

UAW Bargaining:

Woodcock Gears Up No-Strike Offensive

The auto companies and the UAW are conducting their final maneuvers and firming up their positions for the 1973 contract negotiations. Special contract meetings have been held in UAW locals, as well as delegated production and skilled workers conferences and a special bargaining convention of the entire union in Detroit. The meetings reflect the pressure which local leaders are under to produce some real gains and reverse Woodcock's galloping retreat before

the capitalist offensive.

Woodcock, however, is concentrating all his energies on preventing a strike when the present contract expires next fall, hardly bothering even to present a militant face to the companies. Verbally at least, the companies are reciprocating Woodcock's amiable attitude, in order to disarm the militants. GM Board Chairman Gerstenberg announced in a friendly tone just before the bargaining convention that GM probably would not raise

prices for the rest of the 1973 model year—a "concession" serving to provide his friend Woodcock with an argument against wage demands in excess of Nixon's 5.5% wage guideline, which is still in force. Warmly greeting the pro-company grovelling of the bureaucrats, Gerstenberg said:

"We in General Motors agree fully with Mr. Woodcock that there is no need for a strike in 1973....

"I now suggest that we have come to a time when we can acknowledge that we

have so far more in common than in conflict, when we can jointly pay our respects to the buried animosities of the past... These differences have no place in our country today: they have gone the way of the sweatshop."

—New York Times, 20 March 1973

He also described as "another welcome indicator" a letter by the UAW's Blue-stone to all locals urging them to press for better quality production (*Wall Street Journal*, 20 March):

The strongest point of Woodcock's ruling bureaucracy is its ability to provide a pressure release valve for the seething discontent of the membership, in the best Reutherite tradition. This technique was demonstrated at the recent production workers' conference in Atlanta this February where local officers were allowed to blow off steam in a giant encounter group session designed to prepare them for next fall's capitulation. The international leadership responded to the legitimate anger and impatience of the assembly workers with calls for such class-collaborationist panaceas as profit-sharing (a reactionary plan to tie the workers to the "profitability" of their exploiters), productivity bonuses (a regressive measure in the direction of piece-work) and finally, the promise that the next production workers' conference would include a Resolutions Committee—thus openly admitting that the Atlanta conference, unlike the Skilled Trades Subcouncil, was never intended to have any decision-making powers at all!

The real negotiating demands were to be determined at the Detroit special
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Renault workers to Ségué, 27 May 1968: "Don't sign." French workers overwhelmingly voted down the first Grenelle Accords, thus rejecting the CGT leaders and provoking a pre-revolutionary situation.

INFORMATIONS OUVRIÈRES

French Elections: Gaullism Wins a Reprieve

The results of the recent French elections amount to a relative victory for the Gaullist coalition. A substantial majority in parliament allows President Pompidou to rule unhindered by the demands of a wider bloc, even with the bourgeois moderates of the so-called "Center" and "Reformer" parties. The main responsibility for this temporary strengthening of a decaying Bonapartist regime must be placed at the feet of the reformist Communist and Socialist parties, the main components of the popular front "Union of the Left." (See "New Pop Frontism in France," *Workers Vanguard* No. 17, March 1973.)

The first unity between the CP and SP since the late 1940's increased the credibility of a left bloc government, leading to an initial wave of enthusiasm for the Union of the Left. Many French workers believed that for the first time in decades there was a real possibility of a government of "their own." It was not to be.

The "Communist" and "Socialist" leaders were, of course, more than eager to get their fingers into the ministerial pie, but at the same time they took great pains not to scare the bourgeoisie with the spectre of socialism lurking around the corner. The necessary reassurances included holding down strike struggles, a moratorium on mass demonstrations, promises to respect the "strong state" constitution of the Fifth Republic, and the Common Program of Government, which calls for a "reformed" capitalism and limits expropriations (with compensation) to domestic banks and 9 (nine!) trusts.

(At least in the good old days of the 1930's popular front they claimed they were going to destroy the power of the 200 families.)

This consistent policy of class-collaboration was signed and sealed by the alliance with the bourgeois Left Radical party, making the Union of the Left a classical popular front, that is, an alliance of workers parties with a section of the capitalist class (the "progressive, democratic, peace-loving, anti-fascist" section of the exploiters, of course). The net result of this pop front and the deliberately

placid election campaign by the left bloc was apathy in the working class and a turn by the petty-bourgeoisie to the more determined leadership of the forces of "law and order."

President Pompidou maneuvered intelligently, with demagogic election promises, some of them quite similar to the Common Program, and a hard-hitting anti-communist campaign. In a last-minute speech the day before the final vote, the former manager of the Banque Rothschild reiterated the constant Gaullist theme: "The choice is simple: on the one side, Marxist com-

munist and the allies it has secured, on the other side everyone else" (*Le Monde*, 11-12 March 1973). The UDR success was also based on widespread gerrymandering: in past elections it has taken approximately four times as many votes to elect a CP deputy as a Gaullist, because of the way the districts are drawn.

**Revolutionary Marxism
and the Popular Front**

"The Fourth International, already today, is deservedly hated by the Stalin-
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BI-WEEKLY WORKERS VANGUARD!



Beginning with the next issue *Workers Vanguard* will appear every other week, except during August and December. This substantial increase in the frequency of our press is an important aspect of the transformation of the Spartacist League, and reflects the substantial growth of the SL in the recent period. It will strengthen the voice of authentic Trotskyism, enabling us not only to comment on, but also to actively intervene in, the course of the class struggle on a more frequent basis. The changeover requires that we raise the subscription price of *WV* from \$2 (for 11 issues) to \$3 (for 24 issues) a year, including *Spartacist*. During the next month locals of the Spartacist League and Revolutionary Communist Youth will be conducting a subscription drive in connection with the launching of the bi-weekly. As the achievement of a solid subscription base is vital to the expansion of *WV*, we encourage all class-conscious militants to aid the campaign by subscribing, making a financial contribution and circulating the only serious Marxist press in the U.S.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Monthly of the Spartacist League

Editorial Board: Lilz Gordon (chairman), Chris Knox (managing editor), Karen Allen (production manager), Jan Norden.

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Editorial Miscellany

Fusion and Confusion in the U.Sec.

Under the heading "German Trotskyist groups fuse" the *Militant* for 16 March 1973 carries the story,

"In Germany two Trotskyist organizations held a fusion conference December 30-January 1 in Kassel. The two organizations—the Gruppe Internationale[r] Marxisten (GIM—International Marxist Group) and the Revolutionär(e) Kommunistische Jugend(RKJ—Revolutionary Communist Youth)—formed a new, united section of the Fourth International, retaining the name of the GIM....

"During the discussion, broad agreement was reached on some key points: a basic orientation toward the workers' vanguard, now developing within given limits in the factories, and the mechanisms of the GIM's trade-union work; the working out of qualitative, transitional demands for the struggles of this vanguard; the political linking of this workers' vanguard to the revolutionary potential... that has been generated by the youth radicalization."

The 3 February issue of *Red Mole*, the paper of the international Marxist group (British section of the U.Sec.) carries a substantively identical account, which does, however, stress rather more strongly "the extent of the youth radicalisation," which it implicitly places on a par with the working-class mass street-actions in support of the Brandt government last year after it lost its parliamentary majority.

What neither story sees fit to mention is the fact that the so-called "Revolutionary Communist Youth" was in actuality the youth section of the GIM; or, since it seems to have been a case of the tail wagging the dog, perhaps one should reverse the priority and term the GIM the adult section of the RKJ. The "fusion," like the principle of agreement reached on all major points, is thus just as fraudulent as that of the (British) Spartacus League with the IMG, which the U.Sec. similarly trumpeted about.

These actions—by Bolshevik standards of democratic centralism and youth-party relations totally anomalous—can perhaps be explained by a revealing passage in the political resolution of the U.Sec. majority submitted to what is laughably termed the "Tenth World Congress—Fourth Since Reunification" (if you can't agree on the past history of your organization, advance two counterposed positions simultaneously!). In this document ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe"), which asserts the correctness of the U.Sec.'s tactic of protracted entristm up till 1968 (when it was forcibly borne in upon these "revolutionary Trotskyists" that perhaps after all the working class might just possess some revolutionary potential—though, of course, only in conjunction with other "sectors of intervention"), we learn that because of "over-specialization in entryist work" the U.Sec.'s European sections

"...generally went about making this shift [to the "new vanguard"] in too slow and stiff a way. The turn was carried out in the best conditions everywhere there was a youth organization led by revolutionary Marxists existing independently that could 'skirt' the problem of a section identified in the eye of the vanguard with an entryist orientation."

Apart from the application here of the term "vanguard" not to the revolutionary Leninist party of the proletariat and its most class-conscious elements but to an undefined amalgam of (perhaps) subjectively revolutionary ex-Stalinist or -Maoist students (a practice followed throughout this document), we see that the adult sections of the U.Sec., tarred with the entryist brush, were by its own admission so totally discredited among this "new far-left vanguard" as to lack any appeal. Hence the resort to building up youth sections under another name. So far did this process proceed that these "hybrid revolutionary youth organizations... in certain contexts and in view of the relationship of forces... function[ed] as substitutes for adult revolutionary organizations," while bearing "many of the failings typical of the radical student milieu."

Evidently sufficient time has now intervened since the palmy days of entristm for the U.Sec. to feel secure in unmasking itself, to shine forth again like Lucifer in all its pristine glory. Thus from the same document we learn that the "Fourth international opted for a rather rapid fusion between the youth organizations that in reality were substituting themselves for the revolutionary Marxist organizations that did not function within the new far left, and the old sections...." And, of course, while we're at it, why not draw maximal propagandistic advantage among the uninformed by announcing these "fusions" as if they pertained to independent Trotskyist groupings?

Truly, in the view of the U.Sec. the proletariat is possessed of a memory exceedingly short indeed! (Not to mention that of their so-called "new vanguard.") May our account serve as a short reminder!

NCLC/SWP: Cops, Crime and Class

The National Caucus of Labor Committees has for some time been a member of that select club of "Marxists" (together with the Workers League) who consider cops part of the working class. This was brought to light again recently in the 12-16 February issue of the NCLC paper, *New Solidarity*, when they gave their "trade union swine of the week award" to Robert M. McKiernan, head of New York City Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. It seems that "narrow, chauvinist union leaders like McKiernan and Maye [head of the firemen's association] continue to reject a class-wide organizing perspective." One can

only conclude that for the NCLC a class-conscious PBA, together with a reconstructed NWRO, would represent a giant step forward towards the creation of a "proto-soviet" of the "political working class!"

To consider the hired guns of the capitalist class as fellow workers is a disgusting betrayal of the most elementary principles of Marxism and the interests of the proletariat. However, it is not without parallel among allegedly socialist groups in the American left. Thus the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party inadvertently showed its appetites for achieving bourgeois respectability by topping off its fall 1972 election campaign with candidates for sheriff, district attorney and commissioner of precinct 3 of Travis City, Texas (*Militant*, 3 November 1972, p. 19). These intrepid revolutionaries apparently want to become little Noskes, maintaining law and order on behalf of the bourgeoisie. (The Social Democrat Noske used the bourgeois police to smash the Spartacus uprising in Berlin, 1919.)

Now the Labor Committee has outdone itself again by discovering that jails are the result of a "barbaric religious ritual of retributive justice!" Lenin and Marx, who considered jails and police as part of the bourgeois state apparatus, necessary to suppress the workers and maintain its class rule, are apparently vulgar materialists in this dream world. Naturally, we who thought that most crime was a by-product of capitalist exploitation are revealed as bopeless formalists. In a special pre-convention supplement to *The Organizer* published by the "Committee to Rebuild the National Welfare Rights Organization," the NCLC-supported faction in the NWRO, we read: "Actual crimes must, of course, be prevented, and persons disposed to such anti-social acts must be treated... With the aid of concerned former felons, who thus have useful insight into the problem represented by such anti-social tendencies, the problem must be approached in the same terms as diseases. Prisons, or places of confinement to the extent they must continue to exist, must become effective rehabilitation centers..." Naturally, in this whole brochure there is not one mention of socialism or revolution, so what is being talked about is capitalist "rehabilitation centers."

The Spartacist League has always maintained a class line on the cop question. We sharply attacked the Workers League for their support of the 1971 police strike, and have called for kicking the cops out of the AFSCME (public employees) and SSEU (social workers) unions. (See "Police Militancy vs. Labor," *Workers' Action*, April-May 1971.) As for the prisons, the SL calls not for their reform but for their elimination through socialist revolution:

"The prison system cannot be reformed; it must be abolished. While it is correct to struggle for demands which meet the immediate needs of the prisoners, it is essential that we raise the banner of *Smash the Prisons!* We must point out that the main bulk of the reforms proposed can only be realized when bourgeois property relations are overthrown. To abolish the prisons, we must abolish the bourgeois state of which they are part, and the class in whose interests that state is administered." [emphasis in original]

— "Massacre at Attica,"

Workers Vanguard, October 1971

PL: Clean Teeth and Little Red Apples

Apparently as a result of Progressive Labor's recent activity in the Medical Committee for Human Rights, we are now being treated to a "Health Page" in *Challenge*. In the 22 March issue under the headline, "Fight to Live—Live to Fight, Part I: Eat Plenty of Apples," we are treated to an attempt to masquerade as a left-wing Adele Davis:

"An apple a day (thoroughly washed) will do what it promises plus a bit more.... We've got nuthin to lose.... Some years back we learned that many Russian workers were big on apples. They eat apples because they enjoy them like most of us, but they also eat them for laxative purposes.... a hetuiva good move."

In case you happen to live in a penthouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side, PL can tell you specifically how to stay healthy:

"Workers living in New York City should know that each year during apple season the Gristede Bros. Grocers come out with their own brand of apple juice in gallon jugs and quart containers. It's unadulterated and without additives."



Incidentally, if you live in the areas where Gristede Bros. have their grocery stores you might also own a genuine pearl necklace. Well if you do, "don't ever let your kid drop real pearls into a glass of vinegar. Pearls dissolve in it. Now a pearl is merely lipidlike (fatty) tumescent exudations, solidified layer by layer."

