

Oust Nixon! Expropriate the Oil Trusts!

Independent Truckers' Protest Fizzles Government Refuses Fuel Price Rollback

FEBRUARY 10—In recent weeks the level of public discontent over the so-called "fuel crisis" has risen dramatically. In many large metropolitan areas there are frequent days on which more than 90 percent of all gasoline stations are closed, while lines extending for blocks are found at the few which remain open. The result has been numerous shootings, broken windows, fist fights, price gouging, hijacking of fuel tankers and generalized frustration. Almost universally President Nixon and the oil companies are blamed for a crisis which has caused tremendous hardships and declining living standards for millions. One indication of the trend of opinion: a New Jersey man with a Wallace bumper sticker on his car was quoted by the *Wall Street Journal* (8 February) as saying, "I'm for either him or the Communists, I don't care, just anybody who wouldn't be afraid of the big companies."

In Britain working-class protest

against being forced to suffer the consequences of a phony "energy crisis" has been partly expressed through the unions in miners', engineers' and power station operators' wage disputes. In France the national labor federations were forced to call a one-day protest against inflation in order to pacify the union ranks. But in the U.S., where the labor leadership is not made up of Stalinist and social-democratic reformists but rather of timid liberals and arch-reactionaries for the most part, the unions have acted as obstacles to any form of mass struggle during recent months. Consequently, whatever organized resistance there has been to skyrocketing fuel prices has come largely from outside the ranks of labor.

Sections of the bourgeoisie itself are expressing concern about the dangers of permitting the present chaotic situation to continue indefinitely. While U.S. economic power relative to Europe and Japan has been greatly enhanced as a result of the Arab oil boycott, the outflow of billions of dollars threatens international monetary chaos and a worldwide recession, neither of these being reassuring prospects for the bourgeoisie. At the local level several states are now investigating allegations of fraud, black marketing and hoarding by the oil monopolies as part of their efforts to drive up fuel prices. New

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National Guard moves against truckers' protest in Pennsylvania.

NEW YORK TIMES

Not Ford, but a Workers Government!

FEBRUARY 11—Just over one year ago Richard Nixon was riding high. In the greatest electoral triumph in U.S. history, he had carried 49 of 50 states against his Democratic Party opponent George McGovern. After his crushing defeat of McGovern at the polls Nixon saw a mandate to conduct a reactionary campaign to re-establish the old virtues of patriotism and respect for bourgeois authority so badly eroded by the Vietnam war. Typically, just prior to his election he had warned his "children," the American people, that the "era of permissiveness" was about to end.

Nixon's reactionary political offensive, directed most immediately at those who had opposed U.S. military adventures in Indochina and ultimately at the labor movement, had as its goal the establishing of a reliable home base from which the capitalist class could better pursue its global designs. Free, at least for the time being, of the Vietnam quagmire, U.S. capitalism could now turn its full attention to coping with its resurgent imperialist rivals in Western Europe and Japan.

Vietnam had for some time been an albatross around the neck of the bourgeoisie. Nixon's success in obtaining Moscow's and Peking's collaboration in ending direct U.S. involvement on terms which kept the puppet Saigon government intact earned him the solid support of most of the U.S. ruling class. Further, through a series of astute diplomatic moves conducted in the name of détente, Nixon had secured the pledges of Moscow and Peking to "peacefully coexist" with U.S. imperialism in exchange for a series of trade deals and some diplomatic concessions.

Nixon was also successful on the economic front. He managed to easily obtain the active collaboration of all sections of the U.S. labor bureaucracy in enforcing his program of wage controls. Along with a number of monetary and trade measures, these laid the basis for a struggle against the capitalists of Western Europe and Japan. With all these solid "accomplishments" in his favor it came as no surprise that the bourgeoisie preferred Nixon to the ineffectual dilettantish McGovern, darling of the petty-bourgeois liberals and the Communist Party.

Waiting for Divine Guidance

But today, scarcely one year later, all of Nixon's past services to U.S. im-



perialism count for nothing with his bourgeois masters. This is so in spite of his very real "success" in the past year in handling the Near East war, in improving the U.S. position vis-à-vis Europe and in turning around the U.S. balance of payments from a \$6.9 billion deficit in 1972 to an \$800 million surplus in 1973 (*Economist*, 2 February 1974). All of his fantasies about an end to the "era of permissiveness" lie in a shambles. In the wake of Watergate a speech by Nixon on "law and order" would have about as much credibility as a lecture by Charles Manson on mental health. Aside from an occasional fire-breathing speech to a gathering of military personnel, Nixon's recent public utterances have been more along the lines of his remarks at a national "prayer breakfast":

"What all of us need to do, and what the nation needs to do, is to pray in silence and listen to God to find out what he wants us to do."

—Time, 11 February 1974

While Nixon listens for divine guidance the evidence of myriad illegal and underhanded maneuvers continues to pile up against him. The most recent revelations—such as the finding by a panel of experts agreed to by Special Prosecutor Jaworski, Judge Sirica and the White House that the tape of a crucial conversation between Nixon and Halde- man was purposefully erased, the reported objection of Nixon's chief Watergate council James St. Clair to

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For a General Strike in Britain!

Heath Calls Elections to Defeat Miners

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NEW YORK TIMES

Pepsico Closes Brooklyn Brewery—

Rheingold Workers Occupy Plant

FEBRUARY 9—In a typical display of the corporations' crass disregard for the welfare of their employees, the giant Pepsico beverage conglomerate announced last month that because of operating losses it was closing down the 119-year old Rheingold brewery in Brooklyn, New York. While the 1,500 workers at the plant, most of whom are in their fifties and know no other trade, face the threat of permanent unemployment, the company hoped to improve its profits by writing off the operation as a tax loss.

Its public relations story to the contrary, Pepsico made only desultory efforts to find another owner (and that only because of legal reasons and union pressure), moving to shut down the plant on January 30 even though negotiations with one prospective buyer were underway. The management announced its decision by simply telling the workers to go home and stop by later for their last paychecks and started to dump some 3.2 million gallons of beer into the city sewer system! In a dramatic move, 500 workers on the second shift began a sitdown "strike" that same night, demanding that the company come to terms with the union on back vacation pay, severance pay and other matters, and that the plant remain open until the issues were settled.

However, the four-day plant occupation was to remain only a gesture, as the union leadership (headed by Johnny Hoh of Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters) is relying entirely on the courts and on its Democratic Party politician friends to find another boss. When Judge John Bartels granted a partial stay of the plant closing until February 8, the union called off the sit-in. The IBT leadership hopes that wealthy Democrat Jerry Finkelstein will buy the operation or, failing that, that the courts will force arbitration on pension and severance pay. Above all, Hoh, the head of the Teamsters' brewery and soft drink division, has no intention of challenging the capitalist system which is responsible for the hardships caused by such plant closures. (As we go to press, the U.S. Court of Appeals has rejected the union's bid for a court order to prevent Pepsico from closing the brewery until some 14-15 issues arising from the current contract are arbitrated. A union spokesman, however, stated that no resumption of the sit-in was contemplated.)

Pepsico Financial/Legal Shenanigans

For the owners, closing the plant is no loss at all and certainly not a threat to their livelihood. Pepsico also owns a number of highly profitable companies, including Frito-Lay, Yago Santgria, Cold Duck, North American Van Lines and Wilson Sporting Goods, among others. It claims that Rheingold lost \$9 million last year and can no longer be operated profitably. However, prior to its acquisition by Pepsico, Rheingold was not in danger of collapse. In addition to its own label, the company also had Ruppert's Knickerbocker (together accounting for roughly 20 percent of the New York market), a small New England label and four profitable Pepsi Cola franchises in the South.

Moreover, about \$8 million worth of improvements had been installed prior to the Pepsico takeover, including new hoppers and cooking vats, feeding into the largest copper brew kettles in the U.S. The number of men necessary for operation had been cut in half, largely through attrition. As a result, the average age of the Rheingold brewers is over 50 and there has not been a new apprentice in over 15 years. Despite the steady displacement of local brands by the nationally-distributed beers, Rheingold—one of the two remaining



John Hoh (right), president of Teamsters Local 3, pays a visit to Rheingold plant sit-in.

