.

The PQ government made few moves to challenge the federal state; it worked in 1977 to prepare a national referendum on Québec's relation with Canada, currently slated for 1979.

Anti-Québec drive

But the Canadian bourgeoisie took fright, not so much of the PQ as the militant nationalist working class that thrust it into office. They launched a massive campaign against Québec. Their "Canadian unity" propaganda drive in English Canada aimed to prepare public opinion for future economic, political, and quite conceivably military intervention against Québec.

Inside Québec, the Parti Québécois victory had contradictory effects. Nationalist sentiment received new impetus; millions now saw that independence could be realized. But it also generated a "wait-and-see" attitude among the working masses, and a gap in new mass actions.

There is no mass workers party in Québec, and the trade-union bureaucracy has been in tacit alliance with the PQ for some years. It utilized workers' illusions in the Parti Québécois to initiate a policy of more open class collaboration.

The PQ's policies have been blatantly procapitalist. But only after a year, on December 16, did labor in

Québec organize an antigovernment action—against a supposed "antiscab" law that seriously restricts union rights.

Naive euphoria about the Parti Québécois is beginning to wear off.

A marked decline in Canada's economy in 1977 reduced Ottawa's room to maneuver—particularly in terms of economic concessions—in its battle against Québec independence.

The Canadian dollar acted as an economic barometer. It fell 10% relative to the U.S. dollar, and as much as 30% relative to other imperialist currencies.

Although two years of wage controls have sharply cut back wage increases, this has not visibly improved the competitive position of Canadian big business. Inflation is accelerating, and is now officially estimated at 9.1% a year—close to the peak before wage controls.

Unemployment

Rising unemployment reflects the near-stagnation of the economy. The government estimates that 8.4% of the work force are jobless. The actual number of unemployed, as measured by Ottawa's own private calculations, is much higher—well over a million.

This situation demands a continuation of the assault on workers' living standards—but that may well provoke a new wave of labor militancy, as well as reinforce independentist sentiment in Québec.

Canadian labor lost ground before this assault in 1977.

After the success of the October 1976 mobilization against wage controls, the leadership of the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) turned away from mass actions, and spent almost a year trying to negotiate a British-style "social contract" with the federal government.

Stymied by their failure to obtain any meaningful concessions, the CLC brass finally called off negotiations in August.

The CLC's course led to disaster. The union's fighting power had been badly hit by wage controls and massive unemployment. The volume of strikes in the first nine months of 1977 was only 30% of the level of January-September 1976. Layoffs reduced the



Canadian rulers fear militant independence movement of Québec workers, even though it is still under the leadership of the capitalist Parti Québécois.

membership of industrial unions by 10%. Wage increases were cut to one-third their previous level. The New Democratic Party, a mass workers party in English Canada linked to the unions, also suffered significant setbacks in elections in Ontario and Manitoba.

Labor leaders questioned

But the impact of labor's crisis is beginning to show. Recent union conventions reveal a wider questioning of the leadership's policies.

The "social contract" proposed by the CLC, which it termed "tripartism," has been debated and voted down by several major labor conventions, including those of the British Columbia and Saskatchewan labor federations, and of the country's largest union, the

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

And labor and NDP conventions have seen the beginning of a real debate on Québec. CLC and NDP leaders were quick to enlist as camp followers of Trudeau's "Canadian unity" campaign. But all the unions mentioned above have passed resolutions affirming Québec's right to self-determination, as has Canada's strongest industrial union, the Steelworkers.

Most of these resolutions also affirmed support for "Canadian unity," but the Postal Workers, CUPE, and the Saskatchewan Labor Federation took an unambiguous stand for self-determination.

Federal police scandal

The atmosphere of political crisis was sharpened in 1977 by a new factor: the outbreak of the scandal over Canada's federal "security" police.

A vast surveillance operation was revealed, directed against the trade unions, the NDP, the Parti Québécois, and various left-wing organizations. Police were shown to have routinely opened mail, conducted break-ins and stolen political files.

Hard-pressed to justify these activities, Prime Minister Trudeau cited on one occasion the value of obtaining membership lists of the Trotskyist organization. And in two particularly notorious cases, where police infiltrated the supposedly respectable New Democratic Party, they explained that their goal was to track down Trotskyists.

The Trotskyist movement in Canada and Québec remains small. But it gave some indication in 1977 why federal police view it with apprehension.

Supporters of the Fourth International, previously divided into three groups, fused in August to form a unified section of the Fourth International in the Canadian state, the Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire. The fusion has already accelerated activity and recruitment by Fourth Internationalists across the country.

Revolutionary Marxists have bright prospects in the period of intensive political crisis now opening in Canada and Québec.

Trudeau threatens Quebec with military force

By Nancy Cole

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau opened the new year with the most ominous threat so far in the government drive against Québec independence.

Trudeau pledged to ignore the desires of the Québécois people and to use military action if it is needed to block moves toward independence.

"I'm not going to be shy about using the sword if something illegal is attempted in the Province of Québec," he said in a taped interview broadcast throughout Canada and Québec January 1.

Asked what he would do if the referendum planned by the Parti Québécois in 1979 was to result in a vote for independence and subsequent action was taken to assert Québec's national sovereignty, Trudeau said:

"My answer is quite easy because I've given it already once before by action in 1970."

