

TORCH

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JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 14, 1983



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MIAMI, SING SING:

Oppressed People Rebel Against Capitalism's Racist Attacks

By PAUL BENJAMIN

For the second time in two and a half years, Black people in Miami have gone into the streets in spontaneous, militant protests against the murder of a Black man by racist police.

Clashes between Black youths and police erupted in the Overtown district after 21-year-old Nevell Johnson Jr. was shot by patrolman Luis Alvarez on December 28. Johnson died the next day. Alvarez claims he was checking out Johnson for suspected possession of a concealed handgun. Although witnesses differ over whether Johnson was carrying a gun, all agree he offered no resistance to Alvarez and was shot without provocation.

Alvarez and his partner had no business being in Overtown at all, as they were assigned to another patrol area. They left this area, in violation of police procedure, apparently for no other reason than to harass Black people. Alvarez has an extensive record of such harassment. Although he has been on the police force only about 18 months, he has been investigated no fewer than seven times following citizen complaints over his conduct, mainly from Black people. Nevertheless police officials called him a "very mature officer" and resorted to all kinds of stories to justify the shooting. After first insisting that Alvarez fired in "self-defense," they are now claiming that his gun "accidentally discharged" while he was searching Johnson.

The shooting touched off a localized

but very militant rebellion that lasted for three days. On the night of the 28th hundreds of Black youths fought police in the streets around the video game arcade where the shooting took place. Sporadic fighting continued on the 29th, then escalated sharply that night after news of Johnson's death spread throughout the community.

It took massive numbers of police to suppress the revolt, although scattered fighting continued on the 30th. City officials cordoned off the Overtown area to prevent the rebellion from spreading to neighboring Black communities and to protect the lucrative Orange Bowl extravaganza that was getting underway in downtown Miami, only a few blocks away.

Meanwhile, hundreds of cops armed with clubs and shotguns marched through Overtown beating and tear-gassing everyone in sight, while helicopters flew overhead dropping additional teargas canisters. One young Black man, 17-year-old Alonso Singleton, was shot eight times—including five bullets in the back—and killed on Wednesday night, while at least two others were wounded by police gunfire. Altogether, dozens of people were injured and over 40 jailed by police.

The events in Overtown took place just two and a half years after the much larger Liberty City riots in Miami in May 1980, in which 18 people were killed in fighting that followed the acquittal of four white policemen who had beaten a Black man, Arthur McDuffie, to death. The Overtown

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STOP THE
WITCH-HUNT!

NAMBLA,

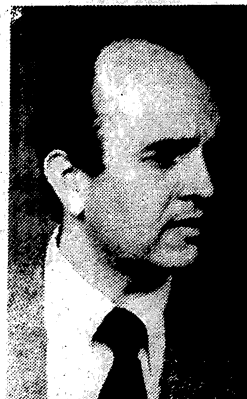
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SECCION EN
ESPAÑOL

**our
readers
write...**

Left groups lie about roles in DC anti-Klan protest

Dear Torch/La Antorcha:

I thought your readers might be interested in two of the more interesting reactions of left organizations to the November 27 anti-Klan, anti-police rebellion in Washington, D.C., that was reported in last month's *Torch*.

The first is the reaction of the Progressive Labor Party, an ultra-Stalinist and extremely sectarian outfit. When I was at the Washington demonstration, I didn't see more than a handful of PLers. But in their paper, *Challenge* (12/22/82), they say, "It is now clear that thousands of workers, students and soldiers are ready, willing and able to act under our leadership to oppose the Klan and Nazis." Hmmm.

Second is the response of the increasingly pro-Stalinist and also extremely sectarian Spartacist League. In the December 31 issue of their paper, *Workers Vanguard*, they print parts of a

revealing statement by SL leader James Robertson. The statement lists the five anti-fascist demonstrations the SL has had anything to do with in the past three years (Detroit, November 1979; San Francisco, April 1980; Ann Arbor, March 1982; Chicago, June 1982; Washington, November 1982). Robertson states: "All of the five above listed mass demonstrations dealt fascism a real blow." This is really silly. It's worth noting the facts: In Detroit there were no fascists around to deal any kind of blow to—the demonstration was a publicity stunt by the SL held several days after a fascist rally. In Ann Arbor, hundreds of militants stopped a Nazi rally, while the SL stayed blocks away and trashed sound equipment owned by other left organizations. In Chicago, the Nazis were able to stage the longest uninterrupted public rally they

DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS!

On January 22, 1973—just 10 years ago—women won an important victory in the struggle to control their own lives. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a woman has a constitutional right to seek an abortion. The fight had been long and many thousands of women

EDITORIAL

had died needlessly because abortions were illegal.

For a short period of time after the court decision took effect, the deaths dropped dramatically as women went to safe, legal clinics and hospitals for their abortions.

But the opponents of abortion did not accept defeat. They began to organize and over the last 10 years they have introduced thousands of bills in local, state and federal legislatures to make it impossible for most women to get abortions. By setting up all sorts of obstacles—from parental consent for women under 18 to denial of Medicaid funds for abortions for poor women, from 24-hour waiting periods to refusals by hospitals to perform abortions at all—access to this vitally important form of birth control was all but eliminated for large numbers of women in the U.S. The exception, as always, was women with the money and time to go to private clinics or expensive doctors. The others were forced to seek out the back alley abortionist—and the death rate began to climb once again.

The ultimate goal of most anti-abortion groups is to overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decision. Abortion foes in Congress have

proposed an amendment to the Constitution which would ban all abortions. Since such an amendment is unlikely to pass in the near future, they are also supporting a bill which would define a fetus as a person from the moment of conception. This would guarantee "human rights" for the fetus, making abortion legally equivalent to murder. The Supreme Court itself is considering the constitutionality of several local laws limiting access to abortion. If those laws are upheld by the court, we will be left with the legal right to abortion with little or no way to get one!

The 1973 victory was not a gift from a benevolent government. It was a victory won by an active and often militant women's movement, supported by allies in other liberation movements of the '60s and early '70s. It is that kind of militant alliance which must be reformed to recover the rights which we have lost and fight for the ultimate victory of control of our bodies and our lives.

We will not get that victory by begging our "representatives" to give us what we need. The capitalist system will continue to try to keep women chained to forced pregnancy and child-rearing. We must take the power into our own hands and begin to build a society where our rights and personal dignity will be ensured. We must not wait until our opponents have defeated us. We must begin now to build a movement which demands our rights. And we must do this with the knowledge that it will have to be a revolutionary movement whose goal is socialism. We in the RSL are working to build such a struggle—Join us!

—Pat Nelson

have ever held in that city while, for its part, the SL tried to cool off the anti-Nazi crowd.

The situation in Washington is more interesting. The SL brags that it consulted police authorities beforehand, and that "no violence against the police" resulted. They go on to say, "We know that for anti-fascists to clash with the police is to protect and embolden the Klansmen and Nazis." When I was in Washington, I certainly saw a lot of violence against the

police. While the SL, like PL, tries to claim credit for the entire day's events, at the same time they deny any part in the militant rebellion against police terror. I think the fact that many Black people, along with other residents of Washington, were willing to stop the Klan—even if it meant fighting the police—will scare the Klan and Nazis from coming back, not embolden them. Already, in fact, one major Nazi group has moved from the Washington

area to the Midwest.

Personally, I think both the SL and PL versions of the truth are straight out of George Orwell's *1984*. If reality doesn't agree with your political line, just rewrite reality to fit.

Sooner or later, one suspects, members of both PL and the SL may discover that people don't need new masters, but liberation.

Yours in struggle,
A New York reader

Our 1982-83 fund drive has surpassed its goal. At press time, \$11,606 has been collected, substantially over our goal of \$10,000. And, while the drive officially ends January 15, late-arriving pledges are expected to raise the final total to over \$13,000.

The fund drive's success, plus economies in our operations, should make it possible for us to continue our work through the current year and even to gain a much-needed relief from month-to-month financial crisis.

Our fund appeal met with an unexpectedly generous response both from friends of the *Torch/La Antorcha* and from our own members and sympathizers, who regularly give large amounts of money to the organization. Employed friends and comrades dug deep into their pockets; those who are unemployed or in low-paying jobs gave far more than they could easily afford. And readers and subscribers of the *Torch/La Antorcha* responded especially generously, ensuring the drive's success.

Our warmest thanks to all our friends for helping us to meet our goal.

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THANKS!

Aftermath of Malvinas Defeat

Mass Protests Shake Argentine Junta

By ALBERT LARY

Argentina's six-year-old military regime is beginning to unravel. A series of strikes and demonstrations this past December have raised the long-simmering discontent among the Argentine people to new levels.

"The country is sailing toward the perilous coasts of a civil war," warned one Argentine newspaper. To the *New York Times*, the unrest in Argentina signalled "a growing danger that the country will slide into anarchy." Other observers have noted that the mushrooming popular anger threatens to go beyond the control of the traditional opposition leaders.

The latest round of struggle began December 4 in La Plata during a military ceremony in honor of Argentine soldiers who died in the Malvinas War. Three hundred war veterans interrupted the event by shouting insults at their officers and chanting anti-government slogans.

Two days later, a nationwide general strike of nine million workers shut down the country for 24 hours. It was Argentina's first successful general strike since a military junta seized power in a 1976 coup. The strike was supported by both wings of the large, but illegal, Confederación General de Trabajo (CGT—General Confederation of Labor), as well as other independent unions. Its official demands were limited to trade union issues: full rights and recognition of the CGT, wage increases and a government jobs program. But many strikers raised broader political demands, including an end to the junta, restoration of democratic rule, and a response by the military to charges of human rights abuse.

Government reaction to the general strike was surprisingly mild. There were no moves to prevent it in advance, and government leaders even agreed with reports that the shut-down was 90 percent effective. The reason for this stance is that the junta, led by Army General Reynaldo Bignone, is itself divided into feuding factions and, under pressure of the new political atmosphere in Argentina, is prepared to make limited concessions. In addition, moderate union leaders privately agreed in advance to schedule no rallies or marches during the strike to avoid confrontations with the police.

The December 6 general strike was followed on December 10 by a March of Resistance



Nearly 200,000 Argentines demand end to military rule at December 16 demonstration in Buenos Aires.

organized by families of the "disappeared." The demonstration brought 6,000 people into the center of the capital, Buenos Aires, to demand information about their missing relatives. An estimated 20,000 people have vanished during the past six years in Argentina. Most are thought to be victims of military and police agents. Prior to the 6,000-strong March of Resistance, a small group of mothers of the "disappeared" had been holding regular protest vigils in the Plaza de Mayo, in front of Government House in the capital. The recent upsurge has now transformed their symbolic protest into a major, mass movement.

Six days later, on December 16, a huge anti-government rally was organized by a coalition of five political parties. One hundred and eighty thousand people crowded into the Plaza de Mayo to demand an end to military rule. When a group of about 3,000 people charged the presidential palace, police responded with tear-gas and clubs. One protester was killed by a plainclothes policeman; 80 others were wounded.

