

## THERE IS NO PEACE!

# The Civil War Goes On

## Statement of the Political Bureau of the Spartacist League

The American ruling class has reached a temporary bargain with the leaders of North Vietnam, in the form of an in-place ceasefire and withdrawal of U.S. troops. But neither in Vietnam nor at home does the Paris treaty mean real peace. In Vietnam the basic issues of the civil war remain unresolved. In the United States the Nixon regime is already stepping up its wave of repression, while wage controls place the burden of inflation squarely on the working class.

For the working masses of Vietnam the war goes back more than a generation, a war which has cost already more than 2 million lives, an incredible balance sheet of suffering. And yet, over the years, these heroic fighters have time and again demonstrated their resourcefulness and determination to carry the struggle against the forces of colonial and capitalist rule through to a victorious conclusion. We salute the workers and peasants who have fought and died bravely in this historic class conflict! Long live the Indochinese socialist revolution!

### An Imperialist Gamble

Especially since the massacre of hundreds of thousands of workers and communists in Indonesia in 1965 accomplished a major imperialist aim in Southeast Asia, key sectors of the American bourgeoisie have favored an end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Distorting the domestic economy, undermining government authority at home, leading to repeated international monetary crises, worsening the U.S. bourgeoisie's competitive position vis-a-vis the other imperialist powers, and weakening the U.S. militarily, the war has increasingly appeared to the ruling class as a diversion from more pressing tasks. At the same time, U.S. imperialism has undergone a significant change in its global role, reducing it from the hegemonic world policeman to only the first among equals, leading to renewed sharp inter-imperialist economic rivalry and the first faint anticipations of World War III. The "American Century," not three decades old, has foundered in Vietnam. Recognizing this new position, and with

promises of important new deals with the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies, the Nixon regime has decided to gamble against the possibility of an NLF/DRV victory in the South by agreeing to an "in-place" ceasefire in exchange for U.S. military withdrawal.

On the other side, the Viet Cong and the Stalinist leaders in Moscow,

totally inadequate flow of Soviet aid to North Vietnam, vastly inferior in quantity and quality to that supplied to the bourgeois Nasser regime in Egypt, where oil, not revolution, was at stake.

The Chinese, who in the past had only shown a minor interest in the Vietnam war, have taken the same line as the Russians following the

to convince the Vietnamese Stalinists that a deal with DeGaulle was impossible (at the time, they called for limited independence within the French Union!).

In South Vietnam, after abandoning the workers and peasants to the mercies of Diem, it took more than two years for the Hanoi bureaucracy to begin giving real support to the resistance struggle which began as early as



Peking and Hanoi are continuing contradictory policies based on their position as parasitic bureaucracies reflecting the pressures of the world bourgeoisie, but also forced, in the process of defending their own rule, to offer a real but limited defense of the workers' conquests when the very existence of the deformed workers states is threatened by imperialism. The actual policies vary somewhat according to the national interests of the bureaucracies. Thus the Soviet Union has for years been trying to force an open sellout, a liquidation of the struggle in the South, in the interests of a global entente with U.S. imperialism. This was expressed in part in the

Nixon-Mao talks, which whetted their appetites for a diplomatic bloc with the U.S. The policies of these traitors today is the same as in 1954, when Chou En-Lai and the Russians shoved an open sellout down the throats of the Vietnamese, who were forced to abandon vast areas of the South already under their control.

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong face somewhat different pressures. On the one hand, from the very beginning they have followed a fundamental strategy of betrayal, beginning with Ho Chi Minh's support for French colonialism during the French popular front government of 1936-39. In 1946 it took the shelling of Haiphong harbor

1956. Not only has the NLF consistently failed to organize the workers in class struggle against the capitalists, foreign or domestic, but their program calls not for socialist revolution but instead for a "democratic" bourgeois government, with firm guarantees for foreign investment and "free enterprise." The NLF/DRV peace program of a coalition government of class collaboration between workers and capitalist parties is only the icing on the cake.

### Social Revolution

However, in spite of this appetite for betrayal on the part of the Stalinist

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# Venceremos Is Target of New Repression Wave

The meaning of Nixon's call for an end to the "era of permissiveness" is being graphically illustrated in a wave of brutal police repression, of which the murder in Baton Rouge of two protesting students was just the beginning. Most recently, in California a campaign of open police repression is being waged against the members of Venceremos. This group originated largely as a split-off from the Revolutionary Union which gave uncritical support to "Third World" nationalism and counterposed "armed struggle now" to the openly reformist workerism of the present RU. The vicious police crackdown followed the escape of Ron Bealy, a former Venceremos member and convict at Chino State Prison, during which one prison guard was killed and another wounded. The FBI and local police in California and Arizona launched a series of illegal raids, breaking into private homes without warrants, conducting massive searches, confiscating legal weapons, and arresting a total of 14 people. The defendants include five Venceremos members, among them Bruce Franklin, member of the Venceremos central committee, and an ex-professor at Stanford, who was fired last year for "fomenting campus violence."

The following leaflet, calling for the unconditional defense of the Venceremos group against these attacks, was distributed by the Bay Area Spartacist League and Revolutionary Communist Youth. The SL/RCY has been the only group on the left to actively exercise its principled revolutionary duty to defend all left and working-class victims of ruling-class attack, despite political disagreements.

## DEFEND VENCEREMOS -- BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

We in the Spartacist League and the Revolutionary Communist Youth pledge our unconditional support to Venceremos in the face of the present brutal anti-communist witch-hunt. As revolutionary Trotskyists we are firmly committed to the defense of the working-class movement against attack by the bourgeoisie and their agents and raise high the banner of international working-class solidarity. Efforts of the ruling class to smash the left must be expected as long as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie lives and breathes, nevertheless militants must be aware that the Nixon landslide victory based on its blatant appeal to racism and anti-welfare sentiment has given the green light to the local police and opened a period where attacks on the working-class movement may well become the norm rather than the exception. Unless all left tendencies stand united against the present outrage, the campaign against Venceremos will be only the beginning. Unconditional defense of the left against the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state is a principle that must be upheld regardless of support for the program of the tendency involved or even the history of that tendency on the question.

The SL/RCY alone among the ostensibly revolutionary left, has consistently upheld this principle. Likewise we oppose hooliganism and thuggery within the left as it undermines the strength of the working-class movement and opens up the left to bourgeois attack. It is not with our fists but with our ideas and organization that the SL/RCY attempts within the workers movement to demonstrate the correctness of our program in the Bolshevik tradition of ideological struggle. Venceremos itself while still part of the Revolutionary Union participated at the 1969 Panther UFAF conference in physical attacks on the SL and Progressive Labor Party members for their criticisms of the Panthers for turning from militancy to a reformist community control of the police campaign. Two years later, after the Newton wing had fully consolidated its right turn to black capitalism and the Church, Venceremos finally issued a public criticism of the Panthers ("Against Revisionism: A Defense of The Black Panther Party 1966-1970") but failed to even mention let alone repudiate their previous gangster activity.

## Not Third Worldism, But Revolutionary Internationalism

The Venceremos group arose as one product of the profound demoralization resulting from decades of Stalinist betrayals and the abandonment of revolutionary Trotskyism by the Socialist Workers Party. Common to the many New Left, Maoist, anarchist and terrorist organizations has been a search for an alternative to organizing the only revolutionary force in capitalist society—the working class. While mouthing phrases of proletarian revolution, the heart of Venceremos' program is the identification of "Third World" peoples as the revolutionary vanguard. However, peoples, nations and communities are made up of antagonistic classes and the attempt to cover over this reality with Stalinist-Maoist formulas leads directly to abandoning the proletariat to left-sounding bourgeois reformists and nationalists.

Third Worldism is organizationally embodied by Venceremos' rule that on leading bodies a majority of the members must be Third World people. In a Leninist organization leaders arise and are chosen for responsibility on the basis of their political and organizational capabilities regardless of race, nationality or sex. Venceremos instead has built in petty-bourgeois white guilt by holding racial rather than class distinctions as primary. In this way, it finds fundamental conceptual agreement with the Ku Klux Klan in determining leadership by race and nationality. The inevitable result of such practice must be white paternalism and race-baiting as the method of political struggle.

## Peoples War vs. Class War

Peoples War or the "military strategy," combined with grossly reformist serve-the-people social welfare projects is the sum total of the Venceremos program. Counterposed to the painstaking work of building a Bolshevik vanguard party through building communist fractions in the labor movement and on campuses, the "military strategy," as all adventurism of the indignant petty-bourgeois intellectuals, seeks a short-cut to revolution by replacing the struggle of the masses in revolt with the heroic but small blows of individuals. Such a strategy of struggle not only opens the way to government suppression of the adventurists, but as a "by-product" opens the way for the FBI and the police to have all communists witch-hunted out of the labor movement.

## Not Social Work But Social Revolution

Serve-the-people programs side-step the core of the proletariat by glorifying the unorganized, the most poverty-ridden, the most oppressed as a "natural vanguard." This form of workerism caters to the present backward prejudices of the masses by abandoning the revolutionary program for minimal social welfare reform demands. Venceremos recently even went so far as to support McGovern, the liberal imperialist under the guise of "supporting the Vietnamese!" The SL/RCY emphasizes the necessity for systematic com-

munist implantation into the trade unions because the labor movement represents the most powerful sector of the proletariat and embodies an understanding of the need for workers organizations. We build communist caucuses based upon Trotsky's Transitional Program, the codification of the lessons of the Bolsheviks, the first four Congresses of the Communist International, and the struggle of the International Left Opposition. We seek to build a multi-racial, multi-national Leninist vanguard party that can lead the working class to a successful completion of the international socialist revolution to lay the basis finally for the qualitative leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.

Defend Venceremos—Unconditional defense of the left against bourgeois attack!  
Dump the bureaucrats—For a workers party based on the trade unions!  
Victory to the Vietnamese revolution! All Indochina must go Communist!  
Labor strikes against the war and wage freeze!  
Build the Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth!  
Toward the rebirth of the Fourth International!

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## ... Civil War

leaders, they are faced at the same time with intractable social and historical realities. In the present epoch, the weak bourgeoisies of backward countries, closely intertwined with imperialism and mortally afraid of an agrarian revolution which would sweep away their dominion, are incapable of carrying out the national and democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Today these tasks can only be carried out by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus, the Vietnamese bourgeoisie, justifiably afraid of being quickly annihilated once deprived of massive imperialist aid, has refused to form a coalition government with the Stalinists. And the Vietnam/NLF/DRV, forced to rely on workers and peasants against imperialism, must acquiesce to certain revolutionary measures if they are to mobilize the masses. These fundamental characteristics of the epoch have made the Vietnamese war from the beginning a social revolution, with the workers and peasants on one side and the bourgeoisie ("national" and imperialist) on the other. Moreover, where the nationalist bureaucrats in Moscow and Peking are content to sell out someone else's revolution, for the equally nationalist Hanoi bureaucracy, and especially the Viet Cong, this would mean cutting their own throats.

Thus the NLF/DRV from their side also have agreed to a gamble, banking on the extreme fragility of the Thieu regime, the widespread corruption, and popular discontent to lead to a rapid decomposition of the Saigon government once the Americans leave. The main difference between this and the 1954 sellout is the ceasefire in-place, i.e., the continued presence of large numbers of NLF/DRV troops in the South. Because of this, and the difficulties (real, but not insurmountable) for the U.S. in reinvading, we can judge that the ceasefire does not mean an immediate liquidation of the struggle and could well eventually lead to a Viet Cong victory in the South. However, this gamble is based on the fundamental strategy of betrayal which has been the essence of Vietnamese and international Stalinist policy since the inception of the struggle. There has been no Dien Bien Phu and the NLF continues to call for a coalition government, which if realized, with the Saigon military apparatus intact, could still lead to defeat.

## No Support to the Robbers' Peace!

The Spartacist League does not support in any way this robber's peace in Vietnam, in contrast with the obscene betrayal by the Stalinists and Maoists throughout the world, whose demand "Sign the Treaty" means supporting the concessions extorted by the American bourgeoisie from the Hanoi bureaucrats at the cost of the lives of tens and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese and American working people! Nor do we simply limit ourselves to the correct demand of "U.S. Out of Vietnam," as does the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, since this enables them to conclude that the treaty is a victory, and therefore to give it backhanded support. The SL has always called for unconditional defense of the DRV/NLF

in their struggle against imperialism, and for a military victory to the NLF in the South. In the civil war going on in Vietnam it is an elementary act of class solidarity to take sides. But we totally oppose any coalition government, or the slogan of a "neutral" Vietnam. *All Indochina Must Go Communist!* And we give no political support to the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy. These parasitic misleaders put down by torture and murder the Vietnamese revolutionary militants—in the first place the Trotskyists—who fought from the outset in 1945 against the re-imposition of imperialism and for a socialist revolution. Should all of Indochina pass out of imperialist control it will be no thanks to Ho Chi Minh and his successors. Before the laboring masses in Vietnam can obtain even the beginnings of satisfaction of their elementary needs and hopes, a political revolution will be necessary, through revolutionary proletarian struggles, led by a Leninist, i.e., Trotskyist, party of permanent revolution. The struggle to build this party is an international task which requires an uncompromising struggle against imperialist war on a class basis, and an equally uncompromising struggle against the agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers movement, both here and in Vietnam. The only way to win a real and lasting peace in the interests of working people throughout the world is through socialist revolution! ■

## Correction

WV's report on the Spartacist League's third National Conference ("Toward Construction of the Leninist Vanguard!" in WV No. 15, January 1973) incorrectly quoted the Credentials Committee report as having stated that "67% of the members of the organization had joined within the past year." The correct figures were that 42% had been members of the SL/RCY for less than one year, while a total of 67% had joined within the past two years.

