

## ULSTER LOYALISM IN CRISIS



8,000 Belfast shipyard workers voted against communalist general strike.

Bob Hamilton/News Letter [Belfast]

## Reactionary Orange Nationalist Strike Fizzles

MAY 10—As the Protestant general strike in Northern Ireland wobbles into its second uncertain week, support in major workplaces appears minimal. The faint possibility of its success hinges on the action of several hundred workers at a single power station which produces two-thirds of the province's electricity. Unlike 1974, when a similar communalist general strike brought Ulster to a standstill, this time the reactionary political strike seems doomed to failure in the face of a sharp split in Ulster "loyalism."

The Protestant politicians and paramilitary groups whose Ulster Unionist Action Council (UUAC) launched the strike are in the anomalous position of insurrecting against the British state to which they have persistently pledged allegiance. While his supporters waved Union Jacks and chanted "No surrender!" bible-thumping bigot and ultra-rightist MP [Member of Parliament] Ian Paisley flung down the gauntlet of disaffected loyalism: "If Mr. Mason [British secretary of state for Northern Ireland] decides that Ulster is ungovernable and steps up withdrawal, then I tell him that we—the Protestants—are prepared to rule Ulster" (*News Letter*



Ian Paisley picketing before Parliament in Belfast last week.

Connolly/Belfast

[Belfast], 30 April).

The Orange nationalist strikers are demanding total suppression of the Provisional IRA and return to the Stormont provincial parliament abolished by Westminster at the beginning of "direct rule" from London in 1972. Already inveterate optimists among the parliamentary parties are prophesying

that a defeat for the Protestant strike would open the way to renewed "power sharing" with "moderate" Republicans. But just as the Paisleyites have been unable to mobilize a solid base to reimpose untrammelled Orange ascendancy, so the "moderates" will be unable to force the Catholic population to submit to the British yoke and Protes-

tant rule which are inherently inimical to its interests.

The successive defeat of every measure proposed by the "respectable" politicians demonstrates the impossibility of resolving the Ulster conflict within the framework of capitalism short of a communalist bloodbath. Set at each others' throats by poverty and closely intermingled so that a territorial separation could only be achieved through massive forced population transfers, the working people of both communities cannot be united on simple economist or "democratic" grounds. It is only through a common working-class mobilization against the sectarian terror, combatting both Orange (Ulster Protestant) and Green (Irish Catholic) nationalism, that an equitable and truly democratic solution to the Northern Ireland conflict can be achieved.

### Shipyard Workers Say No to Sectarian Strike

The overwhelmingly Protestant workforce at the huge Harland and Wolff shipyard in East Belfast handed the UUAC its first major setback. On April 29, 8,000 shipyard workers voted almost to a man against supporting the strike call (see picture above). Such bastions of the "Protestant ascendancy" as the Orange Order, the Official Unionist Party and the Protestant clergy denounced the strike. James Molyneux, leader of the coalition of Unionist MPs at Westminster, condemned it as a "putsch" and declared:

*continued on page 2*

### Civil Libertarians Aid Racist Terrorists

### Why the ACLU Defends Fascists ...6



# Ulster...

(continued from page 1)

"It is no longer an issue of security, but who is for or against the union [with Britain]" (*Daily Telegraph* [London], 5 May). He also expelled Paisley and his Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) from the already shaky parliamentary coalition.

The strike had an uneven impact on its first day, May 3. In Catholic-majority areas like Derry it was simply ignored. In Protestant rural areas, it was largely effective, and numerous shops and small factories were shut down. The key port city of Larne, where the 15,000-strong paramilitary Ulster Defence Association (UDA) concentrated much of its strongarm activity, was closed by a dockers' walkout. In Belfast's main industrial facilities, absenteeism was high, but a majority of workers reported despite a spate of bombings, transportation sabotage and UDA barricades.

On Wednesday, the shipyard and other major industrial establishments (ICI, Courtaulds, Goodyear, General Electric, Grundig and others) reported a 70 percent or higher turnout, larger than on Tuesday. Several hundred strike enforcers clashed with the police in East Belfast as the forces of official repression attempted to dismantle an oil-drum barricade that was blocking traffic. The cops retreated under a barrage of bottles and stones. The following day, support for the strike reportedly declined further, but violent clashes continued in the Belfast area, where a number of arrests were made, and the port of Larne remained closed.

The vital Ballylumford power station outside of Larne has become the main battleground in the strike. In May 1974 a concerted slowdown by Ballylumford workers cut electricity to a trickle and was the major breakthrough in the two-week general strike which toppled the Catholic/Protestant "power-sharing" provincial executive. This time the power workers have been more cautious. On the eve of the strike, an assembly of manual workers passed a motion reading: "Until such time as the rest of industry in Northern Ireland shows support for the strike we will carry out normal duties."

On Wednesday a third of the 600 manual workers met and voted to support the strike's aims without deciding on any specific action. This buoyed the Action Council's hopes, and more squads of UDA thugs were dispatched to the area. Technicians and engineers, however, dissociated themselves from the vote, and several prominent Unionist politicians visited the plant to urge the men to stay on the job. On Friday, another meeting was held, and by a vote of 286 to 171 the workers decided against participation. On Saturday, police and British soldiers threw a cordon around the station.

## The 1974 General Strike

Unless a sudden shift in sentiment among the power station workers throws them behind this reactionary strike, it will soon dissipate. The lack of widespread support is in marked contrast to the 1974 Protestant general strike which it hoped to duplicate. Although the paramilitary Orange gangs certainly played a role in forcing many workers to passively acquiesce in that strike, support among key sectors of the workforce was evident from the beginning. At the very beginning of that strike, power workers walked off in sympathy. The Ulster Workers Council (UWC), which in alliance with the UDA spearheaded the fight against the power-sharing executive, included a number of shop stewards at the shipyard and power plants. With a mass base in the factories and Protestant communities, the UWC strike dramatically demonstrated (albeit in support of reactionary sectarian ends) the social power of the working class, shutting down industry

and organizing distribution of food, gasoline and vital services.

Most importantly, the 1974 battle had a clear target around which the mass of the Protestant population and its communal leaders could rally—the 1973 Sunningdale agreement engineered by the Tory secretary for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw. Sunningdale had two dimensions: a provincial executive in which the Catholic-based Social Democratic Labor Party (SDLP) would be guaranteed a number of cabinet posts and an associated Council of Ireland in which the Northern executive and the government of the Republic of Ireland would regularly consult and presumably find a basis (through joint British-Irish economic pressure) to force reunification of the island.

The agreement split the Official Unionist Party apart, and its leader Brian Faulkner, a staunch Orangeman, found himself denounced for selling out to the Catholic-clerical dominated Southern state. A faction of the Official Unionists led by Harry West allied itself with Paisley's DUP and the Ulster Vanguard grouping led by William Craig to block the agreement. They were, in turn, backed up by the UDA and other armed Protestant groups (who traded sectarian atrocities with the IRA Provos) and the loyalist trade unionists of the UWC.

The headline Unionist coalition demonstrated its strength by winning 11 out of 12 Northern Ireland seats in the British Parliament in the February 1974 general elections. When in May the SDLP and Faulkner's supporters in the Northern Ireland Assembly voted to support the Council of Ireland "in principle," the UWC launched its strike. Two weeks later, the power-sharing executive fell, and the province reverted to direct British rule.

## UDI?

With the exception of Paisley and a handful of other politicians, the "respectable" Unionists who gave open or tacit support to the 1974 strike—West, Craig, the Orange Order—called on Protestant workers to oppose this one. While the reasons are steeped in the complexities of Ulster's constantly shifting political alignments, one central fact stands out. From the pro-strike UDA gunmen to the anti-strike Official Unionists (now led by Molyneux), the Protestants recognize that the logic of this strike leads in the direction of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). With an eye on the South (where British investments are now greater than in Ulster) and on the seething Catholic population in the North, the Labour government dares not accede to the Paisleyite demand for a return to the pre-1972 Stormont parliament, which would bring back the gerrymander, the hated B-Special auxiliary police and all the trappings of full-blown Orange ascendancy.

Nor can London foist another Council of Ireland and/or institutionalized power-sharing on the Protestant majority against their will. Instead, British prime minister Callaghan has typically opted for another temporizing policy: a middle road of "administrative devolution," i.e., a regional authority but no local legislative body. He has sweetened the deal with a promise of more seats for Northern Ireland at Westminster and pleads for some form of window-dressing cooperation between the SDLP and the Unionists.

The Orange leaders are capable and quite willing to close ranks against any particularly objectionable British policy. But only the paramilitary groups and a handful of political desperados like Paisley (who genuinely lust for "Papist" blood) are willing to force the issue in a manner that could directly threaten the union if there is any alternative.

The UUAC claims a certain democratic mandate for its position, since the return of Stormont was demanded by a majority of elected

members of the constitutional convention which dissolved in early 1976, unwilling to deliver a new power-sharing agreement. But faced with a choice between continued direct rule and active resistance to Britain, most of the politicians backed away from the convention report. Concurrently, the paramilitary groups began to seriously debate the prospect of Ulster independence. This divergence is now being seen in the Unionist split over the current Orange nationalist strike.

## The Left Wing of Unionism

While the Ulster Protestants have been a distinct community, they have not asserted a separate national identity but have instead defined themselves largely negatively, in contradistinction to the Irish Catholics. The creation of an Orange nation is a narrow possibility based on the cohesiveness of the million Protestants in the North and their willingness to use any means to avoid subversion in the island's Catholic majority. Historically, the characteristic expression of the Ulstermen has been Unionism.

But the plebeian base of Unionism has been in turmoil for over seven years (since the civil rights marches), and the rise of groups like the UDA and UWC indicates class tensions between the Protestant workers and their traditional leaders. In the absence of a revolutionary party, these tensions have been channeled into sectarian mobilizations.

While the bulk of the Irish and British socialist left has embraced (under various guises) Irish Catholic nationalism, one peculiar group, the British and Irish Communist Organisation (B&ICO) has gained a certain notoriety as "left" apologists for Unionism. During the 1974 Protestant strike, by its own account the B&ICO was mainly concerned with improving the sectarian strike's public image, downplaying opposition to power sharing and emphasizing Protestant opposition to forcible reunification under the Council of Ireland. With UWC approval its front group, the Workers Association, distributed daily strike bulletins in Belfast's Orange strongholds.

The B&ICO functioned not only as enthusiastic press agents but to some extent as a left-wing braintrust for the UWC and the Protestant paramilitaries. In an effort to ingratiate themselves, these so-called communists commemorated the reactionary Ulster leaders who (backed by the Tories and the British officer corps) threatened the pre-World War I Liberal government with military insurrection if it proceeded with plans for a united Ireland under "home rule": "What the Ulster Workers' Council has done during recent weeks is to give to the community the same quality of democratic purposeful leadership that Carson and Craig did in 1912-14" ("The Ulster General Strike," May 1974).

The B&ICO began as a Maoist tendency based in the South and held up to 1969 a more-or-less conventional Stalinist/left Republican position that the island had to pass through a bourgeois-democratic revolution leading to an independent, united Ireland under capitalism. But the experience of the civil rights movement (which increasingly mixed in Republicanism with defense of the democratic rights of northern Catholics) convinced the B&ICO of a salient fact of Irish/Ulster politics, which most of the left cheerleaders for the IRA seek to ignore: that the Protestants will resist unification with the southern Republic in which the church of Rome holds a privileged position.

However, going beyond recognition that support for Green nationalism cut the civil rights movement off from the Protestant working class, the B&ICO gave free rein to a penchant for iconoclastic theorizing and came up with a "two nation" theory that soon placed it squarely in the Unionist camp.

Hewing firmly to the Stalinist "two-stage" schema, in which the immediate program is tailing after bourgeois nationalists, these "creative Marxists" simply switched bourgeoisies.

Trying to clasp its "two nations" theory on a considerably more ambiguous social reality, the B&ICO held that: 1) a distinct "Ulster Protestant nation" emerged on the basis of the industrial revolution in the North, defeat of the non-sectarian United Irishmen uprising in 1798, and economic conflicts between the export-oriented Northern capitalists and the weak, protectionist bourgeois forces of the Catholic "home rule" movement; and 2) this Protestant "national bourgeoisie" chose to exercise its right of self-determination not by forging its own state power, but by remaining within the multinational British state.