Roots of discontent

Much of the current anger erupting in Argentina is a result of the country's humiliating defeat in the Malvinas War. But that war itself was the junta's response to an already existing discontent. The Argentine seizure of the Malvinas Islands in

April was carefully timed by the military to undercut an earlier general strike call. For a while the diversion succeeded. Millions of Argentines rallied to defend their national rights to the Malvinas, which were stolen by the British 150 years ago. But the generals had begun a war with Britain primarily to avoid class war at home. They were not prepared for the ferocity of the combined British and U.S. imperialist response. After two months of lies about impending victory, the Argentine forces abruptly surrendered in June. This defeat evoked bitter anger among the Argentine people.

However, the underlying cause of the political crisis in Argentina is the country's stagnant economy. Decades of industrial development, which once ranked Argentina on a par with Canada and Australia as a stable secondary economic power, have been rolled back. Today unemployment is 18 percent; the annual inflation rate is 500 percent and rising! Prices go up on a weekly, sometimes even daily, basis. The government is forced to print ever larger currency denominations in an effort to keep up with the spiral of hyperinflation. The latest bill issued is a one-million peso note. On the black market, where Argentine pesos change for dollars at the rate of 60,000-to-1, it is worth less than \$20.

Argentina's foreign debt is \$40 billion, third largest in the world. Emergency loans of \$2 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and \$1 billion from private banks have postponed the nation's eco-

nomie collapse temporarily. But the austerity measures demanded by the IMF as a condition for its loan will fall heaviest on Argentina's already rebellious working class. Real wages fell over 50 percent in 1982; interest rates are at 120 percent and further currency devaluations (which mean higher prices) are planned.

In addition to the poor state of the economy, one of the junta's biggest worries is the opening of a national discussion about the fate of Argentina's thousands of "desaparecidos" ("disappeared"). Between 1976 and 1979 the military regime, operating under a state-of-siege law, physically eliminated an entire generation of leftist militants and union activists, simply by making them "disappear," that is, by kidnapping and killing them. Sometimes whole families disappeared without a trace. Infant children who disappeared were reportedly sold to childless couples within the regime.

Where are the 'missing'?

Now, some of the facts from this terror-filled period are coming to light. In September several newspapers, sensing that the junta was losing its iron grip in the wake of the Malvinas defeat, began to print reports about secret military prisons. Several officers were named as suspected participants in political killings.

After three weeks of growing

boldness from the press, the junta cracked down, banning all discussion about the "disappeared," government corruption, or mistakes of the Malvinas War. But it was already too late. On the defensive, the junta announced that it was preparing an amnesty law to excuse all "excesses" committed in the 1976-79 reign of terror. Meanwhile, it announced, those with evidence of crimes should simply go to court.

In late October, the issue burst out anew with the discovery of 88 unmarked graves containing 400 bodies in San Miguel, near the capital. All the bodies were buried between 1976 and 1979. One day later the mayor of La Plata announced that his town cemetery contained 295 unidentified bodies buried during the same period. The door was now open. People who had remained silent for years suddenly remembered strange occurrences from years past. Within a few days, four more cemeteries, with over 1,000 more unidentified bodies, were unearthed.

The junta's response to these new revelations was fierce. Without commenting on the discoveries, the government ordered three magazines permanently closed. Journalists critical of the military received death threats. And when one former diplomat offered evidence of military involvement in an earlier killing, his brother turned up dead, with torture marks and a broken skull.

The military is terrified that, if the whole truth comes out about the "disappeared," popular rage will not be limited to simply replacing their shaky junta. The threat of criminal investigations, trials and even violent reprisals against the generals looms larger as the mass upsurge grows.

Not surprisingly, the U.S. State Department denies that there are any continuing human rights issues in Argentina. U.S. military aid is scheduled to be resumed as soon as Congress gives final approval. According to the U.S., Argentina is now a "certifiable democracy" because the generals have promised to hold elections late this year for a civilian government to take power in 1984. But this electoral promise is highly conditional. For example, the junta recently demanded that all five major political parties sign a pact agreeing that, if elected, they would not take reprisals against military officers, and not investigate the disappearances, military corruption, the

(Continued on page 12)

**STOP THE
WITCH-HUNT!**

NAMBLA,

Age of Consent,

and Human Sexuality

By IAN DANIELS

"This episode has thrown the spotlight on a sicko outfit called the North American Man-Boy Love Association, which actively promotes sex between men and young boys. We urge law enforcement authorities to kick over this rock and throw anyone guilty of any infraction behind bars. It is disgusting—unthinkable—that such perverted behavior can be tolerated in this nation."

—New York Daily News Editorial, December 29, 1982

On December 3, 1982, police broke into a beach cottage in Wareham, Massachusetts, arresting three men and seizing quantities of files and magazines, some of them pornographic. It was the first shot in a new offensive by various federal, state and city authorities against the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). The three men, one of them 17 years old, were held on sex offense charges relating to a 13-year-old and 16-year-old youth staying with them in the cottage. All three were former members of NAMBLA's Steering Committee.

Two weeks later, on December 19, police raided three apartments in New York City, and FBI agents questioned nearly a dozen men. In one house they seized NAMBLA's files and much of its literature. The police and FBI were attempting to link NAMBLA to the disappearance of six-year-old Etan Patz some three and a half years ago, and to the alleged kidnapping of a 13-year-old youth from New Jersey.

A main piece of "evidence" used by the authorities to link NAMBLA to the Etan Patz case was a photograph allegedly found in the Wareham cottage that was supposed to resemble Patz.

Immediately, the media began a series of hysterical articles on NAMBLA and the missing children, labelling NAMBLA a "dangerous international sex network that preys on children." Day by day, papers such as the Murdoch-owned New York Post began to "reveal" new information and "expose" NAMBLA in lurid National Enquirer style. A taxi driver stepped forward and claimed that he remembered picking up Patz with an older man some three years before.

In the face of these attacks, NAMBLA organized a press conference on December 28. It revealed that the photo that was supposed to look like Patz was from a 1968 non-pornographic "Boyhood Calendar," produced by a publishing firm which had been raided by the police some years before. NAMBLA denied

engaging in any criminal activities, most especially in anything involving child kidnapping or production of so-called "kiddie porn." NAMBLA member David Thorstad also expressed NAMBLA's sympathies with the parents of young Patz, and criticized the authorities for causing them added grief over a concocted story.

But the media campaign did not stop. Claiming "new" information, the New York papers began to accuse NAMBLA of links with the second case, the disappearance of the New Jersey youth, Charles Dyson. Significantly, between the December 19 FBI interrogations and New Year's Eve, when Dyson turned up in a New York bus station, not a single new fact appeared in the papers, yet the media hype reached fever pitch, especially after NAMBLA's revelations about the photo took the wind out of the NAMBLA/Patz frame-up. (When Dyson finally did turn up, the New York Post ran a shrieking headline, "GAY NIGHTMARE ENDS," while Dyson himself appeared to have put on some weight and had no complaints.)

The New York Times also jumped into the fray: On January 4 in its "Science" section, the Times ran an article on the "disorder" of pedophilia (an adult's desire to have sex with children), lauding the merits of Depo Provera in "curing" sex offenders. (Depo Provera is a highly dangerous cancer-causing chemical that was first used as a contraceptive on women; for more information on Depo Provera and its effects, see article reprinted from Forward in the April 15-May 14, 1982 Torch/La Antorcha.) Nevertheless, despite its attempts to smear NAMBLA, the Times was forced to concede that "abduction of a child by a pedophile is very rare."

Defend NAMBLA!

Whether or not one agrees with the specific views of NAMBLA, we believe it is essential to defend the organization against criminal prosecutions and against the campaign of vilification and slander being carried out by the press. On the most basic level, such defense is called for because NAMBLA is innocent of the charges being raised against it.

NAMBLA is not an organization which advocates sexual relationships between men and boys. It is an organization that fights for the rights of those men and boys who are involved in or

who would like to be involved in such relationships, and works to educate society that these relationships do not in the main conform to the stereotype in which "dirty old men" rape innocent young children.

According to NAMBLA spokesperson David Ingalls:

"NAMBLA is a public and legal organization. It was founded in December 1978 in response to the extreme oppression of boys and men involved in consensual and loving relationships. It... supports the liberation of persons of all ages from sexual prejudice, exploitation, and oppression. NAMBLA is not, and has never been, involved in prostitution, the production or distribution of pornography, or the transportation of minors for illegal purposes.... We support only consensual relationships, and condemn any involving coercion or in which consent is lacking."

Most importantly, for all the weeks of hype by the media, the raids by police and the FBI and the lurid stories about NAMBLA's alleged activities, one fact remains clear: No one was able to come up with a shred of evidence linking NAMBLA to child kidnappings, "kiddie

porn" rings or anything of the sort. Yet NAMBLA remains the target of reactionary, puritanical outrage on the part of the gutter press, and presumably will continue to face the threat of harassment by various government forces. The police, the FBI and the bourgeois media have united in a campaign against NAMBLA not, because NAMBLA is involved in "crime," but because of its views. NAMBLA must be supported in its fight against victimization by the capitalist state and the three men arrested in Wareham defended against legal persecution.

But the importance of defending NAMBLA goes beyond the narrow, legal question of guilt or innocence. The witch-hunting campaign against NAMBLA is not taking place in a vacuum; it is very much a part of a broader ruling class offensive aimed at limiting the rights of all working and oppressed people. Sections of the capitalist class today, along with right-wing organizations such as the Moral Majority, are trying to re-establish a repressive political, social and moral climate in the country. Strict obedience, the reassertion of the role of the "traditional family" and a bowing down to "God, Flag and Country" are all essential aspects of the "new order" they would like to impose.

Who will be the victims if the ruling class is successful in establishing this kind of reactionary and repressive climate? Man/boy lovers certainly—but the list does not stop there. Lesbian and gay people will be driven back into the closet, with homosexuality again labelled the unholiest of sins. The right to abortion will be stripped away and, over time, a woman's right to be anywhere but in the kitchen will be challenged. Interracial relationships will once again become taboo (in fact, the January 9 New York Times reports that three justices of the peace in Texas are currently refusing to marry interracial couples!). And, more generally, Blacks, Latins and other oppressed people will increasingly be told to "stay in their



At December 28 press conference, NAMBLA member David Thorstad exposes police frame-up implicating NAMBLA in disappearance of six-year-old Etan Patz in 1979. Thorstad is holding calendar photo that police claimed was a picture of Patz. Photo was actually printed in 1968, before Patz was born.

place."

Not surprising, this kind of ruling class is people least like—hence the at NAMBLA men it at the Decem

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In the context mic and social cr are targeting th society for att armed police tas religious commu Arizona, this fall the general unpo up their ability t they are counting opposition to yo (and especially t sexuality or adu BLA.

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Age of Cons

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victims if the ruling class in establishing this repressive and repressive measures certainly—but there. Lesbian and gay people driven back into the closet again labelled "deviant." The right to abortion and, over the right to be anywhere will be challenged. Relationships will once again be in fact, the January 9 reports that three people in Texas are currently interracial marriage generally, Blacks, oppressed people will to "stay in their



David Thorstad exposes 16-year-old Etan Patz who was a picture of a

place."

Not surprisingly, in seeking to establish this kind of a repressive climate, the ruling class is first going after those people least likely to gain broad support—hence the attacks on NAMBLA. As NAMBLA member David Thorstad put it at the December 28 press conference: "Millions, especially young people, in our society are suffering from unemployment. The Western economies are tumbling toward collapse. The world is being dragged ever closer to a nuclear holocaust. The environment is being polluted, and natural resources squandered to increase the profits of the rich. Hundreds of thousands of young people, many of them gay, are fleeing the stifling environments and physical abuse of their homes. Men who love boys are being made into scapegoats for social problems for which they are not responsible. The priorities of our society are completely out of whack."

