

## Peru General Strike Rocks "Progressive" Junta

**Free the 1,000  
Strikers!**

**Cancel the  
Imperialist Debt!**

Mass discontent is still seething in Peru although newspapers report that the country has "returned to near normality" after being paralyzed by a 48-hour general strike May 22-23. The strike was termed "95 percent effective" by observers and brought Lima to a standstill by blockading all access to roads to the capital. The military government had declared the strike illegal in advance, its brutal repression resulting in at least 31 dead, scores of persons injured and more than a thousand in jail.

The two-day work stoppage topped a wave of popular protest that spread through the Andean country following the government's announcement of price rises of 50-120 percent on basic necessities (notably food) and gasoline. The decree was issued after the imperialist banks and governments who hold Peru's huge (\$5.5 billion) foreign debt refused to renegotiate loans until the government imposed drastic austerity measures ordered by the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF). In response, the strike action was called by the Communist-led General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP), with the support of the other main labor federations (the Christian Democratic CNT, the CTP of the APRA party and the CTRP, formerly pro-government), as well as of the National Agrarian Confederation (CNA) and several independent trade unions.

While the CGTP leadership meant the strike to be no more than a "warning" and carefully circumscribed its duration, the strike movement exceeded the limits imposed on it by its bureaucratic leaders. Particularly in the traditionally militant south, Peru had been wracked by bloody riots, demonstrations and strikes for over a week before the official general strike was called. In Arequipa, Peru's second largest city, a general strike already in its tenth day continued after the CGTP called a halt to its official protest.

Events in Peru in the last weeks are another expression of the rise in working-class struggle in Latin America after a period in which military regimes of both the right and "left" have suppressed independent political activity. Last September Colombian workers carried out a national work stoppage against austerity measures; in October/November tens of thousands of state employees struck against the blood-soaked Argentine junta; even in Chile 2,000 courageous May Day demonstrators faced arrest by Pinochet's Gestapo, while auto workers in Brazil have



Pedro Martinelli/Veja

**Police tear gas workers demonstrating against austerity measures in Lima.**

launched the first major strike in 14 years.

In Peru, the bottled-up anger of the working masses could not be contained despite the fact that President Francisco Morales Bermúdez placed the country under a state of emergency May 20 and began a systematic round-up of more than 100 prominent leftists and labor leaders. Twenty-one magazines and newspapers were prohibited as constitutional rights were suspended. Moreover, all major cities were patrolled by the military, whose commanders had orders to "protect" public services, suppress strikes and demonstrations and maintain food supplies. But the protests continued to escalate, culminating in the most effective and violent general strike since the military seized power ten years ago.

During the more than a week of protests against the government's anti-working-class "austerity" decree at least 39 people were killed, according to official reports. In clashes at various points in Lima and other major cities government troops wounded hundreds. Several were killed in the mountain town of Huancavelica, where hundreds of strikers destroyed police stations,

dynamited bridges and burned railway cars. Ten more were cut down by machine gun fire in what the press called "mob attacks on police stations" in the interior town of Huanuco and the coastal town of Chepen. Earlier, a truckload of policemen died when they plunged into an abyss while trying to avoid a barricade erected by an angry crowd outside Lima.

In the capital itself traffic came to a halt as residents of outlying slum

districts littered roads with huge boulders. Three banks were burned out and looted and a glue factory put to the torch; cars of people attempting to go to work were stoned and burned. The Goodyear tire factory and the army's central commissary were attacked by large crowds. In addition a general, a colonel and six other army officials were killed when their helicopter crashed into a hillside while inspecting riot zones.

On the eve of the general strike General Morales Bermúdez denounced it as the work of an unholy alliance of extreme leftists wanting to foment "popular struggle which would mean chaos in the life of our fatherland" and rightists desiring to install a "capitalist totalitarianism." What is true is that the military government has become extremely unpopular with broad sectors of the masses due to its imperialist-ordered starvation economic policies and the strongarm repression by Interior Minister General Luis Cisneros. In its attempts to blame the unprecedented scope of the unrest on the work of a few "outside agitators" the government deported 13 of its leading opponents, including two former ministers under Juan Velasco Alvarado, who was forced out as president by his fellow generals in August 1975.

The group was expelled to Argentina where they are being held at a garrison of the Third Army, headquartered in Córdoba. Among those deported are Vice-Admirals José Arce Largo and Guillermo Faura Gaig, who were candidates of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR) in the elections for a phony "constituent assembly" scheduled for June 18. The PSR is the bourgeois populist party of supporters of the "leftist" line of the military government under Velasco Alvarado. Other prominent *velasquistas* being sought under deportation orders include General Leonidas Rodríguez Figueroa, the top leader of the PSR, General Arturo Valdés Palacio and Major José Fernández Salvatecci. Many of them had just returned from exile in mid-April to participate in the aborted election campaign.

In addition to the ex-military officers the deportees include the leader of the pro-PSR peasant federation, three candidates of the Workers, Peasants,

*continued on page 10*

**Fascists on Streets  
of Britain**

**Workers Must  
Crush National  
Front!**

**see page 6**





**Free Johnny Harris!**

# Smash Alabama Death Row!

The murder machinery of the capitalist state is being geared up again to claim another victim. Although there are presently 490 men and women on death row nationwide, since the sensationalized execution of Gary Gilmore in January 1977 there have been no further killings. Now there is pressure to murder again, but this time the state is having more difficulty. By peddling a sick personality and glorifying Gilmore's death wish, it obscured the enormity of what happened that early winter morning in Utah—the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie asserted its "right" to murder, executing a man not "by accident" in the streets of the nation's ghettos, or in the heat of a prison riot, but openly and with the sanction of the courts.

Johnny Harris (Imani), a black inmate of the infamous Atmore Prison Farm in Alabama, is in danger of being the next victim to be butchered. But unlike Gilmore, Harris is desperate to live. A prison activist, his courageous struggle to expose the filthy hellhole of Atmore and stand up for his and other prisoners' rights make him a far more disturbing figure to the bourgeoisie. Thus the mass media have given him scant attention. The Soviet news agency Tass has publicized the case internationally and was largely responsible for turning the spotlight on Harris' plight. (Of course, its use of Harris to expose the hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism's "human rights" rhetoric is in large part an attempt to distract attention from the Kremlin's own persecution of "dissidents" in the USSR).

Harris was scheduled to die in the electric chair on March 10, condemned to death for allegedly killing a prison guard in a state-engineered riot in 1974. He was given a 60-day stay of execution, which expired May 9. Now the Alabama supreme court says another date must be formally set, and his fate hangs in the balance as his lawyers are fighting to get his original conviction to life imprisonment overturned (under Alabama law, the death penalty applies to murder committed only after a prisoner is

already serving a life sentence). The Alabama court has just ruled that it will await the outcome of this appeal before sentencing him to death again.

Harris is a member of Inmates for Action (I-A), a prisoner rights group sparked by the 1971 Attica rebellion. The I-A at Atmore organized to demand that prisoners be accorded basic necessities such as proper medical care, decent food, improved visiting and correspondence privileges, a minimum wage with the right to join a union and other demands. As they organized work stoppages to win their demands, prison authorities upped the harassment of I-A leaders, viciously beating organizers. After one leader was beaten, Atmore inmates seized the segregation block, took two guards as hostages and demanded that they be allowed to air their grievances to the news media.

As at Attica, an all-out assault was then launched by state and prison officials against the inmates, leaving one guard dead and several inmates wounded. Forty-five inmates were indicted for taking hostages and for the guard's murder; later the number was reduced to nine, who became known as the Atmore-Holman Brothers. Johnny Harris was one of these nine indicted inmates. Although the prosecution had no direct evidence linking him to the guard's death, the all-white jury convicted him on the prosecution's advice that if he had participated at all in the riot, he could be considered guilty.

That Harris' life is in danger even if the death sentence is overturned is revealed by the bloody fates of his fellow I-A activists inside Atmore:

- Jessie Clanzey—Bloodily beaten by guards who left him for dead while crowing to other I-Aers, "We'll kill you revolutionary niggers the way we killed him." Clanzey survived.

- George Dohhins (Chagina)—I-A chairman, wounded by guards during the Attica-style assault upon protesting inmates. Dead on arrival at Mohle General Hospital with nine head wounds such as would be produced by an ax blow, any one of which would



Sloan/Newsweek

## Death row

have been fatal

- Tommy Dotson (Yukeena)—Skull crushed in a beating by four guards while being led to the showers nude and handcuffed. Stabbed; guard also fatally stabbed during melee. Four prisoners were indicted for the guard's death although all were in lockup at the time. Dotson's name headed a "death list" of I-Aers found on the warden's desk by a trusty.

- Frank X. Moore—Never came to trial as an Atmore-Holman Brother; found hanged by a sheet in his cell. A private photographer hired by Moore's family to take shots of the body found bruises and rope burns on his chest, ankles and neck as well as a large gash in his back and severely skinned knuckles.

Johnny Harris must not remain in prison, even if the death sentence is overturned. As a prison activist railroaded for the death of a guard, Harris is a living target for revenge by his jailers and risks the bloody fate of the other I-A leaders. We demand immediate freedom for Johnny Harris!

Even now Harris is courageously continuing to publicize the inhuman conditions faced by prisoners at Atmore, detailing his charges in a letter printed in the 17 May issue of the *Guardian*. Among the atrocities listed by Harris:

"Contact visits were taken away from death row inmates. Yet, they give no justifiable reason and we are the only inmates in the entire penal system to which this policy has been put....

"For no justifiable reason death row inmates have been stopped from purchasing many nutritional items from the prison canteen, and, at the same time, the prison administration has stopped us from receiving packages from our families.

"Death row inmates are not allowed access to the prison library.

"Death row inmates are subjected daily to acts of harassment by the guards such as threats of beatings, macing and physical abuse because inmates file legal actions. Water is cut off with no warning whatsoever. Our mail consistently 'gets misplaced' and our legal mail is opened outside our presence; these are just to name a few.

"The food served to death row inmates by the guards is handled in an unsanitary manner and consistently contains dirt and hair.

"Our toilets are a 6 inch (diameter) pipe encased in rough concrete blocks which

cannot be properly cleaned or disinfected.

"All our pleas to the prison officials here have resulted in no reply in any way. The maltreatment of death row inmates is comparable to medieval times. Further, these acts have been carried out maliciously."

Another inmate of Atmore prison, "Scottsboro Boy" Haywood Patterson, once described Atmore as "the South-ernmost part of Hell...like in the olden days, they feed a man enough to keep him alive and work him all day." (Today's "new South" looks just like that of Patterson's day around Atmore: the prisoners are forced to work from dawn to dusk cutting sugar cane in the plantation outside the prison for only 25 cents a week!)

Such barbaric conditions are not unique to Atmore—or to the South, for that matter. In prisons throughout the nation, overcrowding is hideous, as thousands of prisoners are packed into tiny cells meant for half their number, without adequate food, money, or activity, at the mercy of corrupt, often sadistic prison guards.

## Racism—New South Style

Harris' lawyers are hazing their attempt to overturn his original conviction to life imprisonment on the fact that

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## West Germany Demands Extradition of RAF

The West German government announced on May 29 that Yugoslavia has captured and is holding four alleged West German terrorists. They are: Brigitte Mohnhaupt, allegedly linked to the Moro kidnapping; Rolf-Clemens Wagner, suspected of involvement in the kidnapping and killing of ex-Nazi industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer; Peter Boock, the husband of a woman jailed in Austria for bank robbery; and Sieglinde Gutrun Hoffman, described only as a friend of another alleged guerrilla arrested at Orly Airport two weeks ago.

The West German state is demanding their extradition from Yugoslavia on the basis that they are "suspects" in a wide range of terrorist attacks. All had been on the West German most-wanted list of suspected terrorists connected with the Red Army Faction (commonly referred to in the bourgeois press as the "Baader-Meinhof Gang").