This analysis functions not only to alibi British imperialism's oppressive role in Northern Ireland but to tail plebeian "loyalist" currents like the UWC. Mother England was the source of progress, holds the B&ICO, and the enterprising Ulstermen were at all periods far more progressive than the rural, priest-ridden Catholics. The root of all evil on the island, it maintains, is to be found in Irish nationalist irredentism, and the Provisional IRA is the sole cause of "the troubles" in the North:

"Discrimination against Catholics in the North was a consequence of the national conflict in Ireland, and of the struggle of Catholic nationalism to disrupt or overthrow the Northern state. The ending of discrimination (which has already *legally* ended) can only come about in conjunction with an ending of the Catholic nationalist campaign to disrupt the state."

"On the Democratic Validity of the Northern Ireland State," May 1971

Worse yet, the B&ICO shamelessly endorses every measure of official repression (including internment!) directed against the Provos:

"The Provisionals are waging a war to overthrow the democratically expressed will of the vast majority of people and detach them from the state of their choice. The army is here to assert the will of the people and keep Ulster within the U.K.... the army is playing a democratic role."

—*Workers Weekly*, 18 September 1976

In its attempt to find a "democratic solution" within the confines of the Stalinist "two-stage" schema—i.e., under capitalism—the B&ICO can only choose between the Green card and the Orange card. It no more has an answer for the working people of Ireland, north and south, than do the Dublin and London governments. Although its choice of Unionism aligns it with more reactionary political forces, its policy is the symmetrical opposite of those fake leftists who embrace Irish Catholic

## Public Forums

### Spain: Powderkeg of Revolution

Speaker:  
SAMUEL LEWIS  
Spartacus Youth League National Committee  
Workers Vanguard staff writer

Thursday, May 12 7:30 p.m.  
Memorial Union  
(room to be posted)  
University of Wisconsin  
**MADISON**

Friday, May 13 7:30 p.m.  
3rd Floor Sun Parlor  
Ida Noyes Hall  
59th and Woodlawn  
University of Chicago  
**CHICAGO**

Saturday, May 14 8:00 p.m.  
International Student Center—  
Morning Room  
33 St. George Street  
**TORONTO**

Tuesday, May 17 12:30 p.m.  
State Hall Room 131  
Wayne State University  
**DETROIT**



nationalism, i.e., Republicanism.

Its sickening faith in British imperial democracy is merely a desperate attempt to patch up its crazy-quilt Stalinist Kautskyite theory in the face of communal butchery. Catholics and Protestants alike, the B&ICO asserts, can transcend sectarian divisions by becoming British. What a far cry this is from the Marxist understanding of the necessity to organize the Protestant and Catholic workers on a class basis!

Life on the British dole is certainly more attractive than life under "Rome Rule" to the Ulsterman. Northern Catholics, however, understandably wince at the sight of the Union Jack and rage at the discriminatory treatment they suffer under Orange domination. The checkerboard intermingling of these peoples in the North precludes the ordinary bourgeois-democratic solution to the national question: establishment of a politically independent nation-

state. But this does not mean that there are no immediate demands which Marxists can raise to unite the working people. On the contrary it is necessary to energetically demand British troops out of Northern Ireland, oppose forced reunification and call for non-sectarian workers militias to combat indiscriminate terror.

The answer to the Ulster question will not be found on the terrain of bourgeois parliamentary horsetrading (power-sharing, administrative devolution, Council of Ireland, etc.) but only in the revolutionary mobilization of the workers, Green and Orange, led by a Trotskyist party, which smashes British imperialism and overturns bourgeois rule. A democratic solution to the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland can only come about with the creation of an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles. ■

## Tania Beats the Rap

MAY 10—The world's richest informer, "Patty" Hearst, walked out of a Los Angeles courtroom today, free. Nine felony charges were dropped and she was placed on probation for five years, convicted of "armed robbery" and "assault with deadly weapons." Explaining why he did not order imprisonment for Hearst, Judge Talbot Callister said he thought she had "already suffered," and "I don't think there is a heart in America that isn't full of compassion for her parents" (New York Daily News, 10 May). No? There ought to be quite a few.

First, there is Wendy Yoshimura, who helped the millionheiress when "Patty" was "Tania," the fugitive and "urban guerrilla." Repaying those who gave her refuge, Ms. Hearst has since gone on to become known as "Squealy," telling everything she knew (and no doubt much she didn't) to the FBI, courts and cops. Yoshimura was then framed up with the aid of "Patty-Tania-Squealy."

But while Patricia Hearst is an admitted criminal and was for a time part of the SLA killer cult of indiscriminate terrorists, Wendy Yoshimura was the "guilty" one from the point of view of the capitalist state. For Yoshimura is "guilty" of protesting against U.S. imperialist war in Vietnam. Framed up from start to finish she has already been given 15 years; now the state is trying to send her up for life by retrying her on the charges which "hung" the jury originally. Justice demands that all charges against Wendy Yoshimura be dropped immediately.

Or how much compassion would William and Emily Harris be likely to have for the ex-companion who squealed on them? Given indeterminate sentences for the same activities Hearst



Time

Patty/Tania

admitted doing, they may never get out of jail.

And if Judge Callister is so concerned for the feelings of parents, he might hold some "compassion" for the five SLAers who were burned alive by the L.A. cops.

Patricia Hearst is the only SLA member to escape death or a barbaric indeterminate sentence in prison. The reason is somewhat embarrassing to the bourgeoisie which pretends to "equal justice before the law." Last month a *New York Times Magazine* (3 April) article speculated that her future was uncertain because "the Government wants her to serve further time in jail as proof her case isn't an example of special justice for the rich."

While Wendy Yoshimura's father couldn't pay his daughter's bail, Daddy Hearst paid \$1.5 million for "Patty" and another \$600 a day for guards so she could "come home" on November 19 to Nob Hill in San Francisco. There, "Patty" made herself comfortably at home, lunching with friends at the most expensive restaurants in San Francisco, driving around in the family's \$24,000 Mercedes, playing with her \$4,000 guard dog, taking trips to her grandfather's castle at San Simeon and painting her toenails. But most of all she "sang."

Unlike Wendy Yoshimura and Susan Saxe, who have refused to turn informer and have been vindictively punished for their honor; unlike Gary Tyler, who is serving a life sentence in a clear racist frame-up; unlike the Harrises, unlike the hundreds of thousands of nameless, faceless defendants who are dragged through the capitalist courts, Patricia Hearst got the full accord of democratic rights—her family purchased them. Now brainwashed, rinsed and wrung dry by the SLA and family psychologists until there seems to be barely any brain at all, "Patty" will remain a symbol of bourgeois class "justice" and how to buy it. ■

## 1,400 Anti-Nuclear Demonstrators Arrested

# Free Seabrook Protesters!

They waited politely to be arrested—all 1,414 of them. As they were herded into the trucks and buses that would take them to five National Guard armories, the prisoners talked proudly of their massive demonstration against nuclear technology. They compared it to the days of the civil rights and antiwar movements; some declared that "the movement" had begun again in Seabrook, New Hampshire.

It was the largest act of "civil disobedience" since the 1960's. Two thousand people occupied the site of a proposed nuclear power plant on May 1, and most have been in government detention centers ever since.

Were it not for the callous retaliatory savagery of the bourgeois state, this "ecology" protest by residues of the old New Left—with their "No Nukes" and "Save the Whales" placards, their granola and their "affinity groups"—would be insignificant in class political terms. For Seabrook, despite its organizers' nostalgia, was not Selma, and it was not Kent State. Unlike the New Left—a petty-bourgeois movement which was, however, directed against imperialist war and racism—the "Clamshell Alliance" takes as its target modern industrial society.

As the New Left decomposed, its most organic products went "back to nature." Having rejected the only social force capable of reordering society on a rational basis—the proletariat—they declared war on "bigness" in the name of preserving the ecosphere. It is not entirely accidental that the Seabrook demonstration occurred at a time of extreme social quiescence among the American working class. And similarly indicative of the present climate of sanctimonious "human rights" moralism is the despicable conduct of New Hampshire's conservative governor, who in the name of "law and order" arrogantly ran roughshod over the democratic rights of these innocuous protesters.

While the demonstrators expected mass arrests, the harsh conditions of their imprisonment and the heavy bail and sentences ordered by Governor Thomson were shocking. Prisoners had to wait up to 15 hours in cramped buses, without food or water, while the arrests were processed. Bail was set as high as \$500 in some cases for the charge of criminal trespass, a misdemeanor. In protest against this treatment, the demonstrators have largely refused to post bond.

The New Hampshire attorney general called the protest "one of the most well-planned acts of criminal activity" in the nation's history, and Thomson's courts have begun sending people to jail. Seventeen were sentenced in District Court to 15 days at hard labor, to begin immediately—a break with normal practice, whereby defendants have the right of appeal and a Superior Court jury trial before serving any sentence.

Those still awaiting trial are crowded together in armories and jails, where they have not been provided with clean clothes, and where communicable diseases are a real danger. The Clamshell



Clamshell Alliance members being held in New Hampshire armory last week.

Alliance has reported cases of measles, ringworm, streptococcus infection, fever, vaginitis, food poisoning and diarrhea. Lawyers for the demonstrators are bringing suit against the state for cruel and unusual punishment.

Thomson in his zeal is spending an estimated \$50,000 a day in state monies. He has broadcast an appeal to "corporations, labor unions and rank-and-file citizens" for funds to pay for jailing the demonstrators, claiming that unless New Hampshire stopped them, other states would be "invaded by a mob."

Outraged over nuclear technology rather than U.S. imperialism, the Clamshell Alliance has nonetheless become the innocent victims of an egregious act of wanton and vindictive state repression. The police round-up and court vendetta are truly an outrage. It is an insult to the working class for Thomson to ask the trade unions to help defray the costs of this mass imprisonment. It is not the Clamshell Alliance "trespassors" but the State of New Hampshire which is criminally trampling on democratic rights. We demand: Drop the charges! Stop the Kangaroo Court proceedings! Release the Seabrook 1,414! ■

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Vancouver



## National Front, Tories Score Gains

# IMG Tails Liberal/Labour Coalition in London Elections

LONDON—In recently concluded municipal elections conducted throughout Britain, the British Labour Party (BLP) was resoundingly defeated. In the elections in Scotland, held on May 3, only seven out of 53 councils changed hands, but Labour lost 120 seats, while the Tories picked up 35 and the Scots Nationalists gained 100. The balloting in England and Wales, held May 5, was even more disastrous for the BLP. Conservatives captured eleven councils from Labour and became the majority in seven more where other parties had held the balance of power. Tory leaders are now boasting that nine out of ten Britons live under a Conservative county council.

The erosion of support for the BLP clearly reflects the perception of its traditional working-class base that the Labour government's policies are directly responsible for their immiseration. Under Labour's "Social Contract," unemployment is at its highest level since World War II. Inflation is proceeding at an annual rate of 15 percent, with food prices up 22 percent, far outdistancing the increase in wages. Large numbers of militants accordingly boycotted the municipal elections and recent parliamentary by-elections, while the more backward masses switched to the Tories and even the fascist National Front.

### London Elections

As a result even those constituencies normally considered safe for the BLP have begun to fall. Among the losses suffered by Labour in the municipal elections was the Greater London

unions—got 117,000 votes, or 5 percent, and beat out the Liberals for third place in 32 out of 92 seats.

The stance of Marxists in the municipal elections should have been to refuse even critical support to the Labour Party. It is a valid tactic for revolutionists to extend critical support to mass reformist workers parties as a means to expose their pro-capitalist leaderships and split away their mass base. However, the BLP's coalition with the bourgeois Liberal Party makes it obvious that a vote for Labour is not even a deformed expression of working-class independence. Even in by-elections to parliament last autumn, prior to the formation of this coalition, *WV* called for a policy of conditional non-support to BLP candidates, noting that unless a candidate had stood on a record of support to struggles of the workers to break the Social Contract, a vote for him was an expression of confidence in Callaghan's vicious anti-working-class policies.

