

IN THESE TIMES

Editorial

A slap on the wrist for racists

The outcome of the Camp Pendleton incident, so far, (see page 7, and *ITT*, Jan. 5), is that ten black marines face court martial, while 12 white marines have been transferred from the base, and two discharged. The black marines are in danger of going off to jail; the white marines are free of further jeopardy or punishment and are even suing for damages.

Blacks must suffer the ordeal of court martial; while white racists get a gentle slap on the wrists.

Left and liberal anti-racists should be on the offensive, moving decisively against racism and for democratization in the armed services, in the wake of the Pendleton situation. Instead, they are once again on the defensive and, for all their sincere intent, good support efforts, and militant eloquence, are falling short of their political obligations.

Those obligations go beyond the necessary and important tasks of raising the outcry against racism and organizing in defense of the black defendants. They involve as well grasping the Camp Pendleton situation to organize a sustained effort at a comprehensive reordering of military policy and procedure suited to achieving racial equality and democratizing reforms in the armed services.

The Naval Investigative Services report provides added strength to an anti-racist offensive. It documents a pattern of organized illegal activity by racists at Camp Pendleton and other marine bases, including on-base and off-base harassment and assaults on black marines and civilians, arson, criminal tampering with automobiles with intent to injure or kill, and a general strategy to deny blacks their fundamental rights and the equal protection of the law.

More than this, the report demonstrates that the marine command, in denying, failing to act against, and then trying to cover up, this illegal organized racist activity, is culpable of dereliction of duty, if not felony, by virtue either of complicity or incompetence. Indeed, there is evidence suggesting that the company commander and battalion executive officer were involved in Klan activity in agreeing to use Klan members as a network of informers on black and politically progressive personnel.

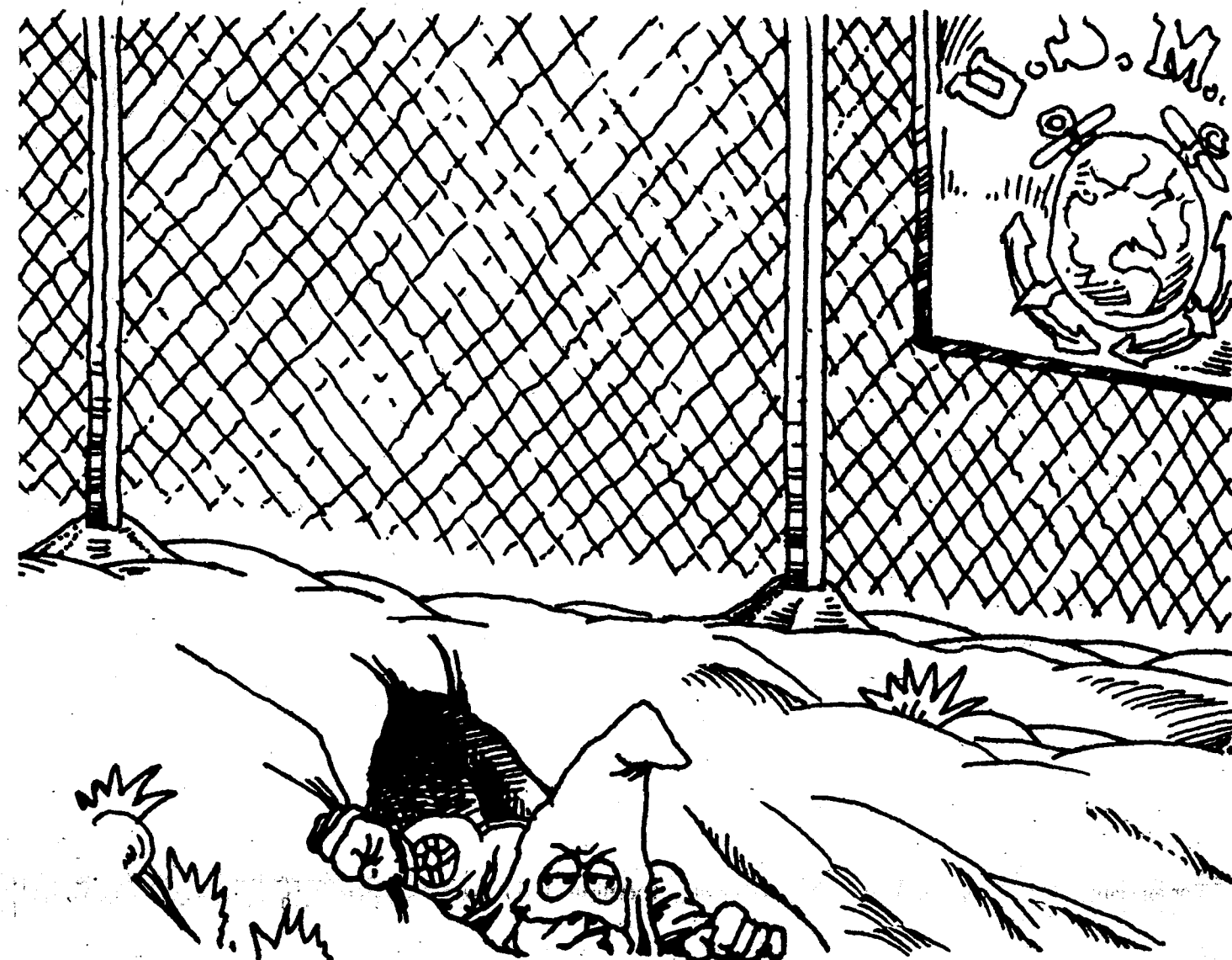
► Naval report not enough.

