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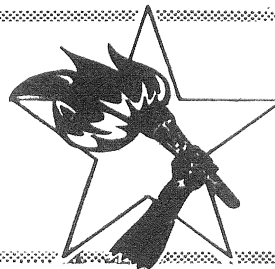
The Struggle for Black Liberation

See Pages 9-12

TORCH

NEWSPAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST LEAGUE

AUGUST 15-SEPTEMBER 14, 1983



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 8/254

FIGHT FOR JOBS, PEACE AND FREEDOM!



This month's 20th Anniversary Mobilization for Jobs, Peace and Freedom commemorates the 1963 March for Jobs and Freedom, an important event in the struggle for Black liberation in the 1950s and 1960s. But the August 27 march is more than a memorial to a demon-

—EDITORIAL—

stration in the past; it represents the beginning of a new stage in the struggle for equal rights and justice for all.

Today, the gains of the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s are being rolled back in dramatic fashion. Recently released statistics show that in 1982 more than 34 million people—15 percent of the entire U.S. population—lived below the official poverty line. This is an increase of 2.6 million people in just one year. And today the poverty rate stands at its highest point since 1965, the year President Johnson's "War on Poverty" began.

In 1983, as in the early 1960s, a disproportionate share of the poor are Black. The median income of Black families in 1960 was 55 percent of that of white families. After nearly 25 years of struggle

(Continued on page 6)

Reagan Steps Up U.S. Military Intervention in Central America

By PAUL BENJAMIN

The Reagan administration is sharply stepping up its war threats against Central America. Recent developments include the following:

• Reagan has ordered naval forces, including two aircraft carrier battle groups and the battleship New Jersey, to conduct "maneuvers" off the Nicaraguan coast—in particular to practice tactics for blockading Nicaraguan ports. The aircraft carrier Ranger and its

escorts, the first of these ships to reach the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua, have already begun to harass Russian freighters bound for Nicaragua.

• The administration is also sending as many as 5,000 U.S. troops to Honduras for up to six months. Once they arrive, military engineers will build airstrips suitable for use by advanced U.S. aircraft, and electronic surveillance stations. U.S. Marines will practice amphibious landings on the Honduran coasts. Weapons and supplies will be

stored in Honduras for use by the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force in the event of an "emergency."

• In addition to these immediate steps, the administration is planning a vast increase in military aid to U.S. allies in Central America. It is considering asking Congress to raise 1984 military aid to the Salvadorean, Honduran, Guatemalan and Costa Rican governments by as much as 40 percent—to \$400 million. Some Reagan aides have also raised the possibility of increasing the number of U.S. military "advisers" in El Salvador from 55 to 125 and giving them greater freedom to accompany Salvadorean forces into the field.

• The administration wants to beef up the counter-revolutionary forces seeking to overthrow the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. It hopes to build up the "contra" bands based in Honduras from an estimated 3,000 members to

between 12,000 and 15,000 troops. It has also worked out a deal with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in which the Israeli government will ship weapons captured during the invasion of Lebanon to Honduras for the "contra" forces.

Reagan seeks military victory

Reagan and his top foreign policy advisers all say that the dramatic show of force in Central America is not a step toward war. Instead, they claim, it is a means of bringing peace to the region. Secretary of State George Schultz, testifying before Congress on August 4, said that the military exercises were ordered because "the far left and its

(Continued on page 3)

SECCION EN ESPAÑOL

Curfew in Detroit

Dear Torch,

Once again, some basic fundamental rights are being taken away due to the state's inability to solve the economic crisis.

Repression of young people has hit recently in Detroit, where the unemployment figures have been the highest in the nation. On June 29th, Democratic Mayor Coleman Young called for police to begin stricter enforcement of the 1976 curfew ordinance which calls for young people under 18 to be off the streets by 10 p.m., Sunday thru Thursday and 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Young, who was quoted as calling the youth of Detroit "hoodlums," reinforced this ordinance as he blames juveniles for increasing street violence. But after only two weeks of this enforcement, the area had one of its most violent weekends with five shootings, leaving two dead and critically wounding three.

There have been reported sweeps of theaters and arcades by the police in pursuit of curfew violators, and hundreds of youths have been arrested.

Adults surveyed by a Detroit newspaper telephone poll (no youths were surveyed in this poll) overwhelmingly support the curfew, believing it will significantly reduce the crime rate in the city and does not violate the constitutional rights of children. Suburbanites polled voiced approval of a similar ordinance extended to their communities.

But the curfew hasn't been accepted by all members of the community. The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit in behalf of a Detroit teenager arrested for curfew violation. The suit is based on the curfew being unconstitutional because it singles out one age group for discrimination. The ACLU is seeking dismissal of the charges against the 17-year-old, who was arrested at a downtown arcade.

Another attack on the rights of young people, which happened within a week of the curfew enforcement, was the cancellation of the remaining summer concerts held weekly in downtown Detroit's Hart Plaza. The plaza is located next to the city's showplace for the influential in Detroit, the Renaissance Center. Many unemployed youth and adults, numbering 7-8,000 at the final concert, went to the outdoor concerts to listen to music and hang-out. City officials admit to canceling the concerts due to the lack of security. It was quite evident that the city government felt like they had lost control of the situation as 5-700 youth attempted to enter the RenCen after the last concert and were locked out. This happened at the same time as the Democratic National Committee was holding its final meetings before the convention in the summer of

1984, in the Renaissance Center.

Another target of harassment of unemployed youth has been at the video arcades, especially those in the "tourist" strip of Greektown. Proposals for tighter legislation have passed which would require: paid security guards, adult supervision for minors, heavy licensing fees and a curfew on arcade hours (10 p.m. on weekdays and 11 p.m. on weekends).

Mayor Young claims that these measures are to "crack down on crime in Detroit," and to make the city streets safe. But the mayor's interest does not lie with the safety of all the people of Detroit. His only interest is maintaining the safety of his new "baby," the Renaissance Center, and riverfront projects in hopes of luring big business back to downtown. A recent article in the *Detroit Free Press* said that the curfew, while not being strictly enforced in the neighborhoods, will be strictly enforced in the downtown business area.

While the rest of the city is rotting away — neighborhood housing is a shambles, health facilities are inadequate, a derelict and defunct educational system (14 main libraries were closed indefinitely) and unemployment figures in double digits — the city has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the revitalization of downtown Detroit as a new convention center and "Jamaica" of the midwest. The city also has plans for casino gambling at a large city park, Belle Isle, and hopes to open other gambling centers in other parts of the city.

This revitalization has produced some jobs (minimum wage service-type jobs) and a lot of profits for the already rich capitalist corporations, such as Ford and GM. But what it hasn't produced is any real answers to the crisis of the capitalist economy and it hasn't made life any better for Detroit's already impoverished people.

So with the attacks coming down on youth: unemployment, child abuse, and more and more general repression, what does

capitalism have to offer them?

Mayor Young may have a lot of goodies to offer to the rich, but his coffers are empty when it comes to the working class. For most youth, and many adults in Detroit, there is no future to look forward to... no jobs, no education and, for many, no heat or decent housing in the coming winter. Life in Detroit is especially hard for women, who make up the largest percentage of head of households, and thus some of the most affected by poverty. Mayor Young knows these people have a large potential for organizing and fighting back against this system and ultimately destroying it. Our job as revolutionary socialists is to tap this potential force, organize and politicize it to create a movement that will smash capitalism and its repression once and for all.

Beverly Anderson
Maggie Sands
Detroit

Gay prisoner needs help

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

I am in need of Torch's help—I am in the Arizona state prison in Florence, Arizona. I have been gay all my life—I was sexually assaulted by two prison guards and I have tried every avenue to file criminal charges against them.

The Internal Affairs division has ignored the matter and I have no family to turn to.

Since I made the first step to file charges I have constantly had my life threatened by one of the two guards and have had foreign substances put in my food by the same officer. I have appealed to the prison authorities and have been totally ignored.

I need help. The officers, C. Rickman and G. Ward, deserve to be charged and because I am housed in an isolation cell in the

back of the basement where CSO Rickman works five days a week and has threatened me constantly, I am in a prone spot.

Please, I need your help before it's too late for me. Help me!

LaRye V. Avila
B-41868
Florence, AZ

Please send letters of protest to: Harold J. Cardwell, Superintendent, Arizona State Prison, P.O. Box 629, Florence, AZ 85232.

Support March on Washington

Dear Torch,

Circumstances smiled on my connection with Torch/La Antorcha and the June 15-July 14 issue managed to slip through the barriers of bureaucracy to reach me here in the basement dungeon of segregation of Lewisburg federal prison.

I agree with your encouragement of people to support the 20th Anniversary Mobilization for Jobs, Peace, and Freedom despite the bourgeois and even reactionary character of some of those who have affiliated themselves with it. Those elements grudgingly contribute their "lukewarm" support only in an effort to manipulate people into surrendering their power to them rather than out of real commitment to a more equitable social reality. Effectiveness obligates progressive people to work to expose these ulterior motives and to struggle with all people on our side of the barricade in order to forge the most revolutionary future. Support of and participation in the Mobilization can help do both. Would that I could be involved as more than a mere observer!

I also very much liked the explanation of how you can support and strongly criticize national liberation movements such as that in El Salvador at the same time. The article on Vietnam and Southeast Asia provided even more insights in that regard. I have seen it argued—with some validity, it appears—that a revolutionary struggle must go through a bourgeois phase in throwing off the yoke of imperialism or an aristocracy, and the state capitalism we see replacing revolutionary struggles is compatible with that idea. So far, no revolution has been able to throw

off both layers of exploiters at the same time. But national struggles in a world that needs an international revolution do have their place, are necessary, and, in the vast majority of cases, are deserving of both our moral and material support. They fight our common enemy. Given uneven development and the fact that it is the enemy that determines the borders, political rebels have no choice but to fight their local bourgeoisie, to create free zones (or try to) where they can without unifying the enemy against them. With such in place, the benefits of Che's idea of many Vietnams is much more likely to be realized—and in less time and with less death and destruction.

In many national liberation struggles, the people realize a net gain. Despite the deformations, the theft of the people's power, the crippling of their revolution, who can reasonably say that the Cubans would be better off under Batista, the Nicaraguans under Somoza, or even the Russians under the Tsar? And many such struggles have been able to facilitate other progressive movements, materially, if not theoretically. They practice but have not yet been able to lay down any practice. In addition, nationalist struggles radicalize people, both those involved and those elsewhere, like here. This should make it easier to make the real revolution. (It is hard to blame people wanting an end to war and privation for being temporarily seduced by glib "leaders" who seek power in a heady victory over an oppressor.) I agree that we should not let the support silence our necessary and valid criticism—the Vietnam article includes an excellent expression of why not—but neither can we let our reservations slow down the waging of people's war.

Bill Dunne
U.S. Penitentiary
Lewisburg, PA

Correction

In the previous issue of the Torch/La Antorcha, an article entitled "Anti-War Activists Map Plans at Second Mexico/U.S. Border Conference" contained a misstatement. Two amendments to the conference resolution, which the Torch credited to the Organization for Revolutionary Unity (ORU), were actually submitted by a bloc of four organizations: the ORU, the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo, Chile en Lucha, and the Central American Solidarity Committee. We regret the error.

TO OUR READERS

On the weekend of September 30-October 2, 1983, the RSL will be holding its 10th Anniversary Convention. Readers of the Torch/La Antorcha interested in attending the convention are invited to contact the RSL National Office or your local RSL branch for further details. Due to the convention, we will be skipping the October 15-November 14 issue of the Torch/La Antorcha. Normal publication will resume with the November 15 issue.