We demand that Yugoslavia free the four and refuse any deal with the imperialist West German state. No matter how misguided, foolhardy and counterproductive the terrorist tactics of the Red Army Faction, the acts of which these individuals are accused were aimed at the class enemy and are not crimes against the working people. Further, the high incidence of deaths under extremely suspicious circumstances of RAF members imprisoned in West Germany makes it clear that their lives are in danger if they are extradited.

No extradition! Freedom for the RAF and all left prisoners! Down with the "anti-terrorist" witchhunt!



Johnny Harris

Ware/New York Times



## Cancel the Debt Service—Strike Against MAC and EFCB!

# Albany Votes Banks to Run NYC

Last week state legislators in Albany voted to extend the life of the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB) with its veto power over all city labor contracts and budgets—for the next "19 to 30" years. Even those contracts decided by arbitration must remain within the proscribed guidelines. Thus until the year 2008, at least, the city of New York is to remain under the direct rule of the bankers and Wall Street trusts. After the Albany vote, the City Council immediately rubber-stamped the proposal, agreeing to gut parliamentary democracy in the nation's largest city.

As a sop to the municipal union bureaucracy which will have trouble selling the proposal to labor's ranks—the legislators added a "sunset clause" stipulating the phasing out of some of the EFCB's power if and when the "budget is balanced," i.e., never. Thus the banks—which created the "fiscal crisis" in the first place when in 1975 they secretly dumped \$2.3 billion worth of city bonds on the market, then

"hailed out" the city with new, higher-interest loans directly tied to tax revenues, in return for the draconian program of wage cutting, job slashing and service cutbacks—would continue on into the next century with this program.

For the criminal conspiracy to hold up, loot and rob the citizenry of New York we indict Carter, the U.S. Senate whose banking committees demanded the action, the bankers, the trusts, the "law and order liberals" Koch and Carey. But most of all those to be held accountable are the city labor bureaucrats who sold out labor's fundamental right to collective bargaining *without a fight*. Labor must bold the Shakers and Gotbaums responsible for their refusal to fight the loss of 60,000 city workers' jobs; for the grinding wage freeze, the tearing up of city contracts; for the closing of hospitals, schools, fire stations, day care centers; the increase of transit fares; and the incalculable hardships inflicted upon the population of New York City.



Mayor Koch

Tannenbaum

Perhaps it is fitting that it is here in the finance capital of New York City that the naked rule of the banks and the trusts should be so starkly exposed. In the burned-out tenements of the South Bronx where the minority population exists in squalor, their children preyed upon by the rats and wild dog packs; where hundreds of thousands of working people subsist on below-legal wages, on the brink of lumpenism; where walking the street or riding the subways at night can be taking one's life in one's hands—it is here one sees most starkly

the political and social decay of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism.

It is here also that each daily question raises the need for socialist revolution. The union bureaucrats, having mortgaged \$3.8 billion in union pension funds to the city, now meekly go along with Wall Street's program for a bank dictatorship in NYC hoping to get their money back. Instead we say: Don't Pay the Banks—on whose loans, the interest



DC 37 president Gotbaum

WV Photo

payments alone constitute the single biggest chunk of the city's budget (17 percent). The powerful transit workers should go out and lead a strike of all city labor to smash the EFCB. ■

## CP Detours Esmeralda Demo

# Longshoremen: Don't Load Junta Napalm



WV Photo

Militants demand labor boycott of military goods to Pinochet junta, no popular front illusions.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 20—Protesting the presence in the U.S. of the Chilean prison ship *Esmeralda*, about 300 people demonstrated today at Pier 45 near Fisherman's Wharf. In a blatant provocation to the entire labor movement, the ship, used as a floating torture chamber during and after the 1973 coup, was invited to dock at Treasure Island naval base in the S.F. harbor and participate in U.S. Armed Forces Week.

Called by the Ad Hoc Committee to Stop the *Esmeralda*—a coalition dominated by the Communist Party (CP) and Non-Intervention in Chile (NICH), the demonstration was a pathetic display of impotent liberal moralizing. Thus rally speakers directed appeals for "human decency" to U.S. imperialist

commander-in-chief Jimmy Carter "not to allow the *Esmeralda* to dock anywhere in the U.S." (This demand was repudiated in advance when the Carter administration invited the ship to dock in the first place!) In the name of "human rights" the rally's central theme was a call to boycott everything Chilean, including the absurd demand for everyone to withdraw money from banks doing business with the Pinochet junta.

Pier 45 is no more than a stone's throw away from the Local 10 hiring hall of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), a union publicly on record for a boycott of Chilean shipping. Yet the protest leaders scrupulously avoided calling on the longshoremen to hot-cargo Chilean goods for the duration of

the *Esmeralda's* stay on the West Coast. Such a call had been made earlier in the week by the "Longshore Militant," a class-struggle opposition newsletter put out by Stan Gow and Howard Keylor in Local 10.

Speaking at the rally Archie Brown, former CP dockworkers' leader, mentioned that there was military cargo (napalm tanks) bound for Chile sitting on the docks waiting to be loaded. If President Carter could not be persuaded to stop its delivery, he said, dock workers might have to take action. Despite efforts of the "Longshore Militant" group to achieve united-front action on a motion to do just that, CP supporters in Local 10 spurned any effort to put Brown's words into practice. Later that week at a Local 10 executive board meeting, it was the "Longshore Militant" supporters who put forward a motion to refuse to handle the war materiel, which is to cause the grisly death of Chilean workers.

Meanwhile, at Treasure Island, where the *Esmeralda* was open to public inspection, about 20 people attempted to stage a protest aboard the ship. Scuffles broke out and many demonstrators were pushed to the deck, kicked and bruised, including a few television cameramen and reporters who, unaccustomed to such brutality, indignantly protested the foul treatment at the hands of a "foreign navy." No arrests were made.

With banners reading "Stop the *Esmeralda*, Smash the Junta Through Proletarian Revolution" and "No Popular Front Illusions," Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL) supporters at the rally sharply counterposed a revolutionary program for Chile to the liberal appeals of the CP/NICH-dominated coalition. Over 50 copies of *Workers Vanguard* and more than a dozen *Cuadernos Marxistas* on "Chile: Lessons of the Popular Front" were sold.

Once again at the rally the Stalinists counterposed the demand for impotent consumer boycotts to the need for militant labor action. This has been their policy since the 1973 Pinochet coup, most pathetically demonstrated in

the CP's 1974 "candlelight vigil" to protest the junta's bloody repression. While these fickle "friends of Chile" have sabotaged every concrete attempt for aid to the Chilean masses, the SL and its supporters have consistently fought to mobilize the social power of the U.S. proletariat in real solidarity action. Thus in September 1974 CP supporters in the ILWU blocked with the union bureaucrats in trying to sidetrack an ILWU resolution to hot-cargo Chilean goods during a two-day worldwide protest. It was the predecessors of the "Longshore/Warehouse Militant" group and their fight for a united-front implementation committee which made the boycott a success.

The May 20 rally proved again that the Stalinists' real strategy is not simply acting out hollow gestures of moral outrage, impotent consumer boycotts, "candlelight vigils"—or even appealing for "non-intervention in Chile." Their real program is reliance on the U.S. bourgeoisie, which helped to install the Pinochet junta in the first place—the call for "intervention" by U.S. imperialist chief Jimmy Carter! ■

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## Labor Reform Bill Follies

In a speech to the AFL-CIO leadership earlier this month on the Labor Law Reform Bill (S2467) now being considered by the U.S. Senate, George Meany declared: "I am sure you will agree that nothing is more important to the labor movement at this point in history. Nothing."

While the trade-union leadership mobilized a small army of lobbyists and letter writers under the aegis of Americans for Justice on the Job, headed by Hubert Humphrey's widow, Senator Muriel Humphrey, conservative politicians and businessmen launched their own counterattack. Business Roundtable, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Right to Work Committee are all opposing the bill. In the Senate, the bill's opponents are currently conducting a filibuster and if that fails, as is likely, they will attempt to cripple the bill through numerous amendments.

Despite the frenzied assertions of both partisans and opponents of the bill, its passage will not enroll tens of thousands of unorganized workers in trade unions. Passage of the bill would not be a victory for the labor movement. Its function, rather, is to strengthen the role of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) as an arbiter between labor and capital. The legislation, like a similar bill already passed by the House, does provide the NLRB with a few more, generally modest, remedies to apply against recalcitrant employers. However, these same remedies are also made available for use against the unions as well, and the bill provides broadened grounds for the use of court injunctions against wildcat strikes.

### What's in the Bill

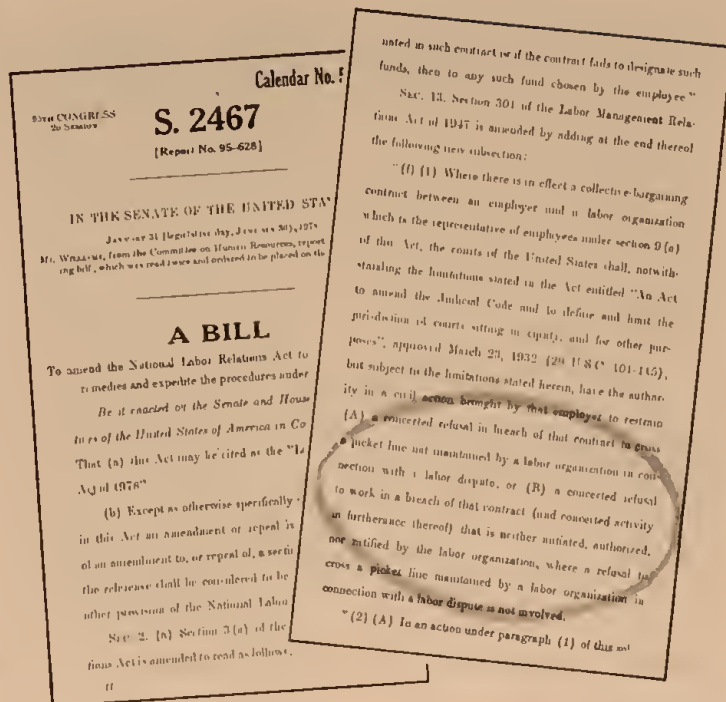
The bill itself is already a significantly watered-down version of the labor bureaucracy's legislative program to clear away obstacles that bar organizing the unorganized. Strikingly absent from S2467 is the repeal of Section 14b of Taft-Hartley. Section 14b, which permits states to pass so-called "right to work" laws outlawing the union shop, has long been cited by the AFL-CIO leadership as the key obstacle to organizing the South. Instead, the bill provides for such remedies as "equal access" for union representatives during organizing drives; sets specific timetables for holding representation elec-

tions; provides increased compensation to employees for work lost as a result of unfair labor practices by an employer during an organizing drive or before a first contract is signed, enables the Board to issue an order adjusting wages upward in instances where the company has unlawfully refused to bargain on a first contract; provides wider latitude for restraining injunctions against such practices; and mandates the Secretary of Labor to "debar" persistent violators from receiving federal contracts for up to three years.

But despite the stiffened penalties, the Board's orders are still subject to review by the courts, and it is the time-consuming delays brought about by extensive court litigation that intransigent employers have utilized over and over to quash organizing drives conducted under the auspices of the NLRB. The debarment provision is also loaded with loopholes. The Secretary of Labor may exempt violators if it is in the "national interest" or if the firm is the sole supplier to a government agency. He may also limit the period of debarment to under three years or otherwise modify the penalties dealt out to violators.

The employers most alarmed by this section of the bill are those with small or moderate-sized unorganized businesses, and this is the group that has mobilized most heavily to defeat it. The larger non-union outfits, with the financial clout to pay the increased fines and the costs of extensive litigation, are less threatened. J.P. Stevens, the notoriously anti-union textile giant with 85 plants and some 44,000 workers, has been consciously defying the orders of the Board for at least 15 years. Since 1965 the NLRB has found J.P. Stevens guilty of violating the law's provisions in 15 separate cases; and thus far the company has already coughed up \$1.3 million in back-pay awards (which it charges off as "business expenses" against income tax claims!). Such obstructionism will be somewhat more expensive under the Labor Law Reform Bill, but it is unlikely that, even if enjoined, it would drive intransigents like J.P. Stevens to capitulate.