It has been brought to the attention of the Editorial Board that one paragraph in the article "Pop Front Imperils Chilean Workers" (WV No. 14, December 1972) was rendered virtually incomprehensible by an unfortunate technical error. The second paragraph under the subhead "A Revolutionary Program for Chile" (page 8, fourth column) should have read:

But the Chilean masses today still follow the Stalinists' and social-democratic misleaders. A powerful weapon in breaking the stranglehold of these class traitors is the demand that the workers' parties must "BREAK WITH THE BOURGEOISIE AND ITS PARTIES—FORM A WORKERS AND PEASANTS GOVERNMENT ON A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM." This slogan exposes the reformists' refusal to break with the class enemy. Expressing no confidence in the reformists' willingness to take power and rule in their own name, the Bolsheviks must at the same time continue their own agitation for transitional demands which constitute a revolutionary program for a workers government. The achievement of this slogan would immediately pose point-blank the total instant choice: the dictatorship of the proletariat or the bourgeois counter-revolution—open class warfare. ■

# PL: Road to Oblivion?

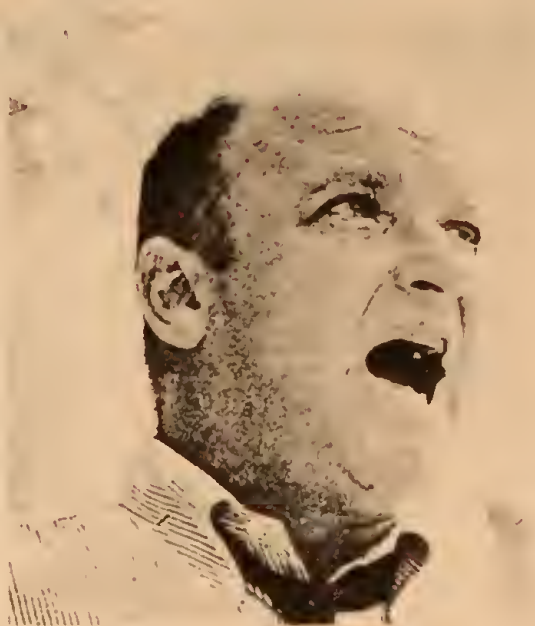
The Progressive Labor Party is presently facing a serious internal crisis which raises a distinct possibility of PL's rapid disappearance as a serious force on the U.S. left. PL's ten-year history has been marked by dramatic line changes, with instant success and an easy road to the masses expected from each new turn. Starting out as a left Stalinist movement ("Road to Revolution," 1963), PL went through a prolonged Maoist phase ("Road to Revolution II," 1966), then broke empirically to the left on the national question and the "theory of stages." In an attempt at theoretical justification, PL elaborated its break from Maoism into a full-scale flight from Leninism toward syndicalism and sterile ultra-leftism ("Road to Revolution III," 1972). Currently, demoralized by the failure of its leftist phase, PL is engaged in a deep plunge to the right, chasing liberals and competing with the CP and SWP on the field of reformism and single-issue opportunism.

For a period PL experienced rapid growth, capitalizing on its role as the pro-working-class left opposition in SDS. At the 1969 SDS convention, PL led a majority of the organization against the petty-bourgeois Third Worldism of SDS's former leadership, enduring every sort of red-baiting and race-baiting from its right-Maoist opponents for its critical stance toward the NLF and black nationalism. In the decisive split at the convention, which spelled the death agony of the New Left, the Spartacist League gave unambiguous critical support to the PL-led wing. However, in the following months, PL demonstrated its incapacity to provide a revolutionary strategy for the subjectively pro-working-class student radical organization. PL-SDS retreated into campus parochialism and pathetic social-workerism (the "Campus Worker-Student Alliance") and its following began to dwindle.

Desperately seeking to attract new forces, PL turned to self-styled "mass" marches, frantic *Challenge* sales campaigns and get-rich-quick gimmicks like its invasion of Buffalo for the expected 1971 steel strike. When these efforts failed to produce any flamboyant successes another switch was pulled, this time to single-issue campaigns (ban racist textbooks and professors, "30 for 40"), but without any particular results.

## Crisis Hits PL

The present crisis in PL is the result of the intersection of the stagnation of its organizational efforts and its total ideological confusion. Over the past few years PL has all but dissipated the political capital which it gained from its struggle in SDS. Dozens of PL-SDS supporters have resolved their confusion by embracing mainstream right Maoism, which offers a more consistent path to reformism; literally hundreds of PL-SDSers have simply dropped out of politics—burned



Better days:  
Rosen addresses  
Berkeley students  
in 1965.

out by meaningless super-activism, demoralized by their failure to "build a base in the working class," uncertain of what program they were defending, convinced by PL's substitution of apolitical personal "criticism and self-criticism" in place of political struggle over the organization's line that they just "didn't have what it takes to be a communist." Now this crisis is appearing in the core of the party, with the loss of Jeff Gordon and several prominent cadre in Boston, and PL chairman Milt Rosen's recent national morale-boosting tour.

The purpose of Rosen's tour is apparent from his speech, delivered "to members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party" in several cities and printed in *PL* magazine (January 1973) under the title "The Struggle for Socialism—A Matter of Life and Death." Beginning with a declaration of "great confidence," Rosen devotes the first portion of his talk to explaining that the commitment to revolution is important and dilating on the evils of the capitalist system—imperialist war, racism, unemployment, drugs, etc. Certainly, one might think, the "members and friends" of an organization like PL should not be in need of catalogues of the horrors of capitalism or impassioned exhortations to struggle against them. But apparently this is not the case, for Rosen goes on:

"Some of us think that some how or other we can escape the consequences of imperialism.... Any form of retreat from our commitment to the class struggle is bad.... Some people say, 'I'm bored.' Others say 'I want to be free to lead my own life.' Some will say they are 'tired.' People will say, 'Workers are rotten,' or 'they will never learn.' Still others will say, 'Everyone is rotten.' And others will develop 'differences'.... A young mother in our party—mirroring others—told me recently, 'I've been thinking of dropping out....'"

"To become 'bored' or 'indifferent' about them [revolutionary activities] means capitulation.... Some people say, 'This is all to the good, but we can't win.'... It is possible that we will not live to see socialism in our country...."

Citing the militancy of the French workers during the 1968 general strike, Rosen reassures his listeners that "Workers are for real, and they can win power."

In the past, communist parties that are granite-hard ideologically have withstood very sharp reverses. At the lowest ebb in the 1909-1911 period, there were no organized Bolshevik committees functioning in Russia; the Spartacist League itself was down to

40 following a faction fight and split in 1968. What has seen us through is the knowledge that we are defending the unique program of revolutionary Marxism, the historic interests of the proletariat. But PL, which changes programs every few years, can only overreact to setbacks which it measures against its earlier grandiose expectations. To be sure, openly opportunist reformist groups can survive for years through constant zig-zags, by adapting to every fashionable trend, from guerillism to McGovern. But at this game PL faces two past masters, the CP and SWP, who already have this territory sewn up tight. So for Progressive Labor the combination of ideological and organizational crisis could well prove fatal.

Since the inception of the Progressive Labor Movement, the Spartacist tendency has distinguished PL from various other Stalinist groupings, noting the numerous subjectively revolutionary cadre who were attracted to PL's hard communist face in opposition to the mushy social-democratic coffee-kitsch societies. We noted PL's tendency to empirically take over bits and pieces of the Trotskyist program (opposition to theories of two-stage revolution, "30 for 40," opposition to "revolutionary" nationalism). At the same time we warned:

"In its confusion, a large section of PL may find Leninism as easy to abandon as the Maoist caricature of Leninism.... PL will either discover the Leninist road in the only tendency—authentic Trotskyism—consistently opposed to the revisionism PL rejects, or reject Lenin along with the usurpers of his mantle and be lost forever in the wilderness of backward sectarianism and political banditry."

—"PL at a Dead End," *Spartacist*  
No. 19, November-December 1970

And so it happened. The demise of PL as a serious competitor for the allegiance of subjectively communist militants will aid in clearing the road to revolutionary consciousness for the masses. But it will be a defeat for the communist movement if PL fades into insignificance without a serious internal struggle counterposing a revolutionary alternative to its aimless wanderings. To date there has never been a serious political challenge within PL from the left, and if the present situation of decomposition continues much longer there may never be.

## From Foster to Mao

Progressive Labor originated from a group in New York around Milt Rosen and Mort Scheer who were expelled from the CP in 1961 as "Albanians,"

apparently for demanding that socialism be mentioned occasionally in the party's trade union work. Basically pro-Stalin internationally, it found its domestic mentor in William Z. Foster, considering him the leader of the "militant" wing of the CPs against the open liquidationism of Browder, who dissolved the party after World War II. Disgusted by Khrushchev's reformist policy of "peaceful coexistence," the founding PLers supported the Chinese in the early 1960's Sino-Soviet ideological dispute.

Reacting impressionistically to developments, the Progressive Labor Movement supported Mao, Castro, Ben Bella and various militant U.S. black nationalists (such as Robert Williams). According to PL's founding document, Castro built socialism in Cuba through a "combination of flexibility and adherence to a consistent anti-imperialist policy" ("Road to Revolution," March 1963).

Compared to other pro-Chinese elements internationally, the PL leadership was left-Stalinist. PL admitted that Foster and even Stalin himself had made serious mistakes, but did not draw the conclusions. "Road to Revolution" claimed that "young radicals can learn from such outstanding communists as William Z. Foster." But: "From the earliest days of the communist movement in the United States to the present, revision and its political manifestation, class collaboration, has been the chronic weakness.... After the expulsion of Lovestone [1928], the Party developed a militant pragmatic approach.... But even at that time there was no long range strategy developed." Stalin basically had a "militant revolutionary line," yet "a number of the fraternal parties which unquestioningly acceded to Stalin are in the main blindly following Khrushchev in a class collaborationist line today." PL avoided the obvious questions raised by its own analysis because it was unable to deal with the essential question of Stalinism as an international political current.

While PL did its best to ignore history, history refused to ignore PL. When the Chinese broke with Castro, PL suddenly discovered that the Cubans were revisionists. When Mao proclaimed the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, sure enough PL discovered it too (as having taken place in 1956). When Mao turned on Liu Shao-chi, it turned out that even the Chinese had not been consistently fighting revisionism after all. This was PL's Mao period, epitomized by "Road to Revolution II" (1966), by uncritical enthusiasm over the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" and "revolutionary" black nationalism. For example, in October 1964 LeRoi Jones spoke at a PL-sponsored rally against fascism, proclaiming: "The majority of American white men are evil and they can never admit their evil otherwise they would kill themselves." PL printed his speech without comment (*PL*, November-December 1964).

And still history would not leave PL alone. In early 1969, after having supported scabbing in the New York teachers' strike in favor of "community control" (which even PL had to admit was a fraud perpetrated by the Ford Foundation), PL found itself in a bloc with openly anti-working-class student black nationalists at San Francisco State. Diametrically reversing its previous position that "revolutionary" nationalism was "national in form, class in content," PL began to insist that "Any form of nationalism is bad.... In the past... we were confused by the concept of the two-stage struggle, which claimed that first there is the battle for national liberation, and then communists transform it to the battle for socialism.... Communists have no business advocating national liberation

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## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Opposition in the UAW

## UNC: Reutherism Revived

The fundamental question facing the labor movement today is a crisis of leadership. Already thousands of workers are expressing their discontent with the hidebound bureaucracy that runs the unions, through wildcat strikes and growing support for opposition caucuses. Already the need to go beyond bread-and-butter business unionism is posed sharply by Nixon's "Phase III" program, which can only be answered by a political alternative to the rule of the capitalist parties. But the question remains whether the Meany-Woodcock gang are to be replaced by a new leadership fighting in the interests of the entire working class, or simply by a new group of slicker, more militant-talking careerists, as in the recent election of Arnold Miller as a "reform" president of the United Mine Workers.

### Phase III—Return of the Bureaucrats

Nixon's announcement last month of the Phase III program is an open challenge to American workers. Most corporations no longer are even required to go through the motions of filing price reports, and the meaningless "profit rate ceilings" are raised, thus giving official sanction to a new round of price increases. Union contracts can't be disguised, however, and thus labor is still subject to the same tight controls, under new guidelines to be worked out by a "labor-management advisory committee." This is no accident as the government gears up to deal with the contract negotiations affecting nearly 5 million workers in 1973 (almost double last year's number).

One of Nixon's biggest weapons in this battle will be the promise of cooperation of the labor bureaucrats with his new model Pay Board. Woodcock, the "progressive" Democrat, again joins the "neutral" Meany and the openly pro-Nixon Fitzsimmons on this control arm of the capitalist government. It is these same "leaders" of the workers who are primarily responsible for making the wage controls work in the first place, by refusing to mobilize the labor movement directly in strikes against the wage freeze, and using the "guidelines" as excuses to limit bargaining demands. Meany and Co.'s grand protest of walking off the Pay Board last year, far from hindering wage controls simply helped them work more smoothly! The UAW's Woodcock, who along with Meany has always supported wage controls in principle, stayed on Nixon's Productivity Commission the whole time.

The UAW leadership has clearly shown that it is incapable of defending even past gains. Under Woodcock the bureaucracy claims to be fighting for many of the same demands they gave away under Reuther, such as non-compulsory overtime, cost-of-living escalator clause, etc. The bureaucracy's new goals, such as "30 and out" are just sops to cover the abysmal situation in the plants, which is approaching pre-union conditions of unlimited management prerogatives, uncontrollable speedup, etc. But now it is the union structure, dominated by an entrenched, pro-company bureaucracy, which serves as the company's back-up in disciplining the workers.

This bureaucracy is characterized by its complete identification with the survival and fundamental aims of capitalism, including the imperialist designs of the government. Woodcock opposes outright protectionism, but instead imposes "non-inflationary" contracts on the workers in order to preserve the competitive position of U.S. corporations. But after signing such a "responsible" agreement with GM in

1970, the UAW machine had to spend the next two years devising new ways to prevent a mass walkout by auto workers. Woodcock claims jobs as his key concern, yet refuses to strike against layoffs and runaway plants, and opposes the demand for a 30-hour week because workers might get out of control and "hold two jobs"! (*New York Times Magazine*, interview, 27 September 1970).

### Roots of Betrayal

Sellouts by the bureaucracy have certainly caused mass discontent in the ranks, but its ability to discipline the work force for the bosses will remain intact until there is a real alternative leadership. The close identification of the trade union leadership with the enemy in the class struggle does not flow from a simple lack of trade union militancy. Rather, it flows from a perspective based only on trade union militancy. All trade union leaders must base their careers, at least in the beginning, on some pretense of militancy. Once in office they become agents of the capitalist system because it is not possible to counterpose the workers to capitalism on the basis of trade unionism.