In the context of this massive economic and social crisis, the capitalist rulers are targeting the unpopular fringes of society for attack. When a heavily armed police task force smashed a Black religious commune in Miracle Valley, Arizona, this fall, they were counting on the general unpopularity of cults to back up their ability to use brute force. Now they are counting on the almost universal opposition to young people having sex (and especially to that involving homosexuality or adults) to go after NAMBLA.

But the capitalists will not stop here. Every move they make today against one or another "unpopular" group will be used to bolster future and even more brutal assaults on even wider sections of the population. Thus, the defense of NAMBLA must be seen as, and organized as, part of a broader resistance to the current ruling class offensive against the rights of the entire working class.

Age of Consent laws

The campaign against NAMBLA also raises questions that go beyond that of defense of the organization and its members from state repression. Issues key to the nature of human sexuality and the sexually repressive nature of capitalism, the rights of young people and the problems of child abuse and rape are all directly or indirectly involved. In addition, the attacks on NAMBLA raise questions about the nature of the so-called "Age of Consent" laws—laws which ostensibly exist to protect young people but in fact serve to legally deny young people's sexuality and restrict their freedom more generally.

In our view, children—especially teenagers—are sexual beings. It is simply a fact that many people develop an active sexuality—straight or gay—at a young age. However, the sexual and social morals of capitalist society consider this dangerous and sinful. Through educational, social and legal institutions, society attempts to repress the sexuality of young people, especially if that sexuality is homosexuality. Many a gay person can remember being aware of his/her sexuality at an age where sex is not discussable, partners totally unavailable and ignorance and prejudice prevalent all around.

This repressive sexual atmosphere is not limited to gay people, or for that matter, to young people. Capitalist

society has long taken a dim view of sex. Outside of wedlock sex is seen as evil, and even within the confines of marriage it is viewed negatively if not specifically directed toward procreation (having children). In general, capitalist society mystifies and represses sexuality, instilling in people from a very young age the idea that sex is "dirty" or "sinful." The result is that most people develop repressed, conflicted, and distorted attitudes toward sex and their own sexuality; attitudes which contribute heavily to the sexual abusiveness prevalent in society as a whole.

One of the primary ways in which a repressive sexual "morality" is imposed on young people is through the Age of Consent laws. Age of Consent laws give the state the power to determine an age at which young people may legally



"Capitalism is ultimately the greatest child molester, abuser and rapist."

engage in sexual relationships. Any sexual acts involving a person under this age are considered "crimes" and are prosecutable under the Age of Consent laws. However, the legal "age of consent" varies dramatically from state to state. In New York it is 17. In some states it is lower, in others higher, and in some cases exceptions are made if the parents give consent for the child. In New Hampshire it is 13. This wide age variation, by itself, suggests that the Age of Consent laws are a wholly arbitrary determination, made by individual state legislatures, of the supposedly "proper age" for sex. Are all 13-year-olds in New Hampshire "ready for sex" while all 16-year-olds in New York are not?

The result of these laws is to take away from a young person any power to give consent, or in fact to play any role whatsoever in making decisions about his or her sexuality at an important age of development. Instead, this power is placed in the hands of the state or, in some cases, the state in conjunction with the parents.

The recent attacks on NAMBLA illustrate this reactionary and repressive aspect of the Age of Consent laws: The 17-year-old arrested in Wareham, MA, was arrested for having a relationship with a 16-year-old. Neither party in the relationship objected to anything going on, rather the anti-gay, anti-sexual laws and morals of the state determined, a priori, that the relationship was illegal and wrong.

A letter in New York's Village Voice (1/4/83) provides another example. "In California a 16-year-old girl was having an affair with a police officer. Her mother discovered the liaison and the officer was convicted of rape, though the girl refused to testify against him, claimed she was in love with him, and repeatedly asserted that she had not been coerced in any way in the affair."

As the above examples show, the Age

of Consent laws give the state the right to intervene in aspects of people's lives that should be entirely personal, and enable it to enforce a repressive sexual and social morality under the guise of "protecting" children.

In arguing that the Age of Consent laws are a reactionary restriction on the right of young people to determine their own sexuality, we are not suggesting that there are not problems within society concerning child abuse or that children need no legal protection against such abuse. Quite the contrary, we believe that child abuse is a serious and growing problem today. Nor, we should emphasize, are we arguing that all relationships involving man/boy love are healthy; undoubtedly there are more than a few instances of abuse and exploitation in relationships involving men and boys—

as criminal prosecution. (How many readers remember a female classmate in high school being quietly—or not so quietly—whisked out of sight to a juvenile home for getting pregnant or for simply being sexually involved?)

It is also worth noting that a large share of the sexual abuse of children takes place within the family. But the Age of Consent laws do not in fact protect children from an abusive parent, since they actually limit a child's legal power vis a vis his/her parents while increasing parental authority.

In our view, the current Age of Consent laws should be abolished, and young people given the right to determine their own sexuality. The issue is not an arbitrary age at which sex should be deemed by the capitalist state to be "o.k.;" the issue is whether that sex is truly consensual or a matter of rape or abuse. Specific laws against rape and child abuse can and should be strengthened—without incorporating provisions that deny young people their rights and subject them to a state-imposed "morality."

Capitalism represses sexuality

More fundamentally, laws in general will do little to solve the problems of rape, child abuse or any other form of non-consensual sex. Until the religious, mystical and repressive climate surrounding the entire question of sex is eliminated and matters of human sexuality brought out of the Dark Ages and treated openly and maturely, nearly all sexual activity will be less healthy than it might otherwise be, and for all-too-many people it will remain downright degrading and dehumanizing. On the most immediate level, particularly in terms of young people, sex education must be broadened and improved, and safe, effective birth control made available to provide people with the knowledge and ability to control their own bodies. Simple measures such as these would be far more "protective" to the rights and needs of young people than Age of Consent laws will ever be.

As long as capitalism, with its repressive morality and ethics based on "getting over," continues to exist, personal relationships, including sexual ones, will continue to be distorted. Children will continue to be treated as the property of parents and state, denied the ability to make basic decisions about their own lives. By the same token, those people with the courage to stand up for their own unpopular beliefs will continue to suffer attacks from the state and right-wing forces.

Capitalism is ultimately the greatest child molester, abuser and rapist. It murders millions of children every year through famine and disease caused by economic chaos; it kidnaps thousands of youth to die in wars for profit; it maims and bruises the lives of billions of children through teaching hate and bigotry. It distorts and destroys human relationships, and declares differences of sexuality to be "sick" and "abnormal."

Unfortunately, love alone can't stop capitalism. As the forces of reaction single out NAMBLA for attack, we must all join together and begin to fight for a society where all of us can be free living, loving and sexual beings. □

MIAMI, SING SING

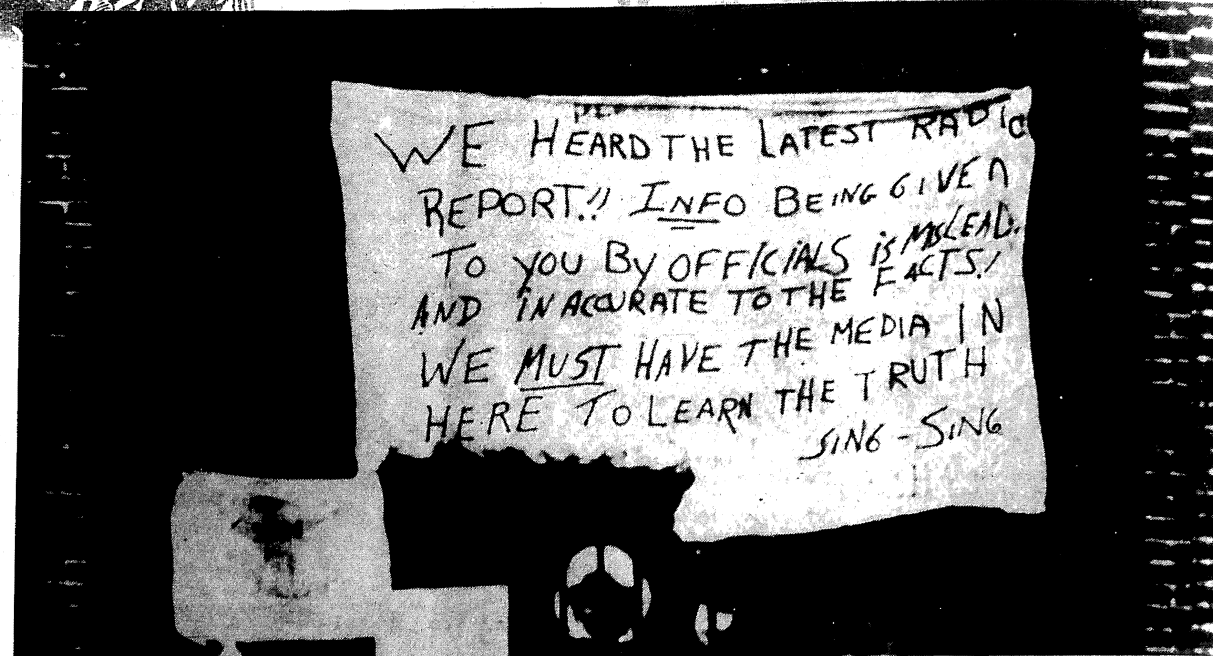
(Continued from page 6)
fighting also comes just one month after Black youths in Washington, D.C., battled for hours on November 27 with police who were protecting an attempted Ku Klux Klan demonstration.

Prisoners take over Sing Sing cellblock

Less than two weeks after the Overtown uprising, still another revolt broke out among mainly Black and Latin prisoners at the Ossining Correctional Facility in New York, better known as Sing Sing.

Ossining is a decaying, century-old prison that accommodates transient prisoners, those waiting for cells to open up elsewhere in the state's overcrowded prison system. Although these prisoners are supposed to spend only a short time at Ossining, many are there for as long as eight months before being transferred.

Prisoners at Ossining are denied even the minimal rights available to those at other institutions. For instance, they are not allowed to participate in remedial education programs, and have only limited access to arts and crafts or other recreational facilities. In addition, they cannot receive packages from friends or relatives and have only minimal mail and



During rebellion, prisoners demanded access to reporters to counter lies from prison authorities.

visiting privileges.

The Ossining rebellion was touched off when a guard refused to allow prisoners from cellblock B to watch television on the night of January 8. This led to protests which quickly escalated into a full-scale rebellion. The approximately 500 men in cellblock B, using broomsticks as weapons, seized

control of the cellblock area and took 18 guards as hostages.

After gaining control of the cellblock they drew up a list of 10 demands which were relayed to prison authorities by telephone. These included rather modest reforms such as the right to receive packages, broader mail and visitation rights and increased recreational facilities.

They requested that prison guards obey prison regulations, in particular those dealing with recreation hours. Significantly, they asked for a "seniority system" in which those transient prisoners who had been at Ossining for the longest time would be the first to be transferred out. And they demanded amnesty for all those involved

in the protest.