New York breweries—was not in danger of financial ruin.

The real cause of the Pepsico takeover was the Pepsi franchises held by Rheingold. The brewery company had sued Pepsi over its inflated syrup prices, and Pepsico countered by buying up Rheingold stock until it had control. From the beginning of its management in April of last year, Pepsico was determined to dump the brewery as a tax loss. First the profitable soft-drink franchises were split off. Then the negotiations to acquire the Pils label (underway at the time of Pepsico's takeover) were dropped. Despite boom conditions throughout the industry, beer production at Rheingold was cut back to 50-60 percent of capacity last summer. All work was halted on the installation of the new cookers, which only need electrical connection. Beer deliveries were deliberately neglected, inducing customers to switch to other suppliers.

The response of the union, IBT Locals 3 and 46 (brewers and drivers), has been capitulation to the power of the companies at every step. In an effort to keep Rheingold profitable (!), Hoh agreed in last year's contract to push the 35-hour workweek back to 40 hours, with no increase in pay or cost-of-living escalator. This concession was not only a pay cut, but it gave up the shorter workweek gained as the result of an 84-day strike in 1949. Then, anticipating a shutdown, the IBT bargainers got two clauses into the contract saying that if Rheingold beer is sold in New York it must be made in the Brooklyn brewery and that the Rheingold label cannot be sold without permission from the local. Now, when Pepsico has gone through with its plans to run the operations into the ground and then close the plant, the union leadership is relying on the courts and on housewives and college students to push a boycott of Pepsico products.

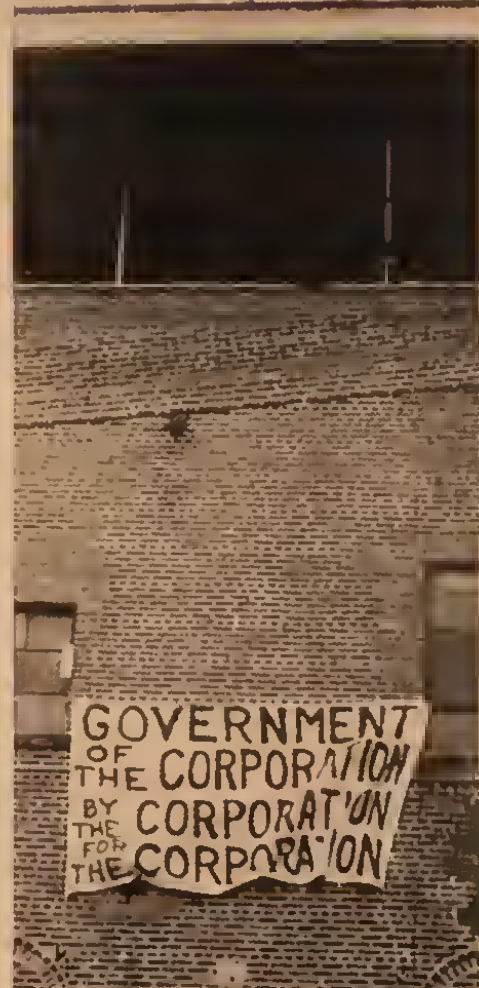
Fat Cats and Bureaucrats

For many of the older, more conservative Rheingold brewery workers the events of the last year have served

to open their eyes as to the relationship between the government and the corporations in the U.S. Although few identify capitalism as the enemy there is a widespread feeling, as one worker put it, that "it's like that fellow Justice Douglas said, this is a country 'of the corporations, by the corporations, for the corporations'." Another worker brought this point home by noting that "Nixon was Kendall's lawyer, you know." Kendall is head of Pepsico.

While the Teamster leadership has been working through the courts, Judge Bartel's initial dismissal of the union case was not unexpected to the brewers. "You know the judge in this case was appointed by Nixon just a few months ago," remarked one of the workers. He concluded: "We haven't got a chance." If he reflected on the close ties between Teamsters' president Fitzsimmons and Nixon and the complete sellout of last year's Master Freight Agreement negotiations by the IBT tops in order to help the government's wage-control program, he would have come to exactly the same conclusion.

Many of the workers still have illusions in the union leadership. While Fitzsimmons' stock is uniformly low, some recall Hoffa's regime with favor and others say that the local president Hoh is all right. But Hoffa is no less a friend of Nixon's than Fitzsimmons, and Hoh has done nothing to bring out the Pepsi Cola workers despite his position as head of Teamsters soft-drink division! Rather than isolated cases of corrupt individuals, the real obstacle to victory is an encrusted bureaucracy in the labor movement, whose members fear nothing more than even a hint of serious class struggle against the corporations' rule. Their goal is to work out a private deal with one or another company, offering them a guarantee of labor peace in return for a little gravy for the union tops. While this may pad the bureaucrats' bank accounts and advance their personal careers, it can only mean suffering for the mass of the union membership—as Rheingold workers are finding out to their dismay.



Banner at Rheingold plant during sit-in.

A leadership of the unions committed to waging a class struggle instead of finagling private deals would not rely on the courts or seek to entice a new boss with promises of giving up one after another of labor's hard-won achievements. Instead it would have immediately called out Teamster workers in Pepsi plants in order to apply the pressure where it counts. Likewise it would have declared an indefinite mass occupation of the brewery, thereby holding the expensive equipment hostage to force an equitable settlement. And since such actions are illegal under capitalist law (the Taft-Hartley Act forbids secondary strikes and a sit-down strike violates the

companies' "property rights"), it would immediately proceed to mobilize labor support throughout the metropolitan area to prepare for a possible showdown with the government.

"Every Class Fight Is a Political Fight"

It is, of course, possible that the company will insist on its "constitutional right" to throw 1,500 workers out of work and into the unemployment lines because it claims it cannot make sufficient profit. The labor movement must ignore such hypocritical pleas of poverty (particularly coming from such wealthy conglomerates). The union should demand that Pepsico prove its claims by opening its books to workers' inspection. If the companies refuse to operate the plants, then the operations must be immediately expropriated without compensation, to be run under the control of a committee democratically elected by the workers.

There is no reason why the working class must pay with its taxes to reimburse the corporations for operations providing them profits for years while they run them into the ground (as is occurring in the case of the public-private rail passenger corporation, Amtrak). And if management is in the hands of the state (controlled by the same capitalists), it will simply seek to bankrupt the public corporation (as happened for years with Britain's nationalized steel and coal industries). On the other hand, we demand nationalization because it is the workers' right that they be guaranteed jobs, and co-operatives almost always fail under capitalism since they are subject to the same pressures from the giant monopolies as any other small business.

Of course, as the courts, the politicians and the union bureaucrats will immediately reply in unison, this is all incompatible with "free enterprise." That is true. And for this reason it is absolutely necessary to widen the fight beyond a simple dispute over severance pay or even jobs. It is necessary to achieve a fundamental social revolution, to replace the rule of the companies with the rule of labor. This means first of all a political fight to install a workers government, which would expropriate the giant corporations and dismantle the state apparatus which serves the capitalists, to replace it with one based on democratically elected workers' committees. As part of the struggle for a mass revolutionary workers party, labor militants must fight to construct a labor party based on the unions to carry out this program. And this, in turn, requires a determined fight in the unions themselves to replace the corrupt, reactionary, pro-capitalist bureaucracy with a new class-struggle leadership committed not to finding a new boss, but to doing away with bosses altogether. ■

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Hungarian Maoist Sentenced for Attacking Income Inequality

While the bourgeois press is currently pushing its campaign to build up the prestige of "liberal" Russian dissidents such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov, it has systematically ignored the cases of socialist opponents of Stalinism, such as General Piotr Grigorenko. (The World War II Soviet combat hero has been confined to a mental hospital since 1968 for the "crimes" of opposing the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia and denouncing the bureaucracy's Great Russian chauvinism toward ethnic minorities in the USSR.) A recent example of the bourgeois liberals' selective "concern" for Soviet dissidents is the complete blackout in the U.S. press of the sentencing last month of the Hungarian writer Miklos Haraszti.