In the imperialist epoch, when the bourgeoisie depends primarily on reformist labor leaders to keep the workers in check, simple trade unionism can only mean class collaboration by reformist bureaucracies headed by the likes of Woodcock and Meany, or some left-talking replacements. The only real alternative is a revolutionary leadership conscious of its role as part of the struggle for socialist revolution. For the latter to be accomplished it is necessary that the bureaucracy be destroyed (not just replacing the current fakers with new ones) under the leadership of a *vanguard party*, and that the program of the party, the Trotskyist Transitional Program, become the program of the trade unions.

The most vital task confronting workers today is the construction of such a leadership and party, the real alternative to the Woodcock/Meany machines. However, "alternatives" to the bureaucracy abound in many hues, and most of them on close examination bear a striking resemblance to the bread-and-butter unionists they seek to replace. The United National Caucus (UNC), the only visible national opposition in the UAW, is such an "alternative."

### \$1.00 an Hour

The UNC grew out of the movement for a \$1.00-an-hour increase in the skilled trades in 1966-67. The Dollar An Hour Now Committee, taking advantage of a reactionary craft union's attempt to pull dissatisfied tradesmen out of the auto union, mobilized thousands of skilled workers in the UAW behind demands reflecting their particular interests. It won concessions from Reuther, such as the right to separately veto contracts (the International, naturally, retaining the power to order all workers back whether they approve a contract or not).

The special interests of skilled workers were and are real—against management attempts to farm out work to non-union shops, "stretching out" lines of demarcation (job categories), etc., and against the UAW leadership's policy of limiting contract demands in order to preserve the competitive position of the union job shops. This self-defeating policy simply prevents the organizing of the unorganized by eliminating the advantages of union conditions. The logical conclusion is inevitably a policy of wage cuts to keep "union" shops in business, as has

occurred in the Rubber Workers.

However, throughout labor history, divisions within the class (such as between skilled and unskilled workers particularly) have constantly plagued—and been maintained by—the trade unions. The craft unions incorporated these divisions, allowing employers to play one craft off against another. In the U.S., where skilled trades were largely older, white, native workers, craft unionism fostered racial and national divisions. The rise of industrial unions tended to cut across craft distinctions by organizing all the workers in an industry into one union.

Although reduced in significance, these craft distinctions did not disappear. The Dollar An Hour Committee, in orienting toward this relatively privileged sector, was not fighting a struggle of all the workers against the companies, but simply protecting short-term interests of skilled workers. So it inevitably fell into the trap set for it by capitalism of competing against other workers for a limited amount of concessions. As the Democratic Caucus, led by Charles Dewey and part of the \$1.00-an-hour movement, at a Detroit job shop local wrote:

"Our present wage scales do not reflect the proper differential between skilled and production workers necessary to compensate for wage losses suffered by skilled members during long years of apprenticeship and training."

—"For the Biggest Gains Ever—A Program for the Job Shops," undated brochure, Democratic Caucus of UAW Local 155

This particularism only aggravated the animosity and suspicion between skilled and unskilled workers. The inability of blacks to penetrate the job-trusted skilled trades was a major impetus in the rise of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and other black caucuses in Detroit auto plants in the late sixties. DRUM emphasized a black nationalist orientation instead of class struggle, and wrongly rejected integrated struggle within the union. Art Fox, one of the leaders of the skilled trades movement in Ford Local 600, and presently a leader of the UNC, now somewhat jocularly describes his past role in the union as opportunist and white chauvinist. He finds this admission convenient today only because his opportunism has found new outlets.

Today Dewey and Fox continue the policy of simple trade unionism reflected by the \$1.00-an-hour movement in the form of the United National Caucus. Dewey closes an article in the December 1972 UNC with the hope ("Something is in the air!") that U.S. trade deals with the Soviet Union, sponsored by Woodcock's recent East European tour (which Dewey endorses), will lead to more jobs for American skilled tradesmen. This is exactly the reasoning of the bureaucracy itself: Dewey (and the UNC with him) is perfectly interchangeable with Woodcock: Woodcock would adopt Dewey's militancy on trade union issues were he out of office, and Dewey would adopt Woodcock's betrayals were he in.

### IS Supports Careerism

Instead of developing a program and leadership to counterpose to the business unionism and treachery of the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," the UNC leaders, and their principal outside supporters, the International Socialists (IS), propose simply a revamped trade unionism through greater shop floor militancy and a syndicalist bringing together of the rank and file through organizational proposals—such as the permanent produc-

tion workers council and reliance on shop stewards. What this ignores is what leadership these bodies will have, on the basis of what program. The IS particularly looks to England, where there is a powerful and militant shop stewards movement. This does not substitute for revolutionary leadership, however, as was demonstrated when the shop stewards, under the influence of the misleaders of the Communist Party, allowed the trade union tops to push through their sellout of the dock workers struggle last summer without a fight (see WV No. 12, October 1972).

Instead of struggling for a revolutionary program corresponding to the real interests of the working class, the UNC leadership prefers to pull together the broadest possible opposition grouping on the narrowest possible platform. This inevitably attracts demagogic careerist elements, which are rampant in the UNC. In an article on the 1972 UAW convention, UNC co-chairman Jordan Sims put these aspirations into words through a grotesque eulogy to the "sorely missed" Reuther: "The big red-haired brother of the podium (Brother Reuther) really had his thing together. It is a pleasure to watch a real professional doing what he knows best [i.e., "domination of the proceedings"]" (UNC, 25 September 1972).

Thus Sims glorifies Reuther and ignores his repeated attempts to smash wildcat strikes forced by speedup, company harassment and oppressive working conditions, as well as ignoring his persecution of all serious oppositions to the bureaucracy. Rather than being "sorely missed," Reuther should have been dumped by the auto workers a long time before a plane crash ended his career of class collaboration. Sims, and the UNC and IS with him, follow in the footsteps of Reuther because they have nothing to offer except trade unionism covered over with social-democratic and social-patriotic rhetoric. Thus Sims remarked at one point, "But you recognize one thing: to make your America great, to make it productive, to make it serve you and benefit you—you're not going anywhere without me or someone like me." The IS, which printed this quote without a word of criticism, responded, "Sims posed in the sharpest form the problem confronting the American working class today—to realize a unity of working people based on their common class struggle" (*Workers' Power*, 3-16 March 1972).

Sims is only one of many careerists in the UNC. A recent addition is Nathaniel Mosley of the Rank and File Caucus of Local 25, St. Louis GMAD, who was featured prominently and uncritically in a recent issue of the IS paper and is a scheduled speaker at the UNC production workers' conference in Detroit in early February. In 1972 Mosley won election to a post of District Committeeman on the basis of a program calling for 35 hours work for 40 hours pay, 25-and-out with \$750/month pension, and make Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday for UAW members. This is simply a jizzed up version of the Woodcock program, with the addition of the word "more." From Samuel Gompers to George Meany, "more" has always been the official ideology of the labor bureaucracy. And since this accepts the framework of capitalism, "more" is easily turned into "less" when the bosses are hurting.

The UNC offers the perfect opportunity for the flowering opportunism of the IS, which has uncritically supported the UNC, confining itself to gentle pressure:

"Desperately needed in such a situation



Foundry at Ford River Rouge: Conditions as bad as ever

NY TIMES

[GMAD crisis] is a conscious leadership with an understanding of how to fight. That the United National Caucus has not yet been able to provide this leadership is due in large part to its small size and organizational weakness.

"An aggressive organizing campaign around the demands in the UNC program could make the Caucus a powerful force in the rank and file struggle. "The Production Workers Conference could be an important turning point, particularly if the UNC is able to attract rank and file leaders from around the country."

— *Workers' Power*, 24 November-7 December 1972

The IS denies that it adapts to trade unionism, yet it consciously separates the task of recruiting *individuals* to Marxism from the "duty" of supporting "broader" movements. This is a hallmark of opportunism, of which the reformist Communist Party, chief partner of the IS in supporting the UNC, is the master. Instead of struggling in the open for a revolutionary program, the opportunist raises his socialist program only in private (if then), publicly kowtowing to the broader formation in order to gain influence with the leadership.

### The Basis of Reutherism

The IS road to trade union opportunism began with the early Shachtmanite movement. (Shachtman broke with Trotskyism by refusing to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack in World War II, an elementary duty in spite of the parasitic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy.) Shachtman did away with the concept of a vanguard which struggles in the class for its political program, and replaced it with a social-democratic organization geared to adulation of the present level of workers' struggles. In the UAW the Shachtmanites early on revealed their adaptationism by tailing after Walter Reuther, then a militant-talking oppositionist. More sophisticated than

their present-day imitators of the IS, they began with real criticism: "Reuther is more concerned with building his own fences, with strengthening his own personal position in the UAW than he is with fighting for... a program of action" (*Labor Action*, 9 June 1947). They pointed out that Reuther remained silent on all the major questions facing labor (such as the union-busting Taft-Hartley Act), in order to garner right-wing support for his faction, including tacit support of CIO President Philip Murray, who was breaking with the Communist Party as the Cold War witchhunt began. In spite of this criticism, the Shachtmanites supported "the progressive Reuther tendency" because his base was interested in moving to the left, i.e., because he was a better faker.

Reuther's "progressive" poses were always geared to the promotion of his personal career, but by 1947 this was no longer necessary and he relied openly on an unprincipled amalgam of left and reactionary forces united only by hatred of the CP. That Reuther could still be considered "leftist" was only due to the fact that the Communist Party had completely discredited itself by its rotten, opportunist role and patriotic virulence during World War II, making it easy to gather support against it on the basis of simple militant trade unionism. Though they formally denounced red-baiting, the Shachtmanites thus became the most "left" expression of the bourgeois government's anti-communist witchhunt in the unions.

### Suing the Union

The basis of the UNC's bureaucratic careerism lies in its program, particularly its call for suing the unions in the capitalist courts (over the retiree-voting issue) and the referendum election of officers.

Retiree voting is an obstacle to any militant opposition (it was a key tactic in frustrating the initial struggle of

DRUM). Taking the union to court, however, can only benefit an opportunist office seeker, since it totally violates workers democracy. Even if some improvements are obtained, such as eliminating retiree voting (unlikely, but possible), the damage done through strengthening the basis for government interference in the unions will be qualitatively worse. The government will define the basis of union membership, eliminate rank-and-file ratification of union contracts (already agreed to by the Nixon toadies in the construction trades) and shore up cooperative bureaucrats. "Progressive" trade union oppositionists who sue the unions in the name of "democracy" in this period (e.g., Stan Weir in the ILWU, James Morrissey in the NMU, Arnold Miller in the UMW) will be the architects of completely government-dominated unions in the next.

Government court rulings aimed at "democratizing" the unions are a sophisticated mechanism for the maintenance of capitalism. They allow the bosses to anticipate a growing line of struggle and act to head it off by correcting less important abuses in return for stability. Rather than having to act through cooperative but sometimes unreliable or incompetent agents in union leaderships, the capitalist government has a chance to more directly influence the political course of events within the workers movement.

Perhaps the best example of this is the recent election in the United Mine Workers, which ousted long-time UMW president Tony Boyle. On the invitation of the "reform" Miners for Democracy, the government was able to step into one of the hottest union situations in the country and take over the union, controlling the books, deciding elections and defusing the massive miners' movement led by the Black Lung Association. Naturally, the UNC endorsed Miller's election (*UNC*, December 1972).

### UNC Referendum Position

The UNC also stands for referendum election of international officers as opposed to the present system of election at the regular delegated conventions. At the last convention, the UNC dropped its entire program in favor of making its big push on this demand. It formed a "league of caucuses" on the basis of this demand and the campaign to sue the union over the retiree voting issue, thus revealing the central place of these two points in the *real* politics of the UNC. It concentrated on the referendum point since this demand was backed by 13 locals, making it the most popular issue of the "militant" local bureaucrats.

Referendums cannot be used to make the basic decisions of a workers' organization, one of which is electing the leadership. Real decisions require discussion and political struggle between opposing tendencies. The leadership should be chosen on the outcome of this process, by delegates who must answer for their actions to the members who elected them, but who are nevertheless free to make their own decisions at the convention. A leadership elected by referendum would be able to defy the will of the convention, thereby rendering convention decisions irrelevant. A referendum forces the workers to decide crucial questions without the benefit of the political education and discussion required to separate the workers' consciousness of their own class interests from the influences of bourgeois society.

Reuther, who knew well what a referendum meant in practice, was able to neatly sabotage the struggle against the wartime no-strike pledge at the 1944 convention of the UAW, by referring the issue to the membership where it was clearly defeated, due to patriotic propaganda and the lack of a means to educate the rank and file through open debate. Referendum votes have brought in some opposition leaders, such as I.W. Abel in the Steelworkers, and it could easily serve as a vehicle for a well-known dissident ex-bureaucrat (for example, Paul Schrade, former Western regional di-

rector of the UAW) careerist basing his campaign on a few militant slogans. But it can not aid a principled opposition based on the defense of a working class program of struggle, which can only win through open debate.

### UNC Trade Unionism

The rest of the UNC program is simply militant trade unionism. Its chief contract demands before the 1970 GM strike were remarkably similar to the UAW bargaining "demands" themselves, just a little more of the same: "restore cost-of-living; 25 years and out; humanize working conditions; wage increase and revamp grievance procedure" (*UNC*, March 1970). Woodcock simply took over the heavy UNC emphasis on the demand for a wage increase over and above recapturing losses due to inflation, and also adopted the vague slogan, "humanize working conditions." Although it raised "30 for 40," the UNC failed to include it as a contract demand, thus anticipating the bureaucracy's handling of this point (the UAW has raised a watered-down version of "30 for 40" "for discussion" only; see *WV* No. 15, January 1973).

The 1972 program which emerged from the UNC Conference on Racism showed no improvement. The program called for proportional representation for racial minorities on leading bodies of the union. Even Reuther wisely opposed such a proposal in the 40's when it was put forward by the CP. Denouncing it as racist to institutionalize the election of representatives on the basis of skin color, he won the point after initial unpopularity, thereby successfully positioning himself to the left of the CP on this issue. The program also called for proportional hiring by race, instead of strongly counterposing a demand for the end to all job and training discrimination and the opening of job opportunities at the expense of the capitalists, realizing such a program through demands such as a sliding scale of hours. Socialists oppose all hiring selection on the basis of race, since this inevitably tends to perpetuate racial divisions, whatever the original intent.

