

Reconstruct
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TORCH

Newspaper
of the
Revolutionary
Socialist League

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 11/85c

NOVEMBER 15, 1978-JANUARY 14, 1979

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STAT... RICAL SOCIETY

Iranian People Rise Up Against The Shah

By TONY CURZO

The Iranian masses have surged forward in a wave of struggle to bring down the regime of Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, the hangman shah, made in the USA. In the last few days, workers, peasants, merchants, students and youth have taken to the streets in bloody clashes with the shah's army and police. The workers have shut down the country with strikes that have spread to most key sectors of

(Continued on page 11)



Iranian militants demand revenge at funeral of demonstrator killed in recent struggles.

*sección
en
español*

Liberals Play Into Nazis' Hands Shut Down "The California Reich"

In New York City on October 28, anti-Nazi militants disrupted a showing of *The California Reich*, a documentary film about the

that a woman had called to take credit for the action in the name of the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Committee Against Racism (CAR).

EDITORIAL

Nazis. The militants entered the Harold Clurman Theatre, stopped the showing and made off with the film. The next day, the Associated Press reported

The RSL, along with the August 8th Brigade Defense Committee and the Committee Against Fascism, has waged a campaign to shut down the showings of *The California Reich*. As part of this, we

(Continued on page 15)

Black Masses Near Victory in Zimbabwe

By PAUL BENJAMIN

"I'd say three-quarters of the country is out of control. There is nowhere that's safe to travel without a gun."

That's how one white businessman describes the growing collapse of white minority rule in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). The past few months have made it clear that the racist regime is falling to pieces under the blows of the national liberation forces.

As late as 1975 Prime Minister Ian Smith claimed there were only 70 guerrillas oper-

(Continued on page 10)



Ian Smith and Ndabaningi Sithole.

THE ECONOMY ... HEADING FOR A CRASH

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Texas Prisoners Fight Slavery See Page 7

**our
readers
write...**

Send letters to:
TORCH, PO Box 562,
N.Y., N.Y. 10036

RSL's change on ERA discussed

Dear Comrades,

I was happy to read Susan Edmunds' article "Support the Equal Rights Amendment" in the 9/15/78 Torch. The RSL's position change in favor of the ERA was several months overdue and a necessary step for an organization which sees the fight for women's liberation as an essential part of the

struggle for socialism. However, I think the emphasis in the motivation for the position change was slightly off.

In the past, the ERA was introduced by bourgeois elements who wanted to head off the militant women's liberation movement and direct it into harmless politicking for meaningless legal reforms. At the same time, some capitalists saw it as an excuse to do away with protective legislation. The issue helped split the women's movement between liberal middle-class and bourgeois women who did not want to change the system and cared little for protective legislation, on the one hand; and radical, revolutionary, and working-class women who wanted to fight the institutions that oppressed us and understood the importance of protective legislation, on the other hand. Under those circumstances, it is clear that revolutionaries had to oppose the ERA. We had to say that, while we favor legal equality, the ERA was not the way to get it. It was a way to attack working-class women and prevent the movement from struggling for gains that would mean something.

The ERA itself has not changed since then. It still does not offer any more legal protection for women than already exists through other laws. It still provides an excuse for attacking protective legislation. What has changed is the movement and the correlation of forces.

The radical mass movements of the '60s and early '70s lost momentum, disoriented by their reformist leadership and lacking revolutionary working-class strategies and programs. When the movements declined, the attacks began to increase. The right wing is now on the offensive. All of the gains won by the militant mass movements of the 1960s and early 1970s—gains like legalized abortion, gay rights laws, bilingual education, access to better jobs and housing for Blacks, Latins, and women—are coming under attack. The right wing has made the ERA one of the main focuses in its attack on women's rights.

It is no longer a choice between a militant struggle for real gains and lobbying for contentless paper reforms. Now we have to fight even to defend our right to legal equality! If we lose this fight, the right-wing attacks will get even more vicious.

Thus, revolutionaries must support the ERA, not because the ERA represents a meaningful gain for the masses of women, but because the defeat of the ERA would represent a tremendous loss. The right-wing attacks, which Edmunds gives as the second reason for the RSL's changed position, should have been the main reason.

I do not think the discussion of protective legislation, the first reason Edmunds gives, was to the point. The threat to protective legislation was the reason that the RSL originally opposed the ERA rather than merely arguing against making it a focus for the women's movement. Revolutionaries cannot now say: "Well, protective legislation is being wiped out anyway, so we'll give the capitalists another law to make it even easier to finish the job." This is an argument against supporting the ERA. The point is that the fate of protective legislation is also a question of the correlation of forces.

If there were a strong, militant, united working-class movement, it could force protective legislation to be extended to men. If the working class is divided and defeated by the right-wing attacks, it will not even be able to defend existing protective laws for women. If the right-wing attacks on the ERA are successful, it will encourage the attacks on protective legislation, because it will be a signal to the capitalists that women and the working class cannot defend their rights. If the attack is smashed and the ERA passes, the capitalists will try to use it to wipe out the remaining protective legislation. We will still have to fight to save and extend it. But at least we will be in a better position to carry out that fight.

**Yours for the Revolution,
Lois Aarons
Los Angeles**

Prisoner hits CP-ML dogmatism

The following letter is from a prisoner in Virginia who has been corresponding with a staff member of the Torch/La Antorcha.

Dear Comrade:

You are right on in stating right up front that as a revolutionary socialist you feel our primary battle is against the system and should be fought on this level and not waste our energies in the internal (so to say) struggle and squabbles that characterize the various left wing groups.

Frankly, I have become more than a little disgusted with the tactics many of the groups use. To explain that a little further, [a person] with the Call (CP-ML) came on to me really strong several months ago, after reading a

couple of articles I had written for other publications. Quite naturally I was eager to establish a good relationship with the CP-ML for my one goal is the establishment of a national prisoners' coalition or union. Well, anyway, as soon as we began writing on something approaching a normal and regular basis I discovered that 1) the man is not willing to "discuss" the differences we have with the stated platform of the CP-ML, and 2) in order to support our movement the CP-ML demanded almost total control over every organizational aspect of the envisioned national alliance, and that was certainly unacceptable in light of our having found him/ them to be less than candid

on the very dogmatic position they have taken on China. As a result he/they have not responded to any of our recent letters nor have they returned copyrighted material I submitted for editorial consideration. Right now our group is fairly well placed in opposition to the stance they have assumed on the true state of affairs in China and the Far East.

Your comments on the re-instatement of a form of capitalism in Russia is on target. Though I would like to believe that the internal situation within the Cuban state will at some point allow that government to break the chains that have tied them to the USSR, I had a rather good dialogue going with a couple of the people at Radio Havana for a while but the Cuban involvement in Ethiopia sort of shot that all to hell.

So, basically, I find we are pretty much in agreement on the world situation as Socialist governments go. The Mid-East poses a most interesting situation which I am following closely. The combined efforts of the various Front organizations have enjoyed a tremendous amount of success over a period of the past 10 years or so. Yet, here too one senses that the "leadership" could easily be capable of acquiring a national bourgeois stance in relation to the workers.

Take care, keep up the work.

**In struggle,
A prisoner
Virginia**

From the Winona Marzocco Defense Committee

Dear Torch:

Winona Marzocco, formerly of East Islip, L.I., is fighting for custody of her five children. They were taken away from her by the courts and given to her husband, Phillip Marzocco. Phillip Marzocco has been reported to Child Protective Services for child abuse. He has been known to throw his children down flights of stairs and brutally beat them. We have an excerpt from Winona's letter which will tell you what she and the children have gone through.

"My five children were taken from me and put into foster homes. I was never told why. It started when I was in an auto accident and also pregnant. My legs were paralyzed but the doctor sent me home thinking a loving atmosphere would bring back their use. Instead my husband punched me in the stomach causing the loss of my sixth child. This was nothing unusual as my children and I have been abused for 10 years by him. After three weeks in another hospital the use of my legs returned.

While attempting to take care of some business, I was caught in the blackout of July 1977 and returned to find that my husband had

taken the children upstate and left them for six weeks. The day that we were supposed to go to court for divorce hearings I learned that my children were in my house, and I was able to get two of them and I brought them to the court. I found them full of welts, lice, dirty, and suffering from malnutrition. The judge has given my five children back to my husband (who had twice abandoned them) with the condition that his invalid mother who is 65 and in a wheel chair move into my house to care for my children. It is six months now since the decision. My husband has the children but his mother is not there. My children tell me there is a young woman living there, and he tells them he is married to her. All the agencies who are supposed to help women in these situations didn't help, and were useless."

We the Winona Marzocco Defense Committee are enraged about what has happened to Winona, and we are organizing to do something about it. One of the things we are doing is having a public meeting in Hempstead, L.I., on Saturday, November 18, at 3:30 p.m. If you can come, do. Call us at 212-869-9239 for further information.

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THE ECONOMY...HEADING FOR A CRASH

The U.S. economy is in big trouble. Everybody in the bourgeoisie knows it, but they don't know what to do about it. Inflation and interest rates are soaring, and the value of the dollar compared to other currencies is dropping. The stock market is falling faster than it ever has since 1929.

On October 24, Carter announced a new anti-inflation program; in his speech he

to banks, and other institutions and individuals that lend money to corporations; and,

3) The government, or public, debt: the money owed by the government (at all levels) to the people and institutions the government borrows money from.

Today, the total debt equals \$3.9 trillion, compared with \$2.5 trillion only four years ago, and \$1.9

income to pay the debt back in the future.

Corporations do the same thing. They borrow money with the expectation that they can make enough profit with the borrowed money to pay back the loan, with interest, and still have profit left over.

Governments go into debt with a similar idea. Money is borrowed and spent in the hope that it will make the economy grow. An expanding economy means more profit and more people working. This in turn means more taxes and/or more money to be borrowed. Taken together, this will enable the government to pay back what it owes. Like individual workers, the government is gambling on the future being rosy enough to pay for today's borrowing, plus interest.

If an economy is in debt, there is nothing wrong or dangerous about this as long as production is growing fast enough. It's as if a working-class family goes into debt to buy a house while its income is rising. The family will be able to pay back the mortgage in the future without cutting its living standard.

But what if a working-class family, with both husband and wife working, goes into debt, but one of them



Depression era bread line. Capitalist crisis means workers starve.

gets laid off? The family will then have a lot of trouble paying the mortgage and may have to cut its living standard to do so. If they lose enough of their income, they won't be able to pay the mortgage and may lose the house altogether.

The same is true of the economy. If production is growing fast enough, all the debts can be paid back and the economy can keep expanding. But if production does not increase fast enough, the debt will grow faster than the economy. If this goes on long enough,

the economy will become weaker and weaker while the amount of debt it is carrying becomes dangerously large.

Sooner or later something snaps. The banks may stop lending money to corporations, which then cut back production and lay off workers. The workers then can't pay back their debts and have to cut down their spending, and so on. The result is an economic crisis, a recession or a depression.

This is the kind of situation we are facing today, and it is why **Business Week**. (Continued on page 16)

"Since late 1975 the U.S. has created a new debt economy, a credit explosion so wild and so eccentric that it dwarfs even the borrowing binge of the early 1970s... unless the nation is very lucky indeed, the new debt economy...could come crashing down." —BUSINESS WEEK

begged people not to poke fun at it. Only a week later, Carter reversed his economic policy and announced higher interest rates and massive support for the dollar. Nearly every non-government economist is now predicting a recession in 1979. Even top Carter advisor Barry Bosworth has admitted that a recession is a "real possibility. It's a very grim business."

Two weeks before these events, **Business Week** devoted a special section of its October 16 issue to one of the key weaknesses of the economy: the enormous debt that is weighing it down. "Since late 1975," writes **Business Week**, "the U.S. has created a new debt economy, a credit explosion so wild and so eccentric that it dwarfs even the borrowing binge of the early 1970s... unless the nation is very lucky indeed, the new debt economy... could come crashing down."

What is the debt, and why does it have **Business Week** and the capitalist class running scared?

The debt includes all loans made with interest charges. Interest charges make the debt owed larger than the loan given. On a mortgage for an \$18,000 house, for instance, a bank might give a loan of \$14,400 but the debt owed to the bank is \$36,000. On a charge card or installment plan, a loan of \$200 to buy a television can easily create a debt of \$250.

Mortgaging the future

The total debt of an economy consists of three major parts:

1) Consumer debt: the money owed by consumers to banks, stores and other institutions that lend money to private individuals (this includes mortgages on houses);

2) Corporate debt: the money owed by corporations

to banks, and other institutions and individuals that lend money to corporations; and,

3) The government, or public, debt: the money owed by the government (at all levels) to the people and institutions the government borrows money from.

trillion in 1970. Of the \$3.9 trillion, the consumer debt is \$1.7 trillion, the corporate debt \$1.1 trillion, and the government debt \$1.1 trillion. In the last three years, consumer debt has grown the most, increasing more than 50 percent.

Debts create "claims on future production." When workers go into debt, they are counting on having the

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Carter's Anti-Inflation Plan: A Seven Percent Solution?

"We must face a time of national austerity." On this note President Carter announced a program of voluntary wage-price guidelines on October 24. Carter claims that the guidelines will lower the rate of inflation, which has totalled more than 16 percent in the last two years.



Carter's economic team strikes out again.

higher costs due to higher oil prices, raw materials, introducing new products or "special financial difficulties."

Workers, on the other hand, would have no leeway to defend their living standards. The average worker's real wages fell 3.3 percent last year, according to government figures. The guidelines would prevent workers

from either regaining income lost to inflation or protecting themselves from future price hikes.

Moreover, workers would have to choose between giving up the cash gains they need now or the benefits (such as cost-of-living, pen-

through Congress, which has to approve it. In any case, it restricts rebates to "reasonable limits" no matter how high prices may go.

Guidelines won't do damned thing

In fact, the guidelines won't do a damned thing to solve the economic crisis and everybody knows it. Within 24 hours of Carter's announcement, the stock market dropped 20 points and the dollar nosedived to record lows on international money markets. A week later George Meany, head of the AFL-CIO, rejected the plan, saying it controlled wages but not prices. Meany's solution? He called for state-enforced mandatory wage and price controls in place of Carter's voluntary guidelines!

Government officials are already worried that the bureaucrats who run the unions won't be able to keep the workers in line. On November 5 Alfred Kahn, Carter's latest "chief inflation fighter," said there could be "severe strikes in key industries" during the 1979 contract round.

