

Hands Off Uganda!

FEBRUARY 28—On Saturday, the *New York Times* carried a front-page dispatch from Washington which in its ominous understatement was more of an official U.S. government threat than a news item. The first two paragraphs read:

"President Carter, suddenly involved in his first international crisis, expressed concern today about the fate of the 200 or more Americans in Uganda who were ordered to meet with President Idi Amin on Monday. Mr. Carter also set in motion the machinery to deal with any deterioration in the situation. "Word was sent through diplomatic channels to Field Marshal Amin that the United States would not tolerate any attempt to use the Americans as hostages."

—*New York Times*, 26 February 1977

Immediately, we remember Santo Domingo 1965, when Lyndon Johnson dispatched the Marines to put down a popular revolt led by "constitutional" army officers. His reason, said LBJ, was that "American lives are in danger." Or, closer to Uganda, the 1964 imperialist operation that took Stanleyville in the Congo (now Zaire), the last stronghold of left-wing followers of slain Congolese nationalist premier Patrice Lumumba. Belgian paratroopers jumped from American planes while CIA-trained Cuban gusano mercenaries headed up a column of government troops in this "humanitarian mission." The pretext: rescuing some 500 European and American hostages.

Now, we again have the loaded issue of white missionaries allegedly being used as hostages by a hostile black African regime. And once again all eyes turn to the Marines. Idi Amin says there are 5,000 on board an aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean. Nonsense, says the State Department, there are only 200 and the USS *Enterprise* was only paying a "good will visit" to the Kenyan port of Mombassa.

But behind the formal diplomatic denial was a fist. While stating that "there were no plans for any landings in Uganda" (for now), the *Times* article added: "A working group was set up at the State Department to monitor developments and the Pentagon considered possible orders to the *Enterprise*..." The White House press secretary told reporters that the U.S. president would "take whatever steps he thinks are necessary and proper to protect American lives."

The working class must not be hoodwinked by Carter's pious talk of saving American lives. The real victims of Amin's murderous rule are the toiling peasants and workers, the schoolteachers and students whose life has been turned into a living hell of daily assassinations, economic ruin and tribal blood feuds. The massive tribal

killings reported by refugees in the last week led one of them to remark in Nairobi that the Ugandan people would welcome "anyone" who deposed Amin.

Communists must denounce the bloody massacre instigated by Uganda's mad dictator and struggle against his brutal rule. But we do not call on the American Seventh Fleet to topple Amin and install "democracy" in Uganda. The gendarmes of U.S. imperialism have already wreaked death and destruction on a vast scale which blood-crazed Idi Amin cannot even begin to emulate, bombing and napalming to death more than one million Indochinese during the Vietnam war. The establishment of a puppet regime or a client state of U.S. imperialism would be a step backwards for the Ugandan masses.

Proletarian internationalists unconditionally defend the national independence of the ex-colonial countries, chimerical as that may be in economic reality, against imperialist forays to subordinate them to direct control by the metropolitan powers.

Coup Attempt?

The current "Uganda crisis" began with Amin's accusation on February 14 that Anglican archbishop Janani Luwum had masterminded a coup attempt with backing from Israel and Tanzanian president Nyerere. Two days later Luwum and internal affairs minister Oboto Olumbi and water resources minister Erinayo Oryema were hauled before a soldiers rally in Kampala (the country's largest town). Thousands of troops screamed, "Kill them! Kill them!" after Amin accused the three of conspiring to overthrow him. The next day Uganda radio announced that the "conspirators" were killed in an auto accident while being transported to an officers mess for interrogation.

Subsequent eyewitness accounts supplied by refugees arriving in Nairobi make it clear that Luwum and the two ministers were killed by Ugandan secret police, if not by Amin himself (as the Tanzanian government newspaper asserted). The London *Observer* (20 February) reported that Luwum "was shot dead by members of Uganda's State Research Department on Wednesday night soon after his arrest then his body was doused in petrol and burned..." The "State Research Department" is a special police force personally controlled by Amin, whose agents bear a remarkable resemblance—both in appearance and their sinister methods of work—with the dreaded Tontons Macoutes of Duvalier's Haiti.

Why were they killed? The *Observer* had reported on 13 February, before the

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Idi Amin

Katherine Young/Sven Simon



UPI

Ugandan soldiers stand over bodies claimed to be guerrillas slain near the Tanzanian border in 1972.



Camerapix

Keystone

1973 execution in Uganda.

Fear and Violence in NYC

Violent crime and constant fear of assault are no strangers to residents of the decaying American metropolis. But in recent months, astronomical levels of youth unemployment and deepening poverty in the ghettos have sent crime rates soaring, particularly in New York City.

A sharp increase of brutal attacks in the mass transit system has produced a barrage of "Death Rides the Subways" headlines and an outpouring of rage and frustration from the city's victimized citizens. So far this year there have been four reported rapes on NYC subways. One particularly gruesome atrocity involved a Brooklyn College professor who was raped, sodomized and robbed for 21 minutes while an almost empty train made ten stops before her attackers finally fled.

But Sanford Garelik, chief of the transit police, claims that the public outcry is unjustified. After all, he points out, in both 1975 and 1976 there were five reported rapes on the trains, and this year there have been only four... in six weeks! Following publication of these figures, the transit police were ordered to redeploy half of the 200-man "fare-evasion unit" to train and station patrols. Garelik protested that guarding against fare-beaters was the cornerstone of his "anticrime" program that he claims produced 163,000 "apprehensions" and \$16 million in "otherwise-lost revenue."

There has been a significant deterioration in the "quality of life" underground, as those forced to wait in the filthy stations for graffiti-smeared trains cannot help but notice. A huge increase in the number of mentally deranged, drug addicts, winos and bag ladies—

clad in layers of rotting clothes with all their worldly possessions crammed in tattered shopping bags—has been evident in the subways as the bitterly cold winter has driven them underground from their usual refuges on park benches and sidewalk hot-air gratings.

As for robberies and muggings, those passengers on the "A" train who were held up on February 4 by three gunmen who went through a car during the express run from 59th to 125th Streets shovelling wallets and jewelry into a grocery bag, will not be reassured by Garelik's feeble defense that "the subways are safer than the streets." The truth is, crime rates are soaring everywhere in the city. Last year in New York there were more than 600,000 felonies reported, an increase of 15 percent over 1975. Almost every night the TV news interviews the latest bruised and battered victim of an assault.

In the midst of the furor over mounting subway crime, a horrible killing spree by a crazed Nazi creep further shocked the area's population. On February 14, Fred Cowan, a sexually defective, swastika-tattooed, muscle-bound walking time-bomb of social pathology slaughtered four workers at the Neptune Worldwide Moving Company in New Rochelle. Cowan, who had been suspended the week before, returned to the warehouse with an arsenal of weapons and proceeded to murder three black workers and one dark-skinned Indian while searching for his Jewish supervisor. He also killed one policeman before putting a bullet through his own head to end the hour-long shootout.

Liberal Hypocrisy and Cop Terror

Public outrage over this escalation of random, almost casual, violence is being channeled by the bourgeois media into a campaign for more cops, stiffer prison sentences, the death penalty and the like. The fact that in America the urban lumpen population is overwhelmingly black creates an explosive intersection of anger against street crime with the poisonous racism which permeates society.

Thus in the case of the perverted kill-crazy Nazi, daily papers prominently displayed photos of the slain New Rochelle cop's funeral, while the deaths of the black workers got little or no attention. The liberal *New York Times*, which had initially refrained from mentioning the race of the slaughtered workers—although blacks were Cowan's obvious targets—brooded piously over where this Hitler-worshipper could possibly have gotten the extensive collection of guns discovered in his bedroom amidst Nazi regalia and war souvenirs.

American society is deeply irrational and violent. People who live in the real world—unlike *Times* publisher "Punch" Sulzberger—know perfectly well that criminals and homicidal nuts like Cowan have always had easy access to guns. In fact, outside New York City, some 40 percent of American households have some kind of firearms for protection. Despite the New York state Sullivan Law, legally restricting handgun ownership to those approved by the police department (which has only 550 pistol permits in effect for "civilians"), and a strict NYC ordinance that places endless obstacles in the path of an ordinary citizen seeking to register any kind of firearm, there are hundreds of



Brooklyn cops arrest black demonstrators in front of Board of Education office.

thousands of guns available, as the numerous crime victims can attest.

The bourgeoisie's response to crime is to strengthen its own repressive apparatus, while disarming the citizenry. Sulzberger and his cronies—who are driven about in chauffeured limousines and never have to descend to the subways—can advocate strict gun control knowing that they are protected by a host of private guards and cops while the masses are kept defenseless. And the main purpose of the capitalist state apparatus—the cops, courts and prisons—is not to protect the population but to maintain the oppressive status quo which breeds violent crime.

There are plenty of weapons in the hands of criminals... and the cops, who are one of the main sources of corruption, thievery and wanton violence in the cities. The policeman's badge and gun are his license to terrorize the ghettos—harassing, shaking down and murdering blacks. This was confirmed again last week when police officer William Walker was acquitted by an all-white Brooklyn jury of murdering a 22-year-old black student, beside whose dead body Walker had placed his own toy pistol to bolster his claim of "self-defense."

This is no isolated occurrence. In 1974 another all-white jury acquitted another NYC cop, Thomas Shea, of the murder of a ten-year-old black child; his guilt was so obvious that a departmental review subsequently removed Shea from the force. Now a third white cop is up on charges of slaying a 15-year-old

black youth outside his Brooklyn home last Thanksgiving.

The New York Police Department's contribution to the bloodletting in the streets and subways does not end with gunning down innocent black youth. A high proportion of violent crimes are by drug addicts needing money for a "fix." Yet everyone knows the cops are up to their necks in New York's flourishing drug traffic, not only taking payoffs to look the other way, but even acting as pushers themselves.

"Law and order" campaigns do not stop crime—they are but thinly disguised attempts to maintain the racist status quo by giving free rein to the terrorists in blue.

Increase Welfare! Abolish Gun Control!

Although the social struggles of the 1960's have subsided and a sullen torpor seems to hang over American society, it must not be forgotten that the "law and order" campaigns were a direct ruling-class response to those struggles. Gun-control laws prohibiting carrying rifles or shotguns in public were passed by the New York city council specifically to prevent Malcolm X, whose life was obviously in danger, from carrying a .30-caliber carbine in his car. When Malcolm was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom a few days after being refused police protection, one of his bodyguards, who had managed to wound one of the assassins, was jailed for violating the state's handgun laws!

The cops do not "protect" the citizenry—they terrorize the population! No guns for professional racist killers—Disarm the Cops!

Communists are not bleeding-heart liberals who preach "Christian concern" for the brutalized lumpen criminals marauding through the streets and subways, killing, maiming, raping and robbing hapless citizens. When the burnt-out rubble of the South Bronx begins to resemble Dresden after World War II, it is to be expected that the vast ghettos will produce depraved human beings, as the "Empire City" slides into

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Muscle Training Illustrated

Frederick Cowan



Manning/New York Times

Arms, swastika and picture of Hitler found in Cowan's house.

London Spartacist Group Forum

Leninism: The National Question and Ireland

Speaker: DAVID STRACHAN

Friday, March 11, 1977 7:00 p.m.