In October 1970, after the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) claimed credit for the kidnapping of a British diplomat and the Québec minister of labor (the minister was later killed), Trudeau dug up the 1939 war mea-

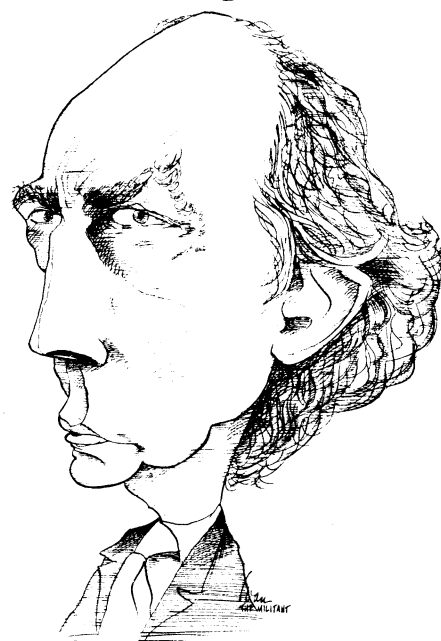
sures act to justify a virtual dictatorship in the French-speaking province.

Civil liberties were abolished, troops marched in, and hundreds were arrested and held with no access to attorneys. Many of those jailed, including leading Trotskyists, were on record in opposition to individual terrorism such as that practiced by the FLQ.

Like the U.S. capitalist class, the Canadian rulers like to portray their government as the beacon for democracy. But when there's a chance an oppressed people might democratically decide on a course contrary to the interests of capitalism, democratic rights are quickly tossed aside.

"There cannot be any unilateral declaration of independence" under the Canadian constitution, Trudeau said in his New Year interview. "If ever Quebecers by an overwhelming margin decide they no longer want to be a part of this country, somebody will have to sit down and negotiate with them and it won't be me."

So since there's no "legal" way for Québec to declare itself sovereign,



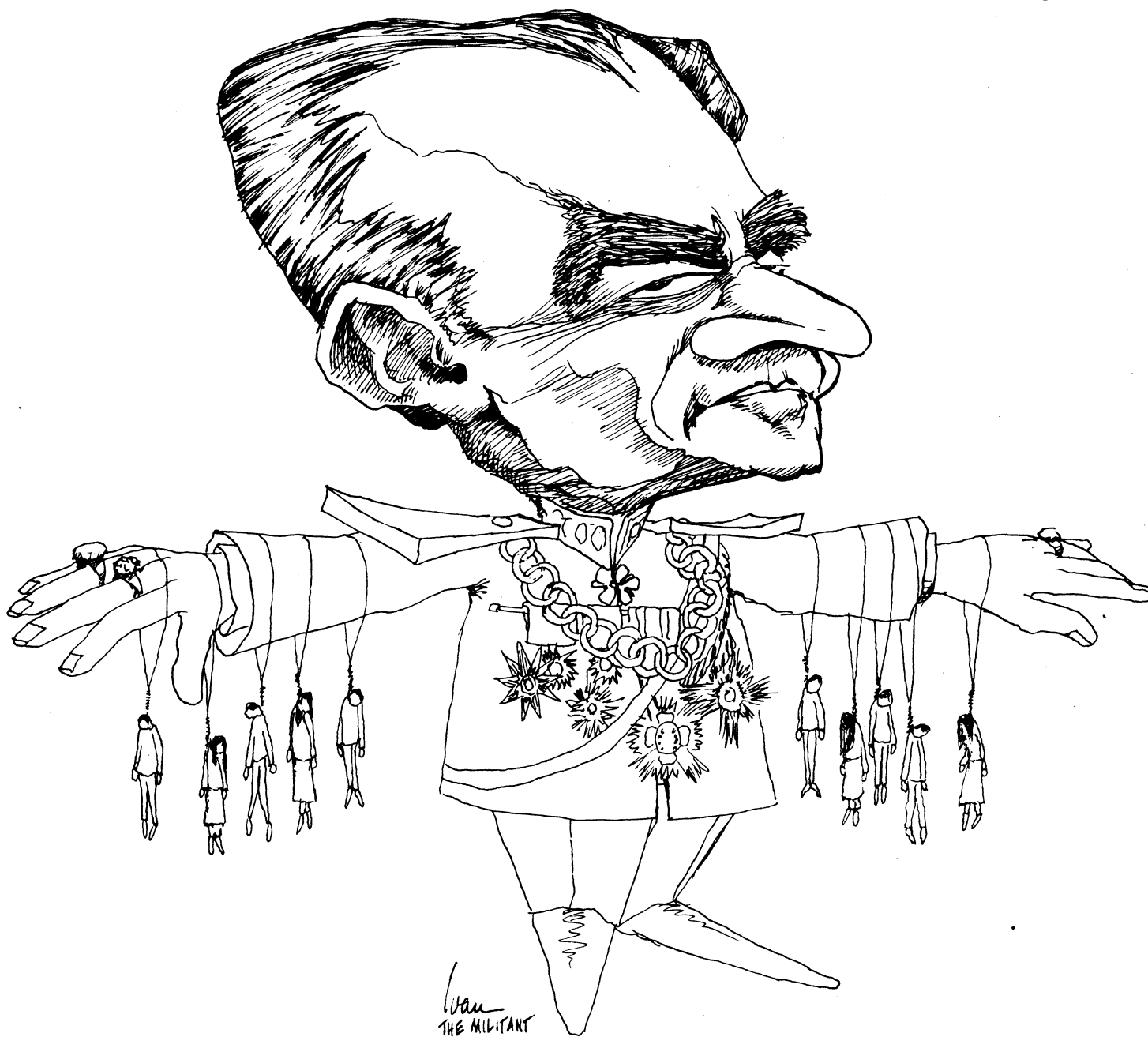
TRUDEAU: ready to use the sword

any action toward independence would be "illegal."

And in the case of any such "law-breaking," Trudeau warns, "obviously we will have to take the kind of action that we took in 1970 when the law was broken."