IN THIS ISSUE

AUGUST 15-SEPTEMBER 14, 1983

- 1 Fight for jobs, peace and freedom
Reagan steps up military intervention in Central America
 - 3 Coup in Guatemala
 - 6 1963 March on Washington: Myth and reality
 - 7 In memoriam: Comrade Awali
 - 8 Stop the death flights
Kissinger Commission
L.A. Central America protest
 - 9 Black people in the U.S.: The fight for freedom—Part Two
- FEATURES**
- 2 Letters
 - RSL Convention
 - 4 Briefs
 - Ma Bell struck... War in Chad... Jamaica... Turks murder... Southern Poverty Law Center... Women's Encampment... International gay conference... Harold Washington... Atlanta child murders
 - 13 RSL Program in Brief

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Reagan Steps Up Intervention

(Continued from page 1)

foreign supporters" in Central America needed an "incentive" to persuade them to come to the bargaining table.

But the administration is more interested in an outright military victory in Central America than in a negotiated settlement. It is demanding that the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and its political arm, the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), the leaders of the anti-imperialist struggle in El Salvador, give up their hopes for victory or even a share of political power. Instead, Reagan insists, they must surrender their arms and place themselves at the mercy of the ultra-rightist Salvadorean rulers who have turned their country into a slaughterhouse.

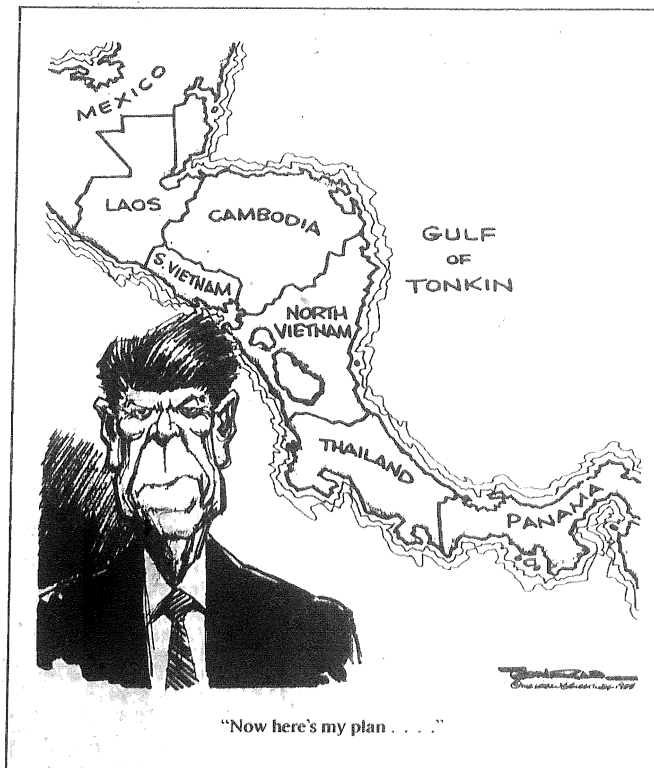
In similar fashion, the U.S. imperialists are demanding that the Sandinistas not only end whatever aid they may have been giving the FMLN-FDR, but also share control over Nicaragua's government and economy with those pro-U.S. capitalists and politicians who remain in Nicaragua, and even with Somoza's hired killers. And it is insisting that the Cuban government cut off its military aid to the FMLN, the Sandinistas, and to other leftist forces in the region.

If the various national liberation forces in Central America refuse to knuckle under to Reagan's ultimatums, the current U.S. military exercises may prove to be the springboard for direct military action in the region. Possible U.S. steps could include a naval blockade or "quarantine" of Nicaragua, air strikes in support of the U.S.-backed "contras" or a Honduran invasion of Nicaragua.

U.S. imperialism on the defensive

Reagan is escalating U.S. intervention in Central America because earlier efforts to contain anti-imperialist revolts in the region haven't worked. As one senior Reagan aide put it, "On the present course, we are certain to lose."

In El Salvador, the military has been unable to crush the FMLN despite massive U.S. aid. On the contrary, the leftist forces have been able to seize the initiative despite a recent government



offensive in San Vicente province. At the same time, U.S. diplomacy has been unable to win any significant international credibility for the rightist regime led by President Alvaro Magaña and constituent assembly leader Roberto D'Aubuisson.

In Nicaragua, the "contras"—aided by the CIA and the Honduran military—have killed some 600 people, inflicted \$70 million in damage to the economy and forced the Nicaraguan government to divert badly needed resources to the defense of its northern border. However, the "contras" have been unable to occupy Nicaraguan territory for any length of time and most observers doubt that the rightist guerrillas presently pose a serious threat to Sandinista rule. Moreover, despite popular criticism of

the Nicaraguan government—acknowledged by the Sandinistas themselves—the vast majority of the Nicaraguan people have rallied to the government against the U.S.-backed Somocistas.

An awkward parallel?

Within the U.S. itself, the administration is openly frustrated over its failure to convince Congress—and, more importantly, the U.S. public—that it has a coherent plan for "stabilizing" Central America without sending in U.S. troops. Even within the government, a recently-leaked National Security Agency docu-

ment stated that the administration's escalating military commitment in Central America, combined with its lack of any clearly stated Central American policy, was creating "an awkward parallel with Vietnam."

In a series of meetings in early July, Reagan's top Central America advisers concluded that dramatic action was necessary to gain the initiative in Central America and win public support for Reagan's hardline policy.

Sandinistas offer peace deal

The administration's show of force in Central America has clearly alarmed the region's leftist leaders. On July 19, the Sandinistas responded to news of the maneuvers by offering a six-point peace program. It called for an "absolute end to all supplies from any country to the conflicting forces in El Salvador." Other points in the Sandinista proposal included a non-aggression pact between Nicaragua and Honduras, an end to economic discrimination against any Central American country, an end to military aid to "forces opposing any of the Central American governments" and noninterference in the internal affairs of any of the region's countries.

Similarly, Cuban Premier Fidel Castro offered on July 28 to end military aid to both the FMLN and the Sandinistas and to withdraw Cuban military advisers from Nicaragua if the U.S. withdrew its own military aid and advisers in Central America.

In other words, the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments are offering to cut off material support for the revolution in El Salvador and other insurgencies elsewhere in Central America in return for a U.S. pledge to refrain from military intervention in the region. In private talks with reporters, a "senior Nicaraguan official" emphasized his support for the FMLN, but went on to justify the peace offer, saying, "We must also practice survival politics. We are responsible for our revolution, and the Cubans are responsible first of all for their revolution."

Not surprisingly, some Salvadorean leftists greeted the Nicaraguan and (Continued on page 8)

Coup Topples Ríos Montt in Guatemala

On August 8, a military coup in Guatemala overthrew the rule of General Efraín Ríos Montt. General Oscar Humberto Mejía Victores was named to replace Ríos Montt as president of Guatemala. Army commanders claim the "transfer of authority" within the country's military regime was provoked by efforts of "fanatic and aggressive religious groups" favored by Ríos Montt to take over the government.

Ríos Montt took power in Guatemala after a similar coup on March 23, 1982. He immediately suspended the constitution and ordered all political parties to end their activities. In July 1982, his government imposed a state of siege and began a brutal campaign against leftist insurgents and Indian peasants, who make up the majority of the country's

population and are sympathetic to the rebels. Thousands of Indians were slaughtered, over 100,000 fled into neighboring Mexico and another million saw their homes destroyed during the army offensive.

Ríos Montt also antagonized most of Guatemala's traditional ruling elite during his 17 months in power. He is a "born-again" Protestant in a Catholic country who pushed aside political leaders from Guatemala's traditionally right-wing parties and relied on evangelical advisers from the California-based Church of the Word. Ríos Montt also angered top army commanders by appointing lower-ranking officers to his military council. He alienated business leaders as well by raising their taxes and scolding them for keeping mistresses in

his weekly television sermons.

In June, Ríos Montt barely avoided an attempted military coup. In July, he tried to gain support by dismissing two evangelical advisers and the younger officers on his council and by promising quick elections. But these concessions were too little and too late to save his regime.

Ríos Montt's ouster is an embarrassment to the Reagan administration, which supported his counter-guerrilla campaign and was trying to convince Congress to resume large-scale military aid to Guatemala after a five-year-cut-off. Reagan himself declared last December that Ríos Montt had gotten a "bum rap" from U.S. human-rights activists. One senior Reagan adviser commented after the coup: "It sets

everything back. I'd suggest he was pretty good for the United States."

The new rulers of Guatemala have sworn to continue Ríos Montt's repressive, pro-imperialist policies. In his first statement after the coup, Mejía Victores assured the Guatemalan capitalists—and U.S. imperialism—that the army would continue its campaign to "eradicate the virus of Marxism-Leninism" in Guatemala. Mejía Victores also has close ties with Mario Sandoval Alarcón, head of the ultra-rightist Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Movement). Alarcón boasts of his support for ousted Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle. He has condemned Reagan's "weak" Central American policy and pledged support for any U.S. military attack on Cuba or Nicaragua. □

Nationwide strike against Ma Bell

More than 675,000 phone workers walked off their jobs as their contract expired Sunday, August 7—beginning the first national strike against "Ma Bell" since 1971. Three unions are represented in the coordinated bargaining and strike activities—the Communication Workers of America, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the Telecommunications International Union. National negotiations remain broken off as we go to press, with Ma Bell's refusal to move from its original wage offer of 0 to 3.5 percent, with a reduction in COLA, for the three-year contract.

With their work stoppage, phone employees hope to draw the line against wage cuts and benefit takebacks in an industry unscathed by the recession. (AT&T reported profits for fiscal year 1982 of \$7.28 billion, an increase of 6.7 percent over 1981 profits.) Also at stake in the conflict are the issues of job security and the structure of union bargaining related to the court-ordered breakup of AT&T in January 1984.

The president of the CWA, Glenn Watts, has predicted a lengthy strike will be necessary to have a significant impact on the heavily automated industry. Ninety-seven percent of all calls are handled by automatic telephone circuitry. Despite Ma Bell's claim that they can hold out indefinitely, picket lines remain strong and there are increasing reports of strikers' sabotage of phone cables and automatic switching equipment. Hopefully, the signs pointing to an economic recovery (however limited it may be), together with the real possibility that this will be the last chance for national bargaining and strikes in the phone industry, will give workers the determination to outlast Ma Bell.

—Lisa Deshong

U.S. sends AWACS to Chad

The U.S. and French governments are stepping up their aid to the pro-Western regime of President Hissen Habré in Chad. Habré's rule is under attack by forces loyal to former Chadian President Goukouni Oueddei and supported by Libyan ruler Muammar el-Qaddafi.

On August 5, the Reagan administration sent two

AWACS surveillance planes, together with a fighter escort, to the neighboring Sudan to keep track of Libyan air attacks in Chad. It also raised its military aid to the Habré regime from \$10 million to \$25 million. And Reagan ordered the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower to patrol off the Libyan coast. Meanwhile, France's social-democratic president, François Mitterrand, sent 500 heavily-armed paratroopers to Ndjamena, Chad's capital, on August 10 to provide "training" for Chadian government troops.

The conflict between Habré and Goukouni is only the latest in a series of Chadian power struggles that began in the mid-1960s. Habré, who at one time served as Minister of Defense in Goukouni's government, was forced into exile in 1980. With the aid of the CIA, the Sudanese government and French mercenaries, he was able to oust Goukouni and seize control of the government in June 1982. But Goukouni was able to regroup his forces and begin a bid to regain power in June 1983.

Most of the fighting that has taken place since June has centered on the strategic town of Faya-Largeau, in north-central Chad. Goukouni's forces captured the town in June, but it was retaken by Habré's troops on July 31. On August 10, Goukouni's army of about 2,000 troops, reportedly backed by Libyan infantry and tanks, again took control of the town. This victory not only gave Goukouni control of northern Chad, but also opened the road to Ndjamena, some 500 miles to the south.

