



U.S. bombing in Cambodia, July 1973.

## U.S.' Last Hope in Cambodia: Mao/Sihanouk

### What Should Be Done About Richard Nixon?

Whatever may be the intentions of the evidently honorable old male chauvinist, racist, constitutionalist Senator Ervin from North Carolina, he has, for his own reasons, provided a service by pushing his inquiry to the point of revealing at least some of Nixon's conspiratorial schemes, and raising the obvious question, what should be done about Richard Nixon?

We are not bourgeois democrats. Certainly, for his crimes against bourgeois democracy Nixon should be removed (impeached) as president of the U.S. Behind his incredible unctuousness—doing dirty tricks while hypocritically mouthing platitudes about public morality and piously calling for "law-and-order"—lie bonapartist appetites to become the Colonel Papadopoulos of America.

But the truly great crimes, of enormous magnitude—smacking of the Nazi war crimes for which the imperialist victors exacted their revenge on the losers in the Nuremberg Trials, as well as of the equally barbarous atrocities committed by the Allies (Dresden, Hiroshima/Nagasaki, etc.)—are what he's done (and is still doing as you read this) in Indochina: the calculated mass butchery of Asian peasants and workers.

The proper aspiration of the American workers movement is to extradite this man and his guilty entourage to some place like North Vietnam, where a real tribunal of the peers of his victims might be convened and a just verdict possibly arrived at. For our part, we aspire to lead the working class in a socialist revolution which can provide the definitive verdict on Nixon's rule—by sweeping him and his class into the dust-bin of history.

By signing the August 15 cut-off of bombing in Cambodia, Nixon and the U.S. capitalist class have signed the death warrant for the Lon Nol clique whose sole base of "popular" support expands or contracts depending on the amount of American "aid" available for bribery and whose sole defense against the Khmer Rouge insurgency is American B-52's. Lon Nol's army, entirely equipped and paid by the U.S., is so shot through with corruption that of the 250,000 soldiers claimed by the general staff to be on the payroll, 150,000 were found to be "phantom" troops added to the lists to pad the bank accounts of the generals. Even the payroll meant for the troops that actually exist is siphoned off by the generals. The army spends as much time demonstrating in front of the Royal Palace for back wages as it does fighting the Khmer Rouge. U.S. military supplies are promptly reelected to the Khmer Rouge, so that although the Chinese and North Vietnamese provide almost no military aid, the insurgents are able to maintain a partisan war using equipment "Made in the U.S.A."

Lon Nol's regime is so unstable that even his hand-picked court astrologers, who are his closest political advisors, predicted his imminent downfall this past Spring. He promptly had 55 astrologers arrested for making disloyal predictions. However, this brought him no better fortune as both his military and economic situation

continued to deteriorate. His U.S. "advisors," with something more material than the stars to back up their advice, forced him to exile his brother, General Lon Non, who even among the thieves and thugs that constitute Cambodia's "elite" was considered corrupt and despotic, and to broaden his regime by bringing back his co-conspirators in the 1970 anti-Sihanouk coup who had since fallen out.

The insurgent forces, the Stalinist Khmer Rouge, have since the overthrow of Sihanouk grown from scattered guerrilla bands and Communist cells numbering 3,000 into a force of 50,000 which militarily controls and politically administers 80 to 90 percent of Cambodian territory. The Khmer Rouge are reportedly divided into several groups and lack central coordination. Following the precepts of Mao and his ex-close-comrade-in-arms Lin Biao, they have made little or no attempt to organize the urban working class. Instead they have preferred to ally with the "national monarchy."

Though when Sihanouk was head of state as a "neutralist prince" he persecuted the Khmer Rouge and drove them underground, as soon as he was deposed by Lon Nol he formed a political bloc with his former foes called the "National United Front of Cambodia," or FUNK for short, which is in turn part of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNK). The FUNK claims to mobilize all so-

cial classes and strata, all political parties, all professional or religious organizations, all patriotic personages irrespective of their political opinion, sex and religious belief. It also promises to "safeguard the inviolability of the person, property, wealth and privacy of correspondence" and even asserts that "Buddhism is and will remain the state religion" ("Proclamation" of the FUNK). The GRUNK claims to be open to all "qualified representatives of the Buddhist clergy, the army, the police, the provincial guard, young people, intellectuals, peasants, workers, other laborers, industrialists, shopkeepers, civil servants, women, etc. who belong to all the patriotic, progressive, anti-imperialist-leaning groups" (*Le Monde*, 25 March 1970). Thus, as in Greece, we are confronted here with a "people's monarchy" vs. a "general's republic," except that in Cambodia the Stalinists constitute the only real, politically organized force within the "people's monarchy" and the prince serves as a titular figurehead.

### A Nixon-Mao-Sihanouk Axis?

The U.S. government, in anticipation of the August 15 deadline, is apparently trying to split Sihanouk from the Khmer Rouge and reconstruct the "government of national salvation" which existed prior to the 1970 coup, composed of Lon Nol as premier, Sirik Matak as

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# French Bomb Tests Spark Protests in Australasia

On July 21 France began a series of nuclear tests on Mururoa atoll, 800 miles southeast of Tahiti, despite considerable international opposition. The governments of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Japan, Canada, Britain and Sweden issued protests. In France the Communist Party and the Socialist Party stated their opposition to the tests. Postal workers in Britain refused to handle mail to France for a week. The main protests, however, have been in Australasia. The Labor governments of Australia and New Zealand successfully sought a ruling from the World Court calling on France not to begin any tests until the Court could rule on the claims of the two Pacific states. When the French government went ahead with its stated intention of ignoring the World Court, Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam lamented that France had "betrayed her traditional respect for the law" (*New York Times*, 23 July 1973). Whitlam sent a naval supply ship to join the New Zealand frigate "Otago" which, replete with Cabinet Minister, was bearing "silent witness" at the edge of the test zone.

In Australia the Australian Council of Trade Unions called for a nationwide boycott of French products, a ban on the handling of French goods and the refusal to service French air traffic, ships and businesses. These measures which include a blackout on telegraphic and postal communications between France and Australia and to French businesses, have virtually severed communications and trade with France.

Most of the ostensible revolutionary left in Australia has uncritically accepted the nationalist, liberal and pacifist premises prevalent among the opponents of the tests. Thus they have been confined to regretting that the Whitlam government is not more determined and that it relies too much on "correct" forms of protest. The exception is the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand. In a leaflet the SL/ANZ pointed out that:

"The Whitlam government has attempted to limit the power of the French by opposing the testing of French nuclear weapons in the Pacific, and various left-wingers have cheered them on, deluded that they were 'pressuring' the Labor government into making gains for the working class. 'Whitlam's action in sending the Supply to the test area was the least he could do. His success in winning a favorable decision at the Hague opposing the French tests would

have achieved nothing if it were not followed up....' (*Direct Action*, No. 43, June 28, 1973) The government opposes the power of the French not because Whitlam doesn't like strontium 90 in his tea (which he presumably doesn't), but because the Australian Labor government will seem to have much more room to maneuver—to negotiate more profitable deals for the Australian bourgeoisie—if the government appears to be authoritative in an attempt to make the French back down. What the SWL/SYA and all the rest don't seem to understand is bourgeois politics. The Labor government decision to send a naval vessel into the nuclear test zone is hardly an act any revolutionists should applaud. Not only are the "lefts" tailing after reformism and chauvinism but pacifist antics as well. Only the power of the conscious working class, mobilised internationally against the bourgeois system of war can effectively end the nuclear power of the bourgeoisie.

The Socialist Workers League/Socialist Youth Alliance is content like their friends in the Socialist Workers Party to tail uncritically after the liberals, even going so far as to suggest that "the tests could easily be stopped if the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, would sail into the test area himself" (*Direct Action*, No. 40, 10 May 1973). Their comrades in the New Zealand Socialist Action League capitulated even more openly to pacifism. At a demonstration protesting the ban on the Ligue Communiste in Wellington on July 2 they carried banners inscribed "Ban the Bomb, not French socialists" (*Intercontinental Press*, 16 July 1973). The largest ostensible revolutionary organization in Australia, the Communist Party of Australia, hopes that the Labor government will make a "fresh start" and implement an "independent and peaceful foreign policy." It fails to realize that Australia is just as much a part of the imperialist system as is the U.S. and that to think otherwise is the first step toward becoming the ally of the Australian bourgeoisie. But besides its utopian Stalinist belief that a minor imperialist nation can somehow achieve economic independence without proletarian revolution, it argues that:

"The problem of nuclear tests and weapons of course goes beyond the French government and involves the other four nuclear powers. Not only France but also China still pollutes the world's atmosphere with tests. The USA and USSR, though confining testing to underground, may be building up mammoth radio-activity problems for the future...."

—*Tribune*, 10-16 July 1973

According to the CPA this is a "totally unacceptable situation" which can be ended only by "universal agreement to abandon nuclear weapons production and destroy stockpiles" which "will not begin to occur until each nuclear power can convince the others it has no intention of initiating a nuclear war

in any circumstances." This completely anti-Marxist idealism was challenged by our Australian comrades:

"The 'Black Ban' slapped on all French goods by the ACTU is an act we must support but not uncritically. In banning all relations with France the social-democratic trade-union leaders mobilised tens-of-thousands of workers for political action. The workers movement must support the ban, not for the reasons offered by the ACTU, but because we are opposed to the arming of the bourgeois state, not because we are against nuclear weapons or the French. The strike leaders' use of nationalist sentiment and appeals to bourgeois morality are barriers to revolutionary class consciousness and



1971 French H-bomb test in South Pacific.

must be fought, particularly when they are used to justify a good action. "These trade-union leaders revealed their limitations when they criticized the Chinese for detonating a nuclear weapon. 'They're fouling our environment,' they cried. But the Chinese state is using the weapons to defend the historic gains embodied in the destruction of capitalist property relations. What we hold against the Chinese state is its failure to use the threat of these potent weapons to aid the Vietnamese in their fight against imperialism!"

The supporters of Mao, the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) are likewise unable to understand the Marxist position of unconditional defense of workers states and are led by the Chinese bureaucracy's efforts to unite with the "friendly" imperialists, to tacitly support the testing of nuclear weapons by the French imperialists. Ignoring the question of the class nature of the state they divide the world into the superpowers (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) who are "desperately seeking to divert the people's growing struggles against imperialism" (*Vanguard*, 28 June 1973), and the "small and medium powers" of which China, of course, is the champion.

According to a Chinese diplomat, "the enhancement of their self-defense capabilities by a great number of small and medium countries confronted with aggression, interference, subversion and control by imperialism, colonial-

ism and neo-colonialism has nothing at all to do with the arms race" (*Peking Review*, 3 November 1972). No matter if these "self-defense capabilities" are used to crush the workers and peasants of these countries, as in Pakistan, Ceylon, Sudan and France!

The Australian Maoists are reduced to claiming that the protests against the French tests are all a U.S. imperialist plot, implemented by "their agents and stooges in those countries where they have large amounts of 'capital' invested" (*Vanguard*, 28 June 1973). And while defending the right of certain bourgeois regimes to enhance their repressive powers, the Chinese bureau-

cracy promotes pacifist illusions by signing an agreement for a nuclear free zone in Latin America, calling for a nuclear free zone in the Pacific and for a total ban on nuclear weapons.

The development and deployment of nuclear weapons, first used by U.S. imperialism against the Japanese people, is the culmination of the destructive, anti-human nature of modern capitalism. Had U.S. imperialism had a monopoly of nuclear weapons during the 1950's, it likely would have used them to slaughter millions of Russian and Chinese in order to destroy the Sino-Soviet deformed workers states. Therefore it is absolutely necessary for the USSR, China, North Vietnam and the other deformed workers states to have their own nuclear arsenal in order to counter the military might of imperialism. Our opposition to the French tests in the South Pacific is primarily based on our principled struggle to strip all the imperialist powers of all their weapons of mass murder. The potential nuclear poisoning of the Australasian peoples is a real and tangible danger, but nevertheless secondary to the class issue involved in the tests.

Disarmament, test bans and nuclear free zones offer no solution to the danger of war. As long as the imperialist system remains, nuclear weaponry will be produced if the bourgeoisie needs it. Real measures are required to defend the existing gains of the working class against imperialism. Brute military power is sometimes the only immediately available weapon to use in defense against imperialism, as the Bolsheviks realized when they set Trotsky to organizing the Red Army. Our defense of the deformed workers states is unconditional. We recognize that so long as the international working class is led by various reformist agents of the bourgeoisie the military power of the vacillating Stalinist bureaucracies is the only immediately available, if poor, unreliable and ultimately inadequate, defense. These bureaucracies will maneuver and betray revolutions in their desire for "peaceful coexistence" with the bourgeoisie, and must be overthrown by a political revolution. But the gains of the working class must be defended by every possible means. ■

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Old- and New-Style Black Courthouse Politicians...

# Bradley, Seale Gain in Coast Elections

The recent election of black ex-cop Tom Bradley in Los Angeles and the sizeable vote received by Black Panther/Democrat Bobby Seale in Oakland represent no gains at all for the black masses. Rather they fit into the recent pattern of ruling-class support for black capitalist politicians in the potentially explosive big-city ghetto areas. Blacks like Stokes (Cleveland), Hatcher (Gary), Dellums (Oakland), Gibson (Newark) or Chisbolm (Brooklyn) are no more able to reverse the deteriorating conditions faced by the working class—increasing unemployment, inflation, inadequate housing, schools and medical care—than are their fellow Democrats Daley, McGovern, Kennedy and Wallace. While Black Panther Party leader Seale is not the same as black policeman Bradley or union-buster Gibson, his appetites are clearly in their direction, as evidenced by the BPP's bloc with local black capitalists and its participation in the administration of the government poverty program. And although the BPP campaign as part of one of the bourgeois parties is certainly a sharp reversal of past policies, it is the logical result of the Panthers' black nationalism, which like all nationalism ultimately means support for capitalism.

## Black Cop Wins in L.A.

Tom Bradley, ex-police lieutenant and city councilman, became L.A.'s first black mayor by defeating three-term incumbent Sam Yorty in a run-off election on May 29. The black voting bloc plus a sizeable white anti-Yorty vote and support from sections of the bourgeoisie enabled Bradley to reverse Yorty's 1969 election success which was based on a racist and red-baiting campaign. This time, in the absence of a militant black movement, Bradley was able to campaign openly on his police record (appearing in uniform on posters and vowing to bring "law and order" to the schools) while Yorty's blatant appeals to racism were unconvincing to many white voters. Moreover Bradley's campaign was too moderate and dull to inspire either racist fears or enthusiastic support.

Bradley's election can in no way

be considered a victory for oppressed black people or even a response by the bourgeoisie to black community pressure. Important sections of the bourgeoisie enthusiastically welcomed his candidacy as a means for stabilizing capitalist rule at the expense of the working class. The ruling class didn't have to fear that Bradley's election might lead to the frustration of "rising expectations" (the usual bourgeois explanation of ghetto rebellions); Bradley gave oppressed blacks nothing to expect. The rulers understand that, in addition to maintaining a façade of representative democracy, a moderate black politician obedient to the dictates of finance capital can often be an effective vehicle for containing and channeling the militancy of labor and oppressed minorities. Yorty is a conservative "maverick" Democrat whose high-handed methods and ultra-conservative rhetoric might be a handicap in a period of economic stagnation and decline.

This is important in Los Angeles because of the sharper social conflicts there than are characteristic of northern California. One evidence was the massive Watts uprising. The current wave of roundups and deportations of Mexicans in southern California, which is affecting thousands in the L.A. region, could lead to a similar explosion. The labor situation is equally explosive. Los Angeles, industrialized largely since the period of labor militancy of the late 1930's, is still not a union town. This produces an explosive situation, reflected in the militant Teamster wildcat in 1970, the vicious union-busting lockout which destroyed the craft unions at the *Herald-Examiner* a few years ago and the current use of an army of company/Teamster goons to break the United Farmworkers' strike. Recently, pro-Abel leaders have been voted out in several southern California Steelworkers' locals in protest over the sellout no-strike pact.

Like Kenneth Gibson of Newark, Bradley is useful for the capitalist strategy of using liberal black politicians to break the power of the unions. In a recent speech at a UAW conference in L.A. Bradley said that his Labor-Management Committee "will try to anticipate labor problems

in our city, mediate labor disputes whenever possible, and keep me advised on all aspects of labor relations so that I can be personally active in helping solve problems" (*Los Angeles Times*, 10 July 1973). The *Times* approvingly notes that San Francisco's liberal Mayor Alioto has been an activist in labor-management disputes whereas Yorty's Labor-Management Committee had intervened in only four disputes in 12 years. The capitalists look to Bradley to become an "activist" in mediating class struggle and presenting a "progressive" facade to the black and Chicano population. On all the issues which face the working class—deportations of Mexican nationals, the wage freeze, union-busting, police



NEWSWEEK

Top, Bobby Seale as respectable Democrat. Below, ex-cop Thomas Bradley.



NEWSWEEK

terror, etc.—Bradley differs from Yorty only on details. Not surprisingly then, Bradley received endorsement from the *Los Angeles Times*, a major organ of the "progressive" capitalists.

The responses of present and would-be labor "leaders" to Bradley's campaign are indicative of the lack of independent working-class politics in Los Angeles. The AFL-CIO bureaucrats, seeking to restore their traditional role as power brokers in the Democratic Party, actively campaigned for the losing organization-liberal, Jesse Unruh, then gave only token support to Bradley in the run-off. A more liberal bureaucrat, Clifford Fried, vice-president of AFSCME

Local 2070, while claiming to support the formation of a labor party within the confines of Local 2070 at UCLA, argued strongly in the County Federation for support to Bradley.

The so-called "left" turn of the Communist Party toward independence from the Democrat Party was again shown to be a fraud in the Los Angeles city elections. (In this year's mayoralty elections in New York City, the CP has supported the capitalist politician Herman Badillo during the Democratic primary, while at the same time pushing its own candidate Rasheed Storey for the fall elections.) It took care not to

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## Preferential Advancement in Steel

June 20, 1973

Editor  
*Workers Vanguard*

Those working class tendencies that give support to government and court-ordered revisions of the discriminatory effects of seniority systems should examine the ruling of the Labor Department concerning the Bethlehem Steel plant at Sparrows Point, alluded to in the *WV* article on preferential hiring. Here is a concrete instance of how state intervention weakens the seniority system itself and threatens the very existence of the union.

Under most contracts in the steel industry, a worker gains seniority only in his own department and must give up whatever seniority he has accumulated when he wishes to transfer. This divisive and restrictive system must be changed to a system of plant-wide seniority to provide more equitable opportunities for advancement and protection against layoff. There must also be a fight for more jobs, through a sliding scale of wages and hours, for without this there will

still be the competition for jobs that makes discrimination possible. The government order not only does not do this (which would require a major struggle against the company), but introduces a whole new set of racial antagonisms by according preferential treatment to those blacks hired before March 1968, when discriminatory hiring supposedly ceased. The order grants members of the affected class of blacks the right to transfer with rate retention (no reduction in pay) and full seniority carry-over to any department in the plant as vacancies occur, using plant-wide seniority. But a white worker (or a black hired after 1968) similarly locked into the hot and dirty blast furnace department or the coke ovens cannot use plant-wide seniority to transfer. And for purposes of promotion, plant-wide seniority is applicable only when an affected black is competing for the opening, whereas others can advance only by use of the backward system of departmental seniority. Judge Henderson, who ruled in a similar case in the Bethlehem plant in Lackawanna, N.Y., termed this privi-

lege "super-seniority" and the new left should logically call it black skin privilege. Whatever you call it, the deliberately preferential treatment is a ruling class tactic of divisiveness.

The cost of the company's admitted discrimination is to be borne by the workers, as Labor Secretary Hodgson made clear when he said that the disruption of whites' expectations "is the price that must be paid."

That the present union leadership is not about to wage a struggle for an equitable solution is confirmed by the response of president Eddle Barteo of USW Local 2609 at Sparrows Point made in the January 22 *New York Times*: "It will be rough for a while. But at least it was good it was the government that imposed the change, because if there is trouble, the government will be the scapegoat. I could say to a white guy, I didn't do it, the government did it."

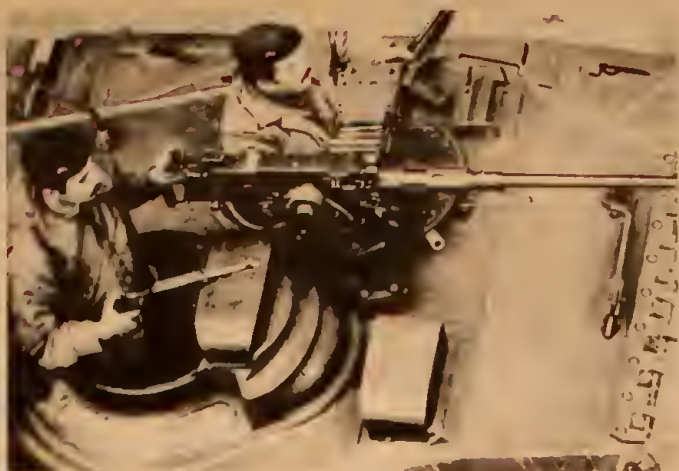
In addition, the government ruling openly encourages the company to use its contractual right to promote and lay off according to "ability to perform the work." In spite of its pres-

ence in the contract with the USW, the company has been reluctant to use this provision, but it is now given a government-sanctioned go-ahead to reassert this most effective management prerogative to destroy the union. Arbitrators will surely uphold the company, since this ruling usurps the negotiated contract.