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC1

LONDON

Militants Oppose Dues Hike at ILWU Warehouse Convention

SAN FRANCISCO, February 26—The 32nd annual constitutional and contract convention of warehouse Local 6 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) held today was dominated by preparation for the coming retirement of founding International president Harry Bridges and secretary-treasurer Louis Goldblatt. Besides reshuffling the top posts to ensure a smooth transition, the incumbent bureaucracy is pressing hard to ram through a dues increase scheme to assure a steady income from a declining membership battered by unemployment and defeated strikes.

In his opening report to the 359 delegates, Local president Curtis McClain noted that "certain things" had taken place which made him decide it would not be "wise" for San Francisco mayor Moscone to speak at this convention. Now seeking election to Goldblatt's post, McClain did not want to remind the membership of how he openly welcomed the mayor to last year's convention, only weeks before Moscone unleashed his cops against the S.F. city workers' strike. McClain noted, however, that he intends to continue to "work with the best of the Republicans and the best of the Democrats."

As for last June's disastrous master contract strike, which ended with 50 union militants convicted and fined on various charges, McClain simply stonewalled it: the three-year contract, he asserted, "provided some of the best benefits"; the strike committee was "damned tough," and so forth. Striking a humble pose, McClain admitted, "we made some mistakes." But he then asserted that "We did not lose this strike," and attributed the string of defeats at Nestlé's, Automatic Plastic Molding and Handyman (where a picketer was killed) to special circumstances.

Summing up, McClain emphasized the depleted treasury and announced a proposed slate of new International officers: Jimmy Herman (longtime head of Local 34) for International president; himself for International secretary-treasurer; Rudy Rubio (former president of Local 13) and George Martin (whose bureaucratic base is Hawaii) for International vice presidents. Such a crew hardly amounts to even a changing of the guard.

Militant Caucus Minority Report

In the discussion on the president's report only the Militant Caucus, represented by four delegates, openly stated

that the sellout Bridges-McClain bureaucracy had to be replaced by a class-struggle leadership in order to save the union. Presenting a minority report as a member of the general executive board, Caucus spokesman Bob Mandel pointed out that the union's defeats were not due to "errors" but to conscious pro-capitalist policies. For example, the International and its flunkies squashed every proposal put forward by the Militant Caucus to come to the defense of the S.F. city workers' strike.

Mandel pointed out the stark realities: 15 percent unemployed in the Local; longshoremen working three-day weeks or less; Hawaiian sugar workers facing total unemployment; scores of union members convicted for strike activities, for the first time in 30 years, and scabs escorted through ILWU picket lines by the cops. These disasters are directly tied to the leadership's treachery: its support to capitalist politicians Carter and Moscone, its failure to mobilize the union for the picket lines, its opposition to Militant Caucus motions to "hot-cargo" Handyman products. There was even a goon-squad assault on Mandel under the noses of the Local officials at a stewards' meeting during the master contract strike.

All this indicates the need to throw out the class-collaborationist Bridges regime, Mandel asserted. A leadership based on class-struggle policies would fight for a union-wide strike for a shorter work-shift at no loss in pay, against all union raiding schemes, for union defense squads to prevent deportation raids, for militant strike tactics such as defiance of injunctions and hot cargoing scab goods and for a workers party to fight for a workers government. These policies were put before the convention in a series of Militant Caucus resolutions.

In contrast, all the other self-proclaimed union "militants" rushed to prove their loyalty to the bureaucracy. Communist Party (CP) supporter Franklin Alexander congratulated McClain on his candidacy, asserting that the Local 6 president is "head and shoulders above most labor leaders." Vern Bown, well-known supporter of the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), echoed CP-style apologies by asserting that things are bad "not because the officers are bad, but because we face the capitalist system." Reflecting their general demoralization and disorientation, RCP supporters played a token role at the convention.

After the membership accepted the president's report, retired union leader Paul Heidi moved to immediately vote on the minority report. Despite protests over this undemocratic procedure designed to prevent the delegates from discussing the Militant Caucus resolutions, the minority report was summarily voted down.

Dues Increase Fraud

The hot issue of the convention was the question of a dues increase. (In 1975 the convention almost unanimously—except for Militant Caucus delegates—approved a dues hike only to see it turned down by the membership.) Local secretary-treasurer Keith Eickman, taking up where McClain left off, painted a gloomy picture of the union's finances. For the most part, this financial disaster is a product of the union's defeats, e.g., large fines for court convictions, loss of membership due to runaway shops and unemployment, etc.

The bureaucratic answer to the financial crunch is not militant union action but a dues increase.

To avoid having to keep going to the membership for dues increases, McClain and Eickman were pushing a scheme to replace the current dues of \$11 per month for employed members with a structure calculated on two straight-time hours of pay per month. Suddenly shedding a tear for the lower-paid ILWU members, Eickman argued that members who make \$3.00 per hour are unfairly burdened by the flat fee system. Militant Caucus delegate Pete Woolston pointed out that such a scheme would violate the constitution by eliminating the membership's right to review dues increases, since they would now be tied automatically to pay increases, and opposed any increase as an endorsement of the leadership's policies.

At this point the bureaucrats panicked, fearing that widespread membership opposition to the dues hike might percolate to the surface. Bureaucratic hatchman Karl Leipnik, an appointed International organizer, argued that only "defeatists" could oppose a dues increase. Well-known CP supporter Joe Lindsay, chief steward at Golden Grain who arranged for management to cross the picket lines last June, announced his support for the leadership proposal, and debate was quickly closed by another CP supporter.

In order to ram through the increase, McClain bureaucratically ruled that the proposed budget for the coming year could not be separated from the dues hike and lied to the membership by claiming that the increase was for one year only. The chair was challenged and a voice vote was taken followed by a standing vote. Despite the unclear results, Eickman quickly ruled that the chair was upheld. At this point a bureaucratic goon squad made a foray aimed at intimidating further opposition.

The vote on the dues increase quickly followed, but despite McClain's ruling that "the ayes have it," delegates demanded a standing vote. The budget and dues increase then passed by a large margin. But the fact that even at the convention, which is generally heavily weighted toward the bureaucracy, fully a third of the delegates opposed the leadership proposal indicates that when this undemocratic measure goes to the membership it is likely to face stiff opposition.

A Militant Caucus resolution calling for Spanish translations of important union documents—including the contract and the local newspaper—was tabled to the general executive board (on a motion by CP supporter Lindsay), even though one third of the membership is Spanish-speaking. Once again a quarter of the delegates voted against tabling, well aware that this meant

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WL Exclusionism Wrecks Own Meeting

TORONTO—The tiny local branch of the Workers League (WL), reinforced by a goon squad of its cronies from Detroit, forcibly prevented members of the Trotskyist League of Canada (TL) from attending a so-called "public" WL meeting February 19 at the University of Toronto. Although a showing of the film "Trotsky: His Life and Work" was the drawing card for the meeting, its real purpose was revealed once the WL had corralled about 40 people inside. It was simply a forum to continue the vicious slander campaign of the Healyite International Committee (IC) against United Secretariat (USec) leaders George Novack and Joseph Hansen.

As usual, the Workers League was concerned above all with spreading its lies without having to face exposure by supporters of the international Spartacist tendency. At the entrance to the meeting a WL goon announced, "Everyone is welcome who is not a member of the Trotskyist League."

To protest this Stalinist exclusion, the TL and its supporters initiated a militant picket line, 40-strong, in front of the meeting site. They chanted: "Let the communists in," "Down with Stalinist exclusionism—For workers democracy," "On Sadlowski, Miller and Ho Chi Minh—IC and USec are brothers under the skin," and "Down with the Healyite slander campaign—Reforge the Fourth International."

Inside the meeting a supporter of the TL demanded to know why the Trotskyist League was excluded and protested this cowardly act as a blatant violation of workers democracy. WL goons immediately rushed him, pushing him out the door. Two others who protested the exclusion were also thrown out. WL honcho Fred Mazelis took the floor, ranting that anyone who disagreed with the exclusion should "go out and join the protest outside," at which point six more people left.

Mazelis cynically offered to let the TL have one speaker. But later when a TL delegation came to accept this offer, four goons at the door mumbled, "You're too late." The remaining audience was treated to over an hour of the WL's crisis-mongering and GPU agent-baiting of Hansen and Novack before the movie. When one person asked when the film would start, Mazelis replied: "If you don't like it you can leave." At that point ten more people walked out.

The Workers League's penchant for slandering and hysterical crisis-mongering is as notorious as its long-time Stalinist exclusion of opponent tendencies from "public" WL forums. Its recent hypocritical appeal against violence in the socialist movement (see "Look Who's Calling Us Comrade," *WL* No. 143, 4 February) is belied by its continuing practice of exclusionism.

The Workers League fortunately has no impact on the working class. Its capitulation to the right-wing social-democratic New Democratic Party and its chauvinist refusal to recognize Quebec's right to self-determination are but Canadian adaptations of its appeals to arch-reactionary labor traitors such as Meany and Abel to form a labor party in the U.S. However marginal this group is, its recourse to lies and slander instead of political debate is a poison that must be vigorously combatted, while its exclusion of and thug attacks against opponents on the left are Stalinist provocations that cannot be tolerated in the workers movement. ■

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No Defense of Camp Pendleton Fascists!

LOS ANGELES For the last two and a half months bitter dissension has wracked the Southern California American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) over the decision of its San Diego chapter to defend ten Marine Ku Klux Klansmen who had been terrorizing black enlisted men at the Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton training base. The suit, which was filed in federal court February 9, seeks \$775,000 in damages for the Klansmen, claiming violation of their Constitutional rights as a result of being transferred to other bases.

While the San Diego chapter is undertaking to defend the murderous Klan, seven ACLU attorneys from San Diego and Los Angeles have taken the side of the Camp Pendleton blacks, eight of whom now face courts-martial for disrupting a Klan meeting on November 13. Although Aryeh Neier, national executive director of the ACLU, maintains that "we've established that it is proper for us to be concerned with protecting the rights of people in both camps," the San Diego suit has resulted in heated emergency meetings in almost all of the Southern California ACLU's 28 chapters and has provoked a rash of protest resignations.

The November 13 action followed months of provocation by the KKK and other racist action groups on and around the base, which houses 32,000 Marines, 6,000 of them black. Although the Klan's presence was at first denied by Camp Pendleton brass, KKKers had been distributing anti-black and anti-Semitic literature and parading around openly wearing large hunting knives which they publicly referred to as "nigger stickers." According to the Southern California ACLU's *Open Forum* (March 1977).

"...there was at least one incident in which blacks were shot at, reportedly by Klan members. A black sergeant's car was burned by whites; brakelines on blacks' autos were cut clandestinely. A black Marine, accompanying his white date on the base parade ground, was attacked by a white Marine....

"The night before the November 13

of the white Marines was among a group that had posed for a photograph at a Klan meeting the day before the incident, brandishing clubs and hunting knives.

Of the original black defendants, one has turned state's evidence and two pleaded guilty and received minimal 45-day sentences in return. Eight defendants, who are pleading not guilty, face up to 21 years in jail if convicted and given the maximum sentence. On February 18 they were finally released from custody pending trial, after having spent over three months in the brig, where they were held virtually incommunicado. According to Smith, their defense is based on the the argument that they acted in self-defense.