In addition, S2467 contains numerous clauses that are simply anti-union. The bill makes it easier to organize plant guards. Its debarment provisions can also be applied against unions deemed to be consistent violators; for example, building trades unions found guilty of "unfair labor



AFL-CIO-backed Labor Reform Bill would provide legal basis in federal law for employers to obtain injunctions against wildcat strikes.

practices" may have federal funding of apprenticeship programs cut off. And the Board can levy the bill's stiffened financial penalties and back-pay awards against labor as well as management in instances where there are proceedings to decertify an existing union as bargaining agent.

But certainly the most striking anti-labor provision in S2467 is Section 13, which amends Taft-Hartley to enable employers to enjoin a refusal to cross a picket line not maintained by a labor organization, or one that is neither "initiated, authorized, nor ratified by the labor organization"—that is, a wildcat strike. (In the House version the Board, not the employer, must seek the injunction.) Certainly this legislation would outlaw the roving pickets that were the heart of the miners' strikes. That alone is sufficient reason for militant unionists to oppose the AFL-CIO backed "labor reform" bill.

### The Wagner Act

Since the days of the New Deal, the trade-union bureaucracy has perpetuat-

ed the myth that the right to organize was won and guaranteed essentially through the application of liberal labor legislation. In 1933 when the NRA was passed with its Section 7a, which "guaranteed" the "right of collective bargaining," labor organizers fanned out across the country, urging that "the President wants you to join the union." These organizing drives met with a tremendous response from thousands of workers who took these promises as good coin. In fact, however, the open shop was not smashed; in most industries, NRA government/company codes were drawn up that simply ratified existing conditions. The auto code, for example, gave the companies full control of hiring, firing and promotions without regard to seniority and granted "proportional representation" to company unions on the industry's bargaining council. As a result of the AFL leadership's failure to strike against such codes, hundreds of thousands of workers deserted the unions they had only recently joined. Only where a prior

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S2457 attacks right to strike, outlawing wildcats such as UMWA miners' strike against cancellation of health benefits last summer. Union militants must oppose all laws restricting labor's right to strike.



While tying unions to the capitalist state, Labor Reform Bill only makes it more expensive for anti-union companies such as J.P. Stevens to carry out unfair labor practices.



# Abstain on Props 8 and 13!

## California Property Tax Squabble

As California's June 6 election day draws near, political controversy in the state centers around the so-called Jarvis-Gann amendment (Proposition 13), a proposed change in the state constitution which would cut California property taxes by about two thirds across the board. Advanced by the Reaganite right wing of the Republican Party as a "tax revolution" which will bring much needed tax relief to small property holders, Jarvis-Gann is bitterly opposed by Democratic governor Jerry Brown, many Republicans and a number of the biggest capitalist enterprises in the state. The California labor bureaucracy has also linked arms with the bourgeois opponents of Proposition 13, meekly buying the bosses' arguments that massive cuts of government workers' jobs are inevitable should Jarvis-Gann become law.

Specifically, the Jarvis amendment would limit taxes on all real property—commercial, industrial and residential—to 1 percent of the assessed real value of that property (as shown on 1975-76 state tax bills). Should this measure pass, local government units statewide stand to lose approximately \$7 billion in revenues. Moreover, Proposition 13 would forbid either state or local government from increasing any other taxes without approval of two thirds of the registered voters. In any case, the amendment effectively prohibits any increases in property taxes whatsoever.

Jarvis-Gann backers have been very successful in appealing to the petty bourgeoisie and the large number of homeowners in the state who have seen property taxes on their houses rise over 120 percent in the last ten years. As we go to press, polls indicate that Proposition 13 is favored over a rival "tax relief bill," Proposition 8, supported by the Democratic Party and the labor bureaucracy. The latter has mounted a massive anti-Prop 13 propaganda campaign promising tens of thousands of layoffs of municipal workers statewide should the \$7 billion tax cut take place.

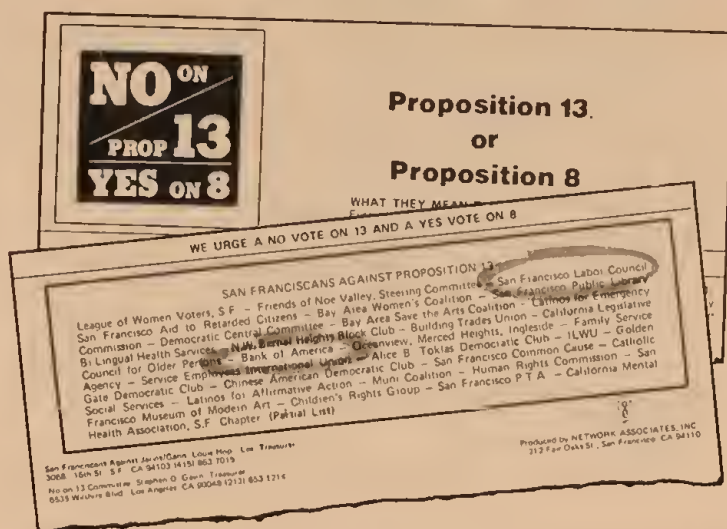
Despite the Jarvis-Gann backers' demagogic appeals to the "forgotten" tax-paying homeowners, it is the big-time landlords and industrialists who would really benefit from Proposition 13. Over 60 percent of state property taxes come from commercial and industrial property. In particular, the measure would mean windfall profits for owners of large apartment houses and it should come as no surprise that Proposition 13 author Howard Jarvis is also the long-time paid director of the Los Angeles apartment owners' association.

In addition to being a bonanza for Jarvis' apartment-owning cronies, Proposition 13 would create numerous inequities. As the amendment permits a new assessment each time a piece of property is sold and since houses in California change hands nearly twice as often as industrial and commercial properties, there would be a long-term tendency to shift a greater percentage of property taxes onto residential properties. Further, depending on whether a person bought a house before or after



Howard Jarvis

Michael Oressler/TIME



Unions join big business in pushing "aid to rich" Prop 8 in order to defeat Reaganite Prop 13.

1975-76, situations would arise where people with similar houses pay wildly different tax bills. Opponents of Jarvis-Gann are banking on using such contradictions to tie up the measure in the courts should it actually pass on June 6.

While Prop 13 enjoys the support of most landlords, agribusiness capitalists and ultra-reactionaries of the stripe of Republican Party gubernatorial hopefuls John V. Briggs (best known for proposing legislation to bar homosexuals from teaching in the public schools) and ex-Los Angeles police chief Ed Davies, the measure has failed to win even the support of the California State Republican Central Committee.

Lining up with Jerry Brown in opposition to Jarvis-Gann are some of the largest capitalist outfits in the state. A list would include: Bank of America, United California Bank, Kaiser Industries, IBM, Pacific Mutual Life Insurance, Southern California Edison and Southern Pacific. Why are these giant corporations who stand to gain millions through lower property taxes pouring money into a major campaign to defeat Jarvis-Gann? Columnist Dick Nolan posed the same question in the 19 March Sunday *San Francisco Examiner* and *Chronicle*, noting:

"Some of these corporations, like Southern Pacific, have real estate holdings big enough to hide a couple of Balkan nations in, and still have room left over for a couple of deserts and an emirate."

The answer Nolan comes up with is simple enough. The capitalists are

worried where the \$7 billion to replace the Jarvis-Gann cuts will come from. They don't believe Proposition 13 will represent a permanent cut in taxes but simply a shift, and they are concerned that the burden might fall heavily on their necks.

There are other considerations as well. The finance capitalists are worried about the possible effects of Jarvis-Gann on the stability of municipal bonds, currently tax-free and backed by the taxing powers of the cities. In mid-April Moody's Investors Service, a major barometer of financial opinion, announced it would suspend ratings on all California tax-allocation bonds until after the June 6 vote on Proposition 13.

In San Francisco, Moody's decision to suspend—not revoke—the ratings will affect \$13.1 million of the city's \$55 million in bonded indebtedness. In southern California the effects are greater. The 14 April 1978 *San Francisco Chronicle* which reported these facts announced that in reaction to Moody's action the Bank of America, the largest bank in the state and one of the biggest in the world, came out against Jarvis-Gann. Also noteworthy is the fact that the largest single donation to the anti-Jarvis-Gann campaign comes from a group called Committee Against 13 that is composed of brokerage firms that deal in municipal bonds.

The big capitalists have an alternative to Prop 13 called Proposition 8 which comes in a package with a bill authored by Republican state senator Behr from Sonoma County. The Behr bill offers a

30 percent cut in property taxes for homeowners only. It contains no ceiling on assessments while prohibiting any further tax increases levied on business to compensate for lost revenues. Instead these monies will almost certainly be raised by jacking up sales and personal income taxes—measures which will fall most heavily on low-income families. As a sop to the nearly 50 percent of the population that rents its housing, the Behr bill offers a measly \$75 credit to renters on their state income tax.

The wording of Proposition 8 is a simple statement that would allow the state to tax residential property (whether a cottage or a mansion) at a lower rate than industrial or commercial property. If Proposition 8 passes it will put the Behr bill into effect. However, should Prop 13 win, the Behr bill will become null and void. Governor Brown has sought to build support for Proposition 8 among tax-burdened homeowners by making it clear he will challenge the Jarvis amendment in the courts if it is approved (where he will likely succeed). Thus he poses Prop 8 as their only real chance of a tax cut.

The role of the labor bureaucracy in the anti-Jarvis-Gann coalition has been particularly disgraceful. Next to the brokerage firms the biggest contributions to the No on Prop 13/Yes on Prop 8 campaign have come from the trade unions. Two years ago San Francisco's Democratic Party mayor George Moscone broke the city craft workers strike; now he is threatening to close down schools, medical facilities, parks and libraries and to lay off thousands of city workers if Proposition 13 passes. And the response to these threats by the local labor bureaucrats? They join hands with Moscone and the Bank of America to campaign for Proposition 8.

California voters are being treated to the bizarre spectacle of the gentlemen who run the Bank of America wringing their hands over the possible loss of jobs of municipal workers around the state. What gall! These are the same captains of finance who with a routine flourish of a pen have been known to condemn whole populations to starvation-condition austerity measures.

Their cynicism is perhaps only exceeded by the hypocrisy of the labor bureaucracy which is now busy campaigning for Proposition 8. Up to the very last minute before Proposition 13 was put on the ballot the AFL-CIO tops mobilized to prevent the passage of the Behr bill. In the 3 March edition of the *California AFL-CIO News* the front page headline screams: "Tax Law Aids Rich and Perils Public Jobs, Labor Warns." Along with the headline you can find a "last-minute telegram" from John F. Henning, executive officer of the California AFL-CIO, to every Sacramento legislator urging them to vote down the Behr bill. The telegram is endorsed by the California AFL-CIO, AFSCME, ILWU, UAW, the Steelworkers, CWA, Retail Clerks and the UTU, among others. Yet in the very next issue of *California AFL-CIO News* a banner headline reads "State AFL-CIO Exec. Council Urges Defeat of Prop 13; Stresses Need for Approval of Prop 8." Thus once more this pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy makes its peace with the bourgeoisie and sets out to hoodwink the union rank and file.

The bourgeoisie is now threatening tens of thousands of municipal employees with layoffs should Proposition 13

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### NOTICE

Beginning with this issue *Workers Vanguard* goes over to a biweekly publication schedule (skipping one issue in August and a week in December). B'V No 209 will be dated 16 June.



"Magic. They came in their thousands. They marched, they sang, they chanted. And more came... Eighty thousand thronged the park, celebrating the rise against the fascists. 'We're black, we're white, we're dynamite,' they sang. They stood in the sun together. Eighty thousand. No trouble. Magic."