The central task of Marxists must be to break the British masses from their illusions in the Labour Party. In the absence of the ability to run one's own candidates, Leninists would seek to find candidates from the workers movement who ran on a programme sufficiently to the left of and counterposed to the BLP that a vote for them could be a vote against the betrayals of Labourism. However, neither of the left groupings that ran candidates in the London elections—the Communist Party (CP) and the International Marxist Group (IMG)—met this criterion.

The Communist Party has pursued its traditional stance of tail-ending the left wing of the Labour Party, which is today deeply mired in the Social Contract. Claiming to be pursuing a campaign in the trade unions to end wage controls, CP delegates were influential at the recent Scottish Trades Union Congress (TUC) in supporting a resolution, narrowly defeated, which opposed any interference in collective bargaining. TUC leaders are under pressure from the ranks not to renew wage restraints when Phase Two is replaced by Phase Three this summer, and the CP is hopeful of pushing the bureaucrats to ask for a few more crumbs when negotiations with the government are resumed. Significantly, the CP did not demand that these talks be broken off. Rather than seeking to "advise" the bureaucrats on how to sell out the ranks, militants would have demanded an end to the Phase Three negotiations.

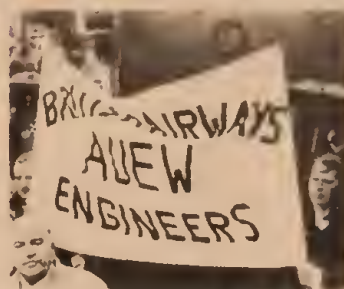
Far from pursuing a course of militant struggle against the Social Contract, the CP has been engaged in active strikebreaking. Recent strikes at Heathrow Airport and among Leyland toolroom workers and Port Talbot electricians have all threatened Phase Two guidelines. In each case the CP has echoed the national trade-union leaderships by denouncing them as "splitist" and demanding that the strikers return to work. At a conference in Birmingham April 3 called by the Communist Party-dominated Leyland Joint Shop Stewards Committee, CP member and conference chairman Derek Robinson reasserted opposition to "breakaway movements" and condemned the Leyland toolmakers repeatedly.



Andrew Wiard/Report

IMG contingent confronts cops at recent London demonstration against National Front.

In fact, CP stewards had the dubious distinction of co-signing with management a hack-to-work letter in March clearly intended as a means of breaking the strike. And despite the presence of the convener for the Port Talbot electricians, who urged support for this strike, a motion of solidarity was ruled out of order. Instead, the Communist Party rammed through its resolution



John Sturrock/Report

Striking Heathrow engineers in recent London march.

calling for "working-class unity," supporting import controls and further paring down a projected call for a token one-day general strike April 20 into a miserable "day of action" and "lobbying of parliament." A mere 3,000 marchers subsequently turned up for a dispirited demonstration on this day.

The only one of the ostensibly Trotskyist groups in Britain that contested the GLC elections was the centrist International Marxist Group, whose three candidates received a total of 1,569 votes, or about 1 percent of the total cast in those constituencies. It opposed the current policies of the Labour government, but failed to point out the role of the BLP as the historic prop of British capitalism within the workers movement. Instead, it called for undefined opposition to the policies of the Callaghan/Denis Healey cabinet, thus leaving the door open to a bloc with the "Labour left" and assorted CPers should Labour be tossed out of office or a resurgence of trade-union struggle push the BLP left-wingers into "opposition."

Nowhere did the IMG, in its election material, oppose in principle the Labour Party's bloc with the bourgeois Liberals (barely even taking note in the pages of

*Red Weekly* of this return to the hated legacy of Ramsay MacDonalds coalitionism), let alone draw the necessary conclusion that workers should withhold their support from the BLP. The IMG called on workers to vote Labour in the 88 seats it was not contesting and even criticised the CP for standing candidates who would "serve to split the Labour vote!" (The IMG made a point of running only in "safe" Labour districts in order to emphasise the tame character of its "opposition" to the BLP.) As a model of how Labour "should" have functioned, it pointed to the Clay Cross Labour councillors, who in 1973 refused to cooperate in implementing the Tories' Housing Act.

The fact that there was a Conservative government in 1973 and not a Labour government was ignored by the IMG. It is precisely the function of the Labour Party to act as a pressure valve for the workers movement. Out of office it masquerades as a "socialist" opposition, but in office it rams capitalist policies down the throats of the workers.

The IMG electoral programme did not fundamentally break from reformism. It opposed the Social Contract, but what it called for was not very different from the usual paper manifestoes of out-of-office Labourism: full employment, more housing, more schools, more hospitals, nationalisation of bankrupt firms, equal rights for women and opposition to racism. In keeping with the reformist/legalist tone of its programme, the IMG proposed to "fight" racism by calling on "the GLC and local councils to ban fascists from using council properties—and from holding positions of public responsibility." Only in a small fund-appeal box tucked away at the end of the four-page IMG "Socialist Manifesto" was there even a passing, ritualistic reference to the need for "workers councils and other organs of direct democracy," and the barest insinuation that something more than left reformism is necessary.

The IMG programme is capped by a vague call for "organising the broadest possible socialist opposition to Labour's policies." At the present conjuncture, all wings of the Labour Party are compromised by their support for the Social Contract. But should Labour return to opposition or the British workers decisively challenge the Calla-



Socialist Worker

Denis Healey

Council (GLC), which over the decades has been a Labour stronghold and last had a Conservative majority in 1970. But the Labour-controlled GLC has collaborated fully with its fellow social democrats in the cabinet in administering the Social Contract: large cuts in health care, education, housing and municipal employment have been carried out, while residential property taxes have soared and public transport fares have doubled. In the London elections Labour lost 29 seats to the Tories; it now has only 28 seats, compared to 68 for the Conservatives. The National Front—whose campaign was directed at channelling the frustrations of petty-bourgeois rate-payers and backward workers into hostility towards the non-white immigrants and the trade



ghan, Healey austerity programme, the minimalist IMG programme could very easily be embraced by at least a section of the Labour Party leadership. This is historically the method by which the BLP has sought to head off opposition from its mass base. The IMG campaign is implicitly a call for a bloc with the "Labour lefts" on the basis of their "traditional" programme. It is not a counterposition of Trotskyism to Labourism and social democracy and only prepares the ground for redirecting militant workers into the Labour Party.

#### The IMG Moves Rightward

The Pabloist IMG itself has flip-flopped on the Labour Party question. Emerging from ten years of deep entry in the Labour Party in the mid-1960's, its initiating cadres actively promulgated the New Left view that the BLP was fossilised and "irrelevant" to the class struggle. As recently as the "winter crisis" of 1973-74 the IMG leadership held that it could simply go around, instead of defeating, the established leadership of the working class (the Labour Party and the TUC tops) through the expedient of calling for the creation of phantom "councils of action" in the pages of *Red Weekly*. Following the drying up of the New Left, the IMG has flip-flopped from ignoring the obstacle posed by Labour's hegemony over the working class to tacit acceptance of it, attempting to find a place for itself among the "loyal lefts" of British social democracy.

Too small to approach the Labour lefts directly, it has sought to achieve this by forming unprincipled blocs with other "far left" parties designed to pressure the larger reformist organisations. This has now become standard practice of those sections of the "United" Secretariat led by the centrist majority under Ernest Mandel. In France and Italy the Pabloists formed electoral blocs with other ostensible Trotskyists, Mao-oids and syndicalists which in effect called for a more "left" version of the popular front than that favoured by the social democrats and Stalinists. In Spain it went so far as to co-sign the Barcelona communiqué of 30 January—together with eleven other parties, including the monarchist Spanish Carlists (!)—lamenting the killing of three cops and calling on the Francoist regime to reform itself.

In Britain the IMG has been pursuing a "unity offensive" aimed at amalgamating the various ostensibly Trotskyist tendencies to the left of the fossilised "Militant" grouping. An important part of the IMG's campaign has been the publication of a series of pseudo-theoretical articles which ludicrously argue that the Bolshevik party was built along the lines of an all-inclusive swamp and which seek to portray Lenin as an arch-conciliator who opposed splits on principle! In line with their swamp-building "offensive," the IMG has also recently announced (*Red Weekly*, 21 April) that they are launching a new "non-sectarian polemical" paper on 9 June to be entitled *Socialist Challenge* which will "advocate and fight for the unity of the revolutionary left." At a public meeting in London last February, Brian Grogan, national secretary of the IMG, promised seats on the editorial board as well as regular column space to opponent tendencies who were willing to participate in this daring new experiment in Menshevism.

The main target of the IMG's "unity offensive" is the considerably larger Socialist Workers Party (SWP), formerly the International Socialists (I.S.). The

SWP/I.S. is a reformist syndicalist tendency which the IMG until recently characterised as "centrist." However, in the interests of "unity" the IMG has now given the SWP/I.S. a clean bill of health and certified them "revolutionary socialists." The IMG's main formal political difference with the state capitalists of Tony Cliff's SWP/I.S. is the latter's anti-communist position on the Russian question. The SWP/I.S., whose leadership originated in a split from the Trotskyist movement in 1950 over Cliff's refusal to defend North Korea in the Korean War, to this day refuses to stand for military defence of the degenerated and deformed workers states against imperialism. However, the IMG has relegated this key question to the status of a "secondary" question which is "not posed at this time."

The IMG has recently enjoyed some limited success in picking up support from one-time SWP/I.S. fellow-travelers who have been "turned-off" by the latter's recent sectarian "party building" turn. In recent months IMG-dominated blocs have out-pollied SWP/I.S.-supported groups in both the National Union of Students and the National Union of Teachers. Most significantly, in the Stetchford by-election, where both the IMG and the SWP/I.S. stood candidates, the IMG out-pollied prominent SWPer Paul Foot by a margin of three-to-two.

The SWP/I.S.' relatively poor showing in Stetchford was the occasion for the IMG to publish an open letter from Tariq Ali to Paul Foot in which he advises "Paul" that running against the IMG was "an act of gross irresponsibility and a misuse of your prestige which extends far beyond the world of left-wing politics." He goes on to remind Paul "how we all used to laugh at [Gerry] Healy's pretensions in the 60's" and warns the SWP of the dangers of trying to go it alone. He continues: "What you must understand is this, Paul. There are thousands of militants all over the country [the Mandelites' fabled "new mass vanguard"] who will not support any far left group because of the divisions and splits, and splits within splits, that characterise us as a whole" (*Red Weekly*, 6 April).

Despite the IMG's undoubtedly sincere and thorough-going neo-Menshevism, its manoeuvres with the SWP are doomed to failure. Although the IMG and the SWP share a common opportunist appetite to "be where the action is," they capitulate to pressures from different and often counterposed milieus. The SWP is fundamentally workerist while the IMG characteristically tails petty-bourgeois radicalism. It would be difficult, for example, to imagine even the currently rightward-moving IMG countenancing the SWP's recent exclusion of Gay Liberation and Working Women's Charter banners from its "Right to Work March." The best that the IMG can hope for from its "unity offensive" is to pick up a few of the smaller pseudo-Trotskyist organisations (the International Communist League, the Chartists, etc.), most of whom have no good political reasons for remaining outside the IMG in the first place.

Fundamentally alien to the IMG is any conception of the role of the vanguard party. For these Pabloist renegades from Trotskyism, Leninism equals sectarianism. Rotten blocs replace principled political regroupment; tailing militant-talking reformists, especially CPers, is a substitute for constructing a class-struggle opposition in the unions. It is not enough to criticise the current policies of the BLP—in the present conjuncture that is cheap talk, indeed. The truth must be told to the British left and trade-union movement: that the Labour Party will never achieve socialism, that it cannot be reformed and that in its stead must be counterposed a Leninist/Trotskyist combat party that will split the mass base of the BLP away from its reformist misleaders ■

## Sit-In, Demos Demand:

# Remember Kent State Massacre!



J. Darnell

Ohio National Guard firing on students in May 1970.

KENT, Ohio, May 5—Over 2,000 people rallied and marched at Kent State University yesterday in memory of the martyrdom of four antiwar students shot down in cold blood by National Guardsmen on 4 May 1970. Unlike previous commemorations, this year's activities resulted in a genuine political confrontation between Kent State students and the administration. University plans to erect a gymnasium on the site of the 1970 killings and the continued ROTC training and military recruitment on campus fueled militant student protest, resulting in a 250-person occupation of the administration building.