The struggle for democratic rights in Iran

Interview with an Iranian Trotskyist



THE SHAH: Royal butcher is finding that old methods of repression no longer work

The following interview was given to the 'Militant' by an Iranian Trotskyist leader in December 1977.

Question. In mid-November there were reports of thousands of people in Tehran openly attending meetings and demanding democratic rights in defiance of the shah's notoriously repressive police apparatus. Doesn't this reflect an important shift in the political situation in Iran?

Answer. Yes. It represents a decisive shift in the situation in Iran. What is different now is that there is not just the repression of the government—there is also a wide response and protest against this repression.

The meetings, according to the reports we have received, were very large—10,000; 15,000; 20,000—and they were not just limited to the capital city, Tehran. They are going on in all the major cities.

Even the controlled Iranian press has had to report this, although in a distorted way. Students especially are gathering in the universities and in

their living quarters and discussing ways and means of opposing the regime's repression.

The center of this movement is the intellectual opposition that has formed in Iran. For more than eight or nine months intellectuals have been writing letters to the government independently, protesting different aspects of the repression inside Iran. This process led to the reestablishment of the Writers Association. Despite the government's refusal to allow it to function legally, the Writers Association organized meetings that drew tens of thousands of people.

Q. Has it been mostly intellectuals and students at these meetings, or have the workers begun to get involved?

Students take the lead

A. Reports in different areas indicate that some workers have joined in. But in a general way the workers have not joined the movement against repression, although there are a lot of economic strikes—demands for higher

wages, better safety conditions in the factories, and so forth.

But the base of the movement is on the campuses. And this movement is quite different from the student movement as it has existed over the past decade. You had a lot of student strikes, and so forth, but this is the first clear, generalized movement of the students against repression, coming out with a clear line for the freedom of political prisoners, an end to torture, literary freedom, academic freedom, and removing the special military units from the universities. This movement has the support of the majority of the students, and it is something new.

There are reports from Iranians traveling abroad that in some districts there are meetings organized on the factory level by workers to discuss the events that are taking place in the streets, but in general there is no worker participation.

Q. We have heard about a great many arrests and strong repression against these meetings. Have the open

meetings continued, or have they been driven underground?

A. It is too early to say what stage things are at right now. The meetings are still taking place, but more are now outside of Tehran, in other cities around the country.

The basic demands that gave rise to this movement have not been met yet. These were the demands to allow the Writers Association to organize freely, to allow it a headquarters and a literary magazine free of censorship, and to allow it to hold the meeting of writers that was suppressed by the police at the beginning of the current upsurge.

So, the protests have continued for more than two weeks. The government has sent in plainclothes police to beat the protesters and to break up the meetings. But when a protest is dispersed in one area, the meeting is reconvened someplace else. So, it is too early to say that the protests have been driven underground, although within this wave of protest there is a lot of underground work and agitation. That is natural under such a repressive regime.

Q. Why do you think these protests broke out at this particular time?

Mood of dissatisfaction

A. Well, the background of this whole thing is that since 1973, when the oil prices went up, the government has been carrying out a big propaganda campaign about how semicolonial Iran is going to overtake imperialist countries like Germany and Japan in industrialization and in other areas.

This encouraged high expectations among ordinary people. But none of the government's plans got underway, and none of the expectations raised by it were met. So a mood of general dissatisfaction began to spread throughout the country. Ordinary citizens began talking about government policies and what was wrong with them. At the same time, corruption encouraged by the inflow of oil money was reaching new heights.

In this situation, the government started a new campaign of repression. It banned the two official parties that it had set up itself; it banned 90 percent of the press; and the shah said that anybody who didn't like this could go to prison or get out of the country.

Two writers were tried and executed and the number of political prisoners rose to 100,000. And all of this took place with hardly any visible resistance inside Iran.

But as I said before, the intellectuals and the student movement began stirring again, and general dissatisfaction was still there. The shah's visit to the United States [in November] became the thing that focused public attention and pushed the process forward.

Everybody began to discuss what would happen when the shah went to the United States. People began raising their voices about human rights, censorship, and so forth—didn't Carter say he was for human rights? People were expecting that the issue of human rights would be raised and would be discussed thoroughly. Of course, nothing like that happened.

But a mood of protest began stirring in all corners, inside Iran and among Iranians outside of Iran. Meetings of Iranian students on U.S. campuses that used to draw twenty students now drew 100 or 150. They wanted to discuss how to protest the shah's visit.

The same thing happened in Iran. No sooner was the shah on his plane to the United States, than all kinds of meetings were taking place. Out of these meetings at Iranian universities came action committees, which had not been seen at Iranian universities in a long time.

There had been student actions before, but this movement had real breadth. Students would gather in meetings of 200, 300, and close down a building, and in any one university there might be ten such meetings with

students sitting and discussing. They would vote on what to do, and frequently decide to turn the meetings into demonstrations—silent demonstrations mostly—in which the students would come out and show their protest.

So, there is a deadlock. The government cannot answer any of the major demands that the people are raising. And this is true not only in the area of democratic rights.

Iran is one of the main oil-producing countries in the world, but inside Iran right now there is an oil shortage. It is a very cold winter, and there are lines for heating oil. There is a bread shortage. There were problems with electricity—for a few months Iranian cities were only getting five hours of electricity a day, and such shortages are constantly recurring.

There is also a housing shortage, which led to a riot in southern Tehran about three months ago. The government wouldn't provide adequate housing for lower income people, and it wouldn't allow them to build their own houses.

In this general situation, protest is more and more becoming a way of bringing out the desires and demands of various sections of the society.