Cecile Podoloff, executive secretary of the ACLU's San Diego affiliate, defends the chapter's lawsuit on the grounds that "however repugnant the Klan and its white racism may be, it exists legally and its members are entitled to the same protection of their civil liberties as any other persons." This position is certainly in keeping with the ACLU's long history of defending such notorious fascists as the late George Lincoln Rockwell, who headed the American Nazi Party. In fact, according to the logic of the ACLU's civil libertarian philosophy, the "disruptive" action of the black Marines who sought to defend themselves against a racist terror gang is totally *undefensible*!

What the liberal defenders of civil liberties in the abstract refuse to see is that it is impossible to protect the rights of the blacks and at the same time defend the fascists who seek to kill them. What is involved here is not a question of freedom of speech but of *action*, for the KKK is above all committed to a program of *racial terror and murder*. Among other incidents, the Klan has been connected with the large cache of arms, explosives and anti-black, anti-Semitic and anti-communist literature recently discovered buried in the desert near Los Angeles.



KKKers pose at Klan meeting at Camp Pendleton.

Thus even though the Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton has claimed to back off from its original position of covering up and then openly condoning the "right" of the Klan to operate on the base, defense lawyers for the blacks say that scores of KKKers are still present.

Rather than rely on the state to "ban the Klan," workers defense guards based on the labor movement and the black and minority organizations are required to smash the KKK and the rest of the fascist filth. Of key importance at this time when fascist organizations are becoming bolder in their provocations is a militant defense of those who defend

themselves from these racist killers. The SL defends the black marines and calls for their freedom, demanding that all charges be dropped.

The San Diego ACLU's defense of the Klan is a direct threat to the legal defense of the blacks. If the KKK really does have the right to organize, as the San Diego ACLU maintains, then blacks and others have no right to prevent it; i.e., they have no right to defend themselves against brutal assault and victimization. Pretending to wage a *classless* defense of abstract civil liberties, the ACLU is logically led to the

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Committee Against Racism pickets attacked Klan Wizard David Duke outside pretrial hearing for three black Marines at Camp Pendleton in December.

incident, the Klan, it has been learned, was planning a "run" an assault on blacks and/or the destruction of their property for November 15, 1976. The blacks acted to protect themselves from the "night riders."

The November 13 action left six white Marines hospitalized with stab wounds, and 14 blacks were charged with assault and conspiracy to commit assault. The Marine Corps claims that the white Marines were not KKKers, but in an interview with *WV* William Smith, one of the ACLU-affiliated defense lawyers, contradicted this assertion. In fact, one

Unlike the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Spartacist League does not defend the "rights" of the Klan or of other fascist organizations, but neither do we call on the state or its army to ban them. While the capitalists do not need these racist murderers at present, the time may come when they will play a central role in the bourgeois' attack on the workers movement. Ruling class "suppression" of fascist groups at most amounts to little more than a gentle warning not to misbehave too much.

PL Sectarianism Undermines Camp Pendleton 14 Defense



WV Photo

SAN FRANCISCO—On February 19 the Pendleton 14 Defense Committee held a demonstration at the Marine Recruiting Office here demanding freedom for the 14 black Marines who are facing trial for disrupting a Ku Klux Klan meeting at Camp Pendleton last November. Although the protest drew about 80 demonstrators who marched and chanted militantly, it was marred by the sectarian exclusion of supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) and the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC).

The SL and PDC had brought a contingent of a dozen people to the demonstration. While the Committee, which is led by Progressive Labor (PL), chanted "Free the 14, Jail the Klan," SL supporters chanted "Smash the Nazis, Smash the Klan, Only Workers Defense Guards Can!" Shortly after the picketing began, in an effort to quarantine "honest center" protestors from Trotskyist politics, Committee goons demanded the SL remove its signs, even though some bore slogans almost identical to the "official" demands.

Spartacist League spokesman Ayn Marin refused, pointing out that inclusion of all tendencies in the workers movement is key to building a successful defense. In order to avoid an incident, SL and PDC supporters thereupon withdrew and set up an adjacent picket line where they chanted "For working-class unity to free the 14!"

The PL-led Committee spouts militant and even adventurist slogans (such as "Turn the guns around now!"), while concentrating on writing letters to the Black Congressional Caucus and petitioning President Carter. The cowardly exclusion of the SL and PDC, a direct blow against a united defense of the Camp Pendleton 14, brands the Committee as one more example of the PL mixture of verbal super-militancy, reformist practice and Stalinist sectarianism.

LOCAL 6 UAW

Nazi poster plastered on window of Local 6 hall in Melrose Park last week.

Defend Bennie Lenard!

Fascists Plaster Swastikas on Chicago UAW Hall

CHICAGO—Last week fascist propaganda posters were plastered on the sides of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 6 union hall in suburban Melrose Park. This provocation came shortly after the union passed a motion establishing a Bennie Lenard Defense Committee to defend a black member of the union who was beaten unconscious by Melrose Park police on January 31. The victim of a blatant racist frame-up, Lenard is still hospitalized, unable due to the severity of his injuries to appear in court where he faces a barrage of trumped-up charges.

The 14 x 18-inch signs read "Niggers Beware" and bore a large skull-and-crossbones above a swastika. It is not the first time racist vermin have left their

tracks at the Local 6 hall. This UAW local has a record of defending itself—something the cowardly fascists hate and fear. In 1975 it organized a defense squad around the home of union brother C.B. Dennis, who was threatened by vigilantes seeking to drive his



Chicago Sun-Times

Bennie Lenard after beating earlier this month.

family out of a white neighborhood. At that time similar signs appeared on the Local 6 hall. However, this did not intimidate the union, whose guard successfully stopped the racist night-riders.

Although the formation of an officially sanctioned defense committee is an important step in mounting a militant defense of Lenard, the committee is hampered by the fact that it is organized on a volunteer basis and, having no access to union funds, must rely on donations for financial support. Local 6 president Ed Graham told *WV* that the only responsibility of the union in the case is "to make sure that his civil liberties have not been violated." But Bennie Lenard's brutal beating at the hands of the police and the trumped-up charges against him are already a violation of his civil liberties! The resolution establishing the defense committee demanded that all charges against Lenard be dropped. The union's

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You Can't Land the 'A' Train at JFK



New York City subway



Concorde

The article on nuclear power published last week in *WV* included an attack on the hypocrisy of opponents of the Supersonic Transport (SST), who are currently trying to stop the British/French Concorde from landing at New York's Kennedy Airport. Their "ecological" concern ignores the fact that thousands of supersonic military jets have been similarly polluting the airways for at least two decades.

But there was one aspect of the anti-Concorde arguments which particularly drew our interest, the claim of "excessive noise." We strongly suspected that we knew what that kind of noise was like.

Some quick research revealed that the Air France Concorde wings out of Dulles Airport near Washington, D.C., at an average decibel level of 116.5 and lands at a level of 117.5 decibels (*New York Times*, 14 December 1976). This is above the maximum noise levels currently allowed at JFK, where authorities require planes to stay under 112 decibels. But our suspicions were confirmed upon discovering that the decibel count of the New York City subway system is on a par with that of the SST: measured on the subway platform at 86th Street and Central Park West, when an "A" train thunders past it creates a noise level of up to... 117 decibels (*New York Times*, 22 January 1974)!

According to a standard authority on the subject (DeWeese and Saunders, *Textbook of Otolaryngology*), hearing damage begins when people are exposed to noise levels greater than 85 to 90 decibels—industrial workers exposed to these levels are required to have frequent hearing tests. Wearing earplugs can reduce the noise level reaching the inner ear by only 10 to 30 decibels—meaning that even if you wear earplugs on the subway you will still be well within the range where hearing damage begins. Moreover, because the perception of sound levels and the decibel system are logarithmic, a person on the subways is exposed to noise which is actually 1,000 times the level at which damage commences!

The longer one is exposed to noise, the lower the decibel level required to produce hearing loss. Thus subway commuters who spend two hours per

day in transit—and subway workers who spend eight or more hours per day in the subway system *plus* commuting time—are exposed to far longer and more intense periods of noise than someone underneath the path of an SST. Even if 10 SSTs per day flew directly overhead, this would add up to only about *three minutes* of noise-exposure total.

For what it's worth, the Concorde is not even necessarily the noisiest commercial plane in the air—both at Dulles and London's Heathrow Airport, Boeing 707s have recently been recorded at higher landing noise levels than the British/French SST. The U.S. bourgeoisie's concern is obviously not noise pollution but the fact that American manufacturers have yet to produce a plane to compete with the Concorde.

While Governor Carey's crocodile tears for the welfare of Queens residents have been dripping from the pages of the daily papers as authorities again debate opening Kennedy to the Concorde, where is the concern for the health of the masses of the New York City population forced to endure one to two hours of ear-splitting subway noise daily? As subway riders in Paris, Berlin, Stockholm, Moscow, and Montreal and on San Francisco's BART trains know, it is possible to produce trains so quiet that one can actually carry on a conversation on them, something New York City commuters have long since abandoned as a utopian dream.

There are even some quieter trains in the New York system, but with the massive cutbacks in all city services the new trains have been deliberately pulled off the more "plebeian" lines and reserved for the "D," "E" and "F" trains serving middle-class areas—to "increase ridership" by enticing the more affluent to use the subway on their trips to Midtown offices or Bloomingdale's and Saks Fifth Avenue. The poor and working class obviously have no choice, so they are left with the 1930's-vintage wind-tunnels on wheels.

Given these hideous traveling and working conditions, it is small consolation to New York's commuters and subway workers to know that the "A" train can't land at Kennedy. ■

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Spartacus Youth League Forum

The Anti-Marxist Theory of "State Capitalism": A Trotskyist Critique

Speaker: CHARLES O'BRIEN
Editor, *Young Spartacus*
SYL National Committee

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Date: 5 March 1977

Place: Rm. 145, Dwinelle Hall
Univ. of California
at Berkeley

BAY AREA

Trotskyist League of Canada Forum—

China Today: Mao's Heirs at Each Other's Throats

Speaker: CHARLES O'BRIEN
Editor, *Young Spartacus*
SYL National Committee

Wednesday, March 9 12:30 p.m.
Simon Fraser University
Pub Seminar Room

Thursday, March 10 7:30 p.m.
Britannia Library
1661 Napier

VANCOUVER

Archives of the Revolution

The Spanish Civil War and World War II

by James Burnham

It is not for nothing that both James P. Cannon and Leon Trotsky struggled to anchor James Burnham in the Trotskyist movement. Burnham was one of the ablest literary propagandists among the Socialist Workers Party's top leadership in the mid-1930's (cf. his "The People's Front—The New Betrayal" which is reprinted to this day).-

Thus Burnham offered an amendment to the Fourth International's Transitional Program that in the United States we call for a "workers' government," not a "workers' and farmers' government," on the ground, inter alia, that in the U.S. there were already more dentists than farmers. (Farrell Dobbs of the by then degenerated and essentially reformist SWP finally made this formal change only in the 1960's.)