Two years ago a Labor Department panel recommended no changes in the seniority system because they would be "unduly disruptive" to the plant's normal business. The recent order was made completely acceptable to Bethlehem by calling for "reasonable requirements" for jobs. Minority employees need not be transferred "if they do not possess the basic skills required to perform the job they seek and could not, with minimum training, be so equipped." This ability requirement will be used, as it was before unionization, as leverage against the collective strength of the workers, and very likely against the black workers first. Comradely,  
Lionel S.

# Letter





Tanks of the anti-Allende insurrectionary 2nd Armored Regiment driving along San Isidro Street on the way to the government building.



The pictures on these pages portray the attempted coup d'état by a section of the Chilean army this past June 21. Troops from the Second Armored Regiment surrounded the presidential palace and the ministry of defense, but were defeated in a three-hour shootout with loyalist units. During the fighting 22 people were killed, mostly civilians who were caught in the crossfire.

The revolt was defeated primarily because the bulk of the officer caste still feels Allende is performing a useful function by misleading the workers, and has not yet decided to dump him. Allende, for his part, again refused to mobilize the workers and relied for the government's defense on the loyalist generals. He accused Patria y Libertad, a fascist group with ties to right-wing sectors of the military, of being involved in the conspiracy, but did not outlaw it.

While the mini-coup was easily defeated, the threat of a reactionary putsch continues to grow as the popular-front government is increasingly unable to perform its job of holding back the workers, as witnessed by the recent copper miners' strike. The question of who shall rule is being posed with razor sharpness, as pro-government and anti-government demonstrations, strikes and lockouts, assassinations and discoveries of fascist arms caches occur one after another.

A rightist military coup, though not necessarily fascist, would (like the Banzer coup in Bolivia in August 1971) be directed at the suppression of the increasing mass militancy and the decapitation of the labor movement. The putsch was directed against the Allende government in the immediate sense; its real target is the workers movement.

Workers and peasants of Chile! The government of the Unidad Popular is not a workers government. It is a coalition of workers and capitalist parties. No matter how small the left radical and left christian-democratic parties, they are in a sense the most significant parties of the UP. For their presence is the guarantee that the Allende government will not step beyond the bounds of capitalism.

Trade unionists and housewives! The UP government does not stand for your interests, but those of the bosses. It has permitted galloping inflation which could be stopped by price controls administered by the unions and workers control of production and distribution. It has slowed down the process of nationalizations and leaves the "national" industrial capitalists untouched. It uses machine guns to suppress striking miners.

The Allende government must be replaced by a workers revolution. The working people must struggle for a government based on the CUT labor federation, the workers parties, and the cordones industriales and JAP's (incipient "people's committees") in the workers districts. This is the only real defense against the reactionaries.

But we are now faced with the following particular situation: The right wing is moving toward a decisive showdown with the government. Because of the strength of the UP vote in the March elections and the increasing radicalization of the workers, larger and larger sectors of the bourgeoisie are convinced that the line must be drawn. So for today the workers and Allende have a common enemy.

In the face of an attempted putsch, revolutionists must give military support to the popular-front government, without for one second ceasing to oppose it politically. We call for the distribution of arms to the workers, the formation of workers militias based on the trade unions, and the outlawing and disarming of all fascist organizations. Likewise we call for the abolition of the standing army and in particular the officers corps, and the organization of the troops into soldiers committees, allied with the trade unions. For the formation of a central committee of workers militias, soldiers councils and workers organizations (unions and parties) to coordinate the defense. Only in this way can we guarantee that the potential for revolutionary mobilization and the gains already wrung from the bourgeoisie are not made dependent on the good will of the "democratic" generals.

The ostensibly revolutionary left in Chile has failed to provide a clear opposition to the popular front, to consistently struggle within the existing mass organizations against the reformist leadership of the Socialist and Communist parties. Attempts, such as those by the MIR, to artificially create "people's assemblies" which will bypass the unions and the mass workers parties, are doomed to failure. So too are the demands of leftist groups on the government to increase nationalizations and break with the capitalist parties.

A bloodbath is today being prepared for the working masses of Chile. Only by struggling to build a revolutionary, vanguard party which bases itself on the politics of Lenin and Trotsky can this be averted and the revolutionary potential be realized. In contrast to centrists such as the MIR who constantly cove in to the popularity of the UP with their formulas of "critical support" and pressuring from the left, such a party would be one of irreconcilable opposition.





*Pro-government troops in front of the Sheraton-Carrera (diagonally across from the government building) prepare for battle against the insurrectionaries.*



*Insurrectionary troops are rounded up by pro-government forces.*

# Rightist Coup Fails in Chile



*Farmworkers of the MIR-led Revolutionary Peasants' Movement (MCR) arrive in Santiago to defend the government.*



*Pro-government soldier, identified by white arm band and dull helmet.*



*Worker killed during the battle in the center of Santiago.*

*After the defeat of the rightist putsch, a mass demonstration in defense of the Unidad Popular.*

PHOTOS BY NAUL OJEDA



Throughout the 1930's the American Trotskyists had to work under an overwhelming organizational disadvantage compared to the Stalinists. Expelled in the late 1920's from a Communist Party which had already undergone years of political degeneration, the Trotskyist forces at first numbered no more than 100 as opposed to the CP's 7,000. Furthermore, after Stalin's abrupt shift into the "Third Period" in 1929, many elements in the CP who had been sympathetic to Trotsky were superficially impressed by the new ultra-leftism and apparent adoption of some of the slogans of the Left Opposition and were induced to remain in the CP. The main initial source of Trotskyist recruitment was thus frozen off.

Despite the extreme sectarianism of the "Third Period," the CP reversed its decline and began to grow again during the early years of the Depression. CP-initiated unemployed leagues held militant demonstrations and attracted new forces. Despite the radical disproportion of forces, however, the CP could not tolerate the political threat represented by Trotsky's analysis and program. It immediately set out to destroy the American Trotskyists through physical gangsterism and cowardly exclusionism within the workers movement. Trotskyist meetings around the country were attacked by thugs and sometimes broken up.

"In those dog days of the movement we were shut off from all contact... Whenever we tried to get into a workers organization we would be expelled as counter-revolutionary Trotskyists. We tried to send delegations to unemployed meetings. Our credentials would be rejected on the grounds that we were enemies of the working class. We were utterly isolated, forced in upon ourselves."

—James P. Cannon, *History of American Trotskyism*

Under such circumstances, the Trotskyists did little mass work. Their first duty was to save as many of the vanguard cadre as possible for the program of the revolution. A premature turn to mass work would have in fact meant meaningless, sterile isolation—an abandonment of the Trotskyist program. Opportunities for intervention such as the Progressive Miners of America in 1932 were the exception rather than the rule.

The victory of fascism in Germany in 1933 was a monumental defeat which went unopposed by the Communist International and caused only isolated defections in its ranks. The Left Opposition concluded that the Third International had definitively gone over to support of the bourgeois order, and pronounced it dead as a potentially revolutionary force. Instead of continuing to act as a bureaucratically-expelled faction of the CI, the Trotskyists announced their intention to build a new party and a new international. This coincided with a slight economic upturn which renewed confidence among employed workers and stimulated a dramatic upturn in the class struggle. Strikes increased, and the Trotskyists fought hard to break out of their isolation. They published special editions of the *Militant* for big events such as the Paterson silk strike, sent their leaders on tours, and even managed to speak at some of the larger unemployed conferences, despite continued hooliganism by the CP.

## Into the AFL

The Depression heightened the crisis of proletarian leadership caused by the refusal of the bureaucratic, craft leadership of the American Federation of Labor to organize the unorganized in

The "Battle of the Market" in the May 1934 Minneapolis truck drivers strike, led by Trotskyists. Strikers dispersed cops and bosses' vigilantes. Innovations such as "flying picket squads" helped win and were later used by other workers in strikes around the country.



## Trotskyist Work in the Trade Unions

by Chris Knox

the 1920's. While millions were thrown out of work and millions more forced to accept wage cuts, the AFL continued its class-collaborationist, do-nothing policy, showing no more concern over the unemployment question than the capitalist government itself. After the 1929 stock market crash, AFL-head William Green had even offered the bosses a no-strike pledge, if only they would stop wage cuts (which, of course, they did not, prompting only more inaction by Green). Most union leaders simply counseled passive acceptance of rampant wage-slashing by the bosses while the AFL campaigned against government unemployment insurance. John L. Lewis of the Mineworkers toured the country putting down strikes against wage cuts. By 1933, AFL membership, continuing its decline, hit a low of slightly over two million, which was about half what it had been in 1920.

The Rooseveltian "New Deal" economic program (under the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933—NRA) was designed to improve business by encouraging "rationalization" (promoting government-backed trustification) and raise public confidence. In the system through a massive propaganda campaign. However, the strike wave beginning in early 1933 included a high proportion of unorganized industrial workers, which caused Roosevelt to cave in to pressure from the AFL to include a "right to organize" clause (section 7-A of NRA). Actually representing no change in the realm of legal rights, the vague clause had the effect of both promoting company unions and building the authority of the AFL unions: in either case, it was designed to provide the bosses with an agency to contain the upsurge.

While the bosses busily set up com-

pany unions to control the workers, the AFL unions also began to expand—despite the fact that many of these unions had previously been reduced to discredited shells—because the AFL appeared to be the agency through which the benefits of the "New Deal" would filter down. The Trotskyists immediately recognized the vital implications of this trend for revolutionary work in the class struggle. "We must march with this instinctive movement and influence it from within," wrote Cannon in the *Militant* (2 September 1933).

The Stalinists, meanwhile, were still maintaining their ruinous "Third Period" policy of creating dual "red" unions everywhere. The supposition had been that the unorganized masses would be organized directly by the CP, over the heads of the AFL. A mere trifle had been lacking for the realization of this plan—the mass movement. Despite some party growth, sectarian isolation of the Communists had been the general result. The established unions were showing some new life, but the Stalinists had destroyed the basis for intervention with their absurd characterization of the AFL as "social fascist" and ordered their people out. The pure sectarianism of their line is illustrated by the fact that where real, industrial unions existed independently from the AFL, but not under Stalinist control—such as the Progressive Miners in the Southern Illinois coal fields and the Amalgamated Food Workers in New York City—the Stalinists maintained their paper "unions" anyway, "independent" of the independents!

The Trotskyist position was in no way a change in basic policy, despite the fact that they had earlier urged the formation of new unions, independent of

the AFL, in some areas. The Trotskyists carried forth the Leninist policy of seeking to reach the masses as long as they remained in the reactionary unions, without placing any confidence in the reactionary bureaucracy. The surge into the AFL was a dramatic confirmation of Lenin's policy, and condemnation of Stalinist ultra-leftism, but, as Cannon continued:

"By this we do not at all commit ourselves to the fetishistic belief in the possibility of transforming the AF of L into a fighting instrument of the workers. We do not expect Green and Co. to organize the masses of unskilled workers... The resurgent struggles of the masses... will probably break out of the formal bounds of the AF of L and seek expression in a new trade union movement."

—*Militant*, 2 September 1933

The course of the upsurge confirmed the Trotskyists' analysis. Massive strikes occurred, but the establishment of new mass unions along industrial lines was thwarted in strike after strike by AFL leaders. The craven betrayal of the nation-wide textile workers' strike in 1934, for instance, confirmed the South as an open-shop haven, which condition persists to this day.

In the entire period, there were only three real victories, all led by revolutionists or professed revolutionists:

## Correction

Part I of this series indicated that the Stalinists went along reluctantly with setting up the Progressive Miners of America. Actually, they only entered it later, after the final abandonment of the "Third Period."



Stalinists led the San Francisco waterfront strike; the Musteite American Workers Party, later to fuse with the Trotskyists, led the Toledo Auto-Lite strike; and Trotskyists led the Minneapolis truck drivers' strikes. These strikes were successful because they established powerful new unions along industrial lines which spread throughout whole industries and regions. The organization of the bulk of the proletariat under revolutionary leadership, finally displacing the reactionary AFL leaders, clearly loomed. To head off this threat, a section of the AFL leaders later formed the CIO.

### Hotel Strike Debacle: a Test of Principle

The turn to mass work did not change the sharp limitations on the Trotskyists' forces. They could only intervene directly in those unions in which they already had supporters. One such place was the Hotel and Restaurant section of the Amalgamated Food Workers of New York, an independent union, which began an organizing drive and called a general strike of hotel workers in early 1934, before the Minneapolis strikes. One Trotskyist particularly, B.J. Field, was propelled into the strike leadership, and the Trotskyists launched vigorously into the struggle. Putting the *Militant* on a special, three-times-a-week basis, they called on the Stalinists to merge their small "red" union into the AFW, urged a united-front policy aimed at the AFL, warned the workers against reliance on Roosevelt's "New Deal," and singled out recognition of the union as the key goal.

In the middle of the strike, however, Field began to pull away from the Trotskyists Communist League (CLA) and showed signs of opportunism. He collaborated too closely with trade-union bureaucrats and government mediators, caved in to red-baiting launched by the bosses, and ignored his party comrades. As Cannon put it, "He disregarded the fraction of his own party in the union—which is always the sign of a man who has lost his head" (*History of American Trotskyism*). With the national spotlight on the "Trotskyist" strike, the CLA expelled Field and denounced his turn to "respectability" in the middle of the struggle. While opportunists howled, the Trotskyists had demonstrated the strength of their principles to serious observers: no matter how temporarily important, mass leaders were always to be subordinated to the general will of the party and its guiding principles.

If the hotel strike had been a disappointment, the Trotskyists soon had another chance to demonstrate that they could lead mass struggle. In the Minneapolis Communist League of about 40 members and sympathizers, they had a core of experienced trade unionists from the CP—with backgrounds stretching back into the pre-CP left wing of the Socialist Party and Wobblies (IWW)—headed by Ray Dunne and Carl Skoglund. Both had been delegates to the Central Labor Union (local AFL council), and had been expelled from their unions in the red purges of the 1920's. In the CP, Dunne had been aligned with the Cannon group while Skoglund had been closer to Foster, but both (along with two of Dunne's three brothers) were summarily expelled simply for questioning the expulsion of the leading Trotskyists. Subsequently they did pioneer work organizing the CLA in Minneapolis, and by the turn to mass work in 1933, they were ready to begin a campaign to organize an industrial truck drivers' union which they had planned before their expulsion from the CP in 1928.

### Three Strikes That Transformed the Northwest

They began by recognizing that even though the AFL had failed to win a strike in Minneapolis in decades (the city was a notorious citadel of the open shop), it was necessary to work through the established unions. Orienting toward General Drivers' Local 574, they made a bloc with a minority of the Local

exec board, headed by President Bill Brown, which was willing to aid them in a militant organizing drive. Purposefully avoiding an immediate confrontation with the rest of the local bureaucracy, they planned to flood the local with newly-organized workers, cutting across craft divisions, and conduct a strike for recognition of the union by the trucking industry on an industrial basis. The question of leadership would be resolved in the process, through the test of the class struggle.

Since Dunne and Skoglund were working in the coal yards at the time, they began with a coal yard drivers' strike in February 1934, picking the middle of winter, when it would be most effective. Through meticulous attention to detail and advance planning, they took the bosses by surprise, shutting the yards down completely and involving masses of workers in picketing. The strike won union recognition in three days.

This increased their base and authority within the union and laid the groundwork for a general strike of drivers and warehousemen throughout Minneapolis in May, which was equally well prepared, also took the bosses by surprise, and won fairly quickly. The Trotskyists insisted on the inclusion of the warehousemen ("inside workers"), since this made the union truly industrial in nature, including everyone in the companies concerned except office workers.

The bosses retaliated and provoked a third strike in July which lasted over a month. International Brotherhood of Teamsters' President Daniel Tobin, an arch-reactionary craft unionist, aided the bosses by starting a red-baiting campaign against the strike leadership. Despite the imposition of martial law by Farmer-Labor Governor Olson and the virtual exhaustion of the strikers in a war of attrition, the third strike solidly established the union and the legitimacy of the strike leadership. The bosses didn't dare try again to smash the former, and Tobin, though he kept trying, couldn't drive out the latter. It took a full scale war-crisis and government prosecution for "communism" to drive the Trotskyists from the leadership in the Minneapolis Teamsters in the 1940's. Before then, Minneapolis had become a highly-organized union

group of strikebreakers in the service of the bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy," Dunne characterized the Minneapolis settlements as betrayals caused by cowardice, subservience to local AFL bureaucrats and Olson, and general covering up for the "fascist" "New Deal" on the part of the Trotskyists. Dunne claimed that the Trotskyists prevented the development of a full general strike, purposefully holding back the revolutionary thrust of the masses.

In following up these criticisms on the scene, the local Stalinists were severely handicapped by their total lack of any supporters directly involved in the strike, despite the fact that District 9 of the CP, covering Minneapolis, had been the third largest in the Party in 1928. The CP had completely isolated itself from the mass movement. As it attempted to present inflammatory criticism from the outside, the Trotskyists had to oppose physical assaults by angry workers on CP supporters on more than one occasion. Despite the fact that the union had an elected rank-and-file strike committee of 100, the Stalinists demanded "rank and file control" of the strike, and representation for their paper organizations on the strike committee. Only a short time later, when the CP dropped its characterization of the "New Deal" as fascist in favor of a popular-front alliance with Roosevelt and union bureaucrats, the Minneapolis CP lined up with the reactionary Tobin as the latter attempted to smash Local 574 by setting up a paper rival, "Local 500," and launching gangland thug attacks on 574 members.

### NCLC Echoes "Third Period"

The CP's "Third Period" criticisms were echoed recently, with a distinctly Marcuse crackpot twist, by the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) in its review of Dobbs' *Team-*

22 August 1934 Issue of the *Organizer*, the daily strike bulletin initiated by the leadership. It was vital in countering the constant lies of the bosses' press and paid for itself through donations from workers.



Bill Brown, Miles and Ray Dunne released from the stockade after Local 574 called a "general protest strike." Leadership of the Minneapolis strikes was based on a united front between militant trade unionists like Brown and Trotskyists to organize an industrial union.

town, and the Teamsters had spread throughout the Northwest. Farrell Dobbs' campaign to organize the over-the-road drivers provided the basis for transforming the Teamsters into an industrial union.

### Strong Words From the Fourth Marx Brother

The Stalinists immediately attempted to discredit the Trotskyists' role in the Minneapolis strikes. William F. Dunne, an old friend of Cannon and the one Dunne brother who had become a Stalinist, was selected by the Browder leadership of the CP to prove his loyalty by doing the "job" on the Trotskyists, including his brothers. This he did with a vengeance, even going to the point of likening his three brothers in Minneapolis to "the three Marx Bros." His articles reflected the ultra-left phase the Stalinists were only beginning to abandon. Calling the Trotskyists "a

ster Rebellion (*New Solidarity*, 31 July-4 August 1972). "Dobbs sees only the military aspects of the strikes," says the NCLC:

"...He fails to understand that it was the role of outside forces supporting the Teamsters which was decisive—the embryonic never-realized United Front....  
"The failure of the Trotskyists to adequately conceptualize the process of organizing the class-for-itself led them to constantly blunt the revolutionary dynamic of the situation."

These proponents of substitutionalism through fraudulent "united fronts" criticize the SWP for being bogged down in "militant trade unionism," to the point that they "aborted" the "development of a genuine mass strike movement." Magically, the incorporation of "outsiders" (who? the CP's paper unemployed organizations? farmers?) in the strike leadership on an equal basis with union members would have changed

all this. The NCLC claims that the American Trotskyists ignored the "class-for-itself" model provided by Trotsky in his writings on the German crisis, citing (incredibly!) Trotsky's "What Next?" (1932).

Hardly intending to renounce the qualitatively leading role of the employed proletariat as does the Labor Committee, Trotsky (who never used the "class-for-itself" hocus-pocus schematisms of the NCLC) pointed out in "What Next?" that simple trade-union strikes could accomplish nothing in the presence of mass unemployment unless the workers addressed themselves to this question, "drawing the unemployed into the struggle hand in hand with the employed." But the American Trotskyists understood this very well. They raised the question of unemployment in the *Militant*, fought for a shorter work week, and counterposed the united-front tactic to the CP's sectarianism in the unemployed movement. In Minneapolis, before the strikes, Trotskyist intervention to this effect in an unemployed conference was followed by a CP walkout.

