

Behind the Dollar Devaluation:

International Financial Chaos Looms

In November 1971, just prior to the Smithsonian Agreement, we stated:

"While small concessions will be made ... the differences are too irreconcilable for a return to a stable international monetary system. The next period will be one of international financial anarchy, quite similar to the 1930's, with managed fluctuating exchange rates..., numerous *ad hoc*

trade and capital controls, bilateral commercial and credit deals and the complete interpenetration of political and financial relations."

— "American Empire Shaken,"
WV No. 2, November 1971

The collapse of the "historic" Smithsonian Agreement, after just 14 months, completely validates this prediction and is a qualitative intensification of a

movement toward complete international monetary anarchy.

The U.S. Exports Inflation

Nixon hailed the Smithsonian Agreement as "the greatest monetary achievement in world history" (*New York Times*, December 19, 1971). Nixon's pleasure at the agreement was un-

derstandable, but very short-sighted—an almost necessary quality in a contemporary bourgeois politician. The Smithsonian Agreement produced a moderate devaluation of the dollar against most other major trading countries and screwed a numerically large up-valuation out of Japan (17%). But it wasn't enough. First, West Germany was appeased with a comparatively small re-valuation against the dollar, which improved its competitive advantage against Britain and France. Secondly, Japan mainly imports raw materials, which do not compete with domestic products and enter into its exports, so that an exceptionally large up-valuation of the yen would be necessary to reverse Japan's competitive advantage against the other industrial powers. Despite the more favorable exchange rate and state wage control, the U.S. international competitive position continued to deteriorate through 1972. For the first time in post-war history the U.S. ran a balance-of-trade deficit, \$4 billion with Japan and \$1-1/2 billion with Western Europe. The out-flow of dollars caused by the balance-of-trade deficit was increased by speculative transfers of dollars to stronger currencies, particularly in Western Europe.

The flood of dollars pouring into the West European banking system has generated the most severe European-wide inflation in the post-war period. In the last quarter of 1972, consumer prices in West Germany and Italy rose at a rate of 8 1/2% a year, in France at a rate of 9% a year and in Britain at a rate of 10 1/2% a year (*Economist*, December 30, 1972). The central axis of the West European class struggle has been around inflation. Last November, the Tory government in Britain imposed a Nixon-style wage freeze, provoking a contest of power with the best organized and most combative

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SL/RCY Demonstrate Against Zionist Repression, Repulse Attack



Members of the Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth picketed the Israeli Consulate to the U.N. in New York on 21 February to protest the frame-up arrest of socialist militants in Israel. The RCY had issued the call for a united front demonstration, responding to the declaration of 5 Israeli organizations (printed in the SWP's *Militant* of 2 February) asking for international solidarity against the Israeli government's brutal repression. Following several telephoned death threats purportedly from the ultra-rightist Jewish Defense League, the RCY had repeatedly contacted the avowedly anti-Zionist socialist organizations to urge an increased turnout to help defend the demonstrators and establish the right of anti-Zionists to publicly raise their views despite JDL intimidation. The only group to respond in any force to the RCY's call was the National Caucus of Labor Committees. The picket was attacked by thugs wielding iron pipes and brass knuckles, but the demonstrators held their lines, repulsed the attackers and continued to picket.

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A Revolting Zionist Atrocity

In last October's *Workers Vanguard* we headlined our account of the Israelis' "punitive" response to the Arab terrorism at the Munich Olympics as "murderous nationalism." On 21 February, acting on orders, the Israeli Air Force shot down a Libyan commercial transport which had wandered over the Israeli-occupied Sinai Peninsula. As proved by both Egyptian- and Israeli-supplied evidence, the disoriented French pilot of the Boeing 727 thought he was being accompanied by Egyptian MIG fighters. When finally he had turned around and was but one minute away from crossing the Suez Canal on the way to his Cairo destination, the Israeli jets shot the plane down, killing outright more than 100 of the 113 passengers and crew.

Atrocity

If, inconceivably, the state of Israel had promptly condemned this terrible deed and sought out for trial those at the highest level responsible for the order to commit this mass murder, and those responsible for the military directives upon which it was based, then one would conclude that it was but a tragic aberration.

To be sure it is only in the whole pattern of military conduct that there is an approximate empirical reflection of the real social and political character and aims of a belligerent power. Thus, for example, U-boat commanders have on occasion come to the aid of their torpedoed victims, and a U.S. helicopter gunner did train his machine guns on the U.S. infantry as it massacred peasants at My Lai. (He is the only known American hero in Vietnam—those others who might have and should have performed similarly were presumably instead in jail as conscientious objectors, over the Canadian border as draft dodgers, in Sweden as deserters, or just plain spaced-out on heroin.)

How did the Israelis respond? Besides denying all responsibility and/or justifying their action, they told lies about the dead pilot. Until the tapes of his pathetic last radio communication came to light (it is a good thing foreign newsmen had noted in the wreckage of the plane the "black box" containing the tapes), the Israelis accused him of willful refusal to heed directives from the fighter planes. After the tapes conclusively proved that no such directives had been received, the Israelis declared that the pilot was not certified to fly a Boeing 727—were they hoping that everyone would forget the plane had been shot down? (Furious Air France officials laid that one to rest by exhibiting the documents of their pilot's certification.)

The pilot only made one real mistake, and it wasn't getting lost: he was a European, and probably did not conceive of the savagery which would be unleashed upon him and his human cargo if by any chance he had wandered over Israeli-occupied territory in a Libyan aircraft.

The New York Times of 25 February reported, "How, many Israelis asked, could anyone have guaranteed that it was not a hijacked plane headed for a kamikaze crash into an Israeli city?" What is interesting is not solely that the plane when destroyed was but one minute from leaving Israeli-controlled air space altogether (that was the reason why the fighters "had to" shoot it down—it was getting away without doing any damage and they would shortly lose their excuse). In addition, the Israeli rationale conceals a profound racist-chauvinist premise: any "threat," no matter how slight, to "us" of course justifies any amount of killing of "them." (How, some Nazi might have asked with equal "justifica-

tion," could anyone have guaranteed that some of those Jews were not secretly plotting a suicide bomb attack on Hitler's life?)

Revolting

It was also reported on American radio that the Israeli "man in the street" sees clear-cut anti-Semitism in the international revulsion and outcry over this "Incident," because for example Nixon killed thousands in Vietnam and got away with it, while Israel triggers all this indignation when it kills only 100. Let us give the Israeli "man in the street" another comparison. After the Nazis invaded Russia, they set up special extermination units to comb the occupied areas exterminating Jews. Many East Europeans, particularly Ukrainians and Lithuanians, served in these units. These local fascists pursued their duties with so much zeal that they sickened even some individuals among the German leaders. On behalf of Western imperialism, the Israeli rulers have hired themselves out and are playing a role toward the Arabs possessing similarities to that which East European anti-Semites played toward the Jews on the Hitlerites' behalf.

Nixon of course recognizes the value of the Israelis' services. While refusing to comment on the shooting down itself, he said he was "saddened" by the airliner "tragedy." By way of comparison, he described the Arab terrorism at Munich as "this appalling, senseless deed" and expressed "shock and horror at... the murderous act."

The Israelis have overlooked one possible "defense" of their deed. Shooting down the Libyan airliner has indeed led to a proportionately much greater outcry than when U.S. troops butcher Vietnamese villagers or when the Israelis themselves smash Arab refugee camps together with their inhabitants. But unfortunately for the Israelis, this atrocity triggers a class bias. Aircraft passengers are petty-bourgeois and bourgeois; the inhabitants of villages and refugee camps are but peasants—and every racist swine knows that an airline passenger (or an Israeli athlete) is ever so much more "human" than some peasant.

Zionism

While the Zionist bourgeois rulers experience some embarrassment, which they look upon as transient, their crimes—committed in the name of Israeli and world Jewry—are calculated to fuse together the Israeli social classes, suppressing internal class struggle and thus hopefully eternally continuing their rule, through ever more widespread guilt and fear of revenge compounding the earlier and continuing crime of the destruction of the Palestinian Arabs as a people. The petty-bourgeois nationalists, Zionist and Arab—and behind them the ruling bourgeois beneficiaries of these ideological mobilizations—offer no way out of an endless mutual escalation of atrocities based upon infinite self-righteousness, and conditioned by the relationship, in the present period, that the Zionists are the oppressor and the Arab nationalists are among the oppressed.

Only the working class—Arab and Hebrew-speaking alike—can transcend this spiral of guilt, fear and revenge through the intersection of the class struggle with the creation of the proletarian vanguard party whose revolutionary Marxist program does indeed uniquely express the most general and historic interests of the working people. For in the real economic and social conditions of life, it is truly only the workers of all lands who have the material basis to unite. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Ex-New Lefters Choose Trotskyism: Cleveland Workers Vanguard Committee Formed

Last December, the Cleveland Marxist Caucus (CMC) became the Cleveland *Workers Vanguard* Committee, a disciplined sympathizing group of the Spartacist League. Based on essential political solidarity with the SL, the CWVC is an interim step toward the integration of its members into the SL and Revolutionary Communist Youth. The CWVC is a unique and temporary phenomenon, designed to provide a particular group of sympathizers with an organizational framework for further political study and common work on the basis of agreement with the SL program. In general, there can exist no stable intermediary of "sympathizer" as an organized category in a bolshevik cadre organization.

The political origins of the CMC members lie in the breakup of the New Left, coming individually from Cleveland SDS, Movement for a Democratic Society (MDS) and, to a lesser extent, Weatherman. In the course of this breakup, two groups emerged in Cleveland: a collective for publishing *HotchPot* (HP), "a socialist newspaper for workers in the human services," and the Women's Marxist Study Group (WMSG), which was formed in reaction to the anti-theoretical, mindless activism of the New Left and Cleveland women's liberation. The merger of these two groups in 1972 to form the CMC was part of their motion toward Trotskyism and culminated rapidly in the formation of the CWVC.

Cleveland SDS, Kent State and Case Western Reserve campuses provided the core of the Weatherman faction of SDS in 1968, which arose largely out of frustration with the SWP-dominated pop-front anti-war movement, through which no revolutionary development was possible. As Weatherman took most of Cleveland SDS through the 1969 split in SDS into rapid demoralization and disintegration, MDS remained. Composed largely of social workers, it had an orientation toward organizing radicals in the professions. MDS attracted some who were repelled by Weatherman's anti-working-class enthusiasm over national struggles; it also attracted opportunists and simple social-work careerists.

Despite their disagreement with Weatherman, many of the future members of CMC advocated and aided the defense of Weatherman against bourgeois state repression. This vital act provided a necessary basis of principled, class solidarity for the reunification, several years later, of the

CMC with ex-Weatherman members on a Marxist program.

The radicals-in-the-professions organizers of MDS formed the Cleveland branch of Social Welfare Workers Movement (SWWM), a short-lived nationwide phenomenon. *HotchPot* was formed as the left wing of SWWM-MDS by several organizers who sought to consciously develop motion toward socialism out of this work, as opposed to those whose orientation was purely reformist or careerist. Partly because of the lack of a well-developed left in Cleveland to provide more attractive, viable alternatives, the politicized social-workerism of *HotchPot* in its two years of life outlived both the rest of Cleveland SWWM and other SWWM chapters in other cities.

SWWM's New Left initiators sought to use the link-up provided by "human service workers" to merge reform of the social services, health, welfare, etc., with "community control" schemes among the poor and lumpen clients. This alliance was to be aimed against the "corporate elite" which profited from corruption in the social services and war production in society generally. *HotchPot* wanted this reformist movement to culminate in a fundamental change in power in society, conceived as a sort of "people's socialism."

Influenced by the "new-working-class" theories of André Gorz and others, SWWM organizers predicted that by 1975 the majority of the U.S. work force would be in the "human service" field, particularly health. These "para-professionals" were seen as the key to ending oppression, which was conceived of not as the result of the exploitation of labor by capital, but as the function of a general distortion of society by the profit motive. It was thus deemed possible to reorder the existing society simply by removing the "distortion" and making the existing institutions "serve the people." This was clearly reflected by *HotchPot*:

"We are now the assistants of the oppressors. We must become the servants of the people. To serve the people is to serve ourselves. All power to the people."

—October-November 1970

New-working-class theories, while recognizing that bourgeois intellectuals would generally be among the first individuals drawn into the revolutionary Marxist movement, denied the possibility of an active relationship between the Marxist intellectuals and the work-

ing class on the basis of the Leninist conception of a vanguard party. In addition, these theories confused the increasing proletarianization of some white collar workers with the exploitation of the proletariat, i.e., the extraction of surplus value by the capitalist class. Hence, the essence of new-working-class conceptions was of revolutionary intellectuals leading other intellectuals toward the seizure of tellers' cages, adding machines, slide rules and case records. The widespread character of these ideas on the U.S. left was made possible by the lack of any serious militancy or revolutionary activity in the labor movement in the early 1960's.

The premises of the *HotchPot* collective failed to correspond with reality. Stubbornly trying to find a strategy for socialist revolution within the confines of isolated, reformist organizing, the group was gradually forced into a definitive break with all its New Left premises. This began as an attempt to surpass demonstrated failures which placed obstacles to the continued maintenance of a socialist perspective. *HotchPot* insisted on printing its full socialist perspectives when working as open socialists was out of favor with the more opportunist social-workerists. This key decision cost the *HP* collective half its membership, as opportunists who counterposed the "mass movement" to even the most minimal conception of socialists as a vanguard within the movement departed to pursue their social worker careers. Not to have gone through with this decision to operate as open socialists would have raised the danger of red-baiting (which had proven destructive in the past) and would have meant the abandonment of a socialist perspective to a paternalist reformism.

HotchPot Opposes "Community Control"

The demonstrated ease with which even the most radical-sounding "community leaders" were bought off by state bandouts convinced the *HP* collective of the fraudulence of the "community control" demand. Thus *HP* opposed Leroy Jones in the Newark Teachers strike, taking a stand against strikebreaking and reactionary nationalism and for the defense of the Newark Teachers Union.

The group's definitive break with New Leftism, opening the door to development on the basis of Marxism, thus came from the piecemeal recognition that isolated sectors of the oppressed, organized around struggles for immediate needs, do not automatically come to socialist conclusions. The group's illusions as to the revolutionary potential of the lumpenized "community" dwindled as the destructive effects of lumpenization were realized. Such struggles do not spontaneously come together and unite in socialist revolution, as was the original hope of *HotchPot*, but must be united behind the class struggle of the workers through the agency of a

mass, working-class vanguard party. Acting as a "tribune of the people," such a party would unite all sections of the oppressed, but on the program of socialist revolution rather than on the basis of illusions of reforms through pressure on the system.

Like the New Left as a whole, the *HP* collective was methodologically ill-equipped to analyze and concretize political conclusions from events. Development took place as the group wandered a tortuous road, drawing lessons from struggle, re-thinking past premises and attempting to incorporate conclusions into a coherent revolutionary strategy. Though hindered by this eclectic approach, the group increasingly came to recognize the need for theory in contrast to the bankruptcy of mindless activism.

Inevitably, the impact of major events was felt, despite delays in drawing the full implications. Particularly the May-June 1968 general strike in France provoked a reassessment of assumptions throughout the left. Even Gortz, father of new-working-class theory, was forced to abandon his ideas and look again in the direction of the proletariat.

Cleveland Womens Liberation was a typical collection of consciousness-raising groups with a steering committee. While politically-oriented women were urging the adoption of a socialist orientation instead of a feminist one, supporters of the SWP/YSA spoke only about their oppression as women and urged people to go on marches for the most minimal demands. No one learned anything about Trotskyism as a result of the SWP's work. Instead, the SWP only invited anti-communist sentiment against itself, anti-communism being not simply the property of reactionaries, but an easy trap for subjective revolutionaries seeking to avoid commitment to SWP reformism. Impossible to hold together, the group split apart while some of the socialist-oriented women later formed a separate Women's Marxist Study Group.

Personal contacts between *HotchPot* and WMSG grew into political collaboration as both groups felt the need for political study to provide the understanding and program required for serious further action. The reading of Lenin, particularly *State and Revolution* and *What Is To Be Done?*, had a profound impact on both groups, leading them to reject their former character as isolated groups oriented only to partial struggles in favor of jointly pursuing the tasks of revolutionary Marxists: party building and organizing the working class.

Another component of the future CMC came out of the Weatherman organization, breaking from Weatherman when this group finally adopted its hard anti-proletarian and terrorist line at its Flint, Michigan conference in December 1969. These comrades gravitated to the CP-backed Peoples Coalition for Peace and Justice, believing it was being formed as a multi-issue group in opposition to the SWP's single-issue

NPAC. Understanding in a vulgar way that only the workers—through mass organization and action—could end the war, the ex-Weathermen believed PCPJ would struggle around communist politics and organize workers through demonstrating the relationship between imperialism and domestic oppression (e.g., unemployment, police repression, welfare, etc.).

But in PCPJ the subjective revolutionaries came face to face with the CP's shameless opportunism, as CP members were silent as crypto-McGovern liberals advanced cynical anti-communist views about the U.S. working class and allowed members of the Welfare Rights Organization to grossly red-bait anyone who wanted to talk about communist politics as "uninterested in the gut problems of poor people." The degeneration of meetings into howling and exhortations to "tell it like it is" undercut any possibility of political discussion and provided a bitter introduction to the CP's practice.

The Struggle for Trotskyism

The leading role of the Buffalo Marxist Caucus (BMC), with whom the *HP*-WMSG had prior contact, was instrumental in the formation of the CMC and its final development to Trotskyism. The CMC was formed as a study group whose basic purpose it defined as: "to build the theoretical basis necessary for the development of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party in the U.S. We understand the CMC as a transitional socialist formation whose contemporary roots lie in the inadequate theory and practice of other formations and parties."

While relatively isolated, the CMC was formed on the basis of prior rejection of the ostensibly revolutionary organizations. Through contact in the Cleveland anti-war and women's movements, the SWP/YSA had been rejected as little more than the embodiment of political bookerism. The CP had been rejected on the basis of its monstrous historical record of pop-front betrayals, trade union opportunism and sectarian purge orientation against groups to the left of it. The National Caucus of Labor Committees was examined repeatedly in the course of the evolution of the CMC and found to be pursuing naked popular-frontist politics. The International Socialists had impressed *HP*-WMSG members as left-social-democratic and opportunist, particularly over its entry into NAM on a completely insufficient basis to separate out a principled opposition to NAM's anti-communism and social-patriotism. (IS' subservience was made even clearer by the fact that NAM had at first refused to let IS supporters enter because of their avowed socialism!)