*Socialist Worker*, 6 May

So the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) summed up the Anti Nazi League (ANL) Carnival of April 30. On that day, rallied by the slogan "NF = no fun, no freedom, no future," tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered in Trafalgar Square and marched to a concert in Victoria Park. Undoubtedly the vast majority sincerely wanted to stop the rise of the fascist National Front, whose activities are a dangerous threat to every worker, leftist and immigrant. But the marchers only got empty "anti-fascist" speeches from union bureaucrats, Trihunnites and liberals, followed by a four-mile parade and a punk rock concert at the end.

Then the day after the Carnival May Day, international workers day—the NF held an unpublished march through the streets of London, from Portland Place to Hoxton. The press estimated that there were 1,000 to 1,500 fascists on the demonstration. They marched under police protection, and were not opposed by any counterdemonstrators. This was the first time the NF has ever been able to march through central London without incident.

What did *Socialist Worker* have to say about this?

"The next day the National Front held a walk through London's East End. Nearly two hundred attended. It was secret. It rained all the way. Even God has joined the Anti Nazi League."

Arithmetic and journalistic incompetence did not cause this distorted account of the march—instead the SWP had something political to hide. For as ANL press officer Peter Hain admitted in the 11 May issue of *Socialist Challenge*, ANL and SWP leaders knew that the fascist provocation was to take place at least two days before it happened. But they did nothing to protest it, or even to inform the many thousands gathered for the Carnival. Rather, in order to conciliate its social-democratic and bourgeois allies inside the ANL, the SWP agreed to withhold the information about the impending NF march.

This incident graphically demonstrates the real nature and purpose of the Anti Nazi League. The ANL has been hailed by all and sundry—from its initiators the SWP, to the fake-

## Fascists on Streets of Britain

# WORKERS MUST CRUSH NATIONAL FRONT!



Mark Rusher/IFL

menace of the New Nazis." In a turn of phrase that would have done Stalin's popular front "theoretician" Dimitroff proud, the ANL vowed to "unite all those who oppose the growth of the Nazis in Britain, irrespective of other differences."

A key component of this "unity" is outright social patriotism. *Tribune* supporter Ernie Roberts, an ex-AUEW national officer and prospective Labour parliamentary candidate, summed up the line in his speech as chairman of the Carnival pre-march rally. According to Roberts, the ANL's fight against the National Front is the contemporary equivalent of Britain's fight against Germany in World War II.

Such flag-waving rubbish has been a constant theme of ANL propaganda, which regularly attacks the National Front for not being truly patriotic. ANL publications forever portray NFers as jackbooted aliens trying to smuggle authoritarian German ideas into the "democratic" British body politic. One major ANL pamphlet, "The National Front and the Jews," states:

"Given that Britain opposed Germany in the second World War, the Front leadership has to explain how they can be both patriotic and yet support the German Nazis."

Speaking at a 20 April Anti Nazi League central London rally, SWP and ANL leader Nigel Harris complained of the "impudence" shown by the National Front in holding a demonstration on Remembrance Day: "And they call themselves patriots! Who the hell's side were they on?" Apparently the ANL would have been on the side of the British and American imperialists! Ah,

if only that heroic patriot Winston Churchill were still with us—then Nigel Harris could sign him up as an Anti Nazi League sponsor!

Labour "left" politicians have been particularly eager to use the ANL to get themselves a cheap "anti-fascist" cover, for they have been severely compromised by the government's anti-working-class policies and protection for fascist demonstrations. More than 40 Labour MPs have endorsed the League to date. One, Neil Kinnock, explained at the ANL founding press conference that he was proud to sign up as an officer of the organisation—after all, it was "an alternative to streetfighting" (quoted in *Socialist Challenge*, 17 November 1977).

Labour's Liberal Party coalition partners also assured representation in the ANL, with Lord Avebury putting his name to the founding statement. More recently *Socialist Worker* (6 May) has regaled its readers with stories of the local Liberal Party in Stoke-on-Trent, which joined the SWP and Labour Party in mass "anti-Nazi" leafletting for the local elections.

### "Stopping the Nazis at the Polls"

In fact, the whole unholy ANL alliance was *explicitly* set up to produce anti-NF propaganda in the period leading up to local Council and general elections. The ANL saw the May 4 Council elections as the first big test of its strategy. When the National Front's average vote dropped sharply compared with 1976, the ANL hailed this as a great

victory. ("Nazi NF Humiliated" was the *Socialist Worker* headline.)

But however disheartening the results may have been to the NF, votes are by no means the key to the growth of fascism. The fascists do not simply constitute another political party campaigning for their particular ideology among a passive electorate. Fascism is not a system of "bad ideas" which can be defeated through ideological "exposure" or argued away. It is a programme of terrorist action; and it has a social base in the mobilisation of the impoverished petty bourgeoisie, which has been squeezed out of its social position by the decay of capitalism and which sees no powerful revolutionary proletarian alternative to capitalist degradation and anarchy.

Contrary to the ANL's social-chauvinist rantings, fascism is not somehow inherently "German"; it is certainly not anti-patriotic. Rather it is based on a *nationalist* chauvinism the "outsiders" and "foreigners" (Jews, blacks, Asians) are scapegoated for all the problems of capitalist society.

Today the National Front does not constitute a mass movement which immediately threatens to smash the proletariat, although its ultimate goal is the destruction of all proletarian organisations and systematic terror and genocide against oppressed minorities. There is, however, a reason why the National Front has more social weight and significance in Britain today than similar far-right movements in other Western countries (e.g., the United States).

That reason is the severe decline of British imperialism—which in its long-drawn-out death agony has brought social degradation, chaos and continuous attacks on the living standards and conditions of the broad masses. Disaffection with this has generated a *real* social base for fascism among the petty bourgeoisie and politically backward workers.

Fascism cannot be beaten by issuing classless propaganda against its "ideology," still less by competing with it for the national banner. It can only be destroyed by mobilising the working class and its allies among the oppressed to *smash* the fascist gangs, and by building a revolutionary party to pose a proletarian class alternative to bourgeois rule and its attendant social decay. Beating the drums for "anti-Nazi" British patriotism is directly counterposed to these tasks, even if the National Front suffers a short-term loss of electoral respectability as its leaders' Hitlerite proclivities are exposed.

Differences do appear among the capitalists on how to relate to the fascists, particularly in a period like today when they are not seen to be immediately necessary in order to crush a highly combative working class. But the capitalist class will always seek to unite to smash the proletariat and its organisations at a point of extreme social and political crisis. When necessary, they will give open support to fascist terror gangs. This is precisely what happened in Italy, Germany and Spain during the 1920's and 1930's.

Any attempt to entice one section of the bourgeoisie (the mythical "progressive," "democratic" capitalists) into a popular front of all forces opposed to fascism is worse than utopian. Such a strategy sows very dangerous illusions among the workers and can only lead them to defeat—just like in Spain.

It is quite principled for a revolutionary party to march alongside social democrats and other reformists in an anti-fascist demonstration (and even to march alongside any bourgeois elements who, for whatever reason, choose to stand with the interests of the proletariat on this issue for a time). In fact, a united front between revolutionists and reformists is often a *necessity* for defence against fascist terror, and it simultaneously serves the purpose of exposing the reformist leaders' hesitations and betrayals and thus winning

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Trotskyist International Marxist Group, the Communist Party and the Labour "lefts"—as a major step forward in the fight against the NF. *This is a lie.* The Anti Nazi League is a popular-frontist, social-patriotic *roadblock* to mobilising the working class to smash the fascist threat. It does not show workers and the oppressed how to use their strength to drive the fascists off the streets. Instead it counsels "unity" with labour misleaders and "democratic" representatives of the class enemy around pacifist, nationalist "anti-Nazi" propaganda.

### Hailing "Democratic" Imperialism

The ANL was launched last autumn with a founding statement signed by numerous "respectable" luminaries, union bureaucrats, "left" Labour MPs, football players, actresses and even lords. It appealed for "the widest possible support for our efforts to alert the people of this country to the growing



workers to the revolutionary banner.

But it is quite another thing to adopt the reformists' bourgeois politics. To issue joint "anti-fascist" propaganda with reformist misleaders (and even representatives of the bourgeoisie!) is to betray the interests of the proletariat. Yet this is precisely what the Socialist Workers Party has chosen to do in the ANL.

### The Fight Against Fascism in the Thirties

In the 1930's the workers movement in western Europe was confronted by the rise of fascism on a scale which makes today's NF pale in comparison. The response of the Stalinist Communist International and its centrist satellites like the London Bureau was to organise coalitions against war and fascism under the leadership of prominent pacifists and other worthy "gentlemen." These coalitions were the precursors of the popular front.

The Trotskyist movement implacably opposed such class-collaborationist alliances, denouncing them for disarming the proletariat by tying it to the class enemy. At some "anti-fascist" conferences the Trotskyists were refused a vote on their counterproposals (1932); at others they were excluded altogether (1933). Particularly instructive is the Trotskyists' resolution on boycotting the "World Congress Against War, Fascism and Imperialism" organized by the London Bureau in 1936:

"The planned conference, on the very face of it, is thus a gross fraud, which can only paralyze the genuine proletarian struggle against war, fascism, and imperialism. Were this congress to be composed of mass organizations of the working class, then, regardless of its ostensible program or leadership it might prove profitable for the revolutionary organizations to attend it for the purpose of exposing the fraud before a working class tribunal and counterposing the program of revolutionary struggle to it."

— Documents of the Fourth International

Time and again Trotsky noted that "a merciless exposure of the theory and



Police seize demonstrator at Lewisham, 1977.

practice of the People's Front is therefore the first condition for a revolutionary struggle against fascism" (*Transitional Programme*). In January 1936 he wrote:

"We have to take strong measures against the abstract 'antifascist' mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times. 'Antifascism' is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery. In the name of 'antifascism' they instituted class collaboration with the Radicals. Many of our comrades wanted to give the 'People's Front,' i.e. class collaboration, positive support in the same way that we are ready to support the united front, i.e. the separation of the proletariat from the other classes."

— "Bourgeois Democracy and the Fight Against Fascism," *Writings 1935-36*

Such popular-frontist "anti-fascism" is precisely the purpose of the Anti Nazi League.

### IMG Chases "Respectability"

True to their tradition, organisations such as the Stalinist Communist Party and sundry Labour "leftists" have leapt onto the ANL bandwagon. But the group which is vying with the SWP to become the ANL's "best builder" is the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist

Group (IMG). When the ANL was founded six months ago the IMG expressed hesitancy about the lack of a "mass action" perspective for the organisation, while endorsing the project nonetheless. Now with the rapid growth (and increasing "respectability") of the ANL the junior Martovs of the IMG have put aside all their little worries.

"Build the Anti Nazi League" screams the front page of *Socialist Challenge*. "Hats Off to the SWP" sings the IMG's editorial pacan to the Carnival. And just to assure the assorted reformists, Liberals and lords of the ANL that it bears no "Trotskyist" baggage of opposition to popular frontism, the IMG writes:

"It is now obvious that the ANL needs a conference of its active supporters. We can share some of the apprehensions of the SWP in relation to such a conference becoming a bear-garden and alienating League supporters because of sectarian bickering. A conference devoted to discussing whether or not the ANL is a 'popular front' or a similar rubbish would, in our opinion, be disastrous."

*Socialist Challenge*, 4 May

For the IMG, intransigent opposition to class collaboration and social patriotism has become "sectarian bickering" and "rubbish"! How far these disgraceful opportunists have sunk into the anti-Trotskyist mire!

Trying to strike a more critical posture toward the ANL are the eclectic left Pabloites of the International-Communist League (I-CL). In March the I-CL complained that the ANL had problems because "it commits the revolutionaries of the SWP [!] to limit their propaganda to what is acceptable to the liberals" (*Workers Action*, 11-18 March). By the time of the Carnival, however, the I-CL had toned down its criticisms considerably. The ANL was still "too confused," but:

"Today's carnival is the biggest anti-fascist event for years. And on the eve of May Day the Anti Nazi League have chosen a great way to celebrate the traditional workers' holiday..."

"How are we going to do the job? Carnivals like today's can get the ball rolling showing us how many we are and helping us to get to know each other..."