Next year over three and a half million workers in major industries will be negotiating new contracts. Among

(Continued on page 17)

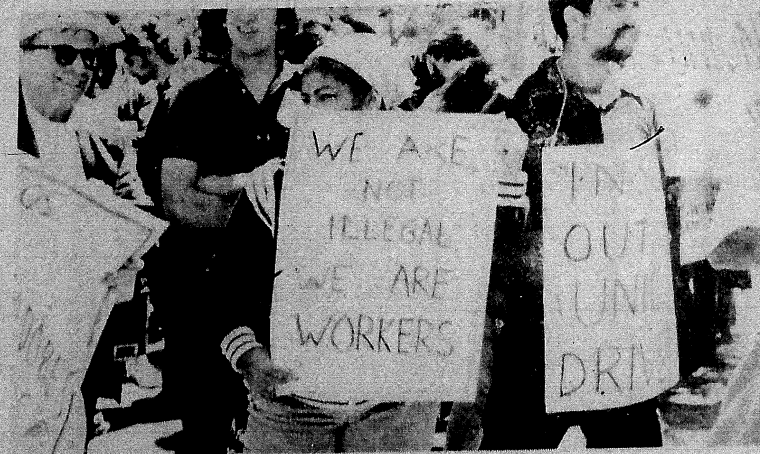
Garment Workers Organize in LA Sweatshops

By ULYSSES RODRIGUEZ

The struggle of undocumented workers for unionization is rising up. The increasing militancy of the workers to fight for better wages, better benefits and better working conditions has made the bosses' attacks even stronger. Undocumented workers are one of the most exploited sections of the working class. With basically no rights whatsoever, undocumented workers are waging the struggle for unionization. We can see that workers are responding to the increasing exploitation by walking off their jobs, striking, slowing down and in other ways. As capitalism goes into crisis, the exploitation of the working class by the bosses increases—and not only increases but the capitalists try to take away the rights that were gained in the past. In order to preserve the gains won in the past and to fight for more and for the overthrow of this oppressive system, workers must unite and fight together with undocumented workers.

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) has launched a campaign to organize undocumented workers in Los Angeles. Undocumented workers are located mostly in the garment industry but also in other places.

The union has organized Motif Inc. where there are about 200 workers. Motif Inc.



Undocumented workers demand union rights.

is a furniture factory. The boss—taking advantage of the workers' status—charged the workers \$150 or more just to get the job. The majority of the workers at Motif are young. The wages they were receiving were \$2.50 per hour. The workers at Motif Inc. won union representation in an election where the overwhelming majority voted in favor of the union. Since then, the boss has refused to negotiate with the union and workers' representatives. He has fired and sus-

pending workers for union activities. The workers finally went on strike in mid-October to protest the unfair labor practices.

Same struggle at Circle Import

The fight of workers at Motif Inc. should not be seen as an isolated struggle because workers at Circle Import have been fighting for

the same thing and at the same time. The fight is the same.

Circle Import is another shop that ILGWU has organized. Workers won union representation by an overwhelming majority. It's been almost a year since they won the election (December 1977). This boss also has refused to negotiate with the union and workers' representatives. He has tried to divide the workers by giving some of them raises. The workers finally went on strike October

9 to protest unfair labor practices.

Undocumented workers should fight against anybody who tries to oppose unity between workers from both places. The only way that undocumented workers can win better wages, better benefits and better working conditions is by making it all one and the same fight.

Workers must take the initiative

The union representatives are going to try to keep the strike limited to the picket line. Workers should fight to extend their struggle to other factories to get support. The union is not going to take the initiative—workers must. The fight against the boss should not be limited but spread so that workers can win the strike.

Workers from Motif Inc. and Circle Import must create a strike committee. The purpose of it would be to develop a strategy for spreading and getting support for the strikes. The committee should put out a leaflet explaining to other workers why these workers are on strike and why we should support them.

Workers should fight for better wages, better benefits and better working conditions, but this is not enough. We have to fight for democratic rights. We should fight for citizenship rights for all undocumented workers. We should fight against the Carter Amnesty Plan. The amnesty plan divides undocumented workers when unity is needed and should therefore be opposed. Workers must unite to fight racism. We should fight the racist Ku Klux Klan and smash them. We should fight for unity between Blacks, whites, Chicanos, Asians and all other workers. We should not let capitalism divide us anymore.

Organize for revolution

We should organize into a revolutionary organization. The only way that we can better ourselves and fight for a more human system is by creating a revolutionary party. A party capable of not only fighting for better wages but for the destruction of the bosses, of capitalism.

We the Revolutionary Socialist League have started the task of creating the revolutionary party. We want to create a workers' party because only workers understand what exploitation and oppression really are. Workers have the power to change society.

Undocumented workers are on the rise and must continue the fight against the bosses and racism. We of the Revolutionary Socialist League are organizing among undocumented workers. We ask workers to unite with us because only united can we win. □

U.S. Rulers Plan Racist Border Wall

Congress has appropriated \$3.5 million to build a concrete-and-steel fence along parts of the Mexican border, to try and cut down the flow of undocumented workers. Their plans sound like something out of a horror movie: A 12-foot-high fence made of dense steel fencing, specially hardened to resist wire cutters; a concrete base sunk at least two feet into the ground to prevent tunnelling; a chain-link upper section designed to sway when anyone tries to climb it; and, finally, razor-

sharp points on top, to mutilate or impale people who reach the top, or cut their throats if they slip.

This monster structure is supposed to go up at San Ysidro, California, and El Paso, Texas. More than half of the undocumented workers who were caught last year were arrested in those areas, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). INS director Leonel Castillo says building a fence is cheaper than hiring another 1,000 border guards. But they don't really

believe it will keep out Mexican workers. INS Washington chief Robin Clack says: "All this is supposed to do is to throw them into the desert where they'll be easier to catch."

Mexicans on both sides of the border see the wall as a racist insult, and rightly so. But it's more than just an insult. It's the latest in a series of attacks by the ruling class in an effort to control undocumented workers.

On the one hand, the capitalists need undocumented workers to take the

louisiest, lowest-paid jobs. On the other hand, they're worried that too many Mexican workers are coming in. California is becoming a bilingual state, and Latin workers are organizing.

Right now, thousands of undocumented workers are joining unions where they work. And the INS acts as a union-busting agency, by arresting and deporting workers in shops that are being organized. All this is to scare undocumented workers, so they'll take whatever conditions the ruling class dictates. The wall is another effort to scare Mexican workers.

The ruling class talks a lot of crap about protecting "our" borders. But what are they really protecting? They are protecting the profits they make by exploiting workers on both sides of the border. The working class doesn't need that kind of "protection."

The RSL fights for the right of all workers to go anywhere. That means open borders—no guards, no fences, no IDs, no restrictions. And wherever workers go, they have the right to bring their families, to join unions, and to organize politically. Workers on both sides of the border must unite to fight for these rights. We must begin now by organizing to make sure that the monster wall won't be built. □



U.S. government uses fencing, barbed wire to hold undocumented workers awaiting deportation.

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Labor Solidarity Defeats Missouri "Right-to-Work" Law

By WILLIAM FALK

A big attack on the unions was turned back in Missouri on Election Day. A proposed "right-to-work" law in that state was defeated by a vote of 916,900 to 618,151. This law would have made the union shop illegal (see box for fuller explanation of "right-to-work" laws).

Several southern states have these anti-union "right-to-work" laws, which weaken the unions and drive down wages. Capitalist pressure groups have tried, al-

bers. The union bureaucracy has done little to bring unorganized workers into the unions through massive organizing drives. And even where there is organizing going on, it is often unsuccessful. Last year, only 46 percent of union representation elections ended with a union victory.

The capitalists are using these weaknesses to step up their union-busting. This is true not only in small industries, but also in auto, heavy electric appliances, and other basics. The campaign

The labor bureaucracy in Missouri was slow to respond to the anti-union threat. At first they pinned their hopes on a court case to keep the measure off the ballot. When this failed, the state AFL-CIO did put some effort into defeating the proposal. They tried to get union members to register to vote.

The rest of their campaign was heavy on advertising and patriotism. Statements from former President Harry Truman opposing "right-to-work" were used in the ads. (Truman initially opposed the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act that made "right-to-work" laws possible. But after it was passed, he used the law against the unions more than any president has since.) There was no attempt made to mobilize the rank-and-file workers, who the law would hurt most.

The defeat of the Missouri "right-to-work" law shows, more about the wide understanding of labor solidarity than it does about the advertising campaign. Most counties in the outstate area rejected the proposal. One big factor in defeating the "right-to-work" measure was that the farmers of Missouri are no longer full-time farmers but work in factories to add to their income. As a result, they have had more



contact with the labor movement and the collectivity of factory work than the "right-to-workers" were counting on.

Revolutionaries and militants oppose "right-to-work" laws because they weaken and threaten the very existence of the unions. The unions are mass, workers' organizations. They are one of the few organizations workers have in the struggle against the bosses. And they have a tremendous amount of potential power.

Defend the union shop!

The labor leaders, on the other hand, see "right-to-work" laws as a threat to their dues base, and want to use the union shop as a substitute for organizing workers and winning their loyalty to a union.

Some militants say: "If the bureaucrats weren't such shitheads, they could win members without forcing people to join. Let's have an open shop and the leaders will be forced to fight the company to win people to the union."

It's true that if revolutionaries ran the unions, we wouldn't worry about "the dues base" because the unions would be fighting for what workers need and want. But letting the bosses get the open shop to discipline union leaders is asking the fox to guard the chickens. We have to organize ourselves—not to discipline the union leaders, but to replace them.

The defeat of the Missouri law will not defeat the current anti-union drive by the capitalists. But it will slow it down and in that way is a victory for the working class. □

What is "Right-to-Work?"

"Right-to-work" laws make it illegal for union contracts to include the union shop. A "union shop" means that all the workers have to join the union once they get the job. An "open shop" means that no union membership can be required. A "closed shop" means that the workers have to belong to the union in order to get hired in the first place. With the closed shop, all hiring must be done through a union hall.

Campaigns for "right-to-work" laws have been going on since 1947. In that year the Taft-Hartley Act was passed to help the capitalists control the labor movement. One of its clauses outlawed the closed shop, which was legal up to that time. Another clause gave the states the right to ban the union shop within the state. Twenty states have done this by passing "right-to-work" laws.

Companies use the open shop to cut wages and benefits. At first they give all workers the benefits in the union contract, regardless of whether they are members of the union. Then, when enough workers quit the union because it seems unnecessary, the bosses attack wages and the right of the union to represent the workers.

Wages in the 20 so-called right-to-work states are the lowest in the country.

ways unsuccessfully, to get these scab laws passed in northern states with large unionized industries.

Bosses step up union-busting

Nationally, many unions are becoming smaller and weaker. Many workers are disgusted by the sellout union bureaucrats and membership is dropping. In the last two years, the AFL-CIO has lost half a million mem-

for the Missouri "right-to-work" law was part of this national union-busting effort.

The capitalists saw Missouri as the soft underbelly of the strong union states. Except for the industrial areas around St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri is predominantly rural and small town (called the "outstate" areas). The anti-union forces were counting on the vote in these areas—and rural southern traditions—to pass the "right-to-work" law.

There were state and local elections this November 7, but most people ignored them. Only about one-third of those eligible to vote bothered to do so. This was even less than the last off-year elections in 1974. The turnout in U.S. elections is the second lowest in the world. Only in Botswana do fewer eligible people actually vote.

Most bourgeois commentators were forced to admit that the low turnout was not due to mere apathy, but to the growing distrust of politicians and disbelief in the idea that electing this or that candidate will do anything about major problems.

Many people are beginning to feel the effects of the crumbling economy and are looking for answers. But neither the Republicans nor the Democrats have any serious proposals to deal with what is happening. This is leading to increased boredom with tweedledee and tweedledum party politics.

It also has led to an increase in attention to referendum issues. In fact, the exceptions to the low turnout were in areas where there were controversial referendums—the Missouri "right-to-work" law (see article on this page), and the anti-gay Briggs Initiative in California and the Rizzo charter change in Philadelphia (see boxes on page 16).

(In the early part of this century, reformers thought they could make capitalism more democratic by permitting referendums—that is, the passing of laws by direct

popular vote instead of by state legislatures. The reformers hoped to use this gimmick to win workers away from the growing socialist movement. Their referendum efforts were successful mostly in the western states, where today there are still several referendum issues—sometimes called propositions or initiatives—on the ballot each year.)

Democrats take few losses

In off-year elections, the political party in control of the White House usually loses a few seats in Congress. This year the Democrats lost fewer seats than is usual. There will be a slight shift to the right in the next Congress, however, because more and more Democrats are junking their support for the social reform programs begun in the 1960s.

Some people were predicting a major shift to the right in the mood of the country, but this did not happen. On some of the few issues where there was heavy voting, the right wing was de-

(Continued on page 16)



Bosses want to weaken strong militant unions like UMW.

Elections '78: No Big Shift to the Right



Free Leo Harris!

Miami cops are trying to frame Roy (Leo) Harris, a young Black political activist. Harris is a member of the Socialist Workers Party and a supporter of the Human Rights for Haitian Refugees Coalition. On August 8, Harris arrived at the Winn-Dixie store to participate in a demonstration called by Haitian community organizations. These groups had organized a boycott of the store, which is located in the middle of the Haitian community. In response to racist remarks by the store's manager and security guard which were quoted in local newspapers.

A Miami cop drove a car into the crowd of 500 demonstrators, throwing Harris up on the hood and knocking down a Haitian woman. Harris received a gash which required 17 stitches. But when Harris and leaders of the demonstration asked the cops to call an ambulance, they answered: "He's not one of you. He's an outsider, trying to stir up trouble." After this red-baiting attack, they took Harris to the police station and charged him with disorderly conduct and criminal mischief. Harris' trial starts on November 17. **Free Leo Harris!**

Shut down Marion torture chamber!

The control unit at the Federal Prison in Marion, Illinois, is a solitary confinement unit where prisoners are kept in six-by-eight-foot cells, 23 and a half hours a day, for two, three or four years. Prison activists from all over the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are sent to this torture chamber.