Q. For years there have been reports of armed actions by small groups against the regime. The argument of such groups has always been that because of the repression, mass action is impossible. Is this debate continuing?

Guerrilla actions recede

A. The "revolutionary avenger," the individual who picks up the gun and goes into action alone, does not have a real tradition in Iranian history. These types of actions really began around 1970. I think it had a lot to do with people looking to struggles abroad—firstly to Cuba and then to Vietnam and to the Palestinian struggle—and drawing the wrong lessons from them.

When the repression intensified in 1973, proponents of individualistic guerrilla actions began arguing that this was the only way to stop the regime, that there was no sector of the masses in motion, so therefore the masses had to be "triggered," sparked into motion by dramatic actions. This became one of the central topics of discussion in the Iranian student movement.

But as soon as the new mass protest movement came on the scene, it overshadowed that discussion. There are fewer and fewer guerrilla actions. As a matter of fact, I haven't heard of any in the past few months. There is less activity of that type, and less and less argument for it.

Now there are thousands upon thousands of people in the streets, and the revolutionary elements among the youth are finding a different road than the one offered by the guerrilla perspective.

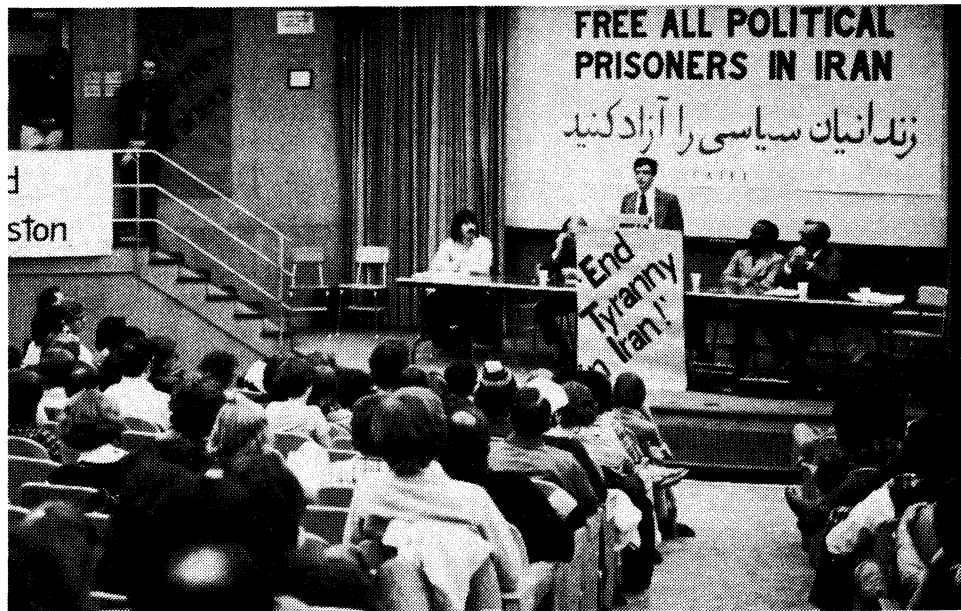
Q. What perspective do you see for winning the democratic demands that are being raised in Iran today?

International solidarity

A. These demands come in a certain context. For the past few years, there has been a consistent international campaign in defense of democratic rights in Iran and for the release of political prisoners. This campaign, led by groups like the U.S. Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), has led to some victories.

Before this campaign the image of the Iranian regime was one of a benevolent government trying to accomplish all sorts of reforms—perhaps with some harshness but certainly not a basically bad regime. Now the basic attitude is that this is a military dictatorship, and this has had an effect on government policy.

They know that they cannot get away with all the things they would like to. SAVAK [the Iranian secret police] is known now in many circles



Houston meeting sponsored by Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI). Militant/Stu Singer

abroad. The regime is sensitive to this, and it spends millions and millions of dollars to try to give itself a better image.

A lot of the things that the intellectual opposition in Iran did was encouraged by what was done abroad. They could see the results; they could see that it was effective; they could see more and more people abroad speaking out in their defense; and they realized that the things they did would not be just isolated acts. On that basis, they organized.

The basic rights that they have been demanding have not been obtained. But the movement has not been crushed either. The general situation that exists is that the movement has suffered casualties, but the government does not have any perspective of answering the demands of the people. It cannot organize the economy adequately; it cannot provide the basic necessities of life for the masses; and dissatisfaction is mounting and the radicalization among Iranian youth and students is getting deeper and deeper.

When the regime came to power twenty-three years ago, it relied on a few tactics: censorship, torture, imprisonment, execution, anticommunism. All these things were used to consolidate the shah's rule.

Now, all of these measures are turning into their opposites for the regime.

The way the shah sees it is that censorship was used for more than two decades and it was very successful. So he applies more censorship, as he did in 1976. But it no longer has the same effect. He applies more censorship, and now there is more opposition to it.

The same is true with red-baiting. Two decades ago this was very effective. Anybody they wanted to destroy, any movement they wanted to discredit, they would denounce as communist. But now it is losing its effect. When they pin these labels on groups and individuals—which they do all the time inside Iran—more and more people react by wanting to know what the "subversives" have to say.

New interest in Trotskyism

Q. What role do Iranian Trotskyists see for themselves in the struggle against the shah and his dictatorial regime?

A. As Trotskyists, we try to offer a program to help the movement for democratic rights in Iran forward, while participating in that movement with all our forces. One of our most important areas of activity has been in the defense of political prisoners internationally.

Obviously, all the opposition groups have led basically an exile life. They all have had some influence inside Iran, but very little.

One measure of our success has been the extent to which the government of Iran has begun to focus its attention on us. More and more the Iranian press is carrying big headlines on Trotskyism.