"Alter the Carnival, What Next?" (*Workers Action* leaflet)

How chummy. The only problem is: the ANL has set the ball rolling in the wrong direction.

The I-CL's chief complaint about the ANL has been that it represents a turn by the SWP away from its past policy of engaging in street confrontations with the fascists. Indeed, until the end of last summer the SWP had been the chief proponent of a strategy of left-wing counter-demonstrations to fight the fascists in the streets, which it combined with calls on the capitalist government to ban NF marches.

Taking on the fascists in the streets certainly reflects a healthier impulse than signing "democratic" manifestos with Lord Avebury—though for the consummately cynical SWP leadership both have been little more than gimmicky recruitment schemes. However, the SWP tried to substitute "far-left" physical confrontations with the fascists and their police protectors for the hard fight within the trade unions to build mass working-class action against the fascists.

This strategy predictably backfired, as last summer's round of street confrontations with the NF ended with the latter achieving its aim of massive police protection. And the Public Order Act—invoked against opponents of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts in 1937—was used to halt left-wing anti-NF demonstrations.

### Build Workers Defence Guards!

As we wrote last summer after the Lewisham events:

"It is not necessarily adventurist for a few thousand leftists to attempt to take on a few hundred fascists. ... The point is to successfully break up attempted fascist mobilisations, not to engage in a string of inconclusive brawls. However, given the demonstrated determination

of the state to protect the National Front in all these recent skirmishes with the left, most such attempts will only result in head-on confrontations with the police. In the absence of a mass working-class base for their activities, the attempt of even several thousand leftists to 'take on' the cops of the bourgeois state will inevitably result in the victimisation of those subjectively revolutionary militants who engage in such confrontations."

UV No. 170, 26 August 1977

Demonstrations of a few thousand ill-organised leftists can usually be dispersed by a much smaller body of

gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a workers' militia as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organisations, meetings, and press."

This is the strategy Trotskyists raise for fighting fascist attacks, against the sellout course of the labour bureaucrats and their "left" hangers-on.

### The Spartacist Tendency and the Fight Against Fascism

The struggle to arm the workers to crush the fascists cannot consist of



Anti Nazi League Carnival In Trafalgar Square.

Spartacist Britain

determined thugs and/or their police protectors. But physically-prepared workers defence guards built by the trade unions can protect workers' organisations and immigrant communities from attack and crush the fascists in the streets.

There is a good reason why the SWP & Co. do not struggle within the unions to build such defence guards: their formation would directly challenge the bourgeois state's monopoly on armed terror. And Ernie Roberts and Neil Kinnock (to say nothing of the good peers of the realm) would not stand for that at all.

How can such defence guards be built? As Trotsky explained in the *Transitional Programme*:

"Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point



National Front demonstrators push racist tith at Lewisham last summer.

of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating workers' groups for self-defence. It is necessary to write this slogan into the programme of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative wherever possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organise groups for self-defence, to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms. "It is necessary to give organised expression to the valid hatred of the workers toward scabs and bands of

empty resolutions in the trade unions. It is a well-known practice for union bureaucrats to pass radical-sounding resolutions, committing themselves to nothing in particular, as a cover for inaction. The "left" talk of labour traitors at ANL rallies is a perfect example. Instead class-struggle oppositions must be built within the unions to ensure that the call for workers defence guards is made a reality. Such class-struggle groupings must link the fight against right-wing attacks to a programme which points the way to working-class power.

The international Spartacist tendency has a proud record of struggle against fascist and other racialist attacks and provocations. In America we have particularly had to fight the treacherous call raised by the IMG's local "co-thinkers," the Socialist Workers Party (U.S.), for defence of platforms for fascists. Our supporters have also actively fought racist and fascist attacks within the trade unions: the caucus we support in a Chicago-area UAW (car workers) local [branch] was instrumental in organising a workers defence squad to defend a black worker's home from night-riding racist marauders. In Detroit, we fought to win the unions to smash a fascist "bookshop" which recently opened near the giant River Rouge car factory. Our key has always been to unleash the powerful strength of the organised proletariat, not to substitute our own small forces for the necessary mobilisation of the class, and certainly not to bolster some fake "anti-fascist" talker.

As we grow and sink roots into the working class in this country, our members and supporters will be leading similar struggles—against the NF, its far-right satellites and the class whose interests they so violently serve. Each victory over the fascist hooligans will bring more forces to the revolutionary banner, thus bringing nearer the day of proletarian revolution.

And that is a struggle which requires neither magic nor god—but the forging of a revolutionary vanguard party steeled in the fight for working-class independence from the bourgeoisie. Only a party which can demonstrate to the working class its iron determination to do away with the capitalist system of anarchy, oppression and exploitation can break the stranglehold of racist division among working people, and lead the struggle for proletarian rule to final victory. ■



# Labor Reform Bill...

(continued from page 4)

history of industrial union organizing existed, as in the mine and garment workers unions, were any sizable number of workers organized and brought under union contract.

In 1934, powerful organizing strikes in Toledo, Minneapolis and San Francisco were successfully led by socialists, Trotskyists and Stalinists. Fearing that the wave of labor organizing would fall under the control of "reds," the Roosevelt administration moved quickly to initiate a government-sanctioned bargaining mechanism under which the dynamic rise in working-class activity would hopefully be subordinated to the capitalist order. The result was the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act passed in July 1935. The Wagner Act established the framework for sweeping federal regulation of labor relations and empowered the government to carve up bargaining jurisdictions and run elections to determine union recognition. It was the first major step of the capitalist state to assert and institutionalize its control of the increasingly turbulent labor movement. As such, revolutionaries opposed this bill.

The constitutionality of the NIRA was defended on the grounds that it was intended to remove the "restrictions" on interstate commerce (due to strike action) which the courts had previously dealt with through injunctions. Section 1 of the Wagner Act stated:

"Experience has proved that protection by law of the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively safeguards commerce from injury, impairment, or interruption, and promotes the flow of commerce by removing certain recognized sources of industrial strife and unrest, by encouraging practices fundamental to the friendly adjustment of industrial disputes."

Thus, from the inception of the NIRA, protection of collective bargaining rights was seen as a trade-off for halting industrial militancy.

During the 1936 presidential elections, UMW and CIO head John L. Lewis campaigned for Roosevelt, citing the passage of the Wagner Act. The Mine Workers and CIO kicked in \$1 million to this campaign, while Lewis toured the country denouncing the steel trusts as the enemy of the New Deal and labor. Lewis clearly hoped to enlist Roosevelt's aid in breaking the open shop in steel, which he had pinpointed as the initial target of the CIO organizing campaign. To this end, several hundred organizers had been put on the payroll of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), and a paper, *Steel Labor*, was issued. But while Lewis was cloaked in closed-door negotiations with U.S. Steel head Myron Taylor in December 1936, the massive sitdown strike of GM workers erupted in Flint. This heroic battle, which was in no sense initiated by the CIO national leadership nor aided by the NLRB, breached the open shop in basic industry. Within a month U.S. Steel agreed to recognize SWOC as bargaining agent for its members, a decision which was essentially a by-product of the victory in Flint.

In the aftermath of the auto and steel victories, there still remained important outposts of the open shop, including prominently Little Steel and Ford Motor Co. The steel strike of 1937 had been drowned in blood by liberal Democratic Party governors and city officials, who mobilized the National Guardsmen and cops against the strikers; Harry Bennett's notorious Servicemen maintained a reign of terror at Ford. These companies and others had been repeatedly ruled in violation of federal labor laws by both the NLRB and the courts. But when John L. Lewis protested the fact that \$13 billion in war contracts had been awarded these companies, Roosevelt replied that the

government contractors could not be expected "to adhere to the letter of the labor law."

Litigation stretched out for years. It was not until early 1941, when massive strikes were waged at the Ford River Rouge plant and Bethlehem plants in Lackawanna, New York and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania that union contracts were won. The willingness of the liberal Roosevelt government to capitulate to the major anti-union employers has been continued thereafter by every administration. The arrogant bosses at U.P. Stevens and other bastions of the open shop have learned this lesson well. With or without the passage of the Labor Law Reform Bill, they are unlikely to vacate their positions in the absence of militant action by the trade unions.

While the Board hardly spearheaded the fight against the open shop, it did exercise considerable authority in designating what the appropriate unit would be in representation elections, whether craft, plant, company, etc. This question became the basis for conflicting jurisdiction claims by AFL and CIO unions. Initially, the Board leaned toward plant-wide elections, which basically worked in the favor of the CIO and industrial unionism. But after massive complaints from the AFL, the Board capitulated and reversed its policy in 1937. Thereafter, where there were established craft unions with some history in the plant, the workers in that jurisdiction were generally given the right to vote on whether they preferred the craft union. Although in the '30's the bourgeois press churned out a constant barrage of propaganda charging the Board with being a pawn of the CIO, in the majority of instances where selection of bargaining units was crucial to the outcome of elections, the Board decided in favor of the AFL. The concerted willingness of the Board to intervene in disputes within the labor movement on the side of less militant organizations did not evolve in the Taft-Hartley era, but in the height of the New Deal.

## Taft-Hartley

In the wake of the post-war strike wave, Congress amended the National Labor Relations Act by passing the Taft-Hartley Act. This bill outlawed secondary boycotts and jurisdictional strikes, allowed states to pass "right-to-work" laws, mandated presidential injunctions in the face of "national emergencies" and instituted loyalty oaths for union officials. Where the Wagner Act had included "unfair labor practices" perpetrated by employers, Taft-Hartley "balanced" the Wagner Act by including "unfair practices of labor organizations." For the first time under the act the bosses had recourse to direct state coercion against the unions, a mechanism which they were quick in utilizing to purge militants and break strikes.

The new provisions were employed as part of the anti-Communist witchhunt. For example, the Board ordered new representation elections for agricultural implement workers; the pre-existing union, the Stalinist-led Farm Equipment Workers, was denied a place on the ballot because its officers had refused to sign Taft-Hartley loyalty affidavits. The UAW thus won the elections easily. The current Labor Law Reform Bill's enhancing of the Board's power to act in decertification procedures thus provides additional authority to a weapon that has historically been used in the service of the conservative labor bureaucracy and the companies against leftists in the unions.

But by far the most pernicious aspect of Taft-Hartley was its curtailing of the right to strike. Not only were secondary boycotts and jurisdictional strikes illegalized but companies were given the right to sue the unions for breach of contract. The willingness of the union bureaucracy to accept no-strike contracts in itself gave the bosses an

enormous weapon, but the Board and the courts have ruled thenceforth on numerous occasions that the mere existence of a grievance and arbitration procedure implies a no-strike agreement.

In 1957 the Supreme Court ruled in the Lincoln Mills case that employers could be compelled to take industrial disputes to arbitration. While this was welcomed by the union bureaucracy, the intention of the courts was to institutionalize a grievance/arbitration procedure which would then be used to exclude strikes. In 1962 the Supreme Court ruled in the Lucas Flour decision that to strike rather than to arbitrate a grievance during the term of a contract was a violation, even where there was no explicit no-strike clause. This decision was extended by the Court in the Boys Market case (1970) to enable companies not only to sue for damages against unions violating an implied no-strike clause but to seek federal injunctions as well. The Court declared: "As we have previously indicated, a no-strike obligation, express or implied, is the quid pro quo for an undertaking by the employer to submit grievance disputes to the process of arbitration."

While court decisions have occasionally conflicted, the clear trends of court decisions have been to reinforce broad authority for the use of the hated injunction weapon. Union officials permeated with illusions in the bourgeois state like to cite the Buffalo Forge decision of 1976 as a counter. In this instance a Steelworkers production local had refused to cross picket lines of an office workers local. The Supreme Court ruled, by a margin of 5-to-4, that no injunction could be issued. But the ruling was made on the narrow grounds that the specific issue of a sympathy strike was not arbitrable under the contract and the court reaffirmed that injunctions were perfectly applicable against any strike over an arbitrable issue. Thus the decision of the coal industry's Arbitration Review Board last October that the right to strike was inconsistent with the existence of a grievance/arbitration procedure was simply an application of prior court rulings.