Haraszti, whose politics are vaguely Maoist, was given an eight-month suspended sentence for "incitement against a fundamental institution of the Hungarian state"—the wage system. This "incitement" consisted of distributing his unpublished work, *Piece Rates*, which exposed the extreme inequities of the Hungarian labor market. The relative mildness of the sentence reflected widespread sympathy for Haraszti's criticisms within Hungary and significant support for him by the West European left. However, the suspended sentence still means that Haraszti can be imprisoned at any time at the pleasure of the police authorities.

History of a Left Dissident

In 1965 Haraszti helped organize the independent (from the Communist Party) Committee for Solidarity with Vietnam. The Committee collected money for the NLF and organized demonstrations at the U.S. embassy until it was suppressed by the Kadar regime, which wanted to avoid embarrassing Lyndon Johnson. Subsequently, Haraszti and his co-activists (condemned by the authorities as "Maoist conspirators") apparently recognized that Kadar's placing diplomatic niceties above the fate of the Vietnam revolution reflected the nature of Hungarian society.

For the next several years, Haraszti's articles and poems concentrated on attacking the anti-socialist aspects of East European social and economic life. According to the Italian leftist daily *Il Manifesto* of 25 August 1973 (translated in the U.S. Department of Commerce "Translations on Eastern Europe," 21 September 1973), he wrote that "there are no longer Soviets in the Soviet Union"; that in Hungary today "tranquility is everything, the objective is nothing"; and "the gap between the masses and the elite becomes wider...."

Haraszti is part of a circle whose politics are a combination of New Leftism (admiration for "Che" Guevara) and Maoism. However, given the rigid restrictions on political intercourse and literature in East Europe, it is doubtful that the Hungarian leftists know what Maoism really is, seeing it rather as a left-communist opposition to the status quo. Do they know, for example, that Mao played a pivotal role in pressuring Khrushchev to crush the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and install the same Kadar regime which oppresses them today? In fact, Mao stated later that he had supported Kadar because he had full confidence in the latter's political views (see Janos Radvanyi, "The Hungarian Revolution and the Hundred Flowers Campaign," *China Quarterly*, July-September 1970).

Whether the "Maoism" of Haraszti and his circle is the result of ignorance or of mistaken political conceptions, it offers no real alternative to the present bureaucracy. Thus socialist militants correctly protest the absence of real soviets in the USSR. But they will find none in China or Cuba either. As for

mobilizing the working class to do away with bureaucratic rule, Mao was quite explicit during the so-called "Cultural Revolution" that he had no intention of eliminating the bureaucracy, only the "bad" bureaucrats (i.e., Liu Shao-chi and others who failed to perceive the infinite wisdom of the "Great Helmsman").

Despite his vague political views, Haraszti clearly differs from "liberals" such as Amalrik and Solzhenitsyn, who oppose socialism and foresee a society run by "humane" technocrats, in wishing to base himself on the strength and interests of the proletariat. In 1970 he was expelled from the university and put under police surveillance because he "wants to subvert the regime from below by penetrating the ranks of the working class." Police surveillance in Hungary is a category of punishment, imposed without trial, which entails a 10 p.m. curfew, weekly reports to the police, prohibition from attending public functions and enforced exile from one's city of residence. In the past three years, Haraszti has twice been imprisoned.

Views from the Red Star Tractor Factory

Haraszti worked in several factories after being expelled from the university, using this opportunity to write on the wage system and working conditions. Hungary has gone almost as far as Yugoslavia toward "market socialism." And, as in Yugoslavia, this has meant greatly widening income differences and job insecurity. For example, a factory manager can receive up to 80 percent of his salary through "profit sharing," but a worker can receive no more than an additional 15 percent of his basic wage in bonuses (Nove and Duti, eds., *Socialist Economics*). While the complete elimination of income and wage differentials is impossible until the achievement of socialism, communists seek to reduce such inequalities to a necessary minimum. Haraszti's protest against widespread large wage inequality thus places him in a different camp from the Czech reform bureaucrat Dubcek, who in 1968 called for increased wage differentials in favor of professionals and technicians.

Haraszti's *Piece Rates* was judged particularly effective because it contains lengthy quotations by workers denouncing the increasingly capitalist features of the labor market. Consequently, despite the fact that his manuscript was originally commissioned by several publishers and magazines, due to pressure from the authorities it was never brought out, one editor being fired for his temerity. When Haraszti distributed it privately he was arrested for "incitement against a fundamental institution of the state!"

Dissidents on Opposite Sides of the Barricades

The Haraszti case has an important bearing on the nature of struggle to build revolutionary socialist (that is, Trotskyist) parties in Stalinist East Europe. The reformist Socialist Workers Party constantly tries to minimize the importance of distinctions between socialists and anti-socialists among Soviet dissidents, while apologizing for the latter's politics. Thus the SWP speaks of a "Soviet democratic movement" whose "dominant trend and thrust" is "wholly progressive" (*Militant*, 19 October 1973). And after Sakharov called last fall on U.S. imperialism to use economic pressure to "democratize" the USSR, the SWP recognized that "he equates the Stalinist regime with socialism and condemns both," but then tried to prettify his bourgeois liberalism by remarking: "But Sakharov's statements make clear

what he stands for: democratization of Soviet society to make it provide the benefits to humanity that official propaganda claims it provides" (*Militant*, 14 September 1973).

This position ignores the fundamental distinction between bourgeois and proletarian democracy and denies the potential danger to the cause of socialist revolution represented by the spread of bourgeois liberalism in the deformed workers states. It also implies that the struggle for political revolution against Stalinist regimes must pass through a liberal phase. The very existence of subjectively revolutionary, working-class-oriented groups like Haraszti and his circle shows how utterly false and reactionary are the SWP's apologetics for Sakharov/Solzhenitsyn.

It is not possible to treat the East European dissidents as a united current. Despite their illusions about Maoism, Hungarian leftists like Haraszti want proletarian democracy so that the East European workers can play a vanguard role in fighting for a socialist world order. Haraszti stands on the other side of the barricades from a Sakharov who looks forward to a reign of personal liberty through the triumph of the "Free World" over "Soviet totalitarianism." And unlike a Roy Medvedev, who foresees liberalization through bureaucratic self-reform induced by peaceful coexistence, Haraszti (or the Poles Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, who wrote in 1964 that the deformed workers states are a new form of class society) is not looking for a Dubcek/Nagy-style "reform" bureaucracy with whom to throw in his lot.

The future Trotskyist cadre will be won through political struggle with the incorrect and vague ideas of people like Miklos Haraszti and his comrades, not by apologizing for anti-socialists like Solzhenitsyn/Sakharov or modern-day Bukharinite right-bureaucrats on the order of Dubcek and Nagy. While favoring the widest possible soviet democracy, even allowing freedom of expression for opponents of socialism (of course excluding overt counterrevolutionary acts or real jeopardizing of the military security of the Stalinist-ruled states vis-à-vis imperialism), Trotskyists must never blur the fundamental class line of proletarian democracy, which is the heart of the Marxist program.