Furthermore, the Minneapolis strikes were one of the most dramatic examples of broad-based organizing in American history. The leadership took meticulous care at all stages of the struggle to keep tabs on and mobilize support from other unions as well as women, petty bourgeois, professionals, farmers. The unemployed got particular attention. The Trotskyists successfully drew them into the strike struggle and attempted to organize them and support their struggles for better benefits and against grievances. After the strikes, a special unemployed organization, affiliated to the union, was constituted, and part of the leadership assigned to help run it. Relief benefits in Minneapolis were soon the best in the country, and the chances of unemployed workers being mobilized to

**THE ORGANIZER**

**VICTORY!**

**Settlement Goes Through!**

**Vote for 574 in the Elections**  
**Make Minneapolis a Union Town**

scab on strikes were slim.  
The strike leaders had a good sense of the mood of the workers and the relationship of class forces. If there were some aspects in which they erred slightly on the side of tactical conservatism, this was certainly not a major characteristic of their leadership. Far from "holding back" the struggle or consciousness of the workers, they advanced both to an entirely new level. Shachtman and Cannon came to Minneapolis to help put out a daily strike bulletin, the *Organizer*, which explained everything in terms of the basic conflict between worker and capitalist. Settlement terms were never overrated, but recognized clearly as temporary stopping points, involving necessary compromises, in the on-going class struggle. Propaganda struggles were waged against backward attitudes, e.g., male chauvinism. The

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# Healy/Wohlforth and "The Crisis"

The socialist movement repeatedly throughout its history has had to struggle against the abandonment of Marxist principles by tendencies and individual leaders who were adapting to pressure from the bourgeoisie. Thus although the *Communist Manifesto* unambiguously declares that "the workers have no country," the reformist Social Democrats voted for national defense of their respective bourgeoisies in World War I. Without a determined struggle against this betrayal the workers movement could not go forward.

The abandonment of proletarian politics is usually accompanied by a "theoretical" justification, in the form of a new "discovery" which "corrects" or "brings up-to-date" central propositions of Marxism. This is what is meant by revisionism—an attempt to attack the substance of Marxism-Leninism without openly coming into conflict with its great authority. Therefore revisionism often takes the form of maintaining lip-service to traditional Marxist terminology but redefining (usually broadening) certain key concepts to insinuate a different political line. For example, the Socialist Workers Party has transformed Lenin's concept of "self-determination" for oppressed nations into the thoroughly utopian-reformist concept of freedom from all forms of oppression through real or illusory separatism.

A central facet of the revisionism of Gerry Healy's "International Committee" and his U.S. satellite, Tim Wohlforth's Workers League, has been the redefinition of the term "crisis." The Marxist use of this term is fairly conventional—meaning an abrupt change in a situation or a sharp transitional period. However, Marx, Lenin and Trotsky were always careful to distinguish different types of crises. There are for instance the epochal crisis of the capitalist order since World War I, a parliamentary crisis (e.g., Watergate), a crisis of class rule (e.g., Chile) or a revolutionary crisis (Russia in October 1917). For a Marxist, an *economic crisis* has a precise and limited meaning. It is that phase in the business cycle between the boom and the bust, between expanding and declining production, and is accompanied by mass layoffs, widespread bankruptcies and the contraction of money and credit.

Contrary to the fantasies of the proponents of Kondratieff long waves (Mandel) or a post-war boom which according to different versions lasted from 15 to 27 years (Healy), the phases of the business cycle are limited in duration. This is doubly true of the transitional, crisis phase. In the entire four volumes of *Capital*, Marx never mentions a crisis involving more than two years. Of course, depressed conditions can last many years. However, in contrast to the IC, Marx clearly distinguishes a "crisis" from "stagnation." ("In the period of stagnation following a crisis, circulation is smallest...." *Capital*, Vol. III, Ch. 33). The concept of a fifteen-year-old never-ending economic crisis is a fundamental revision of Marxism.

Where Marxists are careful to distinguish the different types of crises, the IC amalgamates everything into one omnipresent super-crisis. The Watergate scandal, resurgent Peronism in Argentina, the rising price of gold, Healy's economic policies in Britain, are all an expression of The Crisis. Moreover, this cataclysmic event is also The Worst Crisis Ever:

"The latest moves by the Nixon administration in devaluing the dollar mark a rapid acceleration of the capitalist system towards a breakdown and crisis deeper than at any time in its history...."

"In no way could the implications of the crisis after August 1971 be likened to those of 1931. Despite the depth of the earlier crisis, it was one in which the world's major trading currency, sterling was replaced by another currency, the dollar. The blunt fact today is that *nothing* can replace the dollar." [emphasis in original]

—Development of the Post-War Economic Crisis—Draft Resolution of the Socialist Labour League, *Workers Press*, 24 February 1973

In fact, The Crisis is the Healyite term for the Pabloist conception of a "New World Reality," in which the question of proletarian leadership is no longer the key issue facing the workers movement, due to the changed objective conditions. The purpose of this terminological revisionism is to justify a revision of the Trotskyist program, particularly the methods of constructing a proletarian vanguard party. According to Pablo in 1951 the "New World Reality" would force erstwhile reformists to take revolutionary measures, thereby justifying liquidation of the Trotskyist parties into the local Stalinist, social-democratic or even petty-bourgeois nationalist parties. Today Healy/Wohlforth assert that traditional trade-union economic demands are *now* objectively revolutionary and that there are new shortcuts to creating a mass revolutionary party.

## Crisis Magic: Trade-Union Reformism Becomes Revolutionary

The consequences of the IC's crisis-mongering are starkly revealed in a recent polemic by the Workers League against the Spartacist League on the question of whether wage demands by themselves are revolutionary. According to the WL:

"But the fact is that the fundamental contradiction within capitalism, suppressed for an entire historical period through wild inflation, is radically transforming the relations between classes...."

"This is why simple trade union demands are so profoundly revolutionary today."

—Bulletin, 16 April 1973

This is reformist hogwash. An economic downturn does of course weaken the power of the trade unions and make wage increases more difficult to win. Moreover, in the epoch of imperialism, the decaying stage of capitalism, there is no possibility of substantial and lasting reforms in the conditions of the workers. But the impossibility of *successful* reformism on a systematic scale does not at all imply the impossibility of reformist misleaders taking the working class down to defeat.

Moreover, since the capitalists do not confront the working class in a unified way, they can always temporarily improve the conditions of certain groups of workers at the expense of others and then try to reverse the process. For example, even during the Great Depression those workers who remained employed and were relatively insulated from the market (e.g., government employees) had their real wages rise, as prices fell faster than their money wages. Communists must fight against reformist illusions in the workers movement under *all* political and economic conditions. In a period of actual economic crisis in the Marxist sense, to limit the struggle to reform demands, thereby failing to raise the consciousness of the masses to the understanding of the need to fight the entire capitalist system, means preparing even *worse* defeats.

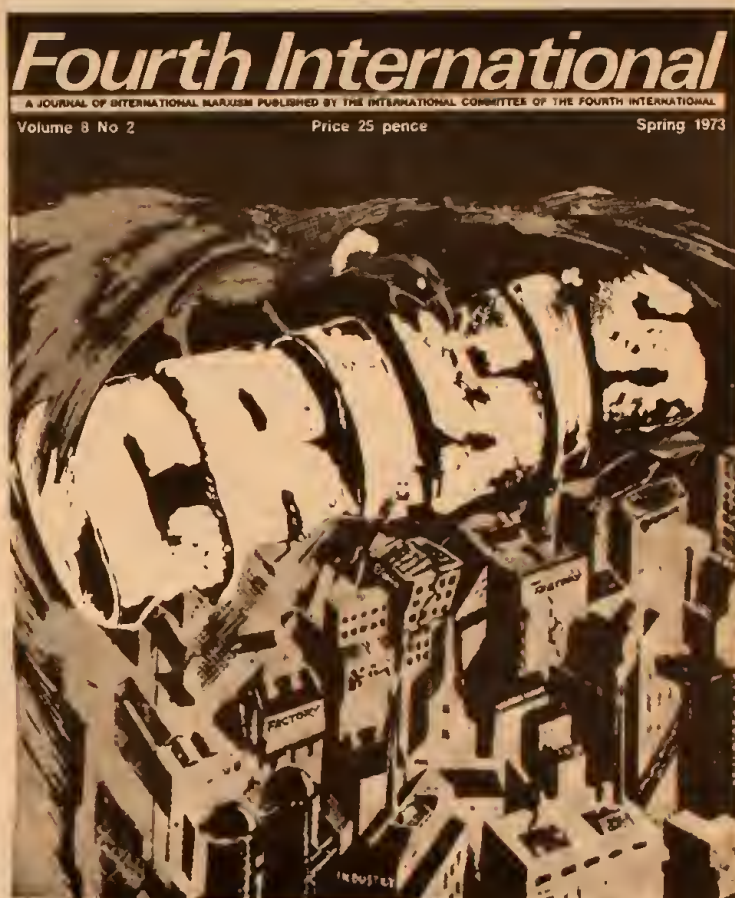
The most important way in which capitalists play off different sections of the working class is along national

lines. In recent years this was manifested in the systematic effort by bourgeois politicians and the labor bureaucracy to build support for the Vietnam war. With the end of the U.S.' post-World War II imperialist hegemony, codified in Nixon's August 1971 wage freeze/devaluation measures, the heightened inter-imperialist rivalry has led to a wave of social-chauvinist economic protectionism in the labor movement. During this period, the Spartacist League has been *unique* on the American left in consistently raising the need for a class opposition to the Vietnam war and economic protectionism in its trade union work. In marked contrast, the Workers League,

(3) then proclaiming at what appears to be an auspicious moment that the crisis is now occurring; and finally (4) asserting the right to lead the working class on the basis of credentials as a successful crystal-ball gazer.

These intrepid "revolutionary" prognosticators will doubtless reply that their wisdom is based on Marxist science (or in the case of Marcus, on superhuman powers of "creative mentation"). But what kind of Marxism is it that announces week-in and week-out for the last *twelve years* that The Crisis is imminent or already here; that talks of a period of boom (during which the law of value was denied!) lasting either until 1961, 1968 or, in the most recent version, until 1971; and that consistently refuses to print any concrete economic statistics of the real evolution of production to back up their ravings?

There is only one way a communist organization can genuinely prepare for a revolutionary crisis, regardless of the factors which precipitate it. This is by establishing its cadre as recognized leaders in the labor movement



International Committee's view of "The Crisis."

precisely by asserting the objective impossibility of reformism, has adapted to the social-patriotic union bureaucracy. In 1968 the WL set up Trade Unionists for a Labor Party whose program did not even mention the Vietnam war; in 1972 these pseudo-Trotskyists hailed Buy-American, No-Strike I.W. Abel's right-wing opposition to McGovern as a step toward a labor party.

## The Jeremiah Theory of the Proletarian Vanguard

It seems that Healy/Wohlforth (together with Lyn Marcus) believe that the essential qualification for proletarian leadership is the same as that for an astrologer or religious mystic—the ability to miraculously foretell the future. And like successful astrologers, Healy/Wohlforth/Marcus are careful to couch their prophecies in obscure formulations which allow them to claim vindication no matter what happens. This fortune-teller blueprint for building a communist vanguard consists of: (1) asserting that the final crisis will appear imminently; (2) redefining the term "crisis" to render it meaningless;

and mass organizations of the oppressed on the basis of a revolutionary program. But this is precisely what the IC and Labor Committee do *not* do. According to their method one does not need a party whose cadre have won authority in the labor movement. All one needs is a genius-leader and effective publicity gimmicks.

A hallmark of Pabloism is the view that the changed objective conditions (The Crisis) will solve the tasks of the proletarian vanguard. Thus the perspectives document of the European majority of the so-called "United Secretariat" comments that recent changes in economic conditions place revolution on the order of the day (as opposed to earlier, when, presumably, it was not).

"The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective (in this sense, it has been on the agenda since 1914), but even from a conjunctural point of view."

—"The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," 1972 Similarly, in the recent statement of Healy's Socialist Labour League on The Crisis reprinted in the WL pamphlet, "The Dollar Crisis" (1973) we read:



"The building of a mass revolutionary party is no longer a propaganda demand, as it has always been for the revisionists. It is the urgent burning question of the hour."

The building of a revolutionary party is never a demand, propagandistic or otherwise. Who is it to be demanded of—the bourgeoisie, the labor bureaucracy, the entire working class? The creation of a mass revolutionary party is the result of the lengthy struggle to root an organized communist cadre in the workers movement. If a revolutionary situation occurs when the communist vanguard does not yet have significant authority in the proletariat, that revolution will fail and no amount of wishful thinking, hysterical posturing or gimmicks can change that. The Healyites believe in every kind of crisis except the decisive one—the crisis of proletarian leadership.

## Economic Analysis as Subjective Idealism

In the article "Myth of Neo-Capitalism" (RCY Newsletter, No. 10, January-February 1972) we wrote:

"All theories of fundamental post-war capitalist change assume that post-war capitalism has performed extraordinarily well. This exceptional performance can only be explained if major structural reforms have taken place. Bourgeois and revisionist theorists then search for the structural changes behind this otherwise inexplicable boom—Keynesian-type stabilization policy, capitalist planning, increased government expenditure, 'the permanent arms economy,' etc. The first, and in some ways most important, myth of neo-capitalism is the post-war boom."

The IC accepts the essential theoretical premise of neo-capitalism. This is that after World War II, the advanced capitalist countries enjoyed a lengthy, extraordinary economic boom as a result of some form of state activity.

"The fact that after the Bretton Woods 1944 conference it [the ruling class] was forced to establish a series of agencies through which the economy was artificially stimulated by means of inflation was its recognition that the working class was too strong to be dealt with at that stage."

—"The Dollar Crisis"

This credit-inflation boom is nothing other than a monetarist variant of the theory of neo-capitalism. This is now clearly demonstrated by the fact that just when the Healyites declare the boom has generated the definitive crisis, the Mandelites have also declared the end of neo-capitalist expansion! ("For the first time since the Second World War, attempts to reduce these crises of over-production through stepped-up inflation ran into obstacles....") ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe"). Healy and Mandel have reinvented the famous Bukharin-Stalin "period" analysis—the "Second Period" of absolute capitalist stabilization is followed by the "Third Period" of terminal economic collapse and immediate revolutionary situations everywhere.

Common to all these final-crisis enthusiasts is the desire to give a pseudo-Marxist explanation to their impressionistically-derived organizational ambitions. Thus in the articles "Myth of Neo-Capitalism" and "Boom Heads Toward Bust" (Workers Vanguard No. 25, 20 July 1973) we scientifically demonstrated that the 1950's was definitely not a period of exceptional capitalist prosperity. For the U.S., 1953-61 was the second worst economic period in this century, with three recessions, a per capita growth rate of only one percent a year and an average unemployment rate of over five percent. In addition to the U.S., France and Japan had distinctly higher growth rates in the 1960's than in the 1950's, while Britain stagnated at the same rate in both decades. The IC theorists have never produced a single statistic to demonstrate that the 1950's was a boom period because it simply was not!

Instead, Wohlforth counters our concrete refutation of their thesis with the following incredibly un-Marxist argument: "To deny the boom of the 1950's

is simply a way to assert that today is the same as the 1950's, that it requires no more of the revolutionary than was possible to do in the 1950's" (Bulletin, 9 July 1973). The state of production is here deduced from a subjective evaluation of organizational prospects! We think we can do much better now than in the 1950's, says Wohlforth. Therefore, there must have been a boom in the 1950's and a great crisis now. Marxists have a term for this method of reasoning. It is called subjective idealism. If Wohlforth thinks he can fly now but could not in the 1950's, do we then conclude that he was a human then and a pigeon now?

Behind Wohlforth's impressionistic idealism there is an element of truth. The organizational perspectives for Trotskyists are more favorable now than in the 1950's. The reason, however, is not the end of the mythical boom. Rather the relative quiescence of the workers movement in the major advanced countries in the 1950's was the result of demoralization produced by recent defeats engineered by the solidly entrenched Stalinist bureaucracies and conditioned by the direct military might of U.S. imperialism. Now a new generation is coming to the fore, uncowed by past defeats, but also unaware of the crucial lessons of the past betrayals. A crucial task of the Trotskyist vanguard is to bring to the new generation of militants the knowledge of these lessons. It will not accomplish this by constantly screaming "Crisis!" but rather through struggling for the program of permanent revolution which represents the distillation of this past history.

## Marxism vs. Monetarism

As a supposedly definitive statement, the WL pamphlet "The Dollar Crisis" is most peculiar. Supposedly analyzing the "post-war economic crisis," it contains virtually no statistics on production, labor input, wages or profits. Despite Peter Jeffries' two theoretical appendices, the central document is journalistic and makes no attempt to present the analysis within the Marxist theoretical framework or even terminology. Particularly peculiar in a supposedly Marxist work, there is no treatment of the changing conditions for the buying and selling of labor power (the labor market)—the point of intersection between the organized working class and capitalism as a system of production. Thus while the Profumo scandal is mentioned, the absolutely strategic importance of cheap foreign labor for the West European economy is not!

However, the strangest fact of all is that there is no detailed, theoretical analysis of the pamphlet's central theme—how the expansion of money and credit could stimulate a prolonged period of expanded production. The term "Bretton Woods agreement" is used like abracadabra as if it were obvious that the gold-convertibility of the dollar could generate an international economic boom. A brief, clear explanation

of the IC analysis appears to the following: There exists a fixed relation between the supply of money and total circulation and, therefore, production. By setting up a dollar-backed reserve currency system in 1944, the world bourgeoisie temporarily created a kind of pseudo-money. The expansion of dollar capital caused an economic boom which lasted until the late 1950's in some IC versions, and until 1971 in others. In any case, with the dollar devaluation in 1971, world production must contract to the point where it can be circulated by gold alone. This contraction creates the conditions for immediate proletarian revolution or the universal victory of fascism.

There is an important bourgeois economic school which, like the IC, regards the stock of money as the active, causal element in determining the general level of production. Running from J.B. Say and the British Currency School in the nineteenth century to Milton Friedman today, it is called the quantity theory of money. This theory holds that there is a fixed relationship between the stock of primary money (gold) and the flow of money expenditures. Until Lyn Marcus and Peter Jeffries, all erstwhile Marxists regarded the quantity theory of money as one of the most reactionary-utopian schools of bourgeois economics, since it asserts that the bourgeois state can control the level of economic activity through its traditional control over bank reserves, or that total production is limited by the physical supply of gold, a kind of bullionist Malthusianism.

Jeffries is no doubt aware of Marx's attitude toward the quantity theory of money so he doesn't explicitly identify it as the basis of the IC analysis. However, the assertion of a fixed relation between the stock of monetary gold and production is the basis of the IC analysis.

"With gold now supporting perhaps only 10 per cent of the value of world trade, the implications of the crisis must be a collapse of much of the other 90 per cent.... Here again, however, the limits to the expansion of credit (which the revisionists such as Mandel saw as the means of indefinite capitalist expansion) are strictly limited by the available money supply."

—"The Dollar Crisis"

A good deal of Marx's writings on money, particularly in Volume III of Capital, is a direct attack on the quantity theory of money. Marx asserted that the money supply adjusted to the demands of industrial and commercial capital through changes in the amount of credit and the velocity of circulation. In the following passage Marx explicitly attacks the notion that the stock of monetary gold or level of bank reserves can determine production. We could cite fifty similar passages.

"So long as the condition of business is such, that the returns on the loans given come in regularly and credit remains unshaken, the expansion and contraction of the currency depends simply on the requirements of the in-

dustrialists and merchants. Since gold does not enter into consideration in the wholesale trade, at least in England, and the circulation of gold aside from the fluctuations with the seasons, may be regarded as a rather constant magnitude for a long time, the circulation of the notes of the Bank of England forms a sufficiently accurate measure of these changes. In a period of stagnation following a crisis circulation is smallest, with the recovery of demand comes also a greater demand for currency, which increases with the rising prosperity; the quantity of currency reaches its culminating point in the period of overextension and over-speculation...." [our emphasis]

—Capital, Vol. III, Ch. 33

The availability of loanable money capital cannot stimulate production if expanded output is considered insufficiently profitable. As Marx observed:

"Not every augmentation of loanable capital indicates a real accumulation of capital or expansion of re-production. This becomes most evident in the phase of the industrial cycle following immediately after a crisis, when loanable capital lies idle in great masses."

—Capital, Vol. III, Ch. 30

The highest level of excess bank reserves (an index of the difference between actual bank loans and legally authorized lending capacity) in U.S. history occurred in the late 1930's, when interest rates were also abnormally low! If what is needed to bring the economy out of stagnation is simply an infusion of more money, à la Keynes and Healy, why was this available money not used to immediately end the depression instead of letting it drag on until World War II? Precisely because it is the rate of profit and not the supply of money which is the immediate determinant of the level of production. The credit expansion of the New Deal policies was a total failure. Conversely, the "shortage" of money and credit during a crisis is not because the stock of gold is too small in relation to total circulation. It is because financiers are hoarding money since they do not think loans can be repaid under conditions of rapidly contracting production and falling commodity prices.

## The Role of Credit

One of the most characteristic features of petty-bourgeois socialism has been to emphasize the supposedly key role of "unproductive" financial capital and credit, rather than the productive system which Marx emphasized was the key to capitalism. From Proudhon to Lyn Marcus their battle-cry has been, "Tax the Banks!" To complement this reformist program, they produce a theoretical analysis emphasizing "fictitious" capital. Thus Marcus writes:

"Under capitalism, however, expanded production tends increasingly to obstruct itself and to turn into stagnation, increasing misery and decay.... Its cause lies in the contradiction between expanded social production and the largely fictitious values associated with individual property-titles in the means

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Healy/Wahlforth have monetarist theory of neo-capitalism, view cause of crisis in surplus of paper money. This view contradicts Marx's position that economic crises are rooted in production. Cartoon from 7 April 1973 Workers Press.