But the Naval report can not be relied upon to change things significantly. Its very title, "Racist Extremist/Dissident Group Activities," suggests an intent to abridge political rights of service personnel and otherwise to avoid any but the most superficial adjustments. It implies that illegal activities by racists, including officers, are in some way equivalent to altogether legal activities of "dissidents," though the latter are sanctioned by the 1971 order wrested from then Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and authorizing legal political activity by military personnel.

The report may foreshadow a move to use the Camp Pendleton affair to rescind political rights of service personnel under cover of being "fair" by putting an end to "extremist" political activity on the "right" and the "left."

The acts of the ten black defendants cannot be equated with the illegal racist activity to which they were responding. The black marines acted as victims of assault, intimidation, criminal conspiracy, and unequal treatment, to vindicate their rights and protect their lives and property, in the face of indifference or complicity by vested authority.

Most of the defendants grew up in the



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South where officers of the law and politicians were in league with Klan and other racists in abridging blacks' right, assaulting and even murdering them with impunity. The Camp Pendleton situation is woven in the same pattern. They acted justifiably (however injudiciously) in vindicating their rights in the absence of protection by lawful military or civil authority. When people cannot rely upon lawful authority to protect their rights and persons, the authorities must be held responsible if they take the law into their own hands.

► The context.

The racist attacks on blacks' life and liberty at Camp Pendleton come in the context of an old pattern of unequal treatment. In 1974 61.5 percent of enlisted blacks were in the bottom three grades, as against only 31 percent of enlisted whites. One-third of all court-martial defendants and one-third of all military-prison inmates were black, even though blacks comprised only 16 percent of military personnel. Blacks received less-than-honorable discharges at twice the rate of whites.

Blacks comprised 18 percent of marine personnel generally and at Pendleton. Yet 26 percent of the combat units, and 23 percent of service and supply units were black, while only 10.3 percent and 5.4 percent of the equipment repair and electronics units were black.

Black military personnel, in other

words, are grossly underrepresented among officers, receive less training and fewer promotions, suffer more court-martials and imprisonment, and have a higher risk of death in combat.

► A movement to eradicate racism.

The Camp Pendleton affair should become more than another in the long series of defenses against unequal treatment of blacks and their subjection to racial attacks and undue legal process. It should also become a benchmark signifying the beginning of the movement to eradicate racism in the armed services and to democratize them. The one requires the other. We think left and liberal anti-racists should organize to see that the following steps are taken:

- The 12 transferred white marines should be brought back to Pendleton to stand trial for their illegal activities.