Well, if that last bit was a little too technical, PL puts it all together for you in that down-home folksy style that only *Challenge* knows how to write:

"As this guy down at the mill was sayin' bout union leader Georgy the 'm,' while munchin his apple, 'I'd rather see no worm than hall un.'"

This may all seem a little bit off-the-wall, and not directly related to the struggle for socialism. But that just shows your narrow-minded sectarianism. Milt Rosen explained it carefully for us in the January 1973 issue of *PL* magazine:

"...if you went to the doctor and he told you to brush your teeth every day and take a pill which would help you, you would brush your teeth and take the pill. Now I am all for brushing your teeth and taking medicine to help yourself. However, fighting the ruling class for socialism, against racism and for '30 for 40' is more important."

PL has a way of reducing every political struggle to the level of personal habits and inanities. Some time back their National Committee suspended one of their members, Jared Israel, for not washing dishes enough. Perhaps Jared will now be able to get back by suspending Rosen for smoking.

Communist Work in the Trade Unions

The Lessons of Historical Experience

Speakers: CHRIS KNOX, Labor Editor of *Workers Vanguard*

Wednesday, April 18 at 7:30 p.m.
Washington Square Methodist Church
133 West 4th Street

NEW YORK

Friday, April 6 at 8:00 p.m.
SUNY/Buffalo
Norton Union, Room 240

BUFFALO

Open Letter to the Ranks of the Black Panther Party on the Oakland Elections

Comrades:

In the wake of the Nixon landslide and the ceasefire in Indochina, the bourgeoisie is attempting to stabilize finance capital at the expense of the working masses in this country and internationally. The welfare lines grow; already painfully inadequate childcare, educational and medical facilities are cut back even further; food prices soar; and the extreme fragility of the economic boom is underlined by the further devaluation of the dollar. 1973 will see contract battles in five major industries in the U.S. at a time when the union ranks have grown increasingly fed up with the sellout policies of the labor bureaucracy. Because of the pervasive racism of capitalist society, all of this comes down hardest on the black proletariat and other specially oppressed minorities.

The working people here and abroad are well aware of their deteriorating conditions. But what is lacking is a tested revolutionary leadership, a program and party that can lead the working class and oppressed masses toward the expropriation of the capitalist class—the perpetrators of exploitation—and the establishment of a socialist society.

At this time the Black Panther Party is running Bobby Seale for Mayor and Elaine Brown for Councilwoman in the city of Oakland. We have followed your press and public statements as well as attended several campaign rallies for Bobby Seale in order to determine our stand on this campaign. As Marxists, we must ask the question: who will benefit should Seale win this election? We look at the program that Seale and Brown are running on, and consider the composition and policy in practice of your party. A minimum condition for any support is that the party must represent independent working-class political action, not some variation of bourgeois politics that may have support from sectors of the workers.

Looking directly at your program—the Ten Point Program—nowhere do you come out clearly against support for bourgeois candidates. Nowhere do you come out with a strong statement against the Democrats, who have cynically manipulated blacks in this country for decades, coming into the ghettos just before elections to promise a few reforms, just enough to pacify the workers, the unemployed, the welfare clients. The liberal legislation of the 1960's was powerless to make a dent in the problems which daily grow more intolerable: jobs, housing, medical care, childcare, drugs, schools. The reforms of Johnson's "Great Society"—the "Model Cities" program, "Headstart" and OEO grants—where mil-

lions of dollars disappeared into projects which did little to help poor blacks—have now proven to be as reversible as are all reforms under capitalism.

BPP Leaders Repudiate Your Party's Past

From its inception, the Black Panther Party was based upon a contradiction: on the one hand, a subjective identification with the most oppressed blacks (working people, the unemployed, welfare recipients, youth, etc.) whose fundamental oppression under capitalism clearly could not be solved or even substantially lessened by a few small and reversible liberal reforms; on the other hand, the ideology of black nationalism, which denied the class basis of society and social struggle and opened the door to the BPP becoming merely another pressure group seeking to play the ethnic politics game of competing for a bigger "slice of the pie" within the status quo.

The Spartacist League was often sharply critical of the BPP in this period, pointing out that black nationalism and Stalinism-Maoism are ideologies of defeat for black working people, struggling against the BPP when it lent itself to the bourgeoisie's attempt to mobilize the indignation of ghetto residents against the unions in the 1968 New York teachers' strike, exposing the "community control" myth as a reactionary fraud, cautioning against substitutionist adventurist terrorism, denouncing the reformism of some of the Panthers' "community" projects. At the same time we recognized that the BPP was the only one among the various black nationalist formations which was seeking to be more than simply "porkchop nationalists." We respected the courage of the Panther militants who embraced a mistaken adventurist policy because of their desire to fight against oppression. And we gave credit to the BPP for its opposition to the hustlers who sought nothing but their own lucrative careers through meaningless "anti-poverty" programs and to the black Democrats and Republicans who keep the ghetto masses tied to the parties of exploitation, racism and imperialism.

In the early years of your party you called for opposition to the Republicans and Democrats. It was largely because of this position that the Spartacist League gave critical support to your 1968 Congressional ticket in which Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and Kathleen Cleaver ran for seats in the California legislature. At the same time we were extremely critical of the



Bobby Seale speaking at Oakland campaign rally.

middle-class, Eugene McCarthy-like politics of the Peace and Freedom Party whose ticket you used to gain ballot status. We pointed out that the PFP was attempting to use the militant image of the Panthers to gain radical petty-bourgeois and working-class support for its own reformist program.

In 1968 you opposed the election of black Democrat Willie Brown, pointing out that he did not represent the interests of oppressed blacks, and ran your own candidate, Kathleen Cleaver, for his seat in the California State Assembly. But only four years later, in the recent 1972 elections, your party urged the Oakland "black community" to vote for the "People's Candidates": Shirley Chisholm and Ron Dellums. And now in the current campaign your ads on KDIA start with, "Hi, I'm Bobby Seale, a Democrat..." and end with "vote for Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown, two Democrats, people's candidates." How is it that your party, which once claimed to seek a revolutionary transformation of society, can now support candidates who are members of the Democratic Party—the party of war, racism and repression—and run as Democrats yourselves? The theme song of Chisholm's whole campaign was to give everyone a "fair share" so that we can "make the system work." In your campaign material you use the slogan, "It's not a race problem, it's a job problem." No, comrades, it is a class problem. Chisholm and Dellums are traitors to the oppressed blacks in this country, because they represent conciliationism with capitalism, i.e., the maintenance of the status quo. These black Democrats are truly enemies of the working class. By joining this bosses' party of war, racism and exploitation, Seale and Brown are placing themselves in the same camp with Chisholm and Dellums... and with Daley, Wallace and the rest of their ilk.

Where Is the Program for the Working Class?

But, you object, the Ten Point Program is in the interest of black and white working people in the city of Oakland. You call for full employment, decent housing, education, free health care, an end to the murder of black people. Certainly, no Marxist could oppose such reforms; we fight for any measure that will relieve, even if only in a small way, the problems of the oppressed and exploited.

But to call for full employment without such demands as Organize the Unorganized, Jobs for All, 30 Hours Work for 40 Hours Pay, Expropriation of Industry under Workers Control, For a Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions, Forward to a Workers Government, leads to union busting. You seek to eliminate unemployment by demanding that 50% of the people hired by businesses who have contracts with the city of Oakland be unemployed Oakland residents. Such a demand will simply lead to deals with big business and government at the expense of organized

labor. Taking jobs away from the unions destroys their bargaining power and weakens the position of the whole working class, including the unemployed. No matter how reactionary their leaderships, the trade unions represent the first step of the working class in overcoming atomization and impotence at the hands of their employers.

In an expression of the fundamental nationalism of the BPP you call for the preferential hiring of blacks. This will only serve to intensify racial antagonisms, antagonisms which must be overcome in order for the working class to make a strong, unified struggle against the capitalists. Intensification of racial antagonisms within the working class not only prolongs capitalism by trapping the class in disunity and reactionary ideology, but also differentially endangers those who have the least social power with which to defend themselves. Demands like "30 for 40" cut across racial divisions by creating more jobs, instead of gaining employment for blacks at the expense of other workers.

In a recent campaign speech at Laney College Seale advocated the creation of a black police force in the city of Oakland. Changing the color of the police force does not change its function—the armed guardian of bourgeois "law and order." Black cops are just as effective at strikebreaking and repressing black ghetto residents as white cops.

Black Version of the "April Coalition"?

Your program for this election bears a striking similarity to the "radical" program of the April Coalition—the bloc of movement activists and Democrats who elected three members to the Berkeley City Council in April 1971. Since then the miserable record of these "radicals" and their impotence in effecting even the most minimal reforms have been so unmistakable that even the *Militant*, newspaper of the crassly reformist Socialist Workers Party, carried a four-part exposé of their performance in office. While embroiled in conflicts among themselves between proposals addressed to the needs of women and proposals addressed to blacks as though the two were contradictory, all three have concentrated almost exclusively on trying to achieve their aims by maneuvers within the city council. In the words of Iona Hancock, one of the Coalition council members: "Radicals are here to stay in Berkeley and so are conservatives. The question is how are we going to live together" (*Militant*, 9 June 1972).

The Black Panther Party supported the election of the April Coalition. Granted, your paper also criticized these "people's" candidates after the election. Too little too late. Revolutionaries must always, as James P. Cannon wrote, know "what to do next." Using the criteria of program, practice and

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Spartacist Local Directory

ATLANTA
Box 7686, Atlanta, GA 30309

BERKELEY—
OAKLAND..... (415) 848-3029
Box 852, Main P.O.
Berkeley, CA 94701

BOSTON..... (617) 661-8284
Box 188, M.I.T. Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139

BUFFALO..... (716) 881-3064
Box 412, Station C
Buffalo, NY 14209

CHICAGO..... (312) 548-2934
Box 6471, Main P.O.
Chicago, IL 60680

CLEVELAND..... (216) 696-4943
Cleveland WV Committee
Box 2492
Cleveland, OH 44112

DETROIT
Box 663A, General P.O.
Detroit, MI 48232

LOS ANGELES..... (213) 467-6855
Box 38053, Wilcox Sta.
Los Angeles, CA 90038

MILWAUKEE
Box 5144, Harbor Sta.
Milwaukee, WI 53204

NEW ORLEANS..... (504) 866-8384
Box 51634, Main P.O.
New Orleans, LA 70151

NEW YORK..... (212) 925-2426
Box 1377, G.P.O.
New York, NY 10001

SAN DIEGO..... (714) 272-2286
Box 22052, Univ. City Sta.
San Diego, CA 92122

SAN FRANCISCO..... (415) 863-1459
Box 40574
San Francisco, CA 94140

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Woodcock...

bargaining convention, where Woodcock carefully maintained control by presenting a laundry list of promises which reflected the pressure of all sectors of the union on the leadership, but contained nothing new. As usual, most of it will be dropped in bargaining. Calling his critics "fools and liars" and "enemies of this union" Woodcock successfully co-opted the disgruntled local leaders and outmaneuvered the UNC opposition. None of these elements transcended the reformist trade unionism upon which Woodcock's demagoguery was based.

A good example of the worthlessness of the spontaneous "militant" leadership was provided by Gary Bryner, Local president and "hero" of the Lordstown strike. Bryner's speech lauding the International bureaucracy which sold out the Lordstown workers provided the most disgusting example of the subservience of the local UAW bureaucracy to the class-collaborationist leadership of Solidarity House.

Under the guise of setting up unsatisfactory security for the union against union-busting, the bureaucracy's collective bargaining resolution contained the most blatant statement of its class collaborationism in its history:

"...the growth and success of the company are of direct interest to the workers and their union, and success of the union is of direct interest to the company...each party therefore pledges...that it will not, in any way, impede the growth or success of the other."

The virtually unanimous passage of this resolution codified what has been the policy of the UAW bureaucracy since its inception.

The United National Caucus managed to attract some sections of the left-leaning bureaucracy to a speech given at its public meeting by ex-Western Region Director Paul Schrade. Schrade argued for not pointing the finger of blame at anyone in particular (i.e., Woodcock or himself) for past failures such as the 1970 GM contract (which he supported). He carried this out by refusing to speak in opposition to the bureaucracy on the floor of the convention. At the UNC meeting, one speaker generally reflecting the views of IS—the UNC's chief outside supporters—challenged Schrade to adopt a caucus orientation, which could only mean joining the UNC. There is nothing in either the UNC's or IS' programs which would prevent a complete subordination of both groups to the bureaucratic aspirations of a purely self-serving careerist such as Schrade.

Real Issues Buried

Behind this facade of a labor-management love affair lie the real issues. Woodcock and the entire UAW International bureaucracy, supported by the local officials, are consciously defending the interests of the companies for higher "productivity" with fewer workers on the basis of the false notion that the success of American capitalism will somehow benefit American working people. Especially important is success over foreign competition, so that American jobs are protected. Lay-offs, however, are required in order to achieve this!

Because of Woodcock's brand of labor "leadership"—the class-collaborationist result of reformist trade unionism—the companies are assured that there will be no hard UAW demand for fully voluntary overtime, no effort to curtail the speedup and overwork upon which the "productivity" drive depends, nor any attempt to defeat the wage guidelines enforced by Nixon's "advisory committee," upon which Woodcock sits. Thus for the UAW tops there is "no need" for a strike, since Woodcock has already surrendered!

Until the reformist bureaucracy is replaced with revolutionary leadership, the UAW will continue to sell out on job conditions, layoffs, etc., in exchange for small increases in wages and benefits, or, if the bosses come upon hard times, for nothing at all. The interests of the workers, however, call for a drastically different policy, beginning with international working-class solidarity against capitalism of all nations and embracing full workers' control of production, including line speed; a shorter work week at no loss in pay to end unemployment; and preparation of the struggle for political power through the call for a workers party based on the trade unions and the demand for a workers government.