Further, before the formation of the CMC, *HP*-WMSG members, together with BMC representatives, had briefly gone through the abortive attempt of ex-PL members around Bill Epton to regroup with more orthodox Maoists around Marxist-Leninist Journal. At the N.Y. founding conference, the Buffalo and Cleveland comrades agreed to an open journal to thrash out differences—a concession to a non-Leninist, all-inclusive party conception—but they argued for a polemical character to the journal in view of the goal of building a communist party. The comrades also opposed blatant accommodation to feminism through a proposal to have a quota of women on the editorial board. The BMC-Cleveland groups dropped out of this rapidly failing attempt to reconstitute Maoism.

In two joint meetings with the BMC in May and June 1972, the Cleveland collective—having been convinced of the bankruptcy of the left (or what it had seen of the left)—had to be convinced of its relevance. Having come from the New Left and rejected the obviously revisionist tendencies with which it had come in contact, the CMC assumed that it would have to build the vanguard party by ignoring the left and going directly to the masses, i.e., reinvent the wheel all over again. The BMC pointed out that

this ignored the role of the left groups as obstacles to the development of working-class consciousness through the consistent dissemination of false consciousness in "revolutionary" garb, bureaucratic control of trade unions and centrist formations, etc. These groups would have to be smashed in the course of building the party and struggling to replace false consciousness with Marxism. Furthermore, given the weakness of the revolutionary forces, a tactic of revolutionary regroupment was required to reach the most advanced workers and students many of whom are to be found in the existing fake-left organizations.

The two groups set out to examine those organizations which the Buffalo and Cleveland comrades had not already found to be politically bankrupt during the BMC-CMC's earlier evolution. This came down to the Workers League and the Spartacist League—both avowedly anti-revisionist Trotskyists.

In the process of the BMC-initiated exploration of the Workers League (WL) a meeting was held with Tim Wohlforth in New York City in July 1972. After a few hours of discussion covering the WL's refusal to fight the oppression of women, its call to the labor bureaucrats to form a labor party and its support of the New York City police strike, the CMC representative came away less than enthusiastic about the mysteries of the "dialectical" hocus-pocus practiced by Wohlforth. Not fully satisfied that the WL was not a Marxist organization;

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WORKERS VANGUARD

the CMC considered arranging a formal meeting with the WL; in the meantime, however, word came from Buffalo of a WL ultimatum to the BMC: if the BMC discussed with the SL, there could be no discussions with the WL.

Rejecting the WL's transparent sectarianism as the "sour grapes" of an organization which recognized it had already lost its bid to suck in the BMC-Cleveland grouping, the Cleveland comrades continued a series of meetings with the Buffalo group and with representatives of the SL. The BMC fused with the SL's youth organization, the RCY, in November 1972, and in December the Cleveland comrades voted to affiliate with the SL as a disciplined supporter organization, looking toward the individual recruitment of its members to the SL/RCY. The Cleveland *Workers Vanguard* Committee, in the interim, will continue its study activities while materially supporting the SL, defending its positions and circulating its press in the Cleveland area.

The experience of the Cleveland comrades—which has been paralleled by local groupings arising out of local New Left, main-line Maoist and women's liberation organizations—is a vindication for the analysis and program of authentic Trotskyism as embodied by the Spartacist League. ■

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CHICAGO..... (312) 548-2934
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CLEVELAND..... (216) 696-4943
Cleveland WV Committee
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Box 22052, Univ. City Sta.
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SAN FRANCISCO..... (415) 863-1459
Box 40574
San Francisco, CA 94140

Labor Department Wins Mine Workers' Election

"For the first time, you have replaced an entrenched labor bureaucracy with leaders chosen from the rank and file." So the United Mine Workers *Journal* (December 1972) pompously told the membership after the Miller-Trbovich-Patrick slate defeated the incumbents headed by Tony Boyle in the Labor Department-supervised UMW elections last December.

And indeed, at first glance Arnold Miller of the "Miners for Democracy" (MFD) appears to be the archetype of the "honest rank and file" courageously taking on and defeating the status quo. But stripped of liberal romanticizing, Miller's victory over Boyle was significant only as a step in the U.S. government's campaign to curtail even the formal independence of the union movement.

Miller, a working miner disabled by black lung (the widespread disease among miners caused by coal dust), had never held union office beyond the local level. He was influential in organizing the militant black lung movement and the wildcat strike which forced the West Virginia legislature in 1969 to pass a bill granting compensation to miners disabled by black lung. But the decisive aspect of Miller's career is that he is also an active Democratic Party politician. Miller twice ran for the West Virginia state legislature, hardly the typical act of a "simple rank-and-file union leader." Predictably, Miller and the Miners for Democracy, the movement which nominated him for the UMW presidency, rely for their strength on alliances with liberal Democrats and legal maneuverings, and are responsible to the group of Washington lawyers who run MFD, not to the UMW membership.

Yablonski's Role

Miners for Democracy was the new name for "Miners for Yablonski," the campaign structure supporting Joseph Yablonski. Yablonski, MFD's first "rank-and-file" candidate for the UMW presidency, first came to public attention as the man who persuaded Pennsylvania miners not to strike to force Boyle to open contract negotiations after there had been no new UMW contract for a period of five years! Yablonski had been a member of the International Executive Board since 1942 and had gone along with the union hierarchy for years. He had worked for Boyle's re-election, participated in permissive use of union funds, and kept silent about the UMW's collusion with the coal companies. (Even one of his most ardent supporters admitted that Yablonski had helped Boyle rig the pensioner vote in 1964!) He was persuaded to run for office by Ralph Nader, who had jumped on the mine-safety bandwagon. It took two months of secret meetings with Nader before Yablonski was willing to announce his candidacy. And why not? He had a lot to risk—a \$26,000/year salary and a no-questions-asked expense account. Reading his program of mild reforms for the first time, Yablonski stumbled over the words, no doubt because he had just seen the program, probably written by Nader.

Miller was selected for nomination by the Miners for Democracy after the 1969 Boyle-Yablonski contest had been ordered rerun by federal court order because of gross election irregularities. His program was a simple extension of Yablonski's: move the UMW headquarters to the coalfields, reduce the salaries of international officers, retirement after 25 years with

full benefits, a \$200/month pension, autonomy for UMW districts, establishment of local safety committees, a 6-hour day and 4-shift day with one shift devoted to maintenance, support to the Black Lung Association, sick pay benefits, and reclamation of land destroyed by strip mining.

The Miners for Democracy is the captive creature of the liberal section of the bourgeoisie and has been subordinated to these interests from the start. MFD was founded, built and run by liberal Democratic Party politicians and lawyers, instrumental in transforming it into a permanent group were Yablonski's two sons, both lawyers, and Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., one-time head of Americans for Democratic Action. Both of Yablonski's lawyer sons declared that the only reason neither would run for union office himself was that the UMW constitution requires a candidate to have worked five years in the mines! One of MFD's closest supporters, Kenneth Hechler, congressman from West Virginia, was known in Washington for years as a spokesman for the coal operators until, in order to preserve his constituency, he suddenly found it necessary to take a strong stand on mine safety after the 1968 Farmington, West Virginia disaster, in which 78 men were killed in an explosion at a Consolidation Coal mine.

Relying on the government and the courts for its strength, MFD practically handed the union over on a silver platter in May 1972 when it sought to have Boyle ousted and replaced by a court-ordered tribunal—again the work of Rauh.

Miller's campaign represented no more of a "rank-and-file movement" than did Yablonski's. The miners realized that Miller was the liberal establishment's and government's choice for their leader. They so resented Miller's overt government sponsorship that, even after the Yablonski murder scandal, 40 per cent of the miners voted for the nakedly corrupt and tyrannical Tony Boyle, whose regime had been an endless series of disasters for the miners.

Degeneration Under Lewis

The UMW had rapidly degenerated during the last decade of John L. Lewis' despotic reign. With the replacement of coal by oil and gas in home heating and the introduction of diesel fuel on the railroads, the demand for coal dropped drastically and Lewis embarked on a campaign to nurse the dying coal industry back to health at the miners' expense. Demands for job security, paid holidays and other fringe benefits were scuttled to allow the companies a free hand in a massive program of modernization and consolidation that cost more than 300,000 men their jobs. Millions were loaned the coal producers from the UMW-controlled National Bank of Washington to assist them in their modernization. Negotiations were carried on in private for the first time and contracts were signed without strikes. Contracts were "open-ended," i.e., they remained in effect until either side decided to terminate them. From 1958-63 there was no new contract, with the only change for the miners being cutbacks in welfare fund benefits.

When Boyle came to power in 1963 upon the death of Lewis' hand-picked successor, Thomas Kennedy, the coal industry had recovered after having captured the electricity-generating

market. But Boyle made no move to reopen the contract until faced with a strike threat in the Pennsylvania coalfields. His first contract was greeted with a wave of wildcat strikes across the northern coalfields and Boyle moved to tighten the reins. Conventions were held thousands of miles from the coalfields and stacked with pro-Boyle delegates. Dissenters at the 1965 convention were silenced through physical attack. Changes in the constitution were made to lengthen the term of presidency and raise the number of nominations needed from five local unions to fifty. 19 of the 23 union districts were held in trusteeship by the international and Boyle was given power to fill all vacancies occurring in international offices except the Executive Board. The 1968 contract included a

B. Bryant ruled the 1969 election invalid and ordered a rerun under Labor Department supervision.

The first and only other election of national union officers supervised by the Labor Department occurred in the National Maritime Union in 1969 after James Morrissey, who had challenged the Curran regime in 1966, filed complaints with the Labor Department. The 1969 NMU rerun demonstrates that the Labor Department's concern is certainly not for union democracy. In virtually every procedural decision Labor Department officials were biased against the opposition and partial toward ruling union officials. (Morrissey first read about the election rules in a press release, while NMU officials had had long private conversations with Department personnel before the rules



W. T. Boyle

Joseph Yablonski

Arnold Miller

provision for a \$120 Christmas bonus for miners who had not taken part in any wildcat strike during the previous year!

The Boyle regime reeked of corruption. \$850,000 was taken from the union treasury and put in a special account to enable all international officers to retire at full salary. (Boyle received \$50,000/year plus an unlimited expense account.) Boyle appointed his brother to the presidency of Montana District 27 at \$27,000/year. His daughter, a lawyer, was put on the district payroll at \$23,000/year. Boyle was convicted in federal court of contributing \$50,000 of union funds to various Democratic candidates and is strongly implicated in the Yablonski murders. There is little doubt that thousands of dollars of unaccounted-for union funds were used for his campaign in 1969, while the UMW *Journal* was turned into his personal mouthpiece. Meanwhile Boyle continued Lewis' collusion with the operators. Right after the 1968 Farmington disaster, Boyle praised Consolidation Coal for its "safety-mindedness"!

Government Intervention

With Boyle's record, union democracy was a ready-made issue for Yablonski and the Miners for Democracy. But rather than building a real movement of the ranks to clean up the union, the MFD relied on legal battles in the federal courts and intervention by the federal government in internal union affairs. Yablonski repeatedly called upon the Labor Department to conduct an investigation of the 1969 Boyle campaign, upon the advice of Joseph Rauh, the chief strategist of his campaign. After Yablonski's defeat and murder in 1969, Mike Trbovich, head of MFD, filed complaints with the Secretary of Labor charging irregularities in the election. Two years later, in May 1972, U.S. District Judge William

were announced.) The opposition was not allowed to board ships to distribute literature, while special pro-Curran union agents sailed along on voyages to devote full time to enlightening the crews, with the permission of the shipping companies. The Labor Department ruled that only NMU members could serve as election observers, which effectively prevented Morrissey from having poll watchers in Panama. (Morrissey had charged that in the original election many Panama votes were fraudulent.) In 1969 the voter list was changed to include only seamen who had 800 days of sea time, instead of the 200 days required in 1966, while Curran added thousands of non-seamen to the voting roster. The Labor Department allowed that ruling to stand.

Miners themselves have been among the chief victims of Labor Department policy. The Landrum-Griffin Act declares that union trusteeships are to be presumed invalid after 18 months. But UMW districts had been under trusteeship for decades, although a suit aimed at forcing Boyle to relinquish control over the union's districts was first filed by the Justice Department more than six years ago. Miners for Yablonski protested that their rights were being denied and that the election was being stolen, but the Labor Department replied that there was nothing to do until after the election.

Maneuver Heads Off Struggle

In contrast to the Labor Department's conduct in the 1969 NMU rerun and response to the earlier appeals of the Yablonski forces, the December UMW election was to all appearances conducted fairly, without Labor Department resistance to the ouster of the incumbents. Far from indicating any change in the fundamental aims of the government, however, the Labor Department's acquiescence to the

MFD's assumption of power was simply another maneuver in the interests of the capitalist class.

The era of labor peace in the coalfields was over. An exposed and discredited Boyle could no longer effectively discipline the work force. Disgusted with the Boyle regime's corruption and collusion with the coal operators, miners had begun to take things into their own hands. Wildcats had spread over contract settlements and health and safety issues. The West Virginia miners who struck in 1969, demanding a law encompassing compensation for black lung disease, were acting in defiance of the UMW hierarchy, which actually brought charges of dual unionism against the black lung movement. While the election challenge was being debated in court, in June 1970 a wildcat strike protesting non-enforcement of the 1969 Mine Safety Law shut down 150 mines across

undermining the capacity of the UMW bureaucracy to discipline the workers. The Labor Department disposed of Boyle for the same reasons that the CIA disposes of petty tyrants, like Diem—when they have outlived their usefulness. By establishing Arnold Miller in office, directly dependent on the liberal bourgeoisie and state apparatus, the government sought to ensure that no real change would be effected in the relationship of forces between the miners and the coal operators. For a few mild reforms and promises, the miners might be bought off and the potential for a programmatically-based real movement of the ranks squashed.

The Left Builds Liberal Illusions

Given the liberal view of the state as a class-neutral entity, it is cer-

tainist opposition to the union bureaucracy, which functions in traitorous collusion with the class enemy and fosters reactionary (i.e., bourgeois) ideology, and therefore must suppress workers' democracy. To "overlook" this principle in the pursuit of opportunist appetites is to cut away the very basis of communist opposition to the reformist bureaucracy! Scum like Boyle must be thrown out by the organized and conscious union ranks, not by the capitalist government and its

supposed to propel the workers toward revolutionary politics:

"The MFD victory has opened the door for democracy in the UMW, but not necessarily the kind of democracy that its leaders and their Labor Department allies envisioned. Instead it will be, if the ranks have their way, the democracy of an active rank and file, continually pushing their leaderships to greater militancy."

—Workers' Power No. 70,
19 January–1 February 1973

Gross opportunism toward the victorious Miners for Democracy was not limited to the American left. The International Marxist Group—a British ostensibly Trotskyist organization which exemplifies the leftist face of the revisionist "United Secretariat of the Fourth International"—offered mild criticism of the "political limitations of MFD" and piously pointed out that "union democracy can only be built if the unions are independent from the state." But with typically workerist know-nothingism, the IMG concluded its article:

"Whether Miller's use of the state was a necessary evil [our emphasis] or whether it will become a habit through which he reflects the real interests of the state, can only be tested in practice by taking rank and file initiatives."

—The Red Mole, 8 January 1973

courts, whose interests lie not in democratizing the unions, but in destroying them.

Yet the ostensibly Marxist movement failed abysmally on this most basic question. Progressive Labor managed to catch the essential thrust of the UMW situation. With a belated recognition that "the unions are potentially the most powerful mass organization fighting for the workers' class interests," PL came down hard against the MFD for working through the bosses' government (*Challenge*, 8 February 1973): "...one cannot 'use' the bosses and their laws to gain even fundamental reform as long as the bosses themselves hold state power." Thus by implication PL has rejected its previous ultra-left line that union bureaucrats are themselves simply bosses. But unfortunately PL's current practice completely belies its line on the UMW. Despite its denunciation of the MFD for "using the bosses and their laws," PL is itself now engaged in lobbying for "anti-racism bills," single-issue "30 for 40" petition campaigns and supporting the United National Caucus (UNC) in the UAW, which is conducting campaigns based on suing the union in the courts!

Needless to say, the Communist Party supported the Miller campaign whole-hog. Trade Unionists for Action and Democracy—a coalition of the CP and its friends in the union bureaucracy—worked closely with Miners for Democracy and sent a congratulatory telegram to Miller and other MFD candidates after the elections.

The left-social-democratic International Socialists recognized Miller to be interested only in gaining personal power and stated that he should be supported, all in the same breath:

"The MFD candidates, Miller, Trbovich, and Patrick, should be supported over the gangster crowd of Tony Boyle and Co. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that these men have no intention of building a real, mass rank and file movement inside the UMW. Their sights are aimed at winning control of the International."

—Workers' Power No. 59,
9-30 June 1972

The IS' support for Miners for Democracy, like its support for the United National Caucus in the UAW, is one more example of its opportunist policy of feeding the workers' illusions to tail future bureaucrats. While claiming on paper to be in favor of socialist principles and working-class power, the IS is really interested only in getting more left-talking and "militant" labor fakers—like Arnold Miller—into office.

IS' lauding of Miller flows logically from its strategy for the trade unions—the building of "shop floor committees" around whatever issues happen to be most popular at the time. The IS presumes that the MFD program, like the shop floor organizations, will "set the workers in motion." This in turn is

But the proletariat develops only, trade-union consciousness through such spontaneous struggle. The mobilization of workers in economist struggle, around reformist illusions under the control of left-posturing bureaucrats does not set the stage for the building of the revolutionary party, but is an obstacle to it. Without the intervention of conscious communist cadres, the miners' struggles, no matter how militant, will never go beyond the level of simple trade unionism. Support to Miller, in lieu of posing the necessary alternative of building communist-led caucuses based on a full transitional program, condemns the miners to this path.

Perhaps the most succinct exposition of the left's capitulation to MFD came from the ostensibly Trotskyist Class Struggle League (a recently-founded organization which was previously the Leninist Faction of the Socialist Workers Party). While criticizing Miller for relying on the courts and limiting his program to simple trade-union issues, the CSL wrote:

"We also supported Miller in the election because, unlike union elections in the past (such as Abel vs. McDonald in the Steelworkers in 1965), this was not a feud between two bureaucrats, or a falling out of thieves. Miller was a working miner, never a pie-card artist, and the election of his slate moves the UMW further in the direction of what is necessary for the labor movement—a complete break with labor fakers and the capitalists they support." [our emphasis]

—Class Struggle, Vol. 1, No. 2,
February 1973

Miller came to power in the UMW precisely with the direct connivance of the capitalist government! The CSL's position is based entirely on Miller's credentials as an honest militant risen from the ranks. But honest trade union militancy per se is impossible in the epoch of imperialist degeneration. As soon as any rank-and-file leader achieves any social weight, he is faced with powerful pressure to support the bourgeois parties and integrate into the state labor-control machinery. Resistance to that pressure can only be consistently maintained through a commitment to revolutionary socialism. Bureaucratism and class collaboration are determined by political and social pressure, workerist moralism notwithstanding, abstract virtue is not a sufficient bulwark against this material base. In this epoch, only communists can be "honest" trade-union leaders.