Various foreign powers are using the conflicting forces in Chad as pawns in their own efforts to dominate central Africa. The Libyan government has often intervened in Chad to further Qaddafi's expansionist ambitions. It has occupied the Aozou district on the Libyan-Chadian border—which Qaddafi claims as Libyan territory—since 1970. Libyan troops also intervened in Chad to support Goukouni in 1980-81.

The French government ruled much of Central Africa, including Chad, until the early 1960s—and has never given up its efforts to maintain control of the region. French troops occupied Chad in 1978-79. In dispatching troops to Chad, Mitterrand's supposedly socialist regime is continuing this neo-colonialist policy. Despite its occasional "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, the Mitterrand government actually maintains over 7,000 French troops and "advisers" to prop up pro-Western regimes in five Central African countries.

More recently, the Reagan administration has begun to interfere in Chadian affairs as part of its campaign to block any expansion of Libyan influence and ultimately to undermine Qaddafi's rule. By intervening in Chad—and sending ships and troops to Central America, ordering military exercises in the Middle East, Thailand and Japan, sending U.S. Marines to Lebanon and reaffirming



A soldier in Chad. Internal power struggles and foreign intervention have brought the Chadian people 18 years of civil war.

military commitments in the Persian Gulf—Reagan is trying to revive the U.S. government's role as world policeman for Western imperialism.

—PB

Jamaica: Seaga tightens the screws

The following news release was issued by the RSL's sister organization, the Revolutionary Marxist League (RML) of Jamaica, W.I., on Sunday, June 19, 1983.

The austerity measures announced by Prime Minister Seaga on Thursday, June 16, 1983, represent the latest and most vicious attack on the working and oppressed Jamaican masses by the JLP [Jamaica Labour Party] government, acting on behalf of big business interests and imperialism.

The massive price increases, shortages of basic items, layoffs, cutbacks and deterioration of social services and other brutal hardships which now face the Jamaican masses are the direct result of the right-wing capitalist and pro-imperialist policy pursued by the JLP regime. This policy has involved pawning the country to U.S. imperialism, squandering the country's wealth on luxuries for the ruling class while squeezing all classes and strata of Jamaican society except the biggest capitalists and landlords. It is a policy which the JLP has carried out, hand in hand with the U.S.-dominated imperialist finance agency, the IMF [International Monetary Fund].

The JLP government's present attempt to place the full burden of the worsening capitalist crisis onto the backs of the Jamaican masses exposes the

falsity of its economic claims up to quite recently. Up to last week and including during the budget presentation, Seaga and the JLP were painting a fairly positive economic picture for the nation. Now they have been forced to admit that, as the RML has maintained all along, the country is bogged down in a deep crisis created by the local capitalists and the imperialists.

The RML calls on the working and oppressed Jamaican masses to militantly resist these latest attacks. We must demand among other things: 1) The immediate breaking off of the agreement with the IMF; 2) cancellation of the massive debts contracted by the capitalists over the years, so that the country's foreign exchange earnings can be used to finance production and the importation of basic goods; 3) a massive, islandwide program of public works financed by a special tax on the capitalists and imperialists and a shorter workweek without loss of pay to workers, to provide jobs for the unemployed.

These demands constitute a program for revolution.

The capitalists and imperialists have obviously failed miserably in their attempts to run Jamaica and the world. In the interests of our simple survival the working and oppressed masses must overthrow the rotten capitalist system and take power into our own hands.

—C. Tucker
(for) RML Executive

Light sentence in Turks murder

On June 22, 1982, Willie Turks, a 34-year-old New York City Black man, was dragged from his car and beaten to death by a gang of 15-20 white youths shouting racist epithets. Turks had stopped for a snack in the mostly-white Gravesend section of Brooklyn after working second shift at a nearby subway train yard.

Last March 8, Gino Bova, believed to have struck the blow to Turks' head that proved fatal, was acquitted by a jury of 11 whites and one Latin of two charges of second degree murder and convicted only of second-degree manslaughter. Bova received a 5 to 15 year term.

Now, Paul Mormando, the person believed to have pulled Turks from his car, has been acquitted of all murder and manslaughter charges by a jury of eight whites, three Latins and one Black person. In the August 4 verdict, Mormando was convicted of four misdemeanors and sentenced to two consecutive one-year jail terms. A number of legal experts, however, say that Justice Joseph Lombardo erred when he made the terms consecutive and predict that Mormando's sentence will soon be reduced from two years to one.

"I feel great," Mormando said after the acquittals. "They ought to get the wild animals that are in the streets, not the good people," said his mother at the sentencing.

—WF

Anti-Klan center firebombed

On July 28, arsonists, presumed to be Ku Klux Klan members, firebombed the offices of the Southern Poverty Law Center and its Klanwatch program. Reportedly, one or two people broke into the office, which is in a one-story building just outside downtown

EVENTS

Los Angeles

August 27-28—Sunset Junction Street Fair. This popular community event will include a food booth and literature display sponsored by Echo Park CISPEs. Stop by to contribute money or held work! All day Saturday and Sunday, on Sunset Blvd. in Silverlake. For more info, call (213) 660-4587 or (213) 385-6029.

September 17—Stop Mexicana Airlines' Death Flights! Picket Mexicana's ticket office, 432 S. Broadway, 12 noon. Sponsored by Echo Park CISPEs. Call (213) 660-4587 or (213) 385-6029.

September 17—Demonstration in support of Palestinian People. Call (213) 385-6029 for more info.

Montgomery, Alabama, doused files, desks and carpets with a gasoline mixture and set the place afire.

The Southern Poverty Law Center is involved in a large number of court cases against the Klan, including cases involving Blacks who defended themselves against Klan attacks in Decatur, Alabama, two years ago and suits aimed at closing Klan paramilitary training camps in Alabama.

The fire damaged the Center's library files and equipment. Fortunately, "We didn't lose anything that is crucial to any of our lawsuits," said Randall Williams, director of Klanwatch.

Women against nukes

A "Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice" was established this July 4 next to the Seneca Army Depot 100 miles east of Buffalo in New York state.

The encampment is on a 52 acre piece of land purchased with the help of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and other groups. Using the camp as a base, women from feminist and anti-nuclear groups from around the country have carried out civil disobedience protests, often involving several hundred people, at depot gates; invasions of the depot at night to leave anti-war displays; picket lines and, on August 1, a march of over 2,000 people.

The army spent more than \$500,000 improving security arrangements just before the camp opened and increased the number of people stationed at the depot from 500 to 800.

While there has been local support for the protesters, relations between the camp and some of the residents of the nearby towns of Romulus, Seneca Falls and Waterloo have not been good. Some number of the people of the area are dependent on jobs at the depot and resent the protests. Organized counter-demonstrations or simply hostile gatherings of over 100 people have occurred on several occasions. Anti-gay prejudice has added to local hostilities, since about one-fourth of the women at the camp are lesbians.

The camp, according to

recent reports, is currently working to dissipate tensions with local residents and shift discussion away from the personal conduct of camp residents and toward the issue that brought them to upstate New York in the first place: the U.S. nuclear stockpile and the danger of a war that ends all life.

—WF

Int'l Gay Association meets

On July 11-16, the International Gay Association (IGA) held its fifth annual conference in Vienna, Austria. The conference was attended by over 150 delegates and observers from Europe, Venezuela, Canada, Brazil, Indonesia, Israel and the United States.

The highlight of the conference was the discussion of strategy for 1984—designated by the IGA as the "International Year for Lesbian and Gay Action." Actions are being planned for 1984 in a number of countries, including a march on the United Nations headquarters in New York City, scheduled for October 1984.

In other interesting developments, a newly-formed gay liberation group, SWH from Suriname, reported to the conference that its members have been forced to flee their country after the so-called "revolutionary" military government of Colonel Desi Bouterse labeled their organization as "counter-revolutionary." Controversy arose at the conference when the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) applied for membership in the IGA. A number of delegates objected to their application after it became obvious that GASA's attitude toward apartheid was at best unclear. A majority of the delegates voted to postpone GASA's admittance into the IGA pending clarification of the group's positions on their government's institutionalized racist policies. After the vote, a delegate from

the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights in Israel walked out of the conference in protest.

An RSL solidarity statement was distributed to the conference. It read in part: "The Revolutionary Socialist League of the United States would like to extend our fullest solidarity with this conference of the IGA. ... While specific forms and conditions may differ, it is clear that all over the world lesbians and gay males suffer oppression and repression of the worst sort. Only by joining our hands across the borders of nations can we lesbians and gay men throw off the shackles and chains that bind us. None of us in one country can be free until all of us throughout the world are free."

According to David France, who attended the conference for the Lavender Left (of which the RSL is a member), "The International Year for Lesbian and Gay Action is going to be an important event. It will be a good vehicle to raise issues and broaden the outlook of the movement. This initiative on the part of the IGA has the potential of redirecting the entire focus of the movement toward political and cultural issues which are bigger than the current narrow, local movement concerns, to ones which are universal to gay people across the country and around the world."

—Ian Daniels

New machine in Chicago?

Backed by Harold Washington, Chicago's new Black mayor, Charles Hayes took 45 percent of the vote in winning the July 26 Democratic primary in the First Congressional District on Chicago's South Side. Hayes, a Black man who is seeking the congressional seat formerly held by Washington, is certain to defeat Republican Diane Precely and Socialist Workers Party candidate Ed Warren in the August 23 general election.

Hayes' victory is a signal that Washington may be putting together his own political machine. Second-place candidate Lu Palmer, who is also Black, said, "I stood in

awe at the sound and crunch of the wheels of a new machine—and that machine rolled over us. The Washington machine really violated the principles of the movement which elected him." Commenting that he was "sickened" by the tactics used against him, Palmer stayed away from the unity luncheon Washington held the next day.

There is little doubt that Hayes would not have been able to defeat Palmer if he had not had Washington's backing. Palmer is the candidate who was more closely identified with the Black upsurge that elected Washington. He is better-known and has a more radical image than Hayes. He founded Chicago Black United Communities and was a major supporter of the Washington campaign. For years he refused to register to vote as a protest against the racist system.

Hayes, though he is much less well-known than Palmer, has a long record as a progressive trade union activist, first in the Meatcutters' union and then in the merged United Food and Commercial Workers Union. He helped Martin Luther King Jr. in the early '60s when most Chicago Black leaders would not. He is a leading member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

A major reason for Hayes' endorsement by Washington was that he helped to mobilize significant financial contributions to the Washington campaign in its early stages. Hayes also has a more integrationist, "within-the-system" style than Palmer and has pledged that he will be a "mouthpiece" for Washington in Congress.

Chicago's First Congressional District has long been important in local and national Black politics. The first Black congressman in the nation after the end of Reconstruction, Oscar DePriest, a Republican, came from the First. He was replaced by Democrat William Dawson, who led Blacks into an alliance with the Chicago Democratic machine and with Roosevelt's New Deal. Harold Washington began his political career as a protege of Dawson's machine and eventually represented the First District.

Now, two other Chicago Black politicians are seeking Washington's backing to replace Chicago's other two Black representatives in Congress, Gus Savage and Cardiss Collins. Collins, who backed Jane Byrne in the February

mayoral primary, looks especially vulnerable. While Washington still faces stiff opposition from the great majority of white politicians in town, along with the majority of their constituents, it seems likely that a new political machine, led by Washington, is being built.