Throughout the rebellion, the prisoners negotiated openly and honestly with prison authorities. At the same time, recognizing that the authorities would make all sorts of phony promises to break the rebellion, they used a variety of tactics to overcome such treachery.

Soon after taking over the

Martin Luther King Jr. January 15, 1929— April 4, 1968

January 15 is the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. King was born in 1929 and was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Despite petitions signed by millions; despite a demonstration in Washington, D.C., numbering tens of thousands on January 15, 1981, and a second, smaller demonstration last year; and despite the endorsement of dozens of prominent individuals, including nearly every Black elected official in the country, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday is still not a national holiday.

The demand to make King's birthday a holiday is not a radical one. It is not a demand for jobs and decent housing for all, for an end to police brutality or for freedom—basic rights

and needs that capitalism can't grant. It is simply a request to set one day a year aside to remember and honor the pre-eminent leader of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, someone who gave his life to win for Blacks what is promised to all Americans. If this request was granted, it would be one of the easiest concessions the U.S. government and ruling class could make to Black people. Despite this, they still refuse to make Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday.

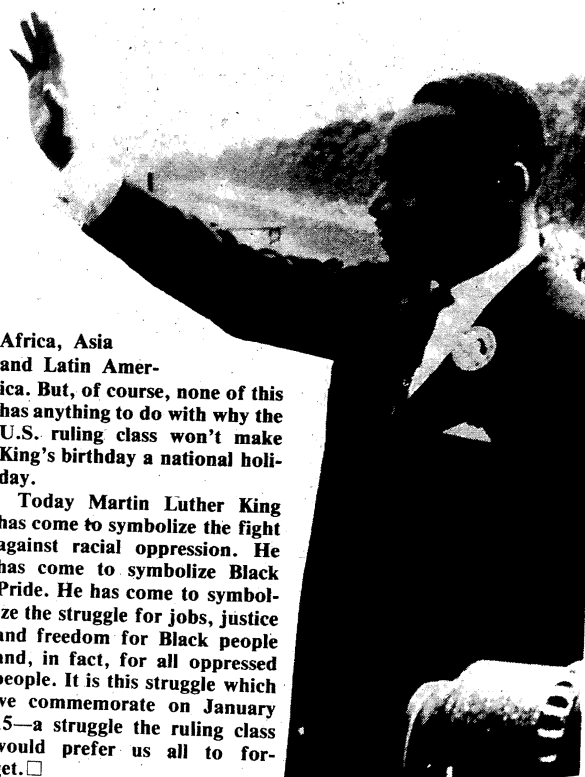
It is worth recalling, however, that the nation does celebrate the birthday of George Washington—a slaveowner. It also celebrates the birthday of Abraham Lincoln who, we are taught, "freed the slaves," but

who in fact refused to until it was forced on him by military necessity. And the same Democratic Party congressmen who won't vote for honoring Martin Luther King Jr. gather each year for lavish Thomas Jefferson/Andrew Jackson Day dinners to honor the two slave-masters who founded their party.

There are certainly many criticisms revolutionaries can make of Martin Luther King's politics and philosophy. He made a moral principle of non-violence. He worked closely with the liberal wing of the ruling class in general and the racist Democratic Party in particular. And he failed to link the struggle of Black people in the United States to the liberation struggles of the peoples of

Africa, Asia and Latin America. But, of course, none of this has anything to do with why the U.S. ruling class won't make King's birthday a national holiday.

Today Martin Luther King has come to symbolize the fight against racial oppression. He has come to symbolize Black Pride. He has come to symbolize the struggle for jobs, justice and freedom for Black people and, in fact, for all oppressed people. It is this struggle which we commemorate on January 15—a struggle the ruling class would prefer us all to forget. □



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On January 10, however, in order to end the rebellion, Cuomo finally agreed to let a television crew into the cellblock. But when prisoners covered that the "television crew" consisted of undercover cops, they postponed the release of any hostages. At this point, the threat of another rebellion drew closer as over 250 soldiers and officers were secretly brought into the prison.

The prisoners then broke the deadlock over access to the media by broadening their demands to reporters to be allowed to enter the cellblock. In the captured bullhorns. In throughout the rebellion, prisoners noted that the only accurate information they received was the progress of negotiations in cellblock B from the prisoners.

The maneuvers of Cuomo and Coughlin were revealed most clearly in earlier negotiations over amnesty for the prisoners. In talks on January 10, Cuomo told the prisoners they would agree to consider amnesty. Once the prisoners agreed to this promise, they agreed to release the hostages and end the rebellion. In reality, however, Cuomo had told Coughlin and other prison officials that they would refuse amnesty once the hostages were released. Unfortunately for Cuomo, a Republican state senator from Long Island, Ralph Marino, blew the whistle on Cuomo's double-cross that night when he announced to reporters that state authorities were not going to grant amnesty.

After the prisoners learned of Marino's statement on the p.m. news, they began shouting angrily, "The deal's off, deal's off." In order to gain release of the hostages, prison authorities finally had to issue a statement agreeing to the prisoners' demands, including promising "no form of retaliation whatsoever" against those who participated in the rebellion. This opened the way for the release of the hostages on January 10.

After the hostages were freed, Cuomo and Coughlin quickly broke their promises of

cellblock, the prisoners put up banners saying "We Don't Want Another Attica"—referring to the massacre of 43 prisoners and guards that ended the 1971 prisoners' rebellion in upstate New York. They wanted reporters on the scene to know—and publicize—their desire for a peaceful settlement of their protest. They also insisted, from the beginning, that they have access to reporters so that the public would know how reasonable their demands were.

This latter demand was rejected by New York Governor Mario Cuomo and Corrections Commissioner Thomas Coughlin. Cuomo told Coughlin that publicizing the prisoners' demands "would damage us forever" and "excite inmates all over. . . ."

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The prisoners themselves broke the deadlock over access to the media by broadcasting their demands to reporters over captured bullhorns. In fact, throughout the rebellion reporters noted that the only accurate information they received over the progress of negotiations or conditions in cellblock B came from the prisoners.

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Miami police arrest Black man during Overtown uprising.

retaliation." On January 11, Cuomo stated that he would refuse amnesty for the prisoners, while Coughlin told reporters that some prisoners would be prosecuted for supposed felonies committed during the revolt, including rioting, assault and, possibly, kidnapping.

U.S. society as racist as ever

The uprisings in Overtown, in Washington and at Ossining all stem from a single cause—the racism and anti-working class oppression that is built into U.S. capitalist society. Despite the mass struggles of the 1960s and the many promises made by the capitalists in the wake of those struggles, U.S. society in 1983 is as racist as ever. The gains Black and Latin people actually won in those years are rapidly disappearing under the weight of the economic crisis and the attacks of the Reagan administration and the capitalist class as a whole.

In Miami, for example, after the 1980 rebellion, the capitalists talked endlessly about the need to do something about the poverty and unemployment that had provoked it. But, two and a half years later, conditions there are even worse.

And in Ossining, though Cuomo told reporters he would have carried out the reforms demanded by the prisoners

without their actions, there can be little doubt that nothing would have been done about the conditions in the prison unless the prisoners themselves raised hell. Corrections Commissioner Coughlin actually told reporters, "This system has changed dramatically since Attica; the racism, the abuse in the system doesn't exist anymore." Yet when prisoners at Ossining carried out a reasonable and disciplined protest to win reforms that everyone claims to support, they were labelled "emotionally disturbed, manic-depressives, schizos and psychotics" (all of which sounds much more "scientific" than the old-fashioned, straight-out racist epithets) and then were betrayed.

The capitalists, who are declaring war against Blacks and Latins, and in fact all working class and oppressed people, can expect to face war in return. This is the real lesson of the recent rebellions in Miami, in Washington, and at Ossining. These uprisings represent an initial and spontaneous—but unquestionably political—response by working class and oppressed people to the attacks coming down on them. As the capitalist crisis deepens, and as ever-larger numbers of people become open targets for the racists in white sheets, in corporate boardrooms and in Washington, D.C., we can expect to see larger and even more violent uprisings in the future. □



Free Darnell Summers & Gail Simmons!

Darnell Summers, a Black revolutionary who is being framed on murder charges in Detroit, is scheduled to go to trial on February 8. As we reported previously in the *Torch* (Vol. 9, No. 9), the case centers on the killing of a police officer, Robert Gonser, in Inkster, Michigan, in 1968. The shooting stemmed from a struggle over the Malcolm X Community Center in Inkster, which the police had been harassing. Four hours before Gonser was killed, a 14-year-old Black youth, Jimmy Matthews, had been shot by police. Nobody was ever punished for Matthews' murder.

Summers was charged with the Gonser murder because of his role as a leader in the Malcolm X Center, and not because the police had any evidence against him. When his case was brought to trial in 1969, the charges were dropped "without prejudice" (meaning they could be brought up again at a later date) when the state's main witness, Milford Scott, admitted he had lied about Summers' guilt under heavy pressure from police.

The main reason the charges were reinstated 14 years later is that Summers' revolutionary activities continued in West Germany. He played with a political jazz band, Afrodisia, and he did anti-war organizing among American GIs with the revolutionary newspaper *Fight Back*. The Coalition to Free Darnell Summers has received a government document, a U.S. Army "information paper," drawn up by army lawyers on the Judge Advocate General's staff for the U.S. Command Berlin in 1975, outlining its strategy to counter anti-war organizing among GIs in Germany. After outlining measures to harass the GI Counseling Center, the document recommends the "expulsion of key individuals in extreme cases." To avoid the appearance of political repression, the document advises: "If deemed necessary, action should be pursued through the most indirect channel possible. . . . Caution must be taken not to trigger a negative and perhaps embarrassing press reaction."

The extradition of Darnell Summers from Germany to face trumped-up murder charges going back to 1968 is motivated by this government desire to "expel" an anti-war organizer from Germany "through the most indirect channel possible." There is certainly no new evidence to justify trying him again. The government is relying on the same Milford Scott who admitted he lied 14 years ago. The only change in the situation is that Scott is now in prison on another charge, and is eligible for parole next year, so he is apparently willing to say whatever the police want him to say.

The extradition of Summers from Germany last year was based on testimony from Gail Simmons, who was his lover in 1968. Her testimony was obtained by charging her with the same murder and jailing her until she agreed to sign a statement implicating Summers. When Summers was brought back to the U.S., however, Simmons publicly repudiated her signed statement. Since she is no longer cooperating with the police, Gail Simmons is now standing trial for the same murder.

Simmons is clearly innocent; among other things, police testimony states that the murder was committed from a car with four men in it. And she has been put through hell because of her refusal to testify against Summers. She was jailed for several months, and was told that she would be made to suffer even if she was eventually found innocent. Being a welfare mother, she was unable to afford bail. Under intense pressure, she agreed to sign a statement implicating Summers in the murder, but then recanted. Since then, she was told at her pre-trial hearing that charges against her would be dropped if she again agreed to testify against Summers. The prosecution has insisted on trying her before Summers' case comes up, apparently hoping that under the pressure of a murder trial she will change her mind and play the prosecution's game. Her trial had been set for last November, but was delayed when she admitted herself to a hospital after attempting suicide.