Conditions at the unit are so brutal that it has the highest suicide rate in the entire federal prison system, according to Bureau of Prisons statistics. The most recent example came on September 1, when a prisoner was beaten unconscious after refusing to return to his cell. Other prisoners in the unit have reported by letter that he was "repeatedly kiked and beaten with billy clubs" by the Marion "goon squad," a group of guards specially trained to suppress prison rebellions.

For six years, the Marion Brothers, prisoner activists in the control unit, have been fighting to force the government to shut it down. On November 27, supporters of the Marion Brothers will demonstrate in front of the Bureau of Prisons office in St. Louis demanding the immediate closing of the control unit.

Chicano activist framed up

Two years ago, Ramon Arroyos, a Chicano activist in El Paso, was framed on charges of firebombing a department store and sentenced to five years probation. Now the courts are trying to railroad him into prison for probation violation. On March 25 Arroyos was arrested and charged with drunken driving. The charge was such a flimsy attempt at a frame-up that the local county attorney was forced to dismiss the charges a few days later. But the Probation Department saw a chance to put Arroyos away and moved to revoke his probation based on the arrest. They did so even though Arroyos' own probation officer recommended against revoking probation.

At the hearing Judge Sam Callan told Arroyos: "If this was a jury trial, you would walk away. But I cannot put myself into the position of telling the community that the police are liars." After this lecture on the neutrality of the courts, Callan revoked Arroyos' probation. He is currently out on appeal.

In brief...

Prisoners at the **Massachusetts Correctional Institute** ended one of the longest prison strikes in U.S. history with a victory on October 20. Prison boss Lawrence Parnell agreed to the strikers' main demands: ending strip searches of visitors, allowing relatives to participate in prison programs, and the holding of hearings on Norfolk's classification system.

On October 13 an all-white jury in Cullman, Alabama, convicted **Tommy Lee Hines** for allegedly raping a white woman. Cops claimed that Hines, a 26-year-old Black man, confessed in writing to the crime, although Hines is mentally retarded and barely able to write his name. The only identification of Hines was made by a woman who admits her attacker was masked. The pig judge sentenced Hines to 30 years in prison.

Fifty people attended the November 4 fund-raising party for the **Cassandra Peten Defense Committee** at the Chicago RSL hall. Late in the evening there was a break in the dancing for brief speeches from News and Letters Committee, the National Alliance of Black Feminists (which did most of the work for the benefit), and the RSL. Cassandra Peten will go on trial November 27 for attempted murder and several gun charges for wounding her husband after he beat her for years. Around \$200 was raised for Peten's defense.

Deadlock Continues At Pontiac

CHICAGO—The struggle of the Pontiac Brothers continues on two fronts.

The deadlock imposed on the 2,100 prisoners after the July 22 rebellion at the Illinois prison is still not over. But it is being modified. On October 23, Warden Pinkney was fired and replaced by Warden Harvey. Harvey immediately increased the number of visits allowed prisoners. Pinkney's firing was in part the result of pressure generated by publicity about the deadlock.

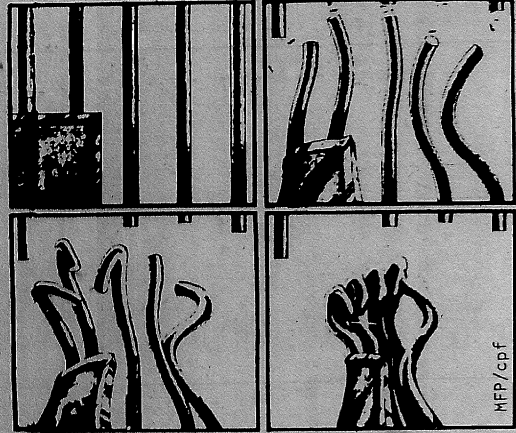
Then on November 3, Federal Judge Crowley made a preliminary ruling in a suit against the deadlock filed months earlier. The judge ordered that prisoners must be allowed to get phone calls and three visits a month. He also ordered regular exercise and showers immediately for the prisoners. In addition, he told authorities to submit a plan in a week to end most other aspects of the deadlock.

(On November 9, however, an appeals court threw out Crowley's order, except for the ruling on phone calls and

visits.) Crowley had noted that the long deadlock violated prisoners' rights to due process, and that it was prolonged in order to pressure prisoners to give evidence to investigators seeking indictments against prisoners in the rebellion.

These indictments are expected soon. Thirty prison-

ers have been transferred to the prison at Stateville (Joliet). It appears that the prisoners who will be charged with murder, arson, and other charges will be some or all of these 30. When indictments are issued, the focus of the defense work will shift to the trials of the indicted prisoners. □



August 8th Brigade Writes:

Long Live the Prison Struggle!

Greetings Brothers:

From within the confines of this prison we send our highest and most sincere force of solidarity in the fight all of you are waging against this prison system. We say "this" prison system because it is the same all over the U.S. of amerikkka.

We have read and studied literature that you have written and in our studies we have seen the similarity in the fight that we are undergoing and yours. The fight is a long and difficult one but knowing that everyone in prison will be affected by the outcome of our fight, it gives all of us the strength to continue in order to change the system or destroy it completely. The growing forces of the Ku Klux Klan has to be stopped no matter what they are in power or what means they have to destroy us. The

struggle behind these walls is more important than our lives. We will fight to the end but our voices will be heard. **Long live the prison struggle!**

Through our experience, beginning on August 8, 1977, until this day and time, many things have happened to us. We were shipped to different facilities all over New York State. Taken to court in very barbaric manners and been set up on different institutional charges so we could be kept in the "BOX" for lengthy amounts of time. It has been a long and hard 14 months of fighting but to this day we stand together and continue to fight back with every means that is available to us. At times it all seemed to go down the drain and our strength was getting weaker and weaker. We say all this

so you can see that no matter how hard it becomes for all of you, the fight that you have against the prison system must never stop.

At this moment and any other, we wish that it would be possible to unite with you physically, mentally and spiritually in order to fight as one and bring about the change that we want. Brothers, Comrades, be strong and always keep in mind that the August 8th Brigade stands by your side in every way possible.

Free all political prisoners! Free the Pontiac Brothers! Free Puerto Rico now! Free all third world nations! Freedom is our only plan and goal!

**En la lucha siempre,
—The August 8th Brigade**

Support the Prisoner Literature Fund

In the past year, the Torch has greatly expanded its coverage of prisoners' struggles. The number of prisoners who read the Torch and correspond with the Revolutionary Socialist League has also increased significantly.

The RSL provides revolutionary literature to prisoners to the extent that we can. Also, large numbers of prisoners receive free subscriptions to the Torch.

Lack of funds keeps us from sending prisoners all the literature they want. Thus, to increase the amount of literature we can send we are launching a "Prisoner Literature Fund." We encourage all readers of the Torch to donate to this fund so that we can supply prisoners with revolutionary literature. Those who can make a monthly pledge, no matter how small, should do so. This money will be used exclusively for providing prisoners with revolutionary literature.

(Send contributions to: Prisoner Literature Fund, P.O. Box 562, New York, N.Y. 10036.)

Dear Torch,

I am 11 years old and some people go to jail. Well they steal because they have no job. There is no job because there are bad guys called Nazis and capitalists. And sometimes they go to jail because they are oppressed.

Thank you.

Anna B.
Chicago

TEXAS PRISONERS FIGHT SLAVERY

By LEE RAMIE

James Bates was a prisoner in the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC). Danny Marvin Baker, 27, said he saw a major and a sergeant pushing Bates "to force him to eat. Two hours later I saw Bates dead in the hall outside the dining area. I heard they had been beating him daily for two weeks."

Prisoners in the Texas Department of Corrections are waging a bitter struggle against the slavery-like conditions there. The current focus of their struggle is a class action lawsuit, Ruiz, et al., vs. Estelle. The suit combines actions filed from 1971 to 1974 by David Ruiz and several other prisoners. James Estelle is the TDC director.

Slave labor

In the words of former Warden Arnold Pontesso, the TDC is "probably the best example of slavery remaining in this country." Prisoners often refer to it as "the plantation." TDC is the largest single agribusiness operation in Texas. The de-

ulated good time.

Michael Garret, a prisoner who had a letter published in the June-July Torch/La Antorcha, writes: "Shortly after I mailed that letter to your paper... on May 22, 1978, I was taken before the disciplinary committee who was by the way, the same officers who had beaten me up, that your paper printed the story about, judged by them for the charged offense, sentenced to solitary confinement for 15 days and my 'good time' taken away from me."

Third, there is the use of Building Tenders (BTs). They are chosen by the keepers to strongarm the other prisoners. Salvador Gonzalez, a former BT now on parole and working to support the suit, testified that: "My job was to keep things clean, have other inmates do their duties and enforce the rules of TDC." He was told to use force to do his job.

James Adams, a prisoner with a history of prison charges of assault as well as a frame-up conviction on a self-defense killing, wrote the Torch/La Antorcha that "They made a Building Tender out of me, armed me with



Strip search in Texas prison.

was denied medical attention for a prostate condition that once caused his bladder to swell with 22 pounds of fluid.

An epileptic prisoner testified to being refused treatment for seizures. Another prisoner told of being given hallucinogenic drugs that made him lose 70 pounds over a 45-day period.

A former TDC registered nurse, Ronald Goforth, described conditions at the TDC hospital in Huntsville. He was allowed to perform surgery, although he was untrained. The electrical system there has no backup, so he once performed an appendectomy with a flashlight. He also described poor plumbing, roof cave-ins and "a fair amount of dirt" at the hospital. Doctors make rounds at most once a week, and one witness guessed that doctors only spend about two and a half minutes with each patient.

Aside from not having enough doctors, the ones they have are incompetent butchers. One doctor performing an appendectomy severed a blood vessel in the patient's stomach, nearly killing him. John Johnson told of being operated on for a hernia. When he came to, the doctor told him he had forgotten to tie up some blood vessels. He was put under again, and when he awoke the doctor said that he had removed one testicle. "You don't need it," the doctor said, "you can go through life without it."

Food

Another serious problem is what prisoners are expected to eat. Paul Brown testified: "I've seen inmates bite into a biscuit and bite right into a mouse or a roach." Brown also said prison meat is "sometimes rotten and green," and "you can grind your spoon into your beans because of the dirt content."

A pro-TDC witness calls

this "good, standard Texas cafeteria fare."

Women prisoners

There is one women's unit in TDC, at Goree. As we go to press, one woman ex-prisoner, Mary Jane Bandix, has testified and two other women are to be called. Women at Goree suffer all the problems, harassment and brutality that men do, along with sexual abuse and rape.

Bandix said a woman prisoner at Goree became pregnant by a guard. She was put into solitary confinement

and nearly died from a miscarriage. Bandix also testified to the rape of a woman by two male guards.

TDC retaliation

Prisoners who have testified in the Ruiz case have a well-founded fear of retaliation. David Ruiz testified that because of his "writing" activities he has been put in solitary confinement on "numerous occasions." Once he was put on a diet so poor he lost 10 pounds in 14 days. Fifteen different times he resorted

(Continued on page 17)

What Is the Ruiz Suit?

The Ruiz suit is the most far-reaching prisoner suit in U.S. history. Over 100 prisoners and close to 500 witnesses overall are expected to testify in the case, which began on October 2 and will run at least three months.

The suit challenges the Texas Department of Corrections' policy in the following areas:

- Inadequate medical treatment and the use of unqualified personnel;
- The use of "Building Tenders" (prisoners acting as guards);
- Opening, reading and stopping mail from courts, lawyers, government agencies and media;
- Unsafe living and working conditions;
- Unhealthy food preparation facilities.

partment owns 102,000 acres of land with 43,000 under cultivation, farmed by unpaid prisoner labor.

A look at TDC policy makes this picture of slavery complete.

First, there is the practice of long sentences. For example, one prisoner writing to the Torch/La Antorcha is serving 40 years for heroin possession, and another is in for 500 years on a robbery charge! Texas is also well-known for the "life-plus" sentence (life plus X amount of years) on capital crimes, which make it almost impossible for a prisoner to be paroled.

Second, TDC is notorious for arbitrary discipline of prisoners, taking away good time and so forth. Class I prisoners get 20 days' good time for every 30 days served, while Class III prisoners get no good time at all. A prisoner can be busted from Class I to Class III at the whim of the keepers, and lose all or part of accumu-

a black jack and knife and set me over other inmates in spite of my prison record... [but] I could not be used to beat and kill other prisoners for TDC... and for that reason I only lasted a few months."

Thomas Carlisle, a former prisoner, said an inmate named Melvin Austin died because of a beating at the hands of a Building Tender.

Other BTs told of whipping prisoners and helping guards in beatings. They were especially told to keep "writ writers" from writing writs.

The butcher shop

The TDC hospital facilities are little more than glorified butcher shops, with too few trained staff, and inmates allowed to do such things as minor surgery and suturing. One prisoner, William Hogan, testified that he

Prisoners Strike to Support Ruiz Suit

Texas prisoners supported the Ruiz case with a massive strike. The strike began at the Ellis unit on October 5 and spread to six other units, including Darrington, Ramsey I and Coffield.

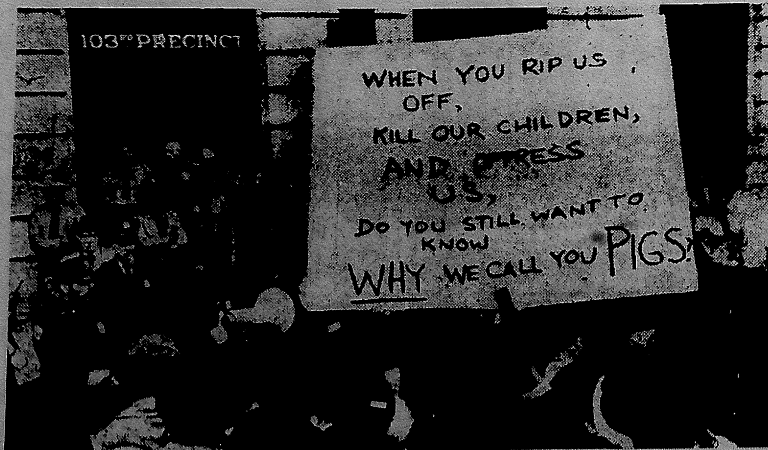
On October 5 the assistant warden at Darrington shot-gunned three prisoners while they were working in the fields. On October 10, 36 prisoners and 20 guards were injured in a three-hour battle at Coffield when guards attacked the strikers. Guards dragged prisoners from their cells, stripped and beat them, in some cases beyond recognition.