—Darryl Clark

Atlanta murders—unanswered questions

Seventeen parents of victims of the Atlanta child murders have filed suit against Atlanta city and police officials. The suit charges the officials did not investigate individual cases thoroughly, ignored or suppressed evidence and deprived the parents of their civil right to a full investigation of their children's murders. The suit contends that the parents "may never know the circumstances surrounding the deaths of their children."

Mildred Glover, a business professor at Atlanta University, is helping the parents file the suit. She said many of the parents think "Williams knows more than he's saying, that he fears for his life. They talk about people they know who have been killed since Wayne Williams was arrested, and they say the killings are still going on. They think their rights to justice were sacrificed for somebody so big, so powerful, that the city found out who it was and has been covering up ever since."

Some of the parents have doubts that the bodies the police found were actually their children. Lois Evans, mother of one of the victims, viewed a decomposed body in 1979. When she told police her son Alfred had a pierced ear, they said the body couldn't be Alfred. But over a year later, she was told the body had been buried as her son. Camille Bell offered to provide the dental records of her murdered son, Yusef. But she was told Yusef's body had already been identified through baby footprints from an Atlanta hospital. She later found out the hospital didn't start keeping footprints until 1971. Yusef was born in 1969.

Ms. Bell, who organized parents and supporters to demand an investigation when the city was dragging its feet three years ago, is bitter today. "My son was poor and Black, and therefore he didn't matter; they don't care who killed him," she said. "Wayne Williams got scapegoated so they could get the ugly picture of all those murdered children out of the way. It was hurting the city's image."

Meanwhile, Wayne Williams' lawyers have asked the Georgia Supreme Court to grant Williams a new trial, arguing he was convicted on insufficient evidence. The court is considering his appeal.

—Paul Carson

Over 200 women were arrested during the August 1 protest at the Seneca Army Depot.



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FREEDOM...

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against racial discrimination, the figure today stands at a nearly identical 56 percent. Moreover, Black unemployment has climbed to nearly 20 percent—double the national average. And for young Black people, people between the ages of 16 and 20, the jobless rate is a staggering 50.6 percent!

Statistics such as these only tell part of the story. The president of the United States ridicules Black women as "welfare cheats," and proposes to keep slashing needed social programs. Sixth-graders from a New York City school are attacked in a public park by a mob of white teenagers who claim the park is "for whites only." The Ku Klux Klan—sometimes in sheets and sometimes in business suits—grows in numbers and escalates its terror every day.

In response, Black people are starting to fight back. And most Black leaders are pointing to the example of the 1963 March on Washington as the way to win what Black people need.

But the Black liberation movement of the 1950s and 1960s involved more than legal mass marches. It included mass illegal "civil disobedience," such as sit-ins at lunch counters and public

facilities. It included boycotts and strikes. And it included violent rebellions in cities across the nation. As Malcolm X pointed out after the 1963 March on Washington, "The Black man's anger rekindled, deeper than ever, and there began bursting out in different cities, in the long hot summer of 1964, unprecedented racial crisis."

It was this kind of broad and militant struggle—a struggle that did not care about legality and respectability—that forced the U.S. ruling class to abandon most official Jim Crow segregation and to take some other measures to improve the conditions of Black people in this country. A key lesson of the Black liberation movement was just this: That the racist capitalist system and its politicians—conservative and liberal alike—only made concessions to those on the bottom of society when those on the bottom threatened the system.

A large March on Washington on August 27, 1983, can be a good way of showing the country's economic and political rulers that Black people are angry about the attacks on their rights and living conditions. It can also be the start of a new campaign to organize and mobilize Black people to fight for their

rights and needs. But the August 27 march has an even greater potential than this. Today—unlike in the '50s and '60s—Black people are not alone in the fight against a system which robs people of their livelihoods, their dignity and their futures. More and more, the corporations and politicians are attacking all working people—young and old, male and female, gay and straight, Black, Latin, Asian and white. And many of these people, too, are beginning to fight back. This provides us with a new opportunity, an opportunity to build a truly massive movement of millions of people of many races, fighting together as allies.

Such a movement, if it is to win, must learn from the past. Most importantly, it cannot make the mistake of looking to and making itself dependent on the liberal capitalists and politicians. (The article below tells the story of the 1963 March on Washington and how the Democratic Party liberals tried to take it over to defuse its militancy and weaken its message.)

Today, these liberal politicians are once again claiming to be the champions of "people's rights." They recognize that there is a growing desperation and anger in the country. As in the 1960s, they hope that by promising a few reforms—reforms that can soon be taken away—they can head off an explosive mass movement. These people will only support Black people's struggle

so long as it is useful to them—and does not threaten their interests and the interests of the capitalist system they are committed to. If the Black movement takes a turn these shaky "allies" disagree with, if it gets too radical or tries to attack the real roots of racism in capitalism itself, then these "friends" of Black people will pull out their money, withdraw their support and try to wreck the movement.

This is, in part, what happened in the 1960s. And it is happening again today. Already, various Democratic Party politicians, trade union bureaucrats, civil rights leaders, and others are dragging their feet in supporting the August 27 march, or opposing it altogether. They claim that it is "too radical," criticize Israel and is too linked to the peace movement. Clearly, to tie the Black movement to sometime-allies like these would be suicide.

Instead, Black people should organize themselves independently of the liberal capitalists and should try to build alliances with the rank and file of other oppressed groups who are also being attacked by the capitalist class. We in the Revolutionary Socialist League believe that by joining together in a common struggle against a common enemy, working people in the U.S. can build a society where jobs, peace and freedom—true humanity—can flourish. This is our dream—and we still have to fight for it. □

The 1963 March on Washington— The Myth and the Reality



By WAYNE GORDON

The 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was an important part of the struggle for Black liberation during the 1950s and '60s. But a myth has been built up around the march, hiding its real history. This myth is being used today to support the policies of those who want a moderate Black movement which does not pose a threat to the racist system in the United States.

The official myth about the 1963 march is that it was organized by a group of "Negro leaders," led by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who pretty much agreed with each other, in coalition with white Democrats and the administration of John F. Kennedy. According to this version, the march demonstrated the effectiveness of the strategy which is supposed to have "won" civil rights for Black people: peaceful demonstrations in coalition with the pro-capitalist Democratic Party.

The truth is different—and more interesting.

Contrary to the official version, the 1963 March on Washington was first planned to be against President Kennedy and his Democratic administration, not in support of them. Speaking for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Roy Wilkins, the head of the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People (NAACP), made an early announcement: "We plan to have a demonstration of representative leaders throughout the nation to show that we don't agree with the Kennedy administration's civil rights position." (Quoted in Louis Lomax, *The Negro Revolt*.)

If even the relatively conservative Wilkins was ready to demonstrate against Kennedy, the administration's civil rights record had to be pretty bad. During the 1960 election campaign, Kennedy had promised to sign a presidential order banning discrimination in federally-aided housing, "with a stroke of the pen." Two years later, he finally got around to it, signing a housing order that was weaker than any proposed by the major civil rights organizations. Kennedy did propose some civil rights legislation to Congress—but even many liberal Democrats felt that this was largely for show. He put no pressure behind his own proposals to get them passed.

Kennedy's record on other civil rights questions was equally dismal. When faced with local segregationist judges, civil rights workers hoped to be able to appeal to more liberal federal court judges. But Kennedy again and again appointed outright segregationists to be federal judges in the South. In Georgia, he appointed J. Robert Elliott, who had once said, "I don't want these pinks,

radicals and Black voters to outvote those who are trying to preserve our segregationist laws..." (Quoted in Howard Zinn, SNCC, *The New Abolitionists*.) In Mississippi he appointed William Cox. In a 1963 case, Cox said, "I am not interested in whether the registrar is going to give a registration test to a bunch of n-----s on a voter drive." (Zinn) Kennedy placed similar racists on federal benches throughout the South. In 1963, when Attorney General Robert Kennedy was criticized for this policy, he answered: "I'm very proud of the judges that have been appointed." (Zinn)

Civil rights activists were particularly angry at the Department of Justice under the attorney general. Repeatedly, its FBI agents would stand by and "take notes" while Black and white demonstrators were brutalized by local police. Black militants demanded that the Department of Justice use its FBI agents and its lawyers to enforce the civil rights acts of 1957 and 1960. These laws supposedly outlawed discrimination against Black people in voting—but they remained unenforced. The FBI and Department of Justice remained "neutral" between demonstrators and racist sheriffs. Years later, the full story about the FBI's attacks on the movement came out. Among other things, the FBI had agents and informers inside the Klan who encouraged racist violence. In addi-

tion, FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover, who hated Dr. King, had anonymous poison pen letters sent to King, trying to provoke him into committing suicide.

By 1963—nine years after the Supreme Court had declared "separate but equal" segregation unconstitutional—segregation still ruled throughout the South. Black and white demonstrators faced the assaults of lawless police and Ku Klux Klan terrorists. On top of that, they were opposed by a hostile FBI, the Department of Justice, and segregationist federal judges. Past civil rights laws were not being enforced and new civil rights bills were not being pushed. Meanwhile, nothing whatever was being done about the racism and poverty which oppressed Black people in the supposedly "desegregated" North.

As a result, Black people were getting angry. By 1963, more and more young Blacks were listening to Malcolm X and looking admiringly toward the anti-colonial revolutions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Moderates plan a march

The increasing radicalism of Black people worried the established Black leadership. The moderates grouped around the national NAACP wanted the

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civil rights movement to rely solely on courts and lawyers. A second group, the ministers who looked to Dr. King for leadership, was aware that Black people were not going to wait for the courts any longer, and that people were ready to engage in mass demonstrations and large-scale "civil disobedience" (that is, law-breaking), non-violent and violent.

Both groups—the NAACP leaders and King's followers—hoped to build an alliance with the more-or-less liberal wing of the national Democratic Party, led by the Kennedy brothers. The national Democrats would, they hoped, put pressure on the Southern segregationists (who were also Democrats) to end Jim Crow.

But the Kennedy administration was not carrying out its part of the deal. This led the established Black leadership to look for a way to recapture the support of Black people, while at the same time giving Kennedy a kick to get moving on civil rights.

A. Philip Randolph, the long-time union and civil rights leader, proposed a March on Washington. He first got the support of the militant non-violent actionists. Then he used them as a threat to get the moderate leaders to join the project. Even then, there was considerable opposition by conservative Blacks. As King put it, there "... were innumerable prophets of doom who feared that the slightest incidence of violence would alienate Congress and destroy all hope of legislation." (King, *Why We Can't Wait*.)

In 1963—before the anti-war movement of the late '60s had held large demonstrations several times a year—a big demonstration in Washington, D.C., would be very unusual and would have a tremendous political impact in the U.S.



John and Robert Kennedy. After they failed to stop March on Washington, the Kennedys decided to take it over.

and internationally. Equally important, the fact that Black people themselves would organize and build such a demonstration was bound to be impressive.

At the same time, the planners did not want the march to be too militant. The more militant supporters of non-violent direct action called for civil disobedience actions. They proposed sit-ins in the offices of segregationist congressmen or on the floor of the Senate, until civil rights laws were passed, and they threatened to close down the Washington National Airport with sit-ins. The moderate leaders vetoed these actions, since such militancy would have made it impossible to ally with Kennedy.

Instead, the march was to be rigorously controlled. It had an official route, an official song ("We Shall

Overcome") and official placards carrying official slogans. In particular, none of the slogans or speeches attacked U.S. foreign or military policies—such as sending U.S. troops to Vietnam. Even though several of the march's leaders, including King himself, were pacifists who supposedly opposed all war and violence, they devoted themselves to opposing self-defense by Blacks, not to opposing U.S. attacks on people in other lands. Open opposition to U.S. foreign policy would also have made it impossible to get Kennedy's support.