# The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited

## 4/ THE POPULAR FRONT

(Editor's Note: The recent wave of virulent anti-Trotskyism being spread by various Maoist groups relies on the standard Stalinist weapons of lies and distortion, and above all on ignorance about the true history of the communist movement. The present series, replying to the articles on "Trotsky's Heritage" in the New Left/Maoist Guardian, serves as an introduction to this history and a brief summary of the principal political issues separating Trotskyism from Stalinism.)

The turn toward the "Popular Front" came toward the end of 1933 as the Stalinized Communist International made a quick about-face from its ultra-left "Third Period" policies. With the triumph of Hitler and the renewed threat of imperialist attack the panic-stricken Soviet bureaucracy set about lining up allies for defense of the Soviet fatherland. Russia entered the League of Nations and signed a Franco-Soviet military assistance pact. Throughout this period the Comintern sought to ingratiate itself with the bourgeoisies of the democratic imperialist powers through calculated containment of revolutionary proletarian movements in Europe. The method: class-collaborationist alliances with and participation in the governments of the bourgeoisie. The cover: the struggle against fascism.

The popular front found theoretical expression in the report of Georgi Dimitroff to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August 1935. According to Dimitroff the main danger now threatening the workers was fascism. But fascism threatened not only the working class, but also the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie in general and even sections of the bourgeoisie. In consequence, the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism are removed from the agenda during the present period:

"Now the toiling masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism."

To defend bourgeois democracy, the proletariat must aim to ally with all other social groups threatened by fascism, including the "anti-fascist" sections of the bourgeoisie in a vast "People's Front":

"Under certain conditions, we can and must bend our efforts to the task of drawing these parties and organizations or certain sections of them to the side of the anti-fascist people's front, despite their bourgeois leadership. Such, for instance, is today the situation in France with the Radical Party...."

—G. Dimitroff, "Report to the Seventh Comintern Congress," 1935

During the Third Period the Communists refused to bloc with the German Social Democrats in a united front against Hitler, dubbing them "social-fascists." Now the Communists are not only willing to make ongoing alliances with the social democracy, but to form a government with the anti-fascist sectors of the bourgeoisie itself! Subsequently, in Italy during the late 1930's this "broad alliance" was still further broadened to include appeals to "honest" fascists!

The popular front is nothing more than an expression of the theories and practices of class collaboration—a bloc of organizations and parties representing various classes on the basis of a common program, the defense of bourgeois democracy. Though the name was new, the content was not. The German Social Democrats formed "left bloc" coalition governments with the democratic bourgeoisie (in the form of the Center Party) throughout the 1920's. The only difference was that the Communists occasionally made a pretense

of being revolutionary, while the Social Democrats were more open about their reformism.

The Stalinists try to claim that the popular front is simply the logical extension of the united front to a higher plane. Nothing could be further from the truth. The "working-class united front" was formed under the banner of "class against class" and was raised precisely in order to break the Social Democrats away from their perennial class-collaborationist alliances with the "democratic" bourgeoisie:

"The tactic of the United Front is the call for the united struggle of Communists and of all other workers, either belonging to other parties and groups, or belonging to no party whatever, for the defense of the elementary and vital interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie."

—Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), "Theses on the United Front," 1922

The united front served both to join the forces of the various workers organizations in action and also to expose the reformists who would participate in struggles for working-class interests only when forced to do so by pressure from their base, and who would desert at the earliest possible moment. Since the Bolshevik party alone represented the true historical interests of the working class, it was crucial that there be no common program with the reformists, since this could only mean the abandonment of the Leninist program. Nor could there be any restrictions on the right to criticize the other parties to the front. Hence the second main slogan of the united front, "freedom of criticism, unity in action" or, as Trotsky put it, "march separately, strike together."

In the popular front, however, the proletarian parties renounce their class independence and give up their working-class program. Earl Browder summed this up succinctly in his report to the Central Committee of the CPUSA on 4 December 1936:

"We can organize and rouse them [the majority of 'the people'] provided we do not demand of them that they agree with our socialist program, but unite with them on the basis of their program which we also make our own." [.]

The popular front conformed with the Menshevik theory of the "two-stage revolution." First the struggle for bourgeois democracy, then the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The Stalinists proceeded from the absolutely false conception that a basic social conflict existed between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Fascism appeared in Europe following World War I as a necessary development of bourgeois rule in a period of severe economic decline. It is a last resort of the capitalists to preserve their system when it is no longer possible through normal parliamentary measures. The Stalinists at one point even tried to justify their two-stage schema by claiming that fascism actually had its roots in feudalism, not capitalism!

In point of fact, the popular front was simply another bourgeois solution to the conditions which led to fascism. The Communists or Social Democrats are invited to participate in a capitalist government under conditions in which no existing bourgeois parliamentary combination can effectively rule over

a restive mass of workers and peasants. The price of the coalition is Communist support to strikebreaking and similar measures by the governments in which they participate.

During the 1930's popular-front governments were realized during pre-revolutionary periods in France and Spain. There the coalition with the "democratic" bourgeoisie was able to head off powerful mass upsurges by diverting the general strikes and even insurrections into the dead-end of defending bourgeois democracy. In colonial countries, such as Vietnam, the popular-front policies led to dropping the demand for independence! To the Stalinists' class collaboration, the Trotskyists counterposed a working-class united front to smash the fascists. Instead of depending on the republican generals and the police, they called for the formation of workers militias based on the trade unions. Weak in numbers and subject to vicious slander campaigns by the Comintern, the Trotskyists were unable to gain sufficient influence to break through the reformist stranglehold on the workers movement. Time and again the positions of the Bolshevik-Leninists were proved correct, but in a negative way, by the ignominious defeat of promising revolutionary situations. Stalin certainly earned the nickname Trotsky had given him—the Great Organizer of Defeats.

### France 1934-1936

In France fascist agitation made more headway than in any other of the "great democracies." Fascist leagues appeared in open imitation of the Italian

cized the united front for limiting its actions to parliamentary maneuvers and electoral alliances and refusing to seek to arouse the workers in extra-parliamentary struggle against fascism, a struggle which might have opened up the prospect for proletarian revolution.

In the midst of acute social crisis, mass strike waves and readiness to fight of the workers, the PCF refused to struggle for power on the basis that the situation was "not revolutionary." Instead, the PCF put forth a program of "immediate economic demands" which served to disorient and disorganize the proletariat and speed the growth of fascism since the capitalists felt increasing threat from the working class. The PCF renounced the struggle for nationalization, opposed the call for workers militias as provocative and refused arms to the workers, while trying to preserve a fig-leaf of revolutionism by absurdly calling for "soviets everywhere," the immediate precondition for an armed insurrection.

In July 1935 the French Stalinists expanded the coalition to include the bourgeois Radical Socialists. The Radical Socialists, based on the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, advocated progressive social changes but were firmly committed to private enterprise and private ownership. In order to save unity with the Radicals the PCF insisted that the popular-front program be restricted to defense of the republic against fascism, measures against the depression and labor reforms. The popular front swept the March 1936 elections. The SFIO became the leading party in the Chamber of Deputies,



Barcelona workers pour out of factories in July 1936 to fight Franco forces. The Communist Party smashed workers militias, collective farms, workers control of factories. GPU agents murdered ex-Trotskyist leader Nin. Stalin opposed revolution in Spain, hoping to achieve alliance with British, French imperialists.

and German fascist organizations. After years of ignoring or downplaying the fascist danger the Communist (PCF) and Socialist (SFIO) leaders panicked after the February 1934 attack on parliament by the Croix de Feu (Cross of Fire) band. Under tremendous pressure from the ranks, the Socialist and Communist-led trade-union federations held a massive joint demonstration on 12 February whose very size served effectively to throw back the fascists for months. Trotsky's struggle of the past four years for a workers united front against fascism had been vindicated against the sectarian-defeatist idiocies of the Third Period.

In June 1934 PCF leader Maurice Thorez proposed a united front with the SFIO. The united front did not adopt the Leninist slogan of "march together, strike separately," but instead took the form of a "non-aggression pact." Both parties renounced their programmatic independence and ceased to criticize each other. Trotsky criti-

and their chief, Leon Blum, became premier of a coalition cabinet of Socialists and Radical Socialists. The Communists refused to enter the government in order to avoid scaring the bourgeoisie but supported it in parliament.

As frequently occurs at the beginning of a popular-front government, the masses saw the elections as a victory for the working class and unleashed a tremendous wave of militancy culminating in the May-June general strike. While the initial demands were mainly defensive, centering on a 15 percent wage increase, the strikes almost all involved the militant sit-down tactic. The bourgeoisie panicked, demanding that the Blum government take office immediately in order to contain the strike. Blum and the CGT labor bureaucrats negotiated an initial settlement which provided some gains, but on the condition of the immediate evacuation of the factories. The pact was solidly voted down by Parisian metal workers.

Fearing that, as Trotsky wrote,





Radical Daladier (left) and Communist Thorez (center) reviewing Bastille Day parade, 1936. During French general strike of May-June 1936, Thorez declared "one must know how to end a strike." The CP opposed arming of the workers as provocative, saw popular front with "democratic" capitalists as answer to fascists.

"the French Revolution has begun," the PCF ordered its militants to support the agreements. Thorez declared, "There can be no question of taking power at this time" and "one must know how to end a strike." The Socialist-Radical government did its part by seizing the issue of the Trotskyist newspaper (*Lutte Ouvrière*) which called for extending the strike. By the middle of June the combined efforts of the reformists had succeeded in scuttling the resistance.

This was the high point of the popular front, for it was in breaking the 1936 general strike that the Blum government accomplished the basic task set for it by the bourgeoisie—stopping the drift toward revolution. The few significant social reforms, such as the 40-hour week, were soon reversed. In 1937, after a year in office and having lost the confidence of the working masses, the Blum government was toppled by the Senate. In mid-1938 the Radical Socialists formed a conservative ministry under Edouard Daladier. Daladier's announcement that fall of a return to the 48-hour week provoked a new mass strike wave. The response of the PCF: a call for a one-day protest strike! Daladier declared martial law and sent troops to the factories. The labor movement collapsed, millions of workers tore up their union cards in disgust. By January the PCF had been banned, and all Communist-led unions were banned from the UGT labor federation. In June 1940 the bourgeois parties, as well as some SFIO delegates, voted to create the Vichy regime. Thus, far from stopping fascism, the popular front proved to be just one more "peaceful road" to barbarism.

### The Popular Front in Spain, 1936-1939

The consequences of the Stalin-Dimitrov popular-front policies were equally counterrevolutionary in Spain. The overthrow of the monarchy in 1931 had led to the establishment of a bourgeois republic, but the social policies of the Radical/Socialist coalition government were hardly more liberal than those of the military dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera during the late 1920's (also supported by the Socialists). In October 1934 an insurrection broke out in the mining region of Asturias in reaction to the rightist policies of the government. Despite bloody repression (thousands of miners were machine-gunned by the military), the heroic uprising awakened the Spanish working masses and led to the widespread formation of united-front workers committees (*alianzas obreras*).

In response, the leaders of the major workers parties moved to set up a popular front similar to that in France,

including the Socialists (right and left wings), the Communists and also the POUM (the Workers Party of Marxist Unification). The POUM had been formed by the fusion of a right split-off from the CP (Maurin's "Workers and Peasants Bloc" which Trotsky had referred to as the "Spanish Kuomintang," i.e., a two-class party) and the former Communist Left headed by Nin. As a result of forming an unprincipled bloc with Maurin and signing the popular-front agreement, the ties between Nin and the Trotskyist movement were broken.

The popular-front agreement signed in January 1936 was a classic document of the abandonment of working-class politics. It pledged:

"The republicans do not accept the principle of the nationalization of the land and its free reversion to the peasants. . . . The republican parties do not accept measures for nationalization of the banks. . . . [and] workers control claimed by the delegation of the Socialist Party."

The republican/worker alliance won a plurality in the February 1936 elections, however, and formed a government under the bourgeois lawyer Azaña. As in France, the masses interpreted this as a victory and began a wave of land and factory occupations which the government was unable to contain. In consequence, on 17 July General Franco and a group of leading military officers issued a proclamation for an authoritarian Catholic state and went into rebellion. The response of the Azaña government was to attempt to negotiate with the insurgent generals, meanwhile refusing to arm the masses!

This temporizing might have succeeded if the masses of workers had not taken matters into their own hands. In Barcelona, a stronghold of the Anarchists and the POUM, workers took over numerous factories and stormed the army barracks with pistols. In less than a day they had complete control of the city. This sparked similar revolts elsewhere, and the republican government was forced to reverse itself, arm the masses and attempt a half-hearted struggle against Franco.

The alternative was a proletarian revolution which was possible at any moment. In Catalonia transport and industry were almost entirely in the hands of the CNT (Anarchist) workers committees, while in much of the northeast (Catalonia and Aragon) the peasant associations and agricultural workers unions had set up collective farms. The old municipal governments disappeared, replaced by committees giving representation to all anti-fascist parties and unions. The most important was the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias of Catalonia which, although it had bourgeois members, was thoroughly dominated by the workers

organizations. Yet on top of this sat the "shadow of the bourgeoisie," a popular-front government of Catalonia headed by another bourgeois lawyer, Companys. As in Russia from February to October 1917 there was a situation of dual power, but with the workers still giving tacit support to the shaky bourgeois government.

In this situation, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had demanded, "Down with the Provisional Government, All Power to the Soviets!" The Spanish workers parties, however, from the Stalinists to the POUM and even the Anarchists (who supposedly opposed even a workers government!) joined the bourgeois government in September 1936. The Stalinists assured their bourgeois friends that they had no intention of leading the workers to power. In August 1936 the PCF newspaper *L'Humanité* stated:

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain requests us to inform the public. . . . that the Spanish people are not striving for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but know only one aim: the defense of the republican order while respecting private property."

With support of the Stalinists and Socialists guaranteed, Azaña and Companys began moving to re-establish bourgeois law and order. The first step was censorship of the workers press. The Catalan government followed this up with a decree dissolving the revolutionary committees which had arisen in July, and in late October it ordered the disarming of the workers in the rear. The POUM and CNT leaders were subsequently expelled from the cabinet, even though they had gone along with all these anti-worker measures. A secret police was organized, under the control of the Stalinists and GPU agents from the Soviet Union.

But this was not enough to break the back of the workers resistance. A provocation was required. This came on 3 May 1937 when the Stalinists attacked the Barcelona telephone exchange held by CNT workers. Within hours barricades were erected throughout the city and the workers were once again in a position to take power. Instead the POUM and Anarchist leaders capitulated to the central government, trusting in Azaña's pledge of no reprisals. Two days later the Assault Guards arrived and occupied the exchange, killing hundreds and jailing tens of thousands. Within a month the POUM was outlawed, at the demand of the Stalinists, and its leaders arrested and eventually shot. In short order the CP led the assault guards in dissolving the collective farms and workers militias. Although the war dragged on for another year and one-half, the result was already decided—since the workers and peasants no longer had anything to fight for, they became rapidly demoralized and the superior armaments of the fascists carried the day.

In all this the Spanish CP had acted as the guarantor of bourgeois order, leading the offensive against the Anarchists and the POUM, the collective farms and the workers militias. In his desperate desire to achieve an alliance with the "democratic" imperialist powers, Stalin was absolutely opposed to revolution in Spain—even if this meant that fascist victory was the alternative. The Great Organizer of Defeats was also the Butcher of the Spanish Revolution.

But the responsibility for the debacle does not stop here. Nin and the other leaders of the Communist Left had once fought for the class independence of the proletariat. At one time they were a larger party than the Spanish CP itself. But by capitulating to the popular front, these centrists were as responsible for the defeat of the Spanish revolution as Stalin. Had they known how to swim against the stream in moments when the popular front had mass support they could have earned the leadership of the workers movement when the masses later came to see that they had been betrayed. As it was the POUM went along with the

betrayals, protesting only when it was too late.

### The Popular Front in World War II

It is remarkable that in Davidson's attack on Trotskyism, in addition to virtually ignoring the October 1917 Russian Revolution and the ignominious defeat of Stalin's policies in Germany, he does not mention Stalin's policies in Spain and France at all. And with good reason! But as a good Stalinist he must defend the popular front somehow, preferably with a more popular example. He chose World War II. According to the Stalinists, this was a war against fascism and in defense of the Soviet fatherland. Their political conclusion was a broad popular front "including even the temporary and wavering allies to be found in the camp of the bourgeois-democratic capitalist governments" (*Guardian*, 9 May 1973).

Davidson gives a somewhat accurate account of the Trotskyist position on the war, presuming that nobody could have opposed the great anti-fascist crusade except counterrevolutionary Trotskyists. But while the Stalinist policy was certainly more popular at the time, it will not wash so easily with a new generation of worker-militants who have far less illusions about the "democratic" character of U.S. imperialism. The Trotskyist position on the war was revolutionary defeatism in the capitalist countries in this *inter-imperialist* war. At the same time they gave unconditional support to the military defense of the Soviet Union. This was no academic question, for Trotsky fought a sharp battle against the Shachtman group (in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party) which was opposed to defense of the USSR, and eventually left the SWP taking 40 percent of the membership with it.

During the war the numerically weak Trotskyist cadre by and large carried out an internationalist line, despite social-patriotic bulges in some of the sections. The French section, for instance, organized a Trotskyist cell in the German navy. In the process, however, many of the leaders of the Fourth International were executed either by the Nazis or, like Nin in Spain, at the hands of the Stalinists. In the U.S. the SWP concentrated its work on fighting the no-strike agreement supported by the CIO leadership and the CP.

The Stalinists had the opposite policy. According to CPUSA leader Earl Browder:

"In the United States we have to win the war under the capitalist system. . . . Therefore, we have to find out how to make the capitalist system work. . . . We have to help the capitalists to learn how to run their system."

The *Daily Worker* of 25 December 1941 implemented this policy by bailing the CIO no-strike pledge as a "definite contribution to national unity." What this meant in practice was strike-breaking. During the 1943 mine workers' strike, CP labor leader William Z. Foster traveled the Pennsylvania mining districts trying to organize scabs and a "back-to-work" movement. On the West Coast, CP-sympathizer Bridges of the ILWU called for speed-up.

Thus throughout the 1930's and 1940's the popular-front policy led to the identical practical result: strike-breaking and counterrevolution. The strangulation of the Spanish revolution, the defeat of the French general strike, scabbing in the U.S. miners' strike—these were the fruits of class collaboration. Drawing the logical conclusion, Stalin made another concession to his bourgeois friends by dissolving the Communist International in 1943 because it hindered a united effort to win the war!

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## Notice

The next issue of WORKERS VANGUARD, No. 27, will be dated 31 August 1973.



## General Strike

following point, written by Cannon, appeared in the *Organizer* for 18 August:

"We see the issue between capital and labor as an unceasing struggle between the class of exploited workers and the class of exploiting parasites. It is a war. What decides in this war, as in all others, is power. The exploiters are organized to grind us down into the dust. We must organize our class to fight back. And the women are half of the working class. Their interests are the same as ours and they are ready to fight for them. Therefore: organize them to take part in the class battle. This is the idea behind the wonderful organization of the Ladies Auxiliary, and its effective cooperation with the union in the struggle.

"Of course, Local 574 cannot claim to be the pioneer in grasping this idea and carrying it into practice. There have been numerous examples of attempts along this line...one that did much to inspire us—belongs to the Progressive Miners of Illinois." [emphasis in original]

—Notebook of an Agitator

### The General Strike Question

At the end of the May strike, the CP claimed that the Trotskyists reneged on their call for a city-wide general strike by accepting a settlement, thereby holding back the struggle. What the Stalinists ignored was that the main goal of the struggle up to that point—recognition of the union—was achieved. To press forward arbitrarily would have left the objectives unclear and been an adventurous risk of everything that had been gained. The Stalinists wanted a general strike against Olson. But in their ultra-left haste to denounce the Farmer-Labor governor as a "fascist," they forgot one small detail: the workers, who had voted him into power, had the illusion that he was on their side. Furthermore, he controlled the bulk of the AFL leadership through F-LP affiliation. An adventurous move at the wrong time could have isolated 574 and led to its destruction. As Trotsky pointed out in "What Next?" (merely one of many, many points the NCLC forgot to read):

"Even though Rosa Luxemburg overestimated the independent importance of the general strike in the question of power, she understood quite well that a general strike could not be declared arbitrarily, that it must be prepared for by the whole preceding course of the workers' movement, by the policies of the party and the trade unions." [emphasis in original]

The Trotskyists worked to expose Olson's real role, but they knew it would take events in the class struggle to do it. When Olson moved in troops in July, the workers thought he was protecting their interests and began cooperating with the troops. The leadership knew better, and at the risk of some initial unpopularity, the *Organizer* worked to expel these illusions. This was necessarily a slow process of education, but Olson himself speeded it up considerably by raiding the union headquarters and throwing the strike leaders in the stockade. The *Organizer* could then call for a "general protest strike" without the fear of isolation of the leadership at the hands of Olson and his AFL friends. The mere call for a general strike was sufficient to get the headquarters back and the leaders out of jail.

The worst the Trotskyists can be accused of with regard to Olson in the strike events is lack of prior warning as to the role he would play, i.e., an over-adaptation at first to the backward consciousness of the workers. In their organizing drive before the May strike, the leadership built a mass meeting at which they demanded that Olson address the workers. This was correct, but building the meeting without simultaneous warnings as to Olson's real nature as the head of a section

of the capitalist state was an opportunistic tactical error.