It is on such a program, representing the historic interests of the international working class, that a real opposition in the unions must be built. Various fake-left tendencies act as if such a program is fine for lipservice by them, but "too advanced" for the workers. "Stick to the immediate issues—wages and hours," they say. They are only playing Woodcock's game. As long as "revolutionaries" restrict themselves to simple trade unionism, it is the real trade unionists who will ultimately win out. Internationalism, workers' control of production, a workers party and a workers government: these are burning issues of the day.

The UAW's position on internationalism and the shorter workweek makes this clear. Said Woodcock:

"If we're going to move to a shorter workweek—say a four-day week—and then have that capital equipment lying idle for three days every week, costs are going to skyrocket, and we do have to be concerned with the import problem in our domestic market."

—U.S. News and World Report, 12 February 1973

He makes no secret of the fact that his concern is for the maintenance of American capitalism's dominance of the world market, in spite of all his pious speeches in favor of international workers' solidarity at meetings of the International Metalworkers Federation.

The 1971 British Ford strike provided a clear example of the cynicism with which the union tops view their participation in the IMF: soon after declarations of solidarity were passed at the London IMF conference in support of the strike, the company was able to successfully route shipments of crankshafts to the Cologne, Germany plant through their Canadian plant in Windsor, Ontario, with the full knowledge of the union leaders.

The bureaucracies of the national unions are well aware of the threat to them represented by any manifestation of real workers' solidarity across national boundaries—a truly international union could not be contained within the bounds of narrow patriotism and loyalty to a particular national bourgeoisie. Thus, in 1963, when the workers of UAW Local 600 offered money to the English stewards at the Dagenham Ford complex to aid them in organizing a union of auto and ancillary trade workers, Reuther threatened the Detroit workers with an injunction, while his British counterpart Carron threatened with expulsion those members of the engineers union involved in the negotiations.

"Left" Echo

Capitulating to Woodcock's social-democratic trade unionism, the "revolutionaries" supporting the United National Caucus (UNC) fail to take a firm stand against the national chauvinism so prevalent among American workers. At the rare times when they actually refer to an issue beyond their typically opportunist scope, such as their sporadic opposition to the Vietnamese war, they can only echo the social-patriotism of the Woodcock bureaucracy. The November 1969 issue of UNC uncritically quoted the Alliance for Labor Action (ALA) statement against the war, which attacked "the reprehensible activities of a small

minority who burn the American flag and equate Anti-Americanism with Anti-War."

The opportunists of the UNC appear to be vying with Woodcock for the favors of the imperialist rulers. Last spring's UAW Constitutional Convention endorsed a proposal to seek national legislation requiring federal licensing of multi-national corporations seeking to export capital. At its recent conference in Detroit, the official spokesman for the UNC on unemployment, MacFadden, called for the same thing: "restrictions on the export of capital" (See WV No. 17, March 1973). According to the UAW formula, such a license to export capital would be issued only if the corporation could prove that the projected export was "in the national interest of the U.S." (Monthly Labor Review, July 1972).

Defense of "the national interest of the U.S." means nothing other than defense of the interests of the U.S. ruling class. The American workers have no stake in furthering the imperial aims of these parasites—the multi-national corporations must be fought with international proletarian solidarity, not with narrow nationalist protectionism. Without an effective organi-



Fremont, Calif. auto workers on eve of 1970 GM strike move to prevent a shipment of trucks. "Radical" Paul Schrade, then West Coast UAW director, denounced action as work of students, formed liaison committee with cops against "outside agitators," set up goon squad and called tactical police to prevent rally called by oppositionist United Action Caucus.

zation which unites in a single force the workers of every country, the capitalists will continue to pit one group of workers against another, using the threat of runaway factories to defeat those struggles which remain limited within a single nation (a technique used successfully by Ford to win strikes in Argentina in 1966 and in Belgium in 1968).

Similarly, the American auto workers are doomed to failure unless they recognize the necessity of forging bonds with their brothers and sisters across the world, through international strike solidarity, a truly international metalworkers union with uniformly high wage scales and a program of international class struggle.

"Opposition" is Cheap

Opposition to the openly defeatist policies of the international leadership costs little these days. A militant, anti-Woodcock posture is the minimum needed for any UAW local leader to maintain credibility today among the union ranks. Every ambitious careerist desiring higher office in the union is leaping onto the "critical" bandwagon, and loyally tagging along behind are his "socialist" covers—one or another allegedly revolutionary group to protect his flank from attack as he prepares to lead the workers into yet another reformist dead-end.

A case in point: A certain Bob Carter at the Jefferson Chrysler plant in Detroit was elected to the Executive

Board of Local 7 with the support of the United Justice Caucus, an IS-supported local caucus affiliated to UNC. Carter then promptly turned around and quit the caucus. He had apparently decided that the caucus would alienate the workers by attacking the international leadership instead of devoting itself exclusively to the problems of Local 7. The plaintive query of the UJC: "Why does he suddenly discover a need to resign now?" is left unanswered (United Justice Train, January 1973). There is a moral in this for those who are willing to learn: If you grovel at the feet of an opportunist, he is quite likely to use you as a stepladder to power. The IS will never learn from this, since the lesson destroys its entire basis of existence.

Faced with ripening opportunities for political activity in the UAW, almost every fake-left organization now has supporters in this union. Yet not one of them calls for a communist policy in the unions. Stalinist, social-democrat, Maoist, pseudo-Trotskyist—every self-styled "Marxist" tendency on the American left is following a deliberate and consistent policy of explicit reformism in the trade unions.

Having abandoned any prospect of winning the working class to an internationalist, revolutionary consciousness, these universally opportunist formations are competing with one another to see how fast they can dissolve themselves into the UNC and the "rank and file."

Typical of "radical" programs to be advanced for the 1973 contract battles are those proposed by supporters of the Communist Party (CP), International Socialists (IS) and the Workers League (WL). One is struck by an amazing similarity between these programs, which share a number of elements: higher wages, shorter hours, the right to strike, a range of minor reforms and the complete absence of anything that would qualitatively distinguish them from old-fashioned, "pure-and-simple" reformist trade unionism.

The Question of Power

Nowhere do any of these groups pose the necessity for a struggle for power, the need to organize the working class to extend the endless skirmishes for partial demands into an all-out battle for the expropriation of the capitalists, the overthrow of their government and the establishment of a socialist society under the rule of a workers state. Instead, the long-range goal is always separated from, and subordinate to, the immediate economic demands of the next set of contract negotiations.

All these ostensibly revolutionary

Militant, Internationalist Policies Required for Shell Strike Victory

NEW ORLEANS—The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) is currently on strike against the Shell Oil Company. The principal demand of the union is for a Health and Safety Committee representing both labor and management. Seeing that the strike will likely be a drawn-out affair and not wanting to create turmoil in the labor movement

which might be reflected in the OCAW's own rank and file, the national leadership of OCAW had called for a consumer boycott of Shell Oil's products along the lines of the famed grape boycott.

While it is the elementary duty of all working-class militants to defend the strike and not buy scab products, it is an act of betrayal to simply follow the wishes of the OCAW's bureaucracy. But opportunist tendencies like the New American Movement, the Red Collective of New Orleans and the October League have done just that.

First, no labor militant can believe that Shell Oil or any other company has the right to determine in any manner what are "safe" conditions under which workers should work. For the bosses, the question of safety boils down to the question of safety for their profits. We must call instead for workers' Health and Safety Committees with the right to shut down plants when safety hazards are present. For Workers Control of Production!

Secondly, since Shell is owned by British and Dutch capital, the union leadership has made patriotic appeals for support of the strike. As Alex Livingston, president of OCAW Local 4-750 at Norco, La. put it: "The Queen is going to try to tell us Americans what to do?" But whether it's

the Queen, Nixon or Rockefeller, all have a common interest in fighting unions. Instead of appealing to patriotism, the fundamental issue must be the solidarity of all workers both here and abroad against their international capitalist enemies. For the OCAW (as with the farmworkers before them) this should be obvious when the Defense Department stated that it would not honor the boycott of Shell products.

Having prepared themselves for this capitulation to patriotism by their uncritical support of the robbers' peace in Vietnam, NAM and the Red Collective have not raised one criticism or counterposed one internationalist slogan to the position of the union leadership. At a recent demonstration at Shell's southeastern headquarters in New Orleans, the only organization putting forward an internationalist position was the SL/RCY which marched with its own signs including: "Workers' Struggle Is International/Safe and Equal Working Conditions for Workers of All Countries," "U.S. and Foreign Capitalists the Same/Exploitation Is the Name of the Game."

Third, at a 16 March meeting of the Shell Boycott Coalition, while the SL/RCY, the Black Workers Congress and the Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the NMU spoke in favor of going to the unions to get their active support,

elements of NAM, the Red Collective, the OCAW international representative and various environmentalists pressed for continued consumer boycott protest activities, e.g., the picketing of Shell service stations. The real power to win this strike lies in the organized working class and its solidarity. While the OCAW had received passive support from a number of unions many of these unions (such as the NMU) continue to handle Shell products. At the meeting, Gene Herson, presidential candidate of the MSC in the upcoming National Maritime Union elections, called for "hot cargoing" Shell products. The international representative of the OCAW argued that hot cargoing was illegal. Herson replied that many unions were built through militant tactics such as these.

The opposition of the OCAW leadership to attempts to mobilize rank-and-file support for the strike both here and abroad is a sign of their willingness to lose the strike rather than cut across anti-labor laws and offend their capitalist friends. The appeal to patriotism has its roots in this same attitude, which requires that the OCAW rank and file keep its distance from giving active support to and getting active support from workers on strike against Shell in Venezuela, Curacao and Japan. ■

groups reveal an opportunist adaptation to the present backwardness of the masses instead of a commitment to building the revolutionary vanguard through raising the level of consciousness of the class. Certainly it is essential for revolutionists to participate in the everyday struggles of the workers over wages, hours and working conditions in order to ensure the closest contact between the class and the party—to establish its authority and legitimacy in the eyes of the workers by demonstrating in practice that the communists are the most militant, far-sighted and consistent defenders of the interests of the class. This does not mean, however, that we attempt to win leadership as simple trade unionists, within the framework established by capitalism and its defenders in the labor bureaucracy.

We aspire to lead the class as communists, which will often necessarily entail counterposing the historic, world-wide interests of the proletariat to its immediate consciousness. In fact, except during periods of revolutionary upheaval, during which the class leaps ahead to transcend its traditional patterns, the consciousness of the working class will generally reflect the dominant ideology, the ideas which serve the interests of bourgeois society. Capitalism is seen as permanent and omnipotent; struggle against it, as futile and utopian. If the continued existence of the capitalist system is taken as the framework, the only struggle possible is simple trade unionism—the fight to sell one's labor power at the highest price; to make exploitation more expensive, but never to abolish it altogether. The ideology of trade unionism is bourgeois ideology, as Lenin insisted in *What is to Be Done?*, the classic attack on trade-union reformism and economism, a work which has lost none of its polemical relevance.

How then is it possible to win the working masses to a truly revolutionary perspective, to an understanding of the need to overthrow capitalism and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat? It was the third, Communist International, while it was still the world party of Lenin and Trotsky, which first clearly posed the answer:

"The Communist Parties must put forward demands, and they must fight with the masses for their fulfillment, regardless of whether they are in keeping with the profit system of the capitalist class or not. What the Communist Parties have to consider is not whether capitalist industry is able to continue to

exist and compete, but rather whether the proletariat has reached the limit of its endurance.... The alternative offered by the Communist International in place of the minimum program of the reformists and centrists is: the struggle for the concrete needs of the proletariat and demands, which, in their application, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, organize the proletariat, form the transition to proletarian dictatorship, even if the latter have not yet grasped the meaning of such proletarian dictatorship. As the struggle for these demands embraces ever-growing masses, as the needs of the masses clash with the needs of capitalist society, the workers will realize that capitalism must die if they are to live." [emphasis in original]

—Theses and Resolutions adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International, "Theses on Tactics," June-July 1921

The American section of the Comintern carried out work in the unions based on these guidelines, by calling for a "united front of the revolutionary and progressive elements in the labor unions...through the Trade Union Educational League." Unlike the "united fronts" based on minimal reformist programs so common today, the TUEL was based on a full program which clearly distinguished it from the reformist "socialists" and trade-union bureaucrats:

"This organization is carrying on an aggressive campaign in favor of the program of the Red International of Labor Unions, including a policy of aggressive class struggle instead of class collaboration, the workers' republic, independent working-class political action, affiliation with the Moscow International, the general strike, support of the Russian Revolution, industrial unionism through amalgamation, etc."

—The Labor Herald, February 1923

This was the tradition which Trotsky developed a step further with the Transitional Program of 1938, the founding document of the Fourth International. The transitional program is necessary to bridge the gap between the existing consciousness of the class and revolutionary class-consciousness, i.e., communism. It does not represent an abstract list of slogans to ensure one's revolutionary purity; the transitional program embodies a strategy of concrete struggles, by posing the real solutions to the oppression of the working masses—solutions which fundamentally challenge the survival of outmoded capitalism and point to international socialist revolution as the only possible answer to the needs of the masses.

Pseudo-Trotskyists like the Work-

ers League and International Socialists reject the Transitional Program as artificial, sectarian and irrelevant to the needs of the workers in this period. By abandoning a principled program based on the objective needs of the working class for the role of left-wing of bourgeois trade unionism, they are condemning themselves to historical irrelevance.

The Spartacist League consistently defends a program for the unions which reflects the lessons learned by the communist movement; thus the SL only supports caucuses which represent a

qualitative break with reformist unionism and seek to provide an alternative leadership on the basis of principled revolutionary politics instead of opportunist adaptationism and reformist panaceas. Because of this, the SL will be a real force in developing revolutionary consciousness through the development of a solid core of communist cadre in the unions, capable of exerting independent and revolutionary leadership, long after the other tendencies have thoroughly betrayed the revolutionary aspirations and goals of the working class. ■



Detroit Chrysler sit-down strikers in March 1937 respond to court injunction ordering them out of the plant.