The program dealt with working conditions in a basically reformist fashion, failing to mention the goal of workers control of production. While it listed "a steward for every foreman," it left striking over grievances to a majority vote of the local instead of calling for shop-floor factory committees with the power to halt production over outstanding questions. It called for making line speed and other questions of production "negotiable issues"—and thereby good throwaway points for the International's bargaining "program"—instead of making a firm, non-negotiable insistence that the speed of the line be specified in the contract.

The January 1973 UNC special issue for building the February UNC production workers' conference reveals a decisive turn toward open reformism. An article on working conditions drops even the demand to make line speed "negotiable," leaving the program with no demand for "combatting speedup whatsoever! Worse still, an article on the wage controls, which mentions the Democratic and Republican parties as being identical, not only completely fails to mention the UNC's supposed "position" for a labor party, but it contains the following as its only programmatic conclusion:

"Complete abolition of all pay controls should be the demand which the UAW chieftains make on labor's so-called friends in Congress."

"A massive labor lobby to Washington should be organized to publicize this demand and to make it clear that labor's votes will no longer be available to politicians who pose as friends but whose actions proclaim them to be enemies."

This sneaky hint of things to come from the UNC, written, not surprisingly, by Dewey, is an admission that sections of its leadership, at least, are looking to establish working relations with capitalist politicians whom they will pass off as *real* friends who don't act against labor, etc. It opens a Pandora's

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Little more than a year has passed since the victory of the Indian army over Pakistan established the nominal political independence of Bangla Desh, formerly East Pakistan. During the India-Pakistan war of December 1971, the Spartacist League took the position that the just struggle of the Bengali masses for self-determination had been decisively subordinated to the class interests of the Indian bourgeoisie, which sought to eliminate Pakistan as a serious threat to its hegemony over the sub-continent and to turn Bangla Desh into a client state. In such a situation, a serious Leninist tendency must raise the slogan of revolutionary defeatism on both sides, i.e., to call on both armies to turn their guns against their own rulers. As we said at the time: "But in the era of imperialism only proletarian revolution offers the masses a road forward. For the Bengali masses only the international client relationships of their masters will change through an Indian victory" ("For Revolutionary Defeatism on Both Sides in the India-Pakistan War," *Workers Vanguard* No. 3, December 1971).

The fake Trotskyists of the Healy-Wohlforth "International Committee," eagerly snuggling up to left-wing Bengalis in Britain, saw matters in a different light. According to them Indira Gandhi and the Indian army were the liberators of the Bengali nation: "The International Committee of the Fourth International was the only organization to support in a principled manner the right of Bangla Desh to secede from Pakistan... We critically support the decision of the Indian bourgeois government to give military and economic aid to Bangla Desh" (*Bulletin*, 20 December 1971). The reformist Socialist Workers Party, which considers everything from last year's Quebec general strike to a meeting of black Democrats as examples of "revolutionary nationalism," naturally took the same position: "At the heart of the war is the struggle of Bangla Desh for self-determination.... The significant degree of mass participation in the armed struggle against the capitalist rulers of Pakistan and the independence of the struggle [!] has given it a revolutionary character surpassing anything seen on the subcontinent since the independence struggle against British imperialism. It therefore merits the unconditional support of all who call themselves socialist" (*Militant*, 24 December 1971).

This is the record. What, then, are the results? What is the verdict of history, where "mistakes" are paid for with the blood and lives of the oppressed?

Riding the crest of its neat, surgical victory over Pakistan, the Indian bourgeoisie quickly moved to re-establish the political dominance of Indira Gandhi's "New" Congress Party, to smash the left-wing opposition, to shore up their puppet Bangla Desh regime and to remove the refugee camps that dotted West Bengal prior to the war, exacerbating the political tensions in that volatile state.

Ali Bhutto's regime, Pakistan's first civilian government since 1958, has provided a thin camouflage for the real domination by the Pakistani army, U.S. imperialism's chief mainstay in South Asia. Bhutto cajoled and threatened the economic oligarchy into granting a few palliatives to defuse the regional antagonisms and sharpened class struggles that have wracked West Pakistan since the loss of its virtual colony in the East.

In Bangla Desh the Awami League camp followers of the Indian army returned with their provisional government from the safety of Calcutta. Under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman a one-party state has been established although with a parliamentary form. Appeasing the masses with chauvinist demagoguery and war-crimes trials, Mujib has emulated his masters in New Delhi with a campaign of repression against all groups left of the pro-Moscow CP. Meanwhile Indian capital is asserting its dominance of the Bengali economy, simply stepping

into the shoes of its West Pakistani predecessors.

Thus developments since the war have amply verified the Spartacist League's position and revealed the fruits of the betrayals perpetrated by our opponents on the left. The victors in the two-week war were the Indian bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy which seeks to use the former in its rivalry with China and the U.S. for influence in South Asia. The real losers were the proletariat and impoverished peasants of the entire sub-continent, condemned to continued slavery in the interests of the tinpot imperialists who oppress and divide them.

### Gandhi Cracks Down in India

Frenzied efforts to remove most of the nine million refugees, who had swollen the Calcutta area to four times its normal population, by the time of spring elections in West Bengal made abundantly clear the nature of India's "humanitarian" concern. Families were bribed with sets of aluminum cookware to return to refugee sites in Bangla Desh which did not yet have tents, blankets or sufficient food to maintain them.

Assembly elections in March 1972 returned the Congress Party to power in all but two of the sixteen states, with a majority of over two-thirds in most of the state legislatures. This sweeping victory was a sharp contrast to Congress' loss in 1967 of such key states as West Bengal, Kerala, Bihar, Punjab and Delhi, and the disintegration of the party climaxed by a split in 1969.

Since the Congress split, the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) has enthusiastically hailed the "New" Congress Party as the representative of the "progressive" national bourgeoisie. Their support complements India's military alliance with the Soviet Union and lends credibility to Mrs. Gandhi's demagogic claims to be building socialism through such "fundamental reforms" as abolition of privy purses for the Maharajahs.

Chauvinist fervor was whipped up by the Congress leaders through the war with Pakistan and, with the aid of a state of emergency declared during the war, used to beat down "disloyal, left-wing elements." In West Bengal where a left-wing electoral bloc, led by the moderate Maoist Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), posed a significant threat to Gandhi's party, the state of emergency was used to arrest without trial 6,000 leftist election workers in a single week and the forcible evictions, beatings and even murder of thousands of others. The CPI-M, however, had paved the way for its own destruction by its past role in popular front governments in Kerala and West Bengal. By taking state office on the basis of temporary parliamentary majorities they created illusions of a peaceful road to socialism, while taking responsibility for the administration of the bourgeois state and defense of capitalist property against militant workers and peasants. In West Bengal this meant presiding over the arrests and murders of hundreds of "Naxalite" Maoist youths by the bourgeois police. Now the chickens have come home to roost, as more than 500 CPI-M militants were murdered in 1971 alone by Congress thugs (*Quatrième Internationale*, 15 April 1972).

The Peking-supported Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) has essentially been destroyed during the same period as the result of repression in West Bengal, an internal split, and the loss of support among peasants and urban youth. Known as the Naxalites after a peasant rebellion led by CPI(ML) head Charu Mazumdar in the Naxalbari region, they began as a left split from the opportunist CPI-M around 1967. After a period of cohabitation with other more-or-less orthodox Maoists in the All-India Coordinating Committee of Communist Revolutionaries, Mazumdar split again to found the CPI(ML) in 1969 on a program of peasant guerrilla warfare. After leading villagers through successive military adventures (notably in the

# Bangla Desh The Fruits of Betrayal

Srikakulam, Naxalbari and Burdwan regions), which left both themselves and the peasant masses defenseless in the face of brutal repression, Mazumdar turned to a policy of rural terrorism ("annihilation of class enemies campaign"). At the 1970 CPI(ML) congress, oppositionists around Kanu Sanyal and Sushatal Roy Choudhuri opposed terrorism, the failure to build mass organizations and Mazumdar's personality cult, eventually leading to a split. Subsequently the Naxalites turned to urban terrorism carried out by hundreds of Calcutta's highly educated, unemployed youth. The split, the arrest of 2,000 CPI(ML) cadre including Mazumdar (murdered in a military hospital), Bengali support for the war against Pakistan, the consequences of their ultra-left tactics and isolation from the combative Calcutta proletariat all combined to destroy the left-Maoists as an organized movement in India.

### Landlord Socialism in Pakistan

Following the defeat in Bangla Desh, General Yahya Khan could no longer rule Pakistan with any hope of a stable regime. Universally condemned for its butchery in East Bengal, with 90,000 troops and collaborators in Indian POW camps and the Indian army entrenched in two-thirds of the disputed state of Kashmir, the Pakistani army needed a more popular instrument. Consequently Ali Bhutto, head of the Pakistan Peoples Party and a leading landowner, was appointed civilian martial law administrator. This move headed off the threat of a coup led by disgruntled junior officers and maintained the power of the military High Command.

Bhutto sought to create the illusion of radical change through "nationalization" of ten basic industries after the war. Nationalization, however, took the form of government management, not ownership, thus leaving the profit structure and market system intact, while attempting to make these capitalist firms more efficient. Even this pallid form of nationalization left foreign investments totally untouched and, in the words of the head of the state bank, Ghulam Ishaque Khan:

"It is significant that Government has opted for a mixed economy and has made it clear that it has no intention of extending its control beyond the industries whose management has already been taken over. These industries account for less than 20% of the organized industries.... the need for an energetic and enterprising business class... is as relevant today as it was before."

—*Intercontinental Press*,  
16 October 1972

In a similar fashion, Bhutto's arrest of several millionaires and his tirades against "robber barons" had the purpose of pressuring the industrial magnates to keep their wealth in the country and support the new regime. The Bonapartist character of these actions reflects both Bhutto's attempts to



Gandhi

dampen the sharpened class struggles and the historical ascendancy of the Pakistani military and administrative bureaucracy over the industrial capitalists.

Such calculated pressure on the bourgeoisie stands in sharp contrast to the mailed fist used against the labor movement. The wave of industrial strikes following the war culminated in police assaults on workers' demonstrations and housing colonies that left at least 30 dead. The jails of West Pakistan today hold more left-wing workers and peasants than they did under the military dictatorships of Ayub and Yahya.

The depth of "radical reform" in Pakistan can be gauged by the current budget which allocates \$405 million out of a total of \$680 million to military expenditures. To this figure must be added \$300 million in military aid (including 100 tanks and 60 MiG-19 jet fighters) from the Maoist bureaucracy. Such generosity, consistently extended throughout the genocidal repression in East Bengal, contrasts sharply with the meager dribble of Chinese aid to the North Vietnamese, under attack by American imperialism. In April 1971 Chou En-lai expressed China's shameless support for Yahya's policy of slaughter: "Your Excellency and leaders of various quarters in Pakistan have done a lot of useful work to uphold the unification of Pakistan and to prevent it from moving towards a split."

Mutually threatened by a restive proletariat and peasantry and under imperialist pressure to stabilize the situation, the Indian and Pakistani bourgeoisies were driven to a summit conference little more than six months after the war. This sham "peace" conference at Simla is in reality no more than the expression of a temporary coincidence of the interests of the ruling cliques in New Delhi and Islamabad in maintaining the status quo. Posing as the benevolent victor, Mrs. Gandhi simply asked for recognition of India's hegemony on the sub-continent (recognition of Bangla Desh, acceptance of Indian control over most of Kashmir) from Bhutto. For his part, the Pakistani leader sought the return of POW's or some other concession that would afford him room to maneuver. Despite the mutual enthusiasm over the results of the conference, the final agreement contained little of substance.

### The Chiang Kai-shek of Dacca

By the first week of November 1971 resistance forces in East Bengal had won limited but significant victories against Pakistani troops and controlled about a quarter of the territory. These forces were composed of disparate elements, with three different centers of struggle. The Awami League's army, popularly known as the Mukti Bahini, consisted of armed bands of students and soldiers from the East Pakistan Rifles who left the service of the Pakistanis after the slaughter began on 25 March 1971. The Mukti Bahini strategy consisted in holing up in provincial towns with their rifles and sticks, making them sitting ducks for the Pakistani tanks and planes. A Maoist-oriented National Liberation Struggle Coordination Committee was established in April by most of the far left groups and a number of trade unions and peasant associations. It sought a joint military command with the bourgeois Awami League, but maintained its class independence by default when its offer of collaboration was refused. A third center of struggle was led by orthodox left-Maoists who opposed the "sham liberation struggle" from the beginning, carrying out a two-front battle against the Mukti Bahini and the Pakistani army.

The Gandhi regime moved to take over the Bengali struggle precisely because the left-wing elements were gaining in strength and undercutting the leadership of the Awami League. At the same time, world indignation at the repression in East Bengal provided an opportunity for India to occupy Kashmir, which has been in dispute between India and Pakistan for more than two decades. In the words of one Indian general:

"We are taking territory and are not ashamed of it. Bangla Desh must simply be ours if it is to remain stable. Some semblance of democracy can be created but no one in Delhi or elsewhere pretends that is the real reason we are here. Bangla Desh will be like Calcutta, which we keep firmly under our thumb from Delhi, with no nonsense of local autonomy."

—Sunday Times, 19 December 1971

In the large-scale Indian invasion beginning on 21 November, Lt. Gen. Aurora, commander of India's eastern front, was made commander of the Mukti Bahini, and the Indian armed forces bore the brunt of the fighting. Following an elaborately staged military surrender in Dacca, the Indian generals shipped 90,000 Pakistani POW's to camps in India where they remain to this day.

Bengalis were soon given a foretaste of the real extent of Bangla Desh's "independence" when they received their first news of Mujib's release from a Pakistani prison via a BBC broadcast. Mujib's journey from Rawalpindi to Dacca was made by way of a slight detour through London and New Delhi, where he no doubt declared his independence before receiving instructions from his imperialist masters.