Iranian Trotskyism is very new; it

does not have any long-time roots in Iran. It is a very new thing for anyone who radicalizes and turns to the revolutionary road to hear about Trotskyism. But now, in the past year especially, the Iranian press is beginning to treat everything that is going on, every demonstration, every protest, as if it has something to do with Trotskyism.

So, witch-hunt methods are focused against the Trotskyists, and there is a lot more interest than ever before in Trotskyist ideas.

We have been able to put out a number of books and pamphlets in Farsi, including: the *Communist Manifesto*, with an introduction by Trotsky; *Permanent Revolution* by Trotsky; a pamphlet on the oppression of women in Iran; and a book dealing with the relationship between the movement of the oppressed nationalities in Iran and the struggle for socialism.

The case of Behazin

One of the most prominent novelists in Iran, Mahmoud Etemadzadeh (Behazin), was arrested along with his son by SAVAK (secret police) agents in Tehran on November 24, 1977.

According to the November 30 issue of the government-controlled Tehran daily *Kayhan*, Behazin and his son "were arrested by order of the Tehran Municipal Court on the charge of inciting hooligans and thugs to break windows of banks and stores."

Behazin, of course, did no such thing. He was arrested because, as a founding member of the Writers Association of Iran and a member of its Executive Board, he has been in the forefront of the struggle against government censorship and for democratic rights.

Behazin's record as an advocate of freedom of thought and expression in Iran is a long one. Following the CIA-organized coup in 1953, which returned the present shah to the throne, Behazin was removed from his teaching post with the ministry of education and blacklisted by the government.

He participated, along with other prominent writers and intellectuals, in the organizational of the Writers Association of Iran in 1968. The Writers Association launched a vigorous campaign against censorship, but was forced to disband by pressures from the government.

In 1971, Behazin was imprisoned by SAVAK for three months because of his defense of a fellow author imprisoned by the regime.

With the reestablishment of the Writers Association in 1977, Behazin

Also, a monthly sixty-four-page magazine published in New York, *Payam Daneshjoo* (Students Correspondence) has articles on questions such as the nature of the Soviet Union and the Soviet dissident movement and on what is happening in Spain, in Portugal, in South Africa, in the United States, and so on. This is an independent magazine, but Trotskyist ideas are reflected in it.

[Subscriptions to *Payam Daneshjoo* are available for \$10 a year from GPO Box 1266, Brooklyn, New York 11201.]

Q. One big problem facing the Iranian movement, it seems, is how to unite the forces willing to participate in the fight for democratic rights. How do you view this question, and how do others see it?

A. The major force in the Iranian student movement has been the Maoists. As they see it, it is necessary to pose as a condition for united action that others agree with some of their particular political views—like that the Soviet Union is "social-imperialist." Obviously, this approach cuts across the mobilization of the broadest number of people in united actions.

At the same time, the Maoists raise very ultimatistic and ultraleft demands. They demand, for instance, that all should unite on slogans like "Down with the shah," or "You must pick up arms," or "No peaceful road, but armed struggle."

Q. What about the demand of "Down with the shah"? Certainly you want to bring down the shah's government.

Constituent assembly

A. Of course, but the question is how to do it. For the ultralefts, the question

Continued on page 30

was a featured speaker at a public meeting in Tehran September 19. He was scheduled to lecture on "Freedom" at the University of Aryamehr in Tehran November 21, but the meeting was attacked by the police and broken up.

The Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI) has initiated a campaign to win Behazin's freedom. It has prepared material explaining the facts of the case, petitions, and a special appeal card urging Behazin's release.

As the CAIFI brochure notes, "the efforts of Iranian writers to revive their Association is a brave and noble act that deserves the support and solidarity of all advocates of human rights the world over."

☐ Add my name to the list of endorsers for the campaign to free Behazin.

☐ Enclosed is \$_____ as my contribution to help the campaign to free Behazin.

☐ Please send _____ copies of the brochure on Behazin's case with appeal cards to distribute.

Enclosed is \$_____ to cover the cost (\$3 per 100 brochures).

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Clip and mail to CAIFI, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, N.Y. 10003. Telephone: (212) 673-6390.

Calendar

CAMBRIDGE

THE COAL MINERS STRIKE. Speaker: Lew Jones, SWP national field organizer. Fri., Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 2 Central Square, 2nd floor. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (617) 547-4395.

CHICAGO: WESTSIDE

RAILROADS 1877-1978—ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF STRUGGLE. Speakers: John Isenhowe, SWP; Andrew Pulley, SWP. Fri., Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 10 North Cicero. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (312) 261-8370.

DENVER

THE STATE OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT: A REPORT FROM THE YSA CONVENTION. Fri., Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. 916 Broadway. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (303) 837-1018.

LOS ANGELES: SOUTHEAST

SOUTH AFRICA: U.S. COMPLICITY IN MURDER. Speakers: Sam Manuel, SWP; others. Fri., Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 2554 Saturn Ave., Huntington Park. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (213) 582-1975.

NEW YORK: QUEENS

WILL SADAT'S DIPLOMACY BRING PEACE TO THE MIDEAST? Speakers: Peter Seidman, Militant staff writer; others. Fri., Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 90-43 149th St., Jamaica. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (212) 658-7718.

ST. LOUIS

MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. Speakers: Glenn White, SWP; others. Fri., Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 6223 Delmar. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (314) 725-1570.

ST. PAUL

THE FARMERS STRIKE: ISSUES & ANSWERS. Speaker: John Enestvedt, Minnesota farmer. Fri., Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 176 Western Ave. North. Donation: \$1. Aisp: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 222-8929.