- All officers complicit in illegal racist activities by either overt act or dereliction of duty, should be brought to trial and, if guilty, punished.

- The American Civil Liberties Union should consider pressing for these two measures as vigorously as it is now aiding in the defense of the ten black marines. The trial and punishment of those violating civil rights are essential to the maintenance and strengthening of civil liberties.

- Congress should be pressed to open a full-scale investigation of racism in the armed services with a view to passing

stringent legislation guaranteeing full political rights of service personnel, equal treatment and opportunities, including substantially higher recruitment of blacks and members of other minorities into officer ranks.

- Among such legislation should be measures requiring all services to institute educational programs, as part of basic training, teaching principles of liberty and equality as essential to democracy and their defense and protection as the highest purpose of military service.

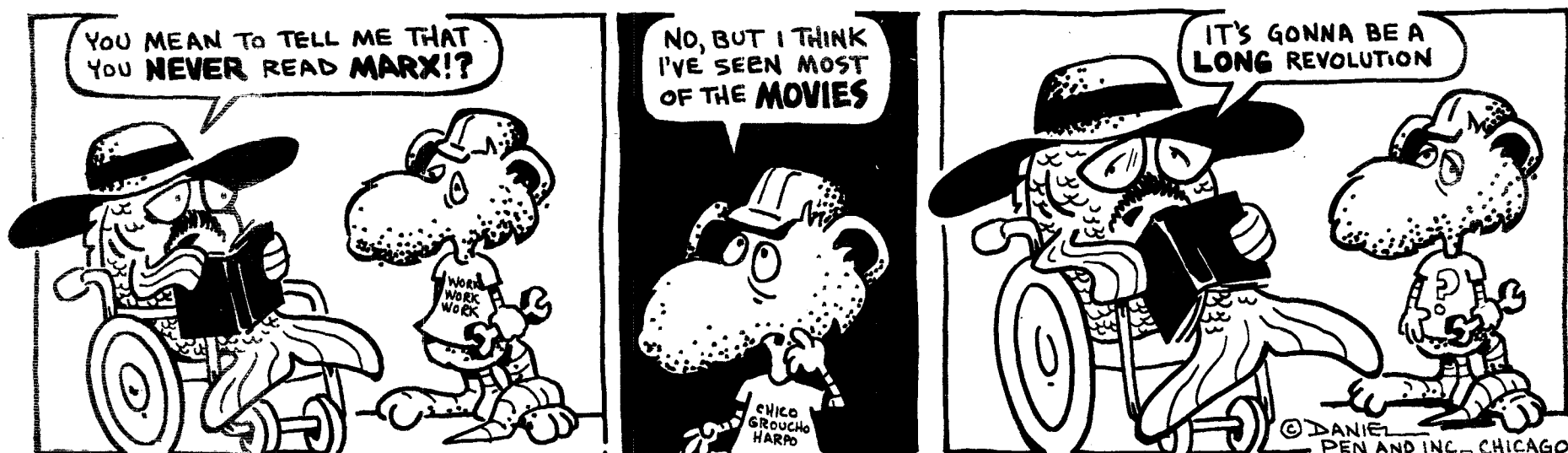
- Congress should be pressed to provide that officers that do not rigorously enforce racial equality or punish perpetrators of illegal racist activities be court-martialed or discharged. Culpable service secretaries should be replaced or impeached.

- Support should be given to, and Congress should be pressed to authorize, the organization of service personnel unions as a good way of bringing military people together across racial, ethnic and cultural lines, for common democratic purposes.

As we have stated before (*ITT*, Jan. 19), civil rights and civil liberties are indivisible.

People who would like to aid in the defense of the ten black defendants now facing court martial may write for information or send donations to The Camp Pendleton Defense Fund, P.O. Box 2235, Oceanside, Calif., 92054.