Darnell Summers' trial is one more example of the lengths the capitalist government will go to in trying to stifle revolutionary organizers. Both Summers and Simmons need your support. Letters of protest can be sent to: **Judge Joseph B. Sullivan, 1801 City-County Building, Detroit, MI 48226.** Information on further activities of the coalition can be obtained by calling the Detroit branch of the RSL.

—Paul Carson



WORLD IN REVOLUTION

Mutiny in Salvadorean army

On January 6 a major crisis erupted within the Salvadorean regime when Lieutenant Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa Pérez, commander of Cabañas Province, began a six-day mutiny against his superiors in the army and the government.

Ochoa declared himself "in rebellion" against the defense minister, Gen. José Guillermo García, after García ordered Ochoa transferred to a diplomatic post in Uruguay. Labelling García a "dictator" who was trying to force him into exile to further his own political ambitions, Ochoa refused to give up his command until García was dismissed from office. Several key officers, including the commanders of the air force and two infantry battalions, supported him.

Eventually, a committee of top-ranking military leaders worked out a compromise in which Ochoa will resign, but not face any disciplinary action for his mutiny, while García will stay on at least temporarily as defense minister.

Ochoa's mutiny is only the latest move in the power struggle that is taking place within the Salvadorean government. One faction, led by García, supports U.S. imperialism's strategy for defeating the leftist rebellion led by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front. This faction would like to win popular support by promoting a limited land reform and cutting down "human rights" abuses, while trying to split the rebel camp by opening negotiations with its moderate wing. This strategy is opposed by the ultra-right faction, led by Roberto D'Aubuisson, president of the constituent assembly elected last March. The right-wingers basically want an all-out, no-holds-barred war against the guerrillas.

In recent months, García has used his control over the distribution of U.S. military and economic aid to build up his political base. He has also begun to purge D'Aubuisson's supporters from key posts in the army and government. But García went too far in attacking Ochoa, whose ability is respected both by his fellow officers and by U.S. advisers in El Salvador. In particular, the rightists have been able to discredit García by claiming he is promoting incompetent officers who are his allies while dismissing more effective commanders.

Workers, peasants battle Mexico's ruling PRI

A wave of protests led by opposition parties of both the right and the left has resulted in the seizure of over 40 municipal buildings in small towns throughout Mexico. In some cases, violent clashes have broken out between the protesters and members of the governing party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, and the police. Five people have been reported killed, and 32 wounded. Most of the injuries occurred in late December in Ciudad Hidalgo near the Guatemalan border, and in Ciudad Fernández in the west.

The protesting political parties range from the Partido Acción Nacional and the Partido Demócrata Mexicano on the right to the Partido Socialista Unificado de Mexico on the left. All charge that electoral fraud by the PRI government is preventing their local candidates from taking office.

In Tepeyanco, 55 miles east of Mexico City, 500 peasants seized the town hall on New Year's Eve. "We are no longer willing to accept the impositions of PRI," said one of the protest leaders. "Almost no one voted for them." Besides free elections for mayor, the people of Tepeyanco are also demanding the right to have an elected town council.

Also in Mexico, 500 peasants took control of Ocoyoacac, an agricultural suburb 30 miles from the capital, on December 19 and successfully fought off an attack by 2,000 police. The PRI government had been pressuring the peasants to sell their highly productive lands so that a residential working class suburb could be built on the site. But the peasants claimed it was merely a trick to get their choice land to sell for high-priced housing. Further, as they pointed out, one high government official owns a large property in the area and his land was not being touched. After a two-week stand-off, the government gave up its development plans and the peasants retained the land.

—Paul Benjamin & Albert Lary

A Review of Michael Manley's Book, 'Struggle in the Periphery'

A Testament of Failed Liberal Capitalism

Below we are reprinting an article by Bill Grier from the October 27-November 26, 1982, issue of the *Forward*, newspaper of the Revolutionary Marxist League of Jamaica, sister organization of the RSL.

October 30, 1980, marked the end of nearly nine years of PNP (People's National Party) rule. In those years the PNP government tried their unsuccessful "democratic socialist" experiment, an attempt to reform Jamaican capitalism against the background of the deepening crisis of world capitalism.

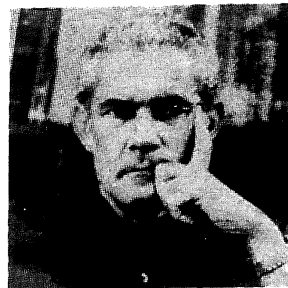
In spite of these obvious failures of "democratic socialism" (liberal capitalism), most of the left which developed during that period, while committed (at least in words) to working class liberation, ended up politically supporting the PNP. A full understanding of the lessons of that period (1972-80) is therefore vital if we are to build a working class alternative to the JLP (Jamaica Labour Party) and the PNP.

Manley's reflections in his latest book, *Struggle in the Periphery*, are important as a timely reminder of what the PNP stood for, the illusions they had, and what we can expect of any future PNP government.

PNP defended capitalism

In the first place, the book makes it plain that the PNP basically defended capitalism and did not stand for fundamental change. On page 43, for example, Manley writes: "We also had a firm and unwavering commitment to the preservation and development of a strong private sector. We did not believe in a pure free enterprise model of economic development and consequently saw the private sector as having a particular place and filling a particular role. But we did want that place to be permanent and the role to be dynamic... In fact we were to bend over backward time and again to help the private sector and to reassure its members of the sincerity of our commitment to their role."

This theme recurs throughout the book. In this connection it is important to add that: 1) nowhere in the world of capitalism in the 1970s and '80s does a "pure" free enterprise model exist, and 2) that the develop-



Michael Manley.

ment of the public sector does not mean socialism or even workers' control of that sector. The experience of workers at the Jamaica Omnibus Service, State Trading Corporation, National Commercial Bank, hotels and other companies taken over by the PNP government can testify to that fact. As if in recognition of these points, Manley makes the following



very telling admission—"In retrospect it does not seem that our programme was all that radical. Many of the schemes we tried to introduce already exist in most of Europe." (Page 95) In plain words all that Manley was attempting were the capitalist reforms that have been carried out in certain parts of Europe, notably the Scandinavian countries.

The 'Third Path,' myth or reality?

Very early in the book Manley writes that the PNP were to spend their years as a government exploring a so-called "Third Path," that is, an approach different from the Puerto Rican and Cuban models of development. As we explained above, this "Third Path" had nothing to do with the ending of capitalism. Manley's book also reminds us that at all critical times the PNP government abandoned the "Third Path" and instead relied on the IMF (which the book equaled with the Puerto Rican model).

Thus even before the December 1976 general elections the

PNP government had begun negotiations with the IMF and subsequently signed an agreement in early 1977 having failed to find any alternative. About this, Manley writes: "Looking back, I believe it to be clear that we had no choice at that time."

No choice, that is, except to subject the working and oppressed Jamaican masses to skyrocketing prices, mounting layoffs, capitalist factory closures and other terrible pressures, while the capitalists and imperialists were allowed every opportunity to make fantastic profits (20 percent, in fact).

The same process was repeated in 1978. This time the situation was even more pitiful. Instead of any alternative, Manley signed what he calls in his book "one of the most savage packages ever imposed on any client government by the IMF."

After six years in power not

even the PNP left wing had any alternative. As the book explains: "By now [1978] there was a general, if reluctant, agreement in the party that for the time being we did not have any choice." Manley also explains that: "I certainly spent many hours at the time considering resigning."

Whatever had happened to the PNP's "Third Path"? Were they still exploring it? In the end it is only in March 1980, that is, after eight years of PNP government, that the party finally broke with the IMF. So much for the eight years of exploring a so-called "Third Path." What is most significant in all of this is that even in looking back Manley attempts to justify the IMF agreement on the basis that he had no choice. No doubt a future PNP government will have no difficulty going back to the IMF path and explaining that it too has no choice.

PNP liberalism

One of the things which comes out clearly throughout the book is Manley's basic (Continued on page 12)

Note to our originally intended series, "Disputes in the Secretariat Re Trotskyist Theory" issue of the *Torch* have decided to space this month the recently-cotition of the Alliance, youth the U.S. Socialty. We believe this report us the current pol the Socialist. The concluding "Crisis of Trotskyism" series will app

By DARR

The Young (YSA) held its convention in October 30 to January people, members and SWP as guests, attendees

The convention great deal about political direction and SWP. Two most clearly: 1) leadership in the diating key parties YSA's long-standing including its Trotskyism, the permanent Revolution

ity of democratic inist parties to class revolution to build a specific ist international party; 2) the leadership are setting the stage with the United the Fourth International

the international organization to presently affiliated goal is to try international rety, primarily with Fidel Castro Communist Party nista National in Nicaragua and Movement in Cuba

Significantly, political shift was discussed at the tion itself—at open sessions members could come up for a alone a vote. I line of the SWP put forward in a part of the con given on New SWP National Barnes.

In his speech Trotsky and Oury Continuity denounced 80 Trotskyists (that rest of the USec unreformable s charged that the to recognize wha "new proletarian leaderships" that in Cuba, Nicaragua. And he w long list of add differences betw

Note to our readers: We originally intended to conclude our series, "Dispute in the United Secretariat Reveals Crisis of Trotskyist Theory," in this issue of the Torch. However, we have decided instead to devote space this month to a report on the recently-concluded convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, youth organization of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. We believe readers will find this report useful in assessing the current political direction of the Socialist Workers Party. The concluding article in the "Crisis of Trotskyist Theory" series will appear next month.

By DARRYL CLARK

The Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) held its 22nd national convention in Chicago, December 30 to January 2. Over 800 people, members of the YSA and SWP as well as invited guests, attended.

The convention revealed a great deal about the current political direction of the YSA and SWP. Two points emerged most clearly: 1) The SWP leadership is in the process of repudiating key parts of the SWP/YSA's long-standing program, including its commitment to Trotskyism, the theory of Permanent Revolution, the centrality of democratic-centralist Leninist parties to lead working class revolutions, and the need to build a specifically Trotskyist international revolutionary party; 2) the leaders of the SWP are setting the stage for a break with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec), the international Trotskyist organization to which the SWP is presently affiliated. Their stated goal is to try to form a new international revolutionary party, primarily in conjunction with Fidel Castro and the Cuban Communist Party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada.

Significantly, this major political shift was never actually discussed at the YSA convention itself—at least not in the open sessions that all YSA members could attend. It never came up for a discussion, let alone a vote. Instead, the new line of the SWP leadership was put forward in a public talk (not part of the convention proper), given on New Year's Eve by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

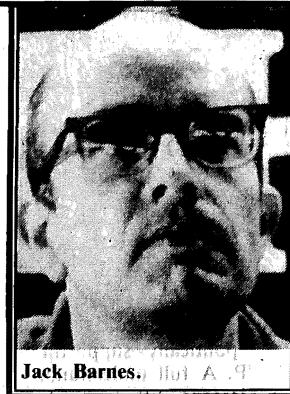
In his speech, titled "Their Trotsky and Ours: Revolutionary Continuity Today," Barnes denounced 80 percent of all Trotskyists (that is, most of the rest of the USec) as "hopeless, unreformable sectarians." He charged that the USec has failed to recognize what he termed the "new proletarian revolutionary leaderships" that have emerged in Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada. And he went on to cite a long list of additional political differences between the SWP

leadership and the USec majority. These include: 1) Iran—the USec has reservations about glorifying the reactionary clerical regime of Ayatollah Khomeini; the SWP leadership has taken a virtually uncritical stance; 2) the Middle East—the USec retains criticisms of the outlook and strategy of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); the SWP now embraces the PLO without reservation; 3) Poland—the USec favors the continuation of a policy of public defense of Solidarność; the SWP says that there is no way to publicly defend Solidarność without playing into the hands of U.S. imperialism.