...Burns

Continued from page 9

Reserve are largely dictated by the policies of the rest of the capitalist government. For example, when the government is running a deficit, the "Fed" has little choice but to issue enough money to cover whatever portion of the deficit cannot be financed through sales of bonds to banks and other financial institutions, even though releasing this additional money is highly inflationary.

The central bank's room for maneuver is also sharply limited by the movements of the capitalist business cycle. During the phase of boom, the Federal Reserve must supply a growing amount of money to finance the expanding economy.

As the boom approaches its end, though, mushrooming demand for credit and growing pressure on the currency raise the threat of soaring inflation. This forces the Federal Reserve sooner or later to adopt a "tight money" policy, restricting the issuance of additional money. It is during this phase that recession or depression begins, with falling production and growing layoffs.

It seems superficially that the depression is caused by the tight-money policy of the Federal Reserve. In fact it is caused by the glutting of markets that invariably occurs at the peak of the capitalist business cycle.

Carter's decision to dump Burns, whatever their tactical disagreements, was part of this pattern of deception. Since the economy happened to enter a new long-term crisis during his term of office, Burns was made a scapegoat. Not that he deserves any sympathy—he willingly shares responsibility for the anti-working-class policies of the capitalist government.

Burns himself faces no problem of unemployment. He can stay on the board until 1984 if he wishes—a degree of job security most workers would envy.

If, as seems quite likely, the pressure on the dollar continues in world money markets and the Federal Reserve is obliged to adopt an increasingly tight monetary policy, the Democrats are free to shift the blame for new economic troubles onto Miller's shoulders.

In a short time Miller may even

replace Burns as the favorite bogeyman of the AFL-CIO bureaucrats.

The only way for the labor movement to escape from this trap is to break from the twin parties of big business and present a program that challenges the domination of the government and economy by a tiny group of billionaires.

...Wilm. 10

Continued from page 8

Wicker's column reported that Assistant Attorney Gen. Drew Days, who is in charge of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, had urged Gov. Hunt to consider pardoning the Ten. However, Attorney Gen. Griffin Bell later reversed the department's position, saying that Hunt "doesn't need me to tell him how to run his office."

Last spring, there was a much-publicized federal probe of violations of civil rights laws by the prosecutor of the Wilmington Ten. Wicker reports nothing has come of the investigation, because Bell doesn't "wish to intrude" into North Carolina's court system.

On December 17, chants of "Free the Wilmington Ten" greeted President Carter when he arrived to attend a nephew's wedding in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Two days later, Gov. Hunt finally met with one of the Wilmington Ten's supporters—Rev. James Barnett, a Black minister from Charlotte, North Carolina, who had just completed a week-long march to Raleigh to call attention to the plight of the prisoners.

On December 21, fifty activists staged a silent vigil in front of the governor's mansion in Raleigh. This action was sponsored by the recently reactivated Raleigh Wilmington Ten Defense Committee.

North Carolina's big-business-controlled newspapers have become increasingly touchy about the case. A December 19 "news analysis" in the Raleigh *News and Observer* was headlined "'10' Pardons Hottest Issue Yet for Hunt." An editorial in the same paper recently urged Hunt to reduce their sentences to time served.

For his part, Hunt has been making vague, contradictory statements obviously designed to pass the political hot potato back to the courts.

Supporters of the Wilmington Ten have planned ongoing protests to ensure the issue isn't swept under the rug. As Rev. Ben Chavis said, "We are political prisoners, and in political-prisoner situations, the public decides the case, not the courts."

...Iran

Continued from page 29

is settled by shouting "Down with the shah," and indulging in wishful thinking.

The way to bring down the shah is to draw the masses into action against his regime around specific demands that they understand and agree with. It is through the mobilization of large numbers of people in the fight for civil and political liberties, and in the fight for the convocation of a constituent assembly, that we can deal the strongest blows against the shah's regime. The ultralefts stand in the way of this.

What the Trotskyists proposed was that we had to build the type of movement that could relate to the actual problems and the actual level of consciousness of people in Iran. What is the key question inside Iran, as millions of people view it? The basic question, both objectively and as millions of people see it, is that there are no basic civil and political liberties.

The voice of protests by individuals in Iran is never presented in the newspapers, on television, on radio—any protest by an individual dies in the darkness of the repressive apparatus.

That is the real situation in Iran.

The Iranian people do not have a system of communications through which they can be informed. They have no freedom of speech or association. This is the fundamental question in the country today, and it is best exemplified by the existence of 100,000 political prisoners.

So, what the Trotskyists proposed was to set up committees that could focus on the demand for freedom of political prisoners in Iran, that could organize around specific cases, and that could attract Iranian students internationally to unite behind the victims of repression and try to win their release.

We saw that a fight of this type would focus world attention on the shah's regime and help to inspire further struggles inside Iran. And that is exactly what CAIFI is doing.

The Maoists and the ultralefts rejected this perspective, claiming that it was not possible to organize such committees for all types of different reasons. But CAIFI did come into existence, and it has had real successes.

...Israel

Continued from page 7

officials leaked to the *New York Times* the statement that they "detected the outline of a possible compromise between Israel and Egypt over the Palestinian issue" despite the sharp public differences between Sadat and Begin.

Washington, according to the *Times*, believes "the essence of the projected arrangement would be to persuade Mr. Begin to modify his plan for granting Palestinians on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip internal self-rule to incorporate the possibility of eventual self-determination."

But, the officials say, "the problem is delicate . . . because self-determination may lead to an independent state dominated by radicals. . . . But since neither Israel, Egypt, Jordan nor the United States wants such a P.L.O.-dominated state, the officials said there was broad support for finding the right formula."