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PL on the Road to Reformism: AN INSIDERS' VIEWPOINT

By Art Carling and Jay Franklin

[Editor's note: The authors are two former members of PL. Jay F. was a member of the Progressive Labor Party from before its founding convention in 1965, and active in the Bay Area PL, primarily in trade union work, for six years. Art C. was involved in PL's army work.]

The transformation of Progressive Labor from an aggressive left-centrist grouping into reformism is almost complete. The class orientation which marked PL through the summer of 1971 has been largely submerged in a desperate search for gimmicks promising mass influence. PL nose-dived into the bourgeois-led NPAC, created its own single-issue reform groups in SDS and WAM, and now begins to consider the possibility of work within the Democratic Party.

A combination of continual zigzags in the line, theoretical disorientation, moralizing sermons rather than political struggle and now a qualitative right turn has led to accelerated internal demoralization within PL. Scores of members and close sympathizers have left PL on the West Coast alone during the past two years. Unfortunately, most of these dropouts have fallen into political passivity rather than attempting to analyze the crisis facing PL. An index of this organizational crisis is the party chairman's recent speech to the ranks reprinted in the latest *PL*—a homespun assortment of petty homilies begging the members not to quit and declaring that the very act of "fighting is winning."

For PL the only existing organizational cement is super-activism based on this "fighting is winning" line; an orgy of paper sales, 30 for 40 petitions and anti-racist textbook campaigns substitute for political clarification. The inability of PLers to grapple with political criticisms, especially those of the Spartacist League, leads to responses along the line of, "at least we're building something! What do you guys do, except bother us?" This can keep militants going for a few months, but more and more PL members are now asking themselves, "what exactly are we building?" Only a struggle to assimilate the lessons of the past, a programmatic fight against PL's eclecticism, will prevent the continued demoralization of subjectively serious political communists.

PLers must closely examine the results of an enormous amount of energy and work—an objective balance sheet of PL's mass work must be drawn. We will focus on PL's Bay Area trade union work and PL's efforts at an army base. Such an examination, based on our own experiences, in fact shows that PL has really "done" very little in building a revolutionary party.

PL in the Trade Unions: Hot Breakfasts and Softball

PL's trade-union work really began in the Bay Area in the Steelworkers local at American Can Co. and two other unions. The articles in *Challenge* about these workers were only a reflection of their militancy which in no way extended the workers' understanding. For example, this Steelworkers' local voted unanimously against sellout by Abel (the USWA president). But despite the potential and despite the fact that three PLers worked in this plant for three years, there was no attempt to channel this militancy into class consciousness by means of a caucus based on a class program. Three years of "revolutionary communist" work in this union produced a petition campaign

to get hot breakfasts served earlier in the cafeteria and a softball team which lost repeatedly and whose politics matched its league record! Of those non-party members of the team, not one is in or around PL today—not even the left fielder! Proof that this was not an isolated opportunist deviation in Bay Area union work is that a similar caucus and softball team was led by the West Coast leader of PL.

PL did initiate an active caucus at Safeway stores, at one point having more than 30 members attending caucus meetings. But beyond selling *Challenge*, there was nowhere for them to go, no way to develop into communists. Lacking programmatic direction, the caucus began to degenerate, at one point having anti-semitic remarks in its newsletter, and eventually becoming an opportunist front-group which had to be liquidated. The extent of PL's intervention in the key 1970 GM strike was to tail the spontaneous militancy of the strikers and to serve them rice and tuna fish. The PL auto caucus in the Bay Area was put on parade more than once during the SF State strike defending and promoting "revolutionary" nationalism. On the job, however, this caucus was impotent, eventually becoming demoralized and falling away from PL. In fact, the entire San Jose PL operation was eventually liquidated—it should be noted that San Jose is the proletarian center of Northern California (auto, food processing and warehouses, electronics, aerospace, etc.).

These experiences seem to have been a nation-wide phenomenon, as there was a sharp "rectification" in early 1970. Two lessons were drawn from these failures: the job of communists is to fight for the proletarian dictatorship, not to initiate reform fights or reform organizations, and most PLers from middle-class backgrounds should be pulled out of the unions, off the "front lines," to become students, librarians, etc. whose main task would be the bombardment of "real, live center" workers with *Challenge*, attempting to win the more advanced to "Challenge Sellers' Collectives." Among other examples, in the Bay Area this meant dropping work among Muni Bus Drivers, who have a tradition of militancy, because the PL supporters in the union were deemed too middle-class!

This truly infantile ultra-left turn was based on the contradiction between PL's crassly reformist union work (which had its student counterpart in the infamous strategy of fights around slippery floors in the campus cafeteria) and a subjective communist impulse. If outright reformism not only didn't work but was also demoralizing the members in the unions then the solution must lie in shouting "Communism" from the treetops—and pulling a chunk of PL supporters out of the unions! A frenzy of *Challenge* sales, contacting sessions and embryonic Challenge Sellers' Collectives produced very little. A few workers and students were attracted to this source of energy, but the turnover rate was very high. In addition, a number of members and sympathizers left during this frenzied "rectification," convinced that PL had forsaken its main attribute, that of "building a base in the working class."

The idea that advanced workers will be won to communism largely from the outside, in the absence of a communist pole within the unions fighting and exposing the present union leadership, is doomed to failure. When this failure became clear, when it became obvious that each issue of *Challenge* was

not being read by 100,000 "masses," primarily workers (the claim of the leadership), and that workers were not being attracted to the Challenge Sellers' Collectives, then a change had to be made. Obviously, if "communist agitation" failed then a zigzag to reformism was the answer. The only difference was that now PL had fewer cadre in the unions and the turn to blatantly reformist organizing was much deeper, based on the shambles of the "ultra-left" period.

A series of gimmick reform movements has dominated PL's work in the class over the past two years, ranging from the "fight racist unemployment" campaign to the current "30 for 40" struggle. These campaigns have been single-issue attempts to create a "center," basically outside the unions, from which PL can recruit and which can serve as focal points of activity to siphon off the anxiety of the ranks. An organization of PL's limited size and influence, an organization which has proven its inability to build opposition caucuses within the unions, is absolutely incapable of really waging a fight against unemployment or for 30 for 40. The attempt to hold PL together with promises about building a mass fight is simple opportunism which will lead to the further disillusionment of the PL ranks.

PL in the Army: "GI Joe's a Red"

PL's initial attitude toward GI organizing was abstention. Tailing after the new left and black nationalists, the "center," PL was among the most energetic fighters for "Hell no! We won't go!" draft resistance. PL gave this position a militant, avowedly anti-imperialist thrust to the left of the pacifist-liberal forces; but it refused to conduct a principled fight for the Leninist position that revolutionaries must accept induction in order to politicize worker-soldiers.

By 1968 a combination of growing spontaneous GI struggles, the success of other left tendencies' work in the military, a romanticism of the left about so-called GI organizing and the success of an inadvertently drafted PLer in organizing an anti-imperialist paper on his base led PL to abandon its earlier policy of draft resistance. The approach to this work was pragmatic, with little attempt to understand the history of communist work in this arena or to formulate a program for GI work.

PL's lurch to the left in early 1970 found its reflection in the army in a sharp tactical turn. We were no longer supposed to be just one of the guys but instead "revolutionary communists fighting for the proletarian dictatorship." The idiocy of this ultra-left turn is perhaps better seen in the army than in other arenas. The objective situation was truly ripe—the vast majority of GI's strongly hated the war and military discipline and were neutral to communists (the usual response was, if you're against the army you can't be too bad). The spontaneous level of struggle was high not only in Vietnam, exemplified by "fraggings" and some refusals to fight, but also state-side as seen in a spiraling AWOL and desertion rate and stockade rebellions. On almost every major base there were indications that this individual rebellion could be transformed into collective struggle, as coffeehouses and GI organizations attracted a nucleus of potential organizers. The ferment in the military in the late 1960's and early 1970's presented an excellent opportunity for revolutionaries.

But the sum total of PL's program in this period was "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and Challenge Sellers' Collectives. Every barracks was seen as a potential red fortress, with the only obstacle between PL and the recruitment of GI's being the lack of exposure to "communist" ideas, i.e., *Challenge*. The only tactic of PL supporters was to talk about communism and try to win GIs to the Challenge Sellers' Collectives. The tense objective situation and the energy of PL's work attracted handfuls of GI militants at various times, but the overwhelming majority was not ready to make the big leap of joining a communist organization. The other result of PL's work in this "rectification" period was a number of busts. Given the adventurism of PL's tactics this is not surprising. An organization whose newspaper could carry the headlines, "GIs, WACs, Beat, Kill Officers!" was obviously out of touch with reality, unable to pose any perspective other than individual martyrdom for radical worker-soldiers.

But the political vacuum which PL helped to perpetuate was partially filled by the reformist coffeehouses and organizations. PL's attitude toward the Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM) and its coffeehouse at Fort Ord was typical. This particular MDM effort was politically controlled by the right Maoist Revolutionary Union (RU), with some CP influence. Its activities consisted of running a coffeehouse off-base in which GIs could congregate, printing a newspaper modeled after the *Black Panther*, undertaking defense work and some attempts at organizing on-base. The MDM's work at this base lasted only about six months, falling apart from cop and military harassment, lack of funds and the contradictions inherent in the RU's politics. But in this period, especially during the summer of 1970, MDM attracted a large chunk of the more radical GIs, those who were looking for a way to fight against the war, military discipline and racism.

PL's approach to these militants was the "united front from below," which meant that we made sporadic efforts to win these guys by baldly posing the Challenge Sellers' Collective as the alternative to the "reformist, CP-controlled, cop-out MDM." But the very purpose of the united-front tactic is not only to provide unity in action, but also to be a means of testing and exposing reformist leaders before their membership in the course of practical struggle. PL demanded that these militants just abandon their reformist illusions and join them—the result was no united front at all and the continued stranglehold of the reformists on the most advanced GI militants. Opportunities for PL to intersect these militants existed without actually joining MDM, e.g., defense cases, demonstrations, MDM public activities, etc. But PL was content to continue building the Challenge Sellers' Collective—a group which at this base never recruited outside of PL and sympathizers who had already been close to PL before entering the army.

Another aspect of PL's sectarianism during this period was the attitude toward democratic rights. Basically, PL's position was that democratic rights don't exist, therefore it is unprincipled to ever appeal to democratic precedents in bourgeois law as this builds illusions. In one case, PL refused to take the cops to court to prevent them from harassing and preventing literature sales off-base, although there was considerable evidence

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Israeli Government Attacks Anti-Zionist Militants

As the deteriorating living conditions of Israeli workers begin to eat away at the Zionist mythology of the "promised land" and the "non-capitalist" nature of Israel, the Israeli ruling class has been forced to employ more open terror against the left and working masses. This terror is not reserved for the more traditional victims alone—suspected Arab guerillas, Arab homes, a Libyan airliner, etc.—but is also directed at sections of the Jewish population as well—oriental Jews, striking workers and Jewish leftists.

Israeli Repression

Recently the Israeli government indicted a number of persons including members of the "Red Front" and the Revolutionary Communist Alliance (Struggle) as members of an alleged Syrian spy ring. The message intended is clear—the advocacy of unity between the Arab and Jewish working classes is equivalent to treason. In response to these attacks, five Israeli leftist organizations—the Vanguard Group, the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen-Marxist), the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen), the Revolutionary Communist Alliance (Struggle), the Arab Students' Union at Hebrew University, Jerusalem—issued a statement appealing for international solidarity against attacks on the left by the Israeli State (reprinted in the *Militant*, 2 February 1973).

Zionist "Civil Peace" Crumbles

The arrests take place against the background of increasing class struggle within Israel. Last year an unprecedented strike wave led to more than 200,000 workdays lost, placing Israel seventh in the capitalist world and first in the category of public service workers' strikes. Also during 1972 inflation rose at a rate of 16%, hitting the lowest-paid sections of the working class particularly hard, especially the unskilled and semi-skilled Arab workers.

Further signs of the increasing break-up of the Zionist *Burgfrieden* (civil peace) are seen in the growth of various left organizations. These range from the left Zionists of SLAKH, and the oriental Jews of the Israeli Black Panthers, to a number of ostensibly Marxist groupings. Last year the Black Panthers called a May Day demonstration attended by most of the left groups and attracting 1,500 participants. The police broke up the demonstration and arrested 80 on various charges.

The various ostensibly Marxist groupings originated in the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen), a loose left-of-the-CP organization founded in 1962. At that time it was made up of some survivors of the Palestinian Trotskyist movement and former members of the CP expelled for their protest against the lack of democracy in the Stalinist party. During the period up to 1970 a gradual political clarification took place in Matzpen,

which had come to be an umbrella organization of all the anti-Zionist groupings. In September 1970 a period of splits began with the departure of the Vanguard group, which rejects the concept of a special anti-Zionist (i.e., "democratic") stage in the revolution and the conciliation of Arab nationalism characteristic of the other groups in Matzpen. At about the same time a Maoist, third-worldist group, the Revolutionary Communist Alliance, split off. This group later split into the RCA (Struggle) and the RCA (Red Front), with the latter accusing the former of opportunistically adapting their propaganda to the level of backward workers. The remaining ISO was split again in February 1972, with one wing, the ISO (Matzpen-Marxist), linked to the revisionist ex-Trotskyist United Secretariat of Frank and Mandel, and the other, ISO (Matzpen), being a loose combination of anarchist and "state-capitalist" elements.

Today the Vanguard group is associated with the French OCI and the ISO (Matzpen-Marxist) with the U.Sec.; the Red Front is loosely tied with Progressive Labor in this country and ISO (Matzpen) similarly with the British International Socialists.

Defense Demonstrations in the U.S.