For its part, the Kennedy administration tried to get the organizers to call off the demonstration. But it was too late for this—there was too much pressure from Black people throughout the country for some kind of decisive action. Unable to stop the march, Kennedy decided to take it over. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., a member of the Kennedy administration and, later, the Kennedy family's principal biographer, describes a meeting Kennedy had with Black leaders at the White House on June 22, at which Kennedy tried to persuade them to call off the march:

"A. Philip Randolph, James Farmer and Martin Luther King defended the march. The blacks were already in the streets [they said]; better that they march under nonviolent leadership; if the march were called off, they might turn to new and desperate leaders."

Schlesinger goes on to say: "If the march could not be headed off, the Kennedys decided that it would have to be made a success. John Kennedy talked to Walter Reuther [head of the United Auto Workers—Ed.], who shared the concern that an all-black march might lose votes on the Hill. Reuther proceeded to bring in white leaders, the churches and the labor movement."

Inside the Justice Department, Robert Kennedy set up a secret committee to plan for the march, headed by Assistant Attorney General John Douglas. They drew up a list that, according to Schlesinger, "covered everything from route and timetable, the sound system and security forces, to food, soft drinks (in paper cups, so there would be no bottles to throw) and toilet facilities." (All quotes from Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*.)

Eventually, the moderate civil rights leaders came to an arrangement with Kennedy. He would openly favor the March on Washington and they would endorse his new civil rights bill, submitted to Congress in June. In fact, the march came to be seen as mainly a demonstration for Kennedy's bill—which had only been submitted because of increasing Black unrest. Clearly, by this point the march was no longer the originally-planned demonstration against "the Kennedy administration's civil rights record," as Roy Wilkins had earlier described it.

SNCC leader's speech censored

As part of keeping everything moderate and under control, the speeches of those who were scheduled to speak at the demonstration were checked beforehand. One speaker was John Lewis, chairman of the Student Non-violent



Malcolm X speaks to a Harlem crowd in 1963.

Coordinating Committee (SNCC), one of the more militant civil rights organizations. Lewis had prepared a speech which reflected the anger of the young activists facing racist terror in the Deep South. Catholic Archbishop O'Boyle of Washington thought the speech was too militant. He and several other scheduled speakers threatened to quit unless Lewis's speech was toned down and certain parts taken out altogether.

The white archbishops and the Black moderates were particularly angry that Lewis planned to not just attack the Southern segregationists, but to also focus his attack on the Kennedy administration itself. His original speech criticized the Kennedy civil rights bill as "... too little and too late. There's not one thing in the bill that will protect our people from police brutality." It denounced the Department of Justice for indicting nine civil rights workers in Albany, Georgia, for peaceful picketing while ignoring the brutality of the police against Black organizers. And Lewis planned to lay down a challenge: "I want to know, which side is the federal government on?"

All this, and more, was censored from the speech as a condition for allowing Lewis to address the rally. Even so, Lewis's talk went well beyond what the other civil rights leaders dared to say. Lewis said, "The non-violent revolution is saying, 'We will not wait for the courts to act, for we have been waiting hundreds of years. We will not wait for the President, nor the Justice Department, nor Congress, but we will take matters into our own hands and create a great source of power.'"

In a slap at those Black leaders who looked to the Democratic Party, Lewis also declared, "We cannot depend on any political party, for both the Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence.... Mr. Kennedy is trying to take the revolution out of the streets and put it in the courts."

Not surprisingly, the press focused on Dr. King's speech and generally ignored Lewis's much more radical talk.

Malcolm X on the 1963 march

The only Black leader of prominence who criticized the march was Malcolm X, then a major spokesman for the Nation of Islam. (His comments are in "Message to the Grassroots" in Malcolm X Speaks and chapter 15 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.)

"The Negroes started talking... that they were going to march on Washington, march on the Senate, march on the White House, march on the Congress, and tie it up, bring it to a halt, not let the government proceed....

That was revolution. That was the Black revolution. It was the grass roots out there in the street. It scared the white man to death, scared the white power structure in Washington, D.C., to death....

"The same white elements that put Kennedy into power... joined the march on Washington.... As they took it over, it lost its militancy. It ceased to be angry, it ceased to be hot, it ceased to be uncompromising. Why it even ceased to be a march. It became a picnic, a circus." ("Message") Malcolm called the march "that farce on Washington," and said of King's "I Have a Dream" speech, "... the Black masses in America were—and still are—having a nightmare." (*Autobiography*)

Malcolm X's comments were made while he was still a member of the Nation of Islam. As a result, while most of what he said was right on target, his comments also showed some of the weaknesses of the Nation. For example, Malcolm was wrong to condemn Black people for marching with whites for "so-called 'integration.'" ("Who ever heard of angry revolutionists... tripping and swaying along arm-in-arm with the very people they were supposed to be angrily revolting against?" he said.) (*Autobiography*) As Malcolm X later came to see, Black people who marched with whites were not fighting for an abstract "integration." They were demanding the same rights as whites in the land of their birth. And they were willing to look for allies among the whites who supported this struggle. But Malcolm was completely right in condemning the Black leaders for bringing white church leaders and labor bureaucrats into the leadership of the march and tying it, through the Democratic Party, to the white power structure.

Malcolm was also mistaken to imply that it was wrong for Black people to participate in the march. The place for revolutionaries, such as Malcolm himself, was inside the broad movement for the march, helping to build it, while at the same time pointing out that the march's leaders were blunting the original militancy of the movement and diverting it from a real attack on the racist capitalist system.

As toned down and tamed as it became, the 1963 March on Washington was a success. Nearly a quarter of a million people came, two-thirds of them Black. Despite the last-minute intervention of the white establishment, the march had obviously been organized and led by Black people. A wide range of Black organizations, from the conservative section of the NAACP and the Black churches to SNCC, joined in. Millions of people, Black and white, watched it on television. It was reported throughout the world. It showed that Black people were serious about their fight for freedom. □

IN MEMORIAM: COMRADE AWALI

It is with deep sorrow that we inform our readers that on August 2, 1983, Johnny Eduardo Swift, a long-time *Torch/La Antorcha* reader and friend of the RSL, was murdered inside the Huntsville Unit, Texas Department of Corrections. According to a letter sent to us by a friend of Johnny's, he was found in the prison recreation area with 16 stab wounds, reportedly inflicted by another prisoner. As we go to press, we have been unable to learn any further information as to the circumstances surrounding the killing.

Johnny Swift, known to his friends as Awali, was a dedicated, life-long opponent of this racist, sexist capitalist system. Comrade Awali's death is a tragic loss for the revolutionary movement.

Reagan Steps Up Military Intervention

(Continued from page 3)

Cuban proposals with dismay. One guerrilla leader commented: "This is a heavy meal. It will take a while to digest."

Serious differences exist within the FMLN-FDR itself over the need for or desirability of negotiations with U.S. imperialism. On July 31, Rubén Zamora, a director of the FDR, met with Richard Stone, U.S. special envoy for Central America, to discuss conditions for any such negotiations. A future meeting that will include representatives of the FMLN as well as the FDR is reputedly in the works.

On August 4, however, the FMLN's radio station, Radio Venceremos, denounced Stone without mentioning his meeting with Zamora. At the same time, some Salvadorean leftists have told the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments that they will oppose "any easy sellout" of their cause—such as an agreement by leftist leaders to participate in Salvadorean elections scheduled to take place early next year.

Factional struggles within the Salvadorean left over precisely this issue led earlier this year to the murder of one well-known guerrilla leader, Anaya Montes (also known as Commander Ana María), and the reported suicide of another, Salvador Cayetano Carpio.

Serious negotiations unlikely

Despite the desires of at least some Central American leftist leaders for an accommodation with U.S. imperialism, it is unlikely serious negotiations will take place. The Reagan administration has given faint praise to the efforts of four Latin American governments—Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela, collectively known as the Contadora Group—to work out a peace formula. But the U.S. government is in fact refusing to negotiate through the Contadora Group because its members—all staunchly capitalist, pro-U.S. regimes—are supposedly "too sympathetic to Cuba and the Soviet Union." And Reagan's own statement that it would be "extremely difficult" to gain stability in Central America while the Sandinistas remain in power is indication enough that he prefers to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, not negotiate with it.

Reagan's military escalation in Central America has also set off alarm bells within the U.S., including Congress, the press and the public. On July 28, members of the Democratic Party-controlled House of Representatives voted 228-195 to cut off funds for covert operations against the Nicaraguan government for the 1983 fiscal year, which ends on October 1. This was a symbolic protest that will likely have no effect on the covert operations since the cut-off is almost certain to be rejected by the Republican-controlled Senate. Nevertheless, the House vote was the first major defeat Reagan has suffered on any foreign policy issue and it reflects the deep misgivings not only of the U.S. population as a whole, but even of a substantial section of the U.S. ruling class over the administration's Central American policy.

Interestingly, similar fears have surfaced among the military and intelligence experts responsible for actually carrying out Reagan's aggressive Central American strategy. In June army chief of staff General Edward Meyer told reporters he and other military leaders opposed sending U.S. troops to Central America without strong congressional and popular support. In July Senator

Gary Hart (D-Colo.) revealed that middle-ranking army-officers had privately informed members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that they opposed Reagan's reliance on military action alone in Central America. And high-ranking CIA officials reportedly recommended against the current military exercises but were overruled by CIA director William Casey.

Despite all these misgivings, Reagan and his right-wing advisers have suc-

ceeded in defining the issues in the Central America debate in their own right-wing terms. Their opponents in the Democratic Party are reluctant to take any measures that might effectively block the administration's escalating intervention in Central America because they fear they will be blamed for "losing Central America" and being "soft on Communism." More broadly, there is a common interest among all sections of the U.S. ruling class in maintaining their

control of Central America. The more liberal sections of the capitalist class cannot put up any effective opposition to Reagan's tactics because they have no credible alternative to achieve their shared goals. Consequently, Reagan and his advisers have good reason to believe that as long as they do not commit ground troops in Central America, they can continue to implement their increasingly belligerent policy and drag Congress along behind them. □

STOP THE DEATH FLIGHTS!

Activists in two cities held their first demonstrations against Mexicana Airlines' deportation death flights this month. The two firsts were in Detroit, Michigan, and Hermosillo, Sonora, in northwestern Mexico. According to a report from Hermosillo, a section of the Mexican Committee in Solidarity with the Salvadorean People organized a protest outside the Mexicana office in that city on July 26. The protesters then marched to the U.S. Consulate, where a rally was held to denounce the deportations, Mexicana Airlines, and U.S. imperialism.

On the same day in Detroit, 60 people came out for a picket line in front of the local Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) office. The demonstration was organized by the Committee to Stop the Death Flights, a coalition affiliated with the local CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador).

Meanwhile, sizable demonstrations continue in Los Angeles, where the Echo



Demonstrators protest Mexicana death flights in Detroit.

Park chapter of CISPES initiated the campaign earlier this year. Over 50 people held a picket line outside Mexicana's downtown office on July 30. Another protest is scheduled for September 17.

In Chicago, the University of Illinois-based Circle Organizing Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salva-

dor and Central America has scheduled its second and third anti-death flight picket-lines for September 28 and October 8.

The protests against Mexicana stem from the airline's participation in INS deportations of Salvadorean refugees. Last year, campaigns forced Western Airlines and then Pan Am to quit cooperating with the INS. The U.S. government then turned to Mexicana, which now takes the refugees to Mexico City, where they are transferred to flights to San Salvador and an uncertain future: Salvadorean government death squads consider many of the refugees subversives.

In a major boost to the international campaign against the deportation death flights, the Second Mexico/U.S. Border Conference, organized by the World Front in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and held last month in Tijuana, Mexico, endorsed the campaign as part of its efforts to organize defense of Salvadorean refugees. □

What is the 'Kissinger Commission'?