The present contribution by Burnham from the Trotskyists' public press, published under the title "Spain and the Coming World War" in the Socialist Appeal of 2 October 1937, is a tightly reasoned "algebraic" examination of the qualitative variants facing the revolutionary proletariat in the Spanish Civil War. While Republican Spain was defeated by the Franco forces only months before the outbreak of the Second World War, the validity of Burnham's projections is revealed not only by the fate of Chiang Kai-shek's China in its subordination to U.S. imperialism during that world war, but also, in the recent Angolan conflict.

In the Angolan case, several qualitatively indistinguishable national-tribal forces fought Portuguese colonialism. With the Portuguese withdrawal, some native forces slid definitively into the arms of American imperialism and South African racialism; but one, the MPLA, accepted Cuban and Russian aid instead. It was this formation that became uniquely militarily supportable—with all the strictures against popular frontism and for independent proletarian struggle that Burnham here well presents.

In an article published in last week's issue of the *Appeal*, I discussed the possibility that the new imperialist war might grow by a series of gradual stages out of present (Ethiopian, Spanish, Chinese,....) and future armed conflicts on the world arena, without any sharp gulf between "peace" and war, and without formal "declaration of war" by the great powers.

It should be emphasized that it is only a possibility that I am dealing with. In the last analysis, only the very realistic criterion of a sufficiently large number of the armed forces of the great powers in the field fighting against each other, can test whether or not the war has begun. By this criterion the war has not begun. None of the great powers is yet at war, with the exception of Japan; and Japan is engaged not in an inter-imperialist war, but in a war against the semi-colonial country, China. The extent of Italian and German operations

in Spain is not enough to constitute war in the full sense from the point of view of Italy or Germany; their troops in Spain are an "expeditionary force", not "national armies".

England's Position

The great fact weighing against the possibility I have been discussing is, of course, the position of England—this along with the fear of revolution by all of the powers. England is not ready for war, and seeks consequently to delay its outbreak. England may succeed in keeping the Spanish and Chinese events sufficiently localized to prevent their spread into general war; and may even achieve temporary "solutions" for them. Even then, however, there are already France and the Near East approaching the boiling point. It is almost inconceivable that an analogue of the Spanish conflict, occurring in France—by no means unlikely, even in the comparatively near future—could remain within French national boundaries.

The key importance of understanding this possibility—and of preparing for it—is seen in this: that the attitude of Marxism toward inter-imperialist war is basically different from its attitude toward many other kinds of war. Marxism shows that the coming imperialist war, like the War of 1914-18, will be a struggle of two coalitions of the great powers over the "division of the spoils", over colonies, spheres of influence, means of exploitation. From the point of view of both sides, it will be a reactionary and decadent war, no matter how it may be dressed up under slogans of "resist the aggressor", "defend democracy against fascism", "defend the U.S.S.R.", or what not. Marxism therefore advocates in the coming war as in the last war, a position of defeatism with respect to both sides and all the respective governments, with the exception of the Soviet Union. The masses have nothing to gain from victory on either side.

But Marxism supports, in the present era, the armed struggles of colonies and backward nations against their imperialist oppressors. Politically, of course, in the case of colonies or backward nations as in the case of every nation, Marxism supports only the revolutionary program and its adherents. But materially it supports the struggle of the colony or backward nation as such, and rejects the conception of defeatism in these cases. It does so because these struggles weaken imperialism and because the road to the proletarian revolution in the colonies and backward nations lies through resistance to the imperialist oppressors.

Marxists, consequently support Ethiopia against Italy, and support China against Japan.

Fascism and Democracy

Even more obviously, in the case of a civil war which is not a mere palace intrigue or military-bureaucratic shift, do Marxists support the side of the workers and popular masses against the side of straightforward reaction. They

do so not merely in the case of an outright civil war for proletarian power (tragically rare in history), but likewise when the class struggle assumes other forms: e.g., the form of an armed struggle between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Thus, Marxists support the struggle of the Loyalist army in Spain against Franco. They do make a distinction between the regime of Caballero or Negrin, on the one side, and of Franco on the other. Their tactics, with respect to Franco's government and armies, advocate defeatism, sabotage, boycott of supplies, etc.; the tactics with respect to Caballero-Negrin advocate none of these.

The tactics of the Marxists toward the Spanish events flow from their conclusion that the dominant character of the struggle is that of civil war, in form of a war between bourgeois democracy and fascism, in substance a defense by the Spanish workers and peasants of their rights and positions against the certain annihilation of these by the victory of Franco. Though this is the dominant aspect of the Spanish struggle, from the beginning it has also had as secondary aspects: (a) that of a war of aggression against a backward nation by Italy and Germany; (b) that of an episode in the world-wide inter-imperialist conflict, which conflict is destined to issue in world imperialist war. It is in spite of (b) and in spite of the bourgeois coalition government which heads Loyalist Spain politically that Marxists support the Loyalist struggle against Franco, that they fight to win in the Loyalist armies, that they send aid to the Loyalist workers and soldiers even at the risk that such aid, controlled by the government, will in part be used against the workers, that they attempt to boycott aid to Franco and to agitate for a defeatist position in his ranks.

Two Kinds of Support

The Marxists give such support to the Loyalist struggle "for their own reasons"; they give it in absolute independence of the Loyalist government itself and of all bourgeois governments; they give no political support whatever to the People's Front government; they defend the rights and conquests of the workers against the government; and by their propaganda they prepare politically for the overthrow of the government and the victory of a workers' regime when a decisive section of the Spanish masses shall have been won to the program of workers' power. Such support and such support only is the road to the revolution in Spain.

The Stalinists, social-democrats, and other types of reformists and social-patriots also support the Loyalist struggle, but their support is at the opposite pole from that of the Marxists. Their material support is subordinate to political support of the People's Front government. Since the People's Front government is a bourgeois government and thus ultimately counter-revolutionary in nature, political support of such a government is political treachery; it is, as the Barcelona events proved, not support of the Spanish

workers but defense of a capitalist government, against the workers and the revolution.

Marxists support the Loyalist struggle, entailing for a period "defense of the government" against Franco, in order to aid the Spanish workers and to prepare the ground for the definitive victory of workers' power, thus for the overthrow of that same government. The reformists support the government precisely in order to defend capitalism against socialism as well as against fascism, to betray the workers and to prepare the ground for the complete liquidation of the revolution. This is the harsh reality.

In order to bolster up their case not merely Franco but also Hitler and Mussolini are making war against "the legitimate democratic government" of Spain; and that therefore all "peace-loving democratic people" should unite to resist the mad dogs of Nazism and Fascism, the "aggressor nations" Germany and Italy. It happens to be false that Germany and Italy are making war against Valencia (though if true it would not at all alter the Marxist attitude toward the Spanish events), but the falsity of this contention is its least sinister aspect. Let us examine further.

The Call for Government Action

The conclusion that the Stalinists and reformists draw from their argument that Germany and Italy are at war with Valencia is not, primarily, that independent working class action should be taken against them, but that governmental action by the "democratic" powers should be taken against the "aggressor nations". "Collective action" of the democratic nations is the pass-word; action by the governments assembled in the League of Nations or on the basis of the Kellogg Pact, or through the Non-Intervention Committee, or the Nyon Conference—the mechanism chosen is incidental. In this country precisely the same conception leads to a demand essentially the same; invocation of the Neutrality Act against Germany and Italy, advocated alike by Browder, Thomas, Waldman, and the Socialist Call.

What is the meaning of this? Put simply and bluntly, the Stalinists and reformists are demanding war, imperialist war, and agreeing in advance to support it. Their entire international propaganda in connection with the Spanish events has, in fact, been consistently social-patriotic, and is merely a rehearsal for the betrayal to the new war. And their position could result in nothing else: they support, politically and materially, the Valencia government, and defend politically and materially democratic capitalism against fascist aggression, whether by Franco, Hitler or Mussolini. If allies come in—England, say, or France—to aid in defending Valencia and in attacking Hitler and Mussolini, they can only welcome this 'with open arms, and support these allies just as they support Negrin. And they will do so.

Marxists, on the direct contrary, are against all intervention by capitalist

Urgent PDC Fund Appeal: Exiled Chilean Militant Needs Your Aid



Hubert Schälzi
Fernando Marcos (center) greets Mario Muñoz, persecuted Chilean union leader, upon his safe arrival in Europe last summer.

Fernando Marcos Arancibia, 30-year-old Chilean union organizer and workers' leader, is blind. Exiled in France by the bloody Pinochet terror, Marcos must have urgent medical attention. At stake: the last chance to recover his eyesight. The cost: \$10,000. The Partisan Defense Committee is undertaking the responsibility of raising the funds necessary for Marcos' corneal transplant.

In 1971 while carrying out his union duties, Marcos suffered a catastrophic industrial accident which almost cost him his life and which left him completely blind. With the sharpening social crisis and mounting threat to the Chilean working class, Marcos refused to travel abroad for medical treatment. The 11 September 1973 coup found Marcos' health deteriorating due to the deliberate criminal neglect by an ophthalmologist subsequently appointed by the murderous junta to the directorship of a major hospital.

Sentenced to death by the Pinochet junta Fernando Marcos was to take refuge in France with his compañera and newborn daughter. Although out of immediate danger, the conditions of exile for class-struggle fighters like Fernando Marcos are harsh, insecure and precarious. Isolated from friends, relatives and involvement in the struggles of the workers to which they dedicated their lives, and burdened with the language barrier and national chauvinism, exile is a lonely sojourn. Since those who stand on the side of the downtrodden and exploited are themselves often poor workers, and in exile they are often deprived even of

their humble means of livelihood, they escape reactionary terror only to be hounded by the relentless persecution of poverty. Even their safety is perilous. Their asylum is at the sufferance of governments hostile to the cause they champion: the liberation of the oppressed. Exiles from right-wing terror are deprived of most democratic rights and are subject to continuous police harassment and the threat of deportation back into the hands of their would-be assassins.

It is not enough to win asylum for victims of right-wing repression: the entirety of their fate in exile must be of continuing importance. This concern is part and parcel of the tradition of class-struggle defense of the early International Labor Defense, which is the heritage of the PDC. Not only did the ILD energetically fight for the freedom of Sacco and Vanzetti and labor militants of all political persuasions, but also regularly sent money to class-war prisoners and their families in order to provide for minimal human needs and at least partially alleviate their hardships. In addition to financially aiding numerous defense cases and campaigns, the PDC has also raised funds for workers locked out because of union organizing drives or temporarily deprived of their livelihood because of company harassment, and also the family of a longshoreman

killed by a scab. The successfully concluded international defense campaign—co-sponsored by the PDC and the Europe-based Committee to Defend the Worker and Sailor Prisoners in Chile—to win safe exit for the Chilean miners' union leader Mario Muñoz Salas and his family, raised the funds necessary to ensure their safe departure from Argentina and to provide for such basic human needs as food, clothing and shelter during the specially difficult early period of resettlement and exile. Financing the operations necessary for Fernando Marcos to regain his sight is an urgent aspect of the PDC's class-struggle anti-sectarian defense work.

This is Marcos' last chance. Previous operations in exile failed due to inattentive post-operative care, vividly illustrating the too-often catastrophic outcome of "charity medical care" upon which exiles are forced to depend. Both Marcos and the PDC insist on the best medical care available for this sensitive operation. As a consequence the excellent Barraquer Clinic in Barcelona, headed by the internationally esteemed Dr. Joaquin Barraquer, has been selected. Clinic specialists have determined that this is the final operation that can be attempted with any guarantee of success. The PDC has already financed the preliminary investigative appointment, including travel, which led to the determination that a series of three operations were medically necessary and feasible. The first procedure is scheduled for the opening months of 1977.