Miller's Program of Campaign Promises

This is amply verified by Miller and the MFD, whose victory the American left, in its eternal studied naivete, seeks to pose as a step forward. Miller's program of reforms was merely a vote-getting sop to the miners. To

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1969—Anthracite coal miners from northeastern Pennsylvania head for the House office buildings to talk with their congressmen about mine safety legislation.



1933—Defiant miners march through the streets of Clairton, Pa. after refusing to obey the orders of union chiefs. They are marching to join steel workers on the picket lines at the plant of the Carnegie Steel Company.

the eastern coal region. A month later a group of disabled miners and widows began setting up picket lines in West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky to protest Boyle's failure to carry out his campaign pledge to shape up the Welfare and Retirement Fund. In 1971 UMW members struck until wage gains in excess of maximums set by the Pay Board were ratified.

In the last ten years the Labor Department has dismissed election complaints in 330 cases in which it admitted that the law had been violated. It chose to intervene for "democracy" in the UMW election because this was an opportunity to stave off the rising discontent of the miners. It was this discontent which caused the government to reverse its earlier pro-Boyle, anti-Yablonski policy. The total collapse of Boyle's authority was dangerously

tainly logical that liberals should look with favor upon appeals to the government to intervene to democratize the unions. Avowed Marxists, however, should certainly be capable of understanding that the U.S. government is nothing less than the political embodiment of the U.S. bourgeoisie (including the coal operators). The unions, despite their corrupt and reactionary leaderships, represent the workers' first step in overcoming atomization and impotence at the hands of their employers. Going to the Labor Department to "protect" workers' rights is inviting the class enemy into the workers' organizations. The elementary first principle of a revolutionary proletarian policy toward the trade unions is the struggle for the class independence of the workers. It is this basic consideration that underlies com-

New Pop Frontism in France

in the "Transitional Program," adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938, Leon Trotsky wrote: "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." This was certainly appropriate for a period when Stalin and the social democrats had prepared the rise of Hitler by refusing at all costs to unite the working class against the fascists—or in Spain five years later, when the dominant workers' parties aided the victory of Franco by tying the proletariat to the bourgeoisie through the Popular Front.

The crisis of proletarian leadership is no less crucial today. This was made graphically clear in the May-June 1968 events in France, where the Communist Party was forced to call a general strike in order to recapture control of a working class which was rapidly responding to calls for revolutionary action. Because of the continued influence of these treacherous misleaders, however, the 1968 upsurge ended in a temporary victory for the bourgeoisie. But the organizations of the workers have remained intact, the combativeness of the proletariat only temporarily diminished. The current French elections are in a sense a continuation of the 1968 events. An electoral victory for the new "popular front"—the CP's classic term for a class-collaborationist alliance between itself, the social-democratic party and a section of the bourgeoisie—could well set off another wave of labor militancy which would quickly be smashed by the popular front in power.

This time the bureaucrats are seeking to tie the workers to their bosses through a new popular front, the "Union de la Gauche" (Union of the Left, or "Union Populaire"—Popular Union). The task of the hour in France is to break the working class from its traditional leadership by clearly counterposing the struggle for a workers government to the class collaboration of the popular front. The decisive international significance of events in France today is clear, and the price of failure has been abundantly demonstrated by history (Spain 1934-38, France 1936, France-Italy after World War II, or Chile today).

Bonapartism

Under a truly revolutionary leadership the chances for a successful revolution by the working class in France today would be enormous. Throughout Europe the bourgeoisie has adopted a consistent policy of massive inflation and growing unemployment. This is partly the result of relatively successful efforts on the part of the Nixon government to export the consequences of the U.S. economic crisis through successive devaluations of the dollar in August 1971 and February 1973. The predictable result has been the increasing unpopularity of the Pompidou regime, reflected in recent public opinion polls which show the Union of the Left being supported by close to an absolute majority of the electorate. On the other side, the bonapartist Pompidou (Gaullist) regime is rapidly decomposing. A continuing wave of financial scandals has affected much of the state administration, including public communications, finance, building construction and land speculation. Moreover, the visible unpopularity of the regime at the time of last year's "Europe" referendum has led to increasing strains within the UDR and the installation of the current Mesmer government, a hard-line combat government put in to discipline the government forces for the upcoming elec-

tions. Like most bonapartist political formations, the UDR is cemented primarily by its lust for the concrete benefits which result from holding office (the "pork barrel"), and a threat of defeat can throw its forces into total disarray. In this it is the legitimate heir of Louis Napoleon's "Society of the 10th of December" and a close relative of Boss Tweed's Tammany Hall.

Bonapartism depends on the ability of what the French call the "strong state" ("état fort") to balance between opposing class forces, and thereby to achieve a certain independence from both, at a time when an open clash between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat threatens. DeGaulle's Fifth Republic, born of an army coup d'état in 1958, has been structurally bonapartist from the beginning, allowing the president to ignore the legislature through cleverly worded plebiscites, allowing extensive decree powers to the executive, and not even requiring that the government have majority support in parliament. The 1968 general strike upset the delicate balance, and the defeat of a referendum the following year led to DeGaulle's departure. His successor Pompidou has been unable to reestablish the bonapartist regime, and thus the current political crisis could easily lead to a crisis of the capitalist order itself.

The Common Program

This is the background against which the French Communist Party and Socialist Party signed the "Common Program of Government" on 26 June 1972, in preparation for the current elections, to take place on 4 and 11 March of this year. Shortly thereafter this agreement was also signed by the "Left Radicals," a small "democratic" capitalist political movement. Will this "Popular Union" fulfill the aspirations of the working class if it is elected? Is this a "peaceful road to socialism" as the CP promises? Hardly. CP Secretary Marchais himself makes one thing clear, speaking at the Twentieth Congress of the French CP earlier this year:

"Is it a matter of installing communism, or even socialism, within the framework of the Common Program? Clearly not.

"Socialist society has as its essential foundations the collective property of the entirety of the major means of production and exchange and the exercise of power by the working class in alliance with the other sectors of the working population. It is sufficient to take a look at the Common Program in order to ascertain that its realization would not amount to the establishment of such a regime in France."

—quoted in OCF's *Programme d'action de la classe ouvrière*

But of course, the Stalinists claim they are realizing socialism by stages, and this is only the stage of "advanced democracy." And what might such a creature be? Perhaps this means an end to the bonapartist constitution of the Fifth Republic? This was for years a constant theme of CP literature, calling for a new constituent assembly. No longer. The Common Program maintains the present constitution imposed by DeGaulle, and as François Mitterand, head of the Socialist Party, states, "We will honestly apply the constitution."

Or perhaps this stage will be characterized by large-scale nationalizations of the monopolies? Not at all. The nationalizations will be limited to approximately 40 companies, primarily banks and insurance companies along with only nine specific trusts. Left out

are such industrial giants as Michelin, Peugeot, Citroën, Usinor and De Wendel-Sidelor (the leading French steel companies), the heavy metallurgical firms—and the 9 which are to be nationalized will receive full "compensation"! The National Front government of 1945-47 under DeGaulle did far more than this.

The Common Program is simply a plan for a "democratic" reform of capitalism, couched in Marxist language. It does contain a certain limited number of reforms in favor of the workers, such as promises of reforms on birth control, building speculation, child care centers, "gradual" return of the 40-hour week (the current average is 45 although the 40-hour week was "won" in 1936), and reform of the apprentice system. Yet not only do these reforms in no way threaten the survival of French capitalism, but in many cases they are formulated as vague promises, to be "attempted" or "encouraged," which will take place "progressively" or "gradually" and so on. In addition, more fundamental reforms, such as workers' control, are to be achieved only with the agreement of the bosses:

"When the workers of a firm express the desire for it, and when the structure of a firm indicates its possibility, the workers' intervention in the administration and management of the firm will take new forms...determined by agreement between the democratic power [i.e., the bourgeois state], the management of the firm concerned [!] and the unions [i.e., the bureaucrats]."

Undoubtedly the actual significance of this provision will be revealed when CP leaders use the capitalist army to return factories to their owners should they be "illegally" taken over by the workers, as is happening in Chile today under the Millas Law.

In key places, the Common Program promises to maintain and administer the bourgeois economy; it institutionalizes speedup by promising to "increase the economic and social return of the productive apparatus."

And what about the bourgeois constitution? When Pompidou obliquely threatened a legal coup d'état if the pop front won at the polls ("If there is a very sharp confrontation between the executive and legislative powers, our constitution permits a number of solutions.... Unfortunately, the history of France shows that we are not a people to compromise.... If the executive throws out the assembly, that is called a coup d'état; if the legislature throws out the executive, that is called a revolution") Mitterand responded "M. Pompidou has become reasonable again.... He will respect the constitution." And Marchais stated "After the elections we will have better things to do than to plunge the country into a debate on changing the constitution." (*Le Monde*, 13 January 1973)

The Common Program even goes so far as to contain an *explicitly anti-communist clause*, which was used by the Popular Front in 1936 to repress the Trotskyists. It states: "Movements which use armed violence or which call for its use will be forbidden in conformity with legislation established in 1936." Although ostensibly directed against fascists, the real content of this point is directed against the revolutionary left.

In a similar elliptical manner, the Common Program calls for a democratization of the Common Market, which in fact amounts to the continuation of the EEC with a few modifications for

window-dressing, instead of its abolition. How completely this policy is a betrayal of Marxism can be seen from the fact that at the time of the April 1972 Common Market referendum the main CP leaflet reversed Marx's famous statement; and said, "the trusts have no fatherland, but the workers do" ("Non au referendum plebiscite," April 1972)! This is important because for the first time the CP has now openly come out for the continuation of the Common Market. As for NATO, it says a left government would call for the simultaneous dissolution of it and the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, it "will favor all measures which would allow this objective to be reached by stages." What this actually means, of course, is French participation in NATO under a predominantly CP government!

The "Common Program of Government" is a gloved hand extended to the bourgeoisie by the main workers' party, the CP; it is a *bourgeois* program of reforms which preserve the essential framework of capitalism. Tomorrow the gloved hand will become the mailed fist of repression as the CP uses the bourgeois state apparatus to smash striking workers who thought the "Popular Union" would be *their* government. The Common Program is the program of a popular front, based on the support of sections of the bourgeoisie and on the bourgeois state.

Popular Fronts in French History

This is far from the first time the French workers have experienced a popular front. It has been a constant in the policies of the PCF ever since the Seventh Congress of the (by then reformist) Comintern in 1935. However, only on two occasions has the bourgeoisie consented to join with the Stalinists—namely, the two occasions when they were in danger of being overthrown by the militant action of the French working class.

The first instance was in the period 1936-38, when the CP and SP joined with the dominant bourgeois party, the Radicals led by Daladier, in the government of Léon Blum. Until 6 February 1934 the CP and SP leaderships had considered each other as their bitterest enemies, the former referring to the latter as "social fascists" in line with Stalin's "Third Period" vocabulary. But an abortive rightist coup on that date brought the menace of a fascist takeover into the open, and mass pressure forced a united front demonstration by the two workers' parties and their respective trade unions a week later. In mid-1935 the Comintern shifted over to the "Dimetrov line" of popular fronts in an empirical reaction to the disaster of the Third Period line which had led to Hitler's seizure of power in Germany in 1933 and the isolation of the CPs from the masses throughout the world. In France this shift was immediately embodied in the electoral pact with the SP and the Radicals.

The Popular Front won a tremendous electoral victory in the elections of May 1936, giving it a majority of over 100 seats in the National Assembly, with the Radicals' vote greatly diminished by the rapidly growing CP and SP. Although the program of the Blum government was little more than a warmed-over version of liberal reformism, from which the CP had been instrumental in excluding any more "radical" measures (such as nationalization of industry), the masses stood considerably to the left of the actual program. Thus the electoral victory of

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UAW "Opposition" Conference: Neo-Reutherites Stage Farce

DETROIT—The United National Caucus (UNC) of the UAW held a "Conference on Unemployment and Working Conditions" February 3-4 which demonstrated conclusively the UNC's inability to provide the leadership and program required to break through the bureaucratically-inspired crisis facing the UAW. The UNC is a loose conglomeration of bureaucratic careerists barely held together by a minimal, reformist program and such dishonest schemes to advance their careers as suing the union in the bosses' courts (see *WV* No. 16, February 1973).

The crisis facing the UAW is mounting steadily. The auto companies are returning record profits through markedly increased production with little or no increases in the work force. Discontent over work loads, speedup, working conditions, company abuse and the complete failure of the international leadership to lead a struggle has built up to such an extent that local UAW leaderships are forced to sharply demand militancy from Woodcock, even at well-screened official gatherings such as the recent Production Workers Conference in Atlanta. Woodcock, however, continues to speak of averting a strike at the expiration of the auto contracts next Fall, of "staggering" local strikes to make them more "manageable," and of creating new forms of joint union-management collaboration to head off local struggles! An opposition capable of resolving the contradiction between a bureaucratic leadership which can only betray and an openly rebellious rank and file, on the basis of a class-struggle program, is desperately needed.

However, the UNC has shown itself as incapable of capitalizing on the widespread membership discontent as it is of putting forward a program which expresses the fundamental objective needs of the workers.

Despite the best efforts of the UNC leaders to attract a large turnout—which for them meant watering down the UNC program to the barest minimum of "militant" trade unionism—the conference was attended by only the usual UNC coalition "membership" of about 60. An equal number of assorted non-UAW radicals showed up, mostly for the purpose of cheering on one or another bureaucratic faction in the UNC, or, in the case of the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), for the purpose of exposing for public ridicule its far-fetched schemes.

Last-Minute Switch

Though it was publicized as a "rank-and-file" conference, not a UNC membership meeting, the UNC leaders switched tactics when they saw how few "rank-and-filers" and how many "radicals" were present. Making the conference for UNC members only, they forced the few independent auto workers present to either join the UNC on the spot—an impossible request for any sane, honest militant—or sit silently in the visitors' section (only two "visitors" ever got recognized to speak after all the UNC members desiring the floor on any question had spoken). Some of these independents could not even be induced to stay for more than one session. UNC co-chairman Jordan Sims was seen personally attempting to dissuade one worker from walking out after the first, typically dull, session.

Together with their friends in the UNC, the various ostensibly revolutionary organizations—Communist Party (CP), International Socialists (IS) and NCLC—made up the great majority of the total attendance, yet at

no point during the conference was a program presented capable of providing the basis for a revolutionary break from reformism and trade unionism. The IS is the most important outside supporter of the UNC because its views are reflected by a substantial section of the UNC membership and on its executive committee, and because the IS skillfully provides a left cover of social-democratic demagoguery for the UNC (although the UNC is so inept that it often resists IS' attempts to protect its left flank). Comic relief was provided by the NCLC's endlessly-repeated proposal for a factional struggle to take over the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO)—a federal "anti-poverty" agency—and by the ludicrous bureaucratic anarchy caused by the crude attempts of Sims and other UNC leaders to shut up the NCLC's members and UNC supporters. Aping the high-handedness of Reuther (whom he warmly eulogizes in print in the February *UNC*), Sims adjourned the second session by fiat from the chair amidst shouts and pandemonium when a simple vote probably would have accomplished his desire to squelch an NCLC-sponsored proposal to have its New York mayoralty candidate address the conference. Only the petty squabbling and bickering among the would-be Reuthers and Woodcocks of the UNC leadership prevented, through disorganization, a total throttling of all opposition.

NCLC Class Collaborationism

The NWRO is a semi-official arm of the state. It is analogous to Mobilization for Youth (MFY) as part of a complex of state-sponsored ghetto reformist organizations arising out of the civil rights movement of the early and mid-60's. This was made perfectly clear by Margaret Baynes, who told the conference how the NWRO officials lived in luxury, care of the Office of Economic Opportunity. It is through its absolute financial control that the Nixon administration is firing left-liberal NWRO officials.

The NWRO can no more be transformed into an instrument of working-class struggle than can the Federal Reserve System or FBI. We defend the democratic rights of NWRO officials fired for opposing reactionary policies (such as forcing clients to work for below union wages), just as we would defend an MFY lawyer fired for his political beliefs or an AFR Force of police court-martialed for refusing to bomb North Vietnam. This has nothing in common with the NCLC's attempt to transform an organization like the NWRO to ostensibly revolutionary aims through politically backing its left wing. The NCLC is engaged in sheer class-collaborationism, not qualitatively different from the support given by the "socialists" of the Socialist Party to the "internationalist-liberal" wing of

the CIA. Any welfare rights activist who wants a militant organization of welfare clients committed to a socialist program must immediately break with the NWRO and all government financial support.

Margaret Baynes, a leader of the "pro-working class" faction in the NWRO, whom the NCLC foisted on the conference, demagogically threatened the conference that welfare client scabs would break the unions unless the UNC materially supported her faction. It is a measure of the NCLC's contempt for the real organizational power of the working class that these avowed "Marxists" not only condoned this demagogic nonsense, but believed it.

Political Tendencies Suppressed

Flagrant anti-communism and vicious red-baiting by key UNC leaders, directed at any left militant who dared to raise his head (and some who didn't), marked the conference.

After much bureaucratic juggling and trickery the first day, designed mainly to keep the NCLC proposal off the floor, Kelly opened the morning session on the second day with a denunciation of "political groups" which seek to "destroy the caucus" by coming in from the outside with an ideology.

Any group struggling for power in the labor movement does so on the basis of a political program, whether it recognizes it or not. Kelly's rank-and-fileism is simply a cover for an anti-red purge and the creation of new trade-union leaders who will continue to carry out the political program of capitalism in the labor movement—national chauvinism, preserving the competitive position of the companies at the expense of the workers, fostering racial and sexual discrimination in the workforce and maintaining the privileges of the organized workers as against the unorganized, of the employed as against the unemployed, etc.