After talks between Mujib and Gandhi in February of last year, the *New York Times* described Bangla Desh as "an independent self-assertive na-

tion eager to cut loose from India" (!), pointing to a section of their joint declaration calling for the withdrawal of Indian occupation forces by 25 March and the Sheikh's opposition to a mutual security treaty which would provide a carte blanche for future military interventions. To the surprise of no one, Indian troops returned to Bangla Desh within a week of their official withdrawal in order to eliminate a group of Miryo tribesmen conducting guerrilla raids in the Chittagong area. (The Miryos had long conducted secessionist activities with Pakistani aid.) It soon became apparent that some Indian units in the operation had never even left Bangla Desh. And on 19 March Mujib signed the mutual security pact he had so "firmly" opposed a month earlier.

Perhaps the most blatant example of the subservience of Bangla Desh to the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie is the wholesale integration of the new state's economy with India. In the first weeks after the war, the Indian army dismantled machinery of several factories and shipped it across the border. Since then, widespread smuggling of jute (Bangla Desh's principal export) has developed, amounting to almost 2.5 billion rupees in the first five months of 1972, according to one estimate. Most dramatic of all, perhaps, has been the sale of thousands of tons of relief rice to India by speculators taking advantage of the abolition of all tariffs and duties between Bangla Desh and India and the black market in Bengali currency, thereby depriving millions of refugees of even the minuscule rations they have been subsisting on (originally 400 calories a day, down to 100 calories a day by mid-1972).

In June Bengali officials agreed in Delhi to integrate the Bangla Desh economy into the fifth Indian five-year plan. Indian personnel now staff key ministries in Dacca, while Indian aid to the tune of \$275 million has been directed at rebuilding the transportation and communications links needed to accomplish the integration. On the one hand, Bangla Desh will be useful as a protected market for India's high-priced industrial production; on the other hand, Bengali natural resources will be utilized to develop fertilizer and paper manufacturing, sorely needed



Mujib journeys from Rawalpindi to Dacca via London

by India's economy. And in the long run, lacking sufficient internal sources of capital and a real bourgeoisie, Bangla Desh can hope to develop only with substantial infusions of Indian and Western capital, thereby reinforcing its position as a client state.

Internally the rule of Sheikh Mujib (who has been aptly nicknamed "Chiang Kai-shek") is none too stable. A U.N. report last May observed that: "Bangla Desh has been surviving on a knife edge.... A landless laborer in full-time employment can just about survive providing he has only one wife and

child... [However,] no landless laborer is ever in full-time employment and most have over five children" (*New York Times*, 28 May 1972). With widespread corruption, staggering inflation (prices of some foods rose by 200 to 400% by late summer) and close to 200,000 registered unemployed in the capital alone, popular protests have increased. A protest rally on 4 April drew some 50,000 participants.

Mujib's answer has been a virulent personality cultism, paternalistic appeals for trust and promises from the masses that they will not ask anything of him for three years—and repression. On 31 March he warned that he had given the police orders to "shoot down anyone engaged in creating confusion or trouble, in particular so-called Naxalites and those disseminating anti-Indian propaganda" (*Intercontinental Press*, 17 April 1972). In several regions Awami League goon squads, the Lal Bahini, have beaten and killed thousands of oppositionists. In addition, the government has tried various means of closing down leftist newspapers, notably the arrest or murder of the leaders of virtually every group to the left of the pro-Moscow CP. At the end of May Mujib issued an executive order banning strikes and "unfair labor practices" (which include "compulsion or attempts to compel an employer or any officer or employee of the employer to sign any memorandum of settlement or agreement"), with punishment of five years' imprisonment (*Workers Press*, 30 May 1972).

These are the realities of Bangla Desh "independence." This is the meaning of giving "critical" support to the Indian army's "liberation" of East Bengal. Defend this, if you will, comrades of the SWP and Workers League/Socialist Labour League, for these are the fruits of this "liberation".

### The Left in Bangla Desh

The dominant political force in Bangla Desh today is, of course, the bourgeois nationalist Awami League. From its birth it has represented the minor government officials, teachers, shop-owners of East Bengal as a reactionary petty-bourgeois party. When its founder H.S. Suhrawardy was premier of Pakistan from 1956 to 1958 he distinguished himself by supporting the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt, later switching over to support of U.S. imperialism as the latter asserted its dominance in Asia. After his death in 1963, the party was taken over by Mujibur Rahman who transformed it into the champion of Bengali autonomy. The key demands of the Awami League's 1965 "Six-Point Program" were a separate currency for East Bengal (to prevent the Karachi government from siphoning off the foreign exchange from jute exports), and a Bengali militia—demands which in no way benefit the oppressed masses but very certainly represent the interests of the upper levels of the petty-bourgeoisie.

The most conservative of the groups on the Bengali left today, the Soviet-line Communist Party of Bangla Desh (led by Moni Singh) and the pro-Moscow National Awami Party of Muzaffar Ahmed, have made a standing policy of "left" support to the Awami League. This went as far as membership in a "National Liberation Front" with the Mukti Bahini during 1971. Recently the CPBD called on "all patriotic people to help implement the nationalization program and other progressive measures taken by the government towards the establishment of socialism" (*Workers Press*, 7 June 1972). Its youth group came out on top of the Awami League's student organization in the May elections at leading universities, and the CPBD's influence will undoubtedly increase as Soviet aid flows in, especially as this aid is concentrated on building up the army.

The various Maoist forces in Bangla Desh all originated in the Awami League itself. In addition to the pro-imperialist leadership around Suhrawardy and Mujib, the League also embraced a populist tradition centering on the 90-year-old veteran peasant leader, Maulana Bhashani. At the 1957 party conference,

Bhashani broke with the leadership over Suhrawardy's support of the Suez invasion, splitting away to form the National Awami Party. This amorphous group functioned as an umbrella organization of the left with a heterogeneous pro-Peking majority. This meant that, because of Ayub Khan's marriage of convenience with Mao and Co., the NAP considered the rapacious ruling clique in Rawalpindi as having "certain anti-imperialist features." This placed them in a compromised position before the Bengali masses, allowing Mujib to demagogically appear as the only consistent opponent of the Pakistani military dictatorship, and thereby diverting the masses' protests into narrow chauvinist nationalism. Moreover, the various Maoist groups (including the NAP) boycotted the December 1970 elections, which enabled the Awami League to win 98% of the vote and establish total political hegemony in the East.

Confronted by the depth of the mass movement for independence, these moderate Maoists have managed to tag along behind without ever being able to seize the initiative from Mujib and his cronies. Typical of their attitude was their unsuccessful attempt to set up a joint military command with the Mukti Bahini in 1971. Since the war Bhashani has led several mass protests against corruption, Indian domination and repression, but always carefully avoiding a break with the Awami League government. Thus a student leader of the NAP declared: "We believe all parties should be in the government. We all fought for liberation. Results of the 1970 election no longer are valid" (*New York Times*, 28 March 1972). Thus at the same time the Lal Bahini are murdering NAP militants, Bhashani calls for a coalition government!

By 1969-70 the largest organized group inside the NAP was the moderate Maoist East Bengal Communist Party led by Abdul Matin and Tipu Biswas. With perhaps 2,000 militants it was strong among Rajshahi and Pabna peasants, as well as among workers in the key port city of Chittagong. The EBCP earlier than other "Maoists" broke with the Chinese to support demands for Bengali self-determination. In fact the first shots of the war were fired at Chittagong dock workers who refused to unload supplies for the Pakistani army. During the 1971 marauding by the West Pakistanis, Biswas led a somewhat successful guerrilla operation in the Pabna area, harassing and finally destroying the local garrison and distributing arms to the local population.

Following the Indian invasion, the party (now called the Banglar Communist Party) capitulated to the cultism around Mujibur Rahman and called for support to the Awami League government. This has done them little good as the Lal Bahini and army do their best to smash the BCP. Matin has been arrested and Biswas was murdered in a wave of killings around Pabna. The BCP, however, controls the left-wing *Sramik* (Workers') Federation which has retained support of significant sections of the working class as the Awami League government grows increasingly unpopular. While appearing to stand to the left of the NAP leadership, they are campaigning for the elections this March in alliance with Bhashani who, as mentioned above, calls for a coalition government with Mujib.

The most significant left-Maoist group in Bangla Desh is the Communist Party of East Pakistan (Marxist-Leninist), formally aligned with the CPI(ML). Led by Muhammad Toha, former head of the Workers' Federation, it alone of all the left groups rejected Bengali self-determination, favoring unity of Pakistan. (One section of their Indian comrades went so far as to give full support to the policies of Yahya Khan, whom they described as the Sihanouk of South Asia, a compliment when falling from Maoist lips!) Consequently, of all the groups the CPEP(ML) was the most disoriented

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# ...PL

movements that do not openly proclaim socialism as a goal" ("Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism," *PL*, August 1969). This is no longer a Stalinist position, for in Stalin's efforts to strangle the world revolution the rhetoric of "revolutionary" nationalists was invaluable. The Chinese CP was crushed by Stalin's policy of subordination to Chiang Kai-shek; even in the fake-militant "Third Period" Stalin sought to divide the U.S. proletariat by calling for a black nation in the American South.

PL's gut-level and belated recognition of the pernicious role of nationalist ideology in suppressing the basic class antagonisms could be only partial and distorted. Although the rejection of nationalism and the "two-stage" theory was a step toward Trotskyism (we termed it "Trotskyism with a prefrontal lobotomy" at the time), PL's left turn carried it past Leninism to latter-day Luxemburgism as PL refused to recognize the right of nations to self-determination. At the same time, PL continued to support "socialism in one country," Mao, Stalin, etc.

This contradictory situation could not last. Bill Epton, one of the founders of PL, broke away in the direction of black nationalism; orthodox Maoist-Stalinist groups (such as the Revolutionary Union) grew; and above all Mao topped off his usual Stalinist policies of class collaboration with the likes of Sihanouk, Bandaranaike and Ayub Khan by extending his hand to Nixon.

## "Road to Revolution III"

For PL, the result was "Road to Revolution III," an amazing document in which PL denounced not just Mao and Stalin, but Trotsky, Lenin, Engels and Marx and the very fundamentals of Marxism itself. Instead, PL counterposed the heroic masses of the Paris Commune and China's "Cultural Revolution."

"RR III" is characterized by a systematic idealism. According to PL: what restored capitalism in the Soviet Union was Khrushchev's speech to the 20th Party Congress; the level of development of productive forces is irrelevant to the construction of socialism, and peasants are just rural workers (thus socialism should have been possible in ancient Egypt, if only Milt Rosen instead of Moses had been chosen to lead the peasants out of bondage!); "the masses are more important than weapons and can defeat any imperialist war, including nuclear war"; material incentives are impermissible in a workers state (in which case PL's cherished call for the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is only a betrayal, since the demand should be for communism now). PL generalizes its idealism by claiming simply: "Historical development depends on the ideas that the various classes hold... Marxism does not hold that economic law rules political struggle. It is the other way around..." ("Strengths and Weaknesses of the International Communist Movement," *PL*, November 1972). This one-sided "theory" challenges the materialist premise that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but rather their social existence that determines their consciousness.

A consistent thread in PL's wanderings is eclecticism, an inability to go beyond surface appearances and make a Marxist analysis of the underlying contradictions. Black nationalists seem militant and anti-establishment? Then PL supports "revolutionary" nationalism. Black nationalists push blatant anti-communism? Then PL "discovers" that nationalism is reactionary. Mao seems militant, attacking Khrushchev and Liu? Fine, PL supports Mao wholeheartedly. But Mao crushes the Red Guard, aids the butchers Khan

and Bandaranaike, makes deals with Nixon? Well then, Mao is the leading revisionist and, surprise, he has been all along.

## Dictatorship of the Peasantry?

The treatment of the peasant question in "RR III" is a good example of PL's eclecticism. Observing that peasant revolutions have succeeded in overthrowing capitalism in China, Cuba and Vietnam, PL concludes that peasants are really workers. "We believe that virtually all of the world's peasants and

a split in the peasantry (rather than peasants magically "becoming" rural workers), with the poorest peasants rejecting their petty-bourgeois class interests and adopting those of the proletariat. PL simply wishes to dissolve the petty bourgeoisie into the working class with a few drops of ink.

PL is right in one respect—the slogan of a worker-peasant alliance has been used to subordinate the interests of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie, but not by Lenin and Trotsky. It was Stalin who demanded that the Chinese

pendent workers movement permitted his success. It was the same in Cuba and Vietnam.

## Infantile Ultra-Leftism

The key to "Road to Revolution III" seems to be the argument that any concessions to self-determination amount to support for the bourgeoisie. The main source of errors of the "old communist movement" is defined as "Lenin's national liberation strategy." If Marx advocated independence for Ireland; if Lenin said Rosa Luxemburg's opposition to the right of Polish self-determination played into the hands of the Russian bourgeoisie; if Trotsky argued that only through the dictatorship of the proletariat can the tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation be accomplished—then, according to PL, it is because they were all opportunists, calling for a two-stage revolution and a "better capitalism"!

Marxists speak on behalf of the proletariat, which according to the *Communist Manifesto* is the first class in history that can achieve its own emancipation only by liberating all the oppressed. As Lenin put it, the communist must be the tribune of the people. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nations in order to eliminate a poisonous source of friction between workers of different countries, to clear the path to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to respond to the reality of national oppression. Yes, in some cases this could involve giving military support to a bourgeois nationalist movement struggling against imperialism. But at the same time we struggle above all to win the working class to the internationalist perspective of proletarian revolution, mobilizing the workers independently of the sellout nationalist fakers.

Authentic Leninists and Trotskyists never advocate a "national liberation strategy" or two-stage theory of revolution. We do point out to those sincerely fighting for national emancipation that in the era of moribund capitalism, bourgeois nationalists will simply end up substituting the domination of one imperialist overlord for another (the example of Bangla Desh), and that real independence will be possible only by struggling for the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, for socialist revolution.