For full legalization of all political parties and groupings which stand for soviet democracy! For freedom of the press and freedom for political prisoners in the USSR and Eastern Europe, victims of anti-socialist repression! Down with the Nixon/Brezhnev détente — For a united front of Russia and China against U.S. imperialism! No concessions to bourgeois liberalism and bureaucratic reformism — Forward to the political revolution against bureaucratic rule in the deformed workers states! For the rebirth of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution! ■

Forum

Communist Work in the Trade Unions

Speaker: CHRIS KNOX
Labor Editor, *Workers Vanguard*
SL Central Committee

TORONTO

Thursday, February 14, 8:00 p.m.
Hort House Debates Room
University of Toronto

SWP Fronts for Chavez Betrayals

SYDNEY—The Socialist Workers Party's Harry Ring has done a great disservice, not only to his audience in a recent forum here on the United Farm Workers, but also to the workers whose case he was supposedly pleading. Sponsored by the SWP's Australian counterpart, the SWL, Ring began his January 19 talk by distinguishing the UFW from those unions held back from using their potential power by conservative, bureaucratic leaderships: "it [the UFW] is the vanguard of the trade-union movement in the U.S. in terms of the kind of struggle it is conducting against an important section of the capitalists. . . ." He explained that the special significance of the UFW is that "its dynamism is related to the fact that it is a Chicano union. It appeals to workers on a national basis as well as a union basis."

In a deliberate attempt to distort reality to conform to the SWP's strange view that consistent nationalism leads to socialism, Ring grossly exaggerated the extent of explicit nationalist sentiment among Chicano workers, leaving those among his audience who had only his account to rely on with the impression that Chicanos, to a man, believe in the mythical nation of Aztlan, which most have never even heard of, since it is the invention of petty-bourgeois nationalists—a reactionary utopian pipe dream.

Aside from the cynical dishonesty and Pabloist rejection of the primacy of working-class struggle in favor of parochial and self-defeating petty-bourgeois nationalism reflected in the SWP's position, the significance of Ring's analysis lies in its excusing of the betrayals of the UFW's Chavez leadership and abandonment of the ranks of farm workers to its treachery.

In place of revolutionary criticism

and a program to replace the Chavez mini-bureaucracy with a class-struggle leadership Ring spoke of the "limitations" of the UFW leadership, explaining that Chavez was not a bureaucrat in the strict sense of the term simply because he does not receive a high salary. Therefore there is supposedly no material basis for bureaucraticism. This obscures the fact that Chavez acts and can only act as an appendage of the central union bureaucracy (and the liberal Democrats), a bureaucracy which is not a collection of individuals but a consciously class-collaborationist stratum within the workers movement.

But, says Ring, the progressive character of the struggle remains: its objective character as a "national liberation" struggle predominates over any "false policies" of the leadership.

In fact, these "false policies" which Ring writes off as a minor hindrance to the forward motion of the struggle could spell the death of the UFW. The Teamster/grower offensive aimed at smashing every gain, especially the union hiring hall, made by farm workers through UFW organization has successfully reduced the number of Farm Workers' contracts by two thirds. As of last August the UFW had gone from representing 40,000 farm workers to 6,500.

So in the face of attack Cesar Chavez, martyr-hero of liberals in search of a cause, called off the strikes in the fields (which had been 90 percent effective) and dispersed the pickets to parade impotently in front of urban supermarkets. Instead of escalating the strike—appealing to the Teamster rank and file, waging a campaign for real labor support through refusal to handle

George Meany and Cesar Chavez



scab products (hot-cargoing), arming the picket lines and a California-wide general strike and expropriation of the fields under workers control—Chavez rededicated himself to pacifism after several farm workers were murdered by the growers and Teamster goons.

In response to speakers of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand in the audience who criticized Chavez' boycott tactic, pacifism, class collaborationism, and specifically his use of the capitalist government and courts against the Teamsters, Harry Ring resorted to the time-worn demagogic tactics of bureaucrats and proceeded to describe the plight of the small, defenseless farm workers' union up against the overwhelming armed might of the capitalist state, the point supposedly being to justify Chavez' pacifism.

The SL's slogan for a general strike in defense of the farm workers was ridiculed as not only unattainable, but as an example of sterile sectarianism as opposed to a "viable socialist approach." Ring defended the effectiveness of the boycott tactic—"the only possible tactic." Militant picket lines

and their armed self-defense were labeled the "height of political irresponsibility."

The SWP has seen one alter another of the "mass movements" (antiwar, women's liberation, etc.) to which it sought to attach itself dry up into nothing, as a result of their reformist political bankruptcy (to which the SWP contributed a great deal). The appetite of the SWP toward the farm workers' struggle is quite clear and can be seen by Ring's one criticism of the boycott: "it is not sufficiently organized and needs to be developed in the way that the antiwar movement was." Having tested the winds to determine their direction, the SWP is now offering to do for left-talking trade-union bureaucrats of the Chavez/Arnold Miller stripe what it did for Vance Hartke.

In the face of such capitulation to the trade-union bureaucracy's desire to work within the capitalist system, Trotskyists must warn the working class against the wretched betrayals of the SWP reformists and continue the fight to destroy them politically as one more obstacle in the path of proletarian revolution. ■

Reformists Duck Layoffs Fight at Fremont GM

FREMONT, Calif.—As the U.S. economy plunges into recession, the question of labor's response to layoffs has been sharply posed before the entire union movement. Hardest hit so far has been the 1.5 million-strong United Auto Workers, whose officials estimate that some 100,000 of their members are on indefinite layoffs. Predictably the top union brass has adopted a cringing do-nothing attitude toward the company attack on the workers' livelihoods. Speaking at a press conference during the December convention of the United Mine Workers, UAW President Woodcock remarked, "I'm afraid there will be more layoffs. There's not much we can do. We're certainly not going to strike on it." Since then the union leaders have come up with what they consider an answer of sorts: the UAW is now asking Congress for legislation to limit auto imports, supposedly to save "American jobs" (*Detroit Free Press*, 31 January). By abandoning the union's formal opposition to protectionism, Woodcock is in effect saying that foreign workers, not the companies, are the enemy.

At UAW Local 1364, covering the Fremont, California GM assembly plant, permanent layoffs have hit several hundred workers, including some with more than six months' seniority, in addition to three (so far) one-week layoffs of the entire passenger car production line. Typically, the impact of the capitalist economic crisis has been utter chaos in production. For a time, Fremont's truck assembly operations were working overtime while the passenger car lines were completely shut down. Additionally, the company has launched an all-out disciplinary offensive against workers and local union officials in order to "tame" a potentially rebellious work force into accepting the layoffs and the accompanying line speedup and work overload for

the remaining workers. Various disciplinary actions, as well as petty harassment through enforcing work rules normally overlooked, have increased sharply in recent weeks.

The response of the Local 1364 leadership, that is, of the reformist Brotherhood Caucus, to the layoffs and the company disciplinary offensive was a leaflet for the January union meeting calling on the members to "stand up and fight." However, in the next paragraph, the Brotherhood leaders ruled out the strike as a weapon to fight layoffs, leaving the workers with no answer to this threat to their jobs. Shop Chairman Earlie Mays verbally opposes the layoffs (so does Woodcock, and even GM calls them "distressing") just as he "opposed" the contract last fall. But his gutless conduct in the period leading up to the contract vote, like the Brotherhood's rejection of strikes against layoffs, fills the membership with a spirit of resignation. Mays, of course, innocently asserts his own militant credentials and, like bureaucrats everywhere, points the finger of blame at the workers.

According to union members interviewed by WV following the January local meeting, a proposal dealing with layoffs was made not by the union leaders but from the floor. A proposal for a committee on the unemployed originated with supporters of the *Bay Area Worker*, a newspaper reflecting the views of the right-Maoist Revolutionary Union. The proposal was amended from the floor to broaden its purpose, from merely servicing those already laid off, to joining with other locals to fight unemployment and stop the layoffs. The proposal passed overwhelmingly. While this could represent a starting point to work for union action against layoffs, the crucial test will come in the implementation and particularly over the question of striking to protect the

members' jobs. It is also necessary to provide an answer to the increasing unemployment by pushing for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to create jobs for all.

Not only does the Brotherhood Caucus have no answer to layoffs, but neither do the political groups which support it, notably the right-Maoist October League. In none of the recent issues of the OL newspaper, *The Call*, is there a mention of a program to fight the rising tide of unemployment. At the January meeting of Local 1364 most of the discussion was provoked by one member of the Brotherhood Caucus (a member of the local women's committee) who asked that the local investigate ways in which women might be retained on the work force in the event of large layoffs, in violation of the seniority system, to compensate for the discrimination in hiring that women have suffered historically. Apparently reflecting the views of what is emerging as the right wing of the Brotherhood, the speaker not only failed to offer a program to fight unemployment but also explicitly opposed any strike against layoffs.