On July 18, President Reagan named former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to head a newly-formed "National Bipartisan Commission on Central America."

The commission's supposed purpose is to investigate the "underlying causes" of the crisis in Central America and come up with ways to resolve it. But its real purpose is to cut short congressional opposition to administration requests for military aid for the Salvadorean government, for the "contras" trying to overthrow the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and for other Central American gangsters in the pay of U.S. imperialism.

In announcing the commission, Reagan said: "The commission will lay the foundation for a long-term unified approach. In the meantime we cannot succeed unless Congress appropriates the necessary resources." Kissinger sounded the same theme in his first press conference by warning: "It is imperative that we avoid the bitter debate that characterized the Vietnam period."

The commission is also intended to create at least the illusion of bipartisan support for Reagan's military escalation. It includes several well-known Democrats—such as AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland and former Democratic Party chairman Robert Strauss. But all members of the commission, regardless of party, are known supporters of the administration's basic policies.

Kissinger himself is notorious as the architect of the bombing of Kampuchea and the principal planner of the 1973 CIA-sponsored overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile. However, since he is

also despised by conservatives for his support for detente with Russia in the 1970s, Reagan is trying to portray Kissinger as a "moderate," and is seeking to cloak his own Central

American policy under the mantle of Kissinger's considerable prestige among the press, substantial sections of the ruling class and the international diplomatic community. □



LOS ANGELES—Five hundred people turned out on short notice August 1 to protest the beginning of Reagan's Central American war games. The protesters, organized by CISPES, picketed outside the local Armed Forces Induction Center.

Four thousand people gathered July 24 near Port Chicago, California, to protest the U.S. war in Central America. Port Chicago is the home of the Concord Naval Weapons Station. It is a storage center for nuclear weapons and is a main port of departure for U.S. arms headed for El Salvador.

The demonstration was organized by a coalition of groups on the West Coast, including the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the Central American Solidarity Committee (CASC) and others. Most participants were from the nearby Bay Area, but about 300 attended from Los Angeles and smaller numbers came from Oregon and Washington state.

On July 25 and 26, several hundred protesters attempted to block entry roads to the weapons Station in a planned act of civil disobedience. About 150 were arrested.

Black People in the US: The Fight for Freedom STRATEGIES FOR LIBERATION



The following article is the second part of a resolution on the struggle of Black people in the U.S., adopted by the RSL at our Fifth National Convention, held June 19-21, 1981. Part one of the resolution, which appeared last month, sketched an overview of the Black experience in this country, from the time of slave trade until today. Part two discusses and evaluates integrationism, nationalism and socialist revolution as differing strategies for Black liberation. The concluding part of the resolution, to be published next month, looks at the prospects and tasks for building a movement that can overcome, once and for all, the centuries of oppression Black people have faced at the hands of racist U.S. society. For a copy of the entire resolution, please send \$1 to the RSL National Office.

Black people's special oppression within U.S. society has had a definite and decisive impact on the economic, social and political structure of the country. Looked at in the most narrow, economic sense, this oppression has meant that Black people have constituted a supply of cheap labor for the U.S. ruling class in its various forms. This has meant that the ruling class has exploited Blacks in an exceptionally ferocious way, maintaining a high rate of exploitation, facilitating the accumulation of capital and greatly fostering the capitalist development of the country. This has been true regardless of the precise position of Blacks, the specific form of work they perform, and the resulting nature of the exploitation.

By and large, however, this narrowly economic fact has been overshadowed by a broader economic/social/political dynamic that has been of even greater help to the U.S. ruling class in developing itself and the entire capitalist economy. This is the fact that the special oppression of Black people has resulted in a split in the laboring classes in the country throughout U.S. history. This division of the working classes is one of the major factors behind the rapid growth of U.S. capitalism, its development from a mere colony of another country to paramount imperialist power in less than 200 years.

The effect of this division on the history of the country and the development of U.S. imperialism can be looked at narrowly and economically or in a broader social-political manner. While these cannot be separated in fact it is useful to discuss them separately.

In the narrow sense, the division of the U.S. working class that has resulted

from the special oppression of Black people has strengthened the U.S. ruling class and U.S. capitalism/imperialism by allowing the ruling class to keep the wages of the entire working class lower than they might have been and hence

"Black people's struggles against their oppression have had a positive effect on the class struggle by weakening the stability of the system."

increasing the overall rates of exploitation and of the accumulation of capital. The special oppression of Black people, and the racism that is integrally connected to it, prevented the working class from uniting on an economic level to fight for higher wages. This has been true both in a local sense—in specific factories, industries and regions—and in the broadest national sense. Although sections of the white workers have undoubtedly benefited from the specific oppression of Blacks (through reserving certain, usually skilled and high-paying jobs for whites, so that they can be said to have shared in the super-profits derived from the super-exploitation of Blacks), the majority of white workers have in fact suffered by the effect of the division within the working class on the workers' ability to struggle.

However, the actual dynamic involved cannot be fully understood from its economic standpoint alone. Racism and the special oppression of Black people has divided the working class in a social, political, cultural and psychological way that both underlies the previously dis-

cussed economic division and gives it a far greater significance than simply the question of wage levels. For the special oppression of Black people appeared to give white workers a social, cultural and psychological stake in U.S. capitalism. No matter how poor, oppressed and despised he/she might have been, a white worker was at least white and hence considered him/herself to be superior to Black people and had certain rights and other advantages that Black people didn't have. This is one of the major reasons why the working class in the U.S. has never developed any firm class consciousness. The race division between Black and white was seen as more important than the class difference

and certainly any allies with power, at all. This effect was in no way the "fault" of Black people. When and where they oriented to the liberals (and this was not always the case; the Garvey Movement, for example was usually hostile to all sections of the ruling class), this was basically a defensive reaction. As a small minority of society, faced with a virtually uniformly hostile white population, Black people have had little choice but to accept help from whatever quarter, for whatever reason and however temporarily, it was given.

In sum, the special oppression of Black people has led to a political/social split in the working class, and in fact has by and large prevented the actual formation of a working class in any but the most objective, economic sense (as material for exploitation). This has strengthened the ruling class economically, through increasing the rate of exploitation and hence accumulation, strengthened it socially and politically by putting an entire section of the working class (the whites) into long-term alliance with it, and given it a virtually free hand to run the country any way it has wanted.

Vanguard role in class struggle

Despite this, Black people's struggles against their oppression have had a positive effect on the class struggle by weakening the stability of the system. The periodic slave revolts under slave society and the constant efforts to flee to freedom forced the Southern states to be virtually militarized societies. The general strike and flight of the slaves during the Civil War was instrumental in bringing about the victory of the bourgeois forces in the Northern states, which would have preferred to defeat their white secessionist brothers without freeing the latter's slaves. The militant struggles of the Reconstruction period, along with struggles of white workers, so threatened the majority of the ruling

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class that Reconstruction was ended and the defeated former slaveowning class granted a considerable share of power in the government. The Garvey Movement, in addition to uniting many Black people in the Northern cities for the first time, also exposed the lie of the capitalists' claims to stand for democracy and freedom for all oppressed people, which they had used to justify their intervention in the first inter-imperialist war. Blacks played a militant role in the union organizing drives and other struggles of the 1930s, a role far out of proportion to their numbers in society and in the union organizations themselves. The Civil Rights and Black Movements of the 1950s and '60s shook up the entire country, exposed the myths of the Cold War and led and inspired all the other social movements, such as the Student and Anti-War Movements, the Women's and Gay Liberation Movements, etc., that exploded in the 1960s. The left wing of the Black Movement—Malcolm X, the Black Power advocates of SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), the Black Panther Party, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, George Jackson, the rebels at Attica prison and the Prison Movement generally—was particularly important in inspiring and providing models for the entire radical and left-wing movements since that time.

This vanguard role in the class struggle in the U.S. has had a great impact not only within the U.S. itself but also internationally. By serving to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the U.S. ruling class and the falsity of its claims to stand for freedom, democracy, justice and equality, the Black Movement of the '50s and '60s was a powerful element in the wave of national liberation struggles that shook U.S. capitalism in the post-war period. While these national liberation movements have not resulted in socialism and the actual liberation of the majority of workers and peasants in these countries, they have significantly restricted the degree to which the U.S. imperialists and the imperialists of other capitalist countries have been able to plunder the people and natural resources of these countries. This in turn has significantly weakened the imperialist economies, undercut the social and political stability of the imperialist societies and helped destabilize world capitalism.

The Black Movement in the U.S. was not per se the cause of such national liberation struggles. But it was both an integral part of, and a boost to, the broad national liberation struggles of the post-World War II period. Thus in both the political and ideological sense, the struggle of Black people in the U.S. has paced the class struggle and been the Achilles' heel of U.S. capitalism and imperialism.

Nationalism and integrationism

Having sketched out our view of the special oppression of Black people, how Black people should be defined, and the effect of Black oppression and Black people's struggle against it on the class struggle and U.S. imperialism, we can now turn to some of the broader programmatic implications of our analysis.

We propose to begin this by first discussing the two main strategic conceptions that historically have been put forward both within the Black Liberation Movement and within the broader radical and left movements in this country. We are referring to nationalism and integrationism. In order to make this discussion as clear as possible, we must first explain that these terms,

"We in the Revolutionary Socialist League are neither integrationists nor nationalists. We understand that neither strategy—even with the best of intentions on the part of their advocates—is capable of ending the oppression of Black people. As Malcolm X said: 'We don't want to be integrationists. Nor do we want to be separatists. We want to be human beings.'"

however much they have been used in political discussion and debate, are in fact relatively vague. Like most other political and ideological terms, they have different meanings for different people and organizations. While we do not propose to discuss all the different implications and definitions, we do wish to draw what we think is a crucial distinction in how these terms are used.

Each of these "isms," ideologies and programs is used in one of two major ways. One is as a fairly precise meaning or set of meanings that corresponds to an actual strategic conception of the ideologically involved people. The other is as a broad category expressing the needs and desires of broader masses of people. "Integration," for example, means different things to the political leaders of the Black Movement than to the masses of people. Strictly speaking, integration, or more precisely integrationism, refers to an ideology, program and strategy that argues that Black people should fight to be integrated, that is, assimilated, into U.S. society.

This means more than that Black people should fight for the democratic rights supposedly promised to all citizens of the U.S., that is, for (abstract) equality. An integrationist strategy implies that the main, if not only, problem that Black people face is the denial of these democratic rights and equality (a view that ignores the fact that the majority of Black people are not simply oppressed as Blacks, but are also oppressed and exploited as workers; that is, the oppression of Black people takes the dual form—democratic and class—discussed earlier in this document). Thus an integrationist strategy, strictly speaking, argues that:

1) Black people should accept the present, capitalist nature of U.S. society and only fight for those changes that allow them to be accepted into this society (and therefore in a way that does not threaten this social system);

2) Black people should demand that the U.S. be the same "melting pot" for them as it has been for other (that is, white) ethnic peoples, including the loss of a certain ethnic-cultural identity that goes along with such assimilation; and,

3) Black people should reject any strategy for separating from the U.S., either now or in the future. In short, advocates of strict integrationism accept and indeed defend U.S. capitalism, and urge Black people to fight for the right to be accepted by it, and eventually assimilated both racially and culturally into it.