In the United States, the Revolutionary Communist Youth, the youth section of the Spartacist League, in spite of its differences with the organizations issuing the appeal, took the lead initiating a series of united-front demonstrations in defense of the Israeli Left. The RCY called on all left and working-class organizations to perform their elementary duty—the defense of the left against capitalist attack—by demonstrating around the slogans:

*Defend the Israeli Militants!
For Unconditional Defense of the
Left Against Bourgeois Repression!
For International Working-Class
Solidarity!*

The RCY made clear the principled nature of this united front, indicating that all organizations and individuals agreeing with the slogans were free to join the demonstration and carry their own banners, slogans and literature.

The RCY in addition to the three central slogans carried banners declaring the need for a section of a reborn Fourth International in the Middle East that would unite Arab and Jewish workers around a class-struggle program. One of the key elements of this program would necessarily be the recognition of the right of self-determination for the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples. This demand is absolutely crucial to break through the nationalist chains which bind the working masses to their respective bourgeoisies, redirecting national hatred into hatred of the class enemy—the bourgeoisie of one's own country. A second key element is the demand for a socialist United States of the Middle East, as the only road along which the democratic rights of both the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples can be fully realized.

The first in the series of demonstrations was held in New York City on 21 February 1973. (See *RCY Newsletter*, no. 16, April 1973 for details.) At the Israeli Consulate to the U.N. approximately 75 persons including members and supporters of the SL/RCY and representatives of the National Caucus of Labor Committees and Vanguard Newsletter demonstrated and drove off an attack by lead pipe-wielding thugs of the Jewish Defense League (JDL).

Buffalo: The SL/RCY initiated a demonstration at the Federal Building in downtown Buffalo which was held 1 March 1973 (coinciding with Golda Meir's arrival in Washington, D.C.) in which several members of the NCLC and the Students for a Democratic Society participated. On first being approached for the united front the Buffalo Labor Committee (BLC) declared that it was "irrelevant" and a dis-

traction from the "real" struggle to "rebuild the National Welfare Rights Organization," the NCLC's latest pop-front scheme to reform an arm of the bourgeois state (the NWRO receives its funding from the federal OEO). On hearing, however, of the principled behavior of their comrades in New York City, the BLC literally overnight "changed its tune." The BLC further distinguished itself from its New York comrades by violating the discipline of the united front democratically decided on beforehand, that each group would have five minutes to speak, by grabbing the bullhorn and refusing to yield even at the RCY's suggestion for a second speaking round if all the groups agreed.

Progressive Labor Party refused to participate in its own name, declaring that PL doesn't "unite with revisionists," preferring to unite with "Grass Roots for McGovern" and the aspiring bureaucrats in the leadership of the United National Caucus of the UAW. Feeling the pressure generated by the

anticipated in by representatives of the IS, the NCLC, Socialist Forum and Venceremos, a Stalinist group in whose defense against a government witch-hunt the SL/RCY has been very active. The Revolutionary Union, the October League, Venceremos and several Arab student groups, after being approached by the RCY for the united front, called a separate demonstration for the same time and the same place to protest the downing of a Libyan passenger plane by Israel. When these groups arrived at the demonstration site, the RCY again approached them for a united front which was refused, the RU et al. (with the exception of three representatives of Venceremos) moving across the street. The SWP had at first refused to join the demonstration, then had agreed to send "less than a handful" to defend the demonstration against the Stalinists, ended up sending no one and demonstrating with the Stalinists. These Maoists and various nationalists were simply aping the splitting tactics of their Stalinist forebears, while the



Boston SL/RCY demonstrates against Israeli state repression.

contradiction between PL's sectarianism and the desire of the membership to defend the Israeli left (particularly an ex-PLer now in Israel) PLers participated in the demonstration under the name of SDS—which apparently does "unite with revisionists."

Chicago: Members of the RCY, the International Socialists, the Class Struggle League and several independent demonstrators demonstrated in Chicago on 3 March, in defense of the Israeli left. Outside of the SWP/YSA, who deigned to send only an observer, every other group approached did not even wish to "observe" an action which *all, in principle, claimed to support*. Words are cheap! The NCLC revealed its inability to respond in a nationally coordinated way even to a simple united-front call, by refusing to participate, again citing "the real issue—rebuilding the NWRO," as an excuse. A group associated with the "United Front Against Imperialism" at the University of Illinois, Circle Campus, endorsed the demonstration, agreeing to the points raised by the SL/RCY as the basis of common action. But after meeting objections from their bloc partners in the "United Front" this group withdrew its support at the last moment. A member of the Iranian Student Association was more honest, stating that he was opposed "on principle" to any joint action with Trotskyists, even though he agreed with the need to defend the Israeli left. Not surprisingly, this absurd logic is held in common by the CP/YWLL, almost all Maoist groupings, and the once Trotskyist, now thoroughly reformist SWP/YSA who declared they wanted nothing to do with the demonstration because the SL/RCY are so "sectarian!"

Bay Area: In San Francisco the RCY-initiated demonstration was par-

ex-Trotskyist SWP gave its approval. The Workers League/Young Socialists, meanwhile, managed to keep its record of sectarianism, phony internationalism and abstention from the defense of the left intact, by declaring that they were "moving offices," but even if they weren't, they "wouldn't have joined with the SL anyway."

Boston: The "May 15th [Israeli Independence Day] Coalition," a hodgepodge of New Leftists, radical pacifists, anti-Zionist Hillel-ers, SDS and the SWP all held together on the basis of a vague anti-Zionism, called a demonstration at Brandeis against Golda Meir, who was receiving an honorary degree there. The RCY, rather than entering the "May 15th" swamp, issued a statement urging people to attend the Brandeis demonstration and raising the issue of defense of the Israeli left.

Prior to the demonstration, the SL/RCY received a letter from alleged members of the JDL threatening physical violence if it attempted to demonstrate at Brandeis. The SL/RCY made this letter public and sought out other left groups for a bloc in defense of the demonstration against right-wing attack. The "May 15th Coalition," Youth Against War and Fascism, the NCLC and the Internationalist Newsletter joined in the defense bloc. At the demonstration of some 250 people, only the SL/RCY contingent, the largest in attendance with 60 participants, was clearly prepared for defense, other demonstrators remarking on the SL/RCY's excellent discipline and organization. The SDS which had promised 150 people brought along no more than 35 while the SWP produced about 40 people marked by no outward evidence of preparation for defense; fortunately no attack was forthcoming.

The SL/RCY has always and will continue to maintain that united action in defense of the working class and the left is an urgent necessity in building a revolutionary movement. This joint defense can only be built, however, on the Leninist principle of the united front, which ensures for all groups involved the right of criticism. The united front has nothing in common with the cynical maneuvering and dishonest talling displayed by the RU, the SWP and various other groups in their response to the SL/RCY's appeal to defend the Israeli left. ■

RCY FORUM

Vietnam: The Civil War Goes On

Speaker: RICHARD CRAMER
National Committee of the RCY

Thursday, APRIL 26 at 8 p.m.

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE
Room 412

Continued from page 1

French Elections...

ists, Social Democrats, bourgeois liberals and fascists. There is not and there cannot be a place for it in any of the People's Fronts. It uncompromisingly gives battle to all political groupings tied to the apron-strings of the bourgeoisie. Its task—the abolition of capitalism's domination. Its aim—socialism. Its method—the proletarian revolution....

"The chief accusation which the Fourth International advances against the traditional organizations of the proletariat is the fact that they do not wish to tear themselves away from the political semi-corpse of the bourgeoisie. Under these conditions the demand, systematically addressed to the old leadership: 'Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power!' is an extremely important weapon for exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organizations of the Second, Third and Amsterdam Internationals. The slogan, 'workers' and farmers' government,' is thus acceptable to us only in the sense that it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i.e., as an anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist slogan...."

—Leon Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, 1938

In all epochs and periods, Marxists have consistently called for the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie. In France today, this principle means that the most pressing task of proletarian revolutionaries is a determined struggle against the popular front. It was in this fight that the early Trotskyist cadre in the 1930's were steeled, and it must be waged again today.

But this struggle cannot take place in isolation from the mass movement, which remains under the control of the reformist CP and SP leaderships. Therefore, the demand for a government of the workers parties alone, with no capitalist ministers, based on a revolutionary program, is a crucial weapon in breaking the workers from these treacherous misleaders. But while we must focus our agitation on the Communist and Socialist workers, we cannot call for a vote for these parties, for every CP and SP vote in this election was a vote for the popular front, that is, for the maintenance of capitalism!

Of the ostensibly Trotskyist organizations in France, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and Lutte Ouvrière both campaigned against voting for the Union of the Left, and for the Left Radicals in particular. However, both also advocated votes for the CP or SP, which in the last analysis means support to the pop-front anyway. This softness in the LO and OCI election policies vitiates the essential content of Trotskyism. The Ligue Communiste, French section of the revisionist United Secretariat, however, is quite another matter. In a scandalous open break with Trotskyism, the Ligue called for support to the Union of the Left, denying it was a popular front. Going beyond its traditional Pabloist adaptation to various leftward-moving petty-bourgeois groups and capitulating to the bourgeoisie directly, the Ligue support for the Union of the Left represents an important shift towards reformism.

The Election Results

In the first round voting on 4 March, the combined total for the Union of the Left came to 11.3 million votes, or 46% of the electorate. This was more than 10% above their combined vote in the last elections (1968), but only equal to the previous elections (1967). The Gaullist coalition received

only 8.4 million, or 34% on the first round. However, in the second round on 11 March the Gaullist coalition managed to mobilize the bulk of the petty bourgeoisie behind its banners and split the vote evenly (46% to 46%), enabling them to win a substantial majority in Assembly seats (256 to 181 for the left bloc). Within the Union of the Left, the Socialist Party won 89 seats, the Communist Party took 73 and the Left Republicans 11. A tiny petty-bourgeois left party, the PSU, won three seats.

Among groups claiming adherence to Trotskyism, the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière ran on a no-contest agreement in 261 out of the 491 electoral districts in the first round. Together with the OCF, they

satisfaction would soon exhaust the public finances and ruin the companies....

"An era of new relations between the government and the trade union movement will be established.... Then, the participation—which the UDR has never been able to obtain from the unions—would finally have a socially progressive meaning."

—*L'Humanité*, 17 January 1973

Marchais, head of the CP, said that alter the elections the Union of the Left would have better things to do than fool with the constitution. Séguy, head of the unions, says that alter the elections they would have better things to do than go around nationalizing the monopolies. One can certainly understand why many French workers won-



Mitterrand on the campaign trail.



CGT leadership in 1968, Séguy on right.

gathered about 300,000 votes, slightly over 2% of the popular vote and 9% of the CP votes in the districts where they ran.

Election statistics published in *Le Monde* (6 and 7 March 1973) seem to indicate that the majority of the Ligue/LO votes were transferred from the PSU. The 300,000 votes of the LC/LO correspond in large part to the loss of 400,000 votes by the PSU since the last election.

As opposed to the Ligue's 90 candidates and LO's 171, the OCI ran only 20 candidates, even though it is of comparable size. However, in spite of concentrating resources, the OCI candidates made a relatively poor showing—in virtually every district they received less than half the number of votes garnered by the Ligue or LO (against which they ran in competition), and only 3.2% of the votes which went to the CP.

The New Left Bloc Campaign

The CP-SP-Left Radical coalition maintained a consistent policy of capitulating every time Pompidou showed a hard face. Georges Séguy, head of the CGT labor federation, was forced to put the brakes on militant workers, declaring:

"In the aftermath of a left victory, to launch into a campaign to nationalize everything totally, on principle and without discrimination, would be economically absurd and could only compromise the success of the minimum reforms necessary for dealing with the major social problems in an economic equilibrium....

"The other means of spreading doubt consists in ascribing to the unions the intention of smothering the government with an avalanche of demands whose

elections? So that the workers can put Marchais and Mitterrand in the government without giving them a carte blanche" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 19-25 December 1972). This policy was implemented by calling for votes for CP and most SP candidates on the second round, thus in the end voting for the popular front, while opposing it on paper.

The Ligue Communiste made a sharp turn towards reformism in this election campaign, by giving "critical" support to the new popular front, calling for votes for all candidates of the Union of the Left on the second round. They tried to spice up this craven capitulation before the bourgeoisie with minor acts of illegality (like smuggling Ernest Mandel into the country to speak) and "revolutionary" guerrilla theater. An account of the campaign in the CP stronghold of Nanterre (where Henry Weber, a LC leader, was running) speaks of colorful "red caravans" replete with flags and posters, speeches interrupted periodically by "revolutionary songs," a street theater group and a meeting on "sexual liberation." The LC never got its cherished seven minutes of television time.

The support for the new popular front by the French section of the ex-Trotskyist "United Secretariat" is a scandal on the order of the support of the Ceylonese section, the LSSP, to the Ceylon popular front in 1960! Although the Ligue does not have the political weight of the LSSP, which was able to enter a popular front government with the bourgeois nationalist Bandaranaike in 1964, it could easily end up tacitly justifying the inevitable attacks on the masses carried out by a pop front regime.

This position represented on one level a break with the LC's previous policies of tailing after left-moving student sectors and simply trying to ignore the existence of the CP and the unions. Thus in 1970 the LC Central Committee declared that an identical "Union of the Left" was a new popular front formation. Today the LC claims it is instead a "global reformist alternative" to direct rule by the bourgeoisie, and not a popular front, because the CP has hegemony over the left bloc.

At a more fundamental level, however, this represents a continuation of the fundamental Pabloist position of capitulation to various non-proletarian strata and denial of the vanguard role of the working class in the socialist revolution. At first the Pabloists capitulated to the Stalinist bureaucracies during the 1950's, by a policy of deep entry (i.e., total submersion) in the West European CPs. With the "youth upsurge" of the 1960's this switched over to capitulation before Castro, Guevara, Ben Bella, Ho Chi Minh, terrorism, guerrillaism and the various other fashionable trends. Today, with the militant stirrings in the working class, it is back to the bureaucracies, and this time to the bourgeoisie as well!