The Rockwell Hall sit-in confronted the university board of trustees with demands that the gymnasium site be changed, dorms be named in honor of the slain students and the university bargain in good faith with the Kent State faculty union. During the continuous mass meeting in the occupied building, students expressed their outrage over administration attempts to bury the memory of the four Kent State students who were savagely gunned down while opposing the imperialist invasion of Cambodia (as were two black students at Jackson State in Mississippi).

Despite the attempts of university president Glenn Olds and board of trustees chairman George Janick to "talk to the students," the sit-in continued as students drew up a list of demands to present to the upcoming meeting of the board of trustees. Olds responded by ordering police to block entry into the building and giving the demonstrators until 4 a.m. to leave.

Although some students vacillated, the majority were receptive to SYL supporters who fought against giving in to the administration and proposed that a steering committee be formed to prepare for subsequent actions. The SYL insisted that there be no behind-the-scenes "dialogue" with the administration. Instead, Kent State students, faculty and campus workers must demand that ROTC be driven from the school and that the university implement the students' demands.

Only after the election of a steering committee and the organization of a mass meeting to plan for the May 12 board of trustees meeting did the students leave the building. Throughout the demonstration only the SYL was able to draw the lessons of May 4 and put forward a consistent program of militant actions to stop the administration plans. Significantly, the SYL was also alone in linking the commemoration of the May 4 killings—which occurred during an anti-ROTC demonstration—to the demands of the 1970 demonstration, for an end to the continued presence on campus of imperialism's future officer corps.

ROTC Off Campus! Jail the Killers of the Kent State Students!



WV1 photo

Kent State students marching on the administration building May 4 on the anniversary of killings by Ohio National Guard.

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## Civil Libertarians Aid Racist Terrorists

# Why the ACLU Defends Fascists

It should have been an open and shut case. Last November, black Marines at Camp Pendleton defended themselves against the night-riding terror of the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK had carried on a months-long campaign of open provocation, while the Marine brass looked on. Finally, after numerous Klan gang beatings and vandalism and intimidation (posters urging "Kill Niggers" were prominently displayed and Klansmen brandished their knives—"nigger stick-ers," they called them), a group of blacks attempted to forestall an assault planned by these racist thugs.

Then the Marine brass went into action...and arrested the black Marines. Fourteen were charged with assault and conspiracy to commit assault, and those who pleaded not guilty spent three months in the brig pending trial. No charges were lodged against the Klansmen, ten of whom were simply transferred to other Marine posts (see "No Defense of Camp Pendleton Fascists!", *WV* No. 147, 4 March).

So it should have been simple. The blacks were being victimized for defending themselves against racist violence. Any organization with an interest in defending basic democratic rights would have defended the blacks, who face 20 years in jail. Indeed, numerous demonstrations have been called in their support. But for the civil libertarians of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the case is a cauldron of boiling controversy. For the ACLU entered the case on the side of the Klan.

The ACLU's San Diego chapter, in fact, decided to represent not only the transferred Klansmen but also the national Klan organization in a suit for financial compensation—in effect raising money for the Klan. The San Diego civil libertarians invoked the ACLU's traditions in arguing that the Klan's First Amendment rights had been violated by the Marine Corps. This position, unfortunately, is fully in line with the ACLU's stated principles and political history.

Such abstract defense of "constitutional guarantees" protecting fascist mobilizations is in perfect harmony with classless civil-libertarian ideology. But the ACLU is also subject to the pressure of the real world as refracted through bourgeois liberal ideology, and rushing to the aid of the white-hooded Klansmen was more than some ACLU members could bear. The ACLU's defense of the Klan's "right" to maraud, burn crosses and terrorize ethnic minorities prompted a rash of objections, emergency meetings and protest resignations in many of its southern California chapters. Seven ACLU attorneys openly repudiated the San Diego chapter by entering the case on behalf of the victimized black Marines—placing the ACLU on both sides of the legal battle! Black members of the board of the Southern California ACLU termed the decision to defend the Klan "an affront to all black people" and called upon the organization to repudiate the San Diego decision.

The civil libertarians continue to sink ever deeper in their legalist quagmire, with lengthy briefs expounding the First Amendment (free speech) rights of the Klan vs. the Fourteenth Amendment ("equal protection") rights of the blacks. ACLU national board member George Slaff put forward the traditional position for support of the Klan with a touching simplicity and characteristic social opaqueness: "I have always held

First Amendment advocacy to be a prime duty of anyone interested in preserving our liberties and our freedom" (*Open Forum*, February 1977).

But the issue was too big to be totally submerged in constitutionalist cretinism. The ACLU's fundamental legalism has once again bumped into social reality, with an impact which resounded throughout the organization. And the "great debate" was carried to the public. In early April ACLU national executive director Arych Neier, speaking in New



Roger Baldwin

York City in favor of defending free speech for fascists, debated New Left mouthpiece William Kunstler, a member of the ACLU national advisory board. Granting in advance the civil-libertarian premise that fascists' "free speech" should be defended, Kunstler could only argue lamely that Camp Pendleton was "not a civil liberties issue" and that in his personal legal practice he would not take the Klan's case.

It was a sorry show. Kunstler, who represents a current of liberal anti-racism, was trapped by civil-libertarian "logic." He was genially baited by Neier, who had merely to insist that "the same standards should be applied to members of the Klan as are applied to everybody else." Kunstler correctly described the confrontation between the Klan and black people as a "conflict, a very deadly one...which undermines every fundamental right of black people." But unable to take a stand against the defense of the Klan in principle, Kunstler was reduced to proposing that he apply one criterion for those he "liked" and another for those he didn't. He cautioned the ACLU that, when defending fascists, "You should not do it in full regalia, you should do it on the narrowest grounds possible." Neier made Kunstler's recoil from defense of the Klan look like mush-minded, self-contradictory political cowardice.

It was not until the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee took the floor in the discussion period that the civil-libertarian philosophy was effectively challenged and the audience—many of whom did not want to defend Klan terror—could see that both liberal currents were bankrupt in terms of protecting the rights and lives of black people. The SL spokesman explained that the existence of the Klan is a threat to "every fundamental right of black people." These are terrorist organizations, the last-ditch defense of bourgeois class rule when it has become

manifestly unable to maintain the dictatorship of capital in the "same old way." Abstract civil libertarianism—which defines itself as consistent defense of the Bill of Rights—can provide no answer to the fascist menace, which arises from the decay of the bourgeois order. High-minded "tolerance" for the fascists' "constitutional rights" only serves to allow them to spread their venomous filth and night-riding terror.

PDC staff counsel Valerie West put forward a class-struggle approach to the defense of democratic rights, sharply counterposed to Kunstler's reliance upon the bourgeois state as a "neutral arbiter." It is only the mobilization of the labor movement, she said, that can defend against fascist provocations and protect the democratic rights of the working people.

The ACLU was not really discussing the defense of democratic rights, but the proper role of civil libertarianism. It was those who spoke for class defense who were the defenders of democratic rights in the real world and those who spoke for civil libertarianism who would deny those rights to workers and blacks by providing a legal cover to the fascists. The San Diego ACLU's action is a reaffirmation of the ACLU's longstanding willingness to provide legal aid to those who are mobilizing to deprive blacks and others of their democratic rights.

### The Class Nature of the State

Although the Camp Pendleton controversy is bitter and widespread, all the main legal combatants accept the civil libertarian framework. In a recent editorial, the *New York Times* (18 April) supports the ACLU decision to defend the Klan as "a fair test of the principles

renounce in principle the defense of fascists. Like Kunstler, Goodman defines the central question as how hard one ought to work in their defense:

"Support for one side, the progressive side, should be wholehearted and provided in the spirit of comradeship. Support for the other side, the reactionary side, may be appropriate at times. On a specific and limited civil liberties issue, it may be correct for the ACLU and other forces to lend some legal support.... However, support should be miserly and stingy—limited to the most proscribed of circumstances and focused upon the narrowest of issues. "The Pendleton Klan situation does not meet these criteria."

So Kunstler wants to defend the Klan "on the narrowest grounds possible"; Goodman wants support to be "miserly and stingy."

Why are the NLG and Kunstler unable to simply renounce the defense of fascists on principle? It is not merely that Goodman regards any political principle as "sectarian" purism, nor simply that he cannot tell a fascist from a right-wing bourgeois parliamentarian. The NLG's problem is fundamental: adherence to civil libertarianism, reflecting the class perspective of the liberal bourgeoisie.

Goodman's obeisance to civil-libertarian ideology derives from the NLG's political purpose: not anti-sectarian defense in the interests of the workers movement but the attempt to create a political bloc with the "progressive bourgeoisie" over the latter's presumed commitment to the defense of democratic rights. Historically, both the ACLU and the NLG have been important arenas of Stalinist class collaboration with the capitalist liberals.

The "progressive" defense milieu takes as its natural orientation the



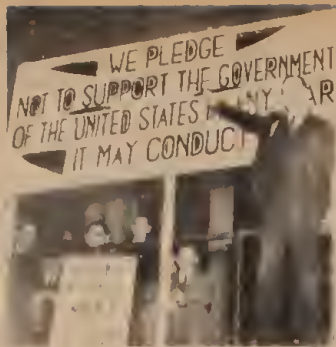
Martin Dies (left) in 1940. As chairman of HUAC he led congressional witchhunt.

of the Civil Liberties Union." The editorial chastises the critics of the San Diego policy, singling out in particular the "harsh words" of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG).

If the NLG's words have been "harsh," the basic attitude of these petty-bourgeois radicals toward civil-libertarian ideology remains decidedly saccharine. The Guild voted to defend the arrested black Marines, and it is much to the NLG's credit that a number of its lawyers have provided some much needed legal aid. But in the latest issue of *Guild Notes* (April-May 1977), NLG president Bill Goodman refuses to

attempt to "fight fascism" through "unity" of all "democratic forces." In the words of ACLU founder Roger Baldwin (1934): "It is to the interest of the Civil Liberties Union...to aid in promoting united action among all the forces combatting fascism." Like all such popular-frontist schemas, the political basis of the "unity" is the nominally class-neutral ideology of the liberal bourgeoisie. The creation of the NLG expressed the appetite to recreate the same popular-frontist "unity" which collapsed spectacularly when the ACLU turned on its former CP allies in an orgy of rabid anti-Communist witchhunting.





Roger Baldwin speaking at 1935 antiwar rally. UPI

Because the refusal to define what is defensible in class terms is the acid test of civil-libertarian ideology, the willingness on principle to defend fascists becomes the concrete question whereby the reformist in the defense milieu demonstrates his fundamental commitment to the ideology of the bourgeois order. When the ex-Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) aggressively took up the slogan of "free speech" for fascists, this was an important demonstration of bourgeois "respectability" in the service of consolidated reformist appetite. In its vehement stance on behalf of fascists' "rights," the social-democratic SWP again demonstrated the hard line—ultimately drawn in blood—between civil libertarianism and class-struggle defense.

There is only one approach to the defense of democratic rights that can be counterposed to civil libertarianism: the proletarian class defense of democratic rights as a weapon of working-class struggle. At the heart of such a defense is the Marxist attitude toward the capitalist state as an instrument of class oppression. The NLG's waffling on the defense of fascists is of a piece with its refusal to defend the independence of the trade unions against the bourgeois state; in both cases the class character of the capitalist courts must be denied.

Just as the NLG accepts the courts as an impartial arbiter for internal union

disputes (claiming the courts can be used "tactically" to redress injustice), so also it cannot break with liberal reliance on the state as a class-neutral force which can be pressured into championing the democratic rights of the "progressives"—in the name of consistent abstract "democracy"—as it does the "rights" of the fascists. In this, the NLG functions as the left face of civil libertarianism.

In modern class society the bourgeois perspective of civil libertarianism and the class-struggle defense of democratic rights are counterposed. The bourgeoisie's proclamations of civil liberty guaranteed by law reflected its progressive historical mission at a particular period of history. The abstract promise of civil liberty was a relative advance over feudal society's outmoded system of ossified hereditary privilege. But the bourgeois order, based on capitalist exploitation of the working class, can no more fulfill its promise of liberty than it can achieve the other slogans of the great French bourgeois revolution, equality and fraternity. In the last analysis the function of bourgeois law is to guarantee the capitalists' right to exploit the working class through their ownership of the means of production.