"The organizing committee also started a pressure campaign to line up Governor Olson as a speaker at the meeting. This was done for two reasons: advance publicity listing the governor as a speaker would help in getting a big turnout for the meeting; and if Olson addressed the workers, he would have to go on record in support of the union campaign."

—Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Rebellion*

Thus the organizers used Olson's name without, at the same time, attempting to expose him as a faker; thereby they helped create some of the illusions that plagued them. This error flowed in part from a theoretical misunderstanding of the Farmer-Labor Party—a bloc of two classes—as a working-class party (this will be taken up further in Part 3). That this error was subordinate within the general thrust of the Trotskyists' practice is indicated by the fact that they didn't hesitate to attack Olson in the heat of the crisis, even though it went against the stream to do so.

Hardly "holding back" the struggle, the leadership held out to the point of exhaustion of the ranks. At the end, the strike had become a war of attrition, and there was a small but dangerous back-to-work trickle. Nevertheless, the main objectives were won. As Cannon pointed out to the Stalinists after the May strike, these "quack doctors whose patients always die," (referring to the record of disastrous, Stalinist-led ultra-left "strikes") could not point to a single example of newly-organized workers having achieved so much (*Militant*, 16 June 1934).

The Toledo Auto-Lite strike, which peaked after the May strike in Minneapolis, is held up as an "alternative" to Minneapolis by the NCLC on the absurd grounds that the revolutionary leaders were the heads of unemployed leagues, and had to be brought in from "outside" (*New Solidarity*, 16-20 October 1972). In fact, the only difference this made was that the Minneapolis strikes had better and more conscious advance planning, and afterwards the leadership, having worked inside the union from the beginning, was in a better position to thoroughly displace the craft-minded reactionaries. Both strikes used essentially the same revolutionary methods of mass struggle and achieved similar goals. The same can be said of the San Francisco waterfront strike, in which the Stalinists were involved. This strike was successful because the Stalinists opportunistically worked with leaders like Bridges who were inside the AFL longshoremen's union, which was technically "social-fascist" at the time! The Stalinists did have a dual union on the scene, but it was essentially a useless hindrance and a potentially dangerous divisive factor. When the police raided it along with the Wobblies, arresting hundreds, the workers on strike were not moved to defend it as their own.

### Workers Party Formed, NCLC Notwithstanding

The NCLC complains that the Trotskyists spent too much time being militant trade unionists and thus failed to build "a significant revolutionary force in the Thirties." Holding up ex-preacher Muste's American Workers Party as conscious followers of Trotsky's German writings, the NCLC "forgets" that shortly after the Minneapolis and Toledo strikes, the AWP and the CLA fused to form the Workers Party! This fusion came about because the Trotskyists correctly saw the AWP as a leftward-moving centrist force and aggressively approached it, seeking to separate the sound, proletarian elements from the rootless petty-bourgeois dilettantes and other Marcus-like garbage which the AWP had picked up in its long history of unpolitical unemployed work. It was the American Trotskyists that supplied the better Musteites with a program, not the other way around. The work of the two groups in similar strikes hastened this process. Afterwards, the fused

organization worked jointly to consolidate the earlier Toledo victory in the Chevrolet transmission strike in Toledo in 1935, which they almost succeeded in spreading throughout the GM empire. (This was the first successful GM strike, and was a vital precursor to the later organization of auto.)

The period of the 1933-1934 upsurge required exactly the kind of trade-union tactics Cannon advocated: a broad but principled united-front bloc around the key burning issues. In 1934, organization of the unorganized was such an issue. It clearly separated those willing to follow revolutionary leadership from the vast bulk of the trade-union bureaucracy of the time, and the Trotskyists were correct to bloc on this issue and struggle to lead successful organizing campaigns. Precisely this kind of activity in Minneapolis, Toledo and San Francisco threatened to solve the crisis of leadership in favor of the revolutionists, but the Trotskyists were too small to carry it through. The betrayals of the much larger Communist Party were responsible for the fact that when industrial workers were fully organized, reactionaries controlled their unions. The later blocs of the Stalinists with these CIO reactionaries—for the popular front with Roosevelt—has nothing at all in common with the Trotskyist united front in Minneapolis to achieve union recognition.

The Trotskyists' mistake (besides the theoretical misconception on the nature of the F-LP two-class party) was that they lacked different tactical weapons in their arsenal for different conditions and periods. An independent, Trotskyist-led caucus, expressing a full program of transitional demands for the unions, wasn't so important in 1934 as later, since in 1934 the Trotskyists were in a position to implement their most important demands in practice (although consciousness of the need for political caucuses might have gone hand-in-hand with greater consciousness of the need to make political warnings and criticisms in advance of the crisis, as in the case of Olson at the mass meeting). Later, however, when they weren't in a position to provide direct leadership of the class, the Trotskyists showed inflexibility. They never betrayed the workers as did the Stalinists, but they did miss opportunities and commit some opportunist errors through a policy of blocking too frequently and almost always working through united fronts many of which lacked the clarity of the blocs to organize the unorganized of 1934. Instead of emphasizing their program, they used organizational weakness as an excuse to over-concentrate on alliances around minimum demands.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## ... ILA Wildcat

in the area could have been a historic event for the class struggle in the South. Instead, under Joseph's leadership, it turned out to be very different. Acting as spokesman for the strikers, Joseph demanded that Landrieu use his influence with the local federal prosecutor to investigate the ILA bureaucracy! No doubt Joseph is partly reflecting the democratic illusions of the ranks. However, because of Joseph's role in actively maintaining those illusions, militants must be highly critical of his leadership.

Faced with a successful wildcat in a major port, ILA President Thomas Gleason flew down to conciliate the strikers. Claiming ignorance of what was happening with the royalty fund, Gleason promised that they would get 90 and not just 25 percent of the royalties due them. Distrustful of Gleason, the strikers decided to hold out for 100 percent of the royalties as a sign of their victory over the company and bureaucracy. However, Gleason's maneuvering was partly effective as about 40 workers led by Plaisance returned to work the next day. Immediately realizing that they had been tricked into breaking the strike unity, these workers quickly walked out again.

Thus far the strike leadership has consisted of a self-appointed, informal group around Joseph and Plaisance. The wildcatting longshoremen should democratically elect a racially-united strike committee. Such a committee emerging out of a successful wildcat could play a valuable role in a militant rank-and-file revolt against the corrupt Gleason/Henry/Chittenden bureaucracy.

### Black Workers Play Vanguard Role

As important as any other aspect of the New Orleans longshore wildcat has been the leading role of blacks, particularly in a region which racism has made into a bastion of political reaction. The numerical weight of black dockers would give them the decisive role in any strike. Significantly, however, white longshoremen have also participated in the wildcat and have accepted a racially united leadership, with Joseph being the principal public spokesman. This strike demonstrates that in periods of intense struggle, class unity can overcome racist consciousness. The ruling class also realizes that racism can be an important weapon in breaking this strike. Thus, the five workers named in the Shipping Association's charges to the NLRB are all black, despite Plaisance's prominent role in the strike. It is necessary that the sense of black-white unity achieved in this strike be transformed into a conscious attack on the racist system. The New Orleans ILA members must merge their two segregated locals into a single racially-united one.

Suffering special oppression and having fewer illusions about American "democracy," blacks are generally the most radical, most militant elements in the working class. Unfortunately, for the past several years this greater radicalism has manifested itself primarily through nationalism and separatism. Black workers' organizations, like DRUM and the Black Workers Congress, have considered themselves the enemies of "white trade unionism." The successful wildcat in this Deep Southern city demonstrates that black workers can and must lead more backward whites in the struggle against the capitalists and their labor bureaucratic henchmen.

The New Orleans longshore wildcat deserves the support of the entire labor movement, particularly New Orleans trade unions and other ILA locals. In addition, we call upon all socialists and trade unionists to defend Joseph and the other leaders against victimization by the shipping companies, government and ILA bureaucracy. ■

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**WORKERS VANGUARD**



The International Socialists have suffered a deep split following a savage, abortive faction fight. Approximately a third of the IS' several hundred members broke away in an ill-defined, impulsive leftist direction, and are now organized as the "Revolutionary Socialist League" (RSL). The split was formalized on July 7, having been irreversibly precipitated a few weeks before.

Following a several-year period of factional instability which resolved itself into a right wing led by Geier, a center led by Mackenzie and a left wing led by Landy-Tabor, the final struggle (precipitated by the collapse of the left wing's bid at the April 1973 National Committee meeting for a clear majority in the leadership, and its consequent abrupt removal from the central administration) developed so rapidly and explosively that neither side sought to bring it to the projected Labor Day convention.

Once the battle had been joined, the left wing moved with lightning speed toward a split. Landy's "National Report" to the left wing charged "that [the IS leadership tendency] is doomed to walk along the same path as its [Shachtmanite] forebears and that it will one day liquidate itself into reformism outright." Clarity over the issues was precluded by the mood of factional hysteria on both sides as much as by the unjelled quality of the left wing's views, but the main issue was trade-union policy. The expulsion motion put forward by the Geierite majority demanded that all ISers repudiate "in particular the contention that IS politics—the politics of revolutionary democratic centralism from below, the fight to build broad political rank and file opposition movements in the unions, the championing of all struggles of oppressed groups—are adaptationist and counterrevolutionary."

## Origins of the IS

The IS' immediate organizational history goes back to the early 1960's when a section of "third camp" socialists (i.e. supporters of the old Shachtmanite formula, "neither Washington nor Moscow") centered on Hal Draper drifted in quiet revulsion out of the Socialist Party/Social-Democratic Federation into which they had followed Max Shachtman some years before, in 1958. The SP/SDF had in a few short years fulfilled Shachtman's dream of the new, broad "Debsian" party of American socialism by becoming—with plenty of help from Shachtman—an unspeakable caricature of garden-variety reformism; a narrow sect dominated by Cold War liberal professors and a few peculiarly ossified trade-union bureaucrats. Its justifications for the grossest excesses of American imperialism were typified by Shachtman's support to the Bay of Pigs invasion, and it was deeply involved in CIA-backed anti-Communist schemes, such as Mike Harrington's international junkets as spokesman for the "democratic alternative to Communism" and Norman Thomas' sponsorship of sundry CIA front groups.

But by the early 1960's the times had changed. The post-war witchhunt was over and the Vietnam war was beginning to become an issue—an issue which was to propel substantial sections of the disenchanted petty-bourgeoisie into liberal opposition to the "establishment." Cold War "socialism" was passé. And so Hal Draper and those who followed him drifted toward the formation of a political milieu outside the SP, maintaining however their SP memberships and insisting that their "Independent Socialist Clubs" were not a faction, not a party, just an educational association. In the years that followed, this tendency (which along the way became the "International Socialists") committed every convenient act of opportunism, recoiling only from those in the direct and explicit service of American imperialism.

One could recite as atrocity stories a seemingly endless list. Thus for example IS trade unionist Anne Draper blocked with the Stalinists (yes, the terrible totalitarian Communist Party!) to support "negotiations now" on the Vietnam war, against the struggle of

Spartacist supporters and other militants to swing sections of the labor movement over to the principled demand for unconditional withdrawal. And the IS went from advocating a presidential ticket of Rev. Martin Luther King/Dr. Spock to organizing the petty-bourgeois radical Peace and Freedom Party, again blocking with the CP against our insistence that PFP could merit critical support only if it adopted an explicit socialist perspective and/or an explicit call for a labor party—i.e. only if it acknowledged the centrality of the class question in political struggle.

The IS' Stan Weir spent years trying to get the federal courts to send the police to compel Bridges' West Coast longshore union to readmit him and other unjustly dropped workers. And the IS abused itself before black nationalism and was notable in its attempt to destroy the New York teachers' union in the 1968 strike, advocating and practicing scabbing. The constant characteristic of the IS' practice was chasing after every passing radical middle-class fad, thereby accumulating a record so shameful as to be a motive in the present split.

## IS De-Stabilizes

Toward the end of the 1960's, in response (as always) to changes in the

petty-bourgeois mood—in this case the considerable social radicalization among American students—the IS acquired several new political positions decidedly to the left (for a change!) of its nominal program. Without explicitly repudiating its established view of the Viet Cong as an agent of Sino-Soviet "imperialism," the IS came out for the military victory of the NLF. Caught up in the delayed shockwave of the massive French general strike of 1968 and other sharp working-class struggles elsewhere, including a 1969-71 strike wave in the U.S., the IS turned ideologically sharply to the industrial working class as the latest oppressed group to be tail-ended, and to work in the labor movement. The spirit of the times, producing a desire for a facade of seriousness, even led to the formal espousal, at Geier's instigation, of a version of democratic centralism, even if the application was sometimes hilariously nominal (in one instance, three factionally conflicting leaflets threatened to appear at one antiwar demonstration).

Meanwhile back at the historic originating center of the IS, the proletarian stronghold Berkeley, Hal Draper and a few others found themselves isolated in the far right wing of the organization and departed, followed by a continuing trickle of kindred spirits. At the same time, when the SDS blew apart at its

June 1969 convention the IS acquired a layer of SDSers, most prominently Tabor and Hobson. This Chicago-based grouping already constituted a loose "third camp" tendency in SDS. At the time of its adhesion to IS several of its positions (e.g., on black nationalism) were formally to the right of those of the existing IS leadership, but it gravitated to the left, largely in the search for a solution to the frustrations of existence in the dilettantish IS swamp. Thus the IS acquired a central contradiction between its Shachtmanite reformism and the associated cadre on the one hand and new partial programmatic elements associated with its new membership component on the other.

By the 1971 IS convention this contradiction had matured a bit, but its implications were subordinated in the confused emergence of shifting clique-blocs, with names which reflected the mood of the IS: "the Band," "the Big Red," "the Theory-Action Caucus." The impulse to political differentiation was there but it was sublimated into the personal animosities and petty maneuverings.

In July 1972 Landy supplanted Geier as National Secretary through piecing together a "left" power bloc which included sundry currents (including the clique around one East Coast unionist notorious even within the IS for his opportunism). Muttering in the corridors that the organization was centrist, Landy began to congeal around himself the left-wing elements for the express purpose of bolshevizing the IS from the top down. (Is this how the RSL intends to build a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions?) This ambitious scheme was dealt its death blow when Landy's unstable web of alliances fell apart; the Mackenzie grouping threw its support to Geier, sweeping Landy out of power and precipitating into the open a faction fight, which rapidly began to run out of control.

To the ex-SDS grouping, the slick organizational operators of the IS had probably appeared as an eminently sane "Marxist" alternative to the dogmatic Little Red Book-waving Maoists in the convulsive SDS split. The Tabor-Hobson current undoubtedly believed that the IS' sophisticated maneuverism could organize the masses, particularly in the trade unions. But the past few years have not been kind to the IS. Their "broad" "rank-and-file" "movements" have disintegrated. Peace and Freedom was a debacle and PFP's labor movement analogues have fared no better. TURF (Teamsters) is dead and the UNC (auto) appears to be in terminal coma.

Highlighting these failures has been the rapid growth of those organizations claiming to be hard communist formations. It appears as if every New Left activist who hasn't turned to liberated communes, religious mysticism or academic careerism has turned to the working class in the name of Leninism. It must be excruciating for the IS to discover that its soft-sell Menshevism is less attractive to its hoped-for base than a hard("sectarian") communist image. The Geierites are probably correct in observing that the left wing is reacting to the impressive growth of such organizations as the SL. The quadrupling of the SL's membership in the past few years and the resulting increase in our capacity to intervene in social struggles must be particularly infuriating to the IS since our growth cannot be attributed to the reflected glory of some deformed work-

continued on next page

# IS Explodes



"THIRD CAMPISM" IN ACTION—On June 23 the New York IS demonstrated outside the USSR mission demanding freedom for all political prisoners. Right-wing East European nationalist groups chose the same time and place to publicize their "Captive Nations Week," providing a living horrible example of one of the "dissenting movements in the Eastern bloc" to which the IS leaflet gave blanket uncritical support. Though the demonstrations were separate they had a common impact—no doubt embarrassing to the IS, but a logical result of the "third camp" equation of U.S. and "Soviet Imperialism."





ers state nor to the demagogic exploitation of political backwardness (a la WL or NCLC).

## Enter the Transitional Program

As the IS swamp underwent polarization, some elements—particularly those not strongly subjectively locked into mainstream ISism—began slowly, painfully to call into question the Shachtmanite heritage. All contenders began to speak in more "Marxist" terms, Trotsky underwent increasing rehabilitation and early this year Tabor (re)discovered the Transitional Program. And he wrote beautifully on it:

"As distinct from immediate, partial and democratic demands, which speak to the specific needs of one or another sector of the class or which do not pose the fundamental reordering of society, transitional demands represent aspects of the economy of a workers' state formulated in terms intelligible to workers who are not yet revolutionaries. In other words, these slogans represent the interests of the entire working class and oppressed masses, reconciling the often conflicting claims of various sectors within capitalist society.... the program, as the key to the agitation and propaganda of the revolutionary organization, functions at all levels of struggle, from the education and training of the revolutionary cadres, to the mobilization of the broadest masses by the vanguard. Seen this way, the Transitional Program is not a manipulative tool to be whipped out on the eve of the revolution to mobilize the masses, as Comrade Geier argues, but the chief means by which the working class becomes conscious of itself, of its needs and interests, and struggles for its rule....

"In our agitational work, our job is to initiate and intervene in the workers' struggles around trade union, partial and democratic demands, seeking to relate these to class-wide demands... to fight within the labor movement for a fighting policy addressing the needs of the class as a whole, for a struggle against the state, against the wage controls and restrictions on the right to strike, for a struggle to build a labor party based on our program. It obliges us to fight within the democratic and middle-class-led movements... to champion the special demands of these movements and to demonstrate that their needs are bound up with the struggle of the entire class, that is, to

fight for an explicitly working class program, and more generally to raise the demands and slogans of the Transitional Program, even when these may be unpopular...."

—Ron Tabor, "On the Transitional Program," (undated [1973])

But while Tabor was writing the above, the issue being argued about in the IS was the United Mine Workers election contest between incumbent Tony Boyle and Arnold Miller of the "Miners for Democracy" (see *WV* No. 17, March 1973, "Labor Department Wins in Mine Workers Election" for our position). The IS right wing essentially wanted to support Miller with criticisms. Tabor wanted to give Miller critical support.

Tabor's adherence to the Transitional Program thus flunked its first concrete test. The Miller program was saturated with class collaboration. It was also very popular, as against the faltering Boyle machine, which was deeply implicated in corruption and murder and no longer able to control the miners, who were beginning to wildcat heavily. Miller's campaign, heavily braintrustered by Joseph Rauh (a prominent Washington lawyer and long-time head of Americans for Democratic Action), pursued as its central thrust appeals to liberal public opinion and direct reliance on the capitalist courts to intervene into the union in Miller's favor. The Labor Department did an about-face, took control of the election procedures; the *Wall Street Journal* endorsed Miller. (Boyle, now abandoned on all sides, still pulled 40 percent of the votes, by campaigning for union traditionalism against Washington lawyers and "outsiders" generally and playing upon the miners' well-developed instinct as to just how "neutral" the courts are.)

Miller campaigned as an honest, democratic, militant unionist—i.e. without a single class-struggle aspect in his program. All oppositionists are "honest" and "democratic" (they have never had a chance to steal and suppress) and promise to be "militant." Talk is cheap. The condition for the possibility of principled critical support is the presence of even one concrete class-struggle plank, however minimal—i.e., a contradiction between a supportable programmatic element

around which the ranks are mobilized and the leadership's limitations and potential for betrayal.

## Enter the Fourth International

For all the table-thumping RRRvolutionary embracing of the Transitional Program of really real Trotskyism, the left wing has not managed to qualitatively separate itself politically from mainstream "third campism." Some of the abstract polemical material is really excellent. For example, in a major document, "Trotskyism, Centrism and the International Socialists," written for the left wing we read:

"The Trotskyist movement was not the only tendency to organize independently of the two renegade Internationals. A sea of centrist groupings appeared as well, each proclaiming itself to be revolutionary-socialist, Marxist, even Leninist. Some even declared themselves in support of the theory of the Permanent Revolution, like the Spanish POUM.

"The centrists were distinguished from the Trotskyist movement in at least one critical respect, however; they refused to 'say what is' to the working class. To avoid the appearance of 'sectarianism,' these parties tailored their political programs to reflect—not the inescapable tasks facing the proletariat—but the current illusions of their audiences. Trotsky insisted that revolutionaries frankly chart the road forward in their program and then patiently explain their program in the most persuasive, dynamic, and comprehensible way possible—joining in and drawing upon the struggles of the masses to do so....

"The centrists, in contrast, transformed their program itself in the interests of 'comprehensibility.'

"...Thousands of advanced workers today are rejecting the Stalinist and social-democratic parties. Whose works can serve as a true guide for them?"

"Those of the centrists? Hardly. Who even remembers them—the SAP, ILP, PUP, PSOP? The POUM—the most 'successful' and left-wing centrist party of the 1930s—is permanently draped in the miserable banner of the bourgeois Popular Front.