However Kelly and the other UNC leaders are not waiting until their election to high union office to begin the purge. On the first day, Caucus leader Charles Dewey had informed the various groups maintaining literature tables in the hall outside the conference that they were not wanted back the next day. When challenged by a Spartacist League member as to the reason, he claimed the tables were a "nuisance" and "my viewpoint isn't represented here!" On the second day, after Kelly's denunciation of the left, the manager of the building (Veterans Memorial Hall) and two uniformed building guards appeared and forced the literature tables out of the hall because of "fire regulations." Questioned separately by members of the NCLC and Spartacist League in the presence of an IS supporter, the manager said that Pete Kelly had informed him of the presence of tables "not connected with the conference" in the hallway. The effect this "informa-

tion" would have was well known to the UNC, which often holds its meetings in this building.

The NCLC and Spartacist League jointly signed a statement which was to have been presented to the conference for a vote. The statement said, "This act of suppression of socialist distribution of views, by the UNC leadership, should be condemned by the conference. We call upon this conference to vote to have the literature tables remain set up." The statement named Kelly as responsible. IS members, whose table was also removed, refused to sign the statement in a grossly obvious attempt to ingratiate themselves with the anti-communist UNC leaders.

The IS did not content itself with this, however, but sought in addition to help provide the UNC with a slick left cover of legitimacy. At the first opportunity after the tables were taken down, a UNC member reflecting the IS view proposed a motion to "protest" the building management's removal of the tables. A supporter of the NCLC rose to make an amendment which was declared out of order before it had even been read, because it was based on the NCLC/SL statement! This prevented the accusation of Kelly's responsibility from getting a hearing by the body. The maker of the original motion then rose again and specifically disassociated himself from any accusation that Kelly had, in effect, called the cops! Kelly then took the floor himself to demagogically shout about his hatred for the police, and imply violence against the left, by saying, "we don't need cops—we have our own cops here!" Always one for a slick maneuver, Fox grabbed the floor to speak for the meaningless, emasculated motion, despite his obvious hostility to all the left groups at the conference, and used his time to attack the NCLC and IS! The motion passed, over the heads of cruder, right-wing and CP-backed UNC leaders, thus making it appear that the UNC actually defended the rights of the victimized groups. A cynical comment came from the floor after the voting, that the "protest" would be made after the conference, of course!

Fox Fingers a Real Oppositionist

At the end of the last session a particularly vicious attempt was made to red-bait a caucus in another union. A representative of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus (MSC) of the National Maritime Union (NMU) had been granted three minutes to address the conference. (The Militant-Solidarity Caucus, unlike the UNC, is based on a program of transitional, political demands designed to counterpose the class struggle of the workers to the entire reformist trade-union bureaucracy.) As the MSC representative arrived at the podium to speak, Fox leaped up and demanded, "Do you represent the NMU or are you just a rank-and-file member?"—a strange question coming from one supposed "oppositionist" to another at a "rank-and-file" conference! Fox continued, "We don't want any speakers from..." and then named a revolutionary organization! The IS-backed UNC members did not find it necessary to disassociate themselves from this accusation—made by one of their collaborators, whom the IS has sponsored in public talks around the country!

Faced with such a gross violation of elementary solidarity against bureaucratic anti-communism and company victimization, Kelly, who was chairing the session, nevertheless refused to respond to Fox, despite his prior knowledge that the proposed speaker

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Spartacist protests police expulsion of literature tables at UNC conference.

Women and the Permanent Revolution

For Marxists the emancipation of women from their special oppression is a precise gauge of the degree to which a society has been purged of social oppression as a whole. This interrelationship was first formulated by the Utopian socialist Fourier:

"The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women towards freedom, because in the relations of woman to man, of the weak to the strong, the victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of women is the natural measure of general emancipation."

—Théorie des Quatre Mouvements

Fourier was paraphrased by Marx in the *Holy Family* (1845):

"The relation of man to woman, is the most natural relation of human being to human being. It indicates therefore, how far man's *natural* behavior has become human, and how far his human essence has become a *natural* essence for him, how far his *human nature* has become *nature* for him."

In a blunter and more succinct fashion, Marx repeated the same point 23 years later in a letter to Kugelmann: "social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex, (the ugly ones included)."

Monogamous Family Emerges

One of the ironies of history is that the origin of the special oppression of women is rooted in one of the earliest social advances—the development of human technology beyond the day-to-day struggle for bare subsistence characteristic of hunting and gathering societies. With the introduction of cattle breeding, metal working, weaving, and lastly, agriculture, human labor-power became capable of producing a substantial social surplus. Under the impact of these technological developments, the institution under which labor power is reproduced, the family, underwent a profound transformation. As Marx and Engels pointed out in the *German Ideology*, the propagation of the species engendered the first division of labor between man and woman. Because of women's procreative functions, the lot of childbearing, childrearing and general domestic tasks fell on them. The household was the general sphere of woman's activity. However, the development of technology, domestication of animals (including other humans, usually war prisoners or slaves) and the land, and the development of tools took place in the general sphere of man's activity, and it was he that appropriated the concomitant expansion in social wealth. Thus, the advent of private property and the need to transfer this property through inheritance gave rise to the patriarchal law of inheritance and law of descent. The monogamous family was developed to insure the paternity of the children, with the incumbent seclusion of the wife to insure her fidelity. Seclusion meant an exclusion from public life and social production.

"Monogamous marriage was a great historical step forward; nevertheless, together with slavery and private wealth, it opens the period that has lasted until today in which every step forward is also relatively a step backward, in which prosperity and development for some is won through the misery and frustration of others."

—Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*

Prior to the growth of private property and the monogamous family, arms, like tools and property, were held in common. However, with the de-

velopment of private ownership in the means of production and procreation, and the polarization of society into economic classes, weapons became monopolized by bodies of men separated from the rest of society. These armed bodies of men constituted the essence of the state. While appearing to stand above classes, the state is in reality the instrument whereby the dominant economic class in each epoch maintains its hegemony. The ancient state was the state of the slave-owners for holding down the slaves, the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern, "democratic" state is the instrument of the capitalist class to maintain its dominance and ability to exploit labor.

In each epoch the family, like the state, has been principally an institution for perpetuating the dominant property form and the dominant economic class. For the slave, serf and wage-slave—i.e., for those social classes without property to inherit or defend—the social institutions of inheritance and defense, the family and the gendarme, are principally institutions of subjugation.

Limitations of Bourgeois Progressivism

With the advent of industrial capitalism, the family entered a state of relative dissolution. In order to drive down wages, capitalism sought to lower the cost of producing and reproducing labor power through drawing the entire family into the labor process. This meant breaking down the guild structure, at first through "piecing out" work to individual families, and then by concentrating them into industrial sites and company towns. In countries with belated capitalist development, such as Tsarist Russia, guilds and the development of home industry were skipped, and serfs drawn directly into large, bleak company towns.

The return of women to social production provides the precondition to their social emancipation, but under capitalism it meant the further enslavement and degradation of women, as they were forced to take on wage slavery in addition to their domestic slavery. Unable and unwilling to provide social substitutes for the economic role of the family, however, the capitalists encouraged women to return to the domicile and kitchen with consciously-generated propaganda in favor of the family and religion. Thus capitalism expanded the productive forces and laid the technological basis for the socialization of domestic work and the replacement of the family as an economic unit, but was and is unable to accomplish this replacement, just as it laid the basis for the international socialization of the means of production, but still cannot eliminate national boundaries.

Capitalism depends for its survival on the traditional, archaic social institutions of class rule: private property, the monogamous family and the nation-state. As the productive forces generated by capitalism increase, they strain against the bounds set up by the social institutions upon which the system depends, and the capitalist class becomes more virulent in trying to shore up and reinforce institutions which become increasingly more reactionary. The capitalist-backed trend of women out of the plants and back to the domicile reached its zenith in the Nazi campaign for woman's enslave-

ment to "Kinder, Kirche, Küche,"—"children, church, kitchen."

The bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, which cleared away feudal institutions from the path of capitalist development, replaced social relations based on obligations and privileges with those based on contractual equality, and thus had a profound effect on the family. Equality of rights between the sexes was given expression by the bourgeois revolution's most radical ideological advocates, especially in regard to the ownership and inheritance of property. But even in the realm of formal legality, the bourgeoisie was frightened by the consequences of its own revolution and immediately dug into the medieval past for archaic institutions with which to

that a higher birthrate was essential to provide workers and soldiers for expanding the French Empire, he appealed to Rome and won from the Pope a redefinition of when life begins—from the traditional Catholic view that it begins when the fetus can survive outside of the womb, to the present immediately-following-conception view. This transformed abortion from a venial into a mortal sin, and on this basis Napoleon III drew up the restrictive abortion law which France has today.

Women Under Decaying Capitalism

Thus the bourgeoisie was never consistently democratic, even when the democratic tasks necessary to consoli-



Algerian women factory workers.

stabilize its rule. Thus, the French Revolution was followed by a further political counter-revolution, a Thermidor in which the agents of the bourgeois revolution, the rural poor and the urban sansculottes, were disinherited. Thermidor in terms of the family and the special oppression of women was provided by the Code Napoleon, which made women the property of their husbands, requiring a woman to obtain her husband's permission in order, for example, to obtain a passport, make a will or sign a contract.

In a similar fashion the equality of nations proclaimed by the bourgeois revolution was subordinated to the drive of the industrially advanced nations to subjugate less developed nations in the struggle for markets and raw materials. The interrelationship between the subordination of the equality of the sexes and the equality of nations is graphically demonstrated by French imperialism. When Napoleon III thought

dating its class rule were on the agenda. In the epoch of imperialism, the imperialist countries have a further direct interest in suppressing the democratic and national aspirations of the colonial and semi-colonial masses. Had the imperialist powers in China supported the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion (in which armed women's brigades played an important part), a modern Protestant nation might have emerged there in the last century. Instead they backed the Manchus, upon whom they were already dependent to ensure stability. The road to imperialist subjection lay through bolstering the most reactionary and repressive aspects of semi-feudal society combined with the penetration of that society by the most advanced capitalist technique.

The inability of the "national bourgeoisies" of these colonial countries to shatter the feudal past and carry through a bourgeois-democratic revolution was conclusively demonstrated in the course of the last century. The na-

tional bourgeoisie, generally recruited straight from the old nobility, and dependent on relics of the feudal past for its survival (e.g., latifundia in South America), developed as the dependent broker for imperialism. The native bourgeois classes in the colonial world were unable to separate themselves from the entanglement with imperialist domination for fear of setting off forces—principally the anti-capitalist struggle of the workers, in alliance with the peasantry—which would sweep them from power as well.

Analyzing the tasks of a revolution in Tsarist Russia and their means of accomplishment, Trotsky formulated the theory of the Permanent Revolution. He concluded not only that proletarian leadership would be required to accomplish the basic bourgeois-democratic goals of the revolution—since the bourgeoisie was unable to take a revolutionary path against the autocracy—but also that the proletariat would have to place its own, socialist goals immediately on the agenda if the revolution were to be successful. In order to uproot feudal autocracy and colonial domination, the working class would have to uproot the bourgeois order which had grown up within, and now propped up, these institutions.

The question of women's emancipation in the "Third World" continues to demonstrate the truth of Trotsky's conclusions and the lessons of the Russian Revolution which they anticipated. Equal rights for women is a basic democratic right, avowed by all democracies and accepted as a goal by all "national liberation" movements. Yet the special oppression of women is grounded in the very basis of the property system itself. Just as the anti-colonial struggle which limits its goals to the establishment of an independent state fails to provide real independence from imperialist domination, so the "revolution" which stops short of overturning capitalism has proven unable to uproot women's oppression.

Bangladesh provides such shocking examples of inhuman imperialist behavior that the complete domination of the "national liberation" struggle against Pakistan by the equally reactionary, rival Indian imperialists is forgotten. Yet this fact absolutely precluded the accomplishment of any democratic tasks by that movement (see *WV* No. 16, February 1973). Among the victims of the struggle over Bangladesh were 200,000 Bengali women who were systematically gang-raped by the West Pakistani Army. Marshal Khan's troops then had the heads of these women shorn, a mark of disgrace in Bengali society. The women were then turned loose, only to be rejected and massacred by their husbands, brothers and fathers as Sheikh Rahman, former feminist and Gandhi's faithful seneschal, came to power. The state that emerged behind the bayonets of the Indian Army proved no more liberating for the women of Bangladesh than the regime which perpetrated bestial gang-rape. The vengeful persecution of the Biharis under the new state is no consolation.

Algerian Independence Little Gain for Women

When "national liberation" does not simply replace one imperialist suzerain for another, as in Bangladesh, but results in a measure of real political independence within the context of continued imperialist economic domination—viz., Algeria—the unimproved condition of women reflects the continued failure to accomplish basic democratic tasks of the revolution for the masses. The Tripoli Program, basic manifesto of the Algerian Revolution, vaguely promised formal equality, but even the law of the new regime codifies sexual inequality for women, many of whom fought in the FLN as both auxiliaries and commandos. For example, the maximum punishment for adultery committed by men is one year—for women, two. And the reality is much worse than the letter of the law expresses—while forced marriage is now illegal, every

year even the government is forced to admit that many suicides take place to avoid forced marriages. This could be attributed to the difficulty in overcoming tradition, yet the attitude of the Algerian regime is one that is hostile to overcoming tradition. Boumediene, President of Algeria's "Revolutionary" Council, said:

"We say 'no' to this [Western] type of evolution, for our society is Islamic and a socialist society. A problem exists here. It involves respect for morality... For we have seen among several peoples who have been recently liberated, that woman, once free, hastens to think of things which one need not cite here... The evolution of Algerian woman and the enjoyment of her rights must be in the framework of the morality of our society."

—8 March 1966

And this speech was given on International Woman's Day! The speech inspired the walk-out of a number of women. In "socialist" Algeria, where every student receives religious education, women have been kept out of politics, generally out of higher education, and under the veil as well.

Algerian society has not been without some democratic reforms, even reforms which touch upon the family. But each reform is elaborately justified only after tortuous religious debate and tedious reinterpretation of the Koran.

Modern imperialism has not forgotten its Rudyard Kipling, has not forgotten how to wrap itself in the mantle of a "civilizing mission," especially regarding the "weaker sex"—as it rapes both the women and the natural resources of the subjugated nations. French imperialists, whose Code Napoleon did not allow a woman to open a bank account or take a job without her husband's permission until 1966, paraded themselves in Algeria as the defenders and liberators of Moslem womanhood. Perhaps the most ludicrous expression of this pious hypocrisy was the so-called "Battle of the Veils." After 13 May 1958, when the French *colons* ransacked the Governor General's headquarters, bringing down the Fourth Republic, a leading *colon* woman organized the Feminine Solidarity Movement, which paraded de-veiled Moslem women around to give eulogistic speeches on how good it was to be liberated by the society of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*—the complete marriage of feminism and imperialism! In reaction, the veil became a symbol of the Resistance to French imperialism, as did the Moslem family, the traditional customs, etc. Thus, not only were centuries-old customs of domestic slavery and oppression not abolished, but the symbols of these very customs were adopted by the "Revolution"! Thus Boumediene says "no" not to French imperialist hypocrisy—his hatred of which is a sham—but to the basic achievements of the French Revolution.

The most articulate expression of "Third World" nationalism which, like the Russian Narodniks, reduces "socialism" and "revolution" to feudalistic revivalism, is to be found in that darling of the café revolutionaries, Frantz Fanon—the official ideologue of the Algerian FLN. While his *L'An Cinq de la Révolution Algérienne* (translated as *A Dying Colonialism*) is a testament to the courage and fortitude of the Algerian revolutionary woman—showing how involvement in the FLN revolutionized her social standing—Fanon finds her strength not in the liberating experience of equality imposed by commando life, but in patriarchal Moslem tradition:

"What is true is that under normal conditions, an interaction must exist between the family and society at large. The home is the basis of the truth of society, but society authenticates and legitimizes the family. The colonial structure is the very negation of this reciprocal justification. The Algerian woman, in imposing such a restriction on herself, in choosing a form of existence limited in scope, was deepening her consciousness of struggle and preparing for combat."

Fanon is quite correct when he states that after participating in the national liberation struggle the Algerian woman

"could not put herself back into her former state of mind and relive her behavior of the past." But for Fanon, as for the Narodniks, the very cultural and social backwardness of the masses is itself a source of their revolutionary capacity. The Narodniks, the supreme petty-bourgeois radical democrats, denied the bourgeois character of the democratic revolution, i.e., agrarian revolution, national independence and democratic rights, which constituted the parameters of their program. For the Narodniks, for Fanon and for the official Algerian regime and its sundry Stalinist-Maoist-Pabloite apologists, such regimes are "socialist" despite their incapacity to carry through even the basic democratic tasks

cation *Woman Worker*. When the bourgeois feminists organized the first All-Russian Women's Congress in 1908 the "social-democratic women were represented by their own separate class group, numbering 45 women. Having passed their own independent resolutions on all questions, the women workers finally walked out of this 'ladies' congress" (A. Kollantai, *Women Workers Struggle For Their Rights*, 1918).

One of the differences between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was over whether to organize an independent proletarian women's group or participate in the bourgeois feminist groups. After the final split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1912 the



Women of the Red Guard laud Mao in Peking demonstration.

of the bourgeois revolution. What emerges is a "Third World" nationalism, profoundly anti-democratic, feudalistic and in this case Moslem fundamentalist.

Women and the Russian Revolution

If the Algerian experience is the negative confirmation of the Permanent Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was both positive and negative confirmation. The Russian Revolution emerged from the cataclysmic experience of world war in a country which, like the colonial countries, combined the latest in capitalist technology—industries that were totally merged with finance-capital and as such ultimately controlled by the Bourses of Western Europe—with the most backward medieval institutions. At the same time Russia was the "chattel-house" of nations, itself an imperialist power with expansionist appetites in Asia Minor and the Balkans. Given Russia's belated bourgeois development, it skipped over that stage which nurtures a strong urban petty-bourgeoisie with strong democratic institutions and illusions. When the radicalized female of the intelligentsia entered politics, it was not as a feminist or suffragette, but as a terrorist. According to the reports of the Tsarist Minister of Justice, Count Pahlen, of the 620 people summoned before the courts for revolutionary activities during the 1870's 158 were women. The 29-member Central Executive Committee of Narodnaya Volya (People's Freedom) in 1879 had 10 women. One of the members of this group, Sofia Perovskaya, directed the assassination of Alexander II.