Support for a "global reformist alternative" implies a wholesale rejection of Leninism. It means that systematic reforms are possible in the period of declining capitalism, a direct denial of Lenin's theory of imperialism. It means that the Transitional Program of the Fourth International is no longer valid. This fits nicely with Mandel's "theory" of "neo-capitalism," which claims that the productive forces increased after World War II (and that therefore reform struggles—dressed up as "structural" reforms—are on the order of the day).

This is made even more explicit by a recent document of 36 militants of the petty-bourgeois PSU who joined the Ligue Communiste last year, declaring:

"As far as the Fourth International is concerned, we recognize a series of merits: not only to have transmitted to the new generations the thread of Leninism and the lessons of the left opposition, but also to have understood early on the decisive importance of the colonial revolution, the increase of the productive forces after the war

dered just exactly what the Union of the left would do alter 11 March!

The "Trotskyist" Votes

Lutte Ouvrière, a semi-syndicalist group which in the past has concentrated almost exclusively on factory organizing, was probably the most electorally-oriented of the ostensible Trotskyist organizations. "One worker out of ten voted for the revolutionaries," announced its press (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 6-12 March 1973), which is quite an overstatement. Among other things, LO distributed 12 million copies of its main election leaflet, "Why LO Candidates?" in this leaflet the only sentence which goes beyond electoralism in any way was: "As opposed to the politicians, the candidates of the LO do not promise to change your life by a ballot." And during the campaign, up to 15 out of the 24 pages of LO were devoted to the elections.

The most severe deficiency of the LO campaign, however, was its political content. Although it criticized the Ligue Communiste for supporting the popular front, LO at the same time formed a no-contest pact with the Ligue, and called on workers to vote for the "revolutionary" candidates of the LC! This, then, was not a pact of organizations opposed to the popular front, but simply an opportunist bloc of groups to the left of the CP.

LO's own demands did not focus on calling for the reformist workers parties to break with the bourgeoisie, i.e., smash the pop front, but simply called for quantitatively increasing the economic demands of the left bloc program. The headline for the article introducing the LO campaign crystallized the whole approach: "Why candidates of Lutte Ouvrière in the next

and its consequences for the workers' struggles, the historic role of the Indochinese revolution and the emergence of new vanguards born outside of the Stalinist carcass...."

—Rouge, 24 June 1972

All these "further developments," the "colonial revolution," the "increasing productive forces," the "historic role of the Indochinese revolution," the "new vanguards," are in fact denials of the program of the Fourth International. It has been known for some time, of course, that the "United Secretariat" considered the Transitional Program a "historical document" whose "method" alone was valid today. The PSU militants at least had the decency to demand that the program be dropped, that the Ligue cease to claim support for Trotskyism:

"The predictions on which the Fourth International was founded were not realized in the period following its birth. The program which accompanied its birth, the Transitional Program, is no longer an adequate instrument for the struggles of today."

—Ibid.

To which Gérard Filoche, member of the political bureau of the Ligue, responded:

"We are in favor of the centralized International undertaking to draw up a new program of world revolution. This is on the agenda of the next two congresses."

—Rouge, 22 July 1972

With our permission, comrades revisionists! Please draw up this new program so you can formalize your abandonment of Trotskyism. The sooner the better!

The Organisation Communiste Internationaliste

The most contradictory policy in the election campaign was that of the OCI. Thus they correctly focussed their leaflets and pamphlets on the call for the CP and SP to break with the bourgeoisie, form a workers government. They refused to join the "left of the CP" bloc with LO and the Ligue and carried on a sharp polemic against the latter's support for the new pop front.

Whereas both the Ligue and LO ran their campaigns on an exclusively electoral basis—and the Ligue openly supported the pop front—the OCI claimed to be running an exemplary campaign, integrated into its continuing organizational work:

"Playing at being a 'large party' at a time when the necessary ties between the revolutionary organization and the masses of the working class for the creation of the revolutionary party do not exist would amount to fighting on the terrain defined by the enemy, beginning with a pitiful publicity bluff as a substitute for organization and conviction...."

—Informations Ouvrières, 7-14 February 1973

By running only 20 candidates the OCI had the possibility of concentrating its forces and propaganda. Further, since the majority of the districts in which the OCI ran candidates was heavily working-class in composition (12 of them eventually elected CP or SP candidates), this created the potential for hard exemplary campaigns against the reformists and the popular front.

If we can judge the OCI campaign by the coverage it received in the OCI press, however, the OCI did little to realize this potential. *IO* instead stressed the scandal campaigns run against the radicals and Gaullist figures, such as Kasperit, Giscard d'Estaing, Poujade, etc. Not until 10 days before the election did the OCI press include any significant space on its campaigns in the industrial strongholds. It seemed that the OCI was concentrating its propaganda on the bourgeois candidates in order to justify to the reformist bureaucracies themselves its call on the CP-SP to break with the bourgeoisie. But the main thrust of this demand is against the reformist parties, to mobilize the ranks to overthrow the class-collaborationist policies of the leadership. And by explicitly

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PL...

that the case could have been easily won. After all, PL reasoned, if we do win the case it will only build illusions in bourgeois democracy, so all we can do is build a mass movement which will pressure the cops to leave us alone. Fortunately, other radicals in the area did sue the city and easily won the right of literature distribution. PL, of course, took advantage of this case.

These examples give a flavor of PL's approach to GI organizing for most of 1970. The failures of this ultra-leftism nationally led to a turn to the right, a turn which was gradual at first. A more cautious approach was taken to implantation of supporters. The Challenge Sellers' Collectives were given up and a series of front groups usually formed around single issues, e.g., defense cases, against on-base racism, etc., was set up. A completely uncritical attitude was taken towards the reformist GI movement (see articles in *Challenge* on Vietnam Veterans Against the War and the Oleo Strut Coffeehouse at Fort Hood). PL

declaring that kicking out the Radicals would be "sufficient" for the formation of a workers government (never mind the Common Program), the OCI capitulates politically to the Stalinist and social-democratic agents of the bourgeoisie.

This failure to present a hard Bolshevik opposition to the popular front is directly linked to the OCI call for votes to the CP or SP where they did not present candidates themselves (i.e., virtually everywhere), thus in reality voting for the Union of the Left. In the elections the Spartacist League advocated votes for the candidates of the OCI and Lutte Ouvrière running against the popular front on the first round, while criticizing the capitulation involved in calling for votes for the CP-SP on the second (or first) round. Our preoccupations were apparently not unshared in France. A letter to the editors of *Informations Ouvrières* by a militant of the OCI said in part:

"Of course, not everything is resolved and there are problems to which we only respond quite superficially. Thus, we have found ourselves confronted with the following problem: 'In the hypothesis that the CP and SP do not break with the left radicals, in voting for the CP and SP on the first round in those places where there is no OCI candidate, and on the second round, ultimately we are voting for the Union of the Left and the Common Program.'"

"One of the discussions which we can undertake, is of course, what should we do then, should we abstain. Must we boycott or in spite of everything vote for the organizations."

—Informations Ouvrières, 7-14 February 1973

We certainly do hope that the comrades of the OCI undertake this discussion, for it involves the fundamental question of the class independence of the proletariat versus a centrist accommodation to the bureaucracies, and through them to the bourgeoisie! ■

FORUM

Communist Strategy for the Trade Unions

Speaker: JOSEPH SEYMOUR

Central Committee Member, Spartacist League

FRIDAY, APRIL 6 at 7:30 p.m.
Trinity Methodist Church
13100 Woodward

DETROIT

has since entered VVAW on the basis of simply calling for more militant demonstrations.

PL had the resources to make a limited but real impact on GI radicals. Instead, by their inability to pose a programmatically-based organizational alternative to the reformist groupings, PL aided in the dissipation of GI militancy, and its zany zigzags demoralized many of its supporters in the Army.

PL's Failure in Proletarian Arenas

Thus, in two crucial arenas PL has not only failed to generate the mass struggles it aspired to, or to attract and hold advanced workers, but even had difficulty maintaining its cadre. The revolutionary impulse which motivated most PLers who colonized themselves into these arenas was criminally squandered. The leadership's answer to these failures is that the party must "rid itself of sectarianism," which to them means capitulating to reformism and diving into more "mass struggles." Any attempt to analyze these failures is termed a diversion; the important thing is to build the mass struggle—"fighting is winning."

But fighting is not winning—the history of the revolutionary movement is, unfortunately, full of examples where tremendous mass struggles were defeated due to the treachery or weakness of the leadership. Mass struggles alone do not generate a program which can lead the workers to power. Rather the prerequisite to successful mass struggle is a revolutionary leadership based on the revolutionary program. Concretely in this period, Bolshevik mass work must mean the penetration of the working class through its most advanced layers, rather than tailing the class at its present level of consciousness as PL does in its single-issue reform groups and its articles in *Challenge*. "Mass work" or "fighting" are abstractions; today in the workers' movement, communists do mass work by building opposition caucuses based on a full transitional program within the only existing mass class organizations, the unions.

PL's Internal Regime

PL still maintains Stalinist norms of "democratic-centralism," i.e., there is no mechanism by which a minority can organize to fight for its position or change the leadership, in contrast to the Leninist norm of factional democracy as the only real guarantee against bureaucratic control, subterranean cliques and a docile membership. The conception of "democratic-centralism" in PL is that the ranks can criticize the leaders for e.g., not washing enough dishes, but the political decisions are only the business of the leadership. The discussion bulletins around "Road to Revolution III" deliberately suppressed an orthodox Trotskyist criticism of Stalinism by Juan Fariñas (now a Workers League supporter) while printing a hack job on Trotskyism written in the Moscow Trials tradition by Mort Sheer. Rosen and Co. attempted to maintain an appearance of internal democracy by publishing a bulletin of critiques of "Road to Revolution III." But every one of the authors had already left PL, while papers written by opponents of the new line were still members were not circulated! But Epton's ill-fated attempt to wage a fight against PL's break from Mao was met by an internal document which can only be characterized as slander and character assassination. Other attempts to raise fundamental questions about PL's history and line have been smashed, whereas a Bolshevik leadership would encourage—in fact demand—an open struggle on political questions.

Moreover, PL's organization into numerous small clubs, instead of local branches, enabled the leadership to severely limit communication within the party. Many PL trade unionists never knew what "Weatherman" stood for, and student activists had little or

no knowledge of what was going on in the trade-union clubs. More generally, this practice of hermetically sealing off the different sections of the party is an excellent means of preventing any national factional challenge to the present leadership. In late 1969 three members of PL's leading national body, the national committee, were removed by PL's core leadership, not the membership which elected them at a national convention, because of alleged arrogance, not getting a job, not doing the dishes at home, and so on. The horror stories could go on—the point is that the leadership's political failures are protected not only by the "fighting is winning," mass-work mystique but by a tradition of political suppression internally.

Right and Left Together

After a period of ultra-left activity which brought no tangible results, PL has recently turned sharply to the right. In the unions this means hobnobbing with the bureaucrats and aspiring bureaucrats. On the political field this meant joining "Grass Roots for McGovern." Reportedly, in California some PLers are now registered Democrats. No doubt they have been sent into this capitalist party in order to do battle with the CP which has been there for decades!

But the reformist slot is already filled by two more competent and socially powerful groups, the CP and SWP. The CP has everything PL doesn't—a history in selling out real mass struggles, an experienced cadre, roots in the trade-union movement and ties to the Soviet bureaucracy. The CP's recent growth and mini-left turn give it added ability to continue its role as the main ostensibly revolutionary obstacle in this country. The SWP, although having lost its roots in the unions, has a revolutionary past, a new cadre schooled in "mass action" reformism, an efficient organization, a certain middle-class base and strong social-democratic appetites. PL will be unable to successfully compete for reformist hegemony with these groups—the alternative for the PLer is either to make a fight for the revolutionary alternative of Trotskyism or to continue building these mini-mass reform grouplets which will be easy pickings for a slick union bureaucrat or the CP.

The 22 February issue of *Challenge* carries the front-page headline of "Fight for Socialism!" just like the good old days. And the previous issue (8 February) carries an article on the upcoming WAM convention in which the 30 for 40 demand is described as a reform demand but one which "points out the basic nature of this system—which forces workers to produce surplus value for the profits of a tiny few...." The same issue notes that 30 for 40 must be taken into the unions if it is to have any influence. These points indicate a sensitivity both to criticism from the Spartacist League and probably an attempt by PLers to empirically turn back to a class line. PL has suppressed its "fight for socialism" line in favor of "fighting is winning" and has put forth 30 for 40 as simply a good economist demand essentially outside of the union movement. The mechanical reprinting of earlier militant-sounding headlines represents only a slight left shading to cover its own flanks.

A genuine turn to the left, a turn to revolutionary Marxism, can only be the result of a serious attempt to assimilate the lessons of Bolshevism, especially Trotsky's struggle against the Stalinist attack on the fundamentals of Leninism and the degeneration of the Soviet state and the destruction of the Third International. If the subjectively communist cadres amassed by PL are not to be simply squandered—reprogrammed as aspiring reformists or lost to the workers' movement as demoralized drop-outs—it is absolutely essential that a fight be waged within PL against its current nose dive into reformism. ■

Continued from page 3

Open Letter...

composition, the Spartacist League was able to predict before the election exactly what would happen. It is with the same scientific method that we look at your campaign.

In the imperialist epoch there are two classes struggling for power—the bourgeoisie seeking to maintain its power and the proletariat striving to rid itself of its oppressors. There are only two sides to the class line. If a party's program does not base itself on the independent mobilization of the workers in their own class interests, it is in fact, regardless of intentions, a bourgeois program. Seale's plan is to channel all the funds from the Model Cities program, OEO, etc., into the Panther survival programs. One obvious problem is that Nixon has just cut out the majority of these funds. It is not a question of corruption or inefficiency in government, although both exist chronically under capitalism. The capitalist system depends for its survival on a large "reserve army of labor"—the unemployed—to meet the demands of its built-in "booms" and "crises" and to hold the wages of all workers down. The needs of the working class can be met only by eliminating the need for profit through working-class ownership and control of the means of production, i.e., socialism.