"No, it is to the Trotskyist tradition and literature that today's revolutionaries must turn. Only Trotsky's writings and those of his comrades provide us today with an understanding of the entire revolutionary experience from 1923 to 1940. During this entire period, no other tendency mustered the courage to 'say what is'; no other tendency, consequently, left behind a tradition from which we can learn. And that is precisely why our attempts today to reconstruct a revolutionary-socialist movement depend so heavily upon the works of Trotsky himself. So thorough indeed is the eclipse of the centrist 'realists' of the 1930s that one must go to Trotsky again even to learn of the centrists' very existence and to discover what they said....

"Only the banner of Trotskyism appears to the best workers today as one worth grasping hold of. And that is precisely why even modern-day centrists and even Stalinoids find it necessary to drape themselves in the Trotskyist banner in order to get themselves a hearing."

—Bruce Landau, "Trotskyism, Centrism and the International Socialists," (undated [1973])

The left wing now rejects Shachtmanism as a fundamentally flawed tradition, condemns the Shachtmanites' 1940 split from the SWP and proclaims its solidarity (indeed, its virtual identity) with Trotskyism and the founding of the Fourth International. But what was Shachtmanism?

For instance on the organizational question, Landy appears to endorse a recent "rediscovery" of the early Lenin conception of democratic centralism ("freedom of criticism, unity in action") which is in its evolved outcome appropriate to a united front, not to a combat party. In this the RSL recapitulates Shachtman's rightward motion when he embraced this conception upon leaving the SWP.

In the field of program Shachtmanism was above all a break from Trotskyism on the Russian question. And on the Russian question the left wing—as the Geierites were only too happy to point out—was agnostic! The RSL comrades have stated that they expect to determine the Soviet Union

and other deformed worker states as some kind of "state capitalism" (although not of the Tony Cliff/British IS variety, Cliff's political track record being that of a long-time, too-thinly disguised reformist who, moreover, gave the Geierites substantial political support in the faction fight).

## The Russian Question

The Trotskyists, in their analysis of the degeneration of the state issuing from the Russian October Revolution, never capitulated before that combination of the pressures of simple liberal-bourgeois hostility to the Soviet Union reinforced on occasion by impressionistic radical outrage at the bureaucratic brutalities and barbarities of the Stalin regime. They insisted that at no point—and despite a continuing pressure of strong polar tendencies—did the Stalinist bureaucracy acquire a characteristic role in the economy (nor any corresponding ideological or traditionalized elaboration and sanctification in the societal superstructure).

The Marxian understanding of class centers at bottom upon the characteristic counterposed roles of human beings in the means of production, one pole the exploiter, the other the exploited. In all aspects of Russian Stalinist society, and in the corresponding states created since the Second World War, the bureaucratic stratum remains deeply shot with inner contradiction and always compelled to hide its own parasitic existence behind vulgarizations of the ideology of proletarian socialism.

The Trotskyists, correspondingly, have struggled to carry out the dual policy of *political revolution*—to place the actual, organized proletariat at the administrative center of power, shattering the nationalist, caputatory stranglehold of the bureaucracy—and *unconditional military defense* of these states against assault by capitalist imperialism. "Third camp" socialism stands aside, but (...but!...) under the umbrella of "democratic" imperialism.

The RSL comrades do not know what they are. They believe that their abstract Trotskyism, enormous self-confidence, expectation of displaying great organizational energy and pervasive contempt for other erstwhile revolutionary Marxists make them (with the possible exception of L.D. Trotsky himself) manifestly the very best Trotskyists ever. They reject Shachtmanism without knowing what it is. The Landau article notes: "The weaknesses of the IS are inherited weaknesses. They can be traced back to the SWP of the 1930's and especially to the Workers Party and the Independent Socialist League of the 1940's and the 1950's...." The document criticizes the Cannon-led SWP for adaptationism in the labor movement to pro-Roosevelt elements and states that "the Shachtmanite Workers Party (product of the 1940 split in the SWP) epitomized this policy of adaptationism."

## Leftist Shachtmanism

The documents of the left wing seem to identify Shachtmanism as capitulation to trade-union reformism and social democracy in general. They have managed to so telescope the history of their forebears as to disappear the real character and practices of the Workers Party during the wartime years. In fact, that organization proudly proclaimed itself then to be a militant Trotskyist organization adhering to the transitional program and the Fourth International, and on some important issues attacking the SWP from the left. If anything the trade-union policy of the WP was more radical, more adventurous and more outspokenly socialist than that of the SWP! By the RSL's present standards, the early Shachtmanite trade-union policy would have to be condemned as hopelessly ultra-left.

Nor did the early Shachtmanites come on as mealy-mouthed reformists with appetites for liquidation into social democracy. As a look at Shachtman's

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1940 document, "The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism," will show, the older authority figure Shachtman backed up by the energetic younger YPSL leadership (suggestive of Landy and the ex-SDSers, although possessing far more seniority and capacity) were supposed to go straight out and build a real slam-bang revolutionary party. Their energy, audacity and combativeness were supposed to put the old SWP in the shade, reduced to a kind of Trotskyist SLP. They denounced the SWP for "bureaucratic conservatism," prompting Trotsky to reply:

"But on what base does 'bureaucratic conservatism' rest in the SWP? Obviously not on material interests but on a selection of bureaucratic types in contrast to another camp where innovators, initiators and dynamic spirits have been gathered together.... All hopes of the Minority leaders are based on their literary capacities. They assure one another that their paper would surely excel that of the Majority. Such was always the hope of the Russian Mensheviks who as a petty-bourgeois faction had more intellectuals and able journalists. But their hopes were vain. A fluent pen is not sufficient to create a revolutionary party: a granite theoretical base is necessary, a scientific program, a consistency in political thinking and firm organizational principles."  
—In Defense of Marxism

The early Shachtmanites insisted that "what is needed is, in its general outline, clear enough: in place of conservative politics, we must put bold, flexible, critical and experimental politics—in a word scientific politics..." ("The War and Bureaucratic Conservatism"). And they had a trained young cadre to go at it full blast for a few years, before the combination of rotten programmatic elements (their view of the Russian question leading to profound depression at what they viewed as the expansion of totalitarian Stalinism after the war), frustration at their failure to achieve a mass revolutionary party straight off, and the turn in the objective situation in the early post-war years highly favorable to petty-bourgeois careerist appetites—all these combined to shove the WP/ISL into the long downward spiral which led Shachtman, Draper and Landy into the SP-SDF.

### Where Is the "Third Camp"?

By telescoping this history and identifying Shachtmanism of 1940-46 with the Norman Thomas "socialism" of the late 1950's, the RSL evades consideration of the relationship between the Russian question and social democracy. But a myriad of tendencies which broke from Trotskyism over the military defense of the Soviet Union rapidly abandoned the Leninist program on all fundamental questions, despite an initial subjective commitment to the bolshevik tradition excepting only the Russian question. Some tendencies (Munis, Johnson) moved toward classic ultra-leftism; others (Shachtman, Cliff) moved right in the direction of reformism. The impossibility of maintaining a "third camp" position on Soviet defensism and a correct Leninist position on all other questions has been demonstrated by life itself. The abandonment of the defense of the deformed workers states against imperialism, and the anti-materialist redefinition of the concept of class which this requires, are in such powerful opposition to the Trotskyist worldview that the acid of "third camp" rapidly corrodes all semblance of Leninism.

The central factor impelling Shachtman toward social democracy was not trade-union policy but his concept of the role of Stalinism in contemporary world history. With the failure of proletarian revolutionary upheavals at the end of World War II, Shachtman envisioned a period in which the fundamental threat to capitalism came from expansionist Stalinism. He saw that Stalinism commanded not only the resources of Russia and Eastern Europe, but also the loyalty of the most advanced section of the working class in the capitalist world. By the late 1940's, Shachtman felt it necessary to

take a position on how the expansion of Stalinist states at the expense of capitalism would affect the future of socialism. At that point, he reached the fatal conclusion—always implicit in the "third camp" analysis which locates the essence of state power in ideology rather than at the point of production—that bourgeois democracy was progressive relative to Stalinism because it did not as directly oppress the workers or impede the development of a socialist movement. It was the fundamental Shachtmanite position that capitalist "democracy" was preferable to Stalinist totalitarianism that drove him and his followers

incredibly stupid in the long run; thus the great opportunist coup of the moment will require a lot of acrobatics tomorrow. Centrist currents, by their very nature unstable and impressionistic, will in a changed situation repudiate their former positions without fundamentally altering their method. (As the Landau document noted, "even modern-day centrists and even Stalinoids find it necessary to drape themselves in the Trotskyist banner....") Thus for example only a hopeless child or a cynic could have considered that the POUM's self-criticism, after the fact, for having entered a bourgeois government had

## Proposal to the RSL

*Back last Spring when Sy Landy was National Secretary of the International Socialists the IS proposed a debate between Landy and James Robertson, Spartacist League National Chairman. Then Landy and the IS abruptly abandoned the proposition. We hereby renew the proposal. From August 11 to 19 the SL will hold a summer camp outside Chicago, attended by roughly two hundred Trotskyists. We invite Comrade Landy (and any of his political colleagues who care to attend) to participate in a full, wide-ranging symposium—to be scheduled at our mutual convenience—covering all disputed questions, centering on the building of the revolutionary workers party. We await your response with great anticipation, comrades of the RSL.*

into the arms of the Socialist Party and the CIA.

In fact, a precondition for the existence of a "third camp" tendency which simultaneously claims to be orthodox Leninist, like the RSL, in the most powerful imperialist nation in the world is that U.S. imperialism is not currently in acute and open conflict with the Soviet Union. An important factor conditioning the relatively left-wing nature of the WP in 1940-46 was the U.S.-USSR wartime alliance. At a time when the broad masses of American working people are again mobilized into virulent and active anti-Sovietism on the basis of bourgeois-democratic illusions and national chauvinism, it becomes impossible for any tendency to maintain "third campism" while adhering to other central Leninist programmatic positions. Thus it was the Korean war which split the Johnsonites out of the SWP and the Cliff group out of the British Trotskyists. Whether they know it or not, the RSL can enjoy the luxury of agnosticism on the Russian question because of the Nixon-Brezhnev detente. In its own way, "third camp" "Leninism" is based on peaceful co-existence—and its future is about as promising.

### Historical Seriousness

The former IS left wing has moved subjectively very far to the left of the IS mainstream. Freed now from its organizational shackles, it proclaims that it has left the political heritage of Shachtmanism far behind as well and refuses to be held accountable for any aspect of the IS' gross opportunism which it has presumably entirely transcended. In his "National Report" to his faction, Landy dismissed the criticisms of the IS "Leninist Tendency" of Shapiro-Hayes as employing "the pot-shot technique of the Spartacists—who did what when etc."

An organization's political history is not something to be shrugged off lightly. Following in the approach of Trotsky in dealing with myriad centrist currents during the 1930's, we do not desire to consign any tendency or individual to political oblivion on the basis of its "track record"—even one as grossly flawed as that of Landy, for instance—when such a grouping protests that it has learned from its errors and repudiates its former course, and when there is real evidence of motion in the direction of Bolshevism. The SL had consistently pursued the tactic of principled regroupment, seeking to intersect, polarize and win over leftward-moving centrist currents.

But, again as Trotsky recognized, the simple affirmation of new-found principles is not sufficient. A typical characteristic of opportunism is that it is "smart" in the short term and

really changed anything.

In fact, a rejection of the importance of "who did what when" is hardly new to the IS. This tendency was always centrally characterized by the sloughing off of its old skin; the Spartacist League's exhumation of the ISC's old King/Spock line was contemptuously dismissed by ISers as the relic of a superseded organization, as they bragged of their efforts in organizing the PFP; Anne Draper's "negotiations now" trade-union stand was written off as the rightist line of an ex-member, while the contemporary members chased the economist, social-chauvinist UNC. The IS was never one to continue defending a now-outmoded opportunism!

The RSL has pragmatically taken some big strides away from the Shachtmanite mire, but it is not now determined whether these constitute a qualitative leap or simply the same impressionistic and tailist impulse which has led even some of the more improbable variants of New Leftism to throw themselves into "organizing at the point of production" in simple reflexive response to the decline of the petty-bourgeois poly-vanguardist movements and the demonstrable upsurge in working-class militancy internationally.

In any case it is more than a little disingenuous for Landy to once again dismiss his past out of hand. After years of "Don't blame me for the SP; this is the IS!" it is now "Don't blame me for the IS; this is the RSL!" Even the bourgeois courts make you wait seven years minimum before you can declare bankruptcy again.

### RSL Confronts the SL

The acid test of the authenticity of the RSL's claim to have fundamentally broken with Shachtmanism at last is in fact the existence and record of the Spartacist League. It is not enough that the RSL proclaims itself Trotskyist, as if Trotskyism had existed in suspended animation since 1940, simply awaiting the birth of the RSL. The RSL must critically confront its history and determine what were the political positions which Trotskyists—had they existed during this presumed vacuum—should have taken, and whether there was not in fact a tendency whose main thrust was consistently correct; the Spartacist tendency.

In a letter to Judith Shapiro (of the Leninist Tendency), Landy charged that the SL is "frightened of the real working class... a tendency that will never have any culmination in the class itself. Even when they are in, they build a wall around themselves."

In the same theme, the Landau document charged that groups like the SL "carry the program with them in a mobile arc-of-the-covenant. When

they encounter a member of the uninitiated, they fling open the arc's doors wide. Whoever does not instantly make obeisance to every word in the Scripture is given up as forever lost, a hopeless sinner." And Tabor wrote in explicating his position on the Transitional Program: "Contrary to the approach of the Spartacists and other wooden heads, the method of the transitional program does not consist of raising the entire program everywhere and always...."

These characterizations are notable for their vagueness, with the partial exception of Tabor's charge, which consists of attributing to the SL the position that one must raise "the entire program everywhere and always." Unfortunately for Tabor, this is not the SL's position (see for example "Trade Union Tactics and the Transitional Program" in WV No. 21, 25 May 1973). The RSL's view of the SL is little more than the prejudices acquired in the service of mainstream ISism—the attempt to dismiss a principled political approach as sectarian ultimatism.

It is not an accident that the IS left wing was the target of the same characterization emanating from the Geierite majority: "The revolutionary rhetoric of the RT [Revolutionary Tendency]—Landy-Tabor faction] is nothing more than a cover for their isolation and conservatism. They fear the real live struggles of the workers and look for every excuse to remain isolated from them" ("The Crisis in the IS and the Road Forward," undated).

The RSL insists that it has rejected the maximum/minimum, step-at-a-time social-democratic practice of the IS in favor of the transitional program—i.e., the insistence that the program around which the revolutionary party propagandizes and agitates is not determined primarily by the existing mood of the masses but by the objective needs of the class struggle. But the RSL's ability to transcend Shachtmanism is fundamentally called into question by its inability, or refusal, to recognize that its view of the SL is lifted straight from the old IS—and that its purpose was precisely to defend against SL criticism the opportunist practices which the RSL now rejects.

When Landy stood up at a founding meeting of New York PFP and called the SL "sectarian" and "utopian" for our insistence that PFP did not represent a class alternative to Gene McCarthy liberalism ("We're tired of talking to ourselves and to the other sects," said Landy); when leading ISers in the women's movement solidarized with "independents" who—when SL supporters raised the need for a class-struggle program—mocked the concept of program as "the catechism" and "alphabet soup"; when the SL raised the question of labor strikes against the war as a means for drawing the class line in the antiwar movement and was termed "unrealistic"; when our opposition to black nationalism was attributed to sectarian purism and self-imposed isolation from the struggles of the oppressed—these were not descriptions of the SL, but political attacks on the very concept of the transitional program, in the service of another program, the reformist minimum/maximum program of capitulationism which the RSL now claims to reject.

For in fact "the approach of the Spartacists" does not consist of raising the entire program everywhere and always. When the ISC undertook, in conjunction with the CP and Progressive Labor Stalinists, to build the Peace and Freedom Party as a middle-class protest group based on two demands (immediate withdrawal from Vietnam and black liberation), the SL intervened, not by simply insisting that the PFP endorse the full program of the SL, but by struggling for the main thrust of that program; we explained that, in order to merit critical support, such a formation had to at least recognize the centrality of the class question in the fight against imperialist war and racial oppression.

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# Bridges Tails Pay Board, ILWU "Lefts" Tail Bridges

## No-Strike Promises Result in Contract Sellout

OAKLAND, Calif.—Two contracts covering 13,000 West Coast longshoremen and 22,000 northern California ILWU (International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union) and Teamster warehousemen were signed this month. Although minor economic gains were made in negotiations, both settlements ignore the most crucial questions facing workers in these industries.

Hailed by union officials as victories, in reality these pacts are defeats—the fruits of a long series of maneuvers designed to disorient a partially-demoralized rank and file by union bureaucrats in collusion with the employers. These sellouts were aided by the lack of critical opposition from supposed left militants, most notably supporters of the reformist Communist Party and the opportunist Revolutionary Union, in the ILWU.

The pact covering the warehouse workers was negotiated by the Northern California Warehouse Council, an alliance composed of two ILWU and eleven IBT (International Brotherhood of Teamsters) warehouse locals. While the NCWC could be a formidable bargaining unit if based on a united mobilization of the membership, in fact it is used by the union officials to keep ILWU and IBT ranks apart and to stultify initiative and opposition from the membership. In ILWU Warehouse Local 6 this strategy has met with some success.

Throughout the pre-negotiation period the union bureaucracy complained that the demands adopted at the ILWU February contract convention of Locals 6 and 17 were too militant for the Teamsters, that the Teamsters would never accept them, and that for the sake of preserving the ILWU/IBT alliance the demands had to be "modified." Thus those demands adopted by the membership in opposition to the leadership's desires at the contract convention were to be scuttled. The thrust of these demands was aimed at the problems faced by workers nationally—against speed-up, forced overtime, company abuse of probationary periods, etc. Most important among them was the elimination of "no-strike" sections from the contract.

After joint meetings between ILWU and Teamster leaders this demand was conspicuously dropped. The announcement came in the form of an official "Officer's Report" at the April membership meeting and as such was not open to amendment. Local 6 President Curtis McClain argued against re-inclusion of the aborted demand as well as against the necessity for a warehouse strike that would include longshoremen and Teamster drivers, fearing mobilization of the ranks and that the strike might spread to other sectors of the transport industry.

After one unsuccessful attempt was made from the floor to have the demand re-included, a CP supporter spoke to say that he thought the demands as reported were superior to those adopted at the convention! Throughout the negotiation period CP supporters in Local 6 praised the "fine job" the leadership was doing. In actuality the "fine job" was being done on the membership. The mid-June strike-vote meeting, held several weeks after the expiration of the contract, the officers attempted to preserve their rapidly deteriorating "militant" face before a rank and file that was increasingly disaffected with the developing sellout. McClain called on the membership to reject the employers' blatantly defective offer and to give the officers a strong strike vote with which to re-

enter negotiations. At this point such talk was cheap because the officers had already themselves jettisoned the key demands.

A leaflet had been issued signed by supporters of the RU, a CPer and various militants, calling for the re-inclusion of the demands dealing with compulsory overtime, restrictions on discharges, introduction of new machinery, and the probationary period. When the bureaucrats announced that the only issue on the floor was the strike vote, again in the form of an unamendable report, in a typical display of capitulating abstentionism not one person who had signed the leaflet rose to speak against the sellout. The strike vote passed overwhelmingly.

At the final contract meeting, attended by 500 people, on 29 June at the Airport Hilton in Oakland, the officers recommended acceptance of a new offer by the employers. The offer, while providing minor increases in wages and fringe benefits, included a vague promise of speedier grievance settlements as a concession to sentiment for the elimination of the no-strike provisions. Actually, this was an attempt to contain growing on-the-job militancy and sabotage effective action against speed-up, layoffs and numerous other attacks faced by warehousemen.

The sellout was crowned with the so-called "re-opener clause," which the leadership had been talking up as the guarantee of action if the pay board cut the settlement. What this clause actually provides for is:

"If as a result of Government controls, a part of the settlement is not allowed to be put into effect, and if as a result of relaxation of those controls, those parts which were disallowed become allowable, then they shall go into effect immediately and if permitted by law can be put into effect retroactively up to six (6) months."

This is a cowardly admission that the bureaucrats will do nothing in the face of government action to scuttle the contract, just as they knuckled under when the pay board knocked down the settlement after the 1971-72 strike.

At the meeting criticisms of the contract were raised including a denunciation of the role the bureaucrats played in sabotaging any preparations for a strike—their refusal to unify the strike efforts of warehousemen with longshoremen on the Coast and in Hawaii, as well as with Teamster drivers, all of whose contracts expired within a month of each other.

International Vice President Lou Goldblatt responded by denying that acceptance of the offer represented defeat, and resorting to his favorite justification for inaction, the argument that it is impossible to build socialism in one union. Keith Eickman, secretary-treasurer of Local 6, followed with a vicious red-baiting speech attacking "those who would sacrifice this union in order to build some new social order." The membership burst into prolonged boos and jeers, forcing Eickman to cut short his remarks, but then proceeded to accept the offer by a four-to-one vote. Approximately 1,000 out of 8,000 members voted.

### Longshore—More of the Same

Sellout in the longshore division of the ILWU followed that in warehouse. Although traditionally the more militant section of the ILWU, the betrayal of the dockers met even less opposition from the ranks than did the warehouse settlement. Many of the longshoremen suffer demoralization due to the defeat of the 134-day strike in 1971-72 and the series of betrayals since.