The inclusion of the anti-strike clauses in S2467 is thus in no sense "incidental" to this bill: the liberal bourgeoisie has granted collective bargaining rights only insofar as it receives in return a guarantee that labor militancy will be quashed. The anti-wildcat provisions in this act not only legitimize past court practice with regard to the use of injunctions, but undoubtedly will serve as a rallying point for a new round of attacks on the right to strike. The bill itself effectively bars roving pickets; it takes little imagination to project that this will be extended by the Board and courts to circumscribe almost any sympathy strike and even to resort to so-called prospective injunctions, under which a company can get a sweeping court order barring strikes or wildcats even before they occur.

The public silence of the labor bureaucracy on the anti-strike provisions of S2467 is criminal. In particular, the bill is a frontal attack on coal miners, who fought bitterly in the recent strike to insure that there would be no explicit anti-wildcat provisions in the contract. Now their contract is being rewritten by the government. The position of the trade-union bureaucracy as a whole on the bill only reflects its deep antipathy for strikes and particularly wildcats.

## For Trade-Union Independence from the State

In his essay "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" Trotsky succinctly described the essential characteristic of the American trade-union movement. "In the United States the Department of Labor with its leftist bureaucracy has as its task the subordination of the trade union movement to the democratic state, and it must be said

that this task has up to now been solved with some success." From the time of the inception of the CIO, the slavish dependence of the trade-union bureaucracy on state arbitration of labor disputes has only intensified.

The Labor Board, an institution virtually unique to the American labor movement, plays a semi-bonapartist role between capital and labor, arbitrating industrial disputes and determining what are "fair" and what are "unfair" labor practices. Notwithstanding the Board's increasingly reactionary role in implementing anti-union policies, the illusions in it and the government within the American working class have markedly increased in recent years. It is fundamentally the criminal failure of the labor bureaucracy to defend its members against company victimizations, racist company policies, etc., that serves to refurbish the Board's credentials as the court of last resort for thousands of workers.

It is not surprising that reformist left groups, like the Communist Party and the International Socialists, have come out in support of the Labor Law Reform Bill. These fake lefts, no less than the bureaucracy, have consistently sown illusions in the Board. In particular, their criminal applauding of the intervention of the Board and the Labor Department into disputes within the labor movement, as well as their support for the Sadlowskis and Millers who utilize such practices, demonstrate fully their willingness to accept the capitalist state as an "impartial" (!) arbiter in the class struggle.

Should the Labor Law Reform Bill pass, Marxists would not hesitate, of course, to use provisions of the act against the capitalists, where appropriate. Nonetheless, we oppose its enactment. Its aim is to curtail the right to strike, to strengthen the authority of the Labor Board to intervene in the class struggle—an intervention that is fundamentally directed at the labor movement. We demand instead: complete independence of the trade unions from the state—organize the unorganized through militant labor action; end all support to capitalist parties; build a workers party based on the trade unions to fight for a workers government. ■

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# Jarvis Amendment...

(continued from page 5)

pass. The labor bureaucracy is hysterically echoing these threats and peddling the notion that these layoffs will come about automatically. In this way the labor brass signal their intent to their capitalist masters to do nothing should the bourgeoisie institute draconian cutbacks in jobs and services.

In fact the union leaders' hysteria over threatened Proposition 13 cutbacks is the worst sort of parliamentary cretinism. California municipal workers must understand that should the capitalists decide to slash jobs and services they scarcely need Prop 13 as an excuse. In New York City the big banks simply ordered the city government to tear up union contracts and lay off tens of thousands of city workers.

The fight over Prop 13 is a squabble among various wings of the bourgeoisie over how best to administer *their* tax structure for *their* government. Instead of pouring union funds into the pockets of crooked bourgeois politicians and an empty campaign to stop Prop 13, a genuine class-struggle leadership would be building its unions' strike funds and putting the capitalists on notice that the labor movement will not foot the bill for capitalist austerity programs. It would educate all the workers to understand that their interests will not be served by tinkering with the structure of capitalist tax laws. And it would let it be known that any cuts in jobs or services as a consequence of Props 8 or 13 would be met by statewide strike actions.

In passing it should be noted that cringing parliamentary-cretin attitudes toward the Jarvis-Gann squabble are not confined to the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy. The geriatric Stalinists of the misnamed Communist Party (CP) have zigzagged along with their good pals the labor skates and joined the fight for "No on 13/Yes on 8!"

For decades the Stalinists have been trying to scotch-tape together a class-collaborationist "anti-monopoly coalition" with an imaginary "progressive wing" of the bourgeoisie. Now our partisans of the "anti-monopoly coalition" seem to have landed themselves in bed with the big monopolists!

What's more, it seems the CP is getting its signals crossed up nowadays. Thus, though the California CP takes up lances against Jarvis-Gann, its Ohio comrades opposed a tax levy in a context where the "no" vote had a heavy racist, anti-busing undercurrent (see "Cleveland School Board Whips Up Racist Reaction," *WV* No. 203, 28 April).

The response of the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to Jarvis-Gann is also interesting as a case study in reformist tailism. In an SWP campaign leaflet entitled "Tax the Rich, Not Working People—Vote NO on Propositions 8 and 13" we find not one word of criticism of the do-nothing policies of the AFL-CIO and AFSCME bureaucracies. Instead we find a call for "a tax program that will benefit working people"...presumably to be administered by the bosses' government. Among other things this leaflet in support of the gubernatorial candidacy of SWPer Fred Halstead demands "Fund Schools, not the Pentagon." Not a word about the need for class opposition to the imperialist war machine, just social-democratic "guns vs. butter" rhetoric in the service of utopian schemes to reform war out of capitalism. Referring to similar pious wishes voiced by similar reformist mountebanks of his day, Engels sarcastically commented, "Yes, if toads had tails, they would no longer be toads!"

Halstead's campaign leaflet is capped with a call for a "Labor Party" which "would organize working men and women to fight for our rights on the job, in the streets and in the voting booth."

What a "Labor Party"! Even the British Labour Party—a reformist, bourgeois workers party—is on "record" for expropriating key sections of capitalist industry. The SWP's "Labor Party" is content to "fight for our rights," whatever that means.

If they were not so utterly cynical the reformists of the CP and SWP should be profoundly shocked by Friedrich Engels' polemic "On the Housing Question," written over 100 years ago. In that work Engels correctly points out that taxes, credit and state debt, while of primary importance to the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie have little long-run importance to the workers. Taxes come down to the overhead needed to run the capitalist state, "a matter that interests the bourgeoisie very much but the workers only very little. What the worker pays in taxes goes in the long run into the cost of production of labor power and must be compensated for by the capitalist."

Furthermore, as against the claims of Keynesian liberals, government deficit spending does not benefit the working class. Continual government deficits mean that an ever larger share of the budget must be spent on debt service. Moreover, frequently a big deficit will produce an inflationary outburst, which cuts into the living standards of the workers and poor even more than would certain types of tax increases. Lyndon Johnson, for example, decided to finance the unpopular Vietnam war by deficit spending rather than trying to get a tax increase through Congress. In 1968 the federal government ran a \$25 billion deficit, the largest since World War II. The result was an inflationary upsurge with consumer prices increasing 12 percent in the next two years.

Certainly any examination of Propositions 8 and 13 should make it clear that it is not permissible for Marxists to vote for either of these measures. They are both bourgeois boondoggles. However, to vote against them is also not permissible. Such a vote would, in the context of the current campaigns, amount to open endorsement of the tax policies of the bourgeois state. Furthermore, a "no" vote would also constitute a statement that proletarian revolutionaries are indifferent to the crushing tax burdens suffered by small petty-bourgeois property holders.

The hubalaboo about "tax relief" currently raging in California is a fraud and a diversion, which aims to pit the petty bourgeoisie and better-off workers against the lower-paid workers and unemployed. As Trotskyists we struggle not for this or that "tax reform" to be administered by the bosses' government, but instead fight for a workers government which will expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class, in the process canceling all debts to the parasitic banks, and will organize production not for profit but according to a plan determined by the democratic decisions of the working masses.

A most instructive lesson on how not to get sucked into the cesspool of parliamentary cretinism was related by Zinoviev in his speech "On Lenin" delivered to the Petrograd Soviet in September 1918. Zinoviev describes a scene where Badayev, a Bolshevik deputy to the tsarist Duma, came to see Lenin in exile and ask for his advice concerning hills in parliament about the budget that were introduced by the Cadets. Lenin replied:

"What do you want a budget, an amendment, a 'hill' for? You are workers and the Duma exists for the ruling classes. You simply step forward and tell all Russia in simple language about the life and toil of the working class. Describe the horrors of capitalist slavery, summon the workers to make a revolution and fling into the face of this reactionary Duma that its members are scoundrels and exploiters!"

That, and not fidgeting with the bourgeoisie's tax laws, should be the guiding light for working-class militants in the great California property tax squabble. ■

# Johnny Harris...

(continued from page 2)

Harris did not get a fair trial. Harris insists he is innocent of the charges of rape and robbery against him, but was forced to plead guilty by his court-appointed lawyer, who told him he'd surely get the death penalty unless he did. His lawyer never met with Harris until just before the trial began and refused to call any witnesses in his behalf. Harris' defense today points out that the rape victim who had two relatives in the Birmingham Police Department at the time—put in a description of her assailant which did not match Harris. Further, when Harris was arrested, his family had just moved into a white neighborhood and had been victimized by racist harassment and threats.

The case of Charles Smith, in Mobile, Alabama underlines the vicious racism which still threatens blacks in the South. Smith, an ex-Marine, had just moved into a white neighborhood with his family, and was having a picnic in the backyard when two whites charged in wielding a lug wrench and a machete. Smith fought back. The machete-wielding white refused to stop after a warning shot, so Smith fired again and killed him. For exercising elementary self-defense, Smith was charged with first-degree murder, a charge of which he was recently acquitted. However, he would probably not be alive today except for the fact that he was a sheriff's deputy and thus was carrying a gun at the time of the assault. No doubt his employment also had an impact on the jury decision. But for most blacks in this racist society, like Johnny Harris, there is no justice in the courts.

Bourgeois politicians, North and South, are jumping on the law-and-order bandwagon, supporting state legislation allowing capital punishment for specifically named crimes in accord-

ance with the Supreme Court mandate. There are presently 32 states with capital punishment statutes on the books, and campaigns to increase that number are growing. At the same time, the numbers on death row are swelling. The American Civil Liberties Union expects that the present total of 490 could rise to as many as the 600 who were condemned at the time of the 1976 decision.

In New York State, for example, Governor Carey (who vetoed the state legislature's death penalty bill) is seeking to recoup his losses with law-and-order forces by pushing through a repressive anti-crime bill. If passed, this bill would deny bail to those who have jumped bail before, more severe penalties will be mandatory for a new category of "violent crimes" and "juvenile" offenses will be moved into the regular criminal system. Such "get tough" legislation in a state generally regarded as "liberal" by southern standards underscores the general rightward trend in the nation and illustrates the fact that "southern justice" is in fact "U.S. justice"—racist, cruel and brutal, a sledgehammer to be used against the working people and oppressed by a ruling class which requires brutal force and repression to maintain its domination.

The Partisan Defense Committee has made a contribution to the legal defense for Johnny Harris (Imani). Donations may be sent to the Committee to Defend Imani and Stop the Death Penalty, P.O. Box 46, Atlanta, GA 30301, and may be earmarked for legal defense.

Free Johnny Harris! Abolish the Death Penalty! ■

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# SL Fund Drive Success

We print below the final breakdown by local area of the SL's recently concluded four-week internal emergency fund drive. As we noted when we first reported on the fund drive in our public press, this was the first time in our history that we appealed to our comrades to assist the organization financially in excess of an already steep system of sustaining pledges ("WV to Go Biweekly," *WV* No. 206, 19 May).