The prisoners at Ellis have not yet returned to work, but it isn't clear if this is because they are continuing the strike or because the keepers are not allowing them to return to work.

Judge Wayne Justice, who is hearing the Ruiz case, issued a statement on October 12 saying he "disapproved of the prisoners' strike" and "the strike could harm and impede the case." According to TDC prisoner Paul Brown in a letter to the Torch/La Antorcha:

"After the judge issued the statement, most inmates wanted to end the strike and not harm the case. As soon as the judge expressed dissatisfaction with the strikers, Estelle [James Estelle, TDC director—Ed.] has appeared to want to prolong the work stoppage. Estelle and his guards seem to be deliberately attempting to provoke an Attica-type situation in order to defeat the Ruiz litigation. Estelle refuses to permit the inmates to return to work."

All the strikers are cell-restricted. In addition, 240 prisoners under special medical care and not on strike are cell-restricted. In retaliation for his testimony, Brown—who was in Houston at the Ruiz trial when the strike began and who has no work assignment at all for medical reasons—has also been on keep-lock since his return to Ellis.

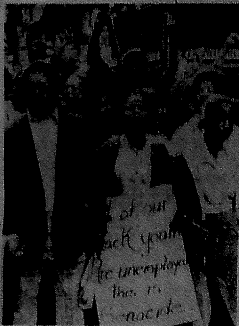


Feds Won't Do Anything

Killer Cops Walk the Beat

By ADELE LOHMAN

NEW YORK—Hundreds of people marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to Wall Street on Black Solidarity Day, November 6. In a demonstration against killer cops who get away with murder. Shouting "Down with the Jury," the marchers pro-



BUF march on Wall St.

tested the grand jury whitewash in the death of Arthur Miller. Miller, a Black businessman, was killed by Brooklyn cops last June.

Witnesses at the grand jury hearings charged that the cops beat Miller with billy clubs, punched and

kicked him while he was handcuffed, and choked him with a nightstick. The autopsy showed that he died of continuing pressure on his windpipe. This is the approved method police everywhere are taught to use to subdue "violent" prisoners.

Even though the evidence showed that Miller died of strangulation after going through this beating, the grand jury found no reason to indict anyone. They called Miller's death "a tragic, unforeseeable accident which occurred during a lawful arrest."

BUF leads demonstration

The November 6 demonstration was organized by the Black United Front (BUF), which also led a march against police brutality on September 28. Both demonstrations called on the Justice Department to investigate the Miller killing.

The BUF was formed last year when another killer cop got off. Robert Torsney, a Brooklyn cop who shot a Black teenager to death two years ago, copped an insanity plea. At that time the BUF also called for a federal in-

vestigation. Torsney has been in a mental institution since last year. He'll be out as soon as the courts can hold a hearing, because the doctors say he's no threat to himself or to society.

Killer cops are getting away with murder all over the country, and people are mad. They're protesting. But what are groups like the BUF calling for? They want the federal government to investigate the killings. The BUF calls

on the Justice Department to indict the killer cops under the Civil Rights Act.

Feds try to derail struggle

But calling on the federal government is a dead end. Look what happened in Texas. The Houston cops who beat Joe Campos Torres half to death and then drowned him got off with a suspended sentence and a \$1 fine! Thousands of people marched in the streets to protest the verdict. That's why the federal government tried the killer cops again under the Civil Rights Act. Under that law the cops could have gotten life imprisonment. But all the federal judge gave them was a 10-year suspended sentence and a year in jail.

Most working-class people don't know the city or the state won't punish their own cops. But they have more faith in the federal government. The feds look good because they are far away in Washington, supposedly watching over everything, to straighten things out when the local authorities do wrong.

But that's a lie. The federal government represents the interests of the boss class—the capitalists—just like the city and state governments, only more so. But the feds have to keep up their image of being an impartial authority.

When masses of people are out in the streets calling for action, the government has to make promises, so the people will go home. That's why they indicted the killer cops in Houston. But they can't afford to deliver on their promises. That's why they let them off with a slap on the wrist. They can't put cops in jail because they need them.

Cops protect bosses' interests

The police are there to protect capitalist property and control the working class. That's their job. And the ruling class that hires them and gives them guns can't very well punish them when they do their job. If they do, they won't have any cops willing to do their dirty work.

The working class can't count on the capitalist government to protect us from killer cops. We have to protect ourselves. The Panthers had the right idea in the '60s when they wanted armed self-defense for our communities. Workers don't need cops in our communities. They don't protect us. They only protect the banks and the stores. We need workers' defense guards to protect our communities. The cops are the hired thugs of the capitalists. We, the working class, have to protect ourselves. □

CUBAN RULERS PUSH NEW ANTI-GAY LAWS

By CHRIS HUDSON

In the early 1960s, the Cuban government sent gay people to concentration camps. When there were international protests, they stopped. But the government still keeps "notorious homosexuals" (that is, gays who are open rather than in the closet) from having prominent positions in sports or the arts. And they have continued to ban gays from teaching jobs.

Recently, the Cuban government proposed a new set of anti-gay laws as part of a general penal code revision. If they pass, it will be perfectly legal to be gay in Cuba—only it won't be legal to do very much about it. Gay Cubans can wind up in jail for asking someone to have sex, acting gay in public, or having gay sex with someone under 18.

Here are the specific laws and punishments that the Cuban government proposes:

- "Soliciting" for homosexual acts, "scandalous" acts, "ostentatious" public display, "indecent gestures"—three to nine months in jail, a \$270 fine, or both.

- "Leading" a person under 18 to engage in homosexuality, or taking such a person to a gay bar—three to eight years in prison.

- Having sex with a male under 16—five years to death. (The same law applies to having sex with women,

but only if they're under 12.)

These laws are part of a section on "crimes against the normal development of sexual relations and against the family, childhood and youth." This section also deals with crimes such as forcing young people to have sex, recruiting people to be

All over the world workers, peasants and other oppressed people are organizing and struggling against capitalism and imperialism. People are rising up to replace the corrupt and brutal rule of the capitalists with a society where all suffering and oppression is ended. No

The new anti-gay laws about age mean a man of 18 with a lover of 17 could go to jail for eight years. If the lover was 15, the man could be shot!

prostitutes, etc. Homosexual acts, which are completely voluntary, are put in the same category as rape and pimping!

Gov't. to gays: Stay in the closet

The laws about "scandalous" acts and the rest can mean only one thing—stay in the closet. If you're gay, keep it out of sight. These sections are also very vaguely written, an open invitation to the cops to abuse the already oppressive laws.

The laws about age mean a man of 18 with a lover of 17 could go to jail for eight years. If the lover was 15, the man could be shot!

There should be no laws against gays, in Cuba or anywhere else. People must have the right to decide who they relate to sexually and how.

one is risking their lives to merely replace today's butchers with new regimes that still throw people in jail for not following the do's and don'ts of the rulers' morality. Many people look to Cuba because Cuba claims to be a socialist country, constructing a "new socialist man." But at the same time that the Cuban government claims to speak for the oppressed masses of the world, it is oppressing gay people right at home.

Working and oppressed people—which includes the vast majority of gay people—have no interest in oppressing anyone. We are fighting so that those who are exploited and oppressed today will rule tomorrow. We are fighting for a society where people themselves are in command and no one oppresses anyone. Gay liberation will be one key part of the new, free society we are fighting for. □

Hyde Amendment Means Death for Women

The 1977 Hyde Amendment cut off Medicaid funds for abortions in most states. These funds paid for abortions for women using various state welfare programs. The National Abortion Rights Action League has reported that since the Hyde Amendment went into effect, the number of Medicaid abortions has dropped 98 percent. In Texas, for example, there was an average of 200 Medicaid abortions each month in 1977, and now there are two or fewer each month. In Alabama, not a single woman on welfare has been given money for an abortion since August 1977.

The attacks against abortion are being concentrated on poor and working-class women. These laws make safe, medically sound abortions the privilege of middle-class and ruling-class women, and force others to use amateur back-alley abortionists. Every woman denied an abortion in a hospital is a potential customer for a coat-hanger abortionist. Every coat-hanger abortion is a potential death or injury. The Hyde Amendment is a government death sentence for hundreds of women each year.

NY Gay Rights Bill Killed — WE SAY FIGHT BACK!

On November 8 the New York City Council killed "Intro 384," a gay rights bill. Gay organizations had spent months lobbying for the bill. The next night 3,000 angry gays and gay-rights supporters took to the streets. After a rally in Greenwich Village they marched up Eighth Avenue and held another rally in Times Square, completely blocking traffic on Broadway. The following is a leaflet RSL members distributed at the march.

The rulers of New York have just told us where to get off. The City Council—servants of the bankers and businessmen who run New York, protectors of the cops who oppress working and poor people throughout New York—have refused to make an exception for gays. They told the city unions: "Sacrifice." They told Black people in Brooklyn: "Forget about the murders of Randolph Evans and Arthur Miller." Now they've told gays: "Stay in the closet."

The entire gay establishment—from Bruce Voeller and the National Gay Task Force through the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights

—told us how to get gay rights. Petition the council, they said, win over the reluctant liberals, put a little pressure on Koch but not too much. These gay leaders have just exposed themselves as incompetents and fools. Begging our rulers for our rights never was and never will be the way to get them. The only way to get rights is to fight for them.

First, we have to build mass actions to demand gay rights now! If the leaders of all the organizations here tonight agreed on a day within the next week for a mass protest at City Hall and put out leaflets in every gay bar, every cruising area, every neighborhood, we could have 10,000 people in front of City Hall. We could double that number for the next demonstration. The key is not to bargain for our rights but demand them. We shouldn't plead for what we think the council might give us. Let them figure out how to get us off their backs.

Unite with the oppressed

Second, we have to build unity with all the oppressed



Angry gay rights demonstrators march up Eighth Avenue after defeat of Intro 384.

people of New York, the whole country and the world. What is happening to us is just one part of capitalism's attack on all working people. Divided from our sisters and brothers in the Black and Latin communities, in the unions, on welfare—we will be defeated. **United we can win!** We need to take the fight for gay rights into the labor movement and to all organizations and movements fighting against the right wing, against the KKK

and Nazis, against U.S. imperialism. The coalition built with labor unions and other organizations in California to defeat the anti-gay Briggs Initiative—timid and moderate as it was—shows this kind of unity can be built.

Fight for revolution

Third and last, we have to recognize that the fight for gay rights will not end until the system that oppresses gay and straight, Black,

Brown and white, female and male, working and oppressed people throughout the world is smashed. We mean capitalism—the rule of the exploiters in the U.S., Europe, Russia, Cuba, and everywhere in the world today. The fight may begin as a struggle for equal rights—but we must join with all other exploited and oppressed people and fight together for **POWER**, the power of the working and oppressed people.

They say Get Back—
We say Fight Back!

LA Workers March in Support Of Nicaraguan Revolution

Chanting "¡Muerte a Somoza! ¡Poder a los obreros!" ("Death to Somoza! Power to the workers!"), about 1,000 demonstrators marched through downtown Los Angeles on Saturday, October 21. They were marching in solidarity with the struggle of the Nicaraguan working class.

The march was co-sponsored by the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Sandinistas for Socialism in Nicaragua (SSN), a group of Nicaraguan revolutionaries in Los Angeles. It marked another step forward in the growing relationship between these two revolutionary organizations.

They were joined in the demonstration by representatives from the Workers Defense Committee (WDC—an organization initiated by the RSL to defend the democratic rights of oppressed people from right-wing attacks), Posición Centroamericana (a magazine published in San Francisco in solidarity with the revolutionary movement in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other Central American countries), Progressive Labor Party, and the Socialist Workers Party, as well as by several non-affiliated workers who support the socialist revolution in Nicaragua.

The demonstration raised the following demands: Stop all economic and military aid to the Somoza dictatorship! U.S. out of Nicaragua! U.S. and Nicaraguan workers unite against imperialist intervention! Proletarian internationalism!

Another demand raised

was: Free the August 8th Brigade! The Brigade, a group of 10 working-class prisoners, were charged with leading a rebellion at Napocho prison in upstate New York. It was pointed out that these brothers, who had been struggling against oppressive prison conditions and racist KKK guards, were fighting the same enemy as the Nicaraguan workers: the capitalist state and its agents.

The theme of the demonstration was the unity of the international working class against U.S. imperialism and all its agents, against the capitalist class of every country. In numerous chants

and in speeches given in English and Spanish by representatives of the RSL, the SSN, and the WDC at a rally in Pershing Square after the march, this theme was stressed.

The demonstration made it clear that the bloody Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua must be overthrown—not by liberal capitalists who will continue to exploit and oppress the Nicaraguan workers and peasants and do U.S. imperialism's dirty work more effectively than Somoza, but by a socialist revolution that will overthrow the entire capitalist class, throw out the imperialists, and end exploitation once and for all. □

Hands Off The Iranian Students!

Iran's military government and the FBI are stepping up their crackdown on Iranian opponents of the shah living in the U.S. According to a story in the *New York Post*, SAVAK operatives assigned to the Iranian Embassy met in Virginia on November 6. (SAVAK is Iran's secret police, notorious for its torture and assassination of tens of thousands of political prisoners.) Ahmed Moshavegh-Zade, a SAVAK officer operating under embassy cover, told the meeting: "If it's blood they want, we'll give

them blood."

In particular the meeting focused on suppressing opposition to the shah among the nearly 30,000 Iranian students in the U.S. These students have organized massive demonstrations against the shah, including the militant protests in Washington, D.C., last year and in Los Angeles this past September.

Among the measures proposed were cancellation of scholarship funds for students who refuse to support the regime; the use of informants to infiltrate Iranian student and political organizations; and physical and electronic spying on individual anti-shah militants.

At the same time the FBI is beginning a red-baiting campaign against the Iranian student movement. An FBI agent in Los Angeles said: "We are taking the suspicion of terrorist activity among Iranian students here very seriously." The FBI claims that several members of the Organization of Iranian People's Fedayee Guerrillas led the September demonstration in Los Angeles.

The FBI and SAVAK have always worked hand in hand. These latest incidents undoubtedly signal a step-up in the campaign of harassment and repression. All working-class revolutionaries and militants should come to the Iranian students' support. □



Militants in Los Angeles unite to support Nicaraguan workers' struggle against Somoza.