The terrorist activity of the radicalized middle class women was the prelude to the militant class battles of Russia's working women. Concentrated primarily in textile industries, they were in the vanguard of the strike struggles of the late 1890's. After the turn of the century bourgeois feminists organized "Women's Political Clubs" in St. Petersburg. In the winter of 1907-08 the Russian Social Democrats organized the "Society for Mutual Help Among Working Women" and issued the publi-

Bolsheviks distinguished themselves by continuing to struggle to draw proletarian women into the revolutionary movement. The Bolsheviks resumed publication of *Woman Worker* in 1914 for International Woman's Day. This holiday, which had originated in 1908 in Manhattan's Lower East Side (Rutgers Square) by women in the needle trades, was adopted by the 2nd International under the leadership of Clara Zetkin in 1911. It was first celebrated in Russia at the instigation of the St. Petersburg textile workers in 1913 and celebrated again in 1914 complete with processional, mass meeting and the first appearance of the red flag in St. Petersburg. The next celebration was in 1917 and marked the opening of the Russian Revolution.

The Stalinists who try to fit the Russian Revolution into their two-stage schema claim that the February Revolution was the bourgeois-democratic stage of the Revolution. While the February Revolution was bourgeois in that it put the bourgeoisie into power, there was very little democracy about it, especially in relation to the emancipation of women. Taking the Church and ecclesiastical courts out of the private affairs of marriage and divorce was achieved only later, by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Likewise, it was only after the Bolshevik Revolution that a real effort was made to alleviate the domestic slavery of women through the establishment of nurseries, creches, maternity care, public dining halls and laundries.

The Bolshevik Revolution established another basic tenet of the Permanent Revolution—the need for proletarian leadership over the peasant movement. While the agrarian revolution was spontaneous, the struggle to summon peasant women to a full public and political life was not. The political mobilization of the peasant women required the courageous and persistent efforts of the Bolshevik party women, many of whom were recruited from the St. Petersburg textile factories which had been in the vanguard of the Russian class struggle for three decades prior to the Revolution. Organized in the

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Capital's Labor Trustee: Australian Labor Party Elected

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND—The victory of Gough Whitlam and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) over the Liberal-Country Party coalition in the December elections has brought Social Democracy back into power in Australia for the first time since 1949. Labor's victory in Australia, coming hard on the heels of the landslide election of Kirk and the New Zealand Labour Party indicates broadly-felt dissatisfaction with conservative bourgeois rule in Australasia.

For differing and essentially counterposed reasons, sections of the bourgeoisie as well as of the working class supported labor in the elections. The labor parties, closely linked with the trade unions in both countries, and traditionally the expression of the political consciousness of the broad masses of the Australasian working class, won new supporters in the class on the basis of growing dissatisfaction with capitalism's attacks on their living standards, and of the great number of social democratic reforms Labor promised. But elements of the historically enfeebled Australian bourgeoisie were also disgruntled by the proven ineptitude of the Liberal-Country Party coalition in the face of the growing economic and social problems. Newspaper magnate Robert Murdoch and retail store millionaire Kenneth Myer were but some of the most prominent recent recruits to Labor. The image that the Labor bureaucrats sought to create, no matter how sweeping the reforms promised, was of responsible reorganisers of the capitalist system. Before his election, Whitlam said quite openly that taxes on the wealthy and corporations "are already high enough." Clearly in the face of growing inflation and unemployment the McMahon-led coalition had lost its authority to rule in the eyes of the working class and among some of the more far-sighted elements of the bourgeoisie as well.

So long as capitalism can rely upon willing Social-Democratic and Stalinist allies to assume the reins of government during difficult times, channelling working-class ferment in the directions of petty reforms, it will be able to weather the severest storms.

News-worthy Policies

In his first month of office Whitlam has consolidated his authority by implementing some of his most news-worthy policies: the abolition of conscription, liberalisation of the divorce laws, institution of a national health scheme, recognition of the Peoples Republic of China, free off-peak transport, equal pay for women in the public service (to be phased in over three years), liberalisation of immigration rights for Asians and Pacific Islanders. All this has lent the regime an aura of dynamism, capturing world attention much the way Roosevelt did in the U.S. during his first hundred days in 1933. While significant, these changes hardly touch the real needs of the masses and in fact disarm them by helping to prepare the way for the very harsh measures Whitlam will be forced to institute for the benefit of Australian capitalism. On the other hand, in New Zealand Kirk is incompetently emphasising his continuity with the previous conservative government.

Historically, Australia and, to a somewhat lesser extent, New Zealand have been direct appendages of imperialist capitalism—at first solely British, since the Second World War more American, and now in the last few years increasingly Japanese. Aus-

tralia has been a source of wool, wheat and now importantly iron, uranium, bauxite, zinc and oil, in addition to being a market for western manufacturers. When the wave of inflation sparked by the Vietnam war broke out in the United States, Australasia felt the impact and was hit even harder. In both countries inflation has averaged about nine per cent per annum, and last year Australian unemployment rose to its highest level in a decade. Most large industry in Australia is foreign-owned, and this foreign ownership has increased spectacularly in recent years. According to a government White Paper issued last year, in the 1970-71 financial year total overseas investment increased by 46 per cent. In the ten years previously it had been growing at an average annual compound rate of 26 per cent. A measure of overseas ownership used in the White Paper was the percentage of the total company income payable abroad. In 1948-49 this was around 20 per cent; in 1970-71 it was around 35 per cent. The Australian bourgeoisie has been ineffective in stemming the root causes of the economic problems without dealing a blow to the very foreign capitalists upon whom it is ultimately dependent. The economically and socially conservative former governments were hamstrung by their social base and governing philosophy in the latitude of measures they were able to develop to solve the problems besetting them. Finally, the shift in the relationship of forces in the international imperialist system, with the Japanese controlling the entire Pacific basin, poses other problems for the Australian bourgeoisie. The change to a Labor government will undoubtedly ease the political accommodation to Japanese imperialism which the bourgeoisie is finding necessary as a concomitant of the Japanese investment which has flooded Australia since about 1968.

ALP vs. the Labor Movement

The main base of support for the labor parties is the organized working class, in response to rising inflation and unemployment, trade-union militancy has increased, occasionally bursting the confines of craft or industrial disputes, spilling over into social and political issues as well. When in 1969 Stalinist union bureaucrat Clarrie O'Shea was jailed for defiance of anti-union penal laws, a million workers went on a nationwide general strike to free him. Most recently, in January the waterside workers went on a political strike against the American shipping companies in response to the renewed bombing of North Vietnam. It took all of the skill of Australian Council of Trade Unions President Bob Hawke to end it by promising a general strike if the bombing were resumed again. Hawke's ability to facilely combine a socialist face to the working class with actions that objectively aid the capitalist system make him the doyen of trade union bureaucrats.

It will be the task of the ALP to improve the anti-union laws. Even before its election to office sections of the party leadership showed their true class allegiance. The bourgeoisie was frightened by the 1969 Clarrie O'Shea strike and the new Minister of Labour in the Labor Government, Clive Cameron, originated a series of notorious proposals for the suppression of the working class, including the illegalisation of political strikes and the imposition of fines (unions \$500 a day and individual workers \$20 a day) for participating in

very broadly defined "illegal" strikes of an industrial nature. Whitlam supported the Cameron proposals at the 1971 Annual Federal Conference of the ALP, and although they were shelved in the face of left-wing opposition, they surely are not dead.

In the last few of their twenty-three years in office, the Liberal-Country Party Coalition was riddled with dis-sension, and, attempting to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, the Labor Party's main campaign slogan was the classless, non-political epigram "It's Time": in a large part of its propaganda the Labor Party—knowing full well that the most conscious part of the working class would vote for it anyway, and seeking to dispel some of its image as a class-controlled party—sought to characterise Liberal-Country ineptitude as the sole reason for the country's economic plight. Yet by far one of the most outstanding features of the campaign was Whitlam's attempt to outdo McMahon in his recourse to nationalist fears and ambitions. At his main policy speech Whitlam conjured the impression that a Labor government would fight to repatriate Australia's foreign-owned resources: "A Labor Government will enable Australia and ordinary Australians to take part in ownership, development and use of Australian resources. It's time to start buying back Australia."

Whitlam went on to elaborate his fealty to capitalist industry: "[Labor policy]...recognises that the national government must by consultation and cooperation with all sections of industry, achieve a growth rate of 6-7 per cent in each of the next three years." Implicit in this announcement was not simply an attempt to curry favour with Australian capital, but an attempt to win the confidence of the wavering and electorally crucial petty-bourgeoisie. Conscious of the many faces of the Labor Party, Whitlam went on in the very same speech to conciliate the left wing within his Party, easing their consciences about the aborigines by promising them "land rights," the removal of apartheid-like laws in the state of Queensland, financial aid to aborigines, and an end to racial discrimination.

Left Accommodates to Reformism

The ostensible revolutionary socialist organisations failed abysmally to guide and lead the working class in the election. A correct orientation to the Labor Party called for a Marxist understanding of its contradictory nature and the implementation of the Leninist tactic of critical support. The tactic of critical support for a mass social democratic or Stalinist party is designed to exploit the contradiction between its formal program and the aspirations of its working class base on the one hand with its betrayals in practice and its traitorous, bourgeoisified leadership on the other. None of the ostensible revolutionary socialist groups adequately pursued this policy!

The Australian Communist Party gave essentially uncritical support to a Labor government as a good thing, although not quite as good a thing as a Communist government. Although in markedly different ways, both the Socialist Labor League of Australia (SLA), which claims solidarity with Gerry Healy's international Committee of the Fourth International, and the Socialist Workers League (SWL), associated with the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, acted as left pressure groups on the Labor Party.



Freighter idled by Australian seamen's union strike against renewed bombing of Vietnam, January 1973.

Of the ostensibly revolutionary groupings, the Communist Party of Australia is the largest, with several thousand members. Since its break with Moscow over the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia it has moved to the right, hoping to absorb much of the New Left. In the process the CPA has become the home for almost the entire non-Leninist left—Stalinist, left-social democratic, New Left or ostensibly Trotskyist. (There are also pro-Peking and pro-Moscow groupings of significant size.) In the last parliamentary elections the CPA stood seven candidates of its own on a platform favoring such variegated positions as Zero Population Growth, religious tolerance, election of the police, and self-determination for the aboriginal population (of about one hundred thousand).

The Australian electoral system is unique in that voting is compulsory and there is a system of balloting such that every voter must mark the names of all candidates standing in his constituency in order of his preference for them, the second and third preferences being used to decide the winner if none receives fifty per cent. This system allows for the formal trading of preferences among political parties. Because of this system the CPA was able to make sure that its candidature in no way detracted from a potential Labor victory and, indeed, the CPA managed to capitulate to the ALP-sponsored priority of defeating the reactionary Liberal-Country coalition, without raising much criticism of the Labor Party besides noting that it was not revolutionary. The CPA presented the relationship between revolutionary socialism and labor reformism as part of a continuing spectrum. Thus, a mass-distributed election policy sheet stated, "Begin with number one for your Communist candidate or your favored choice amongst the reformist candidates, then vote for all the other reform candidates

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... Financial Chaos Looms

trade union movement in Europe. In early December, the Pompidou government announced a new "anti-inflation" program, which included cutting back government-supplied social services and raising interest rates, even at the risk of losing votes to the Socialist-Communist Party electoral opposition. The German Social Democrat-Free Democrat popular front government has recently announced an "anti-inflationary," budget with sharp tax increases and a cut-back in funds slated for housing construction. While Europe's ruling classes were compelled to fight their workers to prop up the dollar standard, the dollar fell anyway.

The Epochal World Money Crisis

The current dollar devaluation is a manifestation of an epochal international monetary crisis. The continual

international monetary "crises" are a clear and dramatic proof of the Leninist assertion that since August 1914, the nation-state system has become a fundamental barrier to the expansion of production. All the imperialist powers financed World War I through domestic inflation, insulating their currencies from the gold standard. World War I destroyed the gold standard which unified the various national currencies. This unity has never been restored. The first of an endless series of conferences to create a new monetary system based on mutual credit was held in Genoa in 1922. The issues and conflicts at that conference were essentially the same as those at the international monetary conferences to be held in this and the coming years. Discounting all the technical complexities, the "problem" of the international monetary system is this: all capitalist states violate the agreed-upon "rules of the game" when serious economic damage results from obeying those rules. Thus, all the major devaluations since World War II, including the present one, are *illegal* according to International Monetary Fund regulations! Ours is an epoch of fundamental international financial anarchy.

This anarchy is disguised by temporary agreements by which the currency of the country enjoying large gold reserves relative to its international debt becomes the world money (Britain in 1925-31, the U.S. in 1945-71). The system is inherently self-contradictory. The "strong" key currency always becomes the weakest in the system. As soon as the capitalists of the favored nation realize their money is "as good as gold," they go on a foreign investment spree flooding the world with their currency well in excess of their gold reserves and foreign demand for exchange holdings. The other capitalist powers are then faced with the excruciating choice of forcing the devaluation of the key currency (which means sacrificing their competitive advantage), reducing the value of their reserves and throwing the system back into chaos or continuing to accumulate decreasingly valued currency which feeds domestic inflation. The British (pound) standard was destroyed in 1931, the American (dollar) standard in 1971.

Monetary Cranks and Catastrophe-Mongering

Because all major economic crises disrupt the existing payments system, there is a strong tendency to blame economic crises on bad money and credit policies. In both left- and right-wing radical circles, there is a long history of money cranks proclaiming that the ills of capitalism can be eliminated through some radically new credit system. Predictably, the U.S. left has produced its own money crank—one Lyn Marcus, head of the National Caucus of Labor Committees. Marcus' major contribution to socialist theory was his observation that depression can be overcome in one day through the organization of bank clerks! Because Marcus identifies capitalism with the existing monetary system he asserts that the devaluation of the dollar leads to instant world depression which can only be prevented through the imposition of fascism. After the August 15th dollar devaluation, Marcus wrote:

"U.S. money-managers have correctly and repeatedly warned the U.S. Presidents and Congresses that any instability in the dollar would wreck the international monetary system and bring the entire capitalist world down into a new depression... The capitalist system veers toward depression for the lack of \$35 gold parity to give stability of trade... Whether actual world depression can be postponed for a few months has little fundamental bearing on the situation as a whole... Forty years after September 1931, we are

again plunging into a new world depression..."

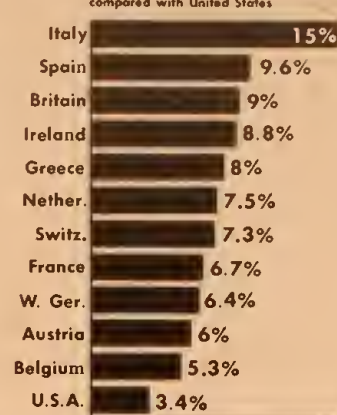
—*New Solidarity*, 30 August 1971

The headline of NCLC's *New Solidarity* right after the current devaluation was "Nixon Makes Depression Official."

There are few better proofs of the theoretical poverty of Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League (SLL) in Britain and Tim Wohlforth's Workers League (WL) in the U.S. than their rote dependence for an analysis of post-war capitalism on Lyn Marcus, who is himself at least a creative crackpot. The 15 February *Workers Press* is headlined "Capitalism Hits the Dust as Nixon Puts the Boot In." Discussing the effects of the devaluation, the article states, "For Europe especially it will mean massive recession, the physical destruction of capital and millions and millions of unemployed." The same article informs us that the capitalist system is

INFLATION IN EUROPE

compared with United States



annual rates in the final quarter of 1972

PLAIN TRUTH

dead (which leaves us wondering who killed it and what social system we are living under now):

"Ever since 1914 the capitalist system has been gripped by contradictions that could only be solved by slump or war. Now its corpse—bloated by the post-war inflation—has burst. And the system is turning to dust..."

The SLL/WL use Marcus' economic catastrophe-mongering to whip their followers into a hysteria for various campaigns (e.g., the WL's instant labor party, the SLL's "long marches" against unemployment). The SLL/WL crisis-mongering is equalled only by their ignorance of and contempt for Marxist political economy.

A good deal of Marx' writing on money and credit was designed to attack the theoretical basis of monetary crankism. Marx insisted that the basis of economic crises was in capitalist production, not circulation. He held that the root cause of all crises was that capital expanded faster than the surplus value that it generated (i.e., the rate of profit fell). Marx dismissed credit theories of crisis out of hand:

"Not a single responsible economist of the post-Ricardian period denies the plethora of capital. On the contrary, all of them regard it as the cause of crises (in so far as they do not explain the latter by factors relating to credit)..."

"In investigating why the general possibility of crisis turns into a real crisis... it is therefore quite superfluous to concern oneself with the forms of crisis which arise out of the development of money as means of payment." [emphasis in original]

—*Theories of Surplus Value*, Ch. 17

Because currency devaluation is a single, dramatic event, there is a strong tendency to attach undue importance to it. Currency devaluation is only one manifestation of fundamental economic conflicts and weaknesses, and often not the most important one. Probably the most important aspect of the international monetary situation this past year is not the second dollar devaluation, but the rampant European inflation resulting from an attempt to prevent that devaluation. The West European inflation has produced a marked leftward

electoral shift and has intensified the class struggle at every level.

No single economic event (e.g., currency devaluation, runaway inflation, a given rate of unemployment or a stock market crash) can mean the collapse of the capitalist system. That is because the capitalist system does not collapse of itself; it must be "pushed" to collapse through the revolutionary action of the working class. The revolutionary action of the working class arises out of the intersection of three elements—the immediate economic and political pressures bearing down on the workers, the workers' past experience which shapes their attitude toward the immediate situation and the character of the historically evolved leadership available to the organized working class. To talk about the collapse of the capitalist system independently of the internal political life and revolutionary struggle of the working class is objectivist idealism.

Socialist Internationalism Against Autarky and Empire

The second dollar devaluation in 14 months means that the system of relatively stable exchange rates is being replaced by continuously fluctuating ones. Fluctuating exchange rates are self-reinforcing as speculation intensifies change brought by changing competitive advantage. With fluctuating exchange rates, it is impossible to calculate profits on foreign transactions; this is fundamentally disruptive of international trade and investment. This is why the ruling classes of the world have made considerable efforts to maintain stable exchange rates.

Faced with the financial chaos associated with fluctuating exchange rates, the capitalist class attempts to retreat into autarky—national economic self-sufficiency, in which trade and production are confined within national-state barriers through economic protectionism and other measures. Foreign goods and money are kept out through high tariffs, quotas and direct state control over exchange transactions. The "two-tier" foreign exchange market (a standard device in the 1930's) which France instituted a year ago to manipulate foreign investment is a sign of things to come. National autarky deprives the working masses of the enormous productive power associated with the international division of labor, one of the most valuable historic achievements of capitalism. National autarky is retrogressive and a clear sign of the decadence of contemporary capitalism. In addition, autarky greatly strengthens domestic monopolies—imagine what GM and Ford will charge for cars if it becomes impossible to import Volkswagens and Toyotas. Autarky adds a systematic deformation to the world economy over and above the fundamental irrationalities of the capitalist system.