By raising your demands within the confines of capitalism, you are helping to maintain the illusion that capitalism can be systematically reformed! In fact, comrades, Bobby Seale himself is now campaigning openly as a member of the bosses' Democratic Party. In a recent speech at Laney College in Oakland, Seale ridiculed the "white radicals" who seek revolutionary solutions. In effect Seale is repudiating the BPP's past—the struggles that grew out of the revolutionary class hatred of ghetto youth against the agents of their oppression.

Social Work or Revolution

While still giving up service to the need for revolutionary action, your leadership has made a right-wing turn into the politics of social work, not social revolution. In his book, *To Die for the People*, Huey Newton writes that the survival programs:

"...are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution. We say that the survival program of the Black Panther Party is like the survival kit of a sailor stranded on a raft. It helps him to sustain himself until he can get completely out of that situation. So the survival programs are not answers or solutions, but they will help us to organize the community around a true analysis and understanding of their situation. When consciousness and understanding is raised to a high level then the community will seize the time and deliver themselves from the boot of their oppressors."

Actually your survival program dooms that sailor to wander on the high seas until he dries, because he has thrown overboard the only tool—a class analysis and the Marxist method—which can guide his journey. Without the Trotskyist Transitional Program, which propels the working class toward revolutionary consciousness through demands which stem from the immediate felt needs of the class, but which lead unalterably to the need for socialist revolution, the sailor (the working class) will never make it to the shore.

Black Capitalism?

The rudiments of a class analysis were expressed by Newton in an inter-

view in 1968, republished by SDS in August 1968 in a pamphlet called "Huey Newton Talks to the Movement." When asked about the Panthers' practice of running candidates against other black candidates, Newton repeated Malcolm X's analogy:

"...The Black Panther Party are the field blacks, we're hoping the master dies if he gets sick. This black bourgeoisie seem to be acting in the role of the house Negro. They are pro-administration. They would like a few concessions made, but as far as the overall setup, they have a little more material goods, a little more advantage, a few more privileges than the black have-nots; the lower class. And so they identify with the power structure and they see their interests as the power structure's interest. In fact, it's against their interest."

"The Black Panther Party was forced to draw a line of demarcation. We are for all of those who are for the promotion of the interests of the black have-nots which represents about 98% of blacks here in America...."

In "Black Capitalism Re-Analyzed," Newton now calls this position counter-revolutionary and tries to prove that black capitalists are also victims of the "white power structure"! He says, "We now see the Black capitalist as having a similar relationship to the Black community as the national (native) bourgeoisie have to the people in national wars of decolonization...." He covers himself by stating that the contributions of the black capitalists to the BPP simply aid in their destruction. But in order to get the support of these black capitalists to begin with, the BPP had to water down its program.

It is clear that Newton has learned more than the cult of personality from Mao (who got it from Stalin). Panther support to black Democrats like Chisholm and Dellums is the same disastrous strategy of class-collaboration that resulted in the death of thousands of Chinese communists and class-conscious workers in 1926 and 1927. Applying that theory—that is, that alliances can be made with the national (progressive) bourgeoisie—under Stalin's orders the Chinese Communist Party entered the party of the national bourgeoisie (the Kuomintang) under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. As soon as the Communists disarmed, Chiang turned on them and massacred them, strangling the possibility of revolution for a generation. Mao repeatedly called for an alliance, with Chiang in the late 1930's and 1940's, thus continuing Stalin's policies. The Chinese national bourgeoisie saw its interests as inextricably tied to those of imperialism, just as the black bourgeoisie in this country is today talking after its white mentors.

Rather than educating the black masses as to the fundamentally reactionary nature of religion, Newton now says that the church as the institution of the black community can be either progressive or reactionary. But in reality, both the black capitalists and the church represent class interests absolutely opposed to those of the black masses, because they are both fundamentally premised on the maintenance of private property, of the capitalist system itself. The function of the church, in the ghetto as everywhere else, has always been to promise rewards in "heaven" for the passive acceptance of injustice and oppression.

Minimum Basis of Support

We call on the Black Panther Party to decisively break with both parties of capital, Republican and Democrat, and with its own current policies of class-collaboration. Campaign independently, against the bourgeois parties! In this election and in your actions generally, fight for the independence of the working class and oppressed masses from their capitalist masters!

Should your party make this fundamental shift, then despite our many disagreements we could call for critical support for Seale and Brown in the

Continued from page 12

...NMU

posed can labor hammer out a program and course of action in our interests...."

—attached to Herson's Affidavit Form; reprinted in *Beacon Supplement*, 5 March 1973

Nonetheless Herson refused to admit the bureaucracy's right to thereby stop him from fighting for the interests of his fellow seamen:

"...I consider this 'affidavit' form to be illegitimate. At the same time I will not allow your bureaucratic regulations to bar me from my right to run for office; therefore I submit this form while attacking such witchhunting, red-baiting devices and seek to mobilize the NMU membership to destroy these dictatorial, undemocratic gag rules...."

The NMU Bureaucracy's "Neutrality" in the Current Elections

Faced with a restive rank and file, and with the threat of government intervention as well, the NMU National Office proclaimed a bogus "neutrality" for the period of the elections. This consisted in eliminating all reference to electioneering, comment on the candidates and signed national or branch reports during January and February from the pages of the *Pilot*, publication of which was then to be suspended for the months of March, April and May! A special election supplement would appear in March to which all candidates—from president to patrolman—would be able to submit a 100-word statement, which the National Office would naturally edit for possible "libel." The Curran bureaucracy has, of course, held tight control over

coming election. But the present Panther program, and the Seale/Brown campaign in particular, is based on a strategy of class-collaboration. Such policies can only lead to the strangulation of the black masses (as well as the white), not to their liberation. The Panther campaign is not a working-class campaign. While the BPP has the support of some black and white workers, it does not depend on the existence of an independent workers' movement, and does not seek to base itself on and express the interests of the working class, but rather wishes to represent the "black community." The "black community" is not a working-class entity, but contains elements from all classes—the proletariat, lumpen-proletariat, petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie.

Therefore, because we in the Spartacist League and Revolutionary Communist Youth stand unalterably for the overthrow of the bourgeois state, against class-collaboration, against any faith in capitalists of any color, we must state that we cannot, as a question of principle, at this time support the election campaign of Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown. We hope that you comrades will recognize the disastrous right turn of the Black Panther Party and will struggle to replace the present BPP line of support for black Democrats, black churches, black cops and black capitalists with a revolutionary working-class perspective.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to an article in *Workers Vanguard* No. 4 which contains a much fuller analysis of your party:

"...The oppression of the black people cannot be ended by black activists alone, but only by the working class as a whole.... That revolution will be made, not in the name of black power, but of working-class power—communism...."

Fraternally,
Bay Area Spartacist League

the *Pilot* for 25 years and Curran's own multi-paged editorial viewpoint has appeared in every issue. Suspension of the *Pilot* is thus designed to stifle information and debate about union affairs at the very time in which members are most interested in bearing the views of others.

Denied the pages of the *Pilot* in which to present their views, oppositionists have also been harassed in their efforts to distribute campaign materials in person. MSC candidate Herson was warned by union officials in New York that distribution of his campaign literature in the union hall was a violation of election rules. The MSC, however, refused to be intimidated by bureaucratic harassment; the Caucus continued to distribute its literature, collect signatures and discuss its program with interested union members. The only real safeguard of the rights of militant oppositionists is a conscious membership aware of the need for union solidarity. The "impartial" ally of the union bureaucrats, the Honest Ballot Association, was since then forced to permit distribution of campaign literature within the hall during the month of March. Despite the seeming insignificance of this retreat, the event constitutes a real victory for the rank and file: it marks the first time in 20 years that the membership will not be relegated to discussing union politics and distributing literature on the street. Now views can be exchanged inside the hall, where trade-union business belongs.

All these events demonstrate that the stress placed on the principle of workers democracy in the program of the MSC, and the emphasis on the class independence and solidarity of the working class, correspond to the immediate, felt needs of seamen smarting under 25 years of repression. Not only does the program oppose witchhunting anti-communism but all forms of discrimination against sections of workers in the union and society as a whole. Thus the caucus has fought for abolition of the "group system" within the union. This open shop system, which takes control over admittance of new members from the hands of the membership, was one result of the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act and is used by bureaucrats and companies alike to divide the seamen, by keeping the lower seniority "Group 2's" in competition for jobs with the "Group 1's." Hence the caucus' demand for full shipping and membership rights for all after thirty days' seetime.

Recognizing that the rights of the working class are essentially "one and indivisible," the MSC program also includes defense of political prisoners and opposition to all forms of racial and sexual oppression. Morrissey, whose reputation as an opportunist rests on firm foundations, has, to the contrary, consistently refused to take a stand on such issues because, as he himself has explicitly stated, it might cost him some votes!

A Bankrupt Union vs. "I've Got Mine"

Curran's years of betrayal in the NMU have brought the union to the brink of disaster. While collaborating with the companies and government to eliminate jobs and erode the seamen's standard of living, Curran headed off action by the seamen in their own interest through a combination of tight dictatorial control and lying promises of fake remedies in the form of government action. But the protectionist 50-50 oil import bill, which was to have created jobs by requiring that half of all petroleum imported would be shipped in American bottoms, was recently defeated in the Senate. Nor have the Soviet grain deals provided new jobs. U.S. passenger ships have been sold to "foreign" companies owned by American capital. The excitement generated by Curran's election-eve hoax—the rumor now proven to be false that the passenger ship *Independence* was to be restored to service—is an indication of the state of des-

peration to which seamen have been reduced.

Ever sensitive to his own self-interest, Curran, faced with a decline in NMU membership from the job losses he has helped engineer and has accepted as permanent, began to diversify the union, herding in shore-side workers in unrelated industries to serve as voting cattle and to maintain his dues base; much the same cynicism is revealed in the leadership's recent proposal, rammed through the New York port meeting, to sell the \$15 million union headquarters in New York City on the pretext of a need for union funds and for cutbacks in expenses necessitated by the decline of American shipping, an act which constitutes implicit acceptance of a permanent loss of jobs in the industry. Most significantly, the proceeds from the sale of the building are to go into the general fund, over which the union officers have unrestricted control, not back into the *strike fund*, which was liqui-

what a "democratic" NMU with Morrissey at the helm would look like.

Morrissey's entire strategy for securing Curran's plush office for himself boils down to bypassing the union ranks to instead ingratiate himself with the bourgeoisie, securing the services of its liberal lawyers and journalists in exchange for opening the door of the union to the capitalist enemies of labor. Government intervention in union affairs is aimed at destroying the unions, not democratizing them—an elementary fact well documented in labor history. But what does this matter to an aspiring labor-faker?

The true character of government "impartiality" in union elections is in fact demonstrated by the 1969 NMU rerun itself. In that farce virtually every Labor Department procedural decision was biased in favor of the incumbents. The present three-month suspension of the *Pilot* against which Morrissey is fighting is based on a Labor Department ruling made then—that the *Pilot* must contain the views

headlined "Maverick Leads Grass-Roots Revolt in National Maritime Union," make much of the similarity of Morrissey's campaign to that of Arnold Miller in the UMW. What the two share is a trend toward the emergence—amidst much fanfare from the liberal bourgeoisie—of a new brand of government-controlled labor-fakers.

In a period of sharpening capitalist attacks upon working-class rights and living standards, the old bureaucratic union regimes, discredited by their corruption and incapacitated by their inflexibility, have become increasingly incapable of containing the rising militancy of the workers. Aiming to utilize this massive upsurge of working-class discontent solely to come into office, the "oppositionists," for the most part simply out-bureaucrats like Morrissey, serve to head off working-class revolt through creating the illusion that meaningful reforms are possible "within the system." What renders Morrissey so attractive to the liberals is precisely this non-struggle perspective. He refuses to mobilize the ranks of seamen to struggle in their interests, and he limits his own efforts to running in elections—with his watery, liberal, class-collaborationist program. That he has called the government into the union to do a job only the membership can undertake—rid itself of the bureaucratic parasites holding back its struggle—is for the liberal bourgeoisie only one more point in his favor.

The complete bankruptcy of such reformism is apparent in Morrissey's own program made up entirely of vague reform promises and mildly militant bread-and-butter demands (in reality, crumbs). He has none of the fake idealism that gave Miller's campaign a grass-roots facade. His program speaks to none of the crucial problems with which seamen are confronted and which amount to a matter of survival. Thus his solution to the job crisis is to spread the limited work available more equitably, not to provide new jobs; he would resolve the problem of runaway foreign-flag shipping simply with the social-patriotic appeal for a government program to expand American shipping, that is, with more of Curran's ineffective and totally discredited groveling before Congress. (He calls for the taxing of American-owned foreign flag vessels and for the joining together of all labor to defeat the use of "cheap foreign labor" eroding American workers' conditions.) His demand for wage-and-hour parity with seamen in West Coast maritime unions, who face the same loss of jobs and erosion of living standards as do NMU members, is absurdly inadequate.

MSC's Principled Program

In contrast, the program of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus is based on the recognition that the fight for the jobs and living standards of seamen and of the working class as a whole can be waged only as a part of the broader struggle of the working class for political power, and only with the awareness that the interests of the workers and their capitalist employers are irreconcilably opposed. Morrissey's apparently "down-to-earth" demands, on the other hand, in accepting as given the "realities" of the companies' need to make profits and the right of the capitalist government to intervene in union affairs, are inherently a sellout: does anyone seriously believe that a Morrissey-led union would advance (let alone fight for) demands for a wage increase which would keep pace with consumer prices (presently advancing at a rate of over 20% per annum)? Should seamen be taken in by Morrissey's "realism," they will all too shortly and to their sorrow discover that it was Morrissey who was promising them "pie in the sky."

This is why MSC candidate Herson, far from simply seeking the "protest vote," is running for office on the basis of the full program of the MSC, which alone is adequate to conduct a militant struggle for seamen's needs. The MSC program incorporates demands which

are vital to the immediate needs of seamen but which in order to be realized ultimately require the overthrow of a society based on exploitation of the working class in the interest of profit. Only such a class-struggle program can further recognition by seamen of the fact that their interests as workers are necessarily counterposed to those of the capitalists, their government and their agents within the working class.