Materialism, the peasant question, self-determination—these are not abstract questions; they are matters of life and death in the real world. The Spartacist League has for years exposed the Soviet Union's betrayal of the indochinese revolution by our demand for massive Soviet aid to North Vietnam, including the most advanced weapons, in defense against U.S. imperialism. PL, on the other hand, calls on Vietnamese revolutionaries to reject this aid (no unity with the revisionists and, of course, the will of the people is more powerful than technology). Thus PL wishes Vietnamese peasants and workers to fight U.S. B-52's with bamboo spears and rifles! This is madness. As Lenin said of the ultra-lefts of his day, who opposed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in 1918 (PL opposes



While PL was in its left phase, SDS drew the class line against liberals and New Left, yet failed to transcend simple economism, exemplified by the CWSA campaign.



CHALLENGE

oppressed peoples are proletarianized" ("Road to Revolution III," *PL*, November 1972). "There is no necessary qualitative difference between urban and rural workers, neither 'objectively' nor 'subjectively'" ("Strengths and Weaknesses..."). This is opposed to the whole Marxist tradition, from the statement in the *Communist Manifesto* onwards, that the proletariat is the only consistently revolutionary class. PL takes the position of the Russian populists who held (against Plekhanov, Engels and Lenin) that the peasants could build socialism.

Lenin's slogan of the "worker-peasant alliance," basing itself on the uneven development of world capitalism, called for a uniting of the workers' insurrection against capitalism with a vast peasant uprising aimed at destroying the last vestiges of feudalism ("land to the tiller"), by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. This was the program of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and it is in this sense that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution speaks of the "dictatorship of the proletariat leaning on the peasantry." Subsequently the workers (urban and rural) would ally with the poorest sectors of the peasantry in the struggle for collectivization.

Today in some of the more developed backward countries, capitalism has itself eliminated the feudal content of production relations in the countryside. Thus the latter alliance, on a socialist program and only with the lowest segments of the petty bourgeoisie, is appropriate. However, even in this case any alliance must be firmly led by the proletariat, particularly the urban industrial proletariat; it requires

CP prostrate itself before Chiang Kai-shek in the interests of the "worker-peasant alliance," the "bloc of four classes" and the theory of a two-stage revolution; it was Stalin and the Mensheviks who called for critical support to the bourgeois provisional government in 1917. Lenin's famous "April Theses," the platform of the Russian Revolution, called for the dictatorship of the proletariat. As for Mao, he did his very best to avoid revolution, time after time offering Chiang a coalition government. Only Chiang's obtuseness forced the Chinese CP to struggle for power in its own right; only the incredible corruption of Kuomintang rule, the temporary weakness of U.S. imperialism and the absence of an inde-

## CLASS SERIES

# Building the Revolutionary Party

The Spartacist League and Revolutionary Communist Youth are sponsoring a class series at UCLA during the winter quarter. Critical examination of the increasing inter-imperialist rivalry; the crisis of revolutionary leadership; the vanguard party, its program and tasks are the primary discussion points.

The series will run for nine weeks beginning on THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY in Rolfe Hall 2106 (UCLA) from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. For more information, call 467-6855.

## LOS ANGELES

it, too): "The revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly)" (V.I. Lenin, "Left Wing Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" [1918], *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 340. This short pamphlet is an excellent refutation in advance of many of PL's current views).

Take the question of the "restoration" of capitalism in the so-called "socialist" states. As Trotskyists, we hold that North Vietnam is a deformed workers state, run by a parasitic bureaucratic caste but based on nationalized means of production, state planning, state control of banking and foreign trade, smashing of the bourgeois state. PL says North Vietnam is capitalist, because its leaders have revisionist ideas. The consequences of this seeming terminological dispute? The Spartacist League calls for the unconditional defense of North Vietnam against U.S. imperialism, while at the same time calling for a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy which daily attempts to sell out the heroic struggle of the workers and peasants.

But the only principled position PL could take is to call for revolutionary defeatism—i.e., PL must be indifferent as to who wins in this war between

what they consider to be two capitalist states (remember, even defending national independence is a sellout). But of course this is not a popular stand; when pressed, PL cadre will argue that of course they defend the Vietnamese workers and peasants against U.S. imperialism, without defending the state. The position is absurd and, moreover, this is the same excuse which the German and French social democrats gave for voting war credits in World War I—they were only defending the workers! If North Vietnam is the capitalist state PL claims it is, PL's shamefaced defensism is a betrayal of proletarian internationalism.

In breaking with its own Maoist and Stalinist past, Progressive Labor has proceeded to overthrow Marxism: "The old communist movement, led by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, is dead as a revolutionary force" ("Strengths and Weaknesses..."). But communists adhere to Marxism not out of some bizarre necromancy or quasi-religious fanaticism, but because it is the scientific doctrine which enables us to come up with correct answers to the problems revolutionaries face in organizing the socialist revolution. When Progressive Labor rejects the essential conclusions and method of Marxism, it can only lead to more "mistakes"

—and it is the workers who will pay the price.

### PL's Plunge to the Right

Forced to recognize that infantile ultra-leftism will not win over the masses, PL reacted with a pronounced turn to the right, first evident in the anti-war movement. In the summer 1971 NPAC conference the Spartacist League gave support to PL's motions demanding the exclusion of the bourgeoisie, a measure the SL has consistently called for since 1965. At the July 1971 NPAC meeting PL and the SL were physically expelled for booing down U.S. Senator Vance Hartke. But by fall 1971 PL was no longer fighting for the exclusion of the class enemy, and supported the semi-annual peace crawl provided it got a speaker.

On the campuses PL/SDS has placed exclusive emphasis on a liberal campaign against racist textbooks and professors. This policy, fostering the illusion that racist ideology is the product of a few evil reactionaries and mad scientists rather than the attempted justification for the material oppression of black workers which is endemic to capitalism, compelled the walkout of SL/RCY supporters from SDS at the spring 1972 SDS conference. As we stated in our leaflet:

"The main thrust of any strategy against racial oppression must be against unemployment and lumpenization and for uniform black integration into the labor force.... The struggle against both racial oppression and white racist attitudes is necessarily linked to the struggle of the working class as a whole against capitalism and to the destruction of bourgeois society."

—"Out of the Classroom and into the Class Struggle!" 30 March 1972

This last summer PL/SDS took its liberal strategy to its logical conclusion by calling on the parties of big capital

to eliminate racism! "SDS is taking the following bill to the Democratic Convention in Miami to demand it be accepted as a platform," announced a *New Left Notes* flyer ("Indict the U.S. Gov't for Racist Acts, Genocide," June 1972).

On the question of elections PL had always taken the simplistic leftist position of abstentionism on principle. But now that it was asking the Democrats to ban racism, SDS could hardly ignore the liberal McGovern supporters on campus. So instead of condemning this bourgeois politician and campaigning against him, the 26 June 1972 issue of *New Left Notes* took a "balanced" view, printing one article for McGovern, one against and one neutral!

SDS's policy was only the top of the iceberg. A recent PL internal bulletin contained an "Election Report" which urged: "Before, during and after the Democratic convention try to build unity on issues with forces inside reform movements tied to electioneering. ... Raise 30 for 40 resolutions before reform organizations, including Democrats. A 'discussion paper' entitled 'Elections: A Reform Struggle Worth PL's Involvement' was even clearer:

"The Party maintained a purist and therefore sectarian attitude towards both the McCarthy and the 1968 Kennedy campaign.... we weren't flexible enough to stay in touch and work with the masses at this crucial time in their political development.... The party must recognize the differences which exist within the bourgeois elec-

toral movements if it is to win friends from it.... We must get into electoral work—really make a serious effort to get involved in this area of reform struggle when the masses choose this way of fighting against the war, unemployment, and racism."

PL paid a price for its gross conciliation to rightist elements; unable to protect its right flank, PL lost several prominent supporters on both Coasts, some of whom helped form "Grass Roots for McGovern" in the Boston area.

Playing a part in McGovern's inroads into PL was PL's chronic inability to draw the class line. Unable to understand the phenomenon of reformism within the working-class movement, PL simplistically lumped union bureaucrats and organizations like the SWP in the same camp with the bosses (and incidentally provided a justification for outbursts of PL physical gangsterism against the SWP and others). Such a line was of course constantly running up against reality, leading PL to capitulate to union bureaucrats whenever it found it could not simply wish away the workers' inexplicable allegiance to its established leaders. Unable to draw the class line, PL explicitly proclaimed in "RR III" that there was really no difference between a *united front* (of working-class organizations) and a *popular front* (with the bourgeoisie). Thus PL's formal theories provided it with nothing but an inarticulate class instinct which recoiled from but was unable to explain why joining the McGovern movement is any different from, for example, membership in a reformist trade union.

### "30 for 40"

For the workers, PL has its "30 for 40" campaign, led by the single-issue Workers Action Movement. In this campaign PL/WAM has bodily lifted the

## Defend Mongo Smith

"Mongo" Smith, a young black militant and chairman of the Los Angeles branch of the Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL), youth group of the Communist Party, has been arrested on narcotics charges in a clear case of political repression. Smith was arrested while handing out leaflets protesting the murder of two Baton Rouge students by police. When in police custody, he was questioned at length about the activities of the YWLL, and was asked to become a paid police informer against the left—an offer which he refused. Smith was charged with having sold narcotics to an undercover agent almost two months earlier. The YWLL has a position against narcotics use by its members.

Smith had been chairman of Community Task Force Against Police Brutality, which was formed to defend two black youths against phony charges of "assaulting an officer," growing out of an incident in which one of the youths was shot in the back by a cop. The group succeeded in obtaining an open investigation which resulted in the dropping of charges against the youth who was shot. The police are always anxious to "get" anyone who successfully exposes their crimes.

The Spartacist League and Revolutionary Communist Youth participated in the Mongo Smith Defense Committee, despite our severe differences with the CP/YWLL. Smith's arrest was part of the ruling-class assault against the left—Angela Davis, Ruchell Magee, Baton Rouge students, Venceremos—which must be combated by every left and working-class organization. These attacks are part of the Nixon government's attempts to crack down on all forms of dissidence, in order to discipline the labor movement and prepare for the prosecution of new imperialist wars. Differences between political groups cannot be suppressed in the name of an artificial "unity," but they can only be resolved within the working-class movement, and on the basis of class solidarity against the bourgeoisie.

It was in this spirit that the SL/RCY approached the defense of Mongo Smith. While actively involved in the defense efforts, the SL/RCY published a leaflet, "Free Mongo Smith! Free All Political Prisoners!" which included criticism of the CP/YWLL policy of blocs with class-collaborationist labor leaders and opportunist capitulation to nationalism. After requesting that the SL/RCY withdraw its leaflet from circulation—which we refused to do—the YWLL leadership expelled the SL/RCY from the defense committee at the next meeting. Although the SL/RCY was the only organization besides the CP/YWLL in the committee and constituted about half the working body, the SL/RCYers were forcibly excluded from the meeting.

At an anti-war rally a week earlier, the CP had been upset by an SL banner reading "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" which the CP considered an offense to the Vietnamese (who "weren't fighting for that!") and "divisive," since it would alienate the liberals in the movement. Yet the CP does not consider it divisive to expel militants from a class defense organization because they express criticisms of the CP! Thus the CP's concept of "unity" consists not in presenting a united face to the bourgeoisie, but in suppressing political differences within the movement so as not to alienate the bourgeoisie. The working class cannot defend itself in this manner; it must be able to unite under attack despite internal differences. The sectarianism of the CP/YWLL can only weaken the struggle to defend their own comrade; the Mongo Smith Defense Committee must be open to all socialist militants and workers.

The SL/RCY does not make prior political agreement a precondition for our defense of working-class militants against repression. The overriding class interest in putting a halt to victimizations such as that being perpetrated on Mongo Smith by the Los Angeles police is a fundamental principle. We urge all militants to actively defend Mongo Smith. This blatant ruling-class attempt to intimidate young black and working-class militants with the example of his persecution must be defied and defeated through true class solidarity!

Send letters of support and contributions to:

"Mongo" Smith Defense Committee  
326 West 3rd Street, Room 318  
Los Angeles, California 90013



"Sterilize Shockley"—Now PL/SDS concentrates on liberal campaign against racist professors, ignoring class struggle and fundamental needs of black masses.

to eliminate racism! "SDS is taking the following bill to the Democratic Convention in Miami to demand it be accepted as a platform," announced a *New Left Notes* flyer ("Indict the U.S. Gov't for Racist Acts, Genocide," June 1972).

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demand for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay from the Trotskyist "Transitional Program" (which first called for a sliding scale of wages and hours 35 years ago) and plastered it mechanically across the front page of *Challenge*. But the manner in which PL agitates around this *transitional* demand is openly and cravenly reformist. In the propaganda of the Spartacist League, we point out that capitalism cannot provide full employment on a permanent basis and thus the demand is unwinnable in any real sense without going beyond the limits of capitalism. We link "30 for 40" with demands for workers' control of industry, for expropriation of the key sectors of the economy (without compensations), for a workers party and a workers government. In other words, we raise the demand in a revolutionary context, building a bridge between the workers' felt needs of today and the program of socialist revolution.

For PL "30 for 40" is simply a "better" reform demand, which is why they isolate it, similar to the way Mandel, of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat treats the demand for "workers' control." In its pamphlet on "30 for 40" PL utters a few abstract pious words about socialism, but in plant gate leaflets it wallows in its reformism: "We should build this defensive fight for job security now into an offensive fight that will

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## ...Bangla Desh

by the 1971 events. On the one hand they characterized the fight for East Bengali independence as simply "a counter-revolutionary struggle" from the outset, even before it was decisively subordinated to Indian expansionism. Thus in a sectarian fashion they ignored the real national oppression of Bengali workers and peasants. But on the other hand, with Tikka Khan's bayonets and his Chinese tanks staring them in the face they were forced to fight or literally be wiped out. As the organ of the CPI(ML) put it:

"Thus the Pakistani ruling classes, which had been opposing the U.S.-Soviet global war-strategy in this part of Asia because of their contradiction with the Indian expansionists...did not distinguish the broad masses of the people and a handful of enemy agents, and did not try to win over the masses. Instead, because of their basic contradiction with the people, they went on committing unspeakable bru-

talities on the people, roused their bitterest hatred, drove most of them into the camp of the enemy....The revolutionaries in East Pakistan could not rally behind the Yahya government, for support to the Yahya government meant liquidation of the class struggle and support to the rabid anti-people policies pursued by Yahya's army, Razakars and die-hard feudal elements, though, at the same time, they realized that the main aspect of the situation was the conspiracy of the imperialists, the social-imperialists and the Indian expansionists. The call for a united front between the Yahya government and the Marxist-Leninist Party...was futile..." [our emphasis]

—"Report on the Revolutionary Armed Struggle in East Bengal," Liberation, July 1971-January 1972, p. 15

Again by default the CPEP(ML) too was unable to sell out to a section of the bourgeoisie, but oh how they tried! (Even this was not enough for a section of the party which split to support the right of Bengali self-determination.) The CPEP(ML) did carry out a two-front war against the Awami League and the Pakistani army with some limited success during 1971.