In its decay, capitalism cannot advance the cause of democratic rights. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie is on the offensive against those rights for the vast majority. Only the working class and its vanguard can carry on a real struggle for democratic rights. But for the working class, democratic rights are not frozen in a document; they must be fought for, extended and defended against the bourgeoisie's attempts to limit them (and, at crucial junctures, to abolish them, unleashing for this purpose the fascist shock troops whom the civil libertarians defend in the name of classless "democracy"). The separation of the struggle for democratic rights from the struggle between classes exists in the arguments of civil libertarians, but not in life and history.

The role of civil libertarianism as an ideology in the epoch of capitalist decay is to present the illusion that the

bourgeois state can still embody a progressive function, that it can be class-neutral. The class-conscious proletarians fight for democratic rights, but not as civil libertarians. Their axis is to protect and increase the proletariat's class independence and capacity to struggle against all forms of social oppression. In this they must wage a battle against the ideology and organizations of civil libertarianism, which aims to tie the working class to the class enemy and its state.

### The Historical Record

The Camp Pendleton furor sharply highlighted the counterposition between civil libertarianism and class-struggle defense. On 23 February the



ILD mounted a class defense of Sacco and Vanzetti.

Chicano Law Students Association of UCLA wrote to ACLU director Ramona Ripston that the ACLU position:

"...came as a surprise to us in light of ACLU's fine and distinguished record of civil rights advocacy.... Your current involvement in behalf of the KKK at Pendleton stands out in a stark contradiction to that fine record."

But the ACLU's defense of the Klan should come as no surprise. It is

consistent with civil-libertarian principle and the ACLU's organizational record. It is also understandable that there is significant discomfort in liberal defense circles with this well-rationalized objective defense of marauding racism. In the framework of its unshakeable commitment to civil-libertarian ideology, the ACLU has frequently displayed a susceptibility to such pressures. From inception, the ACLU has been not only a legal defender of abstract constitutional doctrine, but also has been influenced by popular social currents among the liberal bourgeoisie.

When the ACLU was founded in 1920, it reflected a liberal anarcho-pacifist opposition to World War I. In its early years the ACLU was involved almost exclusively in work on behalf of socialists, anarchists and labor militants. Furthermore, much of its leadership, including founder Roger Baldwin, was swept up in the initial excitement with which certain sections of the American liberal intelligentsia greeted the Russian Revolution. Accordingly, the ACLU at that time openly identified itself with the struggles of the working masses, stating in its first annual report (1920-21):

"Today the organized movements of labor and of the farmers are waging the chief fight for civil liberty throughout the United States.... It is these forces which the American Civil Liberties Union serves in their efforts for civil liberty."

The left-wing verbiage and claim to defend the working class in the 1920's and 1930's is illustrative of the character of the ACLU. As the expression of a purist trend in bourgeois liberal thought, the ACLU can only exist in a political cloud-cuckoo-land of abstract principle.

There are moments in the class struggle when the question of social justice is brought to the fore in ways that make it impossible even for the civil libertarian to avoid social reality. The Russian Revolution was such an instance. There was little political room

*continued on page 8*

## The Purge of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, 1940

# ACLU: Guilt by Association

In April 1976 the American Civil Liberties Union decided it had made a mistake 36 years before, when it stripped Elizabeth Gurley Flynn—a leading spokesman of the Communist Party (CP)—of her ACLU directorship. Thus these paragons of civil libertarianism joined others similarly infected with the bicentennial pardoning spirit.

Last year Alabama Governor George Wallace pardoned the last living "Scottsboro boys" defendant, framed up in 1931. Gerald Ford pardoned Iva Toguri d'Aquino ("Tokyo Rose") after some 30 years of persecution. And the U.S. Senate finally restored Eugene Debs' citizenship—posthumously, of course. The Spanish working class, veteran of numerous partial and begrudging amnesty proclamations, has a phrase for such belated attempts to cover up past injustice: *indulto insulto* (insulting pardon). Only the timely pardon of war criminal and Watergater Richard Nixon had any real benefit for the recipient.

In the spate of post-Watergate, post-Vietnam attempts to cover over "stains" on the American image, the ACLU's 1940 anti-Communist purge is no doubt embarrassing, so Flynn is being rehabilitated now. But the ACLU can't get off the hook so easily. The shameful 1940



Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (right) was active in defense of Warren K. Billings (second from right) and Tom Mooney against "Red Scare" frame-up.

expulsion, which shatters their supposedly sacred principles, is too instructive to be forgotten.

Within the limitations of Stalinist sectarianism, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was more of a veteran fighter in the defense of democratic rights than were her prosecutors. As she pointed out at her ACLU executive board hearing, she was jailed many times for her activities in defense of those rights—unlike her ACLU accusers. Those activities began

in the Spokane, Washington, IWW free speech fight when she was 19 years old.

Flynn, a founding member of the ACLU, had been prominent in the CP's International Labor Defense and its precursor, the Workers Defense Union. In the 1920's she was drawn into the orbit of the Communist Party. She publicly announced her CP membership in 1937 and remained a loyal Stalinist until her death in 1964.

At her 1940 kangaroo court hearing,

the ACLU could not charge her with a single act inconsistent with her role as a board member—a post to which she had been re-elected only a short time before the purge. The trial was a political test of opinion by an organization that claimed to oppose loyalty oaths on principle. The charge, leveled by Dorothy Bromley, was simply that Flynn's CP membership disqualified her from her leadership position. Behind it all was the hand of long-time ACLU head Roger Baldwin, who wrote to Bromley that she "was the one to do it." The "evidence," presented by Roger Riis and playwright Elmer Rice, was articles Flynn had written for the CP's *Worker* and *New Masses*. She was convicted by a slim majority.

The Flynn trial is important not simply as Exhibit A of liberal backstabbing, red-baiting and consummate hypocrisy. It is also a political landmark along the road of Stalinist class collaboration with the U.S. liberal bourgeoisie, a popular-front relationship whose course almost never did run smooth.

For this coziness with the liberals, the CP had adopted the program of the New Deal, becoming the tag-tail of the Democratic Party. However, its short-lived stand against upcoming inter-

*continued on page 11*



(continued from page 7)

for liberals to attempt to posit some idealist legal democratic justice outside the bounds of economic and social justice while the proletariat of Russia was changing history, inspiring the international proletariat with its example (and stimulating the bourgeoisie to step up repression against the left at home). So a small but important current of bourgeois opinion attempted to identify with the Russian Revolution. The statements of Baldwin and the early documents of the ACLU reflect the enormous influence of the Russian Revolution upon this current of liberalism:

"We realize that these standards of civil liberty cannot be attained as abstract principles or as constitutional guarantees. Economic and political power is necessary to assert and maintain all 'rights.'"

As late as 1934, founder Roger Baldwin proclaimed a class sympathy and felt obliged to justify the ACLU's defense of "reactionaries" as a basis for the defense of "working class liberties." Baldwin's words, in a Stalinist magazine of the mid-1930's, may sound strange to those familiar only with the "class-neutral" rhetoric of the more modern ACLU:

"I take a class position. It is anti-capitalist and pro-revolutionary... If I and the reactionaries to get free speech now and then, if I go outside the class struggle to fight against censorship, it is only because those liberties help create a more hospitable atmosphere for working class liberties. The class struggle is the central conflict in the world, all others are incidental. When that power of the working class is once achieved, I am for maintaining it by any means whatever. Dictatorship is the obvious means in a world of enemies at home and abroad... If American workers, with no real liberty save to change masters or, rarely, to escape from the working class, could understand their class interests, Soviet 'workers' democracy would be their goal. And if American champions of civil liberty could all think in terms of economic liberty as the goal of their labors, they too would accept 'workers' democracy as far superior to what the capitalist world offers to any but a small minority."

—Soviet Russia Today, September 1934

But there is no "class position" "outside the class struggle." And despite all the left talk spewed forth under the impact of the Russian Revolution, it is precisely the defense of fascists that defines the civil-libertarian and separates him from the defense of democratic rights practiced by class-struggle militants. As early as 1925 the ACLU reaffirmed its fidelity to classless civil-libertarianism—and did so in explicit counterposition to the Communists, stating in a letter to the Workers Party:

"...you ask us to take a position that we are interested only in civil rights for the working class as a means to power... We are for free speech for everybody as the sole guarantee of orderly progress."

ACLU: Lawyers for Fascism

The ACLU originated in a period in which sedition laws and criminal anarchy legislation victimized the left and labor movement while the Klan had considerable influence in many state and local governments in the South and Midwest. While the ACLU in principle insisted on the fascists' "right" to organize, it was glaringly obvious what the results of that organization were. A 1921 pamphlet by ACLU co-chairman Albert DeSilver detailed Klan lynchings, kidnappings, floggings and threats, concluding: "Its life cannot and should not be a happy one. The modern Ku Klux Klan does not deserve to live and it had much better die."

A 1931 ACLU pamphlet distinguished only empirically between "extremists" of the right and of the left and argued for the left in the name of even-handed justice:

"Not a single act of 'violence' has ever been proved against a member of the

I.W.W. or Communist Party in the last decade in connection with any of the political or industrial activities of those organizations."

"Hundreds of Negroes, Catholics, aliens and others opposed by the Ku Klux Klan have been mobbed, tarred and feathered and beaten during the last ten years... And yet not a single person committing or inciting these violent acts against strikers, Negroes or radicals has ever been punished."

"It is plain, therefore, that those who defend majority prejudices or property rights may not only advocate but practice violence against their enemies without fear of prosecution, while they call for the police and prosecution against mere radical doctrines. The history of the last twelve years has shown that those who advocate violence in maintaining the existing order may do so with impunity while those whose program suggests violent changes in the remote future are punished."

"The Right to Advocate Violence," 1931 [emphasis in original]

Unable to solidarize in class terms with the left against the ultra-right, the

liberties, and would do so here if they had the chance. ..."

But the ACLU would not be deterred from its course by mere social and political class realities. Its top leaders chose to express their opposition to fascism through the American edition of the Stalinist Popular Front, while protecting the "non-partisan" reputation of the ACLU. In 1939 the ACLU defended "free speech" for the German American Bund. The then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party led a mass working-class mobilization against a Bund rally in Madison Square Garden, at which Bund Führer Fritz Kuhn praised the cops who were protecting the rally and declaimed: "History is not written in ink, but in blood! It will take more than words to answer our program! We are preparing with the only language international Communist Jewry understands!" (Socialist Appeal, 24 February 1939). The rally was defended not only by 1,800 armed cops;

professed concern for the democratic rights of the oppressed, to recall that when the Japanese-Americans were rounded up and taken to concentration camps during World War II, the ACLU did nothing (though some individuals and chapters in California did enter the case). Perhaps most indicative, the ACLU does not consider this atrocity a betrayal of its stated principles. In fact, Baldwin defined as the ACLU's single lapse of principle during the war... its failure to defend some fascists during this same period! As for the Japanese-Americans, the ACLU considers their agony "a sad story of war-time hysteria" which the ACLU "could do little to mitigate" (Introduction, ACLU Annual Reports, Volume 1, 1970).

ACLU Anti-Communism

The ACLU's history is intimately bound up with the history of Stalinism. The cataclysmic Russian Revolution, demonstrating the might of the revolutionary working class, impressed many liberals and prompted at least lip service to the liberating power of class struggle. The usurpation of political power by the Stalinist bureaucracy and its consolidation against the revolutionary Left Opposition impressed the liberal fellow-travelers with admiration for the pragmatic "practical" Stalin, whom they saw as building "Socialism in One Country" and whose advocacy of "peaceful coexistence" filled them with joyous visions of serving the "progressive country" and their own ruling class simultaneously. More than a few ACLU "democrats" apologized for Stalin's bureaucratic purges in the name of "progress" and looked forward to smooth class collaboration with their capitalist masters at home.

With the break-up of the popular front, the civil-libertarians rushed to retrench, claiming to represent a "pure" democracy codified and symbolized by the U.S. constitution. The Stalin-Hitler pact was a watershed. What had been an apparently formal equation of "extremists of the left and right" became after 1939 a weapon in a vicious anti-Communist crusade that would leave the ACLU just another liberal red-baiting milieu, as it is today.