Now, it should be obvious that this is quite different from the way the vast majority of Black people view integration. To most people, integrationism



means that Black people should have the same economic, social and political rights that white people have; they should be allowed to live, go to school, and work wherever they choose, to be given truly equal opportunities for education and advancement, not to be discriminated against and looked down upon because they are Black. But most Black people do not take integration to mean that they should necessarily give up their distinct Black culture, eliminate distinct Black communities or support U.S. capitalism and imperialism. While some people may wish to assimilate into U.S. society, move out of Black communities, and advocate the defense of U.S. capitalism, this is not necessarily implied by the term "integration" in the minds of the majority of people. In other words, for the vast majority of Black, primarily working class, people, integration merely denotes having full and equal rights and not being specially oppressed as Black people. It assumes neither the preservation nor the overthrow of capitalism.

There is a similar distinction between the strict and popular meanings of nationalism. Strictly speaking, nationalism is an ideology, program and strategy the starting point of which is that Blacks are, or are becoming, a distinct nation; that they should seek to organize themselves as a nation; and that they should seek to separate from U.S. society and organize a new society on a distinct territory (either in the continental U.S.—for example, in the Black Belt in the South—or elsewhere, such as in Africa).

In this strict sense, nationalism is based on the assumptions that the fundamental conflict/contradiction in U.S. society is race/nation, not class; that U.S. society will not and cannot grant Blacks full rights and equality; that Blacks should seek to pull out of U.S. society, only fighting against the system and the ruling class insofar as this is necessary to achieve national liberation. By and large, nationalism, like integrationism, assumes the continued existence of capitalism in the U.S. It also downplays, denies or ignores the class conflict both within U.S. society and among Black people—that is, within the Black "nation." The strength of this nationalism is that, in contrast to integrationism, its starting point is hostility to U.S. society and, in some cases, a desire to

fight against it. However, historically advocates of a strict nationalist perspective have tended to oppose, downplay or abstain from the struggles of Black people for their democratic rights within U.S. society (particularly struggles against forced segregation, since they see this as weakening the Black nation and pointing Black people in the wrong direction) and to deny the existence of class conflict among the Black population.

While a full discussion of the various ideological trends within Black nationalism is beyond the scope of this document, we should note that even among those who consider themselves "true" nationalists there is a gamut of interpretations of what this means and very far-reaching disagreements. For example, there are those who believe that U.S. Blacks' ethnic/cultural identity is basically African, and advocate a return to Africa and/or the establishment of a Black (that is, an ex-"Afro-American") nation in Africa (Pan-Africanism).

There are those who stress the uniqueness of Black people's experience in the U.S. as well as their contribution to the economy, etc., of the U.S. and advocate the formation of a Black nation in some portion of what is now the U.S. There are so-called cultural nationalists, who do not focus on the need for a territorial nation as such. More recently, as much of the Black Movement of the '60s (and Black African leaders of newly independent nations) adopted a Marxist stance, there has developed a trend in Black nationalism that posits the goal of a Black nation as socialism. Others posit socialist revolution as the vehicle through which Black people will win a territorial nation. These differences are not inconsequential. For example, the revolutionary nationalists do tend to note the class differences within the Black community and have a stated orientation toward the working class elements of the community. On the other hand, the more traditional nationalists, whose implicit if not explicit goal is a capitalist Black nation, focus on developing the middle class strata of the Black community as the future leaders of the Black nation. Whatever their disagreements, however, all of the different Black nationalist trends view separation as the only possible and true road to liberation for Black people.

In addition to "strict" nationalism,

"It is absolutely vital that the workers' movement and the party stand foursquare for the right of Black and other peoples to collectively determine their fate."



However, historically nationalist perspective, downplay or struggles of Black people's rights within particularly struggles of Black people, since they see the Black nation and the existence of the Black pop-

pression of the various Black national-cope of this docu- themselves "true" gamut of interpre- and very far-nts. For example, believe that U.S. ural identity is d advocate a return establishment of a ("Afro-American") (Pan-Africanism). stress the unique- 's experience in the contribution to the U.S. and advocate ack nation in some ow the U.S. There l nationalists, who eed for a territorial : recently, as much nt of the '60s (and s of newly independ- d a Marxist stance, a trend in Black sits the goal of a lism. Others posit as the vehicle people will win a ese differences are For example, the alists do tend to rences within the nd have a stated the working class mmunity. On the traditional nation- if not explicit goal nation, focus on : class strata of the the future leaders Whatever their dis- all of the different ds view separation and true road to people. rict" nationalism,

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there is a broader, popular version of nationalism that is held to by many if not most Black people in the country. This is a recognition that Black people are a distinct group within U.S. society, that has been oppressed as such, that has a distinct culture and that has played a distinct and positive role in the history of the U.S. This kind of nationalism involves a pride in being Black and a hostility to the idea that Blacks should cease being Black—that is, give up their distinct identity and culture. There is a consequent desire to maintain independent Black organization, culture and community, without necessarily separating from U.S. society. In the past, we have referred to this popular nationalism as Black consciousness; while adequate, this term tends to imply merely an awareness of being Black while downplaying the actively positive attitude toward being so, toward Black history, culture, etc.

Taking these terms in their strict senses, the majority of Black people are not and have never been either integrationists or nationalists. They have accepted neither the one nor the other ideology/strategy/program in any strict way. For example, the millions of Black people who marched or simply identified with Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, Whitney Young and the other integrationist leaders of the '60s did not necessarily do so because they were committed to the integrationists' program. They did not necessarily want to become just like white, middle class "Americans." And they did not necessarily want to give up their distinct Black identity, history, culture, churches, organizations, etc. What they did want was an end to their oppression as Black people and to be granted the same rights accorded to white members of the society. They wanted an end to segregation, racial prejudice, and discrimination, and they wanted the right to vote, as well as jobs, housing and a decent standard of living. All these things were "integration," but did not necessarily include the specifically assimilationist goals of the movement's leaders and ideologies.

Similarly, most of the Black people who looked to or joined the Garvey Movement (the Universal Negro Improvement Association—UNIA) in the 1920s were not necessarily committed to a separatist program. They were not necessarily anxious to go back to Africa. They primarily wanted to fight for their rights, needs and political power in the U.S. itself. They saw the movement as a vehicle for building Black pride, organizing and strengthening the Black community and combating the racism in U.S. society. This is not to deny that some people within the movement did want to separate and form a separate Black state somewhere at some point in time. But this was not the primary, immediate concern of the majority of the movement's members and supporters, let alone the Black people who remained outside and untouched by the movement.

This same point can be made in an apparently opposite way. If we use the terms integrationism and nationalism in their looser, popular senses, we can say that the majority of Black people in the U.S. have been both integrationist and nationalist. In other words, they have accepted and embraced, in combinations and with emphases that varied over time, those aspects of the integrationists' and nationalists' programs and ideologies that seemed most relevant to their situation at any given time. As Malcolm X said:

"All of our people have the same

goals, the same objective. That objective is freedom, justice, equality. All of us want recognition and respect as human beings. We don't want to be integrationists. Nor do we want to be separatists. We want to be human beings. . . . Some . . . choose integration, thinking that this method will bring them respect as a human being, and others choose separation, thinking that that method or tactic will bring them respect as a human being."

With the integrationists, the majority of Black people have accepted the need to struggle within U.S. society to end their special oppression, for full political rights, equality and for a decent life in general. At the same time, they have been nationalists in the sense of recognizing and having pride in the special identity of Black people, their unique role in the history of the country, the distinct contributions of Black culture as well as recognizing the need to maintain independent Black organizations, etc. As a result, in various times and places, Black people have chosen between integrationist and nationalist leaderships and the ideologies they have put forth, selecting what they've liked, discarding what they haven't, and in general infusing their own content into them. The result has been a popular political culture and ideology that is neither integrationist nor nationalist in the strict sense of the terms, but which borrows from both.

We in the Revolutionary Socialist League are neither integrationists nor nationalists in the strict senses we have discussed. We believe that taken strictly, both integrationism and nationalism are

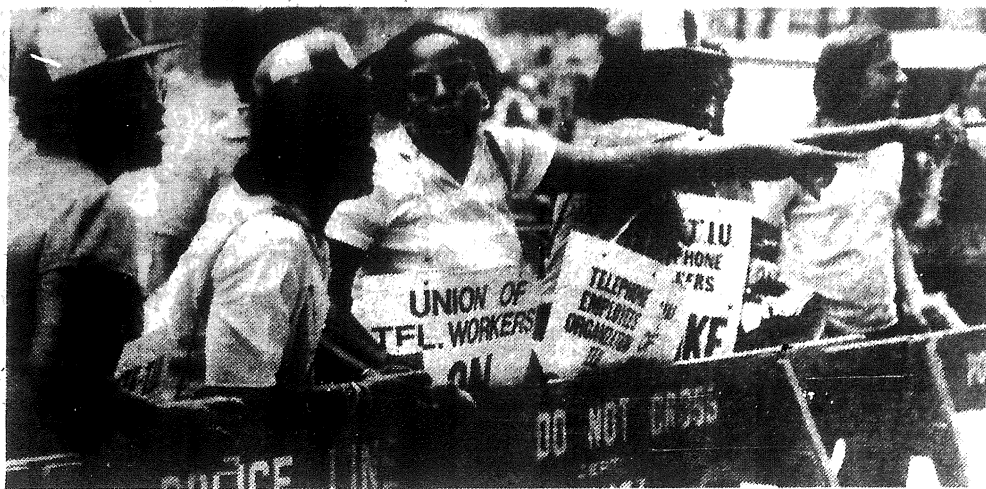
alms are not based on abstract or moralistic grounds. Rather they are based on our understanding that neither strategy—even with the best of intentions on the part of their advocates—is capable of ending the oppression of Black people.

As for integration into U.S. society, we do not believe it is possible for U.S. (capitalist) society to "integrate," that is, assimilate, the majority of Black people. We believe that racism and the special oppression of Black people are so ingrained in the system that such integration is impossible without a social change in society that would in itself constitute a social revolution. This is especially true in the present period, when U.S. and world capitalism are heading into an increasingly severe crisis embracing all society. The integration of the majority of Black people could only even be conceived of if the economy were expanding at an intense rate, providing jobs, education, housing for everybody, including and especially those at the very bottom of society. Only this could provide not only the material things that Black people need, but also provide enough material goods for everyone. Only this could eliminate the material basis of racism—not enough for everyone and the resulting struggle of each against all for too few goods, power, status, etc. Yet, U.S. capitalism has never experienced this type of expansion; even at the height of the post-war prosperity, which did allow the ruling class the maneuvering room to grant certain concessions to the Black Movement, economic growth was nowhere near rapid enough to make a

means, and can only mean, that the oppressed group should "act like" and "be like" everybody else in order to be treated like everybody else. In other words, if the oppressed group didn't act... Black, gay, Jewish, whatever... that is, if the oppressed group lost/gave up that which gives it a unique culture and/or identity, then it supposedly could be integrated—that is, assimilated—into the mainstream of the society. But this is in fact a form of imperialism. Its starting point is the alleged superiority of the dominant culture, and the corresponding need to "civilize" or bring "culture" to an allegedly more "backward" people/culture. This we vehemently reject.