They were defeated in Jessore and Khulna by the Mukti Bahini in October and November, but were able to hold onto a base area in Noakhali district (Toha's home turf) until mid-December, after the Indian invasion. More recently they have suffered from Mujib's repression, with the arrest of 46 "Naxalites," presumably CPEP(ML)-ers, in Khulna last June, and the arrest of Toha, because of "lying about the government" and "maliciously India and the Soviet Union" in their paper.

### Bangla Desh and Permanent Revolution

Thus, in sum, the entire Bengali left, from the most moderate to the extreme left, have utterly failed to give leadership to the masses of workers and impoverished peasants. The fundamental cause for this dismal failure is their collective adherence to one or another version of the Stalinist/Menshevik theory of a two-stage revolution, in which the proletariat allies itself with the "national bourgeoisie" during the "first" stage, the "democratic revolution." Under whatever name, this "bloc of four classes,"

"new democracy" or "non-capitalist road to development" is class collaboration and amounts to the indefinite postponement of the socialist revolution. Trotsky's conception of a permanent revolution—in which the proletariat leading the exploited strata of the peasantry carries through both democratic and socialist tasks without interruption—stands in sharp contrast to Stalinist and Maoist reformism.

Likewise, failure to grasp that the working class must lead the peasantry, that the former is the only consistently revolutionary class, on which revolutionaries must therefore base themselves, is the root of the adventurist policies of left-Maoist formations like India's Naxalites. An international Leninist party, based on the Marxist theory of permanent revolution, would have maintained the class independence of the workers' movement, warning the masses of the betrayals of the petty-bourgeois nationalists, instead of desperately trying to sell out to Mujib or Yahya Khan as did every single ostensibly revolutionary organization in East Bengal. This is the lesson which revolutionaries must draw from the tragic events in Bangla Desh.

Trotskyists understand that in the epoch of imperialist decline the nascent bourgeois classes of the colonial countries are unable to carry through the basic democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution—namely national unity and independence, bourgeois democracy and agrarian revolution—because of their own weakness economically and their fear of revolution from below. Inevitably, the bourgeois nationalists therefore end up aligned with the most reactionary domestic forces and one or another imperialist power in order to avoid at all costs the mobilization of the working masses which could threaten not just colonialism, but bourgeois rule itself. Only a proletarian revolution can complete the democratic revolution in backward countries, and in doing so it must immediately come into conflict with the forces of international capital (e.g., the power of the banks which oppose any agrarian revolution), thereby leading directly to socialist tasks.

To the extent that these "colonial" or "national" bourgeoisies actually do struggle against imperialism for limited aims which coincide with the interests of the working masses, it is principled for a proletarian party to give military support, while always maintaining complete organizational independence and lending no political support to the bourgeois forces (such as a popular front). Such a policy of "revolutionary defensism" was correct in the early months of the struggle in East Bengal, to the point that this struggle was transformed into nothing more than a pawn in the rivalry of India and Pakistan for control of the sub-continent. But after that point, to call for the victory of the Awami League forces over Pakistan could only lend a left cover to India's expansionist plans. Of course, military aid is a separate question, since there is nothing unprincipled about accepting limited aid from a temporarily opposing bourgeoisie. But this is quite different from the complete subordination of the national struggle to the imperialist plans of a new set of bourgeois masters—which is precisely what happened in Bangla Desh.

In practice this means quite concretely that a section of the revolutionary party in East Bengal, while upholding the right to Bengali self-determination, would have attacked both the Pakistani army and the Indian/Awami League forces, concentrating on mobilizing the proletariat in its own class interests, while allying with exploited sections of the peasantry in the interests of agrarian revolution and real national independence. Indian comrades would raise the slogan that "the main enemy is at home" and advocate fraternization with their class brothers in the Pakistani army. The Pakistanis would likewise call for the defeat of their own army and international class solidarity, but would have special re-

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## ...PL

win job security for years to come: 'Thirty for Forty in '73,' 'Better, Earlier Retirement' ("Strike in January," December 1972). Meanwhile, Challenge (14 December 1972) boasts that West Coast PL is pushing "to put a charter amendment on the ballot for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay in the city of San Francisco in 1973." As the Bay Area Spartacist League said of this electoral quackery in a recent leaflet:

"WAM calls on workers to put their faith in and work through the bourgeois democratic system of the ruling class—to 'vote in' a shorter work week. The projected amendment is not only ludicrous, but politically dangerous as well, giving to the local bourgeois government legal powers it does not presently possess, such as the right to determine the work week, abrogate union bargaining agreements, etc.... The whole history of the labor movement's struggles against the attacks of the ruling class...can lead only to one unalterable conclusion: the government will only intervene in unions today in order to smash them tomorrow." [emphasis in original]

—"Electoral Reform vs. Class Struggle," 20 November 1972

PL is also using its reformist "30 for 40" campaign to side up to aspiring bureaucrats in the labor movement. Thus it endorses the reformist, careerist United National Caucus in the UAW: "Thirty for Forty" could unify more workers than any other demand. This campaign will be spear-headed by the UNC and allied groups and individuals from a number of plants, including... Jordan Sims..." (Challenge, 1 May 1972). PL doesn't bother to tell its readers Sims is a demagogic careerist, that UNC leaders dropped their program at the UAW convention in order to focus on the bogus election-by-referendum campaign. Similarly, PL's election day "30 for 40" rally gave enthusiastic coverage to Dennis Serrette, vice-president of CWA Local 1101, and Nat Williams, vice-president of SSEU Local 371, and included N.Y. State Senator Sydney Von Luther, an aspiring Adam Clayton Powell-type black Democrat, as one of the demonstration's sponsors. "RR III" claims that the left-center coalition strategy is a "united front from below," but the "30 for 40" campaign shows once again that sectarianism is just opportunism standing in fear of its own shadow. In its "left" periods PL refuses to ally with anyone, going so far as to argue against participation in the unions (around the time of the 1970 auto

strike). But in its right swings PL shamelessly chases the bureaucrats.

### PL at the Crossroads

A right turn of such proportions is bound to result in demoralization when it fails to bring the expected masses of recruits. In recent months—while the Spartacist League and also several centrist organizations have experienced rapid growth—sympathizers and members have been dropping away from PL in large numbers. Now the crisis is affecting some of PL's long-time cadres. It was this situation which prompted Rosen to go on his recent cheerleading tour. But the PL leadership, armed only with impressionism, finds itself unable to cope with a crisis whose cause is political bankruptcy. Rosen had to fall back on petty-bourgeois moralizing:

"The fight for revolution transcends all other important things. It is more important than getting married, more important than having children, more important than having a job or getting a degree. Not that these things aren't important. Obviously they are. But the fight for workers power is most important.... it would seem to me that to be a good parent, friend, and devoted to your entire family would require the highest commitment to your class.... No, to be a good parent means being a staunch fighter for your class." [emphasis in original]

—"The Struggle for Socialism—A Matter of Life and Death," PL, January 1973

We have known for years that PL considered the family a fighting unit for socialism, but now it seems the party has become a fighting unit for the family!

This substitution of moralism for program is the only recourse of an organization which substitutes idealism for Marxism and perpetual sharp line

shifts for the historic interests of the proletariat. Blocked off by the CP and SWP from finding a niche as the dominant party of American reformism, PL can only play a pathetic and episodic role on the stage of history, ultimately disappearing and dragging a certain number of potential revolutionaries down with it.

If PL's subjectively serious cadres are not to be simply dissipated, they must be regrouped around the banner of authentic Trotskyism, the only program which provides a consistent revolutionary answer to the decisive questions which are tearing PL apart. In the past, PL has been able to insulate its supporters from much of the impact of criticism from the left by an implicit two-stage theory of organization which allowed it to pose itself as a hard communist party while at the same time pushing outright reformism in so-called "mass organizations," from the unions to SDS. This schizophrenic approach allowed PL to conciliate union bureaucrats and academic liberals without noticing the resulting tarnish on its own "revolutionary" credentials: to press for minimum reform demands in the unions under the rubric of the "left-center coalition"; to insist, when confronted by Spartacist League supporters in SDS, that SDS should not be a socialist organization, but rather a "mass organization" orienting to non-socialist, even liberal, students.

This line of reasoning is apparent in Rosen's speech:

"In this period, our party has estimated that what is vital to build this center [a revolutionary party], in addition to open socialist agitation, is to launch mass movements for '30 for 40,' and against racist ideology and its manifestations on and off campuses. We have deduced for many reasons (which we have spoken of at other times) that this is the next step in the class struggle. We deem it crucial for the workers' lives, and our own, that we try to launch these movements. Eventually we will win the leadership of the mass movements."

Thus, the job of communists is not to fight at all times for communist leadership of formations engaged in struggle, but to build "mass movements" which are implicitly understood as reformist. Operating in the vacuum of Stalinist "theoretical" tradition and therefore rejecting transitional demands in favor of the old Menshevik/Stalinist concept of the "minimum/maximum" program, PL, as "the party," gets a monopoly on the "maximum" program; everything else must embody the "minimum."

If PL's subjectively communist elements are to play any part in building the party of the proletariat in this country, they can do so only by transcending this typically Stalinist alternation between outright reformism and "Third Period" ultimatism in favor of authentic Marxism-Leninism, i.e., Trotskyism. ■

## FORUM

### The Origins of World War III

Speaker:  
JOSEPH SEYMOUR  
Spartacist League

SUNY, CAPEN HALL, RM. 140  
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## BUFFALO

sponsibility to emphasize the right of East Bengal to secede. Only such a policy could have undercut the rampant national chauvinism inflamed by the war and manipulated by all sides to maintain bourgeois rule in the sub-continent. This was the approach taken by the Bolsheviks when the legitimate demand for an independent Poland became subordinated to the inter-imperialist rivalry of Germany and Russia in World War I. (See "War, Revolution and Self-Determination," *Workers Vanguard* No. 4, January 1972.)

Like the Russian proletariat in 1917, the workers of the Indian sub-continent, although a small part of the total population, carry a decisive social weight through their high degree of organization, class consciousness and militancy, as well as their central role in the urban centers. It was no accident that the first shots of the war were aimed at dock workers in Chittagong, or that during the army repressions in March 1971 in West Pakistan it was Punjabi workers at Lyallpur who led the way, seizing their factories and hoisting the red flag. Likewise the strike wave that gripped both parts of Pakistan from October 1968 to March 1969, led by the proletariat, pointed the way to a unified class struggle that would lead both to self-determination and socialist revolution throughout the sub-continent.

The independence of the proletariat can only be defended by an uncompromising struggle for the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. It was this that the pseudo-Trotskyists of the SWP and the IC abandoned in their eagerness to capitulate to left-talking nationalists. Today Healy can write: "India has become the guarantor for the good behavior of the new state and has largely taken the place of Pakistan in the economy of the country.... A united front has been informally established to prevent revolution in Bangla Desh which runs through Washington, Moscow and Peking and has its fulcrum in New Delhi" (*Workers Press*, 28 June 1972). But what did Healy say when it counted? At a time when the situation demanded a policy of revolutionary defeatism, all Healy could come up with was "critical support to the Indian bourgeoisie." The elephant labored mightily and brought forth... a mouse. ■

Continued from page 5

## ...UNC

box of class collaboration by dropping the labor party demand and any categorical ban on support for bourgeois politicians. These "political" points of the UNC program (labor party, opposition to the war) were never more than window dressing, completely subordinated to the real program of simple trade unionism. The UNC has always welcomed the worst opportunists into its ranks, such as Teresa Carpenter and Mike Singer, who had a special note attached to the 1972 program opposing inclusion of a demand for the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Southeast Asia. The January 1973 UNC doesn't even mention the war! This treacherous softening of their own program now, in order to attract large numbers of UAW "dissidents" to their conference, is a warning of the more serious betrayals the UNC would undertake once in office in order to gain influence within the limits of capitalism.

### UNC-Potential Threat

At present the UNC is not a serious threat because it lacks the serious perspective of a drive for power in the union. This could be accomplished if it were to link up with a well-known careerist such as Paul Schrade, who has been directly and clearly invited to join the caucus on no other basis than the appearance of opposition to the bureaucracy.

Fake left groups such as the Communist Party and the IS see in the UNC the possible embryo for a more "progressive" union leadership. A bloc between such groups and the more far-sighted of the UNC's aspiring careerists could result in driving away the blatant right-wing opportunists such as Dewey, Carpenter and Singer (after all, even Woodcock is willing to verbally oppose the Vietnam war) in order to emerge with a more "militant" facade and pseudo-radical rhetoric to cover over the same trade unionism. Freed of archaic conservatism and rabid anti-communism, and able to disassociate itself from the past policies of the Woodcock machine, such a revitalized bureaucracy could be more flexible than its predecessor, and thereby better able to contain a mass upsurge of the workers and keep it within the bounds acceptable to the capitalists.

A successful power fight by the "transformed" UNC forces against the entrenched Woodcock machine would require the mobilization of the union ranks. The fake lefts like the CP and IS, who are eagerly seeking to create the illusion in the minds of the workers that such a new leadership means the end of the old sellout policies, are actually helping to block the forging of a real alternative leadership—based on a perspective of revolutionary class struggle rather than reformist class collaboration—by the auto workers. For the enormous shake-up in the UAW required to oust the incumbents will not be easily duplicated. If the struggle to replace the entrenched bureaucracy results only in the establishment of another, qualitatively identical bureaucracy, it will be some time before the ranks overcome their disillusionment and demoralization at this new betrayal and again launch a new round of struggles against the capitalists and their labor lieutenants.