By 1939 the American bourgeoisie was already well on the road to consolidating public opinion behind its preparations for the second imperialist world war. The witchhunting House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), under Martin Dies, had begun its sinister investigations foreshadowing the post-war "cold war" purges and inquisitions of McCarthy. The ACLU was threatened with investigation by Dies, who accused it of being a Communist front group. Although the ACLU national leadership had included CP members almost since its inception, the tension between the Stalinists and the liberals (including virulently anti-Communist social democrats like Norman Thomas) had been building for some time. The threat of Dies' investigation and the Hitler-Stalin pact which isolated the CP from the "progressives" combined neatly to create the incentive necessary for driving the Communists out.

The ACLU had been getting steadily uneasier with "totalitarianism" in the USSR (though during the popular-frontist heyday Baldwin and others had been happy to defend Stalinism). Baldwin, who in 1934-35 had called "Communism the goal," found the pact with Hitler to be the "clinching evidence" that "ended any slight hopes [in the Soviet Union] that I retained." In 1953 he completed the apology: "...since then, I have been a consistent opponent of the Soviet dictatorship, of Communism, and of all cooperation with Communists..." (quoted in the New Yorker, 18 July 1953).

Baldwin maneuvered passage of an "anti-totalitarian" loyalty test for ACLU officials in February 1940,



Trotskyists led massive demonstration against fascists outside Madison Square Garden rally in 1939.

ACLU argued that it was all right for individuals to support leftist causes in their "political" incarnation but defense work should be kept "non-political" and "even-handed."

The ACLU continued its contradictory practice of attacking the fascists in its propaganda while defending them in court into the 1930's. But once Hitler had come to power in Germany and the ACLU found itself compelled by its principles to defend increasing Nazi activity, the ACLU began to have trouble with many of its members. In 1934, at the same time that Baldwin was claiming his "pro-revolutionary" "class position," and the Nazis were crushing the workers movement in Germany, the ACLU published a pamphlet asking the question: "Shall We Defend Free Speech for Nazis in America?" They answered, "Yes." But the pamphlet was forced to note the contradictions that made men and women with a wider social vision than civil-libertarians more than a bit uncomfortable with the defense of Nazis:

"Some of our members have sharply criticized the Union for championing the right of German-American Nazis to hold meetings and to conduct their propaganda. These critics, moved by their own feelings, have excepted the Nazis from their general tolerance of all other propaganda, arguing that the Nazis in Germany suppress all civil

later it was defended by the ACLU legal staff.

The Trotskyists were seething in their criticism:

"The American Civil Liberties Union rushed into print to insist that the right of free speech be extended to the Hitlerites... Apparently exhausted by its noble efforts in behalf of the Nazis, [the ACLU] didn't utter a peep about the democratic rights of free speech, assembly and picketing being denied the 50,000 anti-Fascists who came to protest the Nazi rally."

—Socialist Appeal, 3 March 1939

The ACLU's defense of fascism has continued without interruption. In the 1960's the organization went more "activist" in its defense of draft evaders, antiwar protesters and civil rights demonstrators—as well as the Minute-men shooting at the protesters, Nazi leader George Lincoln Rockwell, the Klan and the American Nazi Party. ACLU clients in the early 1970's have included, along with the Klan, the National Renaissance Party, the White Power Movement, the Fighting American Nationalists, the National States Rights Party, the National Socialist White People's Party, the Christian Crusade, and My Lai mass murderer Lt. William Calley.

It is a significant gauge of the importance the ACLU places on this work, as well as a measure of its



stating that it was a response to "the direction of the Communist international movement since the Soviet-Nazi pact..." (Only months earlier, in the pamphlet, "Why We Defend Free Speech for Nazis, Fascists and Communists," the organization had piously proclaimed: "The Union does not engage in political controversy.... It is wholly unconcerned with movements abroad or foreign governments.")

The ACLU also made use of its record of defending fascist organizations to beat back the taint of sympathy to Communism. Thus in 1939 the ACLU issued a pamphlet called "Everybody's Rights," consisting of favorable newspaper editorial excerpts concerning ACLU work on behalf of fascists and corporations. When this record of building up defense of rightists was deemed insufficient, the red purge began.

Norman Thomas stepped up his five-year guerrilla war against Harry Ward, who was finally forced out. CP member Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a member of the ACLU board of directors, refused to step down and was dragged through a civil-libertarian version of the star chamber by her colleagues in May 1940 (see accompanying article).

That the ACLU liberals would be willing to turn on their CP allies if put under sufficient pressure was always clear. In 1934 Baldwin wrote to William Green and claimed:

"There does not happen to be a single member of the Communist Party on our Board of Directors or our National Committee, though there are two or three Communist sympathizers.... At no time in the Union's history have there been more than two or three Communists identified with our controlling committees."

The witchhunting spirit appears to have been sharply escalated by about 1937 when Harold Ickes told the ACLU annual meeting:

"...we speak of fascism as if it were something different from communism, but from the point of view of democracy the two are fundamentally the same thing."

And in 1938 the ACLU reprinted a statement by Arthur Garfield Hays to a federal court hearing: "We of the Civil Liberties Union have been condemning Soviet Russia from the beginning because of the denial of fundamental rights like free speech, free press, free assembly."

But it was in February 1940 that the anti-Communists translated their pious "philosophy" into a purge. At the February 5 ACLU annual meeting, the National Committee in no uncertain terms read the CP out of the ACLU's "governing committees":

"While the American Civil Liberties Union does not make any test of opinion on political or economic questions a condition of membership, and makes no distinction in defending the right to hold or utter any opinions, the personnel of its governing committees and staff is properly subject to the test of consistency in the defense of civil liberties in all aspects and all places. That consistency is inevitably compromised by persons who champion civil liberties in the United States and yet who justify or tolerate the denial of civil liberties by dictatorships abroad....

"The Board of Directors and the National Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union therefore hold it inappropriate for any person to serve on the governing committees of the Union or on its staff, who is a member of any political organization which supports totalitarian dictatorship in any country, or who by his public declarations indicates his support of such a principle. Within this category we include organizations in the United States supporting the totalitarian governments of the Soviet Union and of the Fascist and Nazi countries (such as the Communist Party, the German-American Bund and others); as well as native organizations with obvious anti-democratic objectives or practices."

The ACLU's explanation was that its concern over "Communist participation was intensified after the Nazi-Soviet pact when it became evident that Communist support of democracy had undergone a sharp change."

Murray Kempton has said he hopes the history of the ACLU in the 1950's

"would never be honestly written." There is much to be accounted for. The ACLU can be held responsible for approving the Internal Security Act's ban on Communists as immigrants, for currying favor with the FBI and never denouncing the Attorney General's list of "subversive" organizations. According to the ACLU, the CP was only half a "genuine" political party with the rights of others; the half that was "part of the Soviet conspiracy" made special regulation justifiable. Finally, the ACLU deemed it a legitimate basis for firing when workers invoked the Fifth Amendment.

As a leading edge of the anti-red hysteria, ACLU executive director Patrick Murphy Malin boasted in 1957 that his "organization was cheered by the CP's reduction to a 'puny crew'"; he was glad the ACLU could be such "a big help to the police job necessary to

has already explained them. Our press must not even mention the petition. It has absolutely nothing to do with the issue. Our press has its own line and needs no ACLU angles" (*Letters From Prison*).

The ACLU "angles" were exclusively legalist. While the revolutionaries were prepared to use every allowable legal means in their own defense, and in defense of all class-war defendants, they understood that their case would not ultimately be won in the courtroom. The socialists' line was to bring the power of the working class to bear upon the trial. The Trotskyists understood that it was "Socialism on Trial" and made their legal defense a part of the overall political defense.

The difference of "angle" between revolutionary socialists and civil libertarians very often appears as simply a difference between a legal-centered



American Nazi Party head George Lincoln Rockwell (center) leading 1966 "White Power" march in Chicago.

internal security." Not all ACLU members were so cheered by their group's joining the witchhunt. In 1952 the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (ECLC) was formed for the purpose of defending the Stalinists who were ignored or attacked by the ACLU. Unlike the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), formed in 1936 as a popular-frontist milieu for the CP, the ECLC attempted to hold onto the first principles of the ACLU and, while more willing to defend the Communists, also voted overwhelmingly to defend the fascist George Lincoln Rockwell. Rather than defining itself in terms of the NLG's aim of becoming an "effective social force," it was fundamentally legalist in approach.

#### For Class-Struggle Defense!

Socialists and civil libertarians sometimes find themselves on the same picket lines, or more often on the same side of a court battle. Socialists welcome the assistance of such organizations and individuals when they apply their professed democratic aims on behalf of victimized class-struggle militants and working people. The ACLU's honorable involvement in the legal defense of the Trotskyists prosecuted in 1941 under the Smith Act benefited the entire labor movement and the cause of the defense of democratic rights. At the same time, the Trotskyists could not amalgamate their defense policies with those of the ACLU. The Trotskyists initiated the Civil Rights Defense Committee (CRDC) as a political defense arm. The ACLU continued legal assistance to the Smith Act victims after they were jailed.

There was a principled basis for collaboration between the Trotskyists' political self-defense efforts and the civil-libertarian work of the ACLU. However the two organizations had different purposes and differing strategies flowing from their political aims. When the ACLU petitioned the court for the pardon of the Trotskyist prisoners on narrow legal grounds, James Cannon wrote from prison to warn that the propaganda campaign "is not in any way to be based upon the petition, but upon the merits of the case as CRDC

strategy and a strategy of mass mobilizations: law vs. politics. But this difference is generated by a most irreconcilable political difference of class perspective as well as a directly counterposed understanding of the capitalist state.

The civil libertarian classically takes the state as a neutral instrument. Often, he admits that there is a social struggle between classes but argues that the state, particularly the courts, stands above that struggle and mediates it. He sees the most direct ideological expressions of class rule as "extremes" threatening liberal class-neutrality. The abstract rationalism of the civil libertarian has its historic source in the faith of the bourgeoisie in its own state to provide justice. Class-struggle defense, on the other hand, in the words of the early International Labor Defense, "puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts" (*Labor Defender*, January 1927).

Lifting the "justice" of the bourgeois courts from the terrain of social struggle, the civil libertarian represents a worldview that is not merely myopic, but false to the core. The idea of such a class-neutral floating state stands more and more exposed as it is demonstrated that the courts are a weapon in the class struggle. The hotter that struggle gets, the more obvious it is to masses of workers for whom the show of class neutrality is enacted. With cops who break strikes and courts that bring down strikebreaking injunctions and frame up "radical agitators," the myth of the class-neutral state explodes in the fury of the class struggle. Even in more quiescent times, the civil-libertarian edifice is easily shown to be built on sand, its eternal assumptions based upon the most superficial and variable trappings of the state power. Thus within the legalist context, the U.S. Supreme Court—considered by 1960's liberal activists the spearhead of a monumental advance toward democracy and justice—is now the vanguard of bourgeois reaction, attacking and reversing the token gains of the preceding decade. Those who call upon the

capitalist state to "democratize" trade unions, "outlaw" fascists, "protect" minorities, etc. are sowing the most criminally dangerous illusions.

The entire history of the ACLU shows the improbability of civil libertarianism becoming an important force in defense of democratic rights. Either its stated commitment to abstract constitutional "rights" can be used by the bourgeoisie to buttress the status quo or the organization is reduced to playing no role in important historical battles. The leading figures in the ACLU have and have always had, despite occasional protestations to the contrary, broader political loyalties than defending the Bill of Rights. ACLU activists are generally committed to one degree or another to the party of the liberal bourgeoisie, the Democratic Party. That is why when the Bill of Rights comes into conflict with the overwhelming sentiment of the liberal bourgeoisie (e.g., during World War II and the McCarthy period), the civil libertarians of the ACLU violate their purported principles.

It is not merely accidental that an organization like the ACLU is unique to the U.S. And it is not only the U.S.' two-hundred-year constitutional history that explains it. The ACLU is in no small way the product of a political vacuum: the absence of a political working class. Where the working class has a history of independent activity it is the organizations of the proletariat which carry out the struggle for democratic rights. Revolutionary socialists and not civil libertarians are the historically indicated leaders in that struggle.