This valiant Chilean workers leader must not continue to suffer the brutal consequences of exile and deprivation. Your financial assistance today will determine the course of the rest of Marcos' life: left to a life handicapped, frustrated and circumscribed by blindness or one in which he regains his fullest ability to dedicate himself to the cause of the oppressed. Your immediate and generous financial assistance will guarantee that the PDC's compelling obligation is met. We welcome your support in this effort.

—February 1977

☐ Enclosed please find my contribution of \$_____ to aid the campaign on behalf of Fernando Marcos (Make payable to Partisan Defense Committee and earmark "Marcos Fund.")

☐ Enclosed please find my contribution of \$_____ to aid the work of the Partisan Defense Committee.

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The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defense organization, which is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

governments in the Spanish struggle, and for working class aid only. If England and France should intervene on a large scale, if the Spanish struggle should thus be transformed into an inter-imperialist war, Marxists explain that under such circumstances, the dominant character of the Spanish struggle would be entirely changed; its aspect as a civil war would be subordinated to its aspect as one episode or phase in the inter-imperialist conflict. The imperialist "allies" of the Valencia government would be entering armed conflict only for their own imperialist interests, and the Valencia government would be in every respect subordinated to those interests. At that time, to fight loyally, to fight to win, in the Valencian armies, would in actuality be to fight to defend one set of imperialist interests as

against another. The workers, then, could defend their own interest only by struggling, in every possible way, against the war, in Spain and in all countries. Marxists would go over to a position of defeatism with respect to the Loyalist armies, since only such a position would correspond with the changed character of the struggle itself.

Dangers of Spain

This change in the struggle, its complete subordination to the inter-imperialist conflicts, is possible even short of its transformation into imperialist war on a grand scale. In fact, the growing subordination of the progressive aspects of the Spanish struggle as a civil war, to its reactionary aspects as an episode in the inter-imperialist conflicts, is apparent during these last months,

and corresponds closely to the growingly reactionary character of the Valencia regime internally. The inter-imperialist conflicts could become dominant not merely through war, but, for example, through large scale intervention by England and France either independently or through the League; or by a sell-out deal by Valencia with Franco engineered along the lines long ago suggested by England. Under any of these circumstances, the same conclusion would have to be drawn by Marxists: the continuation of struggle of the workers for their own interests and for the socialist revolution would become incompatible with any attitude even of temporary "toleration" or "defense" of the People's Front regime; that regime would have become indistinguishable, for, practical purposes,

from the regime of Franco and from the imperialist regime which controlled it. This situation has not yet been reached, and it would be altogether false to anticipate it in action. The way for the Spanish workers is still to beat Franco, which now means fighting loyally in the Valencia armies, without any confidence at all in the People's Front and its governments, and preparing politically for the establishment of workers' power which alone will carry the war to a successful conclusion in the interests of the masses. But if the workers not merely in Spain but on a world scale, are not to be caught in the web of social-patriotism later on, the political preparation must also look forward to these possible outcomes, which, from all indications, are neither far off nor unlikely. ■

“World Revolution” Without a Trotskyist Vanguard?

About 45 people showed up at the Marxist Education Collective (MEC) February 24 to hear Murry Weiss speak on the class nature of the Soviet Union. In Comrade Weiss's opening remarks he made a vigorous and orthodox presentation of the Trotskyist analysis of the "Russian question": i.e., that the Soviet Union still retains essential gains of the October Revolution, such as nationalized property forms, state control of trade and centralized planning, despite suppression of workers democracy in the USSR and international betrayals by the Kremlin.

Weiss took sharp issue with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) coverage in its paper, the *Militant*, of President Carter's screaming about "freedom and democracy" in the USSR. For the SWP to confine its criticism to pointing out the hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism's claim to defend democracy misses the point, Weiss said. "This slogan is always accompanied by something more than just hypocrisy.... We have only to remember that under the slogan of freedom and fighting the tyranny of communism, American imperialism spent seven years in Vietnam."

Weiss continued: "When we speak about the Soviet Union and its character, I want it clear we are speaking from the point of view of those who are not simply for a scientific characterization of the USSR as a degenerated workers state, but stand also on a program for the defense of the Soviet Union." Weiss's remark that Trotsky's position on Soviet defensism could be found in the "excellent" recent article on the Russian question in *Workers Vanguard* ("Trotskyism vs. 'State Capitalism': From Kautsky to Mao," *WV* No. 143 and 145, 4 and 18 February) undoubtedly non-plussed the meeting's chairman, MEC honcho Arthur Felberbaum, who has been spearheading a drive to exclude the Spartacist League (SL) from the school.

The discussion of the nature of Stalinism today, said Weiss, is focused on the struggles in Angola and Portugal. He expressed "alarm" that the SWP's capitulation to social democracy led it

to see the main danger in Portugal since 1974 as that of a Communist Party takeover. Weiss now traces the SWP's increasing Stalinophobia back to the 1953 split in the Fourth International (FI). The SWP's light against Michel Pablo's liquidation of FI sections into the Stalinist parties, Weiss said, was a "mistake," an "erroneous issue" which was proved so ten years later when the SWP reunited with Pablo's wing.

During the discussion period, Jim Robertson of the SL central committee rose to reassert the Trotskyist position of Soviet defensism against the despicable "third camp" defeatism of a preceding Shachtmanite speaker. He went on to respond to Weiss's charge that the 1953 split proved to have no substance. He noted the importance of Weiss's own anti-Pabloist writings at the time. Both Murry and Myra Tanner Weiss were long-time leaders of the West Coast party branches. Myra was the SWP's perennial candidate for vice president in 1948, 1952, 1956 and 1960; Murry was the editor of *International Socialist Review*. It was the Weisses' political bloc with James P. Cannon against the Cochran faction (backed by Pablo)—at a time when the SWP regime of Dobbs, Hansen and Kerry was hesitating—which enabled the party to make its crucial intervention in the factional struggle in the International at the time.

Robertson pointed out: "One of the reasons that I went over to the SWP was because of what *you* wrote in the *Militant* in 1953: 'Hurrah, the German workers are rising! They need a Leninist party, they need soviets, they must drive out the Russians!' Then there was the Cochran position: 'Hurrah, the Soviet bureaucracy is liquidating itself!' And then there were the poor staff writers of the *Militant* trying to reconcile these two lines. It was a major political difference; it was a question of self-reform of the bureaucracy or political revolution by the working people.... And I don't think that's such a small difference, to this day."

To Weiss's charge that the question of Pabloism was a false issue, Robertson pointed out that the United Secretariat (USec) majority position on Portugal was but a slightly more radical version of the CP attempt to ride to power on the coattails of the bourgeois officer corps. This brought a rejoinder from Weiss, who heatedly rejected the charge that "anyone who says about the Portuguese Communist Party that it's possible it can lead a revolution" is Pabloist. "Why? Why can't that happen?" he asked rhetorically.

Weiss went on: "We say that the Communist Party of Portugal has torn out of the orbit of the Stalinist monolith, is on its own power, is under pressures, and the struggle will decide."

Weiss's ambiguous attitude toward the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (MFA) was marked by illusions in its left wing, particularly the populist demagogue Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. Carvalho is a nationalist, bonapartist figure not unlike Pilsudski in Poland or the early Perón in Argentina. As in those cases also, "Otelo" has awakened widespread illusions among ostensible communists. SL central committee member Joseph Seymour rose to speak on this point:

"You mentioned in your talk, as an indication of a great Stalinist betrayal, the Chinese Revolution in 1925-27. You

note that Stalin claimed that the Kuomintang under the 'anti-imperialist dynamic process' was the soviet....

"We maintain, as Marx did, as Lenin did, as did Trotsky, that there is such a thing as the bourgeois officer corps, that it cannot be transformed into a Leninist vanguard. Yes, there is a left of the MFA, there was a left of the Kuomintang. Left and right, as you know, are relative terms having no intrinsic class content. Therefore, the policy is not to support the left of the MFA as some kind of proto-revolutionary proletarian vanguard, but to *split* the army; that is, of course, the call for soldiers soviets allied to workers soviets."

One of the last speakers was Felberbaum, whose intervention perfectly expressed the MEC's character—a would-be trendy miscellany of randomly floating, politically homeless individuals, an episodic formation uncomfortably situated in the terrain between Pabloist revisionism, Third Worldism and Stalinism. Behind Felberbaum's babblings about the "interplay between a discussion of categories of thought on one side and the life process on the other," his objection to taking "these categories to Olympian heights and to impose them upon the revolutionary process itself," was the claim that the MFA was not a bourgeois formation, but rather one whose character was in flux. Felberbaum's endless recitation about how one could not talk about finished categories, how everything in life was fluid, finally brought forth the exasperated outburst from an SL supporter: "Sure, and J. Edgar Hoover could make the American Revolution?"

A decade and a half ago Murry and Myra Weiss were right centrists in the SWP. Since then, their positions have remained basically the same, while the SWP has been moving rapidly to the right. Thus today the Weisses are to the left of the reformist SWP; the Weisses' talk of the possibility of a CP-led revolution in Portugal is only a more frank version of the USec Majority's views. While Weiss rails against the SWP for capitulating to social democracy, the USec Majority itself tails after the MFA in Portugal. The Spartacist tendency alone has refused to build illusions in either the social-democratic, Stalinist or military bonapartist demagogues in Portugal and thus offers the only valid revolutionary perspective: for an independent Trotskyist party. ■

Violence in NYC...

(continued from page 2)

the barbarism of decaying capitalism. It is intolerable that such "human garbage," as Marx described the criminal elements of the lumpenproletariat, can terrorize the public at will.

Ultimately, the solution to spiraling crime rates is abolition of the capitalist system which breeds poverty and crime. In the meantime, it is a just and elementary reflex that the whole population (not just the well-heeled, cops and criminals) have recourse to firearms to seek protection from this hideous social irrationality.

In Albany, Governor Carey and the Republicans are debating how best to cut back welfare—a sure-fire way to exacerbate the explosive frustration and despair of the ghettos. We demand instead that there be *no* welfare cuts, that full services and benefits be restored and extended to all in need!

Furthermore, all gun control laws must be abolished. Down with the Sullivan Law and the NYC firearms ordinance! Criminals, nuts and the brutally racist cops all have guns—only the victims are defenseless. It is a simple democratic right for the citizenry to keep and bear arms, as even the U.S. Constitution stipulates. The police ultimately defend the ruling class, meanwhile pursuing their own unappetizing activities; the working people need arms to defend themselves.

While upholding the right of individuals to effectively defend themselves, we strenuously oppose any kind of vigilanteism, which could only become a racist pogrom. Gun-nut groups and ultra-rightist types who rail that the cops are too soft on "crime in the streets" are the advance elements of a fascist movement. We do not call upon the working masses to implement the bosses' racist "law and order." But in a time of revolutionary upsurge—a dual power situation—a racially integrated workers militia, with recognized authority among the ghetto masses themselves, would certainly deal firmly and justly with lumpen violence.