Black Masses Near Victory in Zimbabwe

Ethiopian offensive stalled

The Ethiopian government's offensive to retake Eritrea is grinding to a halt. Last summer the capitalist rulers of Ethiopia, supported by thousands of Cuban "advisers" and massive Russian military aid, recaptured the Eritrean capital of Asmara. But they failed to take the northern and eastern towns held by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), one of the organizations leading the liberation struggle. As a result, morale among the Ethiopian troops is crumbling. Most of the soldiers are peasants forced into the army against their will. The Ethiopian military regime is using them as cannon fodder in its imperialist war against the Eritrean people. According to Dughe Tejura, a former soldier in the 116th brigade of the militia: "Always we lose, and we see only the militia being killed." Tejura recently deserted and reached safety among EPLF forces.

To shore up discipline, Ethiopian military commanders have launched a wave of repression within the army. "It is a daily program to kill militia or officers for 'anti-revolutionary activity,'" said Tadessa Gbionew, another deserter. He saw 45 soldiers executed for retreating in battle. To prevent mutinies, soldiers are often shifted around. In the words of Tejura: "Whenever we make friends and begin to discuss things together, they separate us into different companies and battalions." The Ethiopian regime is sowing the seeds of revolt. In time, it will reap the fruits.

War threatens in SE Asia

Bloody skirmishes have broken out on the border between China and Vietnam. On November 1, China accused Vietnamese troops of machine-gunning a Chinese village. The Vietnamese government denied the charge and claimed that many of its own troops were killed or wounded resisting a Chinese attack. Vietnam says China has occupied strategic positions in its own Gao Lang province and is massing troops on the Vietnamese border.

These incidents are part of an overall struggle between China and Vietnam for control of Southeast Asia. Vietnam wants to gobble up Kampuchea (Cambodia) and Laos in a "Southeast Asia Federation" dominated by Vietnam. China wants to regain its own traditional "sphere of influence" over the area. These rivalries have already led to war. The Vietnamese have occupied the eastern provinces of Kampuchea with 60,000 troops. Now the fighting threatens to spread to the Vietnam-China border.

The Chinese and Vietnamese rulers call themselves "socialist." But their imperialist actions betray what they really are: state-capitalist regimes built on the backs of the working masses. Like capitalists everywhere, they are trying to increase their wealth and power at the expense of their weaker neighbors. Their rivalry could explode into another full-scale war in Southeast Asia.

In brief...

European workers are taking action to defend their jobs and living standards. In **Britain**, 57,000 autoworkers have shut down Ford for two months. They are striking to break Prime Minister Callaghan's five-percent wage limit. In **France**, workers are organizing anywhere from 50 to 200 factory takeovers a month. The workers are mobilizing against government efforts to close down low-profit companies and toss the workers into the streets.

Several groups in **Nicaragua** have broken away from the Broad Opposition Front (FAO). The FAO is a coalition of bourgeois and workers' parties which is trying to bring down dictator Anastasio Somoza. The Nicaraguan Workers' Central and the bourgeois Movement of the Twelve have charged the FAO with caving in to Somoza and the U.S. mediators who support him. Meanwhile the Sandinista National Liberation Front set a November 20 deadline for Somoza to leave the country. They have called for resuming political strikes and armed insurrection to drive him out of power.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and **Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat** may have to return the Nobel peace prize they won in October. The negotiations for an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty are breaking down. The reason: Begin refuses to link the treaty to settlement of the West Bank issue. Sadat needs this linkage to cover up his sellout of the Palestinians. Maybe there ought to be a Nobel prize for chump of the year, to be shared equally by Carter and the Nobel prize committee. Carter, who actually thought he had conned Begin into making a compromise on something, and the Nobel prize committee, for being the masters of superb timing that they are.

—PB

(Continued from page 1)
ating inside Zimbabwe. Now the Patriotic Front, which leads the armed struggle against white rule, maintains between 7,000 and 8,000 fighters in the countryside. Of these, around 6,000 support the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led by Robert Mugabe. Another 1,000 support the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo. These two organizations, which make up the Patriotic Front, also have about 20,000 armed supporters in bases in Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.

Mugabe has stated that Patriotic Front forces now control 80 percent of the country. Other sources credit the national liberation movement with controlling anywhere from one-third to three-fourths of Zimbabwe.

The government itself admits that over 200 "farms" (actually large plantations including thousands of acres apiece) are officially vacant; in other words, abandoned by their white owners. In one district, the number of operating plantations dropped from 105 to 18 in the past year. In another, the number of plantations dropped from 81 to 19. Smith told a national television audience in August that the government has too few troops to protect all the plantations.

The major cities of Zimbabwe are now islands in a countryside where Patriotic Front forces operate at will. The white population in these cities lives huddled together in a state of siege. A French mercenary who deserted Smith's army reports that: "To leave Salisbury [the national capital] you have to wait for the hour when the

August 6. They also carried out rocket and mortar attacks on the white district in Umtali—Zimbabwe's third largest city—on October 15.

White settler economy falling apart

The national liberation struggle has wrecked the



Guerrilla fighters of the Patriotic Front.

economic foundations of the white settler state. Foreign Minister Plet van der Byl admits: "Economic recession has hit us—mines are closing all over the country. There are many financial cracks."

Zimbabwe's gross domestic product (the total number of goods and services produced by the economy) dropped seven percent in 1977. It will have dropped another seven percent by the end of 1978. At the same time, the war is costing the ruling class \$1.5 million a day. This summer, the government had to impose a 12.5 percent tax increase (supposedly a "defense loan") just to keep the economy going.

The white settlers can read the handwriting on the wall. They're leaving the country in droves. Recently the government reported that 1,490 whites left the country in September, the highest total in 13 years. Over 7,500 whites fled in the first nine months of 1978. Overall, Zimbabwe's white population has shrunk from 263,000 to 230,000 in the past few years.

In addition, 23,000 whites have applied to banks in Zimbabwe to transfer their financial assets out of the country. The government is trying to force whites to remain by allowing emigrants to take only their furniture, their car and \$1,400 in cash with them when they go. Despite these restrictions, Smith was forced to make a special plea to whites, begging them to "hang on" for a few months longer.

But while Smith pleads for a little more time, his own government is falling apart around him. He had promised to hold nationwide elections in Zimbabwe before December 31. On October 29, Smith announced that

the elections would be postponed. A few days later he extended martial law to cover half the territory of Zimbabwe.

Smith's actions have all but wrecked his phony Black puppet government. Last March he signed a constitutional agreement with three Black leaders: Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Reverend Ndabangini Sithole, and Chief Jere-

miah Chirau. These politicians claimed the settlement guaranteed Black rule in Zimbabwe. In fact it allowed the minority white ruling class to hide behind Black politicians while continuing to run the country.

Muzorewa was the only one of the three Black leaders with any substantial support from the Black population. But he lost his reputation as a militant after he allowed Smith to fire the Black Minister of Justice Byron Hoŵe, who had demanded an end to racist discrimination in Zimbabwe. Since then Muzorewa has spent most of his time outside the country trying to drum up imperialist support for Smith's settlement.

Last August, four leading members of Muzorewa's party issued a statement condemning his slavish support to the Smith government. A Black member of Parliament declared: "He's finished at home."

Smith himself is stumbling through a series of last-ditch political maneuvers to prevent a Patriotic Front takeover. In August he went to Zambia for secret talks with ZAPU's Nkomo. When the talks failed he publicly rejected further negotiations with the Patriotic Front. A month later he reversed his stand during a trip to the U.S., calling for all-party talks with no preconditions. Now he is quarreling with Muzorewa, who was not consulted about any of this.

These twists and turns represent the death throes of white supremacist rule in Zimbabwe. While Smith and his Black puppets snap at each other, the Patriotic Front is moving close to final victory. The collapse of white rule will be a tremendous victory for the Black people of Zimbabwe. It's now only a matter of time. □



ZANU leader Robert Mugabe.

convoys set out. They leave twice a day protected by Land Rovers and armored Leyland trucks."

At Bulawayo, according to a **London Times** reporter on the scene: "Bus service is run by permission of the guerrillas on certain days only."

The white districts inside the cities are coming under direct attack for the first time. Patriotic Front forces organized raids in Salisbury itself on July 22 and again on



Mass revolts against shah turned city streets into battlegrounds.

Iranian People Rise Up Against the Shah

(Continued from page 1)
the economy.

The heroic struggles of the Iranian people have shaken the regime to its foundations.

The latest series of clashes took place in Tehran, the capital and main city of Iran. On November 4, troops with automatic weapons fired on thousands of demonstrating students, who were tearing down a statue of the shah on the campus of Tehran University. More than 40 of the students were killed. Angry for revenge, hundreds of thousands of youths, workers, and merchants gathered in the streets.

The next day, November 5, large groups of militants took over the capital, yelling "Death to the shah!" They tore down the iron railing around the British Embassy and, in a two and a half hour attack, put it to the torch. The embassy burned, but no cops or firemen were in sight.

The regime surrounded the U.S. Embassy with tanks to save it from the same fate. The Iranian masses were incensed with the U.S. and British imperialists for statements supportive of the shah which the two governments had made in recent days.

Dozens of banks, U.S. and European firms, hotels and offices, stores, movie theaters, and police stations were burned. The Iranian

Office of Public Information was looted and set afire, and the Information minister, Mohammed Reza Ameli-Tehrani, was beaten. A cloud of thick, black smoke hung over the capital. Afterward, gutted offices, burned-out automobiles, and looted stores stood as testimony to the fury of the battle that had just taken place.

In the evening of November 5, the prime minister, Jaafar Sharif-Emami, and two other cabinet ministers resigned in protest over the shootings of the students the night before. The prime minister had been installed by the shah only last August, to pacify the masses and restore order.

Shah and U.S. in a corner

The shah, who has ruled with unbelievable ruthlessness and brutality for the past 37 years, no longer seems to know what to do or where to turn. All during the rioting on November 5, the army held its fire as the city burned. Apparently the shah had reason to worry that his troops might turn against him and join the rebellion. He turned to opposition politicians to try to form a coalition government, but was rebuffed.

The shah's reliable ally—U.S. imperialism—has been

thrown into a state of near-panic by the latest upsurge. It sees the shah about to fall but has no reliable puppet to put in his place.

Iran is extremely important to U.S. imperialism. With his 413,000-man army, equipped with the latest weapons, the shah is vital to help stabilize U.S. imperialist control over the Middle East. And with his huge oil reserves, he is a powerful agent for the U.S. inside OPEC.

"Human rights" Carter issued a statement praising the hangman's supposed moves toward democracy and saying that his "progressive administration is very valuable to the entire Western world." But the real mood of the Carter Administration was best captured in a statement by an unnamed administration official, who was quoted by the *New York Times* on November 5 as saying: "The situation... is completely out of control. The next 24 to 48 hours are crucial and could be decisive. The shah's present government appears to be a lost cause...."

On November 6, the shah appointed the military chief of staff, General Gholam Reza Azhari, to head the first military government in 25 years. The new government promptly tried to dam up the rebellion. Tanks and troops occupied key sites in Tehran. Reinforcements were called in to strengthen the 150,000 troops already in the city.

The army government banned four of five morning newspapers. It broadcast martial law regulations warning that any gathering of more than three people would be "smashed by force." The midnight to four a.m. curfew was expanded to 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. All schools and universities were closed for a week. The shops in the rebellious bazaar district were also shut down. To ease the discontent, the shah announced the arrest of General Nematollah Nassiri, past head of SAVAK (the infamous secret

police). The ex-prime minister, Amir Abbas Hoveida, who held the office for 12 years and is the shah's closest friend and adviser, was also arrested. The shah issued warrants for the arrest of 60 of his friends, supporters, and members of the regime. He announced that more arrests would be coming, and that all members of the royal family who have gotten rich through government corruption would be investigated.

All that the shah is likely to accomplish by this desperate maneuver is to drive away the last of his own supporters. He is unlikely to stop the rebellion. The masses want the end of his bloody rule. These concessions will only make them bolder.

Essential as the street mobilizations have been, what has hurt the shah the most is the massive strike movement. Iran's 37,000 oil workers have launched a wildcat strike. The strike has halted all exports, and turned off the \$60 million-a-day spigot that brings essential foreign revenues into the shah's coffers. The workers are allowing production of enough oil for domestic consumption, but wildcat strikes by workers in the distribution network have made gasoline scarce. The strike has raised the specter of a serious petroleum shortage on the world market, and has already led to price increases.

More than a million government workers have also gone on strike. The shah has moved quickly to satisfy their grievances, with raises ranging from 25 to 100 percent. The settlement cost \$1.5 billion, and to pay for it the shah has cancelled or-

ders for \$7 billion worth of sophisticated military hardware from the U.S. and Western Europe.

There is hardly a vital sector of the economy that isn't paralyzed by the spreading wildcats. A strike by 11,000 workers at Iran Air has halted all airline flights within the country. Much of the country's transportation and communications network has ground to a halt. Workers have shut down textile and metallurgical plants. Some 400,000 school teachers are out.

The striking workers want political reforms, an end to martial law, the release of all political prisoners, and substantial wage increases to deal with Iran's staggering inflation rate (officially put at 50 percent).

Workers could topple the shah

The workers have shown that they have the power to topple the shah. Unfortunately, there is no workers' revolutionary party to lead the struggle. The workers are fighting in support of the bourgeois opposition and Muslim religious leaders. Instead they should move to take over the country and set up a workers' state.

The revolt against the shah is now 10 months old. There have been recurrent bloody clashes with the police and the army. More than a thousand have died, but the struggle has gone on. The shah's latest combination of the carrot and the stick is not likely to bring it to a halt. The masses sense that the hangman is wounded. They are not likely to rest until they do him in.

Iranian Women Smash Shah's Goons

For historical reasons, the anti-shah masses in Iran look mostly to the mullahs (Muslim priests) for leadership. These mullahs are unbelievably reactionary. Their policy toward women, for example, is to keep them tied to the kitchen and enslaved to the men. They want to drive them out of industry and the schools and deprive them of all legal and civil rights. And by bringing back the Muslim veil, they hope to resurrect the darkest days of feudal oppression.

Recently, their chief, Ayatollah Khomeini, forced Flora Lewis, a reporter for the *New York Times*, to hide herself behind a white cape, with only her eyes showing, and kneel barefoot in front of him. To get the interview, Ms. Lewis decided to put up with the indignities.