Capitalist powers which are heavily dependent on food and raw material imports—like Japan, West Germany and Britain—cannot aspire to economic self-sufficiency. The disruption of normal trade patterns drives such nations to carve out empires among backward countries, attempting to draw them into their autarkic structure, rigidly isolating them from the world market and other capitalist powers. The onset of international financial anarchy in the early 1930's led to Japan's attempted conquest of China and Nazi Germany's economic-political offensive in East Europe. With the disruption of dollar-dominated trade among the advanced capitalist nations, Japan's investment in Southeast Asia and West Germany's Ostpolitik will become more important in the economy of those countries. This is an ominous development. The policy of seeking a monopoly in foreign markets, which is the policy of empire, leads directly to colonial oppression and inter-imperialist war.

Only victorious socialist internationalism can provide the material abundance available through the rational international division of labor and reverse the drive toward colonial oppression and imperialist war. ■

Continued from page 5

... Mine Workers' Election

garner the pensioner vote, Miller proposed increased pensions, making no mention of the obvious democratic demand that retirees should not have equal say in union affairs affecting the working miners. Miller's call for the reclamation of land destroyed by strip mining to be done by UMW members was merely an attempt to capture the strip miners' vote, which had swung to Boyle; when Miller was a Democratic Party candidate for the West Virginia state legislature, he had called for the abolition of strip mining.

For all its talk of union democracy, the 1972 MFD convention was run in typically high-handed bureaucratic fashion. No literature was distributed without the permission of the rules committee; speakers were cut off from the microphone; no vote was taken on program proposals from the floor. One of Miller's first actions after taking office was to fire the pro-Boyle members of the International Executive Board and replace them with his own supporters, while promising new elections. And his proposal for a percentage reduction in officer salaries is an easily reversible demagogic point.

At bottom, Miller's program is specious because it is the campaign promises of an individual rather than a systematic defense of the workers' basic interests; he has no ties to a disciplined political caucus but only to an election campaign committee of his friends. When a union oppositionist wins leadership on the basis of a powerful, organized movement among the ranks, he cannot so cheaply betray his program or that movement might sweep him out of office again. But Miller has no real program, and he must keep faith only with the Labor Department/liberal Democrat cabal which installed him at the head of the UMW.

This is the real lesson of the UMW elections. For communists, whose fundamental aim in the labor movement is to transform the unions into a tool of the revolutionary will of the proletariat, no reform can increase the power of the working class if it is won by placing the unions under the trusteeship of the capitalist state, thus destroying the first pre-condition for their mobilization in the struggle to smash that state. Those pretended Marxists who offer excuses for this disastrous policy, posing the MFD's ties to the liberal bourgeoisie as merely a negative item on a linear balance sheet, demonstrate their complete abandonment of a revolutionary working-class perspective. ■

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New Pop Frontism in France

the Popular Front set off a tremendous expansion of the trade unions and an unprecedented wave of strikes, culminating in the general strike of May-June 1936.

At the outset, these strikes were largely defensive, frequently beginning as protests against firings, and centering on the demand for a 15% wage increase. However, they almost all involved the tactic of factory occupations (the "sit-down strike") which terrified the bourgeoisie (and the CGT union leaders as well); and they spread rapidly and were unified, particularly in the key metal workers federation. The outgoing government quit, and prematurely handed over the reins of power to Blum on 4 June 1936. Under the pressure of the still-solid general strike, the Blum government negotiated the Hotel Matignon agreement between the CGT leaders and the main organizations of French businessmen and industrialists. The agreements provided certain concessions: the principle of union recognition and collective agreements with the unions, a 40-hour week with no loss in pay, paid vacations, and a 12% wage increase. The condition, however, was immediate cessation of the factory occupations. This the masses refused to accept, and the settlement negotiated by their leaders was solidly voted down by the ranks of Parisian metal workers, demanding that the many loopholes be closed and that significant industries be nationalized.

At this time Leon Trotsky wrote, "The French Revolution has begun." This was precisely what the CP leaders feared, as they made clear by their unconditional support for the Matignon agreements. Thorez declared, "There can be no question of taking power at this time" and "we must know how to end a strike," thereby making quite clear where the CP stood. The action of rank-and-file Communist militants had won the party considerable authority during the early stages of the strike, and thus by 14 June, with the CP forcing its militants to withdraw from the struggle, the strike disintegrated. Coincidentally the Blum government closed down the Trotskyist paper (*Lutte Ouvrière*), which had called for extending the strike. During the next two years, primarily because of the CP's refusal to head a new workers' offensive, the French bourgeoisie, led by the Radical members of the Popular Front government, gradually won back what it had been forced to give up. The CP's betrayal of the May-June 1936 general strike was the basic price of the popular front—this is what it was formed to accomplish. By 1938 Daladier and the Radicals expelled the CP from the front, and a year later, in connection with the Hitler-Stalin pact, outlawed them along the road to the fascist Vichy regime.

Popular Front Restabilizes Bourgeois Order

The second popular front, following World War II, was, if anything, even more obscene. During World War II (after the German invasion of the USSR), the CP was the leading element in the French underground resistance against Nazi occupation. At the end of the war there was an armed force of some 10,000 CP worker-members who wanted to struggle for socialism. Under these conditions DeGaulle was forced to accept the CP and SP into the government, in exchange for Stalinist aid in disarming the partisans. Despite the fact that the CP and SP had won an absolute majority in the October 1945 elections, they refused to form a government of their own and

instead voted in DeGaulle.

The situation remained precarious because of the resistance of the partisans to giving up their arms. It was then that the CP took the lead in the campaign to disarm the workers. Maurice Thorez, head of the CP and vice-president of the Republic, summed up the Stalinist position with the famous slogan, "A single government, a single army, a single police force"—that is, a bourgeois government, a bourgeois army, a bourgeois police force. Jacques Duclos (today the head of the CP group in parliament) proclaimed: "Yesterday our duty was to fight. Today our duty is to work, work, work."

From its ministerial positions in Armaments, National Economy, Industrial Production, and Labor the CP's main job then became the repression of the recurring strike waves and the stifling of opposition to the reestablishment of the French Empire. The principal CP slogans were "Produce first, make demands later," and "Strikes are the weapon of the trusts." (This was in the face of galloping inflation, resulting from the economic policies of the CP-supported DeGaulle regime. Thus with 1938 as a standard of 100, the price index at the end of 1944 was 307, at the end of 1945 it was 497, at the end of 1946 it was 865, and by the end of 1947 it had reached 1,356! According to the bourgeois state statistics, the French standard of living did not reach the 1938 level again until 1960.)

The CP supported the colonial policy of French imperialism. CP ministers voted in favor of military credits for the beginning of the Indochina war in 1946, while the CP deputies abstained in the parliament vote! The CP Minister of Aviation did not object to the French bombing of Setif, Algeria, in a repression of a nationalist uprising which claimed 45,000 victims. *L'Humanité*, paper of the CP, stated: "For order to exist in Algeria, the Hitlerite killers who participated in the events of 8 May and the pseudo-nationalist leaders who consciously tried to trick the Moslem masses must immediately be punished as they deserve" (19 May 1945). The justifications for these betrayals? The "theoretical" journal of the CP wrote:

"At the present moment, the separation of the colonial peoples from France would go against the interests of these populations for two reasons:

- 1) The French nation... wants to install a real democracy which could not but bring democracy to these populations;
- 2) Because the lands inhabited by these populations are the objects of threatening appetites, so long as they are unable to guarantee an independent existence."

—*Cahiers du Communisme*, April 1947

It was only with the Renault strike in 1947 and the beginning of the cold war that the CP broke and left the government. By that time, its betrayals had discredited it to the point where it was a simple matter for DeGaulle to boot it out. These policies of "reason" and "moderation" in fact prepared the way in the 1930's for the victory of fascism and after the war for the slaughter of millions of Vietnamese and Algerian workers and peasants—and in both cases frustrated the French working class' clearly manifested aspirations for socialism. In all aspects of its politics the CP proved itself the faithful watchdog of the bourgeoisie, true "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," to use the phrase of Daniel De Leon.

But today, according to the CP, things are different. Now the CP is the largest force in the "Popular Union." The revisionist (ex-Trotskyists) of the Ligue Communiste add that this time only a splinter party, not the main party of the bourgeoisie, is involved in the electoral bloc. But things are always "different." *Plus ça change...* In the first popular front, the CP was not in the government itself, thus enabling it to put more pressure on from the outside. After World War II, they were on the inside, enabling their counsels to be heard more effectively; and besides, this time the CP-SP had

a majority of the popular vote to back them up. In 1936-38 the program only called for a 40-hour week, while in 1945-47 it contained a large number of nationalizations, etc. But in any and all cases the essence of the popular front is to serve as a brake on the masses by clearly and definitely tying the working class to the "progressive" capitalists, and thereby forestalling revolution.

When is a Popular Front Not a Popular Front?

The whole history of Leninism and Trotskyism has been a determined struggle against the popular front. What else can be the meaning of Lenin's determined fight against the Mensheviks who supported the bourgeois provisional government in 1917? Or of Trotsky's fight against the Farmer-Labor Party in the U.S. and the Kuomintang in China? The Trotskyist cadre of the 1930's were steeled in the fight against the French and Spanish popular fronts. Yet it is a sad fact that not one of the three major ostensibly Trotskyist organizations in France today calls for a clear opposition to the Union of the Left, the new popular front.

The Pabloite Ligue Communiste, French section of the United Secretariat, has perhaps the most consistent position—that is to say, consistently opportunist. It can be summed up as follows: "A victory for the Union of the Left will be seen by the workers as a defeat for the bourgeoisie and a victory for the workers' movement. It will serve as a stimulus to workers' combativity... It is this hegemony of the CP over the alliance as a whole that gives it its class nature, and not the presence of this or that bourgeois politician" (*Rouge*, 16 December 1972). More specifically:

"In contrast to the Popular Front, the Union de la Gauche does not have the support of any appreciable wing of French capitalism whatsoever, not even among those elements today that have no confidence in Gaullism or Pompidou. To those who raise the objection that Radical office-holders have associated themselves with the Union de la Gauche, it is easy to answer that these figures represent neither a political or a social force.... The Union de la Gauche therefore is an alliance of reformist parties solely and not an alliance between the reformists and any bourgeois party. From this standpoint, the Union de la Gauche is not a new Popular Front." [emphasis in original]

—Pierre Frank, "On the Coming French Legislative Elections," *Intercontinental Press*, 12 February 1973

Therefore:

"In the first round, the Ligue Communiste is calling for voting only for the revolutionary candidates [i.e., the LC and Lutte Ouvrière, which is in an electoral bloc with the LC] and for abstaining where they are not on the ballot. In the second round, it will continue to denounce the program of the Union de la Gauche and its purported roads to socialism. But in order to enable the workers to learn by their own experience and not to put any obstacle in the way of this, the Ligue Communiste will call on its supporters... to eliminate the candidates of the bourgeoisie by voting for the candidates—but not for the program—of the Union de la Gauche."

—*Ibid.*

The argument that the Left Radicals no longer represent the bourgeoisie in the same way the Radicals of Daladier did in 1936 is empirically true, but is irrelevant. Since when is the class character of a political organization determined by its electoral importance? The inclusion of the Left Radicals is the logical consequence of the Common Program, a second-gloved hand extended to the bourgeoisie, a guarantee of the intentions of the CP, a seal on the overall strategy of class collaboration. It is true that their inclusion did not change the program of the CP-SP bloc in any way, but this is because the alliance was a popular front in intent from the very beginning. A successful mass struggle to throw the Left Radicals out of the bloc could hardly leave the popular front program intact.

The importance of these rag-tag bourgeois politicians in the "Union of the Left" is to set a limit beyond which the new government cannot be forced by mass pressure without causing a fundamental governmental crisis, a split. That is why Robert Fabre or Maurice Faure, true bourgeois politicians of the finest water, or bankers such as Jean Filippi are sitting at the front of every Popular Union demonstration. No, they do not represent the decisive sectors of the bourgeoisie. In Spain during the Republican period the bourgeoisie was overwhelmingly on the side of Franco. All that Stalin and the reformist socialist and anarchist leaders could get in the way of direct bourgeois participation in their governments were two motley lawyers, Azana and Companys. Yet Trotsky spoke of a popular front "with the shadow of the bourgeoisie." Their importance stemmed not from their (non-existent) popular influence, but from the fact that they represented the principle of the "democratic" stage of the revolution. Fabre, Faure, Filippi and Co. in France today represent this same shadow, and to call for a vote for the Union of the Left (whether on the second ballot or the first) is an act of betrayal of the working class.

The Ligue combines its class collaborationist approach with a publicity-stunt electoral campaign totally devoid of any real connection with on-going political work in the class (of which the LC has precious little). The stated purpose is to permit "revolutionary candidates" to be present in a large number of constituencies, over 300 or about half the total number, and to get use of 7 minutes of national television time.

"... As Far Left as Possible"

The semi-syndicalist Lutte Ouvrière group has formed an electoral no-contest agreement with the LC for the elections, for the stated purpose of presenting an anti-popular front candidate in the maximum number of constituencies. We have seen above, however, what the Ligue's "opposition" to the popular front consists in, namely left-talking support. The LO's own campaign is characterized by pervasive workerism, emphasizing that all its candidates are honest workers and quantitatively increasing the demands put forth in the Common Program: thus, 1,500 francs minimum wage instead of 1,000, and so on.

The most important difference with the LC, however, is that instead of calling for a vote for the Union of the Left on the second ballot (i.e., after the LC and LO candidates are eliminated), the LO will call for abstention where the pop front candidate is an actual bourgeois politician (meaning, all of the Left Radicals and leading SP politicians like Mitterand, Mollet and Deferre):

"... we may call on all people to vote for the CP or the SP candidate on the second ballot, if such is the will of a majority of workers, or at least, we will put no obstacle in front of him. But in no case shall we call for a vote for the Union of the Left, a last ditch political solution for the bourgeoisie."

"In the minds of many workers there is no difference between a vote for the SP or the CP candidate, considered as the workers' candidate and for the candidate of the Union of the Left, who happens to be the same man. But it is precisely that difference that revolutionaries must try to demonstrate by their tactics on the second ballot whatever the difficulties may be," —*Lutte de Classe/Class Struggle*, February 1973

It is not just the backward workers who fail to see this "difference," comrades of LO. The difference does not exist. Normally, reformist workers' parties, such as the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, have a dual character. Namely, on the one hand, they function as the political representatives of the working class, while on the other, they represent the political interests of the bourgeoisie. This dual character is closely tied to the nature of their leadership, based on a petty-

bourgeois stratum of labor bureaucrats, the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." However, when the CP or SP enter into an electoral bloc with a section of the bourgeoisie, this duality is suppressed formally and in practice, because the reformist parties then campaign and promise to govern on a common platform within the purely capitalist limits set by their overtly liberal-bourgeois allies. Thus in this situation there is no basis for the Leninist tactic of critical support to social-democratic and Stalinist parties. What is urgently in order is the demand that the reformist parties break their bloc with bourgeois parties—as a condition for support by class-conscious workers. Only then can the contradiction between the professed labor/socialist/communist principles of the reformists and their actual practice be exposed before the working class. It is precisely the fact that a vote for the CP in this election can only mean a vote for the popular front which makes the difference. Today in France, every ballot cast for the CP is a ballot for the bourgeoisie. This the comrades of Lutte Ouvrière have failed to understand. To go ahead and support the CP and SP despite their participation in the pop front is to vitiate the essential content of Trotskyism.

LO's inability to grasp the fundamental class line was further demonstrated when a member of its national political leadership, Arlette Laguiller, evidenced a purely linear, quantitative notion of class. Speaking on national television, she called on the workers to "vote as far to the left as possible" (*Le Monde*, 24 February 1973).

The Organisation Communiste In-

ternationaliste (pour la reconstruction de la Quatrième Internationale) likewise calls for opposition to the Common Program and the Union of the Left. The OCI correctly characterizes the CP-SP-Left Radical bloc as a popular front. And it points out that "the Fourth International was constituted in combat, having as the center of its struggle the unity and class independence of the proletariat against the 'Popular Fronts,' the 'Unions of the Left,' and other combinations which subordinate the proletariat to the bourgeoisie" (*Programme d'action de la classe ouvrière*). In a polemic against the Ligue Communiste, the OCI writes:

"If the Union of the Left is treason of the Popular Front type, the duty of proletarian revolutionaries is to denounce to the masses the danger of their illusions. Not to submit themselves to them... It is incompatible to support the Union of the Left and to belong to the Fourth International."

—*Informations Ouvrières*,
10-17 January 1973

Yet where its own candidates are not an option, the OCI calls for a "vote for the workers' party or organization of your choice: the SP or CP"! The OCI position is essentially that of Lutte Ouvrière, with the difference that the former is putting forward only 20 candidates of its own and, where there are no OCI candidates, is calling for a CP-SP vote on the first ballot. (In the first round all candidates will be on the ballot and victory is only possible through a majority. Thus this tends to be simply an opinion poll. In the decisive second round the minor candidates are eliminated and a plurality is sufficient for victory.)

Continued from page 7

Neo-Reutherites Stage Farce

was a legitimate representative of a union oppositional grouping, or even to grant the speaker extra time to respond. Fox and the entire conference were silent as the MSC speaker used most of his minimal three minutes to point out calmly that such red-baiting is intended to aid witchhunters seeking to keep the unions "purified" of all militancy and opposition to betrayal. Fox left the session muttering aloud that "outsiders" would never again be allowed to attend UNC meetings. This is a warning to all those such as the IS who collaborate with would-be bureaucrats for petty organizational advantage. When their usefulness to these careerists is completed, they will be discarded as so much worthless, excess baggage.

UNC's Economic Nationalism

UNC reformism was epitomized by the presentation on unemployment—supposedly the main subject of the conference—by Roger McFadden of Local 160. Fondly recalling the good-old-days of the 1930's, McFadden held up as an example, not the struggles of the workers, but the fact that the American Federation of Labor (AFL) had managed to push a resolution for 30 for 40 through the Senate (but not the House) in 1933; "This is what can be done with pressure," concluded McFadden. McFadden's entire program on unemployment, to be accomplished by such "pressure" on the ruling class, consisted of lowering the social security eligibility age to 55, more public works, and "doing something about the export of capital" to prevent the loss of American jobs to imports!