Barnes went on to say that on each of these issues, the differences between the SWP and the USec majority were widening, not narrowing. And, as if to prepare the YSA for his next step, Barnes stressed that an organization with such divisions "cannot survive over time."

Barnes: 'We are not Trotskyists'

To justify his impending break from the USec, Barnes said that Central America and the Caribbean have become the "center of the world revolution today." He claimed that Fidel Castro, the Sandinistas and Grenadan Prime Minister Maurice Bishop have all led socialist revolutions without Leninist revolutionary parties. Moreover, he said that these leaderships either have constructed (Cuba), or are in the process of constructing (Nicaragua), revolutionary communist parties made up of the best militants from different traditions—Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyists, Social Democrats, Catholic progressives, middle class nationalists, etc. Barnes maintained that the present period is essentially similar to 1919, when the Communist (Third) International was



Jack Barnes, 1981 A.P.

formed through a fusion, under the leadership of the newly victorious Bolshevik Party, of the best Marxists, anarchists, syndicalists and other left trends. Just as the Russian Revolution of 1917 led to a profound realignment of the left, so, claims Barnes, today's revolutions in Central America will lead to a similar regroupment of revolutionary forces.

Barnes concluded this part of his talk by drawing the following picture (here, we are paraphrasing Barnes): The Socialist Workers Party is right at the center of these developments. A new wave of revolutions in the Western Hemisphere has caused us to re-examine our theoretical traditions. We have met the challenge. We are learning from the comrades. We are reaching out to them.

Barnes then added, "We are not Trotskyists, we are communists."

That the SWP leadership's new course involves downplaying or even abandoning previous criticisms of Stalinist and petty bourgeois nationalist regimes and organizations was suggested in other parts of Barnes' speech. He quoted and praised Schafik Jorge Handal, leader of the Salvadorean Communist Party, for what Barnes termed his "new and original thinking" about revolution. More significantly, Barnes' contention that any widespread

public support for Polish Solidarność (that is, for the Polish workers) can only aid U.S. imperialism, moves the SWP one step closer to Poland's Stalinist rulers.

SWP breaks with theory of Permanent Revolution

Barnes' talk also touched on some of the theoretical questions currently under debate within the USec. He confirmed many of the points we have argued in our "Crisis of Trotskyist Theory" series, most importantly, that the SWP leaders are moving to revise the SWP's theory and program in a distinctly Stalinist direction.

In discussing Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, Barnes not only contended that the theory was invalid for Russia (a position previously elaborated in an article by Militant editor Doug Jenness in the April 1982 issue of *International Socialist Review*, a monthly supplement to the *Militant*), but he went on to argue that Trotsky never originally intended for the theory to apply more broadly and only advanced it in these terms in reaction to Stalin's campaign against him. It is certainly true that when Trotsky first developed his theory (and until after the Bolshevik revolution), he only meant it to apply to Russia. It may also be true that Trotsky only generalized the theory, that is, realized that it applied to other countries, in response to Stalin's attacks on him in the 1920s. But Barnes' insinuation that Trotsky did not, for most of his political life, and certainly throughout the 1930s, see the theory of Permanent Revolution as international in character and central to his entire political program is simply a falsification of history. In the "Transitional Program," the key programmatic document of the Fourth International written in 1938, Trotsky

made his thinking on Permanent Revolution clear: "... the general trend of revolutionary development in all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the permanent revolution..." ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," published in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, 1973, New York, p. 98.) Whatever Barnes himself thinks about the "inapplicability" of the theory of Permanent Revolution to Russia and other countries, Trotsky certainly did not share this view.

Perhaps even more revealing, Barnes accused Trotsky of making "serious sectarian errors" in his approach to the Chinese and Spanish revolutions. Concerning China, this statement suggests that Barnes now takes issue with Trotsky's criticisms of the Third International's policy of the "bloc of four classes." These criticisms were based on the fact that Stalin had distorted Lenin's theory of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship in such a way as to subordinate the workers and peasants to Chiang Kai-shek, and the landlords and capitalists who supported him. In contrast, Trotsky—consistent with Lenin's policies—urged the Chinese workers and peasants to fight all their oppressors and establish their own, revolutionary government. We suspect that, today, Barnes actually supports some version of the Stalinist policy—a policy that led to the slaughter of tens of thousands of workers in Shanghai and other cities in 1927.

As for Spain, we suspect that Barnes believes that Trotsky's opposition to the Popular Front policy—the Spanish version of the "bloc of four classes"—was also mistaken, and that some version of the Popular Front (which, in our view, strangled the Spanish Revolution and paved the way for the victory of Franco's fascists) was correct.

It is highly significant that on two questions posing the issue of Trotsky vs. Stalin, Barnes now attacks Trotsky. We believe this gives added weight to one of the key points we have been arguing in our series: The Barnes leadership is not dropping Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution in favor of Lenin's theory of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, but rather is embracing Stalin's and, subsequently, Mao's distorted versions of that theory.

As further confirmation of this conclusion, it is worth noting that the SWP has begun to sell a collection of Fidel Castro's speeches on the Allende government in Chile. During the "Allende experiment" with reformist socialism in Chile in

(Continued on page 12)

(This is the final article in our six-part series on the history of Haiti.)

By WILLIAM FALK

It has been over 25 years since Haitian dictator François ("Papa Doc") Duvalier came to power and 12 years since his son, Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc"), succeeded him. Today, however, the Duvalier regime faces the most serious crisis of its two-and-a-half decades of corrupt and repressive rule. The Haitian economy is a shambles and the ruling and middle classes are divided into warring factions and cliques.

The poor state of the Haitian economy is directly linked to today's deepening world economic crisis, a crisis that is taking its greatest toll on Caribbean and other so-called Third World nations. The world prices of sugar and coffee, Haiti's chief agricultural exports, have plunged dramatically. The demand for Haitian-produced bauxite (aluminum ore) and the small consumer products (stuffed toys, electronic components, etc.) that make up much of Haitian manufacturing has been sharply reduced by the world recession. For the same reason, Haiti's tourist trade has dwindled to a small fraction of what it once was. The resulting deterioration of the Haitian economy has forced the cancellation of plans for expanded industrial development in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince and for an even more extensive agricultural reconstruction program. In short, "Jean-Claudism"—the attempt to make Haiti the "Taiwan of the Caribbean"—has failed.

Needless to say, Haiti's economic crisis has hurt Haitian peasants and workers the most. Over the last five years, for example, the number of Haitians living below the official United Nations poverty line has increased by more than a million and now may total well over 4.5 million—of an estimated population of six million. Thousands of Haitians have been forced off their plots and into Port-au-Prince in search of jobs that do not exist. Hundreds of thousands more have gone to the Dominican Republic to work for \$1 to \$3 a day on the sugar and coffee plantations there. But the Dominican Republic is also in economic crisis today and many of the Haitians there, as well as 30 percent of the Dominican workers, are unemployed.

Haitian ruling class in crisis

The crisis of the Haitian economy has not only affected those on the bottom; it has also provoked an intense political crisis in the Haitian ruling class. During the 1970s, Jean-Claude, who came to power lacking a solid base of support of his own, sought to create a stable regime by building an alliance with both the largely mulatto business elite and the technocrats and so-called modernizers who are closely tied to U.S. imperialism.

But the collapse of Jean-Claude's economic program has set loose a political free-for-all. No section of the Haitian ruling class holds much faith in or loyalty to the Haitian state. No single faction or individual commands sufficient respect to pose as the embodiment of the nation, as Papa Doc did throughout his rule. Moreover, whole sections of the ruling class—including those closest to Jean-Claude—have be-

The History of Haiti— Black People Struggling to Be Free Conclusion: Prospects for Revolution



come thieves in their own houses, caring little if their looting endangers the wealth and power of the ruling class as a whole.

Today's instability in Haiti is causing increasing concern on the part of the U.S. government. It fears that the factional fighting and the corruption, combined with the hatred the Haitian people feel for the Duvaliers, could lead to revolution and a resulting loss of U.S. control. Desire for a new, more efficient regime is not limited to the more liberal wing of the U.S. capitalists, such as those associated with Jimmy Carter and his "human rights" policy. A right-wing thinktank connected to the Reagan administration, the Council for Inter-American Security, recommended at the time Reagan took office that, in order to forestall a "Communist invasion from Cuba," the U.S. should support efforts to oust Jean-Claude through a "neocapitalist revolution." This "revolution" would aim to install Clemard Joseph Charles, a conservative exiled banker who was once part of Papa Doc's machine, as head of the Haitian government. Replacing the Duvaliers with someone "cleaner" has been a State Department dream for nearly 25 years, though in the end it has always been discarded because, as Latin America Regional Reports put it in January 1982, "All U.S. officials still seem to agree... that the opposition is still too weak and divided for the Duvaliers to be

cast off with safety."

Until now, Jean-Claude has managed to balance among the contending forces in the Haitian ruling class and maintain his position as the one irreplaceable part. He has allowed the technocrats and modernizers enough room so that they could increase production, and support him against the old guard—but not so much room that they could provide the U.S. with an alternative way of ruling Haiti. He has utilized the repressive apparatus and nationalist cover provided by the old Duvalierists—but, at the same time, he has kept them from getting enough power to try to rule without him. So far, Jean-Claude has balanced longer and better than anyone thought he would when Papa Doc died. But he has never faced a conjuncture of economic and political crises such as that affecting Haiti today.

In an article written in 1915, V.I. Lenin, then the leader of the Bolshevik Party and later the leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, outlined the essential conditions for a successful revolution in the following terms:

"To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not

be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is... a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth...; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses...."

Among the three conditions cited by Lenin, only one, the third, does not yet apply in Haiti today. But there are definite signs that "a considerable increase in the activity of the masses" may not be far off. Despite conditions of extreme repression, workers in Port-au-Prince have struck repeatedly. This past autumn, for example, workers struck the Rawlings Sporting Goods Company. To suppress the strike Baby Doc called out the army, which shot 12 strikers. As well, there has been a notable increase in political activity among the Haitian emigré community, including, on January 2, 1982, the staging of the largest Haitian demonstration ever held in the U.S.

What will be the outcome of a massive rebellion by the Haitian people? If Haiti's past guides its future, then the prospects for the Haitian people are not good. From Toussaint and Dessalines to Duvalier, the pattern of Haitian history has been one of the masses providing the source of strength for a leader who comes to power promising freedom—and then betrays his followers.

But Haiti's future need not be determined by its past. Changes in Haitian society and, in fact, in the world as a whole, have created new conditions that make it more possible than ever before for the people of Haiti to truly win their own freedom.

The first of these changes is the growth of the Haitian working class. Since the end of slavery, the overwhelming majority of the people of Haiti have been peasants, barely scratching out a living in the impoverished countryside. Peasant life has an enormously adverse impact on people's political consciousness and ability to struggle. As with peasants everywhere, the small farmers (mostly sharecroppers) of Haiti have been isolated from the cities, where political power is concentrated and political events determined. The vast majority of these small farmers are illiterate and have had little opportunity to develop an understanding of the outside world. Equally important, they are dispersed, with little chance to develop stable political organizations. Moreover, virtually the entirety of the peasants' life experiences hammers home the "lesson" that the critical events in the world—the success or failure of crops, the survival or death of children—are beyond the control of human beings.