This priest and his ilk must be mad to think that the women of Iran are going to sit still while the priests put the yoke on their backs. Perhaps the clearest example comes from the small town of Paveh in western Iran.

On the night of October 30, 2,000 armed tribesmen hired by a politician loyal to the shah invaded Paveh on horseback and trucks. The men of the town, fearing the attack, marched out of town. To avoid a confrontation, they decided to hold a prayer meeting.

The armed goons attacked the prayer meeting and killed three men. Then they turned back and attacked the town, burning cars, shops, and houses.

This infuriated the women, who had been left behind by the men. Women and children counter-attacked, burning three trucks filled with raiders, hurling stones at the horsemen, and killing 12 of the attackers.

Let Khomeini & Co. draw a lesson from this small town in rural Iran. Iran's women are nobody's playthings. Whoever tries to enslave them is playing with fire.

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By RON TABER

In last month's Torch/La Antorcha, we discussed the major reformist organizations in the United States today—the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), the Communist Party (CP), and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). We outlined the political strategies of these groups and showed that, despite some differences, they basically add up to the same thing.

They are all working to remodel the reformist trade union bureaucracy. They want to give it a more militant face so that it can maintain its control over the working class in the mass struggles that lie ahead of us.

We warned that this represented a dire threat to the socialist revolution in this country. And we argued that, for this reason, these reformist tendencies are the enemies of the working class. (Here we are using "reformist" to include the right centrists—reformists in Marxist clothes.)

Revolutionaries must work to expose, discredit, and deprive the reformists of power and influence in the workers' movement. How to conduct this fight in the coming period is the subject of this article.

Today, the U.S. left is fragmented into a large number of groups and tendencies, debating political differences and competing for the limited amount of influence and recruits that is presently available. If there is one major axis dividing these tendencies, this appears to be the division between Trotskyism and Stalinism.

In other words, the left appears to be split into two hostile camps or milieus—the Trotskyist camp and the Stalinist camp, which includes the Maoists (or Marxist-Leninists as many of them like to be called).

The Trotskyist milieu includes organizations such as the Socialist Workers Party, the Spartacist League (SL), the Workers League (WL), the Revolutionary Socialist League and others. The Stalinist milieu includes the Communist Party, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the Communist Party-Marxist-Leninist (CP-ML), and other tendencies.

While many organizations do not fall neatly into either category, overall the Trotskyist/Stalinist division seems to define the left.

The real issues involved in the struggle between Trotskyism and Stalinism—the Permanent Revolution vs. Socialism in One Country, the united front vs. the popular front, and others—are vital. They embody the fundamental issues of Marxism.

We believe that any truly revolutionary party must break thoroughly with the national chauvinist, class-collaborationist and state-capitalist politics that Stalinism represents.

Little agreement in each "camp"

However, Trotskyism and Stalinism mean different things to different organizations. Despite areas of agreement—such as on the question of Socialism in One Country and the nature of democratic centralism—the Maoist organizations interpret Stalinism in a qualitatively different manner than does the CP. Basing themselves on the Chinese Revolution, which they incorrectly see as a proletarian revolution, the Maoists consider Stalinism to be the continuation of Leninism.

In contrast, the CP interprets Stalinism in terms of the "peaceful road to socialism," "peaceful coexistence," and class-collaborationism in general.

To the Maoists, therefore, the Communist Party is a "revisionist" organization that has turned Marxism into the most craven reformism in theory and class treason in practice. We agree with this.

Similarly, we believe that the SWP, the SL, and other "Trotskyist" organizations represent the betrayal of Trotskyism—not its continuation. We

see these groups as middle-class radicals who try to hide their liberal bureaucratic do-goodism behind a ritualistic chanting of Trotsky's words.

In other words, within each "camp" there is little real political agreement.

In fact, there is often more fundamental political agreement between a given Trotskyist organization and a Stalinist group than there is between organizations inside each milieu. For example, despite the historic rivalry between the CP and the SWP, they share a fundamental world-view and pursue very similar strategies. They both believe that the state-capitalist countries (Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, the Eastern European countries, etc.) are "socialist" or "degenerated or deformed workers' states," and consider them progressive.

Neither the CP nor the SWP believes that the workers can or ought to overthrow capitalism through a violent revolution and set up their own revolutionary dictatorship as a step to socialism and communism. Their common political goal is to transform traditional capitalism into state capitalism in a more or less peaceful manner.

On the other hand, a number of groups—both "Trotskyist" and "Stalinist"—seem to share agreement on the need for violent revolution to overthrow capitalism; consider all, or almost all, the so-called "socialist" countries some form of capitalism; and generally pursue more militant policies. In our view, these more left-wing tendencies include the PLP, the RCP, the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee, and ourselves, among others.

This should suggest that the current lines of division on the left are, at bottom, artificial and false.

To us, the most basic and most important issue facing the working class today is the question—reform or revolution? What is the solution to the crisis that is strangling us? Is it to reform capitalism or overthrow it? Should our goal be to reorganize capitalism, to eliminate its "defects" and strengthen its "strong points" (as the capitalist apologists put it)? Or should we be working to smash the system and replace it with a revolutionary society, ruled by the working class and its allies?

This question—reform or revolution—has been the fundamental issue in the workers' movement throughout its history. It was the substance of the debate between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and the utopian socialists on the other. It was fought out in the German Social-Democratic movement at the turn of the century, when Rosa Luxemburg led the fight against the revisionism of Eduard Bernstein. It was the real issue in the fight between the Iskra-ists and the Economists in the Russian Social-Democratic movement.

And it was the red thread that ran through the fight of Lenin and the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks from 1903 to, and after, the Russian Revolution in October 1917.

Today, 61 years after the October Revolution, the issue of reform or revolution is still the key question facing



Jobs rally in Washington, April 1975. Workers fought to take over stage from sellout politicians and

REFORM OR REVOLUTION? KEY QUESTION FOR THE LEFT

the working class. Underneath the peripheral and subsidiary issues, the line between the organizations that stand for reform and those that are fighting for revolution, is, and should be, the fundamental division on the left.

How to defeat the reformists

As the world crisis deepens and the class struggle throughout the world explodes, new layers of people, particularly the youth, will become politicized and radicalized. What path will these people follow? Will they be misled by the reformists, turned into bureaucrats and camp-followers who will work to cripple the working class in the face of the crisis? Or will they

become Bolshevik revolutionaries, struggling to build a Leninist vanguard party that can lead the workers and all oppressed people to socialism and freedom? What we do today and in the immediate future can help determine the answer to this question.

At the present time, the left-wing (that is, anti-reformist) tendencies are greatly outsize by the reformist and right-centrist organizations. The latter have many more members, supporters and resources than the more left-wing tendencies. On top of this, the level of class-consciousness of the workers is still quite low. As a result, the anti-reformist organizations are at a decided disadvantage in the struggle against reformism. For the present, this is beyond our control.

There are ways, however, in which we unnecessarily cede advantages to the reformists. For example, politically raw workers are often put off by the political struggle among left organizations and the organizational sectarianism that characterizes the entire milieu. Since they don't understand all the issues involved, these workers often view this struggle only as "hair-splitting" and "squabbling over minor issues." The smaller the organizations involved, the more often the disputes among them are seen as irrelevant.

Since today the anti-reformist tendencies are smaller than the reformist ones, many people new to the left may be alienated by the left-wing tendencies, while they find the larger reformist and right-centrist organizations more appealing.

There can be no doubt that the differences among the tendencies are of vital importance to the workers' movement and cannot be ignored or glossed over. The revolutionary party can only be built through a determined

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March 1977: RSL fought for revolutionary line in SWP-led anti-apartheid demonstration.



From sellout politicians and union hacks.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION? THE QUESTION LEFT

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demonstration to publicize and build support for the struggles of the Nicaraguan workers. The demonstration was joined by supporters of PLP, as well as other revolutionaries. This approach can also be applied in other arenas.

Through this type of united-front work, the more left-wing tendencies can attract more attention to our activities and policies. And we can show ever larger numbers of workers that militant rank-and-file struggle—rather than reliance on the capitalist police, liberal politicians and trade union bureaucrats—can win significant victories.

Concrete actions against reformists

II. The anti-reformist organizations should combine our forces in specific struggles against the reformists and right-centrist organizations. In the trade unions, community organizations and in the left as a whole, the reformists and right centrists maneuver for control, try to squeeze out the more left-wing tendencies, and generally use bureaucratic means to prevent the radicalization of the workers and oppressed people. If in these situations the more left-wing tendencies try to take on the reformists on an individual basis, we will virtually guarantee the reformists' victory. However, if we unite our forces on a tactical basis we may be able to outflank the reformists and turn the tables on them. Examples of united fronts that could improve our tactical position vis-a-vis the reformists include:

- **Revolutionary contingents at marches and demonstrations organized by, and under the auspices of, the reformists and right-centrist organizations.** When the reformists and right centrists organize demonstrations and marches, they usually do so under reformist and broad democratic slogans. They also exert considerable effort to swamp or drown out the more militant slogans and chants of the more left-wing organizations. The result is usually more or less legalistic, pacifist, reformist marches in which revolutionaries serve as little more than bodies to fill out the reformists' ranks. If the more left-wing groupings joined in revolutionary contingents we could organize a distinct revolutionary pole. These contingents could attract the most militant participants in the demonstrations and counterpose revolutionary slogans and chants to the nursery-school jingles of the reformists.

In March 1977, for example, the SWP organized a demonstration in New York to commemorate the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre and to protest the continuing crimes committed by the racist South African regime. The RSL joined this demonstration.

In predictable fashion, the SWP wanted to limit the chanting at the demonstration to "Majority Rule Now" and to prevent the demonstrators from chanting more revolutionary slogans. The RSL is for Black majority rule in southern Africa, but we believe that this can only be won through a revolution led by the armed Black workers. Consequently, we wanted to chant revolutionary slogans. But whenever we tried to chant them, the SWP tried (unsuccessfully) to drown us out.

At one point in the demonstration, the RSL plus supporters of other organizations began chanting "What's the Word? Johannesburg!—What's the Solution? Revolution!" This was too much for the supposedly revolutionary SWP, so they tried to drown out this chant with chants of "Majority Rule Now." But despite their vastly greater forces, the SWP had a lot of trouble imposing their reformist line on the demonstration.

Only when they brought in a large sound system, mounted it on a platform, and got five of their hacks shrieking "Majority Rule Now" into the microphones, were they able to regain

any amount of control over the demonstration.

In other words, joint chanting on the part of a number of groups and individuals enabled us to wage a limited, but partially successful, battle against the SWP. While the incident was small, it suggests what such an approach on an even greater scale could accomplish.

- **United-front committees and caucuses in the trade unions and other organizations in which the left-wing tendencies can combine our forces and coordinate our activities to take on the reformists in these arenas.**

As we discussed in last month's *Torch/La Antorcha*, supporters of the Revolutionary Autoworkers Committee (an organization launched by the RSL), Autoworkers United to Fight (affiliated to the RCP), the Spartacist League and other militants joined forces in a Heat Walkout Defense Committee. This committee helped to lead a rank-and-file struggle against company firings of militants, speedup, job combinations and management harassment, and to mobilize support for a local strike run by the rank and file.

Although this committee was formed primarily to fight the company and the more right-wing reformists (that is, the local union officials), it also served to outmaneuver the right-centrists who had tied themselves to the coattails of one faction of the bureaucrats. As the right-centrists grow and increase their influence, they will increasingly worm their way into bureaucratic positions. As this happens, united-front opposition caucuses in the trade unions will have to be organized to fight directly against the more left-sounding sellouts.

- **Where, for a variety of reasons, more formal united fronts cannot be organized, the anti-reformist tendencies should arrange tactical coordination in the various arenas where we must combat the reformists.**

For example, in many trade-union situations, it is already necessary for the more left-wing tendencies to meet before union meetings to work out our

ism—such as American exceptionalism, Karl Kautsky's theory of the state, the so-called peaceful road to socialism, etc.

An integral part of such a campaign should be regular exposures of the activities of the reformist and right-centrist organizations today. For example: how, concretely, the DSO, CP and SWP are working to refurbish the labor bureaucracy; what the SWP is doing in NOW, the NAACP and similar organizations; and how the CP and SWP work to prevent a militant struggle against the Nazis and the Klan. This work of political exposure should include polemics against the CP and SWP's pseudo-Marxist analyses and perspectives on trade union work, the national question, women's liberation, etc.

Every time a group like the DSO, the CP or the SWP takes one step, makes one deal or fakes one fact at the expense of the workers and their struggle, it should be nailed. Presently, most of the more left-wing tendencies carry on propaganda and agitation of this kind. But if a number of the organizations each began to emphasize this work and took some steps to coordinate it, we would be able to multiply our impact on the advanced workers, and undercut the reformists' ability to mistrain and mislead the working class.

A call to action

We have no idea whether our proposals will actually be implemented by any significant number of the left-wing tendencies. On the one hand, we have already organized some modest united-front actions, and our approach has attracted the attention of some members of a number of left-wing organizations. On the other hand, the leaderships of most of the left-wing tendencies refuse to form united

Should our goal be to reorganize capitalism, to eliminate its "defects" and strengthen its "strong points?" Or should we be working to smash the system and replace it with a revolutionary society ruled by the working class and its allies? This question—reform or revolution—has always been the fundamental issue in the workers' movement.

motions and tactics just to be able to get the floor and avoid splitting the militant vote. In the future, this type of tactical arrangement will have to be utilized in various other situations, such as conferences controlled or dominated by the reformist and right-centrist organizations. Anyone who remembers how the SWP and the CP ran the various "peace" organizations in the 1960s will know what we are talking about.

III. Each of the anti-reformist tendencies should launch a sustained propagandistic and agitational campaign against reformism and the reformist organizations. Through newspapers, journals, forums and leaflets, we should be carefully explaining what reformism is, why it represents a threat to the working class, how the reformist organizations function to tie the workers to capitalism and block the socialist revolution. Such a campaign would include:

- Basic educational articles explaining the Marxist position on the question of reform or revolution;
- Historical articles on the specific reformist tendencies and organizations, such as the Social Democracy during and after World War I, Menshevism and Lenin's struggles against it, etc.;
- Theoretical articles that take on the theoretical underpinnings of reform-

fronts, preferring to pursue the struggle on an atomized basis. As a result of this sectarianism, the various enemies of the working class have won and are winning victories that are in our power to prevent.