It is precisely in times of sharp class struggle that the civil libertarian either picks a side or simply absents himself, hoping the bourgeoisie can get things under control again so he can begin again to process all the back-logged cases. Because he has faith in the bourgeoisie's commitment to "democracy," he is unable to take effective action. Fascism as a mass action movement is precisely the product of the bourgeoisie's instability in ruling by "normal" parliamentary means intersecting the proletariat's inability to then seize state power. In such a crisis the civil libertarians play a negligible role. They cannot stop a fascist movement. Only the power of mass working-class organizations can do that. What the civil libertarians are able to do is to provide legal aid for such fascist action groups when they are small and have not yet attracted a mass base, while spreading dangerous illusions that this is the way in which abstract "democracy" is defended. This is what the ACLU is doing today, in the name of legal defense principles.

Class-struggle defense organizations recognize the fascists for what they are and oppose the legal defense of these genocidal terrorist groups, whose sole purpose is to become the reserve thugs of the capitalist class to smash the workers' organizations. The ACLU is not only wrong when it posits a neutral, rational state governing "above the battle" of the class struggle. It is dangerous—all the more so when defending fascists.

Both the civil libertarian and the fascist represent currents of capitalist rule. The former offers the disarming, bloodless and utterly false doctrine of a class-neutral state; the other provides the shock troops for a crisis-ridden class when it can no longer rely on legal parliamentarily sanctioned methods to crush the left, labor and black movements. When the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat meet in final conflict, there will be only a few civil libertarians, and they—along with their more social-democratic friends—will be screaming for a "democracy" of the bourgeoisie. Their most important role will be then as now to offer some protection to bourgeois rule. But unlike today, the proletariat led by its vanguard party will draw the class line, sweep away the entire repressive bourgeois state apparatus and institute workers democracy. ■



# Fraser...

(continued from page 12)

foreman who had provoked the strike, without winning a local contract and without a membership vote on the "settlement." Instead, retaliatory disciplines were handed out to the entire shop committee!

Fraser's backstabbing orders at Indianapolis were entirely in keeping with his previous record. As head of the UAW's skilled trades department, he has played a key role in repressing the union's restive tradesmen. Last year ratification of the contract by skilled workers at Ford was secured only by arbitrarily altering the traditional method of vote-tallying. In 1973, Fraser shoved another sell-out contract down Ford tradesmen's throats after they voted it down once, not even permitting a second vote on the renegotiated agreement.

**Jefferson Ave., Detroit Forge,  
Mack Ave., Dodge Truck**

But Fraser's real glory days came in the hot summer preceding the 1973 negotiations when wildcats exploded in one Detroit Chrysler plant after another. First came the Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant, where two black workers locked themselves in a power cage and shut off the electricity to win removal of a racist supervisor. With many workers defending the sit-down action, management agreed to dismiss the supervisor and grant full amnesty to the strikers. The leaders of the wildcat were carried from the plant on the shoulders of exultant workers. Fraser initially joked about the incident: "This is the first plant hijacking in my experience.... They get an 'A' for ingenuity." But within a few weeks, speaking as head of the union's Chrysler department, he was denouncing the company for "giving in" to the militant strikers!

Next came Detroit Forge on August 8. After months of twelve-hour days and seven-day weeks, and following serious injuries to two workers as a result of horrendous working conditions in the plant, Forge workers wildecatted. Demanding the reinstatement of previously fired workers, settlement of a long backlog of grievances and no reprisals, the strikers elected a strike committee and hired attorneys to fight court injunctions obtained by the company. Fraser again stepped in, ordering the workers back to their jobs pending "negotiations." In the end they won no concessions from management and the International refused to authorize a strike.

Three weeks after the Jefferson sit-down, workers at the Mack Avenue Stamping Plant adopted the same tactic. When a left-wing white worker was fired for participation in an earlier "unauthorized work stoppage," the victimized militant sat down on the line and was joined by several dozen supporters. Chrysler management



UAW pickets during June 1974 walk-out at Dodge Truck plant in Warren.

emptied the plant, and the next day riot-equipped city cops marched in to arrest the protesters. Fraser panicked at the spectre of a "red revolt" in Detroit auto and organized a 1,000-man goon squad of officials from area plants in order to aid the cops in breaking the strike.

Later, in the fall of 1974, another wildcat exploded at the Dodge Truck plant near Detroit. When a left-wing shop steward and several other metal shop workers were fired for allegedly leading a "sick-out," the entire plant walked out in solidarity. During the week-long strike, Dodge Truck workers faced an unholy alliance of union officials, management, cops and judges. When strikers took over the Local 140 hall to hold meetings, the UAW regional director called in 30 squad cars of local police to evict them. And in order to break the mass picket lines, Local officials (with Fraser's backing) called on a local judge who "held court" standing in the back of a Chrysler pickup, ordering the arrest of the strikers with a bullhorn.

Doug Fraser is thus eminently well-prepared to enforce the pro-company contracts, cumbersome grievance procedures and no-strike clauses he and his cohorts have engineered. It is with good reason that auto company executives have warm praise for his "abilities."

## Re-Attiliation with the AFL-CIO

With Fraser's coronation in the bag, one of the few pieces of "other business" which might cause a slight stir at the convention is the question of UAW re-affiliation with George Meany's AFL-CIO. This issue has been batted about Solidarity House for some time and last winter Woodcock and UAW secretary-treasurer Emil Mazey met with Meany and his probable successor, Lane Kirkland, to discuss terms.

While Woodcock, Fraser and a majority of the IEB favor re-affiliation, Mazey adamantly opposes it, claiming that the differences with Meany that caused Reuther to pull the UAW out of the federation in 1968 still exist. Rather than push the issue to a conclusion and possibly provide a political football in the convention elections, the International decided to recommend a special one-day convention on re-affiliation next September. A motion to this effect will be voted on at L.A.

Those bureaucratic forces who oppose rejoining the AFL-CIO do not have a program of militant class struggle counterposed to the reactionary Meanyite brand of pro-capitalist, anti-communist labor fakery. Instead, they are looking for a cheap issue with which to cloak themselves in the mantle of Reutherite "progressives." This is particularly true in the case of the fake-oppositional United National Caucus (UNC). At a meeting called by the UNC in Detroit last week, this moribund reformist conglomeration of out-bureaucrats and social-democratic leftists announced plans to make an issue out of re-affiliation at the convention.

Echoing Mazey's appeal to old-time Reutherism, UNC leader Pete Kelly claimed in an interview with *WV* last week that there were "important differ-

ences" between the UAW and AFL-CIO, although he could not specify what they were. Yet on none of the significant issues facing the labor movement does the UAW stand qualitatively to the left of the AFL-CIO. Meany is a cold-warrior defense budget booster, usually aligned in Congress with the sabre-rattling Democratic "senator from Boeing," Henry Jackson. Woodcock, the Vietnam "dove," lobbies for the B-1 bomber in order to get more defense jobs. Meany is a virulent champion of protectionist import quotas; Woodcock advocates quotas to stem the tide of foreign cars. Although Meany is notoriously insensitive to the needs of blacks and other oppressed minorities, he at least came out weakly for school integration through busing in Boston. UAW leaders, including Fraser, *opposed* the court-ordered Detroit busing plan in 1975.

As the Spartacist League noted at the time of Reuther's break with Meany, this separation reflected nothing more than the minor differences between "liberals" and "moderates" within the framework of Democratic Party politics. A real class-struggle leadership would have remained within the federation to fight Meany's reactionary grip and break the labor movement from the capitalist parties. But Reuther, the former head of the CIO, grew tired of waiting for Meany to die so that he could take over the federation, and pulled out in order to gain more freedom to maneuver with his own operation. The fraudulence of Reuther's claim to be a "progressive" alternative to Meany was quickly shown by his hook-up with Frank Fitzsimmons and the Teamsters in the ill-fated "Alliance for Labor Action."

Without the forging of a class-struggle leadership in the labor movement, unity between the UAW and AFL-CIO will mean little. But in the absence of new restrictions on democratic rights or a lowering of the class struggle as a result of the merger, Marxists support the maximum degree of labor unity. We support the UAW's re-affiliation with the AFL-CIO, not least in order to expose the myth of Reutherite "progressivism."

## Detend Victimized Militants!

One of the issues which should provide a basis for militant opposition to the Woodcock/Fraser policies is defense of a long list of victimized UAW members. Harassed and fired by the companies, union militants are often abandoned by the International and local UAW bureaucracies. Currently prominent are the cases of Detroit-area dissidents Steve Smith and Jordan Sims. Smith, a prominent supporter of Autoworkers United to Fight (AWUF), was the leader of the Dodge Truck strikers, and his NLRB case for reinstatement was recently turned down by the Labor Board. Sims, co-chairman of the UNC and a sometime critic of Woodcock, was fired from Eldon Gear and Axle Plant and later ousted by the International from the presidency of Local 961 on flimsy charges.

In an anti-union action which gives the bureaucracy ammunition to use

against oppositionists, Smith took the UAW as well as the company to court. Sims appealed his case to the union's Public Review Board (PRB)—a panel of professors, clergymen and other "impartial outsiders"—which predictably upheld the International and barred Sims from holding or running for any union office. Appealing to the capitalist courts against the union is an indefensible anti-labor action; the PRB, on the other hand, is a hand-picked servant of the bureaucracy whose "impartiality" is a fraud, which cuts off the right of appeal to the UAW convention and whose very existence is a step away from membership control of the union and should be abolished. Nevertheless, both Sims and Smith should be defended against the machinations of the International.

Another, particularly egregious, case of company/union victimization of militants is that of ten members of Local 15 who were fired last summer after a walkout at GM's Fleetwood plant in Detroit. The strike had been called by the shop committee to defend Local president Rufus Coleman and the shop chairman from company discipline. But after having initiated the walkout, the Local 15 officers panicked under International pressure and helped break the strike, leaving ten fired and over 400 penalized. The newspaper of the International Socialists (I.S.), *Workers' Power*, a longtime supporter of the UNC, recently announced that two of the fired workers have been elected convention delegate. It failed to mention, however, that the selfsame Coleman who helped sabotage the strike in his defense was formerly touted by the I.S.

## For a Class-Struggle Opposition

The UAW tops should have no trouble dealing with tame "oppositionists" of the UNC stripe. Aside from opposing re-affiliation, its other main gimmick at present is a call to elect the UAW president by referendum vote. The experience of unions such as the United Steelworkers which already have referendum election procedures demonstrates that this supposed cure-all for bureaucratism has the *opposite* effect, increasing the power of the incumbent leadership which alone is in a position to reach the entire membership as atomized individuals. In any case, the phony democratism of the UNC is exposed by its support for the patently anti-

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157

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democratic, craft-unionist, splitting position of giving skilled workers a veto over UAW contracts.

None of the other reformist "opposition" currents in the union can be expected to provide anything better. The Maoist October League (OL) is planning an anti-leadership demonstration on the opening day of the convention. But the OL's current "left turn" in trade-union work, after a consistent history of supporting every bureaucrat on the make, is more rhetorical than real. Its bootlicking loyalty to every twist and turn of the Peking line prevents the OL from breaking with Stalinist reformism. In addition, the Maoists' vicious anti-Sovietism foreshadows a new round of betrayals and drives them ever closer to the anti-communist bureaucrats who run the American labor movement.

The Revolutionary Communist Party-backed "Auto Workers United to Fight," which claims to have had a few delegates elected, combines mindless "unite and fight" rhetoric with New Leftist "jam the unions" adventurism. The more staid "Auto Workers Action Caucus," supported by the pro-Moscow Communist Party, lamely supported Woodcock at the last convention and may well cast their vote or two for Fraser at this one. The Solidarity House crew will have little difficulty dealing with these fake-radicals whose programs serve only to divert the rank and file.

But the International cannot make the discontent among the ranks disappear with a wave of the wand and appointment of a new president. There have been a large number of local contracts rejected since last fall's national bargaining, causing about one local strike every two weeks. Before the International stepped in, the Indianapolis and Fremont strikes showed the willingness of the membership to fight when given the slightest opening. Emerging from a cautious mood induced by the huge layoffs of 1974-75, the historically militant UAW ranks will not forever endure the speed-up, overtime and harassment which are making life in the plants reminiscent of pre-union sweatshop days of the 1930's.