Like the warehouse settlement, the

ILWU/PMA (Pacific Maritime Association) West Coast pact does not deal with the crucial questions facing workers in an industry where the work force is being decimated by containerization and automation. In the ILWU questions of job security, protection against layoffs, maintenance of working conditions and gains such as the hiring hall are crucial to the very survival of the union against the combined onslaught of the government and the shipowners. The agreement was hailed by many as a victory simply because for the first time in thirteen years, the longshoremen did not give up con-

clusion." But even though they themselves are members of a caucus in Local 6, RU supporters have never put forward any "line" or program beyond the most basic economism and tactical criticism of the bureaucrats.

The article goes on to praise *Longshore Victory*, a newspaper published by assorted radicals and militants which is widely read on the San Francisco-Oakland docks:

"...the LONGSHORE VICTORY organization will play an increasingly important role in organizing and mobilizing rank and file resistance to the PMA and the Bridges machine."

**"It seems to us at this stage that PMA really wants to reach a settlement without a strike. So do we. Well, that makes two of us and that's the way the union will continue to operate."**

—Harry Bridges, THE DISPATCHER, 11 May 1973

ditions. In fact there is really very little left for the dockers to give up; this has been seen to by the shipowners' best friend, Harry Bridges.

The die was cast by 10 May when Bridges and Ed Flynn of the PMA announced a tentative settlement aimed at averting a possible repeat of the 1971-72 strike. The no-strike agreement took place six weeks before the longshore contract was set to expire (see IVV No. 22). The following day Bridges stated in the union paper, the *Dispatcher*:

"Our rank and file doesn't enjoy strikes—and here I exclude those few so-called hot shots and radicals who preach that a strike is a good thing because it brings rank and file workers face-to-face with the class struggle. Our policy is that strikes are weapons to be used with great caution and then only as a last resort."

Unfortunately, Bridges' fears of "radicals" were superfluous as effective, organized opposition was nowhere to be seen. The longshoremen ratified the contract in mid-July.

The Bridges bureaucracy followed the example of the warehouse settlement and agreed to a clause that says in effect that if the government intervenes to cut the settlement, union and management will meet to make plans to "comply with the rulings." No, Harry Bridges would not stoop to bring the workers "face-to-face with the class struggle!"

### Right and "Left" Stalinists Cover for Bridges

Bridges is able to maintain pretenses of militancy and radicalism for two reasons—first, the glaring lack of any serious, programmatically-based opposition within the ILWU, and second, the excellent public relations job performed for him by the Communist Party and the *People's World*. The CP, long associated with both the ILWU and Bridges, has always sought to act as his cover (both left and right!) despite their regular public quarrels. These quarrels have never brought forth any serious, consistent criticism of the Bridges bureaucracy because the CP could not do so without exposing its own past support for every rotten sellout by the ILWU bureaucracy.

The opportunism and hypocrisy of the Maoist Revolutionary Union were exposed in the July issue of its paper, *Revolution*, in which it criticizes the CP because the latter "builds no real rank and file organization and puts forth no independent communist line, explaining the connection between strikes and other immediate struggles and the long range goal of socialist rev-

In actual fact *Longshore Victory* from its inception has never criticized the Bridges bureaucracy, much less put forward an "independent communist line!"

Rather than intervene programmatically in the ILWU, demanding political clarity on all questions facing the labor movement and seeking to win the politically most advanced elements in the union to the perspective of building a class-struggle leadership in opposition to the Bridges bureaucracy, the RU tails after militants and even the bureaucrats. "Mobilizing rank and file resistance" and "independent communist lines" are simply decorations to take up space in its press.

An article in the July issue of *Longshore Victory* demonstrates where its gross shortcomings lead: the new contract is hailed as a victory. Speaking of the 1971-72 strike it says:

"A lot of brothers were demoralized by those 134 days when we emerged with very little, and even that was cut by the government. But an old slogan goes 'a strike is never lost'... Now we're finally reaping the benefits of those 134 days."

Needless to say the inability to tell defeat from victory is a serious failure in a group whose claimed concern is the interests of the rank and file. The PMA had good reason to be pleased with the avoidance of a strike; during the last ten years "mechanization and modernization" agreements have allowed it to cut the work force in half and save \$900 million in wages. The new contract does nothing to protect jobs: the promised guarantee against layoffs was qualified to the point of its negation—the eligibility requirements for the promised weekly pay guarantee were made for the most part prohibitive, besides providing only \$115,385 to cover 11,700 workers. The contract maintains the "steady man" system (Section 9.43) by which men work regularly for one employer, thereby undermining job assignment through the hiring hall. Even the wage settlement was far too little to be considered a gain at the current rate of inflation. And just in case the employers' interests should need any more protection, the government stands waiting in the wings. The whole scenario of the recent ILA negotiations once again shows the need for a political struggle in defense of the workers' interests, a struggle directed against the capitalist class, their government and their agents in the labor bureaucracy. Simple trade-union militancy leads straight into the arms of the Bridges bureaucracy, as the various "lefts" in the ILWU have so amply proved. ■



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# Cambodia

vice-premier and Sihanouk as head of state. Sihanouk first maneuvered the Lon Nol clique into power while expelling his former left-wing supporters from the government and, as recently revealed, at the same time actively courting a renewal of U.S. aid which he had previously broken off in 1963. He also tacitly approved of (i.e., never publicly objected to) the U.S.'s clandestine bombing of Cambodia, which by May 1970 had dropped more than 100,000 tons of bombs on the "neutral" kingdom.

His about-face came on the heels of a series of peasant rebellions originating in Battambang province, the only Cambodian province with a high degree of tenancy and long a Khmer Rouge stronghold. At the same time corruption, bad harvests and a downturn in the world rubber market wreaked havoc with Cambodia's economy. In late 1967 Jackie Kennedy paid an "unofficial" visit to Cambodia and Sihanouk approached the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank for aid and credits. However, not until Sirik Matak began to denationalize Cambodian industry and banking in late 1969 was aid actually forthcoming.

Sihanouk is currently talking with great intransigence and truculence about being willing to fight for his throne to the last drop of Khmer Rouge blood. But as Peking's kept prince, he will do their bidding just as he was once the faithful servant of French and American imperialism. His current job is apparently to see if a Nixon-Mao-Sihanouk alliance can be patched together, at the expense of the Vietnamese-oriented Khmer Rouge. The 1 July *New York Times* quotes Senator Mansfield as reporting that as soon as the prince finishes his current spate of globetrotting, "the tempo for possible negotiations will be stepped

up, and I believe that in this respect, the People's Republic of China and our government are in close contact."

Thus history has come full circle. In 1954 at Geneva the Soviet Union and particularly China forced the Viet Minh to drop their demand to have the Khmer Rouge seated as the official representatives of Cambodia. Instead they got the anti-communist playboy-prince, Sihanouk, the Bao Dai of Cambodia. In an important dispatch by Robert Keatley, their chief diplomatic correspondent, the 27 July *Wall Street Journal* (obviously speaking for the U.S. government) wrote:

"For example, analysts believe that China wants a friendly, neutral Cambodia not under North Vietnamese control (China fears the Russians might gain too much influence if Hanoi ran things outright). Thus Premier Chou En-lai seems willing to help seek a settlement to a degree. A compromise acceptable to Washington could be either a de facto partition of Cambodia, with unity talks promised, or a coalition government that would in fact give the Communists the major role."

The U.S. is clearly grasping at straws at this point. What it hopes to achieve by this proposal for a Communist-dominated coalition government, which it has always opposed in Vietnam, is to temporarily stave off the outright military defeat of the tottering Cambodian army. It is not impossible that Chou will, in fact, enable the FUNK to grasp defeat from the jaws of victory. If the U.S. is able to put a Sihanouk-Lon Nol regime together with the aid of Peking, while isolating the prince from his Khmer Rouge alliance and maintaining the threat of B-52's in Thailand, then the civil war will continue, although with the Khmer Rouge stripped of the legitimacy of the Throne of Angkor. Sihanouk certainly leaves this option open when he stated in a recent interview: "If Congress can help us have peace in obliging Mr. Nixon to disengage, it is possible, it is even probable that the Cambodia of tomorrow can be reconciled with the United States of America" (*New York Times*, 1 July 1973).

If, however, the GRUNK takes power through the defeat of the Lon Nol regime by Khmer Rouge forces and the U.S. government is too paralyzed by domestic crisis to intervene, the Stalinist component of this unstable popular front could very well shed its monarchic shell, leading to a deformed workers state.

The bombing of Cambodia has not only been the main prop of the Lon Nol regime, but a blackmail threat aimed at North Vietnam. A key demand of the struggle against the war within the U.S. must be for the complete removal of U.S. imperialism's entire military apparatus from Southeast Asia—including the B-52's in Thailand, the aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin, etc. We call for a military defense of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, as well as the Pathet Lao in Laos and the People's Liberation Army/NLF forces in Vietnam. We also call for Moscow-Peking to supply the most modern weapons to the guerrilla forces, particularly surface-to-air missiles, which have been systematically withheld by the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies in their efforts to force a negotiated settlement in Indochina, allowing the U.S. to continue its terror-bombing raids using antiquated B-52's with impunity. We likewise call on the Khmer Rouge to break with the monarchic popular front (FUNK/GRUNK) and in conjunction with the Stalinists of South Vietnam and Laos to take power in its own name. The Cambodian workers and peasants, on the other hand, must place no confidence in the Stalinist leadership of the Khmer Rouge, which is responsible for the present popular front with Sihanouk and for not having openly organized against him during most of the time he was in power. Rather than a "democratic" monarchy, workers and peasants must struggle for a Cambodian workers state, destroying the present oppressive capitalist army and government and replacing it with the rule of the working masses, led by the proletariat. All Indochina Must Go Communist! ■

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# ...Crisis

of production and other income-producing property forms."

— "Economics or Socialism, Part II," *The Campaigner*, October 1970

Wohlforth is not so blatant in his revisions of Marx as is the guru of the NCLC. So in his current series on "What Is Spartacist Today?" he spends part four in attacking the SL for allegedly ignoring the question of circulation, listing several quotes from Marx which point out how the crisis of overproduction is expressed in the process of circulation. But Wohlforth is saddled with an insurmountable difficulty: namely that the IC monetary crisis theory is rooted in circulation, not production, and is precisely the kind of monetarist theory Marx polemicized against in Vol. III, Part 5 of *Capital*. So in the next installment we discover that crises in Marx's time were, it is true, production crises but now things are different:

"Marx wrote of [capitalism] under conditions in which it was still capable of expansion of the productive forces of mankind. Crises in his period were more limited in impact and largely of a commodity or commercial nature. Today the overall expansion of capital with its corresponding change in the organic composition of capital producing a falling rate of profit means that capitalism has reached its general historical limit...."

"This is also why questions of the monetary system and credit become so vital as well. As Lenin explained, the epoch of imperialism is a period in which finance capital triumphs over manufacturing capital...."

"If forms of credit, of extended credit, are entered into this process both through bank loans and through the introduction of paper currency quite out of proportion to the money (gold) backing of the currency, then we can immediately see how the problem of overproduction can be momentarily overcome and, along with the problems related to the falling rate of profit...."

— *Bulletin*, 23 July 1973

Thus, you see, today the crisis takes place in circulation, today it is possible to solve economic crises of overproduction by artificially creating credit! Keynesianism works according to Wohlforth, although only "momentarily." On the other hand, according to the 28 May *Bulletin*, Wohlforth's Hegelian "moment" when the law of value was "denied" lasted for "27 years"! Even more explicitly, the "Dollar Crisis" pamphlet exclaims: "The crisis of the capitalist system, in any case is not fundamentally a crisis of commodity over-production, but one involving the over-production of capital." Wohlforth just can't keep that Marcus ghost hidden in the closet! As if in anticipation, Marx entitled one of the sections of chapter 17 of the *Theories of Surplus Value* "Absurd Denial of the Overproduction of Commodities, Accompanied by a Recognition of the

Over-Abundance of Capital." But then, of course, that was in his day. As far as the substance of the matter is concerned, commodities are capital and capital in turn takes the form of commodities and even money at different points in the process of circulation. And the triumph of finance capital over manufacturing spoken of by Lenin was achieved by the absorption of the latter by the former. The opposition of financial and manufacturing capital is a myth of Stalinism concocted to justify the theory of a people's front with the "progressive" capitalists against the reactionary, unproductive sector, variously known as the Robber Barons, the 200 Families or Wall Street.

## Not the Credit System, But the National State

Although the IC keeps insisting that the present crisis is insoluble, if their analysis was correct there could be an easy solution. If world trade must collapse because the value of monetary gold is too small to circulate it, all that is necessary is to raise the price of gold. And this is precisely what is now happening. Within a year, most governments will probably be buying and selling gold on the open market. When this happens, the IC will have to come up with another explanation for the final crisis.

In general, *The Dollar Crisis* raises an obvious question which it does not answer. Why didn't the ruling class restore the pre-1914 gold standard after World War I, or World War II, or why don't they do so now? Under the pre-1914 gold standard the only way a national bourgeoisie could improve its international competitiveness was by lowering the domestic price level. This, in turn, could only be brought about through unemployment, cutting money wages and temporarily sacrificing profits. Under nineteenth century conditions of generally expanding world production and a weak labor movement, the advanced capitalist countries were prepared to play by the gold-standard rules of the game. But backward capitalist countries (e.g., Argentina) did not adhere to the gold standard even in the nineteenth century.

After World War I the qualitatively greater instability in the world economy, the strengthening of the labor movement and development of powerful revolutionary proletarian tendencies made domestic deflation to correct a balance of payments deficit too politically dangerous. Significantly, the only contemporary bourgeois political tendency which even contemplated a return to the pre-1914 gold standard was semibonapartist French Gaullism in the early 1960's. After World War I, the conflicts between the national bourgeoisies produced international financial anarchy because this condition enabled a national bourgeoisie to maintain or increase its share of world trade and capital at the expense of other nations through permanent borrowing, competitive devaluation and direct control over foreign exchange transactions. That this did not occur after World

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# ...Crisis

War II was the result of the absolute economic and political hegemony of the U.S. in the capitalist world, a condition which lasted until the late 1960's. Even today the U.S. produces roughly 45 percent of total goods and services of capitalist countries, and its still considerable power has enabled it to force upward valuations of its major competitors' currencies (Japan, Germany). The endless crises of international finance are arenas of struggle between the imperialist powers over markets and spheres of exploitation. The decisive arena is war.

Despite its lip service to Lenin's "Imperialism," the SLL negates the Leninist-Trotskyist view of contemporary capitalism. Written during World War I, "Imperialism" has two major themes. The first is that a decaying world economy intensifies inter-imperialist conflicts leading to a war over the division of world markets and spheres of exploitation. The second is that labor reformism necessarily leads to social-patriotic support for one's own imperialist bourgeoisie. In contrast to Lenin, the IC ignores the question of imperialist war and denies the possibility of labor reformism, even in its virulent social-chauvinist form. Instead what is projected is a *uniform* world economic collapse whose result could be the international victory of fascism:

"Either the working class, under the leadership of the revolutionary party, takes the power and puts an end to capitalist anarchy, or the ruling class will be forced to impose brutal dictatorship on the European, Japanese and American working class."

—"The Dollar Crisis"

Such a view dangerously misconprehends the nature of fascism. A fascist bourgeoisie is not content merely to intensify the exploitation of its own working class. Fascism is, above all, the mobilization of the masses for imperialist war. Fascists come to power by proclaiming that the "people" need a "strong leadership" to defend them against their national enemies. It is precisely by social chauvinist demogogy that fascism attains its mass base and disorients and splits the workers movement. After Hitler came to power, the German Social Democrats announced their support for Nazi foreign policy. Labor reformism prepares the way for fascism through its social chauvinist policies. Because the IC rejects the centrality of the struggle against social-chauvinism and labor reformism in this epoch, the politics of international Healyism are essentially *economist*—which because they fail to go beyond the limits of capitalism ultimately lead to outright support for the bourgeoisie. Healy/Wohlforth have not yet had their 4 August 1914 (the day the German Social Democrats voted for war credits), but they have one in their future. It is only a question of time.

## Healyism and Pablist Drift Together

For the past several years we have called attention to the rightward degeneration of international Healyism, and its increasing adoption of Pablist methodology. The parallelism of the IC and USec Majority's present economic analysis and particularly the organizational perspectives they draw from it further strengthens this view. It is now clear that Mandel's neo-capitalism and the Healyites' credit-inflation boom were objectivist explanations for the organizational stagnation of the erstwhile Trotskyist movement in the 1950's-early 1960's. Likewise, their present catastrophic economic analysis is an objectivist projection of their get-rich-quick organizational ambitions. These ambitions are simultane-

ously associated with both sectarian posturing and adventurism and with opportunist tailism. On the one hand, we have the Healyites boy-scout-type hikes against unemployment and ever-more-frequent press or the USec's experimentation with guerilla terrorism in Latin America and confrontation with the police in France. On the other hand we have the WL's campaign to pressure the Meanyite union bureaucracy into building a reformist labor party and the Ligue Communiste's and the WL's support to the French popular front, the Union of the Left. What sectarian posturing, adventurism and tailism have in common is that they are apparent short cuts to building a mass party.

The Spartacist League does not pretend to be able to foretell the pattern of future economic cycles and their precise effect on the international class struggle. On the value of such predictions, we can do no better than to quote comrade Lenin.

"We cannot tell—no one can tell in advance—how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and what immediate cause will most serve to rouse, kindle and impel into struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant." [emphasis in original]

—"Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," 1920

We assert that in this epoch of the death agony of capitalism many revolutionary situations will occur. They can only be resolved in favor of socialism if led by a revolutionary proletarian party. And the only way to successfully prepare for a revolutionary situation is a constant struggle to establish a cadre as recognized leaders in the labor movement and mass organizations of the oppressed on the basis of the Transitional Program. ■

## Correction

The "Preferential Hiring Is Not the Answer" article in WV No. 25 of July 1973 states in reference to the 1968 NYC teachers' strike, "This strike lined up almost every left group, with the exception of the Spartacist League and the NCLC, behind the school board and its cynical Ford Foundation backers." In addition to the two organizations mentioned, the Workers League and Socialist Party also supported that strike.

## IS Explodes

We codified this in the proposal that PFP must declare itself for a socialist perspective and/or for a labor party. Now Tabor can write of the PFP experience:

"...the middle classes...by virtue of their class position cannot develop an independent alternative to capitalism, but can only follow the working class or one or another wing of the ruling class....By trying to position the PFP some imaginary 'one step to the left' of McCarthy, the ISC placed it between two stools, and as a result it became a hollow shell and eventually collapsed. And the ISC, because it did not make it clear that the PFP could not end the war, that only the Vietnamese people or the U.S. working class could end the war, but that no radical party based on the middle classes could do it, did not clearly pose itself, that is, its ideas as an alternate perspective.... In other words, by refusing to expose the radical illusions of the majority of the PFP, the ISC could not pose the necessary class alternative...."

—"On the Transitional Program"

### Whither the RSL?

History never repeats itself exactly. But the RSL comrades have managed

to unwind the film of their tendency's evolution in reverse to become akin to the early Shachtmanites of vintage 1941. The RSL still remains trapped within the framework of its historic origins as a break away from Trotskyism, i.e. the revolutionary Marxism of our time. Politically its future, though not necessarily now determined, is not promising. Organizationally its perspective, objectively considered, are suggestive of early disintegration. Its prior shaping experience in the welter of IS personality blocs is poor preparation for the crystallization of a cadre capable of class-struggle combat; and a grouping of under a hundred comrades had better have a characteristic and vital programmatic quality if it is reasonably to expect to exist and grow.

Yet the RSL does represent the outcome of the painful accumulation, over four years, of a leftist bulge in the IS. Revolutionary Marxists must not lightly or indifferently write off the possibility for the winning, not merely of individuals (which occurs in any case) but of whole leftward-moving currents.

And what about the traditionalist IS majority? Politically, the murky and quantitative political separation which emerged within the IS permitted the Geierites the opportunity to play at a bit of radical demagoguery. In their statement just prior to the final break, "The Crisis in the IS and the Road Forward," these classical Kautskian step-at-a-time pressure-group politicians declared:

"It is the IS [majority] which will continue the struggle of the early American Trotskyists to defend the politics of the October Revolution. It is the IS which has the hope for developing an American cadre of worker-Bolsheviks...."

Ye gods, worker-Bolsheviks! Well, when in extremis in the 1920's, the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce came out for the world proletarian revolution! In order to avoid giving a leftist cover to the right wing, the small "Leninist Tendency" of Shapiro-Hayes—which had fought for Marxian clarity midst the factional frenzy—resigned from the IS at the plenum which expelled the RSL comrades, although the LT itself was not in the direct line of the Geierites' fire.

We trust that the right wing will soon settle back politically into its minimum/maximum niche. Organizationally, the Geierite IS has suffered a blow—the loss of a substantial chunk of members which leaves them formally somewhat smaller than the SL and significantly smaller in terms of active cadres. But if they can pull together a cohesive cadre on the basis of political homogeneity, they may have the possibility—given the super-rightist ossification of the SP and the SWP's present uninvolved in labor struggles—of playing for a period a successful political role as the virulently Stalinophobic variant of left reformism. ■

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## Sitdown Victory...

production: the power plant. Minutes after their shift started, they climbed into the wire cage containing the electrical controls for a feeder line and shut off the controls. Immediately, 150 to 200 workers surrounded the area to protect their action. Sometime after 10 a.m., all the lines throughout the giant plant of over 5,000 workers were down. The company then sent the shift home.