THE FACTORY WITH RATSUS AND TROUTIGAN



Letters

Being a revolutionary means not being afraid to sign your name

Editor:

Revolutionists are not found on the safe and sunny side of the Rubicon, or in air-conditioned offices dashing off reformist essays. Revolution means risk, sacrifice, struggle, the CIA/FBI menace and threat of economic suicide, prison and even assassination. Revolution is a matter of life and death; it is not the idle pastime of duffers, dabblers, dilettantes and others who would defuse militancy and mislead the working class Carter-Meany style.

For an elaboration of what revolution is and is not, we recommend the works of Marx, Lenin, Engels and Trotsky.

—A revolutionary socialist
Cleveland, Ohio

Open letter to Mario Soares

Dr. Mario Soares
Office of the Prime Minister
Lisbon, Portugal

Dear Prime Minister,

We are astonished to learn that Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho and a large number of other officers are about to be indicted before a Court Martial, as a result of various accusations concerning their part in the events of November 1975.

As you know, we have for a long time felt that Major Carvalho and his colleagues should either be exonerated or brought to a fair trial. It seems to us that there has been an indefensible delay in deciding this matter, and that the position itself is quite unjustifiable. What possible reason can there be for allowing the military to adjudicate this matter? The allegations which have been made against Major Carvalho would normally be considered by a high civil court, if they were to be taken seriously enough.

We are bound to register our profound disquiet at this turn of events. It seems all too likely that Major Carvalho is to be the victim of vengeful pressures.

With our respect,

Yours sincerely,

—Ken Coates, Chris Farley

Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation

—Chris Goodey

Russell Committee for Portugal

—Ken Fleet

Institute for Workers' Control

—Audrey Wise, MP, Doug Hoyle, MP

Ron Thomas, MP, Martin Flannery, MP,

Syd Bidwell, MP, Jo Richardson, MP,

Oonagh MacDonald, MP, Russell Kerr, MP,

Eddie Layden, MP, Brian Sedgemore, MP,

Tom Litterick, MP,

Tony Topham, Raymond Williams

To the left of (Brezhnev)

Editor:

Pete Karman's letter supporting Roberta Lynch's criticisms of the DSOC actually contains the rationale for DSOC strategy. It is because American politics are retrograde and anti-socialist that DSOC advocates progressive reforms. DSOC claims to be socialist because its goal is a socialist society, not an advanced welfare state. Its strategy, however, is based on an analysis of political reality in the U.S., a reality that, as Karman indicates, is hardly receptive to socialism at the moment.

DSOC is, of course, to the left of Bismark and de Gaulle (and Brezhnev) precisely because it understands that nationalization without democratization is not socialism. The problem involved in advocating extensive nationalization is that it leaves the potential constituency for socialism behind. So DSOC supports the most progressive reforms it believes are possible—Those moving beyond liberalism and toward socialism. DSOC will "move to the left" whenever there is mass support for a more radical politics, support that DSOC will have helped to create.

—Greg Schirm
Philadelphia

The home team did better

Editor:

As a longtime student of India, I found your coverage of the Indian elections (*ITT*, April 6) very disappointing. Indira Gandhi's government was repressive and not in the best interests of the Indian people, but it is not at all clear that the Janata victory will be to their benefit either. Prime Minister Moraji Desai has represented the interests of the privileged for decades; it is difficult to see his government as at all progressive.

Your article was sorely lacking in analysis, and the little it contained was misleading. Jas Saund described Janata as comprised of "the old guard, the populists, the socialists and the small farmers," forgetting to mention the Hindu chauvinists, the merchants and the landlords.

Is a class analysis too much to expect from a newspaper that claims to provide an independent socialist perspective? What is the class composition of Janata's constituent parties? Who is in the second tier of leadership and to what power base are they responsible? What signs are there that the end of the emergency will result in effective organizing on the left? What is happening in traditionally militant areas of the country such as Bengal and Maharashtra? Are the left parties showing any disposition to build solidarity among themselves or working class unity across caste, linguistic or religious lines?

On the scene reporting isn't worth carrying if the reporter fails to frame the crucial questions. John Judis did better from a distance (*ITT*, March 30).

—Marion M. Barnes
Eugene, Ore.