Numerous union members spoke vehemently against this blatant attack on labor's only form of job security achieved so far (the seniority system) and spoke for the retention of the plant-wide seniority system as a protection for male and female workers alike. Several women workers pointed out that the union must strike to stop all layoffs and called for reducing the workweek at full pay for everyone, regardless of seniority. The supporters of the *Bay Area Worker* are now trying to distinguish themselves from the ever more blatantly opportunist Brotherhood Caucus, although they supported it at the time of elections last spring. However in practice the differences are negligible. Not only did they fail to

oppose this attack on the seniority system, but they too failed to raise a program to fight layoffs.

Thus the recent dramatic increase in unemployment once again demonstrates the need to go beyond the simple reformism and meaningless promises of "democracy" which are the stock-in-trade of reformist fakers like the Brotherhood Caucus, who once in power become indistinguishable from their predecessors. The mass layoffs point out the need for a class-struggle opposition in the unions which is based on a full program of transitional demands which answer the needs of the working class, irrespective of whether or not capitalism can fulfill them. Not simply responding to the effects of capitalist economic crisis, such a program would struggle for a society in which production is for the needs of the masses, not the profits of the few. ■

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Class Struggle in Auto

articles from *Workers Vanguard*

Argentina - A Warning:

Peron Prepares to Crush Left

PART 1 OF 2

The enactment of "anti-terrorist" legislation by the Argentine Congress late last month is only the most recent indication that the bonapartist Peronist regime is preparing for a general offensive against the left and every manifestation of working-class militancy. Using a January 19 guerrilla attack by the "People's Revolutionary Army" (ERP) on the Azul tank garrison as a pretext, conservative Peronists pushed through the government's new law against "incitement to violence" and "illicit associations" while police blocked off the Congress plaza to prevent demonstrations. Setting the tone for the week, General Perón announced shortly after the guerrilla action that "the small number of psychopaths who are still left will be exterminated one by one for the good of the republic" (*New York Times*, 26 January).

The "anti-terrorist" bill led to the first open break with the government by left-wing Peronists, as eight Justicialista congressmen resigned rather than vote for the law which, with its vague wording and stiff sentences, was obviously intended to be used not only against supposed Marxists and guerrillas, but also against the Peronist left. Only a few days earlier, policemen dressed as civilians had publicly burned the edition of the leftist *El Mundo* before it reached the newsstands, and at mid-week masked policemen raided the offices of the most important left-Peronist magazine, *El Descamisado*.

The Peronist Left Against the Wall

As part of the reactionary Peronist trade-union bureaucracy's attempt to crush all militant opposition in the guise of purging "Marxist infiltrators," thugs have unleashed a wave of assassinations of left-Peronist labor leaders this fall. The victims include Pablo Fredes of the Transport Workers' Union, Enrique Grimberg of the Peronist Labor Youth (JTP) and several others. A leading Peronist senator, Hipolito Solari Yrigoyen, was seriously injured by a car bomb in retaliation against his opposition to the new "Law of Professional Associations" which gives the top labor bureaucracy the power to perpetuate itself without elections and remove dissident local leaders. Earlier in the fall, Rodolfo Puigros, another left Peronist, was ousted as rector of the University of Buenos Aires.

In response, the Peronist left has been unable to go beyond pathetic pledges of loyalty to its supreme leader. According to Dardo Cabo, a leading Peronist leftist, "if sometimes we are in disagreement, Peron still gives the orders around here" (*New York Times*, 29 November 1973). As a result, the congressmen adhering to the Peronist Youth voted for the professional associations law out of "esteem" for General Perón, despite the fact that the Peronist Labor Youth had organized a mass protest of some 20,000 against the law less than a month earlier. The Montoneros, a left-Peronist guerrilla organization, could only reply weakly to Perón's "anti-terrorist" law that "something must be wrong if a populist government must revive this type of legislation to maintain internal peace." Something must be wrong, indeed!

What the left-wing Peronists refuse to face up to is the fact that this reactionary orientation of their idol is nothing new. While the Peronist Youth was demonstrating in favor of an immediate Perón presidency last July, the supreme leader was relying on a group of right-wing advisers including his wife, now vice-president, Isabel Martinez de Perón, Colonel Jorge Osinde

and other long-time Peronist hacks. He has also been consulting with old-time anti-Peronists such as the conservative representative of landowner interests, Ricardo Balbín. Even Hector Cámpora, who was elected president as Perón's man last March is, due to his supposed "center" position, now being questioned by the Peronist Supreme Command as to his loyalty (*Avanzada Socialista*, 1-8 November 1973).

The most dramatic indication of this increasingly right-wing course was the attack on the Peronist Youth and guerrilla contingents by Peronist gunmen last June 20 during the welcoming festivities at Ezeiza airport for the

of the trade-union movement has a certain amount of independent support.

It has been remarked by a number of observers, both "socialist" and bourgeois, that the Peronist mass support in recent months is overwhelmingly drawn from the petty bourgeoisie rather than the working class. Gone are the large contingents of workers marching in factory delegations. Moreover, while the largest part of the Argentine proletariat voted for Perón in the September elections, most of the working-class Peronist activists are connected with the leftist Peronist Labor Youth, currently under sharp attack by the Justicialista (Peronist) leadership.



Buenos Aires, 20 June 1973: Hired gunmen of the Peronist union bureaucracy attack leftists, leave 34 dead, 342 wounded.

arrival of "El Viejo" from Europe. The gun battle, initiated by thugs working for the union bureaucracy, was organized by Colonel Osinde and left 34 dead out of the crowd of close to one million enthusiasts. As a reward for his operation, Osinde was appointed head of security for the General soon afterwards.

But the same course was already indicated at the time of Perón's brief stay in Buenos Aires during late 1972, which was welcomed by the then-head-of-state, General Lanusse, as a "positive step," particularly because Perón spent his time negotiating with conservative politicians rather than making speeches to the masses. And shortly after his arrival this summer, "El Viejo" set the theme for his new government in an emotional speech centering on two slogans—"now is not the time for loalers" and "from home to work and from work to home"—i.e., telling the workers to get out of politics. Instead of taking up the slogan of the Peronist Youth for a "socialist fatherland," Perón called on all Argentines to "place their destiny within the scale of established values. First the fatherland, then the [Peronist] movement and then the individuals" (*Avanzada Socialista*, 27 June-3 July 1973).

Attack on the "Marxist" Left

Perón is using both the carrot and the stick with the Peronist left. Thus after sacking the leader of the Juventud Peronista (JP—Peronist Youth) last spring, the General has sought to offer the youth leaders "constructive" tasks, launching the Argentine Political Youth as a sort of domestic peace corps. Toward the non-Peronist left his attitude has been uniformly hostile yet, at the same time, more hesitant. Thus he has taken as a constant theme the danger of "infiltration" of the unions by "Marxists," and Perón's first command after Cámpora took office in late May was "get the Trotskyists" (*Le Monde*, 6 June 1973). But while the 200,000 members of the JP may rapidly desert their "leftist" leaders in the face of a determined offensive by the General, the "class-struggle" left wing



General Juan Perón

This situation, contrasting sharply to the 1946-55 period, is due to the fact that the labor movement has been firmly under the leadership of a conservative Peronist bureaucracy since the late 1950's, a bureaucracy which has consistently sabotaged every effort to overthrow military rule or resist U.S.-imposed austerity programs.