But while we don't know if our proposals will be implemented, we do know that they are necessary. As we said earlier, the reformists and right centrists are large and growing. They have money, personnel and other resources. And they are willing to use the vilest methods, not against the capitalists, but against us—their opponents on their left.

To wage a successful fight against these bureaucrats, we must unite our forces. If we are divided, they can take us on one by one, where the odds are in their favor. But if we unite, if we can develop some communication and coordination of our forces, we will be able to hold our own or better in the foreseeable future, while we prepare for the time when we can take the offensive against them.

We should debate and discuss our disagreements in the context of this fight against the greater enemy. If we allow our political differences to stand in the way of a joint struggle against the reformists, and if, as a result, the reformists can keep the movement firmly in their clutches, we will prove ourselves little better than they are.

UAW Head Fraser Calls Conference

Liberals and Bureaucrats Try to Talk Tough

Over 100 trade-union leaders and politicians held a one-day conference in Detroit on October 17. Doug Fraser, head of the United Auto Workers (UAW), called the meeting to form a "coalition of coalitions" of liberal and labor organizations in the U.S.

Twenty-six trade unions sent delegates to Detroit. Among those attending were representatives of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers (AFSCME), District 1199 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, the United Farm Workers, District 65 of the Distributive Workers of America, the International Union of Electrical Workers, and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

In addition, a collection of big-name liberal leaders attended the meeting. These included former anti-war activist Tom Hayden; Joseph Rauh from the Americans for Democratic Action; Bella Abzug, a former congresswoman from New York; Benjamin Hooks, head of the NAACP; and Eleanor Smeal from the National Organization for Women.

During the meeting a parade of speakers from these and other organizations attacked big business and the Democratic Party leadership. Ron Dellums, a Black congressman from California who is now calling himself a socialist, led off with a speech demanding jobs and condemning military spending. Fraser himself proclaimed: "We're on a collision course with the Democratic Party and they ought to be put on notice about that."

Despite the tough talk the meeting accomplished very little. One delegate complained: "All the one-issue people wound up in arguments about which issues were the most important." Some delegates were for organizing a dump-Carter movement in 1980. Others, like Fraser, want to concentrate on building up liberal control over the Democratic Party machine. A few are talking about organizing a new political party.

The conference ended without reaching agreement on any of these questions. Instead, it simply authorized Fraser to set up two standing committees on "political

reform" and "Issues."

The conference was a reflection of the problem facing liberal politicians and trade-union leaders these days. Fraser and his friends are loyal supporters of the

To do this, the bureaucrats had to be able to pressure the capitalists to grant some concessions to the people. This involved tying the unions to the Democratic Party and trading their members' votes for "pro-labor" legislation. Overall, it has been the bureaucrats' and liberals' ability to "deliver the goods" that enabled them to maintain control over their rank and file.

Today, however, the ruling class is not in a conceding mood. On the contrary, they are attacking the trade un-

ing to fight back against this offensive. Meanwhile, the labor leaders and liberal politicians are caught in the middle. This is straining their traditional relationship with the Democratic Party. As one UAW organizer put it: "We won a big victory in '76 and wound up with a pile of shit. What do we tell the troops?"

To maintain their position the liberals and bureaucrats need to win some concessions. But, afraid that their membership might get out of control, they are not ready to organize a real fight. So instead, they're calling meetings and conferences. This gives them a forum to try to figure out what to do. It also makes it look like they are getting ready for a fight. This, they hope, will convince the workers that they are actually fighting for the workers' interests. At the same time, it is meant to threaten the ruling class to come up with some crumbs: "If you don't give us something for the ranks, we may be forced to do something we don't want to—actually organize a fight."

The Detroit conference was just the latest feint in this bout of shadow boxing. The bureaucrats and politicians couldn't agree on what to do. They are not ready to do anything decisive—like break with the Democratic Party. And they can't agree on a meeker strategy. That's why nothing happened at the conference. □



Fraser talks to striking workers in Iowa. He wants to head off spreading strike wave.

ruling class. For years, they have used their control of the trade unions and other organizations to keep the workers and other oppressed people under the heel of the capitalist class.

ions, chopping away at democratic rights and generally slashing away at the living and working conditions of the working class. At the same time, the workers and oppressed people are begin-



Safeway strikers reject sellout

The bitter California supermarket strike, in which one picket has been killed and several hurt, continues. Teamster drivers and warehouse workers voted down a sellout negotiated by union bureaucrats and federal mediators—the same lousy deal they turned down twice before. The walkout started on July 18, over an inhuman, computerized speedup scheme at Safeway, and spread to three other chains: Lucky's, Alpha Beta and Ralph's.

The so-called settlement does nothing about the speedup. The Teamster tops want to leave that to arbitration. And it guarantees that the most militant strikers will be fired. Workers wouldn't be called back according to seniority. Anyone not recalled within 36 hours would be out of a job, with no appeal through any grievance procedure. The bosses have a hit list of picket-line leaders that they want to fire. And the Teamster heads don't give a damn.

If the International Union would call out the workers in the hundreds of Safeway stores across the country, they could win this strike. But all the bureaucrats want is to get the workers back on the job and let arbitration settle the whole thing. Meanwhile the government is helping to bust the strike. On October 27, the FBI raided one of the striking locals, Teamster Local 70.

But the workers are standing firm. Even if they have to fight the government, the bosses and their own union leadership, they swear they'll stay out until they get a decent settlement.

NY Newspaper strike settled

The New York City newspaper strike, which shut down the *New York Times* and the *Daily News* for 88 days, ended on November 6, with a partial victory for the unions. The strike started because the bosses wanted to cut the number of press operators in half.

Now, as a result of the strike, the 1,508 regular press operators have job security for the duration of the six-year pact.

However, the publishers will save millions of dollars through speedup. They'll cut crews through attrition and by eliminating overtime. At the *Times* alone, the number of junior press operators will be cut from 68 per shift to between 18 and 38. Maintenance and cleanup shifts will also be reduced.

The publishers wanted to break the press operators' union like the *Washington Post* did in 1975. But they couldn't do it for two reasons: The unions stuck together, and the bosses didn't. In Washington, the deliverers had crossed the picket lines. In New York, they refused. Six unions—over 10,000 workers—stayed out solid.

Meanwhile, Rupert Murdoch, whose *New York Post* had been losing money, decided to grab all he could from his competitors in circulation and advertising dollars. He made a deal with the unions that they'd come back to work and he would sign whatever agreement they made with the *Times* and the *Daily News*. The *Post* hit the stands on the 57th day of the strike.

While the workers lost a lot of what they had gained over the years, the bosses lost a lot more. They tried to break the unions and failed because the workers stuck together and refused to give in.

McDonald's cracks union drive

Young workers in a downtown Chicago McDonald's lost in their first attempt to organize a union. Almost all the workers are Black, and 65 percent are women. They needed 40 union cards signed to petition for an election in the shop. When they got 70, they were sure they had it. But the company found a loophole.

The McDonald's at 115 N. Wabash Avenue is owned by Lyon Weber Management, which owns 11

McDonald's in the Chicago area. They claim none of their stores are independent units. So the union would have to bargain with the whole chain, and they didn't have enough signatures. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled in favor of the company.

There's little chance of organizing all 11 restaurants at this time. Eight of Lyon Weber's stores are in the suburbs. They employ mostly white, middle-class students who live at home and work to earn pocket money. McDonald's pays their workers a nickel over the minimum wage. The whole operation is built on hiring young people who never worked before and see this as a temporary job. In some stores the annual turnover of help is 300 percent. One executive said: "It's 150,000 kids out there busting their tails that makes us tick."

In brief...

About 50 workers at the Law Den Nursing Home in Detroit have been on strike since November 6 against abominable wages and conditions. The starting pay is \$2.65 an hour. Workers with years of seniority only get \$3 to \$3.50. They have no COLA and very little medical coverage. Workers have been fired indiscriminately and then told to come back to work when they were about to collect unemployment checks. Then on September 29, management cancelled their contract with SEIU (Service Employees International Union) Local 79.

The women and men have been out on the picket line every day. They say they're ready to stay out until they force management to give in. About half the beds in the home are now empty. The strikers are looking to get support from other parts of their local and from other workers in the area.

The number of workdays lost due to strikes reached a four-year high in the first nine months of this year. There were fewer but bigger strikes, the majority involving more than 5,000 workers. —AL—

EDITORIAL

Shut Down "The California Reich"

To Our Readers

(Continued from page 1) were picketing outside the theater at the time of the disruption. However, we neither carried out the disruption of the showing nor called the Associated Press. The November 8 issue of *Challenge/Desafio*, newspaper of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), acknowledged that friends and members of the PLP and CAR had stopped the showing.

The director of the theater, Jack Garfein, has attempted to use the disruption to rally support for his showing of *The California Reich*. He claims that it is an anti-Nazi movie. And he says that the best way to deal with the Nazis is to put them up on a screen and let them spout their racist, sexist, and anti-working class filth. Supposedly everybody will be so disgusted that the Nazis will just wither up and die.

No free platforms for Nazis!

Garfein is wrong on two counts.

In the first place, *The California Reich* is not an anti-Nazi movie, whatever the intentions of the people who made it. Over 30 public broadcasting stations have refused to show it, calling it a "recruitment film" and "a model for development of other Nazi cells." The film has no narration and was made with the cooperation of the National Socialist White Peoples (Nazi) Party. Basically, it is nearly one hour of Nazi meetings, speeches, demonstrations and interviews—a free platform for the Nazis to spread their racist ideology.

In the second place, letting the Nazis propagandize for their movement is not the way to defeat them. This society is falling apart. The capitalists are unable to solve the crisis which is racking the economy and society as a whole. This is forcing people to look for alternatives. Millions of white people have already been brainwashed into believing that Black and Latin

people are the causes of unemployment, high prices and lousy living conditions. To people like this, the Nazis' message in *The California Reich* can be high-potency vitamins. It points to Blacks, Latins, Jews, gay people and working-class revolutionaries as the enemy, and drives home the Nazi program to enslave and exterminate them. A film like *The California Reich* can help to recruit ground-down, racist whites to the Nazi movement.

But Garfein doesn't want us to think about this. He wants to keep us confused about who are our friends and who are our enemies. He even goes so far as to say that the anti-Nazi militants are "just as bad as" the Nazis themselves. To strengthen this claim, he and the *New York Daily Press* (Oct. 30, 1978) manufactured some Nazis and claimed that they had joined the anti-Nazi protesters.

Garfein has tried to squeeze every drop of publicity he can out of the situation. The lengths to which he is willing to go show through in his cynical use of the fact that he is a survivor of the German Nazi concentration camps of World War II. He plays on people's sympathies for the Jewish victims of the Nazis to build his credibility as an anti-Nazi "spokesman" and to boost his profits at the box office. By smearing those militants who are actually building the struggle against the Nazi movement in this country, he only aids those whom he claims to oppose—the Nazis.

PLP/CAR tactics fail

The RSL is not on principle opposed to disrupting showings of *The California Reich*. But we believe that what PLP and CAR did was a tactical mistake.

When revolutionaries attack Nazi rallies, demonstrations, bookstores, headquarters or individuals, we are concretely weakening the Nazi movement. On the most

basic level, it reduces the number of Nazi shock troops. It shows that the Nazis can be beaten. This lessens their ability to recruit and scares off the more vacillating people in the Nazi periphery.

In addition, such actions concretely educate working and oppressed people about the Nazi threat and show how it can be fought.

But PLP/CAR's action did neither of these things. Concretely, their action did not shut down *The California Reich*. Another print of the film was being shown in the theater just 45 minutes later. Not one less person saw *The California Reich* because of the disruption. Ripping up a strip of film hardly hurts the Nazis or their movement.

Even as an educational symbol of the anti-Nazi struggle, however, PLP/CAR's action was unsuccessful. There was no confrontation between the Nazis and anti-Nazi militants. Instead, the anti-Nazi militants attacked liberals who claim to also be against the Nazis.

The net result of the incident was to build sympathy for the liberals (in this case Garfein). The press was able to portray the "poor victimized" liberal as the only sane person caught between two equally bad extremist forces—the Nazis and the anti-Nazis.

We have another criticism of PLP and CAR's approach. Both organizations had the opportunity to join in united-front actions (and in the general campaign) to shut down *The California Reich*. The RSL has held weekly picket lines outside the theater, along with other organizations and independent militants. We have handed out thousands of leaflets in Black and Latin working-class neighborhoods, to bring new people into the struggle and educate workers about the Nazi threat. And we called many other organizations, including PLP and CAR, asking them to participate.

PLP and CAR's participation would have strengthened the picket line, and increased the number of work-

ers educated about the threat of fascism. A broader united front against *The California Reich* would have had a much better chance of actually driving it out of New York.

But PLP/CAR refused to be part of the united-front campaign. Instead, they showed up unannounced the night of October 28. Though there was already a sizable, militant picket in front of the theater, they chose to set up their own small line off to the side. They refused to coordinate chants or other activities with the leadership of our picket line. And they told us nothing about the action they were planning inside.

When the PLP/CAR people came out of the theater, the whole group took off. Had the cops arrived right after they left, a whole lot of other anti-Nazi militants could have been busted.

Unite against the fascists

The RSL has consistently urged those left organizations which are for a militant fight against the Nazis and other fascists to work together in concrete actions against them. As individual organizations, the different anti-fascist forces are relatively small and weak. United-front actions can strengthen our forces and score victories against the Nazis.

The leadership of the Progressive Labor Party, however, has run a consistent line against united-front actions with other organizations. They insist on labeling everyone (except the PLP) "enemies" and "red-coated scabs." The easy labels hide the fact that the PLP leadership is scared to let its rank and file near other organizations. Maybe they're afraid the PLP membership will see the need for united-front struggle against the Nazis and other enemies of the working class?

The PLP leadership can continue to run its silly sectarian line. Meanwhile, we will continue our work in building a united revolutionary struggle against the Nazis.

The RSL has physically fought the Nazis in Chicago, Detroit and St. Louis. In every city where we have supporters we have organized working and oppressed people to stop Nazi marches, disrupt their meetings and shut down their bookstores. We have also carried out consistent educational work, explaining to workers and oppressed people what the Nazis are and how to fight them. And we have fought for a united-front approach in these areas of work.