A formula to grant self-determination without self-determination. That is a bare bone indeed! Despite his hopes, there is nothing Sadat can do that will change the fact that Israel—not any of the Arab governments—will continue to be Washington's favored reliable military outpost and staging area for attacks on the Arab revolution.

Washington's goal is to preserve its imperialist domination of the Middle East—which explains its massive support to the Israeli garrison state, and its hostility toward the national rights of the Palestinian people.

Last year Carter proclaimed his support for the idea of a Palestinian national "entity" or "homeland" in the hope that at least a section of the Palestinian leadership would make the concession of recognizing the Zionist regime in exchange for his promises.

But under the pressure of the Palestinian masses, no section of the leadership—however much they may have been attracted by such bait—was able to take Carter up on his offer.

This led Washington to switch from the carrot to the stick in its drive against the Palestinians. Following Carter's announcement of support for Begin's plan, for example, Wafa, the official PLO press service, accused the United States of having a strategy aimed at "exterminating the Palestinian presence, annihilating the Palestinian national identity and consecrating the occupation of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories."

Carter's support to Begin's plan has produced a new degree of unity and militant opposition to Washington's schemes within the Palestinian movement.

At a rally uniting various Palestinian groups, including the previously divided Al Fateh and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PLO leader Yasir Arafat told a cheering crowd in Damur, Lebanon, December 31, "My answer to Carter is that if there is no Palestinian state, there will be no stability in this area."

"No to surrender," Arafat shouted, according to the January 2 *New York Daily News*. "Yes to fighting."

"We are not warmongers," Arafat explained. "We are demanding our rights."

According to the January 1 *New York Times*, Arafat went on, "I am saying, and Carter should listen: he tried to destroy our revolution but the Palestinian revolution will go on until victory."

This new unity and stepped-up militancy represents a shift by many PLO leaders, who had hoped—as Sadat does today—that the United States might pressure the Zionists on their behalf.

Mahoud Labadi, for example, a PLO spokesman in Beirut, told *New York Times* correspondent Marvine Howe the day after Carter announced his support for Begin's plan, "The United States has lost its role as neutral arbiter in the Middle East with its support for Israeli occupation and expansion against Palestinian self-determination."

The truth is that Washington has never been neutral in its attitude toward the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab masses against the Zionist regime. The recent negotiations prove once again that it will be this mass struggle, and not Carter's false promises, that will open the road toward a real peace in the Middle East.

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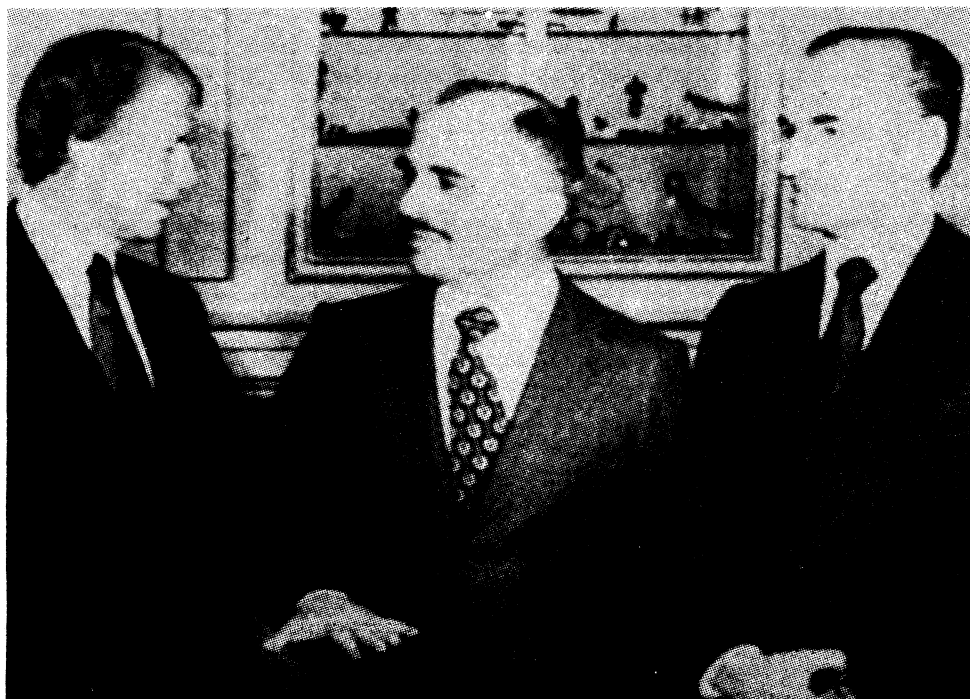
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The butchers' New Year

Carter celebrates with shah of Iran and King Hussein



Carter and dictators in Tehran. Anti-Carter protests occurred despite repression by shah's secret police.

By David Frankel

There was no talk about human rights inside the shah of Iran's Niavaran Palace December 31. Instead there was a sumptuous New Year's Eve banquet at which President Carter hailed the shah's notorious dictatorship as "an island of stability."

With a display of shameless cynicism that would be hard to surpass, Carter told the royal butcher that the stability of his regime was a "great tribute to the respect, admiration and love of your people for you."

The shah, of course, knows better than to rely on "the respect, admiration and love" of his people. Underground torture chambers, the repressive apparatus of the hated secret police (SAVAK), and billions of dollars worth of U.S. weapons help keep the shah on his throne.

But the best efforts of the shah's police were not enough to prevent some

shah, were "Down with imperialism," and "Yankee go home."

A second medieval-type despot, King Hussein of Jordan, also joined Carter in celebrating the new year. Hussein's presence was particularly appropriate in light of Carter's statement, made shortly before he left the United States, opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Middle East.