Thus in 1958 the Justicialista bureaucracy of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) supported Frondizi for president, who after winning the election drove unemployment to record levels and cut real wages by 40 percent. When Justicialista candidates won a plurality and then governorships (including strategic Buenos Aires) in the 1962 elections, the military annulled the elections. The bureaucracy's response? Complete passivity. The CGT leadership was one of the main forces favoring the imposition of direct military rule, by General Juan Carlos Onganía, in June 1966. But despite its labor support, the new regime proceeded to put down strikes by army intervention, to place rebellious local unions in receivership and to fire thousands of union militants.

Consequently when the unrest of the working masses reached the flashpoint in the May 1969 Cordobazo (a three-day general strike and workers' uprising

in the key interior industrial center of Córdoba), the movement was directed in large part against the local union bureaucracy. As a result, there developed a layer of working-class militants who were independent of the control of the Peronist bureaucracy and oriented, in an embryonic way, toward class struggle both at the trade-union and political level. It was the existence of this layer which made possible the appearance of the independent "clasista" (class-struggle) unions SITRAC and SITRAM at Córdoba's Fiat factories during 1970 and 1971.

The military government immediately recognized that the existence of combative unions outside the control of the Peronist bureaucracy of the CGT represented a mortal danger to capitalist rule. At the first opportunity it moved to deny legal recognition to the "class-struggle" unions, a move which succeeded in destroying SITRAC/SITRAM in late 1971. Subsequently the militant workers in key Córdoba factories have given their sup-

port to non-Peronist leftist bureaucrats who have had a certain amount of autonomy within the bureaucracy. Among these are Rene Salamanca of SMATA (auto) workers and Augustín Tosco of the light and power union.

Once in power last summer, the Peronists immediately began attacking non-Peronist leftists in the bureaucracy. At the Fiat plants the reactionary UOM (metal workers' union) dispatched goons to beat up SMATA militants during representation elections in June, then announced it had won although it had the support of less than 10 percent of the workers. In July goons of the right wing of the local Peronist bureaucracy attempted a machine-gun and bomb attack on the headquarters of Tosco's light and power union. The attack was beaten off and the next day the auto and power unions staged a one-day strike in protest, but the battle had only begun (*New York Times*, 18 July 1973). This fall, the national congress of Luz y Fuerza (the power union) gave Tosco 60 days in which to abandon his combative attitudes or else be deposed. Within SMATA, rightist sectors of the national and provincial bureaucracy are mobilizing to depose Salamanca.

Against these frontal and indirect attacks the response of these Marxist bureaucrats has been to seek to get as close as possible to the Peronist left for protection from the national bureaucracy. However, the Peronist leftists, also under attack, have been trying to prove their loyalty to the new regime by dissociating themselves completely from the "Marxist infiltrators." Thus, when Tosco and Salamanca called for a one-day strike last October 10 to defend the Córdoba provincial government against attacks from the Peronist right, the result was an absurd spectacle of a non-Peronist union leadership supporting a left-Peronist government but with absolutely no support from the "rank-and-file Peronists" it was supposedly trying to influence (*Política Obrera*, 20 October 1973). In times of sharp class battles opportunism does not even work in the short run.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

For a General Strike in Britain!

Heath Calls Elections to Defeat Miners

FEBRUARY 9—Taking advantage of the Arab oil boycott, the British miners have mounted a sharp counter-attack against capitalism's assault on the living standards of the entire British working class. While the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leadership has largely treated the dispute as an exceptional case, the impact of the struggle is to further deepen the current economic crisis faced by British capitalists. If the current strike were generalized to the other industries it would not only eliminate the hated "Phase III" wage controls, but it would also prevent the bourgeoisie from carrying out its plans to pass sharply increased fuel and food prices to the consumers.

Faced with the reactionary Tory regime of Edward Heath, the NUM leaders first chose the tactic of a slowdown in the form of an overtime ban. The Heath government counterattacked with a series of measures culminating in a nationwide lockout—a state-imposed three-day workweek. By passively accepting the lockout, Britain's labor leaders brought the miners to the edge of defeat. Coal reserves increased sufficiently so that Heath could relax the shortened workweek, defusing the immediate crisis, and wait out the miners' slowdown until summer. Knowing this, the miners voted overwhelmingly (81 percent) for a full-scale strike; without a total strike, the miners simply would have lost. Facing the strike, Heath's election call is an attempt to deflect the miners from action with electoral hopes and to return to office by running an anti-reds, anti-miners, "law-and-order" campaign.

Heath Deploys His Anti-Labor Weapons

The Heath government has prepared for the miners' strike as seriously and ruthlessly as British imperialism mobilized for its major wars. Business publications such as the influential conservative *Economist* are discussing the case of the 1926 British general strike (which was also sparked by a coal strike and defeated due to the treachery of the top trade-union leadership), coldly calculating what level of force would be necessary to break a strike of similar magnitude. The question of military force has already played a major role in the Heath/miners battle. When Mineworkers union Vice President Mick McGahey, a prominent member of the Communist Party (CP), was asked how the union would react to the army's transporting coal, he replied that it would appeal to the soldiers, many of whom have working-class backgrounds, not to break the strike. Such appeals to soldiers called upon by the government to crush strikes are solidly within the traditions of elementary trade unionism. In the U.S., politically conservative local leaders issued similar appeals when Nixon used the National Guard to break the 1970 postal wildcat.

Expectedly the Tories pounced on McGahey's statement with the absurd claim that he was fomenting red revolution. The Labour Party leadership joined in the Tory red-baiting, groveling before bourgeois law and order. The Labour executive put out a statement asserting:

"We utterly repudiate any attempt by Communists or others to use the miners as a political battering ram to bring about a general strike or to call on troops to disobey lawful orders in the event of a strike."

—*New York Times*, 30 January

Labour Party head Wilson accurately located his class position by calling Heath and McGahey the "extremists" in the situation. The British CP, in turn, appears to be wooing Labour support at any price. Capitulating before

Labour's red-baiting, McGahey repudiated his earlier remarks, claiming they had been quoted out of context.

While the army can distribute the coal, it cannot dig it out of the ground. The Heath government is relying heavily on coal imports, particularly from the U.S., to defeat the strike. Since the Tories' resolve to discipline their combative workers naturally has the sympathy of the propertied classes everywhere, the Heath government, despite its catastrophic balance of payments deficit, will be given the international credit to import scab fuel. One of the major suppliers of this scab coal, however, is slated to be "socialist" Poland, with which agreements have already been reached (*Economist*, 2 February). (Imports of Polish coal helped Franco break the 1970 Spanish miners' strike.) This is just one more indication that to the Stalinist bureaucracies international class solidarity counts for exactly zero when it is competing with cold hard cash. Another major coal supplier in the case of a long strike is to be the U.S.

The British ruling class has long based its popular image on the claim



Leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers: from left, Mick McGahey, Joe Gormley, Lawrence Daley.

that it governs a humane society with widespread access to various welfare programs. For example, the wives and children of striking workers are eligible for social security benefits. For that reason, British unions do not build up strike funds. In his desperation to break the miners, Heath has now discarded the traditional "fair play" image of the British rulers. He has threatened to change the law to prevent the families of striking miners from getting social security, attempting to literally starve them into submission.

With Heath threatening to prevent social security payments to miners' families and the likelihood of fines (they are striking in breach of contract), the financial resources available to the Mineworkers' union could be the difference between victory and defeat. The British miners' strike is now a pivotal battle in the world class war and labor and socialist militants must demand that their unions contribute funds to the Mineworkers' union. Thus in the U.S., auto workers should challenge UAW President Woodcock to provide something more concrete than his telegram of solidarity with British miners, by providing a substantial donation to NUM strike funds. Dock and maritime workers, similarly, could give real aid not only through union donations, but also by refusing to load and ship U.S. coal to Britain during the strike.

Labor Bureaucrats Scurry Under Phase III Ceiling

The policy of the entire British labor bureaucracy, including the CP fraction of the NUM, has been that higher wages for the miners should be treated as an exception to Heath's Phase III limit. What this means for the British workers can be seen from the fact that the Phase III wage ceiling is 7 percent while the



Miners voted 81 percent for strike.