As a result of these conditions, the Haitian peasants, who at times have been very revolutionary, have ultimately been led, or misled, by one or another of the urban classes. This has had a profound impact on Haitian history. In 1804, for example, the Haitian people won a limited kind of freedom after nearly 15 years of violent, often brutal, revolutionary struggle. But their gains were quickly lost as the new elite they had boosted into power sold the country, bit by bit, to the imperialists.

During the upheaval politics in the cities the outcome of the masses of Haitian pe countryside and un role in the events, su urban-based middle ized under the banne ism. Once in power, like those before it, t base of support Haitian people.

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What is the outcome of a massive revolution in the Haitian people? If we look at the future, then the Haitian people are not as saint and Dessalines to the term of Haitian history. The masses providing the leadership for a leader who promises freedom—his followers.

Security need not be determined. Changes in Haitian society, in the world as a whole, are new conditions that are possible than ever before in Haiti to truly win their

These changes is the Haitian working class. Slavery, the overwhelming people of Haiti have barely scratching out a living in the overgrown countryside. An enormously adverse economic and political consciousness to struggle. As with the small farmers (peppers) of Haiti have come from the cities, where the population is concentrated and determined. The vast majority of small farmers are who had little opportunity for understanding of the revolution. Equally important, they have little chance to develop political organizations. Finally the entirety of the Haitian experiences hammers home that the critical moment—the success or the survival or death of the revolution beyond the control of

Under these conditions, the Haitian people, who at times have been revolutionary, have ultimately been crushed, by one or another of the ruling classes. This has had a profound impact on Haitian history. In fact, the Haitian people have a kind of freedom after a period of violent, often brutal, struggle. But their gains are not as the new elite they have sold the power to the imperialists.

During the upheavals of 1946 and 1957, politics in the cities similarly decided the outcome of the class struggle. The masses of Haitian people, isolated in the countryside and unable to play a direct role in the events, supported the Black, urban-based middle class which organized under the banner of Black Nationalism. Once in power, however, this elite, like those before it, turned on their mass base of support and betrayed the Haitian people.

Today, though the majority of Haitians are still peasants, there is in Haiti a small but growing working class. Over 60,000 workers are employed in the assembly plants of Port-au-Prince. Although they constitute only slightly more than one percent of the population, these workers have tremendous social weight—they produce over one-third of Haiti's exports. In addition to these workers, there are thousands more working in the construction and shipping industries and in such places as the state printing office. Although very poor, these workers have certain political advantages the peasants lack. In contrast to the people in the countryside, the workers are concentrated in the cities, the centers of political life, where they have the opportunity to learn about Haitian politics. While not well-educated, they have a higher rate of literacy than the peasants. Most important, rather than being dispersed and atomized by their living and working conditions, they tend to be concentrated in relatively small areas and are further brought together by their workplaces.

For these and other reasons, the Haitian workers, like workers everywhere, have significantly greater social power than the peasants, along with the opportunity to become far more politically conscious. Moreover, despite the many differences between the workers and peasants, there is one thing they share: common enemies. The same capitalists, the same banks, the same church, the same police and army that oppress and exploit the peasants oppress and exploit the workers. The Haitian workers have the ability, in other words, to unite the overwhelming majority of the Haitian people in a revolutionary struggle against a relatively small ruling class.

The second development that makes it possible for the Haitian people to avoid the tragedies of the past is that today the workers and peasants throughout the Caribbean/Central American region are in revolt against U.S. imperialism and its local stooges. During the 1957 upheavals in Haiti, for example, the Haitian people faced pro-imperialist dictatorships in Cuba (Batista) to the west and the Dominican Republic (Trujillo) to the east—as well as the U.S. itself to the north. Had the Haitians actually seized power for themselves, or in any way threatened U.S. interests, Haiti would probably have been invaded, as was the Dominican Republic in 1965.

Today, the U.S. is on the defensive throughout the region. Pro-U.S. dictators have been overthrown in Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua and replaced by regimes that, while not in our view socialist, are nonetheless hostile to U.S. imperialism. The Dominican Republic is ruled by a party that calls itself socialist and, facing economic crisis at home, may not be in a strong position to invade Haiti.

In short, today, unlike in the past, if the Haitian people rise up against their rulers and U.S. imperialism, they will

not be isolated. They will be part of a broad anti-imperialist struggle which the U.S. will find difficult if not impossible to suppress.

What strategy for Haitian revolution?

These and other developments make the liberation of the Haitian people far more possible today than in the past. In our view, this liberation can only be achieved through a socialist revolution. By socialist revolution we mean an armed uprising of the Haitian workers, peasants and other oppressed people to overthrow the corrupt Duvalier regime, smash the police and the Macoutes, and defeat or win over the army. In such a revolution, the Haitian people, led by the working class, could kick out the imperialists, the landlords and the local capitalists and take over the factories and the land. They could run the economy and the entire country through



A 10-year-old Haitian chops sugar cane at a Gulf and Western plantation in the Dominican Republic.

democratic workers' and peasants' councils (soviets), factory and neighborhood committees, militias, etc. In other words, the Haitian workers can lead the rest of the Haitian people in a revolution to overthrow the imperialist and local ruling classes and establish their own collective and democratic rule.

This strategy—a socialist revolution in which the workers lead the peasants in the overthrow of all the old ruling classes and in the establishment of a revolutionary government based on the workers' and peasants' direct rule—is the strategy of Permanent Revolution. It was first put forward by Leon Trotsky in a series of articles titled **Results and Prospects**, written in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. It was also the strategy successfully followed by the Bolsheviks in 1917—although they never explicitly adopted the term. (See discussion in the first three parts of our "Crisis of Trotskyist Theory" series.)

The essence of the strategy of Permanent Revolution is to make a revolution that is "permanent," that is, complete, in two basic senses. First, the revolution should not stop until the workers and peasants have overthrown all the old ruling classes and have established their own revolutionary government. This does not mean that the revolution must

either take place all at once or not at all. Rather, it means that the workers and peasants should not seek to limit their struggle to a so-called "first stage," or "bourgeois democratic revolution" whose purpose would be to clear the way for the further development of capitalism and, so the theory goes, pave the way for a future "second stage," a socialist revolution in which the workers and peasants themselves would take power.

The problem with such a "two-stage" approach is that the workers and peasants never get to the "second stage." If the workers and peasants limit their struggles and place into power a supposedly progressive sector of the capitalist class or middle class, these forces, once in power, will turn on the workers and peasants in order to consolidate their own rule. In other words, there simply are no consistently "progressive" bourgeois or petty bourgeois classes—in Haiti or anywhere else.

This is not mere speculation on our part. As we discussed in the previous article in this series, it was under the

equally if not more true of Haiti today. It is hard to conceive of any Haitian revolution that is not international from the very beginning, at the very least in the sense of being intertwined with a revolution in the Dominican Republic. These two countries have always been linked politically and economically, as well as geographically. Since the days of the 1791-1804 Haitian Revolution, no ruler in either country has felt secure unless they or one of their allies controlled the other side of the island. Moreover, there are now several hundred thousand Haitians who live in the Dominican Republic. A revolutionary upsurge in Haiti could easily spread to the Dominican Republic, where, as in Haiti, a tiny ruling class holds nearly all the wealth, while the majority of people live in poverty in the countryside.

Revolutionary party needed

This strategy, the strategy of Permanent Revolution, is not an iron law of history. **Organization** is a prerequisite for a successful workers' revolution. If the working class fails to take decisive leadership of the struggle, middle class groupings of one stripe or another can end up leading the anti-Duvalier struggle. A successful fight for freedom in Haiti requires that a revolutionary party be built that can challenge the anti-Duvalier, but pro-capitalist, leaders and organize the workers and peasants for socialist revolution. Because the fight for freedom requires international revolution, such a revolutionary party must be built on an international scale as well.

By a revolutionary party we do not mean a group of middle class professionals and technocrats who speak in "Marxist" phrases and seek to assume power "in the workers' and peasants' interests." Such parties, which hold up Russia and Cuba as the model for "socialism," are in fact one of the greatest dangers to the possibility that a second Haitian revolution can truly free the Haitian people.

What forces such as these want to create is **state capitalism**—with themselves as the new masters. Just as the middle class négritudists in Haiti claimed that because they were Black they had the right to rule over Black people, today sections of the middle class in the Caribbean claim that because they are supposed "communists" they should be the rightful rulers of the region's workers and peasants.

In sum, the fall of Duvalier appears today to be inevitable—but the victory of the Haitian people is not. In any revolutionary period after the overthrow of the Duvalier regime, pro-state-capitalist groups are sure to be active. One of the urgent reasons a genuinely revolutionary, working class party is needed is to provide workers with enough cohesion and political leadership for a successful fight against this new would-be ruling class. Only when the workers and peasants take over society and actually run it themselves, will there be any assurance of liberty. Despite 200 years of bitter struggle, the Haitian people have never been free. Today's generation of Haitian revolutionaries can be proud to pick up the tradition of the Haitian fight for freedom, but they must lead it to a place it's never been—to an island-wide, Caribbean-wide and, in fact, worldwide socialist revolution. □

banner of supporting a so-called progressive "national bourgeoisie" that the Haitian left allied itself with both Estimé and François Duvalier in their respective bids for power. What Papa Doc Duvalier subsequently did to the Haitian people may have been extreme—but it was not an accident. As one emigré Haitian political activist recently put it, "The progressive bourgeoisie always stabs you in the back."

The second sense in which a revolution in Haiti should be "permanent" is that, to be successful, it must spread internationally, that is, it must be part of an international revolution. When the Bolsheviks led the Russian workers and peasants in a successful revolution in October 1917, they did so with the definite expectation that revolutionary crises were developing elsewhere. Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolsheviks all felt that unless workers seized power in one or more of the economically developed countries of Europe, a revolution in a semi-developed country like Russia would be doomed. (There were no successful socialist revolutions elsewhere and, in our opinion, the workers' government in Russia was in fact overthrown and capitalism re-established, although in a different manner than either Lenin or Trotsky had expected.)

What was true of Russia in 1917 is

Argentina...

(Continued from page 3)
Malvinas War, or the foreign debt. All the parties rejected this demand.

Opposition in disarray

But, like the fractured and failing junta, Argentina's opposition parties are themselves weak and divided. The largest party, controlled by the Peronistas, contains a dozen factions with views ranging from Marxism to fascism. Its leader is former president Isabel Perón, the widow of three-time president Juan Perón, whose earlier populist dictatorship was modeled after that of the Italian fascist Mussolini.

Isabel Perón lives in exile in Spain and no one seriously expects her to return to lead the country, except perhaps as a figurehead. But the Peronistas have no popular leaders to take her place. One group of army officers has proposed an alliance with right-wing Peronistas to isolate the left and main-



Isabel Perón.

tain a military presence in the future civilian government. Still others are urging a right-wing coup to throw out Bignone, cancel the elections, and crush the growing popular movement.