As we reported in that announcement of our "limited and orderly retreat" from a weekly press, the money raised in the internal fund drive nearly tripled the most optimistic projection of the Political Bureau, which had anticipated raising perhaps \$5,000-20,000 from members and close sympathizers in North America. In addition, sections of the international Spartacist tendency overseas, though not centrally involved in the fund drive, came through handsomely with over \$5,000.

When the internal fund drive was first reported in our press, *WV* received a number of gratifying letters from readers who share our regret at the necessity to return to a biweekly frequency. One supporter in Vancouver sent \$50 noting:

"... It saddens me to read in your latest issue of *WV* No. 206 of your financial trouble and the need to publish biweekly.

"... Having been an avid reader of *WV*, and having learnt much from it, I hope the social and economic times will soon arise again to enable you to publish weekly.

"A small donation is enclosed to assist you through your present difficulties."

The spontaneous solidarity of these readers only strengthens our confidence in our commitment to return *WV* to a regular weekly frequency "when either continuing sharp class struggle demands it or simple bulk growth of the SL/U.S. readily permits it."

The success of the fund drive internally is a gratifying and powerful confirmation of the revolutionary determination of our comrades. The figures printed below speak louder than any words.

Area	Amount Received	St Section	Amount Received
Los Angeles	\$ 5,544	U.S.	\$49,478
Boston	2,931	Canada	4,213
San Francisco	4,923	France	2,610
New York	17,944	Germany	1,295
Berkeley/Oakland	4,342	Britain	681
Detroit	4,751	Australia/	
Cleveland	2,601	New Zealand	458
Chicago	5,692	TOTAL	\$58,735
Other	750		
TOTAL (U.S.)	\$49,478		



# Cowardly WVO Maoists Attack SL

On May 19 the labor front-group of the Maoist Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO) held a meeting at its Lower East Side office to discuss the struggle of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) and the New York city workers against Mayor Ed Koch's vicious anti-union offensive. The discussion period was transformed into a virtual debate when supporters of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus (M-SC) in the National Maritime Union and the Spartacist League (SL) counterposed a class-struggle program to the self-defeating reformism of the WVO and its Trade Union Educational League. Frustrated by the impact of the SL's revolutionary politics on its worker-contacts, WVO ended the meeting by launching a cowardly physical assault on the SL and M-SC, pitching one union militant down three flights of stairs.

While WVO claims as a model the early communist work in the trade unions, the Communist Party-led TUEL of the mid-1920's was characterized by its fight to break worker-militants from simple trade unionism and win them to a revolutionary program. In sharp contrast these workerist Maoists were pathetically unable to go beyond the most pallid nickel-and-dime economism. The city workers who spoke at the meeting could do no more than relate shop-floor atrocities; the program of a member of the District 1199 hospital workers' contract negotiating team to defeat Koch's offensive could not be differentiated from the empty mouthings of Municipal Labor Council head Victor Gotbaum or the rest of the union sellout artists.

The tone for the ensuing discussion was set when an M-SC supporter first raised the need to build class-struggle oppositional caucuses in the trade unions. He went on to criticize the attempt of the Committee of Concerned Transit Workers to stop the bureaucratic ballot fraud in the TWU contract vote by going to court, an action which ended with a federal judge throwing out the entire ballot. Taking the unions to court, the M-SC spokesman pointed out, opens the road for the government to move in and take over the workers' organizations lock, stock and barrel, as

it has been doing with some success in the United Mine Workers.

When Concerned Transit's action was defended as a smart "tactical" use of the courts, an SL spokesman noted that the judge's decision was a godsend to the TWU Guinan/Lowe bureaucracy: "Originally, the bureaucrats opposed the Committee's action but the very next day they were back in court saying 'sure throw out the ballots' because they figured out that the workers had turned down the contract." A class-struggle leadership in the TWU and city unions, the SL declared, would instead abide by the TWU tradition of "no contract, no work," call for strike action and demand cancellation of the city debt service and expropriation of the banks.

Another SL speaker challenged the Maoists to come up with an alternative to strike action which could effectively combat the union-busting city government, to which one WVO supporter actually argued that advocating a strike was "stupid" because the workers would lose money! Others tried to dodge the issue by denouncing Trotskyists for not supporting "socialism" in China or by attacking the SL for not trying to reach the workers "where they're at."

Backed into a dead end as they watched their sympathizers showing approval of the call for strike action, WVO went into a frenzy and resorted to the usual tactics of cornered Stalinists faced with a political challenge: physical violence. As the meeting broke up and a number of workers sought to continue discussions with the M-SCers, a group of Maoist goons struck out and shoved the SL and M-SC supporters toward the door and attempted to toss them down the stairwell. In the process one trade unionist sustained a serious injury to his knee.

The WVO should learn from the experience of the Revolutionary Communist Party, Progressive Labor, the Workers League and other two-bit outfits that like to pretend they are running their own little deformed workers state that the Spartacist League will not be intimidated. We will assist these Mao-Stalinists in their education by upholding and enforcing the Leninist tradition of democracy in the workers movement ■

# Vote No on Wage-Slashing Bill in L.A.

LOS ANGELES, May 27—In the context of efforts to whip up a "taxpayers' revolt" centered on southern California, anti-labor L.A. County supervisors are sponsoring a charter amendment to the June 6 ballot aimed at slashing the wages of county employees, particularly skilled tradesmen. Proposition A would overturn the provision of the Los Angeles County Charter which guarantees that county workers are paid a wage "at least equal to the prevailing salary" in the private sector. This constitutes an immediate threat to the livelihoods of 70,000 local government workers.

As is usual in these wage-slashing attacks, a great deal of propaganda has appeared claiming that county workers are overpaid. The *Los Angeles Times*, for example, in a 23 May editorial, printed the bald-faced lie that "county employees enjoy on the average, higher salaries than do their counterparts in private companies." In fact, a grand jury survey found that in 1976 only 10 percent of county workers earned more than their counterparts in the private sector; and a Service Employees International Union survey revealed that in 1977 county employees earned 7 percent less on the average than all workers surveyed.

"Prevailing wage" clauses are a standard dodge of the sellout labor bureaucracy, which quails at the prospect of directly confronting the government with strike action. While in general such clauses tell government workers into accepting no-strike laws (thinking they can get a "free ride" by relying on legislative pressuring), they are particularly treacherous in the "open-shop" environs of southern California, where they have been used to limit county workers' salary increases by linking them to the low wages prevailing in non-unionized industry. Nevertheless, the elimination of this clause in the present context would open the way for even more drastic wage cuts and must be strenuously opposed by the labor movement.

The right-wing initiators of these propositions are counting on the support of the heavily-taxed homeowners, whom they expect to vote for slashing the county workers' wages in the guise of "tax relief." In particular they hope to link up with the anti-"big-government" crusade by "free enterprise" fundamentalist supporters of Proposition 13 on the California state ballot in the June 6 vote (see article this issue). "Prop 13" proposes to drastically cut property taxes, playing the familiar right-wing populist "welfare Cadillac" theme.

Instead of mobilizing the strength of the unions to block the anti-labor offensive, the union bureaucrats are pandering to the right wing. In a statement signed by county supervisors Edelman and Hahn, L.A. County Democratic chairman Ed Burke and county Federation of Labor Executive secretary William Robertson, the "prevailing wage" clause is praised as having been "responsible for labor peace in Los Angeles County" and for keeping wages down. They proudly cite the example of San Francisco, where a "prevailing wage" clause was voted in "to keep salaries in line" after "two years of devastating public employees' strikes."

Both in L.A. and San Francisco the object has been to lower the wages of public employees. As a result of the introduction of the "prevailing wage" clause in San Francisco and the refusal of the S.F. labor leadership to wage a militant strike to defend union gains, the S.F. Board of Supervisors was able to drastically slash the wages of municipal craft workers in 1975-76. This is the specter which now hangs over the Los Angeles County workers.

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## Peru...

(continued from page 1)

Students and People's Front (FOCEP)—ex-peasant leader and self-styled Trotskyist Hugo Blanco, labor lawyer Genero Ledesma and Ricardo Napuri, leader of the ostensibly Trotskyist POMR—and three candidates of the Maoist coalition Democratic People's Unity (UDP)—Ricardo Letts, editor of the "far left" weekly *Marka*; Javier Diez Canseco, editor of the Maoist review *Amauta*; and miners union lawyer Ricardo Diaz Chávez. The lives of all these leftists as well as of the deported populist military officers are in danger so long as they are at the mercy of the bloodthirsty Argentine junta. (The Third Army is particularly noted for its trigger-happy executioners.) All socialists, unionists and opponents of junta terror must demand that they be immediately released and provided safe conduct to the country of their choice. The Peruvian government's deportation order must be rescinded and the hundreds of strikers, union and left leaders still being held in jail immediately released!

### "Anti-Imperialist" Military Regime Turns Right

Riots first erupted after the government authorized large price increases for gasoline, wheat products, milk and cooking oil which had previously been subsidized to protect low-income consumers in a country which has a current

rate of inflation of 80 percent and unemployment of 40 percent. The government adopted its austerity program after the IMF and foreign banks refused to refinance short-term debt payments of about \$1 billion due this spring unless the government undertook measures to reduce deficits and increase exports.

The Peruvian government was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. Wells Fargo Bank had already declared Peru in default of \$26 million, which it was able to cover only by obtaining an advance payment of royalties from the Occidental Petroleum Corporation. Morales Bermúdez' appeal to Washington resulted in agreement from Carter to accelerate food shipments on credit but not to cover any of the existing debt. The military regime in Lima—which once fancied itself "anti-imperialist," with support from Cuba and the USSR—was thus left to the mercy of Washington's debt collection agency and soon knuckled under to the IMF demands.

The current crisis has its origins in the right turn taken by the Peruvian government after Morales Bermúdez ousted the popular General Velasco Alvarado in a bloodless power shuffle in August 1975. Velasco Alvarado had stood at the head of the nationalist military junta which deposed the conservative president Fernando Belaunde Terry in 1968. The "leftist" generals, most of whom had participated in anti-guerrilla operations in the early 1960's, pompously talked of their coup as the Peruvian Revolution, instituting



populist reforms directed against the "oligarchy" and foreign domination of the economy. Velasco Alvarado's rule from 1968 to 1975 is reminiscent of the populist bonapartism of Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico in the late 1930's.

Like him, Velasco Alvarado found it necessary to enlist a certain measure of mass support in order to modernize the economy of a backward capitalist country with large holdovers of semi-feudal relations of production in the interior. Thus Velasco Alvarado carried out a huge land reform program which broke up a large percentage of the giant estates in Peru and redistributed them among 300,000 peasant families. He also carried out a limited amount of nationalization of foreign industry—notably of International Petroleum (1968), an Exxon subsidiary, and the U.S.-owned Cerro de Pasco copper mine (1974).

Velasco Alvarado's government was hardly the "revolutionary" regime it (and much of the left) claimed it to be, however. Nationalizations of imperialist-owned property were minimal and the 1974 seizure of the Lima daily newspapers, while it did break the right-wing press monopoly, imposed near-total government control and rigid censorship of the national media. The government sponsored a number of schemes for "worker participation" in mixed ownership (state-private) industries and set up a corporatist "social mobilization" institution (SINAMOS) to organize mass support for its reform projects. At the same time, however, strikes were brutally crushed. In late 1971 the government broke a teachers strike, followed by the assassination of several mine workers in Cobriza (November 1971) and the occupation of several sugar plantations (early 1972). In addition, prominent leftists were exiled and their organizations forced underground. Even the Communist Party, despite its strong support for the *velasquista* regime, was only tolerated in a semi-legal status.

Morales Bermúdez calls his government the "second phase" of the revolution of the armed forces—a time of consolidation. The first act of "consolidation" was to purge all the

*velasquistas* from the government, some of whom were forced into exile in January 1977, after forming the PSR to mobilize peasant support for the military officers who carried out the land reform. Under Morales Bermúdez all land reform and nationalization came to a complete halt, all "anti-imperialist" rhetoric was eliminated, private business was encouraged and American foreign capital was courted.