THE ECONOMIST

has yet to publicly support the strike. The miners are thus being politically isolated. Even if they are victorious, the miners will indeed be the exception as the British working class suffers a real wage cut in the face of a major economic downturn.

What is required is a unified labor offensive to defeat the Heath government and reverse the entire complex of its recent anti-labor economic measures. This means a general strike centering on (though certainly not limited to) ending the shortened workweek/lockout, breaking state wage controls and winning major wage gains backed by a full cost-of-living adjustment.

In contrast to this perspective the British "Trotskyist" groups have responded to the current crisis either with routinist calls for union militancy or by flirting with insurrection. While Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party has criticized the CP for not calling for a general strike, the WRP itself is not agitating for a general strike. Clearly this is a deliberate decision. WRP propaganda consists of vague calls for class solidarity in support of the miners. The WRP is being quite careful to be no more than a half step ahead of the miners' struggle, with demands that do not essentially go beyond what the CP leadership in the NUM is advocating.

To be sure, the question of support for the miners is neither unimportant nor automatically guaranteed. A decisive reason for the miners' victory in 1972 was that roving pickets, reinforced by labor and socialist militants, were able to prevent not only coal, but also fuel oil from being delivered to the power stations. Preventing deliveries of coal and fuel oil in the current strike will be even more important and more difficult. However, swelling the miners' picket lines is not and cannot be a substitute for a general strike. Optimally successful, the miners' strike would still remain a single-industry wage struggle.

The position of the International Socialists (IS) is similar to the Healyites' and amounts to vague calls for class solidarity and militancy. In a major statement on the crisis, IS leader Tony Cliff asserts:

"The best act of solidarity with the miners that the engineers can show is by pressing their own claim with a national engineering strike. The same principle of generalising, expanding the struggle applies to dockers, to teachers and all other workers."

—*Socialist Worker*, 5 January 1974

We are also in favor of strikes to

A General Strike and the British Left

The miners are heading into a decisive clash with a reactionary government while the rest of the British unions are succumbing to Heath's anti-labor offensive. Moreover, the Labour Party has been noticeably cool and reticent about defending the miners and

achieve higher than the wholly inadequate wage increases allowed under Heath's Phase III wage controls. However, this demand has for the last 10 years been the ABC for any group claiming to be revolutionary socialist. What is now on the agenda is a concerted political struggle against the government and not merely a quantitative increase in strikes. In the IS and WRP press there is no sense that Britain is in a genuine political and economic crisis the outcome of which could well determine class relations in Britain for the next several years.

Unfortunately, some of those organizations which are agitating for a general strike see it as a call to insurrection. Given the reformist leadership and illusions of the British working class an insurrectionary attempt at this time could only lead to disaster. The purest calls for insurrection come from the small *Chartist* group which has offered a "united front" with any "Trotskyist" organization to form a "joint command" on the sole (!) basis of the "preparation of our class for the taking of state power" (*Chartist*, January 1974).

The International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the "United

Wallowing in Stalinist Boorishness...

PL Applauds Slave Labor/Death Camps

The international furor triggered by Russian oppositionist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (see *WV* No. 37 for a Trotskyist assessment) has found appropriate reflection in the U.S. left press. From the predictable pro-Russian apologetics of the CP's *Daily World* to the essentially liberal anti-Stalinist stance of the SWP, the spectrum of ostensibly Marxist organizations demonstrates its lack of a revolutionary perspective for Russian working people. Thus, the CP attributes *The Gulag Archipelago* to a *New York Times*-engineered conspiracy to discredit "socialist" Russia, while the SWP has embraced the anti-Stalin intellectuals en bloc with scarcely a criticism of their illusions in "Western democracy."

But among the left-wing responses, surely the most despicable was that of Progressive Labor in an article entitled "A. Soldshitsin Makes Nazi Waves" (*Challenge*, 24 January 1974). In this half-page orgy of smug know-nothingism, PL simply dismisses the crimes of Stalin and explains that "the bosses and their stooges on the left, have kept up and are now stepping up their 40 year anti-Stalin crusade, which is simply anti-communism." Very simple: Solzhenitsyn is a Nazi, all opposition to Stalin is anti-communism. And PL continues:

"When Stalin died in 1953 the largest outpouring in modern times came forth, as millions of Soviet workers lined up endlessly to view his body. Not only out of respect and love for him, but out of understanding of their own efforts, and the society they had begun to develop. Those millions lined up in sub-freezing temperatures in Moscow in 1953 haunt the bosses...."

Even for PL this is surely a nadir. This organization, born of a left split from the CP, fortified itself with the assumption that a naive subjective identification with the working class and a "hard communist" profile could substitute for Leninist theory. In the post-1968 period PL moved left over domestic issues (opposition to black nationalism and the bourgeois-dominated "peace" movement) only to find that it could no longer defend key elements of Stalinism, in particular the "two-stage" revolution and Stalin's class-collaborationist popular front.

But unable to break from its Stalinist roots decisively in the direction of Trotskyism, unable to distinguish between authentic Leninism and its perversion by the Stalinist bureaucracy, PL flirted with an idealist and ultra-left rejection of the entire communist tradition, then beat a hasty retreat and buried itself in its own single-issue reformist front groups (SDS, WAM), spinning off many of its more left-wing elements along the way.

Today nothing is left of PL's "hard communist" face except shameless obeisance before the most horrendous aspects of Stalinism. Although unable to defend any of Stalin's "theories," PL embraces his purges and prison camps. With revolting smugness, PL responds to Solzhenitsyn's portrayal of life in Stalin's prison camps by proclaiming, "After workers get through with him, the Gulag Archipelago will seem like Disneyland to Soldshitsin."

Certainly no one could have expected from PL any semblance of Marxist analysis. But the *Challenge* monstrosity lacks even a hint of compassion for the victims of Stalin's barbarous counter-revolutionary policies—not merely the persecuted intellectuals in present-day Russia, but the millions who faced hardship and starvation as the result of Stalin's brutal forced collectivizations, the hundreds of thousands of old Bolsheviks and rank-and-file Communists arrested in the purges, the sev-



From left: Joseph Stalin, Nikolai Bukharin, G.K. Ordzhonikidze. By the end of the purges only Stalin remained. In the Moscow Trials virtually the entire 1917 Bolshevik Central Committee and all remaining members of Lenin's Political Bureau (save Stalin himself) were convicted as "spies" and "traitors."

eral thousand Left Oppositionists shot in the spring of 1938, the masses of workers and peasants who died defending the Soviet Union against the Nazi invasion even after Stalin's suicidal policies—toward the Army and oppressed nationalities—had brought the Soviet Union virtually to the brink of collapse.

Solzhenitsyn is nothing more nor less than a disillusioned intellectual whose experiences under Stalin led him to repudiate socialism in favor of "enlightened" Western liberalism and the Russian Orthodox Church. He is willingly feeding ideological ammunition to the liberal bourgeois spokesmen, epitomized by the *New York Times*, whose Stalin's crimes as a rationalization for the crimes of racist, imperialist capitalism. But despite *Challenge's* hysteria, PL has in fact no real programmatic reason to denounce Solzhenitsyn, since PL itself terms present-day Russia "a fascist capitalist state." Presumably, then, PL believes workers need not defend the Soviet Union militarily against U.S. imperialism! If the USSR is capitalist and Solzhenitsyn is the "loyal opposition," as *Challenge* claims, what is all the fuss about?!

The Stalinist ruling clique usurped political power from a decimated Soviet working class in a political counter-revolution which required the repeated top-to-bottom purging of every level of the Communist Party and Comintern, every body of the Soviet state, every stratum of Russian society. In mortal danger both from world imperialism, which craves the destruction of the collectivist property forms upon which the bureaucracy rests, and from the international proletariat, which holds the power to sweep away the Stalinist para-

sites, the bureaucracy was compelled to transform the Comintern from an internationalist revolutionary organization into its opposite: a tool for selling out revolutions in the interest of "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism.