Some of the resolutions submitted to this convention point a way out of the union's current impasse. Motions sponsored by the Committee for a Militant UAW (CMUAW) of Local 1364 repudiate the class collaboration of the Reutherite regime; demand the unlimited right to strike over all grievances without International authorization, and advocate an industry-wide strike for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, to make jobs for all. They also oppose union-busting preferential hiring and firing schemes, instead demanding union action to fight racial and sexual discrimination, through strikes for more jobs, union control of hiring and upgrading, and company-paid maternity benefits and 24-hour child care. Finally, the CMUAW resolutions demand a break with the capitalist parties in order to form a workers party, to fight for a workers government.

From Local 6 in Chicago come several resolutions, initiated by the Labor Struggle Caucus, demanding an end to government intervention in the unions; calling for international working-class solidarity against protectionism, for full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers, and for union defense guards against racist terror. One Local 6 resolution calls for the UAW to put teeth into its occasional paper support for anti-apartheid protests by undertaking solidarity actions, including strikes, to force the more than 70 U.S. corporations with UAW contracts who have operations in South Africa to recognize unions of their black and mixed-race employees there.

The class-struggle program outlined by these motions is a foundation on which UAW militants can and must build. Unfortunately, there is little chance that such resolutions will even be considered at this bureaucratically run convention. The membership will only be given a real choice when an industry-wide class-struggle opposition is constructed in the UAW. This awaits the linking up of authoritative militant caucuses in key locals, tested by their ability to respond to and provide leadership in the class battles which lie ahead. ■

## Elizabeth Gurley Flynn...

(continued from page 7)

imperialist war (dictated by the exigencies of Russian foreign policy following the 1939 Stalin-Hitler pact) briefly broke the bloc and deprived the Stalinists of any usefulness for the liberals. Flynn dutifully did her share, with social-patriotic appeals such as "American Mothers: Keep Our Boys Out of Imperialism's War."

But after Hitler's invasion of the USSR, the CP hastened to ingratiate itself once more with the "democratic" bourgeoisie as it broke strikes and signed no-strike pledges on behalf of the "anti-fascist" popular front.

The CP's 1939-40 antiwar line caused a fissure in the popular-front alliance, which in the post-war period gave way to an avalanche of anti-Communist hysteria. It was this first rupture which formed the context of the 1940 Flynn expulsion. Flynn's trial was an important "loyalty oath" by the self-styled democrats of the ACLU, placing the organization in the forefront of war hysteria.

Many of the issues associated with the "cold war" witchhunts are foreshadowed in this 1940 hearing. It is one of the self-serving myths of liberalism that the post-war witchhunt was the product of Joe McCarthy. In fact, it was more a liberal invention. Ironically, even before the Americans for Democratic Action started its "housecleaning," before Harry Truman instituted loyalty oaths for government employment, it was the ACLU—the self-proclaimed guardian of the individual's right to hold unpopular opinions—which set the tone, style and political content of McCarthyism: guilt by association.

In this small dramatic scene are found some of the stock characters associated with the later witchhunts. There is Martin Dies of the infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities making a tacit agreement with ACLU co-counsel Arthur Garfield Hays; and Morris Ernst, the ACLU board member who was J. Edgar Hoover's personal attorney. There are the anti-Communist liberals trying to sanitize their organization "by any means necessary"—an anti-Communist "housecleaning" in exchange for which the big-time witchhunters agreed to exempt the ACLU from their tender mercies. And there is the CP victim, sometimes courageous, betrayed by liberal "friends," isolated from labor support in part by the class collaborationism of Stalinism.

## PDC Protests Witchhunt Conviction of West German Anarchists

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt  
Bonn, West Germany

The two-year show trial proceedings against the Red Army Faction (which the bourgeois media call the "Baader-Meinhof gang") is over, but the reactionary vendetta in West Germany continues. The capitalist kangaroo court has sentenced Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe to life imprisonment, having previously sent two of their comrades (Ulrike Meinhof and Holger Meins) to martyrs' deaths.

The defendants are accused of attacking symbols of murderous imperialism, which is no crime in the eyes of the working class. On the contrary: it is your witchhunting government with its vicious attacks on the most basic democratic rights of the defendants, its nationwide blacklisting of radicals, its harboring of Nazi war criminals, which stands convicted as the real terrorists.

We demand that all charges against Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe and the other victims of West Germany's bourgeois class terror be dropped and that they be freed immediately.

Partisan Defense Committee  
Box 633, Canal Street Station  
New York City, NY 10013

Much of Flynn's testimony (eventually published in book form by Corliss Lamont, an ACLU board member present at the hearing) was indeed courageous, but some was downright slippery. She forthrightly refused to deny or downplay her CP membership, but some of her rather disingenuous statements are reminiscent of much of the testimony at the subsequent "cold war" witchhunts—with the important difference that those who recanted or equivocated under the hammer blows of the McCarthyite repression were facing imminent personal tragedy: loss of their jobs, persecution of their families, the vague threat of legal proceedings. At the ACLU hearing in 1940, Flynn was facing nothing worse than the loss of her ACLU membership. Perhaps it was her years of practice in Stalinist front-groupism which induced exchanges such as the following:

"Mr. Hays: Has the [Communist] Party here ever rejected any policy which has been determined by the Third International?"

"Miss Flynn: I would have to look that up. I have only been a member of the Communist Party for three years."

"Mr. Hays: Has it, in the last three years?"

"Miss Flynn: I don't know that, either...."

"Mr. Hays: I want to know to what extent members of the Communist Party are subject to orders by the Communist Party."

"Miss Flynn: Well, do you want me to tell you from my experience?"

"Mr. Hays: Yes, surely."

"Miss Flynn: As a member?"

"Mr. Hays: Yes."

"Miss Flynn: I have yet to receive any order from the Communist Party."

In the trial are paraded the viciousness of the liberal red-baiters and the helplessness of the Stalinists, under attack from the liberals whose "democratic" pretensions they have buttressed for years. Years of peddling Stalinism as some kind of linear extension of bourgeois democracy and the "Bill of Rights" had left Flynn in an unenviable position before her ACLU prosecutors. Stalinist sectarian defense work and front-groupist manipulations had eroded and destroyed the united-front defense traditions of the 1920's, leaving little to counterpose to ACLU-style libertarianism.

The only effective reply Flynn could muster was her demonstration that she was a more consistent liberal and civil-libertarian than the majority of the ACLU board:

"Communists have been among the most loyal and devoted defenders of civil liberties in America, as were our predecessors, the left-wing groups of the old Socialist Party and the I.W.W. The records of the A.C.L.U. abound with

our names, as those who were arrested, beaten, jailed, tried, and served sentences for free speech, free press and free assembly."

"Is there any member of this Board whose record as a consistent militant fighter for these rights can outweigh the records of Wm. Z. Foster and myself, since the free speech fight in Spokane, Wash., in 1910, which was not our first arrests? Has any of this Board a better record against war-time invasion of civil liberties and their defense for 20 years than Earl Browder? How often has Mrs. Bromley, Mr. Riis, or Mr. Rice been in jail for free speech?"

"Is this Board to retain its original character, where all the groups engaged in struggle were represented from Christian Pacifist to I.W.W. and Irish Republican or is it to be 'above the battle,' detached observers, subscribing to abstract civil liberties, graciously willing to defend the bold bad reds, but not to associate with them?"

But as the ACLU—always a weather-vane of liberal public opinion—rushed to disavow the taint of "Commie" connections, no defense could protect her. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Changing of the Guard at UAW Convention

# Doug Fraser's Record of Broken Strikes

**Jefferson Ave.,  
Detroit Forge,  
Mack Ave.,  
Dodge Truck...**



UAW president-to-be Douglas Fraser talking to workers outside Chrysler's Lynch Road Forge after he broke five-day wildcat at the plant in August 1973.

The 25th Constitutional Convention of the United Auto Workers (UAW), being held in Los Angeles May 15-20, is billed as a giant celebration of the changing of the guard at Solidarity House. Leonard Woodcock is retiring after seven years at the UAW helm and will be succeeded by the unanimous choice of the International Executive Board (IEB), Doug Fraser. Their man, says the Administration Caucus, has a record of proven experience. Doug Fraser has a record, alright, and plenty of experience... in negotiating speed-up contracts, accepting massive layoffs, victimizing union militants and breaking hard-fought strikes.

Like Woodcock, Fraser is a longtime member of the bureaucratic "team" installed by former UAW president Walter Reuther which has run the union with an iron hand for the last 30 years. So while the "socially concerned" leaders are patting themselves on the back, it is a sure bet that the real problems of the 1.4 million-strong UAW membership will be swept under the rug. The grueling overtime facing auto production workers; the escalating management abuse of union representatives; the 300,000 UAW membership loss over the last five years, and the problems of organizing "runaway" shops in the South—not to mention vital tasks of international labor solidarity—have all been ruled "out of order."

Just to make sure that any dissidents present have little opportunity to be heard, the convention's agenda has been packed with a list of bourgeois politicians and assorted luminaries even more wearisome than normal. The first three days of the confab are solidly filled with speechmaking, much of it testimonials by prominent Democrats to Woodcock's four decades of class collaboration as a UAW bureaucrat. Jimmy Carter, having just authored an energy program that threatens thousands of auto workers' jobs, will be on hand to thank the International officialdom for their early support in last year's election, and may announce the much-rumored appointment of Woodcock as U.S. envoy to Peking.

Teddy Kennedy and U.S. solicitor general Wade McCree are scheduled, as is Jerry Brown, California's "tighten your belt" governor, and L.A.'s mayor and long-time cop, Tom Bradley. Coretta King has been invited to add a civil rights touch. Although her husband was assassinated while supporting striking Memphis garbage men, she will probably avoid mention of the recent Atlanta sanitation strike which Martin Luther King, Sr., helped crush.

Those delegates still awake by the fourth day will finally get around to the main "business" of the convention: election of Fraser as next UAW president, and reelecting all the incumbent International officers. Only after the

baton has been passed will the floor be open for "other business," but this will amount to nothing more than a few perfunctory resolutions reported out by stacked committees. All issues dealing with working conditions, contracts, etc., will be put off to the 1979 special bargaining convention.

### A Man With a Record

As Woodcock steps down amid choruses of praise from the companies for his "labor statesmanship," the big business press is already lauding the "achievements" and "responsible leadership" of Doug Fraser. Achievements for the Big Three or those whose labor they exploit? Responsibility to the bosses or the workers? Let's take a look at his record.

Fraser's roots in the union go back to the turbulent 1930's. Born in Scotland, he was the son of a union activist who became a Norman Thomas socialist after immigrating to the U.S. Both Doug Fraser and his father were involved in the early attempts to organize a union in auto. After the 1938 sit-down strike at Chrysler's Desoto plant (which his father helped lead), Fraser rose quickly in the UAW, becoming president of Local 227 at the age of 25.

Like many auto militants of that period, Fraser flirted with left-wing politics in the 1940's. But after becoming

an International representative, his interests turned to the "stabilization" of the union which Walter Reuther was imposing after taking office in 1946. Working closely with Reuther in the 104-day strike against Chrysler in 1950, Fraser became his administrative assistant for the next nine years. He then became a regional co-director and finally vice president.

When Reuther was killed in a plane crash in 1970, Fraser came within one vote on the IEB of capturing the presidency, but lost out to Woodcock. Biding his time, Fraser administered his union departments and the Michigan unit of the UAW's political arm, the Community Action Program, with the cardinal aim of proving his dependability to run the union in the service of the corporations and their parties.

Fraser does bring to office extensive experience in one crucial area: breaking strikes. The latest item in his record was entered just a few weeks ago when he flew into Indianapolis to order 3,200 wildcatting workers at a Chrysler electrical equipment plant back to their jobs. This left 23 officers of Local 1226 fired and 44 militants saddled with 15- to 30-day disciplinary layoffs. Two days later, International representatives convinced Local 1364 leaders at the Fremont, California General Motors plant to end a four-day walkout without obtaining the removal of an abusive

*continued on page 10*