The December protests have created a new sense of national unity against the government, its repression, and the economic crisis. But neither the opposition parties nor the unions have any ideas or leaders capable of focusing the discontent. In fact, the military and the main party leaders share a very similar political program. A civilian government led by any of the

parties, including the Peronistas, would not function much differently than the present military regime.

It is this political vacuum which has both inspired the spontaneous mass upsurge and frightened capitalist political observers. Five million young Argentines who have never voted before are eligible to vote if the military goes ahead with elections this year. Very few are registered in any party and no one is sure what their views are, except to note that thousands of them took part in last month's strikes and demonstrations.

"The military is not the only one to blame," complained Deolindo Bittel, acting head of the Peronistas, in an interview with the *New York Times*. "The most grave problem is precisely that the people don't believe in anything anymore." But unlike Bittel, who wants to strike a quiet deal with the murderous military, many Argentines believe in something deeply enough to risk their lives for it in the street. If the present political groups fail to offer a solution to Argentina's crisis, as seems likely, the mass movement may grow to sweep them, and the military, out of the way. □

YSA Convention...

(Continued from page 9)
the early 1970s, the SWP—basing itself on Trotsky's opposition to the Popular Front line in Spain, France and China—criticized Allende's class-collaborationist policies.

Much of this criticism was correct. Allende consistently worked to conciliate the Chilean bourgeoisie. In particular, despite warnings of a probable military coup, he trusted in the "non-political" tradition of the Chilean armed forces and told workers not to arm themselves in self-defense. Yet in September 1973 the army, led by Augusto Pinochet, overthrew Allende, murdering him and thousands of workers, and established a semi-fascist junta that has brutally oppressed the Chilean people for nearly 10 years.

During these events, however, Fidel Castro, the supposed proponent of guerrilla-based armed struggle as the road to socialism, defended Allende's policies, and urged the Chilean workers not to "go too far," that is, not to carry out a socialist revolution. In other words, Castro threw his tremendous prestige among the most radical

Chilean workers behind Allende and helped prevent them from recognizing in time the disaster that awaited them.

Today, the SWP—having abandoned the Permanent Revolution—has apparently concluded that Castro was right and the SWP mistaken. As a YSA member staffing the convention literature table put it to this reporter, "We've just lately come to understand this stuff."

In sum, Jack Barnes' speech to the YSA convention confirmed what we have been arguing: the SWP leadership's newfound criticisms of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution are just the tip of a programmatic iceberg. Having broken with the Permanent Revolution, they are now rejecting Trotsky's criticisms of Stalin's disastrous policies in China and Spain. We suspect that other portions of Trotsky's program, especially his call for a political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish workers' rule in Russia (and, by extension, in all the Stalinist countries) will soon be repudiated as well. □

A Testament of Failed Liberal Capitalism...

(Continued from page 8)
liberal approach to politics and the class struggle. This is because he believes in and sees no possible alternative to capitalism. Instead of class struggle Manley would like to achieve the impossible and bring all classes together and so avoid or minimize confrontation.

This basic approach is summed up in the following passages. "We knew that change in politics is like motion in physics, breeding its own opposite reaction and sought to ensure that the reaction would be rational. We worked to secure that it would be a measured response to our real actions and intentions rather than a hysterical reaction to imaginary dangers. Time was to show how great that reaction would be and how out of proportion to the actual degree of threat." (Page 71)

Further, "If plural democracy is to work it must rest upon two acts of self restraint, first on the part of those who hold power and secondly on the part of those who seek it." (Page 169) What this liberal approach to the capitalist and imperialist meant in practice was also stated in the book:

"Some sympathisers have contended that we should not have irritated the giant to the North'... In fact we worked

sincerely to make it clear that we were not anti-American as such, but only firm in our support of particular principles... We sought, constantly, to explain our position and to persuade Americans to accept it at its face value... Equally we never failed to make it clear by word and deed that we had neither the desire nor the intention to destroy our local business class. We wished to reduce their power and make them share some of their wealth within reason. We wished to make them a legitimate part of a democratically controlled socie-

ty rather than its hidden, if not open, masters. But we neither wished nor sought their demise." (Page 70)

The capitalists and imperialists of this world, however, already consider themselves legitimate and have no intention of reducing their power "within reason;" hence their hostility to Manley and the PNP. In any case as long as the capitalists and imperialists are "legitimate" (or "illegitimate") members of society controlling the means of production they will be its actual masters. They can only be overthrown through revolution.

What Manley and the PNP really want is for the capitalists to give a little more crumbs to the working class and oppressed masses so that they will accept their oppression. In the meantime these classes (according to Manley) are expected to restrain themselves by tying themselves politically to the capitalists through the PNP class alliance.

In conclusion, Manley's book *Struggle in the Periphery* shows that the PNP today is no different than when it formed the government. No useful purpose can be served by politically supporting it. We have to build the revolutionary workers' party as the only alternative. We have to build the Revolutionary Marxist League. □

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

1 The **REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE** is an organization dedicated to the fight for freedom for all the world's people—freedom from poverty and hunger; from racism and all forms of national, sexual, age and class-related oppression; from privileged rulers and wars—freedom from capitalism.

We believe that this fight is more necessary than ever. Today, the world capitalist system is sliding deeper and deeper into a massive economic, political and social crisis. This crisis is bringing conditions as bad as or worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s. In all countries, the ruling classes are responding to the crisis by bludgeoning down the living standards of the masses of people and curtailing our rights. Unemployment and wage-cutting, cutbacks in social services and a beefing up of the repressive apparatus—the police, military, prisons, etc.—are all part of the capitalist attack. As in the 1930s, the crisis is paving the way for the rise of fascist groups eager to impose their genocidal solution on humanity.

Internationally, the crisis will cause the battles among the different blocs of national capitalists to flare into full-scale wars, as each seeks to defend and increase its power, markets, investment outlets and control of natural resources against the others. Twice already this century the capitalists have fought devastating world wars, in which millions of people died. Now, with the development of huge nuclear arsenals capable of blowing up the planet hundreds of times over, human civilization itself hangs in the balance.

Thus the continued existence of the capitalist system is pushing us closer every day to depression, fascism, world war and possibly total destruction.

2 We in the RSL believe there is an alternative to all this. That alternative lies in the workers, small farmers, peasants, unemployed, national and other oppressed minorities, youth, women, lesbians and gay men—in sum, the downtrodden and persecuted people of every society—uniting together to overthrow our common enemy, the capitalist system, and establish **SOCIALISM**.

This will require a **REVOLUTION** in which the masses of people fight to seize control of the governments, banks, means of transportation and communication, factories, fields, mills and mines. A revolution would also have to smash the capitalists' state apparatus: their police and armed forces, their courts and prisons, their political bodies (legislatures, congresses, parliaments, etc.) and mammoth bureaucracies, and other institutions of capitalist class rule.

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

3 In place of the dictatorship of the capitalists, the RSL believes working and oppressed people can build a cooperative, humane world society. Run by workers' councils and other mass organizations of farmers, wives, soldiers and specially oppressed groups, the new society would provide the fullest democracy for the vast majority of people, while ruthlessly suppressing the capitalists and those who seek to get ahead by stepping on the backs of others.

Although the destructive legacy of capitalism would be severe, a truly democratic, mass-controlled government could begin to reorganize society to fulfill human needs, not provide a privileged existence for tiny elites. Resources currently thrown into the military, for example, could be used to end hunger, build housing, schools, roads, etc. The workweek could be shortened, creating jobs for millions of unemployed people.

In ways such as these, the inequality and scarcity that lie at the heart of capitalism's dog-eat-dog competitiveness could be eliminated. People would increasingly have no reason to get over on others, and the material basis of classes, the state, racism, sexism and anti-gay bigotry would disappear. Increasingly, everyone would have the time and opportunity to develop their full human potential; everyone would become truly **FREE**, able to control their own destinies.

This is our vision of **SOCIALISM**. It will not be easy to achieve. And it is not inevitable—people have to want it and fight for it. But we believe it is the only alternative worth fighting for.

4 Socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today. What is called socialism in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Albania, Poland, etc., is **state capitalism**, a 20th century variation of traditional, private shareholding capitalism. In the state-capitalist (often called Stalinist) countries, as in the "regular" capitalist nations, a small elite dominates society, making all the decisions and reaping all the benefits. Working and

oppressed people have no more control of the factories and other workplaces, the economy, the government or anything else than do workers in traditional capitalist countries. The state-capitalist ruling class controls the state apparatus and nationalized industry, while the workers are in the position of being wage slaves, chained to a giant capitalist machine.

In these countries—as in all the countries of the world—**REVOLUTION** is the only way to establish real socialism and win freedom for all working and oppressed people.

At a time when the struggle between the world's two main imperialist powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., is being portrayed wrongly as one between capitalism and socialism, democracy and totalitarianism, the RSL believes it is more important than ever to take a clear stand in opposition to capitalism in all its forms and to fight for a revolutionary, libertarian vision of socialism.

5 In the coming period, as the capitalist crisis intensifies, we expect mass movements and mass struggles—both of the right and the left—to break out with increasing frequency around the world. The question is: Will these upheavals lead to fascist dictatorships, state-capitalist transformations, a new world war—or an international socialist revolution that puts all the capitalist garbage behind us?

The RSL believes that the last outcome can be brought to pass only with the active intervention and political leadership of a disciplined international revolutionary working class party. This party, and its sections in countries around the world, is needed to educate and organize workers and other oppressed people about the cause of their misery and the solution to it; to work in different movements and struggles to increase the class-consciousness and militancy of their participants; to combat reformist, social-democratic, state-capitalist, fascist and other leaderships that would derail mass, popular struggles and lead them to certain defeat; and to help unite the different forces oppressed by capitalism into a massive assault on the system.

The existence of revolutionary working class parties does not guarantee victory. But without them, the more-organized and powerful enemies of socialist revolution will surely triumph.

The RSL considers the construction of a revolutionary party in the U.S. and around the world to be our main strategic task. In so doing, we reject any and all elitist notions that have come to be associated with such parties: that the party stands separate from and above the working class; that the party may use any method, no matter how base or dishonest, to gain leadership of the masses in struggle; that its goal is to form a one-party state within a supposedly socialist society. Our goal is a society where human beings can consciously shape their own existence; we see a revolutionary party simply as the vehicle through which this can be made possible.

6 The RSL identifies itself in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, particularly the pioneering theoretical work of Marx and Engels; the conception of the party, the stress on the importance of national liberation struggles and the anti-statism shown in **The State and Revolution** of Lenin; and the fight against Stalinism of Trotsky. But we also identify with the best of anarchism, particularly its libertarian spirit. And we hold in no less regard those leaders throughout the ages who have fought against various forms of exploitation and oppression: from Spartacus to Harriet Tubman, from Emiliano Zapata to Malcolm X.

We believe it is crucial for the left to rid itself of the state-capitalist baggage which it has carried for far too long. To do so requires a careful evaluation of the theoretical underpinnings of the modern left, from Marx to the Russian Revolution to the current day. Only in this way can the best of our heritage—the fight against oppression and for revolutionary socialism—be preserved and the worst of it—an infatuation with technocratic planning and strong states—be discarded. Revolutionaries must be the vanguard in the fight for common decency and true freedom. It is to that fight the RSL is committed, body and soul. Join us!

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