Archie Bunker's suggestion on the "All in the Family" TV show to discourage terrorist hijacking by giving a gun to every airline passenger as he boards reflects a worldview deeply repugnant to righteous liberal magnates like the *New York Times* publishers, who from their majestic heights feel sure that the state will protect *them*. (We might remind the Messrs. Sulzberger, however, of the time some years ago when they were unable to deliver their newspapers because of a bonapartist cop mobilization against the impotent "civilian review board" which the *Times* had editorially supported.) But Archie Bunker's semi-humorous proposal contains a grain of truth. (Of course, handing out guns randomly has certain obvious drawbacks; we simply defend the right of those who already own guns and are familiar with them to carry them where they are needed for their self-defense.

It is profoundly dangerous and demoralizing to keep the population, white and black, in a constant state of helpless fear: such desperation spawns fascist mobilizations and racist vigilantes, as shown by the enormously enthusiastic response to the movie "Death Wish." Marxists must struggle against the monopolization of the means of violence in the hands of the bourgeois state while asserting the right of the working people to defend themselves, as Malcolm X said, by any means necessary. ■

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Uganda...

(continued from page 1)

arrests and assassinations, that Amin and cronies from his tribe, the Kakwa, had met at the capital on January 30 where they decided to eliminate the Acholi and Lango tribes. Protestant Christian leaders, other suspected opponents and Catholic leaders. On February 5, the archbishop's compound was searched for arms, as were the residences of two other Anglican bishops. The bishops responded on February 10 in a letter to "His Excellency Al Haji Field-Marshal Dr Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Life President of Uganda."

Although set in the most "humble" language, the letter courageously protested against the abuses of the omnipresent secret police. "Too much power has been given to members of State Research to arrest and kill at will innocent individuals." It also denounced "a war against the educated that is forcing many of our people to run away from this country...." Four days after the letter was delivered, Luwum was dead. The two other bishops whose homes were searched have been missing for days.

Tribalist Pogrom

While the fate of the archbishop held the attention of the bourgeois media—after all, as the bishops' letter noted, the Anglican church is a "world community" with powerful friends—a massive tribalist pogrom was unleashed by Amin inside Uganda. The targets were Acholi and Lango tribesmen and soldiers. These districts were the power base of former prime minister Milton Obote, a Lango, who was ousted by Amin in 1971. Luwum was a native of the Acholi district.

The two districts were sealed off by troops and at a prison in Kampala some 800 Acholi and Lango were reportedly killed on Amin's orders on February 22. In one Lango village, the home of a former Army colonel now in exile with Obote, 300 men, women and children were reported killed. Beginning on February 17 members of the two tribes living elsewhere in the country were

systematically rounded up. On the same day an order was reportedly given to "eliminate" all Acholi and Lango in the army, air force and prison service.

Amin admitted to visiting British reporters that there were some shooting incidents in the army—impossible to deny in any case since machine gun fire was heard at the prison—but attributed it to a mutiny. "Some Lango and Acholi soldiers had decided to shoot other tribes," he said (*New York Times*, 24 February). The alleged rebellion was said to take place in the Tiger Battalion at Mubende, an outlying army post. Refugees reported, however, that 700 soldiers were arrested in Kampala and then taken to Mubende where they were massacred.

Altogether, at least 2,000 people were reported killed since mid-February, recalling earlier pogroms directed at the two tribes in 1971-72. The Acholi and Lango are small, comparatively backward northern (Nilotic) tribes who were preferentially selected by the British for military service in the Kings African Rifles, in order to control the more advanced southern tribes. Since Amin's takeover, however, his Kakwa tribe (also northern Nilotes and disproportionately represented in the army) has virtually eliminated the two victimized tribes from the armed forces and decimated their male population. According to a recent report by Amnesty International, between 50,000 and 300,000 have been killed under the madman dictator, most of them in tribalist pogroms (*New York Times*, 7 February).

"A Black Superpower in Africa"

In his "activist" foreign policy of preaching about "human rights" to the Soviet bloc states, President Carter had come under criticism from left liberals and social-democratic reformists (such as the Socialist Workers Party) for being selective in his "concern." Why had the State Department issued no declarations on Chile, Iran, the Philippines, North Korea or even China? Careful not to step on the toes of U.S. allies, Carter ducked the question; but to show his evenhandedness, the U.S. president added another nation to his short list of "unfree" countries: Uganda. At a press conference on February 23 he referred to the "horrible murders that apparently are taking place in that country."

This sparked an angry response from Amin the next day, when he barred all American citizens from leaving Uganda. They were told to come to Kampala for an audience by Monday, and regional administrative officers were instructed to prepare a list of the Americans' property, "including chickens, goats, pigs and other animals." Those who had engaged in Zionist propaganda and unfriendly acts would have to "take the consequences" he said. Most of the approximately 200 U.S. citizens in the country are reportedly missionaries, while some are crewmen of Amin's several planes. At the same time Amin sent a letter to Carter charging that the Marines were standing by to invade Uganda.

The letter is a typical piece of Amin bragadoccio and theatrics. He counseled the U.S. president not to be "used as exhaust pipes of the Zionist lorries [trucks]" and warned Carter not to be "blinded by those who may want to take your place even before you have seen all the rooms of the White House." It counseled, "You should therefore be like Field Marshal Amin, who is a black superpower in Africa."

It was cheap for Amin to point to the hypocrisy of U.S. "human rights" propaganda, telling the U.S. that instead of asking the United Nations to investigate Uganda it should ask the UN to investigate "the crimes which the United States has committed in the name of democracy in the various parts of the world...." Among these it listed assassinations of political leaders in the U.S.; racial discrimination in the U.S.;

millions killed by napalm and B-52 bombers in Vietnam, Cambodia and Korea; and the Bay of Pigs invasion against Cuba.

Amin has used such bluster before in addressing his former colonial masters. At one point he ordered local British businessmen to carry him in a sedan chair, joking that this was "the new white man's burden." At another point Amin forced the British Labour government to send its foreign minister, James Callaghan (now prime minister), to Uganda to beg for the release of Dennis Hills, a teacher and author who had irked him. But this time, when he tweaked the nose of the "paper tiger" of U.S. imperialism Amin found it had nuclear teeth. The U.S. was a real "superpower in Africa."

Immediately after the State Department's warning, Amin and his flunkies began singing a different tune. The Ugandan ambassador assured the press that no harm was meant; the state radio said that the president merely wanted to thank Americans for their years of service; the next day Amin's top British aide said that his only complaint about the Americans was that there were not enough of them in Uganda. The scheduled meeting in Kampala was postponed to Wednesday and then indefinitely. Secretary of State Vance welcome these assurances in a low-key statement.

No U.S. Intervention!

But the threat of U.S. intervention was quite real and has not been



Archbishop Luwum

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eliminated. When asked whether he could "conceive of any circumstances" in which U.S. troops might be sent to Uganda, Vance replied with deliberation: "I do not want to speculate on something like that." The State Department "crisis center" continues to function and the nuclear aircraft carrier is in a holding pattern off the East African coast within striking distance of Uganda.

Idi Amin is a menace to the Ugandan people. He is also an annoyance to U.S. imperialism, with his Russian army advisers, Libyan military hardware, Palestinian security guards and highly erratic foreign policy (e.g., he first opposed Cuban intervention in Angola and now hails it). But the Ugandan masses and the world working class certainly cannot make common cause with the imperialist powers. Their interests are diametrically opposed.

If U.S. imperialism can topple an Amin, then it can prop up another brutal dictatorship in his place, one which does its killing more discreetly than the flamboyant "Big Daddy." The longevity of the Congolese and Dominican Republic strongmen installed with the aid of the CIA and the Marines should make clear the bankruptcy of relying on the imperialist "democracies" and their UN tool. *And so should the horrifying rule of Idi Amin.*

Today the *New York Times* rages against his "evil politics"; the London press creates a furor every time Amin murders or arrests a British subject. But they seldom mention the substantial evidence that the 1971 coup which overthrew Obote and placed Amin in office was carried out with Israeli aid and British approval. Obote had begun talking of "democratic socialism" and was moving away from his previous pro-Israeli foreign policy (which included Israeli advisers for the Ugandan army commanded by Idi Amin). For the Marines to throw out Amin and replace him by a Mobutu, or even a tame Obote, means perpetuating imperialist domination, not opposing it.

There is a tiny Idi Amin lobby in the U.S., consisting of the most wretchedly pro-imperialist black nationalists such as Roy Innis' CORE. (In addition to praising the "black superpower in Africa," CORE last year tried to raise a force of black mercenaries to fight alongside the CIA-funded FNLA and South African troops in Angola.) But for almost everyone else, Idi Amin Dada is a supremely unsavoury figure. Under his rule the Ugandan rivers have run red with the blood of his numberless victims; every day new cadavers are fished out of Lake Victoria.

Amin's massacres are used by white supremacists as arguments to bolster their oppressive rule over the black masses of southern Africa. But national independence even under a blood-stained Amin is a historic advance over the colonial rule which prepared the way for Amin. Even if tens of thousands die and the standard of living of the masses is frequently lower than before, with the colonial masters out of the picture, the class struggle can come to the fore. It is no longer the foreign invader but the domestic tyrant who is the most immediate enemy.

The task of the revolutionary workers and peasants of Africa is not to replace the Amins with Mobutus or Obotes through the "good offices" of the imperialist butchers of Indochina. It is rather to sweep away all the neo-colonialist bootlickers, phony "Marxist-Leninist" colonels and megalomaniacal nationalist demagogues from the face of the continent and the world. Today this means resolutely opposing the threat of imperialist intervention in Uganda, which masquerades in the guise of protecting "human rights."

—Hands Off Uganda!

—Down with Idi Amin—For a socialist federation of East Africa!

ILWU Warehouse Convention...

(continued from page 3)

certain death for the proposal.

Another Militant Caucus resolution calling for an end to the restrictive rule on campaign literature—a rule unique to Local 6 in the ILWU—brought a tirade of abuse from business agent Joe Figueiredo, a well-known CP supporter. Figueiredo, who plans to run for Local president, puffed that Bob Mandel was playing the "bosses' game" by introducing "factionalism" (i.e., wanting open elections where Bridges-McClain supporters like Figueiredo would issue leaflets defending their rotten policies!). Stooping to the vilest personal slander, Figueiredo told Mandel, "You do not want to work." But the membership is well aware that Mandel has been blacklisted by the employers, and that the union bureaucracy has refused to arbitrate Mandel's grievances against the blacklist which have been outstanding since 1973.

Toward the end of the convention, International secretary-treasurer Goldblatt stepped in to pat the backs of his flunkies. Openly endorsing McClain to take his place, Goldblatt made snide comments about self-proclaimed "saviours." In a final goodbye sentence, Goldblatt managed to remember the words "workers of the world unite"—but this was clearly only a faint recollection of years gone by. The ILWU ranks need a militant new leadership for the class battles to come. ■

"Roots"

(continued from page 12)

participation and leadership in social struggle against that oppression—not in nostalgic individual escapism that black people will find their source of pride.