When the second shift arrived that afternoon, they were locked out for about an hour. Then the company called the shift in and tried to run some of the other lines, but with the feeder line still down, they couldn't keep going, so they went the second shift home as well. Many workers remained to provide support for the sit-down strikers, since an attempt might be made to remove them with police, who were gathering outside the plant.

The sit-down action was a success because Carter, Shorter and their supporters in the metal shop were prepared to fight for their position and not be cowed or tricked by the company. Their demands were simple: fire Woolsey and no reprisals. After about nine hours, the company finally decided against any attempt to evict the pair with security forces and agreed verbally to the demands. The workers said they wanted it in writing. The company submitted a statement which said there would be no reprisals "if the second shift were not disrupted," but since the second shift had already been disrupted, this "guarantee" was meaningless. It was refused. Finally, top management, all smiles, being very "friendly" for a change, was forced to come down and talk to the workers. Woolsey was fired, and a statement was signed which unambiguously guaranteed no reprisals. Carter and Shorter were carried out of the plant as heroes. Chrysler had lost about 950 cars during the day.

### Bureaucrats Laugh at "Joke"

The union officials—the supposed "leaders" of the workers—did not know what was happening, of course. If they had, they certainly would have put a stop to it, or tried to. The committeemen on the scene advocated going to work for the most part, but ran into heavy criticism from the workers. Douglas Fraser, head of the UAW's Chrysler division, joked with the press afterwards. "This is the first plant hijacking of my experience," cracked Fraser, "They get an 'A' for ingenuity" (*Detroit Free Press*, 25 July).

We're glad Fraser enjoyed the "joke." He and his fellow officers have the power to mobilize all auto workers to do the same thing, thereby making sure of winning *all* such grievances and avoiding *all* reprisals, not to mention the contract demands in September. Will they do it, now that Carter and Shorter have shown them how? Of course not. They have not forgotten that the UAW was built by the Cartere and Shorters in massive sit-down strikes in the thirties. Their job is to use their position as union "leaders" to prevent such things as the big sit-down strikes again. Their goal is to keep the capitalist system functioning smoothly so they can reap their small rewards (their favorites are dues money, large salaries and political connections).

### A Foreman Is Dispensable, But Production Is Not

Woolsey was seen by the workers as an extra bit of oppression which, on top of everything else, was the "last straw." The nine-hour shifts, the particularly heavy, hot and dirty conditions of the metal shop and all



the other abuses that necessarily go along with production for profit will remain. In fact, the company got off cheap: they settled relatively quickly in order to prevent the sit-down strike from spreading and the workers' demands from becoming more fundamental.

A particularly abusive individual superintendent is not, of course, ultimately important to management. Like individual cops, one foreman is a despicable rodent that can be discarded if it is not performing well. Foremen shootings by enraged workers occur fairly frequently in Detroit auto plants, but such actions do not hurt the company or eliminate the constant abuse of the workers by company officials. The action taken by the workers at Jefferson was important not because another particularly abusive foreman got eliminated one way or another (although this way is better!), but because it demonstrated that militant, determined workers can apply their power to shut down production and win their demands. After the half-hearted UAW strikes in 1967 and 1970 (and particularly the demoralizing Lordstown strike last year) which the Reuther-Woodcock gang allowed to drag on inconclusively in order to draw off steam and prepare the way for ramming sellout settlements down the members' throats, this lesson is extremely important. The same methods applied on a larger scale could win larger demands: an end to speed-up and layoffs, a shorter work week at no loss in pay, etc. In fact, by using militant methods, which take advantage of labor's numbers, organization and power to halt production, the working class can eliminate not just all abusive foremen, but the entire system of exploitation that creates them.

But other elements are necessary along the way. No organizations were involved directly in planning the action. A leaflet was put out through the efforts of the United Justice Caucus, a grouping at the plant, signed "Concerned Workers, Local 7," which told what was happening (but neglected to urge the workers to join or support the sit-downers!). While this was better than nothing, it did not reach many workers in other departments of the plant. An organized caucus, with a base and efficient network throughout the plant, is necessary.

### Need To Beat the Bureaucracy Politically

But the system cannot be overthrown in just one plant. Organization is needed throughout whole industries and unions. This raises the question of the trade-union bureaucracy, which stands between the workers and their organizations, distorting those organizations into agencies of the capitalists for keeping production rolling and preventing precisely what the Jefferson workers did. An organization must be formed in the unions to beat the trade-union bureaucracy politically and put in a new leadership dedicated to a policy of class struggle. The militant struggles which built the UAW, and in the early years of the union gave the workers substantial control over the shop floor (for a time reducing the problem of abusive foremen), has been abandoned

because the labor bureaucracy is dedicated not to class struggle but to class collaboration with the companies and the government. What better proof than Woodcock's participation on Nixon's Pay Board, meekly going along even with the vicious slashing of the terms of the UAW's own aerospace contracts? To return the UAW to a fighting organization against the companies, the workers must deal with Fraser, Woodcock & Co.

The United Justice Caucus (UJC) at Jefferson is an example of trying to beat the bureaucracy by joining it. Before the last local elections, it merged with the Action Slate, an opportunist crew of vote-getters, in order to improve its vote-getting ability. The UJC and the other caucuses linked with it through the United National Caucus (UNC) have no program to separate opposing the bureaucracy from joining it. They have a program all right, but it is a contradictory mish-mash which allows the worst, most opportunist office-seekers to rub shoulders in the same organization with people who claim to be revolutionists. One of its "demands" is to let the office-seekers sue the union in the capitalist courts in order to get their way! The supporters of the social-democratic International Socialists (IS) and the reformist Communist Party merely serve to give the office-seekers the appearance of having some principles. The truth of the matter, however, is that these fakers bend their principles just enough to avoid having a real fight-to-the-finish with the office-seekers. Thus the IS complains that the UJC made a mistake in merging with the Action Slate and calls for a new split (see *Workers Power*, June 1973), but it defends the UNC as a whole and argues against a split there, even though the UNC is a small-time office-seekers' clique with practically no influence anywhere. The IS would rather bury itself in a small opportunist swamp than independently raise a full program of what it thinks the unions should do. In case of the Communist Party, it has been bending its principles for so long, it long ago had no principles left to bend.

Running for office in the union is a perfectly acceptable tactic, but it must be seen as a tactic, subordinated to the over-all goal of returning the unions to class-struggle policies. But this cannot be done without the answers to the important questions facing the working class. What should the workers do about inflation?... about layoffs and unemployment?... about wars like Vietnam and Cambodia? What should they do about the capitalists' shifting investments and plants to other countries to find cheaper labor? (Should they scream "Buy American!" or do the same thing by calling for "restrictions on the export of capital"—the slogan of Woodcock and the UNC?) What should they do about the threat of the capitalist trade war leading to a new inter-imperialist world war? Any leadership thrown up by the class struggle will have to have answers to these questions almost immediately. The trade-union bureaucracy faces them every day, and it has answers—the wrong ones!

The trade-union bureaucracy, for instance, is not against politics. It is very much for politics—capitalist politics. It sees the importance, to it, of backing the "right" horse in the elections, since the question of who gets into office might—make a small difference in obtaining small favors. What the bureaucracy is against is *working-class* politics; it is against a labor party and a fight for a workers government and the elimination of capitalism because it has placed all its bets on getting a few favors from capitalism. You can't do that and fight the system at the same time.

### For a Class-Struggle Leadership

A class-struggle leadership has to have answers before it starts out, or it will be outmaneuvered or sucked into the bureaucracy. To wrest control from the Means and Woodcocks, any oppositional formation must demonstrate that it has the answers it would need if it became the leadership. It

Continued from page 3

## ...Coast Elections

challenge Bradley directly, instead concentrating on its reformist campaign of Bill Taylor for comptroller. Yorty was frequently attacked in *People's World* but there was only the slightest criticism of Bradley. The CP lauded Bradley's election in the following official statement:

"This election represents an important victory in the fight against racism and for democracy.... Yorty has been a brazen mouthpiece of the monopoly banking, oil and industrial interests that control the LA basin. Thus the vote against him represents an increase in anti-monopoly sentiment.... Communists played an important role in exposing and defeating Yortysm.... Bradley was supported by important sections of monopoly, and without popular pressure, will tend to reflect these interests."

—*People's World*, 9 June

The CP was critical of County Federation leaders for refusing to really materially support Bradley. CP labor spokesman George Morris claimed that "the labor movement nationally has lots to learn from the LA experience if we are to ever have a real popular coalition" (*People's World*, 16 June). The Bradley election highlights the reality of the CP's strategy of "anti-monopoly coalitions." In L.A., the CP seeks a coalition of moderate Democrats (preferably black), so-called community leaders (such as Bert Corona of CASA, the darling of the SWP) and the "progressive" wing of the union bureaucracy (e.g., Chavez) around a reformist program.

At the University of California at Los Angeles the Revolutionary Communist Youth (youth section of the Spartacist League) fought to pose a working-class alternative to the reformist hullaballoo about black Democrats by raising motions at a meeting of Fanshen, a local new-left/Maoist organization, to 1) give absolutely no support to either Yorty or Bradley; and 2) fight for a workers party, dump the bureaucrats! The first part of the motion was accepted, the second defeated, reflecting the Maoists' inability to clearly draw the class line and provide an alternative to liberal capitalists and the union bureaucrats.

Erstwhile "revolutionary" Huey Newton tried to bolster his new moderate image by endorsing Bradley, further demonstrating the hopeless degeneration of the Black Panther Party. Readers may recall that not long ago this same party spoke of the over-

must be armed with a full program of transitional demands: demands which, as they are struggled for, lead inevitably from where we are now to the struggle to overthrow the whole capitalist system.

Fight inflation and unemployment with a sliding scale of wages and hours, so that available work is divided among those who need it at a stable, high real wage! Not "Buy American"—ism or "restrictions on the export of capital," but international strike solidarity, including strikes against plant closures and layoffs and a struggle to organize the unorganized! "No!" to colonial wars, trade wars, and new world wars! For labor strikes against war—turn the imperialist wars into civil wars! Oppose all government intervention in the labor movement—we don't need the courts to run our affairs! We have our own answer to bureaucracy and racial and sexual discrimination—workers democracy! Not capitalist horse-trading, but a workers party based on the trade unions to fight for a workers government!

Out the bureaucrats! Build the revolutionary leadership! ■

throw of capitalism and refused to give support to black Democratic Party candidates. Now the BPP cannot do enough to show its docile subservience to the capitalists. Newton's endorsement was rejected by Bradley who noted, "I don't need or want help from a man who has promoted these kinds of ideas. Having Huey Newton endorse me would be like having the Nazi Party endorse Sam Yorty." Not easily denied, Newton sent Bradley congratulations on his victory!

### Black Panthers Become Black Democrats In Oakland

Meanwhile, in Oakland, the BPP leadership capped its drive to the right in Bobby Seale's campaign for mayor against Republican John Reading. Running on virtually nothing except rhetoric about being the "people's candidate," Seale was careful to emphasize on radio and billboards that "I am a Democrat."

The main problem for Seale and the BPP was to erase their radical history and assure the local ruling class of their loyalty to capitalism. The BPP did not find quick endorsement from the usual sources of liberal support: the AFL-CIO's COPE made no endorsement for the Democratic primary in April, while the ILWU and other liberal unions endorsed Otho Green, a well-established local black Democrat. In the runoff the Alameda County Central Labor Council decided to make no endorsement.

Although Seale lost the mayoral election of May 15 by 30,000 votes, he did beat the other Democrats in the primary, thereby increasing his influence in the Democratic Party apparatus by demonstrating his vote-getting power. This fact was not lost on the BPP, which gloated in the 19 May issue of the *Black Panther*: "The Peoples' Campaign organized the Democratic Party in Oakland, an accomplishment that cannot easily be lived down by establishment Democrats."

It did not take long for Seale to consolidate his machine in the best traditions of ward politics. The 30 June *Black Panther* was headlined, "New Oakland Democratic Organization Launched," and was filled with descriptions of a lavish banquet for 1500 campaign workers, "a gala banquet... at Nikkole International, a well-known club in Oakland... at which... the formation of the New Oakland Democratic Organizing Committee was announced." The paper went on to explain that the New Democratic Organization "...will join hands and hearts with honest, committed and dedicated citizens of Oakland from all strata and walks of life, to win elective power for those who represent the best interest of all the people, the best that exists within the truly democratic ideals of this land."

The *People's World* of 19 May was not far behind in seeing the potential here for another reformist "people's coalition." Under the headline, "Seale doubles vote in Oakland," the paper noted that the big vote for Seale "indicates at least a strong potential for an opposition in Oakland to the Republican-dominated administration. If it is organized beyond election day." No doubt the CP will do its best to see that Oakland's black population is "organized"—into the Democratic Party!

The Panthers, defeated by government repression, disillusioned and disunited, are with CP encouragement enthusiastically following a policy of class collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie. Thus the distinction evaporates between "revolutionary" nationalism and its "pork-chop" varieties. While Bradley represents a victory for a strategy of one section of the ruling class, the BPP policy of class collaboration is a betrayal of the working class, particularly of the most oppressed black sector whose revolutionary aspirations the BPP once expressed in a distorted form. Even in their more militant days the Panthers were unable to transcend black nationalism. Their later degeneration is simply a working-out of the bourgeois logic of nationalism. ■

## Trade Union Tactics and the Transitional Program

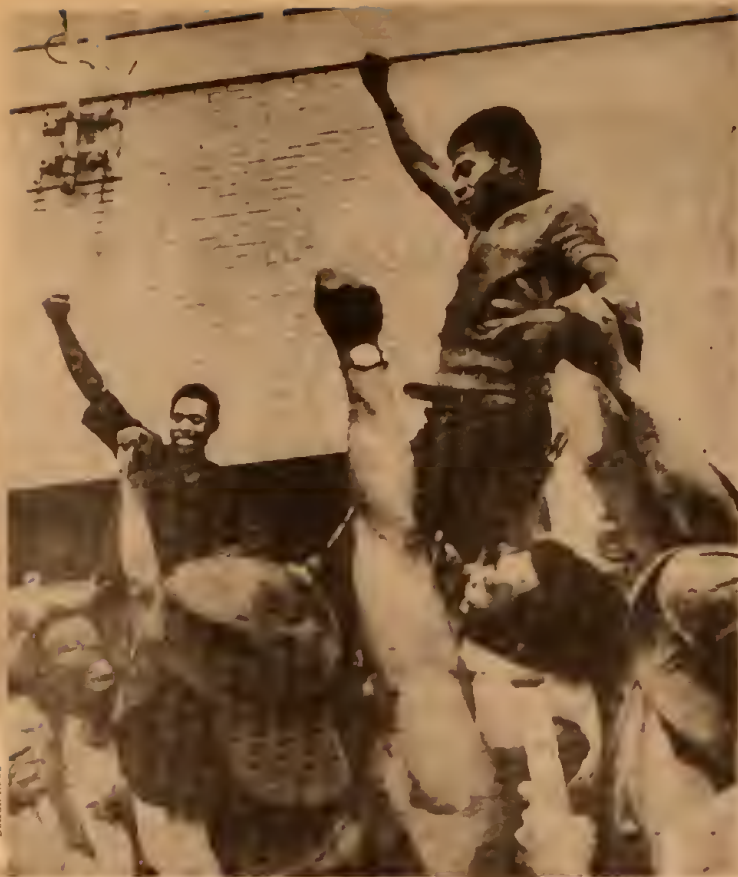
Trinity Methodist Church  
13100 Woodward

5 AUGUST 1973 7:30 p.m.

Speaker:  
SUE ADRIAN  
SL Central Committee

DETROIT





Leaders of Detroit sit-down strike being carried from plant after recent victory.

## Sitdown Victory in Detroit Auto

Using a militant tactic which had not been seen in U.S. labor struggles for years, workers at Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue assembly plant in Detroit on July 24 sat down on the job, immediately stopping production and winning their demands within 24 hours. The sit-down strike was planned and spearheaded by two workers and immediately joined by more than 150 others in their department. The one-day action solved a nagging grievance which the union officials, with all their top-heavy bureaucracy and formal negotiations, had been unable to settle for weeks.

The sit-downers not only won their grievance, but forced a written statement from the company guaranteeing total amnesty.

The two workers, Larry Carter and Isaac Shorter, showed what could be done by auto workers (and all workers) to win their demands, if only the proper planning, organization and leadership could be provided. Their act gave auto workers a reminder of the power of the militant tactics which built the UAW, but which auto union bureaucrats have since abandoned as too revolutionary.

### Normal Channels Failed To Get Rid of Racist Foreman

The action was a protest against a particularly oppressive foreman, Woolsey, in the metal shop. Woolsey went out of his way to harass people and make life miserable for the workers, and was a notorious racist. He frequently abused black workers with racist epithets. Workers in the metal shop had filed grievances and circulated a petition demanding his termination. The shop committee demanded his removal, but the company refused to act. Normally the most the company would do with an objectionable foreman like Woolsey would be to transfer him to another department, but this had already been done to Woolsey several times. According to newspaper accounts of the incident, Woolsey had helped provoke a walkout earlier in the year. He was universally hated throughout the plant.

Carter and Shorter struck at a key point, where they would be sure to stop

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## Response to Gleason/Company Compensation Fund Ripoff:

# New Orleans ILA Ranks Wildcat

Since Monday, July 23, wildcatting longshoremen have shut down the port of New Orleans, the second largest in the nation. With up to 1,000 union members showing up to protest at the docks daily, the strike has been so effective that it provoked the direct intervention of ILA President Gleason and Mayor Landrieu of New Orleans. A small group of strikers returned to work Friday, but quickly went out again when they discovered they had been tricked into agreement. As we go to press the wildcat continues to be effective. The Shipping Association has charged five of the strike leaders with organizing an unauthorized action.

### Gleason Bureaucracy Sells Job Rights

Containerization represented a major technological change in maritime transportation and, from the shipowners' standpoint, greatly reduced the demand for dock labor. The ILWU and ILA bureaucracy met this challenge by giving up job rights and voluntarily reducing the size of their unions in return for a cash payment. The Spartacist League has always opposed unions accepting technological unemployment in return for money. Rather we demand that the entire working class must benefit from increased labor productivity through a shorter work week with no loss in pay. Under the best conditions, when the currently employed workers get a fairly large money compensation, trading away job rights sacrifices the future interests of the working class. It presents young workers with reduced job opportunities and weakens the trade unions. This should be particularly obvious in unions with a large proportion of blacks since the mass unemployment of black youth is one of the most burning sore spots of American capitalism.

The New Orleans longshore wildcat highlights another reason for opposing unions' selling of their members' job rights. These job-lost compensation funds (called royalties in the ILA) become enormous sources for bureau-

cratic theft. Last fall and winter, New Orleans ILA members were presented with a document authorizing the union to give them 25 percent of the agreed-upon royalties, while the other 75 percent would go into the pension fund and other bureaucratically controlled honeypots. In protest many members did not sign. So far no one has been getting any royalties. The striking workers believe that upwards of \$10 million is involved (one of the major demands is to open the companies' books on royalty payments) and that the bureaucrats may have gotten their hands on a lot of it. The demand that the workers immediately get the full royalties due them is the central issue in the wildcat.

Paralleling the royalty rip-off, only nine of the 3,300 workers have gotten the guaranteed annual income won in the last contract. The company is deducting any outside earnings from the "guaranteed income." It is also making the payment of the "guaranteed" income conditional upon the elimination of the traditional job categories of grain and

freight handlers. This of course further reduces the labor force. Other factors provoking the walkout are one company's using non-union labor, failure to receive all of their due vacation pay and the lack of any work breaks other than lunch.

### For a Democratically Elected, Racially-United Strike Committee

The New Orleans ILA consists of two traditionally segregated locals, with the black one (1419) having about 75 percent of the total membership. The strike has shattered these racist divisions and produced exceptional black-white worker unity. The most prominent leader of the wildcat is Irvin Joseph, a black activist. Joseph has played a moderating role throughout the strike emphasizing the need for respectability. The best known white activist in the strike is Norris Plaisance, perennial and unsuccessful candidate for Local office. (Following one of his defeats, Plaisance sued the union

to have the election results thrown out.) However, the wildcat has not had strong leadership. Rather the strike has demonstrated a powerful spontaneous but undirected outpouring of hostility to the Gleason-backed Local regime.

A major impulse in the strike has been to "take back" the union from the corrupt Henry/Chittenden regimes. When Joseph suggested they move the meetings from the company shape-up area to a public park to avoid legal problems, a number of workers countered that the strike meetings be held in "our" union hall. There has been a lot of feeling to impeach 1419 President Clarence Henry, which Joseph deflected by suggesting court action.

A few days after the strike began, 300 longshoremen massed at the City Council chambers and pressured Mayor Landrieu into meeting with them. This confrontation between wildcatting, mostly black, dockers and the responsible representative of capitalist rule

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Ships tied up in New Orleans harbor during dockworkers' wildcat strike.