Of course, the UNC could also go out of existence in a year through demoralization at its failure to achieve expected rapid growth, or some other reason. One thing, however, is certain: no revolutionary leadership can be built in the UAW at this time except on the basis of implacable struggle to expose and politically destroy the UNC and the "militant" trade unionism upon which it is based. This requires the development of caucuses which are sharply

counterposed on all questions not just to the present bureaucracy, but to the trade union-oriented politics and methods of struggle which recreate bureaucracy anew. Only through a struggle for a hard, consistent program, resting on the foundation of the international struggle of the working class, transcending all racial, national, section and trade union boundaries can this be achieved.

Thus a principled caucus must begin with uncompromising opposition to the UAW bureaucracy's support for U.S. imperialism. It must combat protectionism and oppose all wars and imperialist ventures of the U.S. government, not as an expendable afterthought, but as a central core of the program. Nowhere, for instance, has the UNC ever identified its interests with those of the laboring masses of Vietnam in achieving a military victory over U.S. imperialism—an elementary act of basic international class solidarity, despite the politically unsupportable and treacherous NLF/Hanoi leadership.

A revolutionary leadership genuine-

Continued from page 12

## ...CWA

against the MAC, have provided a testing ground for the two counterposed strategies of MAC and the *Bell Winger*. *Bell Winger's* opportunist, bureaucratic tail-ending reflects the classic historical role of a social-democratic grouping. Only this latest, most serious attack on MAC's rights has forced a change in *BW*, which has pulled away from a former bureaucratic collaborator in order to make a principled defense of MAC. The previous role of *BW* helped lay the groundwork for the attacks on MAC.

Last summer the *BW* group entered an agreement with Virginia Branning and Bobbie Williams, both appointed stewards who had a fake "militant" posture which they were grooming for the November elections. The *BW* and these two ladder-climbers formed the Committee for Elected Shop Stewards (CESS), even though the MAC was already pushing a by-laws change to get elected shop stewards. Repeatedly MAC warned the *BW* that it was merely building the reputation of aspiring bureaucrats and careerists, but *BW* stuck to its course of refusing to raise the political program which they claimed to have in common with MAC, in order to hold onto their bureaucratic friends. When a MAC speaker was physically threatened on Candidates' Night, neither the *BW* supporters nor CESS rose to defend her. The *BW* joined with the chorus of bureaucrats in denouncing the "irresponsible" nature of MAC's criticism. All this served to embolden the bureaucrats to more serious attacks on the apparently-isolated MAC.

Although *BW* has now committed itself to the defense of MAC against Branning's attack, the political links between *BW* and Branning have never been explained or formally broken, leaving open the possibility for future rotten blocs.

Recounting these experiences is necessary if one is to understand and learn from the false method of a group such as *BW*, which has led its subjectively militant and dedicated supporters to the brink of a disaster threatening the very existence of any real opposition to bureaucratic and reformist union leadership. In trying to balance between the needs of the workers and the pressure of the company, such "leadership" must, at all points of crisis, upsurge or political motion of the workers, act as agents of the company against the union membership. An alliance involving a wing of such "leaders," or merely aspirants, which does not have at its core a clear political separation from the program of the trade union bureaucracy, will inevitably founder on

ly seeking to replace trade unionism and the bureaucracy it engenders must also counterpose a political struggle for a workers government to the bureaucracy's support for one wing or another of the capitalist political spectrum. It is not enough to call for a labor party, although the UNC is completely unserious even about this. The program and aims of the labor party must be fundamentally anti-capitalist.

By struggling for a new leadership on the basis of such a program, the struggle within the union will transcend simple trade unionism politically, and give support, through the actions resulting from the general thrust of its program, to the struggle to build a Leninist vanguard party of the working class. The building of such a party is a strategic necessity in order to bring about the seizure of power by the workers, which can alone destroy capitalist exploitation and replace it with socialism. Without such a perspective, opposition to the servile, traitorous union bureaucracy is futile, and inevitably serves only to bring it forth anew. ■

the same points of crisis. In the end, it can only reinforce the bureaucracy.

The danger to the MAC supporters is not over simply because the membership came out to defend the basic right of opposition. All too often the workers think they have dealt with a question, only to find later that their wishes have been undone through the efforts of those who are more persistent and able to maneuver quietly in the background. The charges still stand, and will not be voluntarily withdrawn simply because the original incidents of scabbing are verified to those who knew they were true all along. The accused still face possible expulsion from the union because they consistently counterposed a militant and political course to the self-defeating policies of a "leadership" which used lies, slander and violence in order to cover its role. These charges must be dropped at once!

Throughout the entire labor movement, constant vigilance is required to maintain the rights of the membership. The attempted frame-up of the MAC supporters in CWA Local 9415 is an attack on the rights of every local member and a threat to every CWA and union member in the country. It is in the interest of every union militant to express his or her opinion on this outrage. We urge all local unions to pass resolutions of support for the MAC, demanding that the charges be dropped in the name of union democracy. Send them to:

Militant Action Caucus Defense Committee  
P.O. Box 462  
El Cerrito, California 94530

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**WORKERS VANGUARD**

# Bureaucratic Purge Attempt in CWA

Union militants—supporters of the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) of CWA Local 9415, Oakland, California—have been brought up on trumped-up charges in a bureaucratic attempt to purge the union of militant opposition. The chief backers of the purge attempt are embittered local bureaucrats who were dumped in the last election—ex-President Blasingame and ex-Secretary-Treasurer Hart—and their hangers-on, Virginia Branning and Mike Budd. The charges claim that the militants have made written and verbal statements about the leadership which "tend to bring the union or local thereof into disrepute"—a formal violation of the CWA constitution.

MAC has repeatedly pointed out the sellout policies of the Hart/Blasingame regime over the past two years. This has included noting that Blasingame, Alta White, Virginia Branning, L.R. Hawkins and Bobbie Williams, among others, scabbed on strikes as far back as June 1971. The frustrated ex-bureaucrats, long irked by these exposures and looking for a convenient scapegoat for their rejection at the hands of the membership, picked these accusations of scabbing as a basis for charges. For them, it was a final, desperate attempt to smash MAC and destroy all basis for the kind of militant opposition which proved to be such an embarrassment to their bureaucratic careers. For the people charged, however, it could mean expulsion from the union and probably firing, and for the union, it could mean the strangulation of democracy and all meaningful political life.

At the January local meeting at which the charges were formally presented, it became apparent that the bureaucrats had stirred up more outrage than they had bargained for. Having accidentally found out about the charges beforehand, MAC had urged a strong attendance in a leaflet entitled "Defend MAC, No Frame-Up!" Over a hundred people showed up including over 60 who consistently voted to support MAC's rights.

After wading through much parliamentary trickery, the MAC moved that the local recommend to the accusers that the charges be dropped. MAC member Kathleen Burnham pointed out how the caucus has helped build the union, and noted the dangerous precedent the charges set. The accusers, Virginia Branning and Mike Budd, had had ample opportunity to answer the charges earlier and had chosen not to. By hand vote, the MAC motion passed, 60 to 47, but the bureaucrats called for a division of the house, and the disputed result was 63 for to 68 against. Despite the close vote, the accusers refused to withdraw the charges and a trial body was elected.

## Defense Committee Formed

The charges are an attempt to intimidate even those who would merely support a militant opposition group. While referring to specific "slanders" in MAC literature, the charges have been brought against 8 people, not all of whom are MAC members.

As there were many independent witnesses to the acts of scabbing, which Blasingame, Hart et al. hope have been forgotten, MAC has been gathering affidavits to prove them. The

charges are so obviously fraudulent and so clearly an attempt to destroy all militant opposition that even the *Bell Winger* (BW) group, which was in bloc with one of the accusers and for that reason failed to defend the elementary democratic rights of MAC members in the past, has thrown itself fully and actively into the MAC's defense effort. BW actively supports the defense committee which has been formed, and a BW supporter was elected to the defense committee's coordinating body.

The defense committee is based on two points—"drop the charges" and "union democracy." It meets regularly, issues reports to the membership, and has launched a petition campaign which it hopes will spread to other CWA locals. Supporters have attended meetings from San Francisco CWA and from Western Electric Local 9490, a member of which is also helping to coordinate the defense efforts.

## Bureaucrats Fear Caucus Growth

If the local is in "disrepute," as charged, it is due to the wretched policies of its bureaucratic leadership, which has brought the union to the brink of destruction. In July 1971 a large membership meeting greeted CWA President Beirne's back-to-work order ending the nationwide phone strike with a stormy rejection and vote to stay on strike. The Blasingame leadership simply walked out on the union, totally abandoning its responsibility to lead. Despite MAC's attempt to organize the implementation of the membership's decision to continue the strike, its momentum was lost. Faced with this devastating betrayal by their elected leaders, the strikers were in effect coerced back to work.

Shortly after this, Blasingame refused to honor the picket lines of IBEW members at San Francisco Yellow Pages who were still defying the Phone Company. Thus Blasingame helped Beirne break the resistance of his fellow workers. Other Local 9415 leaders scabbed on Western Electric installers in CWA Local 9490 and other IBEW workers. These scabbing incidents reinforced the breakdown of the militant Western Electric workers, formerly members of Local 9415, into a separate CWA local.

As the MAC points out, it has been the only consistent defender of the union against the company. When Blasingame accepted a company attack on the union which involved his own suspension and final warning last spring, the MAC defended Blasingame along with other victimized officers and members, seeking at every turn to widen the scope of the struggle.

The MAC is not organized simply to pressure the incumbent bureaucrats. What separates it from pressure groups such as *Bell Winger*, politically supported by the International Socialists (IS), is the recognition that in order for the working class to move forward under the all-sided attacks of the capitalist class, it is necessary to defeat the bureaucratic betrayers of the unions on the basis of a program which counterposes the interests of the working class to the capitalist system as a whole on all questions. This approach

contrasts sharply with that of BW, which concentrates on shop floor and trade union issues, and accuses the MAC of "divisiveness" for attacking bureaucrats and would-be bureaucrats. The MAC responded:

"Why does MAC put so much effort into attacking the actions and politics of this local and international leadership? Because the present union bureaucracy is the main obstacle standing in the way of the light for the interests of the working class..."

"MAC considers it our responsibility to struggle against every other contending leadership because their policies can only end in sellouts and defeat for the working class. Any group like the *Bell Winger* whose strategy is to pressure the existing bureaucracy, instead of clarifying its positions, and ruthlessly exposing every betrayal, every disastrous policy of the actual and would-be bureaucrats shares responsibility for those disasters and betrayals." [emphasis in original]

—"Militant Action Report,"  
1 November 1972

The MAC program includes, "No government interference in the unions—abolish anti-labor laws; for rank-and-file control of CWA; for working-class unity—fight protectionism; immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from S.E. Asia—for labor strikes against the war; for workers self-defense; 30 hours work for 40 hours pay or better—strike against layoffs; organize the unorganized; end women's and racial oppression; nationalize the Phone Company; and all major industry under workers control; and oust the bureaucrats—build a workers party based on the trade unions—for a workers government."

The caucus based its campaign in last November's local elections on challenging the other candidates to come up with answers to the key questions facing labor—inflation, layoffs, the wage freeze, the war, racism, etc.—and sought to get votes only on the basis of a full understanding of its program. In order to force the candidates to speak on the issues, the MAC gathered 700 signatures on a petition, which forced the bureaucracy to hold a special "Candidates' Night" meeting.

## Bureaucratic Retaliation

Because of MAC's consistent political struggle and the growth of its influence (including the election of a MAC supporter to the local Executive Board), the bureaucrats have retaliated with violence and slander. In July they revived a defunct local newsletter, *Labor News*, to print a scurrilous anonymous "letter to the editor"—a piece of sexist garbage baiting MAC with phrases like "broads" and "felch chorus," etc. It falsely accuses a MAC leader of taking the union to the NLRB (she had taken the company to the NLRB). This piece of filth reflected the bureaucrats' inability to answer the MAC's charges openly. Accomplishing nothing, it was followed by escalated attacks.

Before the elections, the union leadership agreed to a company ruling that MAC could not post its election material on the union bulletin boards because the MAC slogan "Nationalize the Phone Company under Workers

Control" was "derogatory" to AT&T! Of course, local leaders were allowed to post their campaign material, since they have nothing "derogatory" to propose against AT&T!

Obviously approaching frenzy, the bureaucrats arrived at the last resort of all labor bureaucrats—open repression and violent intimidation. For "Candidates' Night," the bureaucrats imposed a gag rule by declaring that "no candidate can attack verbally or otherwise, another candidate." If Branning et al. had really been slandered by MAC as they had claimed, this would have been the time to answer the charges before the membership. Instead these bureaucrats hid behind a gag rule.

When MAC candidate Burnham began to expose the history of the bureaucrats, the microphone was turned off and MAC members were physically threatened and shoved. Subsequently, at the November 21 regular meeting Secretary-Treasurer Hart rammed through a motion of censure against MAC for printing a leaflet about this incident. After the meeting MAC members were brutally assaulted by local bureaucrats and cronies including Mike Budd, a right-wing goon who is now filing charges against MAC (see *WV* No. 14, December 1972). Finally in early December the bureaucrats' hangers-on Virginia Branning and Mike Budd secretly drew up the charges against the MAC and others—charges which the MAC only accidentally learned about six days before the meeting at which they were to be formally presented. In response, the MAC has brought charges against those who assaulted its members on November 21.

Throughout the current fight, the MAC has sought to lay down basic principles of workers democracy, which the bureaucrats have trampled upon. The bureaucrats appeal for "unity," but attempt to bar all real discussion with the threat of expulsion. Their "unity" means unity around a

## The Communist Approach to Women's Liberation

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program of betrayal. This is precisely why they fear open discussion and opposition, reflected in the fact that MAC is being prosecuted for its beliefs, not for any anti-working class acts such as scabbing. The MAC has emphasized:

"Real unity is based on three principles: First: Solidarity in the face of the class enemy—no scabbing. Second: Full freedom of discussion, intense criticism and debate. Third: No violence in the workers' movement!"

—"Defend MAC—No Frame-Up!",  
13 January 1973

The events of recent months, culminating in the bringing of charges

continued on page 11

# DEFEND THE MILITANT ACTION CAUCUS