Cultural Nationalism in the Service of Liberalism

Roots was hailed by black capitalist politician Barbara Jordan:

"Everything converged—the right time, the right story and the right form. The country, I feel, was ready for it. At some other time I don't feel it would have had that kind of widespread acceptance and attention—specifically in the 60s. Then it might have spawned resentments and apprehensions the country couldn't have taken. But with things quiet, and with race relations moving along at a rate that's acceptable to most Americans, we were ready to take in the full story of who we are and how we got that way."

Time, 14 February

The contrast with the 1960's—a period of significant black militancy—is important. For Jordan, the *Roots* phenomenon heralds not only a general acceptance of that liberal capitalism which she represents in Congress, but the opportunity for black liberalism and cultural nationalism to get back together on the terrain of demoralization.



F. H. Meserve Collection

Frederick Douglass

In the 1960's it was not so easy to see that liberal integrationists and black nationalists were offering only different varieties of bourgeois ideology. The widespread black nationalist mood of a decade ago was a response to the manifest failure of the liberal-pacifist civil rights movement. Many young blacks, recoiling from the blatant accommodationism of liberal gradualism, identified militancy with separatism and racial solidarity. Black nationalist and vicarious "back to Africa" sentiment was an illusory "solution" born of hopelessness in the face of the evident bankruptcy of integration struggles. But what was once a kind of political statement soon became simply a matter of style.

At the outset, mainstream liberals accepted the nationalists' identification of daishikis and African names with ghetto revolts and quivered with apprehensions that blacks in their mass might break from the traditional liberal organizations. But the usual techniques—tokenistic handouts combined with a virtual cop manhunt against black militants like the Panthers—prevailed. Soon it was not unusual to see the head of a government poverty program dressed like an African, administering the crumbs of capitalism to the impoverished ghetto population.

Roots closes the book on the apparent war between black nationalism and liberalism. Cultural nationalism, in its most vicarious and backward-looking form, has been rendered not only manageable but fully respectable.



Bettman Archive

During the Civil War 250,000 blacks joined the Northern army to fight for the end of slavery.

Roots is the pop-culture counterpart of cultural nationalism's smooth slide from radical rhetoric to tool of the poverty pimps and black elected officials.

The Romance of African Heritage

Roots treats the elements of "African identity" formerly associated with radical nationalism and black separatism as a sort of romantic genesis myth. The political and imaginative core of both the book and the TV series is the life and legacy of Kunta Kinte, the African warrior who represents resistance to slavery and whose memory sustains his descendants.

Kunta Kinte's "black pride" is based on the sense of tribal identity and "manhood" instilled in the ordered and idyllic world of his native Africa. He refuses to abandon his heritage: the Mandinka language, the Muslim religion, the customs he learned in Africa. The American-born blacks who are his fellow slaves are rootless and broken; he despairs of teaching them "why he refused to surrender his name or his heritage." When his daughter is born, he insists that she be given the Mandinka name Kizzy rather than "bear some toubob [white man's] name, which would be nothing but the first step toward a lifetime of self-contempt."

The proud African warrior refuses to accommodate. Confronted with the hideous reality of enslavement, he tries four times to escape. When he is recaptured the fourth time, the whites take horrible revenge by chopping off half his foot with an axe. Now crippled, he will never be able to escape. From this point on in *Roots*, resistance to the slave regime becomes symbolic rather than a matter of organized rebellion or even overt acts of individual resistance. It is the symbol of resistance, captured in a few African words and transmitted from generation to generation, which becomes the subject of *Roots*.

After the failure of his last attempt to escape, Kunta Kinte determines to pass on his heritage. He marries and has a child. He teaches her some Mandinka words and tells her stories of her ancestors. Kizzy in turn, as mother and grandmother, retells these bits and pieces of Africa to her family.

The TV script even invents some scenes to highlight the importance of the African tradition in resisting the degrading effects of slavery. A character who was not in the book, Kizzy's suitor Sam, is refused because "Sam wasn't like us. Nobody ever told him where he come from. So he didn't have a dream of where he ought to be goin'."

Haley has become the target of several black historians (notably Willie Lee Rose, *New York Review of Books*, 11 November 1976) for inaccuracies and anachronisms in his portrayal of the Mandinka village of Juffure (as well as

of the antebellum South). But it is the ideal which is intended—a Garden of Eden world ritualized around the cult of manhood. *Roots* is not even myth, but romance: a deliberate idealization of the past to escape an unbearable present.

The Legacy of Slavery

There is some truth in the image of a rebellious African taken into slavery. Compared to blacks born into slavery in the U.S., those slaves transported directly from Africa prior to 1808 (when the slave traffic to the U.S. was officially closed) were quite "troublesome." They spearheaded the earliest slave revolts; the significant uprisings of the nineteenth century (led by Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner) were organized by freedmen or skilled craftsmen whose daily work brought them into contact with free laborers. Haley's acceptance of the centrality of the African heritage engages the old debate over the effects of slavery on the consciousness of blacks.

The relative absence of organized large-scale slave revolts in the U.S.—compared for instance with the massive 1791 rebellion which overthrew slavery in Haiti—precipitated a heated controversy among radical academics in the 1960's. The CP's Herbert Aptheker sought—mainly by redefining the category of "revolt"—to demonstrate a presumably "hidden history" of black resistance. Aptheker's antagonists, spearheaded by Eugene Genovese, advanced a plethora of factors to account for American slaves' relative quiescence—among them the overwhelming military superiority of the white American state power, the small size of most American plantations, the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Africans who became the slave population and their systematic deculturalization, etc.

Underlying the 1960's heat over a historical dispute was the closer-to-home ideological battle over resistance vs. accommodation, posed in terms of separatism vs. integration. The black nationalists saw the pacifist liberalism

they hated as a carryover from slavery. They argued that it was in giving up their African heritage and aspiring to equality in white-ruled America that blacks had gone wrong. Dumping their "slave names," they accused the black liberals of accommodation to white "Eurocentric" culture and demanded "black history." This debate ended as liberals and ex-militants elapsing hands over the academic tokenism of Black Studies departments.

The radical nationalists who rejected "Uncle Tom" and proclaimed an unhroken tradition of black resistance reaching back to slave times were making a fundamental mistake. The line between accommodation and survival in a militarily hopeless situation is not so easy to draw. If, faced by overwhelming odds against them, most blacks could express their seething hatred of slavery only by sabotage, malingering, petty theft, attempted escape, etc., this is a historical fact of previous centuries and not a prescription for the future.

Roots does more than acknowledge the blacks' need to accommodate to survive. It embraces it. Following the slave revolt led by Nat Turner, Kunta Kinte's grandson "Chicken George" and his master "both hoped fervently that there would be no more black uprisings." But the real highpoint of black resistance to slavery is the one which is left out of *Roots* almost entirely: the civil war, in which 200,000 blacks joined the Union army, despite its vicious racism, and took up arms against the slave South.

An All-American Success Story

Roots incorporates cultural nationalism into the "American dream." In the old Horatio Alger stories, even the poorest among the downtrodden can become rich through the work ethic and the beneficent workings of divine providence and capitalism. It is an old theme: the good are rewarded and the evil punished. In Alger stories the moral differential can be easily measured by an accountant. The moral implication of a fair market is clear enough: if you work hard, keep your wits about you and are decent you will succeed. So people who have prospered are obviously good folks, and there are some obvious implications about the poor.

Roots is a Horatio Alger myth on two levels. First, there is the token—Alex Haley, the former marine cook and struggling writer who is making a fortune. But the example of an individual black who goes from rags to riches is not likely to have much social impact among the black masses of Harlem and Watts. The myth of upward mobility has little credibility among the black masses, and Haley's life story is an obvious exception to the general rule.

But as a family saga, *Roots* can make a similar pitch and get away with it. Haley wants *Roots* to become "all of our stories." He himself says he identifies most with "Chicken George"—after his grandfather, Kunta Kinte, the most important character in the book. "Chicken George" becomes a trainer of gamecocks, a sporting man and entrepreneur. He conceives of the project of accumulating—through the crumbs which trickle down to him of his master's high-stakes cockfighting ventures—enough money to buy himself and his family out of slavery.

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Still a slave, "Chicken George" is sent to England to train birds for a lord. When he arrives back at his own plantation with money in his pocket, he finds that his family has been sold. His son Tom takes over as the patriarch, struggling to reunite the family. Tom manages to get his master to apprentice him to a blacksmith and uses the proceeds from his tireless skilled work to reunite the partially scattered family.

After emancipation, "Chicken George" and Tom move the family to Tennessee. When Tom finds that he will not be permitted to own a shop, he sets up as a travelling blacksmith and he prospers. His daughter marries a hard-working manager of a lumber company owned by an incompetent drunk. His profligate and sobriety are rewarded; he eventually takes over the company. The final link in the chain is this man's grandson, Alex Haley.

The route to success in *Roots* is entirely personal and familial. This presumably inspirational saga is an almost perfect contrast to the real life of a real black hero, Frederick Douglass, as he describes it in his autobiography. The *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* is the story of the development of social consciousness. Douglass learned to read by applying a simple rule of survival: the slave and the master had opposite social interests. So when Douglass heard his master give instructions that under no conditions must a slave be taught to read, Douglass set out to learn to read.

And when he learned to read, Douglass began to teach other slaves to read. He was committed not only to free himself, but to a social movement against the system of slavery. After escaping to the North, Douglass became a leader of the abolition movement. Rather than seeking to recover a lost African heritage, he learned to absorb the master's culture in order to change society. For him, historical identity meant not an inquiry into his genealogical antecedents but social struggle in the present and for the future.

It is ironic that Haley's real literary achievement is not the maudlin if sometimes powerful *Roots* but his collaboration on the gripping and socially important *Autobiography of Malcolm X*—a work which, like that of Frederick Douglass, starts from personal experience as the raw material from which to generalize a social vision.

Malcolm X was a contradictory figure who personified the break with Martin Luther King-style liberalism, arguing for an African-separatist ideology and black self-defense. When he was gunned down on 20 February 1967 as he addressed a public meeting, he had broken from the religious obscurantism of the Black Muslims and was moving away from black separatist ideology. Had he lived, Malcolm X might have had enormous impact on the development of political consciousness among blacks. But for Haley, "Malcolm died tragically, but perhaps if there was a right time to go, for him, that was

probably it" (*Penthouse*, December 1976). Haley's spitting on the example of Malcolm X is of a piece with *Roots*.

Rootlessness and Roots

For all its promises, *Roots* provides no real historic identification for American blacks. White and black liberals are saying to ghetto blacks that the rediscovery of an African heritage can make them "real Americans." The trouble, they presumably believe, is that blacks have had no Mayflower. But a "Mayflower tradition" is of use perhaps only to that tiny minority of blacks who, like Alex Haley, "make it" as individuals.

This is why the *Roots*-fed interest in genealogy is primarily a fad. It is no more helpful in the fight against racial oppression than the daishikis were in the 1960's. Lineage is important in feudal societies in defining an individual's position in the society. For the owners of private property in bourgeois society, genealogy is a matter of some legal as well as ideological importance. But for the virtually propertyless black masses, it has no point and is certainly not a form of struggle against the white-dominated status quo. At best it is a hobby, bearing approximately the same relation to the fight for black freedom as stamp collecting does to internationalism.