The last point raises a key issue facing the international working class: economic protectionism. While not openly protectionist (neither is the UAW bureaucracy itself), the UNC approaches the question from a narrow, nationalist viewpoint which must eventually

give in to the demand for protectionism. Only a program based on the interests of the international proletariat can provide an answer to protectionism and the threat of a new inter-imperialist war which lurks behind it. Lay offs and closures caused by "run-away" companies seeking to escape union wages and conditions must be opposed by strikes, across international borders if necessary. But the UNC's call for restrictions on the export of "American" capital to protect "American" jobs is reactionary: it assumes American workers should become partners in their own exploitation in order to maintain relative privileges over the rest of the world's workers. A working-class program must call for international class solidarity and organization to eliminate international differences in living standards at the expense of capital, not for "reform" measures to protect some workers at the expense of others.

The UNC's nationally limited, narrow view—necessary for a caucus which sees its program as relevant only to the members of its union and not the international working class—went completely unopposed by the friends of the "International" Socialists, CP, NCLC and other UNC supporters. The IS- and CP-backed factions simply pushed different versions of trade unionism, not in opposition to the reformism of McFadden, but in support of or in addition to it. While the pro-IS spokesmen worked on nice-sounding bargaining demands, the CP-backed members concentrated on baiting the other leftists and opposing anything that smacked of politics in favor of "base-building" in the plants around the most minimal issues. The NCLC, meanwhile, tried to pretend its class-collaborationist bloc with liberals in the NWRO represented a "class-wide" alternative to UNC trade-union parochialism, but its antics did nothing to counterpose a working-class program to the UNC and only gave the anti-communists another excuse to try to purge the entire left.

Political Zoo

The IS-backed effort to provide a left-face for the UNC was based entirely on "militant" trade unionism. This culminated on the second day when a resolution for a labor party and no support to bourgeois candidates in the

The key to the OCI position is in a letter to the editors of *Le Monde* by Pierre Lambert of the OCI, in which he says:

"... though taking a position against the union of the CP and SP with the bourgeois party of the left radicals, the OCI considers that an electoral victory of the workers' parties would constitute a powerful stimulus for the workers' struggles."

—*Informations Ouvrières*,
20 December 1972-4 January 1973

Again, empirically it is undoubtedly true that a victory of the workers parties (and of the Union of the Left, for that matter) would constitute a powerful stimulus to the workers' struggles. The victory of the popular fronts in Spain and France in 1936 certainly gave rise to a powerful wave of workers' struggles, but Trotsky did not therefore call for electoral support to the CP-SP-Radical blocs at the time. The reason is clear: A popular front victory would create illusions about the possibility of substantial improvements for the working class without breaking with the bourgeoisie and capitalism. And this at the very time of sharpened social polarization which makes an independent working-class policy most urgent. One can logically demand of the CP, SP or other reformist workers party that it implement the demands of the working class; there is no basis to demand this of the Radicals, for they represent another class altogether.

In addition to this appeal to class collaboration, the OCI manifests a systematic adaptation to the bureaucrats of the CP, SP and CGT labor federation. This is embodied in their theory of a strategic united front. The OCI correct-

ly states that, "The workers government is the government of the proletarian revolution, the government which opens the way to socialism" (*Programme d'action...*). "But," they go on, "the working class cannot wait. It cannot wait until the workers' government is miraculously constituted."

The adaptationist implications of the OCI position are spelled out in a Proposed Resolution submitted to the delegates to the National Meeting for the Workers United Front:

"In order to impose the workers government which would satisfy the aspirations and demands [of the workers], it is sufficient that the organizations unite, that they call for the struggle against the governments of capital, for a government of the SP and CP without ministers representing capital. This is possible immediately on the direct battleground of the class struggle." [our emphasis]

—*Informations Ouvrières*,
6-13 December 1972

Thus the CP and SP are miraculously transformed into revolutionary parties which "would satisfy" the demands of the workers if only they would get rid of the Left Radicals! The adaptation is also reflected in the fact that the OCI hesitated for two months after the signature of the Common Program before criticizing it publicly, and even then it confined itself largely to piecemeal criticisms. Not until December (five months later) did the OCI once characterize the Union of the Left as a popular front, and then apparently as the result of a polemical battle with the Ligue Communiste.

Moreover, the whole campaign of

continued on next page

elections was proposed by UNC executive board member Jack Weinburg. While the proposal gained the support of a section of the UNC members and leadership, such as Nat Mosley of Local 25 and co-chairman Sims, it was passed over the objections of the bulk of the UNC leadership, including Art and Edith Fox, Charles Dewey, Mike Singer, CP supporters and friends of the NCLC such as Louis Smith of Cincinnati. The core of NCLC support in the UNC abstained on the vote.

The IS-backed motion stated, "UAW must call for a national congress of labor to formulate a collective response to the government assault on American workers. At such a conference a program that speaks to the problems of the American people could be hammered out, and the work of building an American labor party begun."

The discussion revealed the hopelessly dis-united character of the UNC coalition, which the IS seeks to keep pasted together. On the extreme right were Singer, arguing consistently for no politics whatsoever in the UNC program, and Dewey, reflecting the CP line of support for "lesser-evil" capitalist politicians.

The abstention of NCLC supporters reflected more than just their sectarian position of calling for a mass workers' party but not one based on the only mass workers' organizations, the trade unions; it also reflected their class-collaborationism. The NCLC, which is no different than Dewey in its quantitative criteria on bourgeois politicians, openly invites liberals into its pro-NWRO bloc. The NCLC recently warmly invited the CP to participate jointly with it in an electoral bloc in New York (*New Solidarity*, 19-23 February 1973).

In the center of the political spectrum, Kelly squirmed out of taking a position or voting on the question with the excuse that he was chairing that particular session, while Fox, with all the Reutherite zeal he could muster, pledged his undying support for the labor-party demand except that, as always for Reutherite fakers, "now is not the time."

Behind the IS' "Labor Party" Slogan

On the left, the IS-backed faction argued for a labor party without men-

tioning, naturally, the need for a programmatic break with UNC reformism; thus their call meant a labor party to carry out the UNC's nationalist, trade-unionist program of pressuring the U.S. ruling class for reforms. The demand for a labor party genuinely based on the Trotskyist program of transitional demands (which the IS claims to support) and a struggle to oust the trade union bureaucracy would have required the sharpest possible attack on the rampant careerism of the UNC and its use of the bourgeois courts to sue the union, as well as its gross trade-union reformism. This would have meant a deep political split in the UNC and would have alienated much of the IS' support, such as that of the reformist-careerist Sims, which the IS is completely incapable of contemplating. The IS' labor-party demand "victory," then, simply served to provide the grossest trade-union reformism with a more "progressive" political face. The worst of the reformists naturally didn't want to take the medicine, but the IS successfully completed its task of gently forcing it on them!

With such medicine applied in such a way, the recovery of the patient can never be expected. In the first place, the UNC requires no formal agreement with any part of its program for membership, thereby ensuring that each leader will apply the "program" according to his or her own tastes. When it does act as a body, the UNC always treats its formal "positions" for this and that with contempt anyway. At the last UAW constitutional convention in 1972, it dropped its entire formal program in favor of a big single-issue push for referendum election of officers, since that was popular with the dissident stratum of local bureaucrats (see *WV* No. 9, June 1972). Its special January 1973 issue of *UNC*, designed to build for the conference, made no mention of its formal opposition to the war or of its pre-existing "position" for a labor party. The IS, which treats its own "program" in the same manner, has never criticized the UNC for this looseness with its politics.

In sum, the UNC is an unprincipled cabal of venal careerists. Only its ineptness and total lack of cohesion prevents it from becoming a dangerous stumbling block to the development of a real programmatic opposition in the UAW. ■

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... Women

special Communist Party sections dedicated to drawing in the oppressed women masses behind the revolution, party cadre, often disguised in *paranyas* and *eluchvons* (the veiled clothing worn by the women in Moslem territories of the Soviet Union) would carry the message of the revolution to the most backward areas of Russia. In order to reach women in nomadic tribes the CP's women sections would organize Red Yurtas, or large tents which dispensed medical as well as political propaganda. Their efforts culminated in the First All-Russian Conference of Proletarian and Peasant Women in November 1918, attended by 1,700 delegates. One of the participants described the conference as follows:

"In 1918, when the civil war was raging, when we still had to struggle against hunger, cold and unprecedented devastation, when it was still necessary to defeat the enemy on countless fronts,

at this juncture the conference of proletarian and peasant women was summoned. Hundreds of working women, from the remotest factories and villages, had come to Moscow with their complaints, grievances and doubts, with all their cares great and small..."

—F.W. Halle, *Women in Soviet Russia*, 1933

Thermidor Reverses Gains

But the Soviet Union, an economically backward country to begin with, ravaged by imperialist intervention and civil war, encircled and blockaded by hostile capitalist powers, was unable to provide the economic basis for the construction of socialism; it could only "generalize the want." Lenin and Trotsky realized that just as the democratic revolution must grow into the socialist revolution if the democratic tasks of the revolution are to be solved, so must socialist revolution grow directly into world revolution. The failure of the revolution to spread led to the seizure of power by the conservative state bureaucracy under Stalin in 1923 which converted the Soviet Union's isolation from a profound defeat into a rhetorical "victory" with the anti-

Marxist, nationalist "socialism in one country" doctrine. As Stalin consolidated power, the new ruling elite also required the revival of the monogamous family as the bulwark of this national "socialism"—just as it was a bulwark of the fascist political counter-revolution in capitalist countries.

The Stalinist political counter-revolution simply ran the film of the revolution backward in the realm of women's rights. The party women's sections were liquidated in 1929; homosexuality was made a crime in 1934; abortion, which had been legalized in 1920, was illegalized in 1936; from 1935 through 1944 divorce was made increasingly expensive and complicated; and in 1944 even co-education was abolished. To accomplish these measures, Stalin relied on the conservatizing influence of the peasantry, which generally was alone in welcoming them.

Of course, at each stage Stalinist apologists could find economic and social reasons for each of Stalin's counter-revolutionary measures. As Trotsky said in the *Revolution Betrayed*, "You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it. The actual emancipa-

tion of women is unrealizable on the basis of 'generalized want'." Thus, even the revolutionary government of Lenin and Trotsky had to face horrendous problems, especially in terms of the family and women's emancipation. For example, in 1922 Lenin's wife Krupskaya estimated that there were 7-million homeless children, while Lunarcharsky, Commissar of Education, estimated 9-million. And adoption had to be illegalized in 1926 to prevent the exploitation of child labor by the peasantry? The chief "accomplishment" of Stalin was to turn difficult conditions into a rationale for entrusting all power to a conservative, counter-revolutionary ruling clique which adapted to the backwardness in order to survive.

Women Under "Third World" Stalinism

In Yugoslavia, China, North Vietnam and Cuba, petty-bourgeois leaderships commanding peasant-based armies succeeded, because of exceptional historical circumstances, in overturning capitalism despite their completely pro-capitalist, "democratic" programs. This fact alone has enabled these countries to play a role free of direct economic and political subservience to imperialism; that is, enabled them to fulfill the basic task of the anti-colonial revolution. But these victories took place as military confrontations which were lost by the imperialist and allied native bourgeois forces despite the best efforts of the "revolutionary" leaderships to sell-out the struggle in exchange for a "revolution" safely contained under capitalism (such as did happen in Algeria and most similar situations). The proletariat, a victim of earlier defeats, lacked leadership and failed to play a role as an active contender for power in these revolutions.

As a consequence, what emerged was not proletarian democracy, but regimes as bureaucratically deformed as that which emerged from the degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union—i.e., deformed workers states. Within these regimes, once again the emancipation of women is a most accurate gauge of the general emancipation. While women have been granted formal equality, no consistent, concerted effort has been made to liberate them from domestic slavery. While women have increased their access to socially productive roles, they are generally restricted to those areas which are a simple extension of domestic work, such as textiles and nursing. In North Vietnam, after 26 years of war, women are still not permitted to play a combat role in the regular army. And only the exigencies of war have forced the North Vietnamese bureaucracy to establish nurseries and creches. Birth control and abortion are legalized and illegalized at the whim of the bureaucracy.

Politically, women are no more or less disenfranchised than their husbands in the absence of proletarian democracy. In the absence of special party sections for women, there are no special vehicles to train and equip them to enter the party. The recruitment of women is generally done through moral exhortation. Most women are shunted off to the local Women's Democratic Federation where they can circulate petitions for peace, justice and equality. In China, the Women's Democratic Federation, which once claimed a membership of 70-million, was headed by Liu Shao-chi's wife; it was therefore abolished by the Cultural Revolution. In backward and colonial countries, petty-bourgeois classes oppressed by feudalism and imperialism, particularly the peasantry, are more numerous than the proletariat. In order to come to power, the proletariat must mobilize these classes behind it in the struggle against imperialism and for basic democratic rights. Yet the proletariat is the only consistently revolutionary, anti-capitalist force in these countries. In order to overthrow capitalism and begin an unobstructed path toward socialism, the revolution must be made on the proletariat's terms and with its program. The family as an economic

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... France

the OCI, rather than focusing on a sharp call to CP and SP militants to force their parties to break with the bourgeoisie, instead focuses on opposition to Pompidou and the UDR. If, as Lenin said, the tactic of critical support means support such as a rope gives to a hanging man, then it was certainly not the CP and SP who were left hanging by the OCI campaign. In addition, a main emphasis is put on the campaign of the OCI's J.P. Speller, who three years ago lost an eye as the result of a beating by a UDR goon squad which included his opponent's son. This kind of scandal-mongering in no way differs from the Ligue's publicity stunts, and represents a serious subordination of the Trotskyist program.

One can argue, as do the LC, LO and the OCI, that it is necessary to share the experiences of the working class. Certainly we must seek to show in practice that the reformist policies of class collaboration mean defeat for the working class. But the vanguard can never "share" with the backward elements of the class illusions on the class nature of the state or the electoral process, on the possibility of collaborating with the bourgeoisie, and so on. And to place a primary emphasis on "sharing" the experiences of the class ultimately amounts to adopting a social-democratic conception of the "party of the whole class"—the conception of Kautsky and one from which Rosa Luxemburg never fully broke. This is the ultimate logic of the OCI's "strategic united front."

For Critical Support to LO and OCI Candidates

It is a hard fact that none of the major ostensibly Trotskyist organizations in France today have been able to clearly grasp the need for a sharp break with the popular front—that every vote for the CP and SP in this election is a vote for the bourgeoisie. The OCI and Lutte Ouvrière are attempting to counterpose the workers parties to the popular front. But they are offering critical support to the reformist workers parties within the Union of the Left, rather than calling upon the CP and SP to break the alliance with the Radicals as the precondition for critical support in this election. So long as the CP and SP do not break organizationally and programmatically from their bourgeois allies, the contradiction within these formations—which are at once bourgeois and proletarian—has been suppressed in favor of a purely capitalist content.

French worker-militants must therefore refuse to vote for any candidate of the Union of the Left. The electoral policies of the OCI and LO, however, embody a contradiction; while opposing the Union of the Left, they contain an element of capitulation to popular frontist illusions in the class. Therefore a vote for the OCI and LO candidates must be accompanied by criticism of the ambiguity that they are on the one hand running their own candidacies opposed to the Union of the Left yet on the other are calling for at least second-round votes for the CP and SP components of the class-collaborationist bloc.

The OCI and LO have maintained at least remnants of Bolshevik class independence by refusing to support openly bourgeois politicians. This cannot, however, be said of the Ligue Communiste, which for all its "revolutionary" verbiage ends up justifying a vote for class collaboration on the fraudulent grounds that the inclusion of the Left

"capitalist ministers" must be complemented by an equally determined struggle against the capitalist policies of the ministry.

A significant weakness of the OCI's perpetual call, particularly upon the Stalinists, to break with class collaboration and struggle for the workers government is that now, when this issue is indeed posed most sharply before the French working class, the OCI's year-in, year-out usage undercuts the demand's specific impact. This demand, which the OCI poses in a timeless and therefore abstract manner, acquires the greatest urgency in the present context. For the demand that the workers parties must break their bloc with the Radicals and contest for power in their own name means a fundamental polarization along class lines within these formations—the reformist parties in which the working class places its confidence but which have shown themselves to be at the same time the determined guardians of the



Seated at a recent press conference: (from left to right): George Marchais (CP), François Mitterrand (SP), Robert Fobrer (Left Radical).

Radicals in the electoral bloc—what Trotsky, regarding Spain, termed "the shadow of the bourgeoisie"—does not affect its class character. The LC's denial of the popular-front character of the bloc removes all political obstacles to its own participation in the popular front.

The militants of these ostensibly Trotskyist organizations must reject this dangerous political line. If the Popular Union is elected and forms a government, it will certainly come under sharp attack from the bourgeoisie, and in such circumstances the pressures to adapt to the popular front will become enormous. The softness already manifested in the OCI's and LO's election policies poses the danger of future betrayals of far greater magnitude.

Revolutionaries certainly can and should use the electoral process to publicize their opposition to the popular front. This cannot be done by "critical support" to the CP-SP-Left Radicals, but through a call for a CP-SP government on a revolutionary program. The struggle against the

bourgeois order. In this context, the demand for a government of the workers parties alone implies the shattering of these formations—through setting the proletarian base against the treacherous leadership—which stand between the working class and the achievement of its revolutionary will. ■

SL FORUM

The Origins of World War III

Speaker: JOSEPH SEYMOUR
Spartacist League

THURSDAY 8 MARCH
University of Illinois, Circle Campus
7:30 p.m.
Room to be posted

CHICAGO

unit enslaving women could then be replaced through socialization of the means of production and reproduction of labor power. But the revolution which rests on the peasantry or on a specious amalgamation of the interests of peasants and workers (that is, on a modified program of a section of the petty-bourgeoisie) finds that for the peasantry, the family is the existing economic unit of small-scale agriculture, as opposed to the factories and socialized industries of the workers. Unlike the workers, the class interests of the peasants are based on deepening private ownership of small plots, which means retaining the family structure. But the peasants are incapable of reorganizing society. Their conservatizing influence can only be overcome through the leadership of the workers.