Select company

Editor:

I sincerely hope that you make it through this critical period in your history. I am very selective in my news consumption; it might be something of a compliment for you to know that in addition to *ITT*, I read regularly only the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*.

Please accept a small contribution above my subscription. Best of luck!

—Howard H. Frederick
American Friends Service Committee
San Francisco

Childlike, petty, unworthy

Editor:

Two points about Barbara Ehrenreich's column "New Fashions" (*ITT*, April 6).

First, it sets my teeth on edge to see knowledgeable feminist women repeat old sexist myths as history. Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818-1894) did not "invent" or wear those baggy gym slacks so misnamed "bloomers." Bloomer wore slacks which were originated by a sister reformer, Elizabeth Smith Miller.

Second, it also gripes me to see anyone, for any reason, advocate the thoughtless marking and defacing of library books. This is a child-like, petty, unworthy suggestion. Many, many libraries are operating on the edge as it is. Defacement of books would tend to encourage library management to cut back on buying of all material (including feminist) by demonstrating that certain cretins have no respect for the rights of others and the property of us all. For shame.

—G.D. Goodman
Hardinsburg, Ky.

More grass roots!

Editor:

Congratulations to David Moberg for a fine article on E.F. Shumacher (*ITT*, April 13). I agree with Moberg that Shumacher and some of his supporters are often politically naive and tend toward being overly moralistic. However, Moberg's other point, that the need for "intermediate technology," more emphasis on decentralization, etc., will be ignored at the peril of democratic socialists" is absolutely crucial!

It seems to me that the adherents of Shumacher and other grass roots movements are really dealing with the "democratic" part of what we call democratic socialism! Groups like National People's Action, the National Association of Neighborhoods, Active Communities Organizing Reforms Now (ACORN) and many others should be a regular part of *IN THESE TIMES*. We need their people and ideas on democracy and they need our socialist perspective.

In line with this, I want to point out that DSOC at its recent convention unanimously passed a resolution to work more closely with grass root constituency groups such as those I have mentioned. Unfortunately, *IN THESE*

TIMES' coverage of the convention failed to mention this or to report on the strong sentiment for it at the convention.

—Bob Groves
Philadelphia

Red baiting?

Editor:

Certain aspects of Dan Marschall's article on *Labor Today's* 15th anniversary (*ITT*, April 13) are inaccurate and misleading.

Labor Today draws support from a wide range of trade unionists, as I stated to Marschall. It is improper to single out any particular group or ideology as dominant. In fact to suggest that certain organizations play any role at all is to convince many, influenced by McCarthyism, that that particular group is dominant.

When asked what role Communists played in *Labor Today*, I replied that our policy is one of non-exclusion. We have supported efforts to remove anti-Communist clauses from union constitutions, and have argued that Communists, as well as many others, have a legitimate right to participate in the trade union movement. We are not particularly pro-Communist, but we feel that the labor movement must confront this civil liberties issue. The purges that swept the labor movement in the '50s resulted in thousands of persons being removed from union office undemocratically: more non-Communists than Communists suffered from this. And worse, the entire labor movement suffered a setback.

To single out Communists, while ignoring the fact that most *Labor Today* supporters are Baptists, Catholics, Democrats, Socialists, vegetarians, Rosecrucians or what-have-you, smacks to us of red-baiting. We would have expected that from the *Chicago Tribune*—but such biased coverage in flagrant contradiction to how we characterized ourselves in the interview is uncalled for from *ITT*.

—Jim Williams
Editor
Labor Today

Editor's note: First, Dan Marschall's article does not constitute red-baiting. Unlike 20 years ago, the mere mention of the Communist party does not invoke McCarthyist hysteria. Nor is it necessarily negative. Communists have played a long and honorable role in the labor movement, and the "network of trade union activists" mentioned in the article are a progressive force in many unions.

Second, Marschall conducted his own investigation apart from his interview with Williams. The statement in the article reflects his conclusions and makes it clear that Labor Today maintains its organizational independence.

We believe it is essential to be honest with our readers while being supportive of the efforts of groups like Labor Today. Honesty, in this context, means being open about political association.

More letters next page.