The longing for an African heritage in *Roots* is artificial but the nostalgia for rural Tennessee rings truer. Near the end of the book, "Chicken George" tells his family:

"De lan' where we goin' so black an' rich, you plant a pig's tail an' a hog'll grow... you can't hardly sleep nights for de watermelons grown' so fas' dey cracks open like firecrackers! I'm tellin' you it's possums layin' under 'simmon trees too fat to move, wid de 'simmon sugar drippin' down on 'em thick as 'lasses....!"

More than any other group in the U.S. the black masses have indeed been uprooted—not only from Africa, but from their roots in the rural South. But this same rootlessness has made them potentially a vanguard element of the future American socialist revolution. Twice severed from his roots, the urban black worker is a motor force of an integrated proletarian revolution.

Certainly the *Roots* phenomenon shows a longing for historic identification. But that identification cannot center on nostalgia for the past. It may well be that for the Haley family, the mythologized memory of their African warrior ancestor and a few words of his language were a consolation in time of deep trouble and an effective source of "black pride" as a survival mechanism against the internalization of racist ideology. But what was perhaps a source of resistance in 1850 becomes a buttress for reaction in 1977. With the economic integration of the blacks into capitalism's factories, their future is bound up decisively with their white class brothers. U.S. blacks, more than any other group in this country, have truly "nothing to lose but their chains." ■

Fascists Plaster Swastikas on Chicago UAW Hall

(continued from page 5)

full resources must be committed and the labor movement mobilized (beginning with the Local 6 membership) to achieve this.

The motion, which called for the firing of two cops who beat Lenard, was too strong for Graham. We pointed out in a previous article (*WV* No. 145, 18 February) that this motion "lets the entire state repressive apparatus off the hook, perpetuating the fatal illusion that the police are neutral or can be reformed." But to Graham the motion was "a little presumptuous.... Until the facts come out on it, we can't really judge a doggone thing as far as guilt or innocence, although we say that on the surface it appears that the Melrose Park police engaged in police brutality. I feel certain that after a complete investiga-

tion by the state's attorney these police will be dealt with."

This expression of confidence in the capitalist state to discipline its own armed thugs is a slap in the face against Bennie Lenard and the membership of Local 6 which supports him. It was Melrose Park cops who satidly by while a scab ran over and killed the vice president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union on a picket line at the Capital Packaging Company a little over a year ago. Yet the scab was merely fined \$25!

The workforce of Local 6, which is 40-50 percent black, must travel through this hostile all-white suburb from all parts of Chicago to the International Harvester plant at Melrose Park. Norman Lloyd, a Local 6 steward who was elected head of the Bennie Lenard Defense Committee, told us, "This is not the first time this kind of thing has happened. It has happened a number of times, but only since the Bennie Lenard case have a lot of people in the plant been talking about incidents that have happened. These things are just beginning to come out."

If the frame-up of Bennie Lenard, the frequent harassment of black members of Local 6 and the fascist threats are to be stopped, the Chicago-area labor movement must take up this fight. The membership of Local 6 must be mobilized as the core of a militant and aggressive defense of Lenard. Smash the fascist scum! Jail the criminal cops! All charges against Bennie Lenard must be dropped immediately! ■

Camp Pendleton

(continued from page 4)

defense of the bloodiest enemies of the working people. Such a position is ultimately suicidal for blacks, Jews, organized labor, socialists and others whom the fascists desire to annihilate.

The treacherous liberalism of the ACLU has also found its reflection within the left. A newly launched social-democratic newspaper *In These Times* editorialized (January 19) that the ACLU "in defending the Klan against the political ban, is right both in principle and in political intelligence." And Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, told *WV* that, "We have no position on the ACLU position to defend the KKK at Camp Pendleton. That's the ACLU's position on what they do." The ACLU position is completely consonant with the SWP position—in opposition to its own revolutionary heritage and in willful disregard of the tragic lessons of history—of defending "free speech" for fascists.

The workers movement must organize to defend itself, to smash fascist gangs and to defend individuals and groups such as the Camp Pendleton black Marines who come under attack by the state for their courageous self-defense.

Drop the charges against the Camp Pendleton 14! Smash the Nazis and the KKK! ■

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S OAY FORUMS

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

ANN ARBOR

Speaker:

KAY BLANCHARD
Women & Revolution Editorial Board
Spartacist League

Wednesday, March 2 at 7:30 p.m.
U. of Michigan at Ann Arbor
Assembly Hall, Michigan Union
Phone: (313) 869-1551

BOSTON

Speaker:

BONNIE BRODIE
Spartacist League

Friday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m.
Harvard University
Emerson 101
Cambridge

CHICAGO

Speaker:

TWEET CARTER
Spartacist League Central Committee

Saturday, March 5 at 7:30 p.m.
5615 S. Woodlawn
Phone: (312) 427-0003

CLEVELAND

Speaker:

RENA DREISER
Spartacist League

Tuesday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m.
KSU Student Center
Kent State U.
Phone: (216) 281-4781

DETROIT

Speaker:

KAY BLANCHARD
Women & Revolution Editorial Board
Spartacist League

Wednesday, March 2 at 12:30 p.m.
Wayne State University
Hilberry C, SCB
Phone: (313) 869-1551

NEW YORK

Speaker:

ELIZABETH KENDALL
Spartacus Youth League National Committee

Thursday, March 10 at 7:45 p.m.
Hamilton Hall, Rm. 703
Columbia U.
Phone: (212) 925-5665

PURCHASE

Speaker:

ELIZABETH KENDALL
Spartacus Youth League National Committee

Thursday, March 17 at 7:45 p.m.
Conference Room, C.C.S.
State University of New York
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New York, New York
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Alex Haley on visit to ancestral village in Gambia.

Ebony

WORKERS VANGUARD

A Black Horatio Alger Story

Behind the "Roots" Craze

One hundred thirty million viewers, courses in almost 300 colleges, 1,400,000 copies in print, crowded a recent Double-day ad. They were talking, of course, about *Roots*. Twelve years ago, professional journalist Alex Haley set out to create a novel based on his research into the oral and written histories of his own family. By the time the saga was dramatized and transmitted to the largest television audience in U.S. history, it had become more than just the popularization of some interesting (if not wholly accurate) research. *Roots* had become something of a social phenomenon.

The furor over *Roots* was not just the usual public relations hoopla, though there is plenty of that (New York's Mayor Beame and no less than twenty mayors in the South proclaimed "Roots Week" and the Texas legislature voted Haley an "honorary Texan"). Nor was it simply that *Roots* made effective use of the tested clichés of popular culture: a heady mixture of violence and suggested sex focused through the lens of the best-known melodramatic techniques of soap opera. No, *Roots* struck a nerve.

The current intensity of the *Roots* craze will be short-lived, but the television series and book have tapped an authentic, widespread and seething reservoir of social passion. The passion is in the first instance over the subject: the brutal history of chattel slavery in America, the resurrection of an ancient form of labor for the enrichment of the commercial capitalists and textile lords of Europe and the masters of New World plantations. There is no more explosive subject in the U.S. than this. Only *Gone With the Wind* with its "magnolia, moonlight and banjos" version of the antebellum South has come close to equalling the audience which sat riveted before TV sets to follow the generational saga of a black family from West Africa to Tennessee.

Unlike *Gone With the Wind*, *Roots* is sympathetic to the victims of slavery, and seeks to view through their eyes the anguish of human beings who have become property. Even the sentimentalized, one-dimensional characterizations of *Roots* challenge the racist ideology of slavery: that blacks are subhuman and therefore do not feel as deeply or with as much complexity as their white masters. By presenting slave characters of obvious human worth and dignity uprooted, degraded, punished beyond human endurance, *Roots* breaks with the debasing "Sambo" traditions of ignorant but happy "darkies" stumpling into paint buckets and singing in the rain.

It is this psychological identification with the slaves which in part explains the impact of *Roots*. For over 100 pages (or two and a half hours on screen) the audience has followed the story of the hero, Kunta Kinte, as he grew to young manhood in his idyllic African homeland. It would be an unusually callous viewer or reader who could thrust aside the vivid image of young Kinte amid the blood, vomit, feces of the sick, starving, terrified blacks who lie shackled on the slave ship. It is one thing to know that it



Slaves on slave ship in the television program "Roots."

was far from uncommon for a third of the kidnapped Africans to die on board the ships carrying them to captivity. It is another to see it happen.

"There is no arguing with pictures," said Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which is certainly the moral precursor of *Roots*. Published in 1851, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made an equally sensational entrance into public life. And like *Roots*, it was passionate in its partisanship of the slaves. It presented an upside-down moral universe in which the victims were infinitely good and the slaveholders the personification of evil. It was a weapon in the service of the abolitionist movement.

But that was 1851. The book's political purpose was clear, its political imperatives unmistakable to its friends and foes. Moved by the personalized indictment of slavery as an institution, the reader was meant to work for its abolition. But what is the political point of *Roots* in 1977? Is it intended as a model for struggle against the continuing oppression of black people in the U.S.? No, *Roots* is a testament to liberal accommodationism and a declaration of personal escapism. It is a sentimental American success story and a celebration of the usefulness of the themes of black nationalism to the racist status quo.

"Consciousness-Raising"?

The media responded to this media event with white guilt and "black pride," while the fake-radicals scurried along behind. The SWP's *Militant*, for instance, dubbed *Roots* "one big consciousness raiser" and thinks that perhaps its creators fooled themselves: "Certainly it wasn't in the minds of [ABC's] board of directors to encourage black pride or militancy. But I'm afraid that they may have succeeded in doing exactly that." And the *Militant*

recounts this anecdote to illustrate what the SWP means by "consciousness":

"A young brother stopping in a coffee shop before work said, 'I tell you one thing, those white folks better not mess with me today. I just might have to stomp one'."

The *Militant* approvingly reports a racial incident at a mostly black high school in which black youth, chanting "Roots, Roots, Roots," scuffled with whites. The SWP looks hopefully to *Roots* to "increase Black pride."

But the clue to the political meaning of *Roots* is precisely the incorporation of themes generally associated with

cultural nationalism into the liberal melting pot of cultural pluralism. That is what the fuss is all about. That is why Haley "dedicated *Roots* as a birthday offering to my country."

The *New York Times* (February 2) showed that it understood the real political thrust of *Roots* better than the *Militant* when it tried to pass *Roots* off as perhaps "the most significant civil rights event since the Selma-to-Montgomery march of 1965." But *Roots* is not a "civil rights event." It poses no perspective for social action of any sort. It prescribes the search for black "roots" as a substitute for struggle.

Roots flows directly from the failure of the liberal civil rights movement to provide anything more than the token gains which are coming under increasing attack under the pressure of a worsening economic situation. Now more than ever black people are being told that nothing can be done to alleviate their miserable oppression. Carter's government is not even making promises about the amelioration of the actual conditions of ghetto life. Instead of jobs, housing and social services, the blacks are being offered "black pride." This is Jimmy Carter's formula for a successful election and a moral America, applied to blacks.

The "black pride" which is being cynically pushed as an ersatz program is a diversion from struggle. Marxists' quarrel with the idea of "black pride" is not with the individual's feelings of dignity and self-worth that come from understanding. The internalization by blacks as well as whites of the racist stereotypes is a most pernicious effect of racism; Marxists solidarize with every genuine effort to expose the racist ideology which presents oppression as "natural" and even just. But it is through

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Alex Haley

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