The RSL calls on all working-class militants and organizations to join with us in this fight. It is a life and death struggle. □

Let's start off with a reminder. The next issue of the *Torch/La Antorcha* will come out on January 15, 1979. The December 15 issue is cancelled because of the RSL's fourth national convention. Friends and comrades of the RSL in prison who are writing solidarity messages to the convention should try to mail them in soon. . .

An article in the November 1 *Washington Post* reports that the cops in Montgomery County, Maryland, have busted 256 high school students for grass recently. Who are they kidding? They're smoking dope in the White House! The only reason grass is illegal is to keep the prices high and to hassle young people, leftists and prisoners. . . And talking about smoke, some readers may remember that last spring, the Spartacist League said it was no accident that the RSL has ties with a revolutionary organization in Jamaica, W.I., since, according to the SL, Jamaica is "the lumpen capital of the world." Well, after all these months, the SL's newspaper *Workers Vanguard* has published an article defending this racist shit. They quote a British bourgeois sociologist and point to the movie *The Harder They Come* and the widespread use of ganja as the proof. Check it out in the October 20 issue of *Workers Vanguard*. . . We have got to come up with some better name for this column. "To Our Readers" is pretty dull. We were thinking of "Seeds and Stems" or "What's the Word?" but weren't sure. What do you think? Send in your comments or suggestions. If we use your idea, we'll send you a copy of "Malcolm X Speaks" or some other book. . . Finally, let's end with a Christmas poem written by a prisoner and printed in last December's *Torch/La Antorcha*. It's called: "To All My Revolutionary Sisters. . . All over this earth women are murdered/tortured, sterilized/raped, stifled/crippled, owned/exploited under the banner of male supremacy! "So many deeds cry out to be done, And always urgently; The world rolls on, Time presses. Ten thousand years are too long. Seize the day; Seize the hour!" Let light and love and power restore the plan of humanity on this earth. Happy holiday greetings? FUCK XMAS! LET'S GO TO WAR!

—SE

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1978
Revolutionary Socialist League

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Address all correspondence to:
Torch/La Antorcha
PO Box 562
New York, NY 10036

Subscription Rates:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)

Prisoners.....	FREE
3 issues (introductory).....	\$1.00
12 issues (one year).....	\$5.00
Supporting (one year).....	\$10.00
Libraries and institutions.....	\$5.00
(Overseas)	
12 issues (seamail).....	\$5.00
12 issues (airmail, unsealed).....	\$12.00

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Solidarity Defeats Missouri "Right-to-Work" Law

(Continued from page 5) feated. The Missouri "right-to-work" law, the anti-gay Briggs Initiative and Rizzo's proposed charter change all failed. The major exceptions to this trend were on taxes, crime and women's rights. The anti-tax bandwagon that

started last summer continued, though in a moderated form. But on the issues of crime and women's rights, there was a more significant shift to the right.

Taxes: Property taxes have soared sky-high in recent years, and middle-class and

working-class homeowners have been squeezed. In response, many people now support property tax cuts. Last summer, Proposition 13 passed in California. Now there are dozens of "Sons of Proposition 13" proposed as tax relief for the working people. These laws, however, end up helping business and real estate interests the most, since they own the most property.

Simply cutting taxes on property and not increasing taxes on business and corporations means cutting back on social services that local governments provide. Many supporters of tax cuts don't care, however, because they are white homeowners who believe that Blacks, Latins and other minorities in the inner cities are the main users of city services.

Fifteen states had some sort of tax relief measures on the ballot, and they passed in 13 of them. A moderated version of tax relief—limiting government spending to current levels rather than tax cuts—was the most popular measure. In Michigan, where the moderate version was on the ballot in opposition to straight tax cuts, the spend-



In Philadelphia, racist ex-cop Mayor Frank Rizzo tried to get the city charter changed to allow him to run for a third term. Rizzo called on his supporters to "Vote White" and was awarded the KKK's "Racist of the Month Award!" Rizzo tried to break the strike of 19,000 city workers this summer by claiming: "This is a Black people's strike. White people won't honor this strike." The pig lost heavily in his attempt to get a third term.

VOTERS TURN BACK BRIGGS INITIATIVE

For the first time in two years, legal attacks on gay rights were defeated in elections. In California, Proposition 6 (the Briggs Initiative) was defeated by an easy 16 percent margin, with 58 percent of the votes going against Briggs. Several months earlier it had been expected to pass. If it had, all gay teachers as well as teachers who support gay rights would have been fired. But in the weeks before the election, right-wing politicians, including Ronald Reagan, opposed the initiative.

The night before the election, Los Angeles rioters spoke on street corners on the theme "Vote no on Briggs, but voting is not enough."

In Seattle, Washington, so many people rejected a city law against anti-gay discrimination that it was dropped. As expected, however, there were no winners in Duval County, Florida. In a re-run of the election, Governor Jeb Bush Bryant began her anti-gay campaign.

Indiana Prisoners Salute Pontiac Rebellion

'Your Fight Is Our Fight'

Pontiac State Prisoners:

That this statement of solidarity and support comes now—some 90 days since the rebellion/fightback is indicative of our ever-growing but low political level of development. But that we present it today is demonstrative of our growth.

We as prisoners can easily embrace and most correctly recognize what quantitatively led to July 22, and sympathize with the loss of human life. Further, we can openly support and second the passage put forth in "Statement of the Pontiac Prisoners," in *La Antorcha/Torch*, Oct. 15-Nov. 14, 1978:

"We don't believe that exploitation can be ended under capitalism nor do we believe that crime will end and prisons be abolished as long as the system of oppression which creates and profits from these continue to exist. So today we will give you no promises that there will be no more bloody prison rebellions here."

As prisoners we know too, the concrete conditions existing in Pontiac on July 22 were not just peculiar on that day or only relegated to Pontiac. But were only unique in that on July 22, 1978, prisoners at Pontiac fought back! Serving further to heighten the already escalating contradictions of "the prison business" in the U.S., in general, thus ce-

menting once again the connection to working and oppressed people in particular.

The Pontiac prisoners struck back primarily in/with the only means appropriate—concentrated, concerted violence! Violence is/was appropriate in that violence and prisons are one and the same! Violence and amerikkka are synonymous! Violence and the political system of exploitation chiefly characterized by the amerikkkan government forces the inevitability of violence as the only means of redress in the prisons!

As prisoners we know all too well the atmosphere of violence that has to be created just to acquire some of the needed things, i.e., medical treatment, even respect of our families and friends when they come to the prison to visit.

The Pontiac Prisoners Statement that asserts: "... the very real danger that prison reforms will be taken as ends in themselves instead of a means to put checks on the authoritarian power and lessen the severity of prison repression..." is absolutely correct.

As we write this we know all too well of the prison authorities' power-crazed ideal of itself, how it feels it has the right to openly intimidate/harass and dehumanize our families and

friends with their perverted concept of control through fear and terror. Terror and fear can control frightened people... but not forever!!!

As POW Bro. Dhoruba looked down in a camp in New York State correctly pointed out in an open letter to demonstrators recently: "Black and oppressed people are living in a state of undeclared war!!!"

Therefore we are not under any illusions about what typifies day-to-day, month-to-months and year-to-years of existence where oppression and racism either in their more sophisticated forms (behind the walls) of "disciplinary proceedings/classification committees etc.," or, in their more blatant forms of Nazi and Klan activity. Our/your fight is against the very nature of capitalist/colonialist and imperialist rule!

So again we acknowledge that your fight is our fight and our fight is your fight! We are winning and we have suffered setbacks... this process will continue universally until self-determination/political independence and national liberation will rightfully restore to the world's people the natural order of things—a true socialist society!

Peace—After fierce struggle!
War to the nub!
Indiana State Prison
Revolutionary Collective

ing limit won.

Crime: Tighter laws against crime, including laws related to youth crime and the death penalty, went over big this election year. Most of the "anti-crime" hysteria is directed at Blacks and Latins (youth in particular), who many whites blame for the decay in the cities. As a result, "crackdown on crime" has become a racist code word.

In California voters overwhelmingly approved John Briggs' Proposition 7, adding to the list of crimes subject to the death sentence.

In Michigan, Nebraska, and Oklahoma other "anti-crime" laws were passed.

Some races went the other way, but by very narrow margins. In New York one of the biggest issues in the governor's race was Governor Hugh Carey's veto of a death-penalty bill. His opponent, Perry Duryea, promised to sign it if he got elected. Carey won, apparently stalling an early return to the death sentence

in New York. And in California, Chief Justice Rose Bird, in a very close vote, won confirmation after a campaign that pictured her as "soft on criminals."

Women's Rights: A rightward shift was also apparent on this issue. The Equal Rights Amendment was on the ballot in some form in two states—Florida and Nevada. It lost in both places.

In Iowa, anti-abortion forces focused efforts on defeating Senator Richard Clark, and were successful. In New York, the "Right-to-Life Party" got over 150,000 votes for governor.

This will be enough to guarantee them the fourth line on the ballot for the next four years.

Overall, the right wing won some notable victories, but the working class and oppressed people were able to deny them others. The balance of forces did not shift significantly to the right. Perhaps the most significant single thing is that so many people just stayed home. □

ECONOMY... HEADING FOR A CRASH

(Continued from page 3) Carter, and the rest of the capitalist class are worried sick.

Today, the economy is in the fourth year of the recovery from the 1974 recession, the worst crisis since the Depression. But this economic recovery has been weak. A strong upturn is usually based on a substantial increase in "capital spending," that is, investment in "plant and equipment" (new factories and machinery). This not only puts people to work and expands production, but also modernizes the economy, making it stronger.

But the post-1974 recovery has seen little spending on plant and equipment. Instead, the expansion has been based primarily on the production of consumer goods, which in turn has been based on the tremendous expansion of the consumer debt.

The result is an extremely sick economy suffocating under a pile of debts. "Overall," says *Business Week*, "for every \$3 owed in 1974, the U.S. now owes \$4, a growth of debt far faster than the growth of the economy, even when inflation is counted in economic growth."

It is only a matter of time before the economy enters an economic recession. This one, which will hit next year or the year after, will probably be much sharper than the one in 1973-74. But this recession will not wipe out the entire debt. The debt structure will remain, pushing the economy toward a full-scale collapse sometime in the future.

Business Week called this accumulation of debt "drinking more to postpone the hangover." After four years of drinking in debt, the economy is in a drunken stupor. □

TEXAS PRISONERS FIGHT SLAVERY

(Continued from page 7)
to self-mutilation to get out of solitary.

Lawrence Pope, another prisoner filing the suit, has been in solitary four times since April, lost 60 days good time and been in administrative segregation, all because of the case. He is strip-searched four times daily.

James Adams described in his letters how he has been regularly harassed and attacked since he began "writ-writing" in 1973. He

has filed several suits against prison conditions and civil rights violations. TDC has responded by framing him on murder and assault charges, keeping him in solitary for extended periods of time and taking away his good time.

Adams was called as a witness in Ruiz, and wrote the *Torch/La Antorcha* that: "[When I return to Angleton] I will go back to segregation on a built-up charge and be retaliated against. I was told that I was next on the 'hit' list by building tenders and turnkeys. I feel that I will be beaten and that my life is in danger."

Paul Brown testified to acts of brutality by BTs. He names a prisoner, Joe Greer, who he saw beat another prisoner bloody. Brown wrote the *Torch/La Antorcha* that when he was returned to Ellis "I was... assigned to living quarters B-1 where inmate enforcer Joe Greer is assigned.... Prior to testifying my living assignment was D-11. Assistant Warden Lightsey assigned me to B-1 as a direct retaliation for my testimony."

case after being brought in as plaintiffs by Judge Justice. The large role of the U.S. government in the case has led to speculation about the possibility of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons taking TDC over, as it took over the Arkansas prison system in 1970.

The speculation is based in part on the potential cost to TDC if the Ruiz suit is successful. On the one hand, TDC is now badly overcrowded. It is set up to handle 19,000 prisoners, but currently holds 24,000 and the prisoner population is growing rapidly. Many cells designed for two now hold three, with the third made to sleep on the floor.

Estelle has used the overcrowding as a lever to push for \$82 million to buy more land and build a couple of new units. In addition, it will cost TDC \$500 million to \$1.5 billion to make the changes that could be ordered as a result of Ruiz. Since it is unlikely that TDC would come up with that kind of money, implementing Ruiz could mean that the feds take TDC over. The question is, would this be an improvement? We say no.

Texas prisons are not overcrowded simply because of rigid parole procedures or lack of facilities. Nor are Texas prisons such hellholes just because the Texas

keepers are particularly sadistic. In almost every state the prisons are being filled to the brim, and the greatest victims are young working-class people, especially Black and Latin youth.

The reason for this isn't very hard to find. U.S. capitalism is falling apart. The capitalists can't provide decent jobs at living wages for the working class, and especially for working-class youth. Capitalism's only "answer" to the poverty and misery it creates is more repression, murder and prison. The number of victims grows every year.

This cannot be solved by the U.S. government taking over the prisons. It can only be solved through workers' revolution which will end the

conditions that place our brothers and sisters in prison, and which will tear down the walls once and for all.

Prisoner testimony in the Ruiz case has been like the prisoners rolling back a huge rock and exposing the snakes, rats and vermin crawling around underneath. The exposure has been extremely valuable, and must be continued.

TDC is regarded by ruling-class prison "experts" as one of the best prison systems in the country! It is good for working-class people to learn what the rulers' model really looks like. The heroic struggle of the TDC prisoners against degradation and brutality deserves the support of all working and oppressed people. □



"TDC is probably the best example of slavery remaining in this country."

The role of the feds

The "Justice" Department assigned three attorneys and over 20 FBI agents to the

Carter's Anti-Inflation Plan

(Continued from page 3)

them are:

- 465,000 teamsters. Their contract expires March 31.
- 60,000 rubber workers. Their contract expires April 20.
- 244,000 garment workers. Their contract expires May 31.
- 185,000 electrical workers. The General Electric contract expires June 27. The Westinghouse contract runs out on July 15.
- 672,000 autoworkers. Their contract expires September 14.

Union leaders will try to use the guidelines to sabotage militant workers' struggles during the contract round. Teamster leader Frank Fitzsimmons offered Carter's plan "qualified support." Peter Bommarito, head of the United Rubber Workers, said he "could live with" the guidelines. And United Auto Workers boss Doug Fraser declared: "I don't think anyone should reject this out of hand."

It will be up to rank-and-file militants to take the lead in organizing to smash Carter's phony guidelines. □

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