In the context of the U.S., with its dominant WASP culture, the assimilation of Black people would mean the more or less complete liquidation of their unique culture and identity. While some Black people may wish to assimilate and give up their cultural identity, we believe that most Black people in the U.S. are, have a right to be, and should be proud to be Black (more than simply the color of their skin), and wish to retain their distinct culture and identity. Moreover, Black culture is already under attack even without Black people being assimilated into mainstream (white) society. It is being undermined by attempts to suppress or at least contain it, on the one hand, and by efforts to appropriate (steal) elements of it, to "whitify" them, deny their origins and make a profit marketing them. In short, Black culture is ripped off all the time. (Corn-rowing of hair is an example that comes to mind. When

"While we do not deny one bit the importance of the so-called 'race' question in the history of the country and the world, we look to a class solution to the oppression people face and the crisis of the society as a whole."



pro-capitalist ideologies fashioned by sections of the Black middle class (or working class intellectuals) as reflections of their own aspirations: in the case of strict integrationists, the wish for economic, political and social power and status within U.S. capitalist society, often as "spokespeople" for the Black community; in the case of the strict nationalists, the wish for the same power and status as above, except as advocates of and within an independent Black nation. Both are bourgeois in the sense that they accept U.S. capitalism as a more or less eternal entity, which Black people should seek to improve and enter or leave. And both are bourgeois in the sense that neither has as its vision the destruction of the international capitalist system, which is the only route to freedom for Black people and the vast majority of humankind. In sum, our objections to integrationism and nation-

major dent in the special oppression of Blacks. If that was the case during one of the greatest economic booms in U.S. history, can anyone believe that capitalism in crisis can integrate Black people? Now more than ever the U.S. ruling class needs to maintain and reinforce the special oppression of Black people; Blacks' role as a major component of the reserve army of labor, the possibility of earning super-profits through the exploitation of those who do have jobs, and as a means to further divide the working class by appealing to the racism of white workers, to give them what appears to be a stake (meager as it is in fact) in the system. For these and other reasons, we do not believe U.S. capitalism is capable of integrating Black people.

Nor do we believe that integration in the sense of full assimilation is a desirable goal. In such situations, assimilation

Black women did it, as they have for years, it was considered alien, strange, even hostile. But when Bo Derek, a white actress, does it, it becomes a fad among whites, it is commercialized, and Bo Derek is given credit for having started it. Similarly, the appropriation of Black music by the popular music industry.) We believe that by and large the cultures of Black people and other oppressed people, precisely because they reflect the outlook of the downtrodden and not that of those doing the oppressing, are more humane and have a positive effect on the proletariat as a whole; and we are for their maintenance. We oppose any strategy—in this case assimilationism—that would lead to their destruction, that is, their total dissolution into dominant white culture.

In addition to our opposition to integrationism/assimilationism, we do not
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believe that the separation of Black people from the U.S. and the establishment of a separate Black nation on a distinct national territory would lead to freedom for Black people. (This does not mean, however, that we do not support Black people's right to such a nation, that is, the right of self-determination, if they so choose—more on this later.) First, a separate Black nation would be oppressed by imperialism, that is, by the same neo-colonial mechanisms that lead to the plunder and distortion of the formally independent nations of Africa and other parts of the so-called Third World. In other words, such a nation would be independent largely in name, but would in fact continue to be dominated by imperialism. This would especially be the case if the territory of the newly independent Black nation were within the continental United States, that is, surrounded on all or most sides by what is still the strongest imperialist power in the world.

Furthermore, within such an independent nation, which would in fact be capitalist, the majority of Black people would continue to be oppressed and exploited, only now by a Black capitalist class instead of a white one. While Black people certainly have the right to be exploited by a Black ruling class instead of a white one, it is hard to see that this is a solution to the oppression the majority of Black people face. Their liberation would then require a socialist revolution within the Black nation which in turn would be set back by the nationalists' emphasis on the cross-class unity of Black people.

Moreover, the U.S. capitalist class is not likely to grant Black people a distinct national territory, and certainly not a territory in the Southern part of the country, which is now one of the only parts of the country that is growing economically. In addition, the ruling class will not want Blacks to leave the country. On the contrary, they are likely to fight desperately to keep Blacks within the country; however much the ruling class may despise Black people and seek to keep them in chains, it needs them just as it always has. It needs Black people to work for them at starvation wages; and it needs Black people and racism to divide the working class, to fool white workers into supporting the system, and to prevent a united class struggle. The ruling class cannot use Black people for these purposes if Black people are not actually in the country in some proximity to whites. As a result, we believe the ruling class will attempt to actually re-enslave Black people rather than allow them to separate.

A struggle to secede therefore would inevitably mean an all-out war against the U.S. capitalist class. This, in turn, could only succeed if at least some other section of the U.S. population were to ally with Blacks in their struggle. In other words, there would have to be a mass uprising of the working class—Black, Latin, Asian, white, etc.—or at least a substantial section of it, that destroyed or severely weakened the capitalist class, for Black people to actually win an independent nation. But this itself would constitute a socialist revolution, or something very near to it, something that a strict nationalist perspective denies is necessary or even possible.

In sum, we do not support either integrationism or nationalism, assimilation or separation, as strategies for the liberation of Black people. We do support the positive aspects, proposals and demands of these ideologies insofar as they reflect one or another aspect of the Black experience in the U.S. And we should support and seek united fronts with those organizations, movements and leaderships that fight for these positive aspirations. Finally, in carrying out our political/ideological struggles against integrationist and nationalist leaderships, we should be aware of, and

sensitive to, the positive contents that Black people infuse into their leaders' programs and ideologies.

RSL approach

In contrast to the integrationist and nationalist perspectives, our starting point is that all oppression and exploitation come from relative scarcity (not enough surplus product for all people to lead secure and fulfilled lives) and the ensuing division of society into social classes. Today, however, the productive forces are developed enough—both the technical forces such as the machines, the technology, etc., and the working class—so that if they were used, to benefit and build society as a whole, as opposed to cannibalizing it, it should be possible to overcome relative scarcity and the resulting struggle of each against all.

Therefore, while we do not deny one bit the importance of the so-called "race" question in the history of the country and the world, we look to a working class solution to the oppression people face and the crisis of the society as a whole. From our point of view, only when capitalism is destroyed—that is, only when the system based on exploitation, accumulation for the sake of accumulation and ruthless, dog-eat-dog competition is destroyed—will Black people and all other oppressed and

“Revolutionaries must organize within the Black community so that Black people see that the actual source of their oppression is capitalism as a system, and that, at bottom, this oppression results from the class nature of capitalism and can only be ended through the destruction of this system.”

exploited people win some real measure of control over their own lives and be free. Thus our strategic goal is a united class struggle, a united movement, in which revolutionary workers—Black, Latin, white, etc.—lead the broad masses of oppressed people in a fight for everybody's rights and needs against the U.S. capitalist class. Our ultimate goal is a socialist revolution in which the working class movement overthrows the capitalist class, smashes it and its state, and proceeds to build a new society, truly run by the workers and oppressed sectors. Within such a society, as we shall discuss, Black people would have the right to separate, integrate or whatever they wished.

We do not assume, however, as the Marxist movement in this country traditionally has, that such a working class movement will necessarily be made up of one or a series of relatively integrated, multinational organizations. Instead, we believe that the most likely course of development in the U.S. will be a movement that is a coalition, or united front, of a broad range of organizations, some multinational, some consisting solely of oppressed nationalities or other oppressed groups (gays, women, etc.), some with explicitly socialist goals, some not. Within each community, we expect that the more working class elements will play a leading role in mobilizing and organizing other oppressed people. At the same time, we expect that the members of the oppressed groups will play a leading role in the struggles of the entire working class.

Within this movement, we see the need for a revolutionary socialist, working class party that can represent and fight for the interests of all sections of the movement—the needs and aspirations of all the oppressed and exploited. This unifying function is particularly important in the U.S., where

the working class is, and has always been, deeply divided. Moreover, a revolutionary party is needed to explain why socialist revolution is the only road forward for the workers' movement, to combat leaderships that argue for a reformist perspective, and at the proper moment to help organize and lead the forces of the movement in an assault on the capitalist system.

If the revolutionary party is to carry out these tasks, it must be made up of the most class-conscious elements from all sections of the working class, as well as middle class people who look at the world from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat. In particular, it is crucial that the revolutionary party include among its leadership and ranks members of the most oppressed sections of the society. Therefore, while we do not oppose, and in fact in most cases support, the independent organization of Black people and other oppressed groups, we still try to win the vanguard elements of the Black and other communities and movements to the revolutionary party.

Self-determination

One of the keys to the building of a class-conscious, united workers' movement and a mass revolutionary party is the question of self-determination. It is absolutely vital that the workers' movement and the revolutionary party stand

community groups, caucuses within broader formations, etc.—as well as participate in multiracial bodies. In general, we regard this as positive and we expect to participate in such formations where possible, fighting for our revolutionary program inside them. We are in no sense opponents of all Black organizations as a way of organizing one sector of the oppressed masses. Under certain conditions, we ourselves might initiate some type of Black organization.

The right of self-determination extends to and beyond a socialist revolution. While we are for a unified workers' movement that smashes capitalism, we are not necessarily committed to a unified single country within the boundaries of the existing United States after such a revolution. There is, for example, the question of self-determination for Mexicans/Chicanos in the Southwest. There is the question of an equitable return of lands to the Native Americans. And there is the question of an independent Black nation within the current boundaries of the U.S. if Black people so choose.

We should not confuse our support for the right to self-determination, however, with actually advocating secession. In particular, at this time we do not advocate the formation of an independent Black nation. In addition to the arguments we discussed earlier, we do not believe that calls for an independent Black nation currently represent the aspirations of the majority of Black people, how they want to see their oppression ended. As we have discussed, this country was built in great part off the labor of Black people, and its product and wealth is as much Black people's birthright as it is anybody else's in this country. We believe that many Black people feel that they have a stake in, a right to a piece of, what this country is, has produced and can produce, something that would be taken away/given up by the formation of a separate nation.

Given the general approach discussed above, revolutionaries—Black, white, Latin, etc.—have a twofold task in relation to winning Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution. First, we must wage a determined struggle among white workers and within the working class movement against all forms of racism, to have white workers and the movement as a whole understand the special oppression of Black people and the role they and their oppression have played in the history of the country. We must work to convince white workers and the movement to commit themselves fully and completely to struggling for the rights and needs of Black people and for their full liberation. This not only includes fighting for full democratic rights for Blacks, but also full support of the right of Black people to national self-determination. Only if this struggle is carried out and the commitment of white workers, or a substantial number of them, to the freedom of Black people made clear, can Black people be expected to unite with white workers, that is, can an actual classwide and class-conscious movement be built.

Second, and at the same time, revolutionaries must organize within the Black community and particularly among Black workers so that Black people see that the actual source of their oppression is capitalism as a system and the ruling class that runs it; that, at bottom, this oppression results from the class nature of capitalism and can only be ended through the destruction of this system, not through trying to reform it, or trying to secede from it to set up a new Black capitalist nation. In other words, revolutionaries should be organizing, propagandizing and agitating among Black people for a class-analysis and a class-struggle strategy for achieving Black liberation.

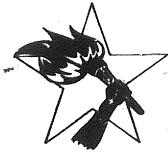
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WHAT WE STAND FOR

Program in Brief of the Revolutionary Socialist League

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

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

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

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

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

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

While such revolutions are most likely to develop on a national basis, we believe that to be successful they must become worldwide in scope. Capitalism is

an international system, with a world economy and a world market. Only through an international socialist revolution can the workers and their allies eliminate all capitalist oppression and have access to the human, natural and technical resources necessary to solve the problems confronting human society.

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

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

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

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

4 Socialism does not exist anywhere in the world today. What is called socialism in countries like Russia, China, Cuba, Albania, Poland, etc., is state capitalism, a 20th century variation of traditional, private shareholding capitalism. In the state-capitalist (often called Stalinist) countries, as in the "regular" capitalist nations, a small elite dominates society, making all the decisions and reaping all the benefits. Working and oppressed people have no more control of the factories and other workplaces, the economy, the government or anything else than do workers in traditional capitalist countries. The state-capitalist ruling class controls the state apparatus and nationalized industry, while the workers are in the position of being wage slaves, chained to a giant capitalist machine.

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

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

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

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

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

socialist revolution will surely triumph.

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

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

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

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