Hussein's credentials as a hangman of the Palestinians are notorious. In September 1970 he unleashed his army against refugee camps in Jordan in a bloody civil war that left at least 10,000 dead. Carter must have enjoyed a jolly evening listening to how Hussein dealt with the Palestinians.

The hypocrite who has made his supposed concern for human rights into a virtual trademark did not even pretend to take up that issue in Tehran.

On the contrary, U.S. officials have sought to deny that Carter's friend the shah is doing anything wrong. "According to American officials," *New York Times* correspondent Flora Lewis reported from Tehran December 30, "the Shah has moved quietly but effectively in recent months to limit political arrests to cases involving violence, to relax stiff restraints on the press and, apparently, to end the use of torture."

Not even the *New York Times* could let that go unchallenged. Lewis noted that "private Iranian citizens who are not active in the opposition said . . . that they have not noticed any such changes and that as far as they can see, repression remains intense."

For an exclusive 'Militant' interview on the situation in Iran today, see page 28.

expression of the real feelings of the Iranian people. *Time* magazine reported January 9 that after Carter's arrival in Tehran, he and the shah "drove along roads that were lined with more security men than well-wishers. Only a few hours earlier there had been five anti-American demonstrations."

Two of the slogans raised by the demonstrators, who had good reason to resent Washington's support for the

Soviet regime frees Dzhemilev

International defense effort ends in victory

By Marilyn Vogt

Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev (Abdulzhemil) has been freed. According to the *New York Times*, the Stalinist rulers in Moscow released Dzhemilev from prison camp December 22 when his two-and-one-half-year term ended.

International attention began to focus on Dzhemilev's plight in June 1975 when he was rearrested in prison just three days before his third term was to have ended. Dzhemilev began a ten-month hunger strike until he was brought to trial in April 1976, weighing only seventy-seven pounds. He was sentenced to forced labor for "anti-Soviet activity."

Dzhemilev's "crime" in the eyes of the Stalinist bureaucrats was his uncompromising commitment to the right of his people, the Crimean Tatars, to return to their homeland and to their demand for the reestablishment of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. (Stalin deported the entire Tatar population from Crimea to Central Asia in May 1944, and in 1946 abolished the republic that had been established under Lenin and the Bolsheviks in October 1921.)

Dzhemilev's release is a victory for his defenders both inside and outside the Soviet Union.

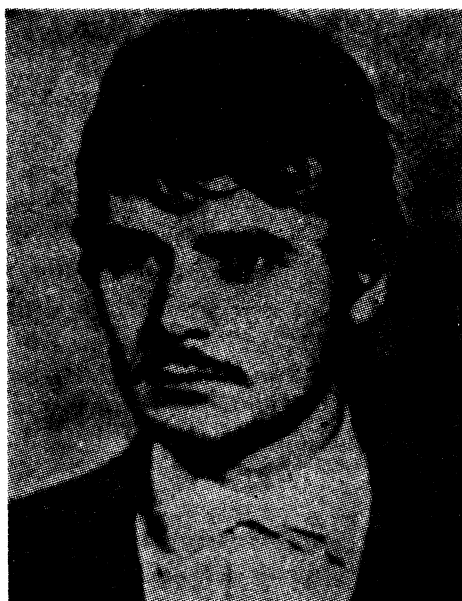
Thousands of Crimean Tatars protested Dzhemilev's fourth term of imprisonment. Marxist dissident Pyotr Grigorenko and many other prominent Moscow dissidents issued appeals for his release. Andrei Sakharov and Elena Bonner journeyed to Omsk, Siberia, where Dzhemilev's trial was held to draw the attention of the world press.

Abroad, Amnesty International adopted the Dzhemilev case.

And in New York in the summer of 1976, the Mustafa Dzhemilev Defense Committee was established. The committee reached out to those in this country who support democratic rights, the rights of oppressed nationalities, and freedom for political prisoners both in the United States and around the world. It sponsored speak-outs and picket lines and prepared literature about Dzhemilev.

This fall Sakharov reported that the Kremlin bureaucrats were planning to once again rearrest Dzhemilev before his term ended. Upon learning of this, Amnesty International in New York launched a "telegram tree," which resulted in more than 200 protest messages being sent to Kremlin authorities.

On December 20 the *New York Times* printed a letter supporting Dzhemilev.



DZHEMILEV: Crimean Tatar leader has spent eight of past thirteen years in prison.

milev signed by four former political prisoners—Reza Baraheni, an Iranian; Hugo Blanco, a Peruvian; Martin Sastre from the United States; and Leonid Plyushch, a Ukrainian. The letter was initiated by Dzhemilev's New York defense committee.

"We, former political prisoners from

four corners of the world," the letter said, "appeal to all adherents of social and democratic justice to . . . demand that the Soviet authorities proceed with the unqualified release of this great leader of an oppressed nationality in the Soviet Union."

According to the *New York Times*, Dzhemilev was released to his parents in Tashkent, capital of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (more than 1,500 miles from his homeland). This is a bitter reminder that the demands he was imprisoned for defending have not been met by Stalin's heirs.

The roughly half-million Crimean Tatars have carried on a long fight for their rights. Their appeals to the government contain more than 3 million signatures.

According to Dzhemilev's testimony at his trial, more than 12,000 Tatars have tried to return to Crimea since 1967 in defiance of government bans. Often their homes are bulldozed, they are deported back to Central Asia, or they are arrested for "passport violations."

While Dzhemilev's release is a victory, the continuing oppression of the Tatars shows the need for ongoing defense of their rights and those of other oppressed nationalities in the Soviet Union.