The brutal repression unleashed by the military government of Morales Bermúdez exposes the treachery of all brands of Stalinism, which for years embraced the revolutionary pretensions

government order raising food and gasoline prices by as much as 50 percent led to a 24-hour general strike July 19 which left 19 dead.

The protests caused the government to back down on some of its proposals and reduce the price hikes intended for milk, bread, noodles and flour, but also gave it an excuse for mass repression. Hundreds of labor leaders, including CGTP secretary-general Eduardo Castillo, were arrested. On July 21 the government issued a decree that allowed companies a period of 15 days to fire union leaders who have participated in the strike and 5,210 militants were

sectors of the army threatened heavy repression, an intervention by Morales Bermúdez obtained the support of del Prado, whose supporters in the labor federation called off the work stoppage at the last minute. This further deepened divisions within the party as well as strengthening the appeal of the several Maoist and "Trotskyist" groups to the left of the PCP. Division in the left and the PCI was also undoubtedly important in the defeat of another general strike called by the CGTP on February 28. The strike fizzled after the first day when transport, banks and most businesses functioned normally.

The May general strike was organized by the Communist-led CGTP, where militants in opposition to the del Prado leadership are strong. Due to the severity of the government's economic measures they even managed to drag in the *aprista* CTP, which boycotted the July 19 and February 28 general strikes, even though APRA leaders have been trying to win the favor of Morales Bermúdez. But the events of the last weeks of May proved that no wing of the reformist, Stalinist PCP is capable of leading the masses' struggle to victory over the strutting military bonapartes. Both wings seek only to *pressure* the government, although with differing degrees of intensity. The role of the strike leaders was to *limit* and contain the mobilization of Peruvian workers, which had gained a huge momentum and become fiercely antagonistic to the military regime already days before the start of the "official" strike.

Despite the loss of workers' lives and the mass arrests, the government was clearly on the defensive throughout the strike. Yet the effect of the "48-hour" strike call was to put a time limit on the protest—at the height of the struggle the workers were told to go back to work. Moreover, there were no mass demonstrations to display the strikers' power and take control of the streets. If the strike had been in the hands of revolutionaries rather than these class betrayers, the leadership would have seized the opportunity to mobilize the workers against the isolated military government, now revealed as a servant of the imperialists. A Peruvian Trotskyist party would have fought for the formation of democratically elected mass strike committees to pose a direct alternative to the Morales Bermúdez regime and provide the means for organizing a proletarian victory.

With the support of the huge peasantry, a workers and peasants government would expropriate both national and foreign capitalists, unleashing an agrarian revolution to sweep away the remains of feudalism and latifundia from the Indian highlands to the coastal plantations. Far from accepting the narrow limits of backward Peru, as do both Moscow and Peking Stalinists—not to mention the "left" generals, whose concept of the Peruvian Revolution is to get the U.S. to recognize the 200-mile limit on territorial waters!—it would spread the revolutionary struggle up and down the cordillera and beyond the Andes. On its banner would be inscribed not *Inca* nationalism but the slogan raised by the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky: for a Socialist United States of Latin America! ■



Abbes/Gamma

Peruvian president Morales Bermúdez "consolidates the Revolution" by ordering drastic price rises, shooting strikers. Stalinists supported phony "anti-imperialist" generals.

of the Peruvian generals. Castro praised Velasco Alvarado as a dedicated anti-imperialist and received Peruvian officers in Havana who only a few years before were hunting down Castroite guerrillas in the Andes. Moscow sent heavy arms shipments in addition to political praise, to the point that the Peruvian army is now largely equipped with Soviet arms. So when the strikers blocking the road to the Lima airport were killed by troops, they were shot down by Russian machine guns and tanks.

#### From July 19 to May 22

As the price of Peruvian exports (copper, fishmeal) fell on international markets and the prices of imports (especially oil) rose, the trade deficit ballooned. As a loyal vassal of imperialism Morales Bermúdez found it necessary to submit to the demands of the IMF and U.S. and European banks. The first attempt to impose an austerity program similar to that announced this May took place last summer when five weeks of street protests against a

subsequently sacked.

While the July 19 strike was a direct confrontation with Morales Bermúdez, the Communist Party (PCP) insisted that the work stoppage be directed "against the right and not against the government" (*Marka*, 27 October 1977). With the arrest of CGTP leaders, however, PCP enthusiasm for the "Revolutionary Government" cooled. Nevertheless when the Lima regional affiliate of the PSR-led CTRP labor federation called a strike for September 20 demanding the rehiring of the union activists, the CGTP did not go along.

As the economic crisis has deepened and the government repeatedly shown that its only answer is to further impoverish Peru's working masses, Morales Bermúdez is quickly losing any advantage of the "populist" image inherited from his predecessor. And as the military government is increasingly despised, the PCP has become discredited for its craven support to the government.

This, in turn, has provoked widespread discontent in the party directed at long-time PCP secretary-general Jorge del Prado. It reached the point that by January of this year the leadership of the party's youth group, part of the CGTP leadership, the Lima regional committee (which controls over half the party membership) and a large number of central committee members went into open rebellion, refusing to recognize the political committee headed by "El Viejo" (the old buzzard) del Prado. The rebels' complaint was that the PCP leadership "maintain that the entire armed forces were revolutionary and it was necessary to preserve their unity" (*Marka*, 12 January 1978). They were particularly angered by del Prado's efforts to head the PCP slate for the June "constituent assembly."

In this boiling factional war the CGTP had scheduled a two-day general strike for January 23-24. However, as

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## UAW Passivity Allows Fascist HQ to Reopen

# Detroit Community Fights Nazis

DETROIT, May 23 Thanks to the legalistic policies of the labor bureaucracy Nazis have again poked their heads up in this black and heavily union city. Barely five weeks after members of the "National Socialist Movement" were evicted by court order from their "bookstore" on the Southwest side of Detroit, the race-hating sect reopened a storefront office last Saturday in the racially mixed Northwest side Brightmoor district. The fascist bunker on Fenkell Avenue has been the scene of repeated clashes as demonstrations of up to 300 outraged neighborhood residents and community groups seeking to oust the two-bit stormtroopers have found themselves pitted against the Nazis and their protectors in the Detroit Police Department.

Within an hour of the opening of the new Nazi headquarters, its windows pasted full of anti-Semitic and anti-black posters, a small picket line was set up by the Jewish War Veterans. As more and more opponents of the Nazis' presence gathered, six Detroit police squad cars and a Tactical Mobile Unit were rushed to the scene to protect the fascist scum. The atmosphere became particularly tense after Charles Benhan, head of the Detroit Roundtable of Christians and Jews, entered the building and was assaulted and thrown out by helmeted Nazis who stood outside jeering at demonstrators, who by then numbered over 200, their ranks bolstered by members of local motorcycle clubs.

By nightfall, the growing crowd began throwing bricks at the fascist headquarters and 60 cops in riot gear were mobilized to seal off a several-block-square area and disperse the demonstrators. The following day the clashes were renewed, with anti-Nazi protesters throwing stones and bottles at the police stationed in front of the building. Four Nazis were beaten to the pavement when they strayed out of their office, but the arrest toll mounted to 17. Over the next two days, a total of 55 protesters were arrested on charges ranging from felonious assault on a police officer to incitement to riot and destruction of property.

The Nazi presence in Brightmoor has sparked widespread hostility among community residents with the local youth and members of largely proletarian motorcycle clubs participating in the spontaneous demonstrations. In explaining this one of the bike-club leaders interviewed by the *Detroit Free Press* (24 May) expressed the fear that the Nazis' race-hate propaganda would spark racial clashes in the area which, although predominantly white working class, contains a substantial black population as well. And while there was some anti-Germán sentiment expressed, the community opposition to the Nazis reflects as well the general disgust of the residents toward a bunch of sleazy punks whom they see as invading the neighborhood.

Since last December, when the fascists first crept into view in Detroit, the Spartacist League has called for a broad-based mobilization of the city's powerful labor movement and minority



Residents demonstrate as Nazis reopen "bookstore" in their community.

organizations to drive the Nazis out. Though socially marginal now when the capitalists do not directly need their terrorist services, the Nazis are pledged to the most vicious pogroms against blacks, Jews and the labor movement. Their razor-slashing assault on a young woman trade unionist outside an earlier anti-Nazi meeting is just a small sample of the attacks they yearn to launch.

But rather than mobilize the power of Detroit's hundreds of thousands of auto workers and massive black population, the leaders of the trade-union bureaucracy and "responsible" black organizations have chosen either to ignore the fascists or to turn to the bourgeois courts and government agencies hectoring them to evict the fascists. For four months, the Nazis' office in Detroit's Southwest side distributed hate literature, while the Nazis thumbed their noses at left-wing demonstrators and a "Labor-Community Council Against the Nazis" initiated by the leadership of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 600 fought proposals by auto worker militants for mass demonstrations to oust the Nazis.

The UAW tops preferred to pursue a court suit to evict the Nazis for a violation of their lease. Though the Nazis were finally ousted from their premises, the Spartacist League warned, "While this time around a legal technicality could be used to effect the Nazi eviction, the capitalist courts will not and cannot fight the fascist threat. Until they flee in fear of their lives it is only a matter of time until these homegrown Hitler lovers stick their heads up again" (*WV* No. 202, 21 April). Our prediction proved absolutely correct, as the Nazis almost immediately reappeared.

Yet the labor bureaucrats and their liberal allies learn nothing from bitter experience. At a turbulent meeting on May 23 at the Brightmoor Community Council headquarters, Paul Boatín, chairman of the Local 600 "Labor-Community Council" pleaded "give us a couple of days" to initiate court action,

claiming that the new landlord did not know he was renting to Nazis. But angry community residents impatiently shouted, "It took you three months at Vernor," referring to the long drawn-out effort to get the fascists out of their Southwest side office.

Brightmoor Community Council president Walter Roesler was similarly shouted down when he meekly urged "peaceful and legal action." "It's war," community residents responded. "If the police can't get the Nazis out, we can!" Matt Prince, a rank-and-file member of the UAW's Local 600, was widely applauded when he said that only the working people could drive the Nazis out and called for a massive labor demonstration in front of the fascist headquarters.

The failure of the labor bureaucracy in Detroit to mount a massive opposition to the Nazis has allowed a situation in which neighborhood youth and angered but isolated individuals have gone up alone against the violence of the Nazis and the Detroit Police Department. Not only does this rob the demonstrations of the social power necessary to close down the fascist lair,

it also has aided the diversion of anti-Nazi sentiment into anti-German chauvinism. Some local residents have shown up with signs against the "krauts." Even members of ostensibly socialist organizations have capitulated to this American nationalism. Frank Runninghorse, national spokesman for the International Socialists' youth group, Red Tide, appeared one day on the picket line with a sign, "We Kicked Your Ass in Germany, We'll Do It In," which in effect sided with the Allied imperialists against Germany in World War II.

The size and discipline of Detroit's powerful labor organizations, principally the UAW, are necessary to decisively rout the Nazis, instead of engaging in innumerable clashes with the police who defend the Nazis' "rights." Writing about the struggle against fascist gangs in the 1930's Leon Trotsky said:

"In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists; it wants to arbitrate. Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehensions, on the part of the 'arbiter,' its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbiter without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the state itself. That is the whole point!"

*Writings, 1936-37*

Another eviction notice for the Nazis will only convince them that they have to set up shop elsewhere. The task for Detroit's working and black masses seeking to drive out the Nazis is to mount a force sufficient to show the brown-shirted Hitlerites that renewing their efforts is not worth the effort. One of the Nazis himself succinctly summed up the alternatives when he told a newsmen: "We are just going to have to keep this up until they give up or wipe us out" (*Detroit Free Press*, 22 May).

Detroit workers should heed this warning and demand that their unions drive the Nazis out, beginning with a massive demonstration in front of the fascist office, and demanding that all charges be dropped against those arrested in the anti-Nazi protests. Drive the Nazis out of Detroit! ■



UAW Local 600 member calls for labor mobilization against Nazis.