Thus, the interrelationship between the land question and the family is a key to understanding the zig-zags of the degenerated and deformed workers states. For industrialization requires a food surplus; a food surplus requires mechanization; mechanization requires industrialization, etc. How to break out of this vicious cycle? The New Economic Policy (NEP), primitive socialist accumulation (the tax in kind), persuasion and example were the methods of Lenin and Trotsky. Bureaucratic fiat, whose parameters are only the precipices of catastrophe, is the method of Stalinism, which veers from Stalin's "Kulaks, enrich yourselves" and Mao's New Democracy to forced collectivization and the Great Leap Forward. During the Great Leap Forward and Stalin's forced collectivization, women were encouraged to participate in social production, and the family tended to be subordinated. But these measures did not correspond to the real tempo of economic development, and no substitutes for the family as an economic unit were developed. Stalinist regimes were thus forced to strengthen the family structure as the only non-revolutionary way out of the chaos they had created and to conciliate the enraged peasantry. The proletariat, precisely the class for whom the family plays no economic role, is destined by history to lead the struggle for women's emancipation.

Women and Permanent Revolution

While class exploitation is the main axis of social struggle, it is not the only form of social oppression. Insensitivity to the special forms of oppression, national, racial and generational as well as sexual, is a form of opportunism. Economism, the ideology of trade union bureaucrats and their hangers-on like the Labor Committee and the Workers League, thrives on such opportunism. However, refusal to see the interlocked nature of special oppression and the class struggle, to posit roads (e.g., bourgeois feminism) other than the class struggle for dealing with special oppression, is both reactionary and utopian. Because the question of women's oppression and the family is fundamental to class society, the solution can only be a global uprooting of capitalist property and the preparation for a classless communist society. Only an international proletarian party, conscious of its tasks and mission, can provide the necessary leadership for such an upheaval. ■

BLACK OPPRESSION

A Communist Strategy to End It

Speaker: JOSEPH SEYMOUR
Spartacist League

THURSDAY 15 MARCH
7:30 pm

East Side Community Center
911 East Ogden

Milwaukee

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Australian Labor Party Elected

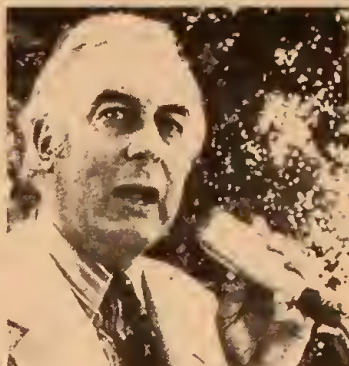
and then place the rightwing candidates last." And, "In our view, experience of a Labor government—which we hope and believe will be elected—will show that another course altogether is necessary to end capitalist control of Australia" (*Tribune*, 21 November 1972). A communist government is presented simply as a more effective, more consistent, in short better version of a Labor government. In reality, a reformist party is directly counterposed to a revolutionary party and, in that sense, is an enemy of the working class.

The Socialist Labor League (SLL) had its paper-thin anti-revisionism crumble beneath the weight of an opportunist, economist approach to the ALP. Like its fraternal organisations in Britain and the U.S., the SLL used scare-mongering to present the ALP vote as a mass working-class upsurge against reaction. "If the Liberals are returned they will be the most reactionary government this country has ever seen.... The workers are not playing a passive role in these elections. On the contrary, they are consciously and actively putting a Labor government into power..." (*Labor Press*, 1 November 1972). By presenting the vote as little short of the defeat of fascism, the SLL avoided the central task of attacking the Labor Party leadership and program.

The ALP is a well-established and openly reformist party. The struggle against the ALP is essentially a struggle against reformist and social-patriotic attitudes and currents within the working class. And here the economism of the SLL is gross. The SLL calls for a "Labor government pledged to socialist policies"—policies which do not include the liberation of women and do not go beyond Whitlam's modified version of the traditional anti-Asian "White Australia" immigration policy. Further, the SLL emasculated the *Transitional Program's* demand for a sliding scale of hours and wages (which is a bridge between the felt needs of the working class and revolutionary consciousness), capitulating instead to

the Stalinist and Left-Labor bureaucrats' openly reformist 35-hour week campaign: "The ALP leaders must pledge themselves to the immediate implementation of the 35-hour week—with 40 hours pay—throughout industry, with the provision for a 30-hour week, with 40 hours pay, in the near future."

The SWL attitude toward the ALP, in line with the political character of its American co-thinker, the SWP, was



Newly-elected Labor prime minister Whitlam and trade-union head Hawke.

consciousness has been awakened by many diverse issues in recent years and Whitlam's reforms are a clear response to the mass movements that developed on those issues" (*Direct Action*, 21 December 1972). The SWL policy builds the dangerous illusion that perhaps mass pressure will force Whitlam to reform away Australian capitalism.

For a number of reasons, critical support for the ALP in the election was a significant issue for Australian revolutionaries. First, the ALP was not running in collaboration with a purely bourgeois party, a popular front, and thereby can be held accountable in the eyes of the workers to govern solely in their interests. Secondly, the ALP is the party of the Australian working class and, as such, is a strategic obstacle to the construction



unalloyed reformism. Its demands on the ALP included gay liberation and punitive nationalization: "nationalize any firm which cannot justify price rises," "nationalize any firm which will not stop polluting the air." Predictably, the SWL's Pablist policy of pressuring the Labor bureaucracy (rather than counterposing a transitional program to the reformist program of the ALP) rebounded in their face when Whitlam's initial reforms closely mirrored their own program. Left with little to criticize Whitlam for, they enthused over his actions: "The fact that the ALP victory was a victory for the working class and its allies was demonstrated very clearly. Labor expressed the hopes of thousands whose political con-

of a revolutionary vanguard party. Thirdly, the victory of the ALP partly reflected working-class discontent with a worsening economic situation. However, the ALP victory also reflected increased bourgeois and petty-bourgeois support produced by a program of economic rationalisation and nationalism. Therefore, the central axis of principled, critical electoral support to the ALP was to counterpose a concrete, revolutionary program to the basic thrust of the ALP's program. To capitalist economic "rationalisation," we counterpose expropriation of private industry and social planning; to Australian nationalism and isolationism, we counterpose proletarian internationalism. ■

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...MAC Vindication

For Candidates Night, the leadership imposed a "gag rule" against criticism of other candidates, and when MAC candidates defied the censorship and continued to expose their opponents' records, they were shoved away from the microphone.

Although all other union groups were permitted to post material, MAC's campaign literature was pulled off the union bulletin boards because the company objected to MAC's call for "nationalization of the phone company under workers control." Ibsen, who grieved the case, agreed to a settlement that anything derogatory to the company could be taken off the union bulletin board and that MAC members would be fired if they posted literature on the union bulletin board.

During this period, the leadership was carefully testing the response of the local, noting carefully the failure of the *Bell Winger*, CESS, and a group of black militants in the local to defend the MAC's democratic rights or to recognize each attack against MAC as part of a drive to wipe out organized opposition.

Branning, who was backing off the

fight for elected stewards, since it put her into confrontation with the leadership, was getting angrier at MAC when it exposed her during the campaign. Instead of the *BW* being able to move her to the left, as *BW* had claimed to expect, its commitment to the bloc with Branning was preventing it from defending MAC.

In the election, MAC candidates pulled about 35% and 14% of the vote in their respective areas. Their support was mainly passive, members willing to vote for their program, but not willing to come to the union meeting or take an active role. The elections were indicative in that they defeated President Blasingame and Secretary-treasurer Eleanor Hart, those two of the old regime who had been seen as most responsible for the heavy-handed tactics such as adjourning meetings when they lost a vote. Ibsen, who won for president, and White, who was re-elected as a vice president, had both been part of the previous administration, which they did not criticize during the campaign; however, they had managed to maintain a lower profile than did Blasingame or Hart.

Branning also lost her election and saw MAC as a factor in her defeat.

At the November union meeting, following the election returns, Blasingame and Hart—with nothing left to lose before their replacements took office—railroaded through a motion to censure MAC for allegedly lying in its literature, then quickly adjourned the meeting. As MAC members lingered in the union hall to protest the motion

they were physically attacked by Vice-President Alta White, Traffic Representative Mary Lou Kindem and Mike Budd (who later brought charges against MAC).

The violence, which was only an extension of the earlier attempts to silence MAC, did finally arouse a defense. A member of the black militant grouping jumped in to pull Budd away, and the *BW* issued a leaflet condemning the violence.

Although the *BW* never formally repudiated its bloc with Branning or appeared to understand why its strategy generates such consequences, the *BW* at this point recognized the danger facing MAC and the entire left. They empirically broke from Branning and fought to keep MAC in the union, playing an active role in the Committee to Defend MAC.

For the moment, 9415 is entering a new period. Freed from the threat of a dangerous purge trial, having won the right to debate and criticize, the local can use these gains as a step toward discarding the politics which have nearly paralyzed it, to alter the pattern of years of sellout and betrayal and to begin to adopt new programs to combat the crises it faces: the forced transfers, layoffs, Phase III of the wage controls and the upcoming 1974 contract. The continued principled struggle of the Militant Action Caucus for a leadership based on a revolutionary transitional program is key to determining whether it will be a period of class struggle or of class collaboration for the Local 9415 phone workers. ■

PURGE ATTEMPT FAILS IN CWA LOCAL: MAC Vindication Is Victory for Union

OAKLAND, Calif.—Charges against the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) of CWA Local 9415 for "bringing the union into disrepute" have been dropped, a victory for union democracy that will set a precedent in upcoming labor struggles. The local here has undergone a critical test and emerged strengthened, having refused to stand by and watch an opposition caucus be railroaded out of the union.

Because of defense of MAC by other oppositional elements in the union, the overwhelming sentiment which made itself felt throughout the key work locations, membership and stewards' meetings, and the intervention of a newly-elected local leadership which was unwilling to lend itself to a blatant witchhunt in the first months following its election, the charges were dropped on February 15.

Five days before the January 1973 union meeting, eight caucus members and sympathizers learned that a "liberal," Virginia Branning and a right-winger, Mike Budd had charged them with "bringing the union into disrepute"—specifically for publishing campaign materials that criticized local officers and stewards for crossing wildcat CWA lines and lines of other unions in the phone industry. Branning denied that they scabbed; Budd did not. Both asserted that to talk about those who scabbed showed the company that the union was internally divided, thereby weakening it. If found guilty, MAC could have been suspended or expelled from the union.

MAC had five days before the January union meeting, where a trial board was to be elected, to mobilize a membership demoralized and apathetic after years of sellout into a fight for MAC's right to remain in the union. Five days to make people understand that at issue was not just a couple of the former bureaucrats' appointees squabbling with the Militant Action Caucus, but a question of whether or not organized or individual opposition could exist in the union and fight to change its course—and that only the intervention of a conscious membership could step in with its weight to get the charges dropped.

MAC's task was to effect a change of consciousness in a membership long dominated and made cynical by the leadership of conservative, self-serving bureaucrats; to enable it to take action, to feel its own power and thus enter the relation of forces. That this was successful and condensed into a time-span of weeks provides a glimpse of the explosive way in which the consciousness of a seemingly passive working class can accelerate.

Initial Inertia Overcome

The membership did not at first see themselves affected by MAC's trial. The atmosphere in early January had somewhat the quality of a Roman circus. Rumors circulated that MAC was "going to be taught a lesson." Not yet seeing the threat to the union, members were merely curious to see if MAC could really prove what they said in their leaflets, curious to see if MAC could extricate itself from this predicament. The new liberal leadership of President Harry Isben stated it was taking a position of strict neutrality. If one member of the local wanted to charge another, it said it could do nothing but ensure that the trial was conducted in a "fair and democratic" manner.

The MAC and the *Bell Winger* (BW), another opposition grouping in Local 9415, worked in the days before the union meeting to impress upon the local the extreme seriousness of the issue, showing the connection of the trial with the 6-month effort to drive

the caucus from the union; pointing out that MAC was on trial not for acts which weaken the union such as scabbing, but for its exposures of the scabbing of candidates for local office; that the charges against MAC violated the rights of free speech in the union and that if MAC was allowed to be kicked out the whole union would be weakened.

The local membership responded to this call. They had just thrown out of office the despised and heavy-handed President Loren Blasingame and Secretary-treasurer Eleanor Hart, in whose defeats MAC's exposures had been a factor. They saw behind the charges of the "liberal" Branning an attack from the Blasingame-Hart right wing.



Jane Margolis
of MAC

The turnout at the union meeting was the largest since the 1971 strike. Sixty-two members voted to recommend that the charges against MAC be dropped as "representing a dangerous precedent and abuse of the CWA constitution." When this vote was narrowly defeated, the membership elected a fair and independent trial board, preventing attempts of the right wing to pack the court.

MAC came out of that meeting with sixty-two people determined to ensure there would be no kangaroo court and with a fighting chance to win the struggle. At the union meeting dozens of "Defend MAC" buttons were handed out and two days later the Committee to Defend the Militant Action Caucus held its first meeting. The Committee called on all members to join who agreed to work to acquit MAC of all charges and who saw in the charges against MAC a threat to the democratic rights of all members to criticize the leadership. Membership in the Committee did not depend on agreement with the program of the caucus. In the Committee were representatives of the *Bell Winger* and independent militants from all over the local. Attending as fraternal representatives were the *Yellow Pages* group and other oppositionists from CWA Locals 9490 and 9410.

Blasingame Discredited

Putting MAC on trial for "bringing the union into disrepute" raised the fundamental question of its fight for leadership in the union, and why other forces wanted to drive it out.

In the four years of the Blasingame regime (during which time Isben was a vice president), which was voted out of office this January, approximately one-third of the membership dropped out of the local. Those who remained were demoralized by a rotten contract settlement in 1971; by the leadership's failure to fight grievances; by its inability to counter the process of automation, firings, forced transfers and layoffs which threaten to cripple the union. Things were so bad that during a seven-month period in 1972, only one membership meeting attained a quorum!

The Defense Committee collected literally scores of affidavits from members who attested that if the local was in disrepute, it was not due to the activities of the Militant Action Caucus. Many affidavits dated the disrepute of the union from the sellout 1971 contract. Others said the disrepute started way before the MAC was formed.

Members from all over the local attested that MAC had fought to strengthen and build the local. MAC documented its record in recent years: it had worked tirelessly to recruit new members; to fight the firings of plant workers and operators; to stay out to reject the 1971 contract and, while politically opposing Blasingame, to defend him when he was fired. In addition, MAC raised the demands of its program, including the election of all union officers; lowering the quorum; labor strikes against the war and the wage freeze; and the principle of international workers solidarity.

Far from bringing the union into disrepute, MAC was threatening the present leadership's ability to wheel and deal with impunity. To the challenge of MAC's program, the leadership had no response but to cut it off, to try to silence it for their own survival.

Union Democracy at Stake

The task of the Defense Committee was to make it clear throughout CWA that the attack on MAC was only the tip of an iceberg, which if successful threatened to drive all militant individuals and groupings from the union. It planned area-wide leaflets on union democracy, issued petitions and buttons, and set up information tables at work locations.

It became public knowledge that MAC could produce witnesses confirming the scabbing charges, which threatened to embarrass many people.

Groups of stewards met to brainstorm ways to get the charges dropped. The support for MAC was building and affecting every level of the union. The new liberal leadership became unwilling to be held responsible for a widely publicized purge and witchhunt and they changed from their original position of formal neutrality to actively encouraging MAC's accusers to drop the charges.

At the executive board meeting on February 15, Isben announced that the charges had been dropped and later that week produced Branning's and Budd's statements withdrawing the charges. Subsequently MAC withdrew its countercharges filed in the union against three members for assault (see WV No. 16, February 1973).

MAC Gains Authority Among Ranks

Those who had wanted to "teach MAC a lesson" had bitten off more than they could chew. The relationship of forces changed from one in which MAC looked relatively unprotected to one in which the right wing was isolated and unwilling to test its strength.

When MAC first began to fight in 1945, it was a tiny group with little support, tolerated by the leadership. It put forward motions in union meetings demonstrating how a leadership really committed to fighting for the working class would handle situations threatening job security, and political issues like the war and the wage freeze. In general MAC was seen by the leadership as not much more than a persistent irritation.

However in the summer of 1972, the Blasingame group began to change its attitude, precipitated by its own demonstrated impotence in the Franklin Street walkout in contrast to the authority gained there by the caucus. Although the bureaucrats' inability to

steer the local had long been obvious, they became completely discredited in this incident. In April 1972 there was a wildcat walkout of operators in the Franklin Street complex in Oakland when management fired a black trainee. MAC called for rehiring the fired operator and for a sanctioned strike should reprisals occur. When the company suspended all who had walked out, the Blasingame leadership in face of mounting militancy sought to contain the flare-up and called for a one-day "work holiday" limited to the Franklin Street building, apparently thinking that if they didn't call this action a strike, PT&T wouldn't notice it. The Company retaliated by firing Blasingame, suspending most of the officers and many militants. MAC, though opposing the leadership's hopeless maneuvers, took a leading role in defending them against the company attack and sought to widen the scope of the union's defense by calling for such action as Central Labor Council support through a general strike and massive picketing. Faced with an overwhelming vote for a strike and afraid of the rising militancy of the local, the Beirne International rushed in to negotiate with the company, achieving a settlement that reversed Blasingame's firing, but left most of the officers and many militants on final warning.

Shortly afterwards, MAC candidate Jane Margolis ran and won election to the local executive board. The discredited leadership began to see MAC as a threat to its authority.

Vacillating Lefts Embolden Bureaucracy

As the fall elections for local officers and executive board representatives drew closer, the Blasingame group grew more concerned about MAC's exposures. The caucus had become extremely obtrusive, while at the same time the formation of the Committee for Elected Shop Stewards (CESS)—a bloc between the *Bell Winger* group and several "progressive" stewards—seemed likely to isolate MAC as the far left wing of the local.

The *Bell Winger* had originated as a split from MAC in early 1972. It split on the basis of advocating building non-programmatic shop-floor committees that would "get workers into motion" around popular issues and asserted that such motion would lead in the direction of progressive change. This strategy was opposed to the MAC perspective of winning workers to seeing the necessity of replacing the entire International and local leadership of CWA by a leadership committed to a revolutionary program of transitional demands—including nationalization of the phone company under workers control and the fight for a workers government.

Believing that workers' own experience of fighting against their oppression will lead in a linear fashion to the correct path of struggle, the BW opposes a fight for leadership based on a class-struggle program and commits itself to the strategy of supporting "progressive" individuals and groups within the union who appear to be in motion.

MAC insisted that whereas the reaction to class exploitation, to having one's labor stolen and used for the profit of a few, produces a spontaneous militancy, this will not necessarily lead to advances for the working class. Without the conscious intervention of a caucus with a principled program, this spontaneous militancy can develop at best only into bourgeois trade union consciousness and not revolutionary consciousness.

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