Basic to the program is the concept of the *independence of the working class*. The demands advanced in the program are based not on what might perhaps be acceptable to the employers and their government but rather are designed as a vehicle for realizing the vital needs of seamen, and in the only way that this can be done: by a militant struggle of the rank and file which will not shy away from direct conflict with the capitalist myths. Thus the demand for a four-watch system and alternating crews on each ship receiving continuous pay would increase jobs at the expense of employers and eliminate the virtual imprisonment of seamen aboard ship. For those who would say that realization of this demand would result in the total flight of shipping to foreign flags, the caucus puts forth the demand for *international working-class solidarity*, not jingoist protectionism (such as the ILGWU "Buy American" campaign): create an international seamen's union to fight runaway shipping by raising wages of foreign seamen to U.S. standards!

Similarly, the demand for wages and pensions tied to the cost of living corresponds to a vital need of all workers, but will be fought tooth-and-nail by the capitalist class; a key means of increasing profits is to reduce real wages through continuous inflation. The demand "Nationalization of Shipping Without Compensation under Seamen's Control" recognizes the twin realities that the shipping companies have existed only thanks to government subsidies (a typical instance of the American system of "socialism for the rich, free enterprise for the poor"), so that even by bourgeois standards their capitalist owners have no right to compensation; and that mere nationalization under capitalism will lead to increased regimentation of the labor force. Thus all these partial demands necessarily lead to the call for the building of an independent workers party based on the trade unions, and for a workers government. Economic struggle by itself is doomed to failure: what the capitalists give with one hand they take back with the other. Thus, for instance, wage increases are eliminated by speed-up and inflation. Only by politically uniting the class in resolute struggle against the bourgeoisie in every sphere will seamen—and all workers—be able to escape from the prison not just of the *fo'c'sle* but of capitalist exploitation. ■

Fake-Lefts Back Morrissey

Predictably, the existence of a candidate (Gene Herson of the MSC) running for the presidency of a national union on a full program of working-class struggle has revealed the appetites for betrayal and the unprincipled sectarianism of self-styled "socialist" groups who form a Holy Alliance supporting the aspiring bureaucrat, Morrissey.

- The SWP, in the *MILITANT* for 30 March, while criticizing Curran and the CP for their histories of notorious class-collaborationism, nonetheless concludes that Morrissey, through his various court suits (i.e., government intervention) "has done more than anyone else to guard the union treasury and deserves support on that account alone."
- The International Socialists, in the 16-29 March *WORKERS' POWER*, true to their policy of supporting would-be future bureaucrats (in the UAW, Art Foe; in the UMW, Arnold Miller), listed Morrissey's program uncritically, not even mentioning the MSC.
- In a typical display of sectarianism, the Workers League formally claims to support a number of demands in the program of the MSC, but then turns around and calls on Morrissey to implement them. Criticizing Morrissey as one of the men the government would like to see in office, "to hold back the struggle," the 12 March *BULLETIN* nevertheless urges the ranks to "demand an accounting from Morrissey, a break from these policies and a program to defeat the shippers and Nixon..."
- Not to be outdone, the CP in the 3 March *DAILY WORLD*, published Morrissey's program, while red-baiting Herson as did the *NEWS* of Port Arthur, Texas, an oil port dominated by Gulf and Texaco interests.

dated to pay for this frivolous monument to Curran's ego. As Curran said at a convention several years ago, "I've got mine."

The pension plan which the bureaucrats touted as exemplifying the gains achieved under their leadership, and which seamen viewed as the only thing they had left, also seems likely to go by the boards. It was eroded in the 1972 contract by introduction of a minimum retirement age of 55 in addition to the requirement of 280 days seetime per year for 20 years; reports are now being circulated that the "Curran team" will succeed in raising the age minimum to 62 upon expiration of the current contract in June 1975.

The Question of Government Intervention

The only reason the Curran bureaucracy is making a phony pretense to "fairness" in the elections is their fear of government intervention, an ever-present possibility with the likes of James Morrissey contesting the presidency. Morrissey's chief claim to fame is the federal court suit whereby he forced a rerun of the 1966 NMU elections, the first national election ever to be supervised by the Labor Department (the UMW's was the second).

Hoping to use the Labor Department to bolster his own sagging campaign, Morrissey has again asked the courts, i.e., the government, to intervene in the NMU election procedures. This present suit is revealing in several respects, particularly the fact that he failed to tell the membership—his supposed constituents—about it. Most significant, however, is his demand that the *Pilot* be published throughout the pre-election period with James Morrissey to be granted half the space in each monthly issue! This is the true nature of Morrissey's altruistic concern for union democracy—half the pie for himself and to hell with the rest of the membership! It is an ominous warning as to

of all candidates or none. For the bureaucrats, who have controlled the pages of the *Pilot* for decades, the answer was clearly "none."

Moreover, experienced bureaucrats such as Curran and W.T. Boyle of the United Mine Workers (UMW) are skillful at using the question of government interference in union affairs as a handle against oppositionists relying on such intervention to come to power. In the recent UMW election Boyle, despite his gross corruption, was able to mobilize substantial support around the correct charge that Mitler and the Miners for Democracy were being run by government "outsiders"—liberal Democratic Party politicians and lawyers. Likewise, the NMU bureaucrats presented a motion at the January New York port meeting condemning the utilization of the Landrum-Griffin Act to bring the government into union affairs. Despite the blatant hypocrisy of this action on the part of a regime that has regularly preached reliance on the government to provide jobs and has even called the police into NMU halls to break up union meetings, Morrissey, who made no effort to defend his use of the courts, was thereby discredited once again before the membership.

The MSC has consistently opposed any and every interference of the capitalist government into union affairs. In its newspaper, the *Beacon*, and in countless leaflets, the MSC has pointed out that the purpose of its fight against Curran is to enable the NMU to undertake real struggles to defend the workers' interests against the companies and the companies' government. To seek, as Morrissey does, to come to power by way of government intervention is to vitiate in advance the purpose of principled opposition to the Curran regime, by chaining the union in advance to its irreconcilable enemy—the capitalist state!

The various articles which have recently appeared in the bourgeois press praising Morrissey, such as that in the 26 February *Philadelphia Inquirer*

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Curran Loots Union, Retires

Class Struggle Opposition in the NMU

For the first time in over 20 years American workers in a national union have the opportunity to vote for a candidate dedicated to a program of resolute working-class struggle. Within the National Maritime Union, the Militant-Solidarity Caucus, a group of rank-and-file militants organized in 1968, is advancing as its candidate for president Gene Herson, who is running on the full program of the caucus.

The attack on seamen's jobs and living conditions in this declining industry stems not just from the government-subsidized companies but also directly from the government, which, in the wake of the collapse of American world economic hegemony, is concerned to further the "competitiveness" of American industry through automation, job cuts and wage freezes. Recognizing this, the Militant-Solidarity Caucus is advancing a program for economic and political struggle which will unite seamen and the working class as a whole to combat this attack, under slogans such as "Labor Solidarity," "Nationalization of Shipping Without Compensation

working-class struggle, one that does not contain in itself the seeds of future sellouts and betrayals, and that such a campaign will have wide appeal to workers who see in it the only possible answer to their immediate and deeply felt needs.

Bureaucratic Repression vs. Workers Democracy

A key demand in the caucus' program is the call for workers democracy, a demand whose need is immediately obvious to seamen who have suffered 25 years of Curran's bureaucratic control: "For Membership Control of the Union—End Bureaucratic Privileges." The other main opposition candidate for the presidency, the aspiring would-be liberal bureaucrat James Morrissey, makes a deliberately imprecise call for a "membership vote on officials' salary." This ignores the fact that the NMU membership has been coerced or maneuvered into "approving" most of the Curran machine's bureaucratic abuses over the years; where

section of the MSC program was made evident just last month, when NMU president Joseph Curran for once forsook the confines of his upstate New York estate to receive the "thanks" of "grateful" NMU members for his years of "self-sacrificing service" at the New York City union meeting on 5 March; Curran had chosen to step down so as to establish his hand-picked successor, Secretary-Treasurer Shannon Wall, as the incumbent.

The union meeting, however, failed to provide the automatic stamp of approval desired by Curran. To start with, the membership was clearly less than impressed by Curran's introductory address, in which he stressed his valiant efforts to build the union, despite the fact that he "could have left the waterfront with a lot of money" had he been willing to sell out. Perhaps the members thought that Curran's planned retirement from the union with \$1 million in severance pay and lump-sum pension benefits more than compensated him for his earlier sacrifices. (Since then, faced with a court challenge by former members of his own bureaucracy and the general gasp of disapproval with which the bourgeois press greeted his plans, Curran has settled on a mere quarter million dollars in severance pay and a \$53,000 per year pension for life.) The NMU membership which Curran "represents" leaves the industry with a pension of \$3,000 per year!

Curran's bureaucratic flunkies then introduced the motion to give Curran "a vote of thanks," whereupon, as a gesture of "fairness," they permitted an "oppositionalist" to speak—James Morrissey, who has discredited himself among many of the militant rank-and-file by resorting to government intervention in the union to further his own political ambitions. Constant heckling from union officials and Curran sympathizers, many of whom were bussed in from other East Coast ports, led to Morrissey's being ruled out of order(!), at which point the chair attempted to call the question.

But, refusing to be intimidated by the bureaucratic tactics which have always been the stock-in-trade of the Curran regime, the candidate of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus, Gene Herson, demanded his right to speak and took the floor. Herson then gave an account of the early history of the NMU, emphasizing the bloody struggles fought by seamen to secure union recognition. Giving the lie to Curran's constant attempts, endlessly featured in the *Pilot*, to take personal credit for every action of the NMU past and present, Herson stressed the role of the union membership and denounced Curran for his betrayal of the militancy of the ranks. Herson pointed out the need for a new, militant NMU leadership which would fight the shipping companies and the government rather than continue Curran's policy

of abject class-collaboration. At this point, the microphone was turned off on the pretext that Herson was not keeping to the subject.

After this, the meeting degenerated into a complete farce. First a union patrolman rushed to the front of the room to put the microphone away. Then another official came up to urge Herson to sit down, while a third became involved in a tug-of-war over the mike. Herson relinquished the floor, but not before denouncing Curran to his face for running the union in a way that deprived the membership of even the right to speak.

Since it was unclear whether the motion for a "vote of thanks" had passed, the chair then called for those in favor to rise. Such was the reluctance of the members to do so that the chair had ultimately to tell the membership peremptorily to stand up and be counted. Slowly most eventually did. A clearer indication of the true views of the membership is provided by the Boston port meeting, which Curran failed to pack with his flunkies: there the motion for a "vote of thanks" failed by a wide margin.

The farcical New York port meeting was not untypical of the manner in which Curran has maintained power for 25 years: bureaucratic manipulation coupled with brutal suppression of all "dissidents." As membership control of the union was eroded, so too were the wages and working conditions of the seamen: Curran's collaboration with the companies and government against the seamen, under the patriotic slogan, "Build the U.S. Merchant Marine," has led to the loss of jobs through automation and through sale of ships to "foreign-flag" companies to the point where, according to one union official, there are now 8,000 deep-sea jobs for 25,000 seamen.

Curran did not achieve this autocratic position in the union, which has allowed him to make himself—officially!—the sole interpreter of the NMU constitution and to receive an \$86,000 a year salary plus unlimited expense account, without a brutal struggle against the union ranks.

Working closely with the Communist Party (CP), Curran became the NMU's first president in 1937. During World War II, however, the CP discredited itself completely through class collaboration and social-patriotic subordination of the workers' interests to the war effort, thus setting the stage for the anti-communist witch-hunt which followed. In an attempt to consolidate his own power Curran then cooperated with the FBI, Coast Guard and the police to purge the CP and militants from the union, upon whom actual physical attacks were mounted. A "red clause" inserted in the union's constitution now bars "Communists" from NMU membership.

It was at this time that Morrissey first came to office, as a loyal member of the Curran regime. Nonetheless, the CP is still continuing today the class collaboration and bureaucratic maneuverings which led to its purge from the labor movement, is now supporting Morrissey uncritically in his bid for the presidency.

In the current NMU election all candidates are required to sign an affidavit stating that they are not now and have not been members of the Communist Party. This use of political discrimination by the bureaucracy to eliminate challenge from opponents with a program of working-class struggle was strongly attacked by Herson, the candidate of the MSC:

"I object to the use of this 'affidavit' form in that it is a tool to suppress political ideas and beliefs of union members. I, along with all others in the NMU Militant-Solidarity Caucus, defend the rights of all individuals, groups and organizations within the labor movement, including the Communist Party; specifically in this NMU election I defend the right of any Communist Party member who wishes to run as a candidate. Principles of workers democracy must be adhered to because only when all views in the labor movement are heard and counter-

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Militant-Solidarity Caucus demonstrates in 1971. "Fight runaway shipping with international seamen's unity," headlined the BEACON.

tion under Seamen's Control," "Fight against Government Control and Interference," "For a Workers Party" and "For a Workers Government."

The successes already registered in this campaign and the wide-spread recognition accorded Herson among the rank and file as a principled union militant expose the justifications advanced by ostensible leftists for adapting to what they regard as the abysmal level of consciousness of the American working class. What Herson's campaign demonstrates is that it is possible, despite anti-subversive laws and an entrenched bureaucracy, to wage a campaign of

this technique has failed, Curran has simply packed the meetings with his hand-picked supporters. The MSC, on the other hand, demands that the maximum salary for union officers be no higher than that of the highest-paid working seamen, and demands that the right of immediate recall of all officers by the rank and file be written into the union constitution. And to ensure that oppositional voices are not stifled it calls for opening the *Pilot*, hitherto the house-organ and mouthpiece of the Curran bureaucracy, to all opposing views.

The immediate relevance of this