Stalinism's bureaucratic stranglehold over the Soviet economy, its oppression of non-Russian nationalities, its substitution of terror and lies for soviet democracy, its diplomatic deals with imperialism have undermined the gains of the October Revolution, have fostered apathy and cynicism among the Russian working people and have given hope to capitalist-restorationists within and without the USSR. And PL's only response is: long live Stalin!

PL's "program" for the USSR is: "Perhaps the bosses could do us a little favor and keep [Solzhenitsyn] alive and well until workers in Russia take power again." The article concludes, "This time he won't make the 'Gulag Archipelago'—the Grossinger's of Siberia. It's too good for him and his kind."

Comfortably ensconced in the richest and most powerful imperialist country in the world, PL can chortle with glee while vicariously exiling the world's reactionaries (and sundry disoriented intellectuals) to Siberian prison camps. For Leninists, however, there is no room for these vicious little games. Our task is more demanding but far more satisfying than PL's fantasies. Our task is the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International, the world proletarian party which will safeguard the gains of the October Revolution in the only way possible: the extension of the revolution, which will dispense once and for all with the Stalinist usurpers as it sweeps the imperialists into the dustbin of history. ■

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British gas company suggests ways to "conserve energy."

Secretariat," is apparently agitating for a general strike that does not have immediate insurrectionary aims. However, the IMG perspective is seriously flawed by the belief that a general strike is possible independently of the trade unions. The IMG is calling for the immediate creation of nonexistent "councils of action" regardless of what the Trades Union Congress, the mass industrial organization of the British working class, does:

"Whether the TUC fights or not, the greatest possible organisation of united struggle at local level will be needed in the days ahead.... The important thing at present is not how Councils of Action come into existence but that they are actually set up."

—Red Weekly, 21 December 1973

This is a typically petty-bourgeois spontaneist deviation denying the necessity to struggle against the reformist misleadership of the existing mass organizations of the working class in order to lead mass struggles.

A general strike in Britain today, which can only be organized by the TUC should have the limited, offensive aim of reversing the policies of the Tory government and bringing it down. Should such a strike be victorious, even under reformist leaders and despite their inevitable attempts to sabotage the struggle, it would shatter the stability of bourgeois rule in Britain and open up a pre-revolutionary situation.

The Election and Class Struggle

Having pulled out all stops to crush the miners, Heath tried an election maneuver of promising more money if the NUM would postpone the strike until after the voting. This play produced the first open split in the NUM leadership with the right-wing president, Joe Gormley, falling for Heath's seduction act. However, the class militancy of the miners had reached such an intensity that they weren't about to let their fate be determined by "public opinion." In rejecting a postponement the NUM executive asserted (what is undoubtedly true) that had it tried to call off the strike, there would have been general wildcats.

The British labor leaders could

continued on page 8

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Not Ford, but a Workers Government!

the experts examining any other tapes (presumably he would be more content with a panel of used car dealers from Southern California?), the destruction of relevant tapes held by the CIA, etc.—only serve to further implicate Nixon and his staff in the scandal.

Watergate has turned into a nightmare for Nixon. Like a man trapped in quicksand, the more desperately he thrashes about trying to free himself the deeper he sinks into the mire. Other members of the Republican Party, fearful that they too might be dragged under, are deserting him. Thus the Republicans in the House of Representatives joined with the Democrats in voting (410 to 4) a motion giving the House Judiciary Committee power to subpoena Nixon in pursuing its impeachment investigation. By voting this motion the Republicans also hope to

speed the hearings along, getting the Watergate affair settled before the election in the fall. The Democrats of course would like to drag the hearings out in hopes of obtaining an electoral advantage out of the issue. Since Nixon had already indicated in his State of the Union speech that "one year of Watergate is enough" and that he would cooperate with the Judiciary Committee only to the extent that such cooperation did nothing to "weaken the office of the presidency," the stage is set for an early confrontation.

The Bourgeoisie Contemplates Impeachment

Significant bourgeois forces now want to throw Nixon to the wolves, replacing him with an equally reactionary caretaker, the "honest" Gerald Ford. In this way they hope to refurbish the bourgeois democratic political system so deeply tarnished by the Watergate revelations. But even if Ford is installed in the White House, either through impeachment of Nixon or his resignation, it is uncertain that this will eliminate the "crisis of confidence" in capitalist politics. At best Ford would be the caretaker of a shaky interim regime.

Worse yet, Watergate comes at a bad time for the U.S. ruling class. It follows on the heels of the unsuccessful and deeply hated imperialist war in Vietnam. It comes at a time when the working masses and broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie are being ground to bits by a vicious inflation that hits hardest at the everyday necessities—food, clothing, rent, fuel. Real wages are dropping and essential commodities such as food and especially fuel are in short supply.

At the same time corporate profits are reaching astronomical levels, particularly in the case of the large oil companies. Giants like Texaco who have about as much public-relations sense as Nixon, complain that their profits are not high enough! They take out full-page advertisements to announce that they earned only \$1.3 billion in 1973 (up 45.4 percent from 1972), but that they invested \$1.6 billion "to help fill your energy needs." While Texaco weeps about its rate of profit, tens of thousands of workers are being laid off as a consequence of the phony energy "crisis."

Continenence

The objective basis thus exists for extremely sharp class struggles. And

already the volatile petty-bourgeois independent truckers, faced with a loss of one third of their income because of skyrocketing fuel prices, de facto fuel rationing and unnecessary speed restrictions, launched a work stoppage that crippled shipments of food and steel and brought about the mobilization of state police and national guardsmen in several states. So far the trade unions have been quiet—so quiet, in fact, that the rabidly anti-labor *New York Times* can only shake its head and marvel at the restraint of the unions.

"The only bright spot in the anti-inflation picture has been the continence of organized labor in the face of the sharp ascent in living costs, but that continence has brought a 3 percent shrinkage in purchasing power of the average paycheck over the past year."

—*New York Times*, 7 February 1974

Responsible for this "continence" and sitting atop this social powderkeg are the current misleaders of the labor movement, Meany, Abel, Beirne, Woodcock, Miller, etc. For the past several years these servile lap dogs of the capitalist class have outdone themselves in selling out the labor movement. Rather than mobilize the millions

Continued from page 7

Heath Calls Elections...

commit no greater betrayal at this time than to allow the struggle against Heath's reactionary measures—the three-day workweek, the Phase III state wage controls, the massive budget cuts, threatening the miners with troops—to be decided by parliamentary means. An electoral victory for the Tories would worsen the position of the miners and make a general strike even more urgent, as the second Heath government would consider it had a political basis for an all-out attack on the unions.

As for the possibility of a Labour victory, Wilson, Callaghan and the rest of the party leadership have made it absolutely clear by their foot-dragging, red-baiting and back-stabbing of the miners' struggle that British workers could not rely on a Labour government to satisfy their needs. In fact, if the Labour Party were elevated to the government, this would only intensify the contradictions in its midst, allowing revolutionists to convincingly demonstrate the meaning of Wilson's pro-capitalist policies in practice, demand-

ing the Labour Party expropriate the key sectors of the bourgeoisie, that it settle strikes on terms favorable to the workers, etc. Its certain failure to carry out these measures, i.e., to act like a genuine workers government, would convince broad masses of workers of the need to build a revolutionary alternative to the existing reformist (Labour Party and CP) misleaders of labor.

In no case should the British workers accept a Tory electoral majority as meaning five more years of Ted Heath. A general strike should have the aim not only of smashing the government's economic measures, but forcing yet another election to throw it out of

office. Political loyalties change rapidly in a general strike situation and the determination of the organized working class to combat reaction would win over wavering middle-class elements. The current wavering of TUC and Labour Party leaders over their attitude toward the strike, on the other hand, is the best guarantee of a conservative election victory. They are well aware of this, but would clearly prefer Heath in power than to be brought to power in a time of sharp class struggle.

The Trades Union Congress must call an immediate congress of labor to prepare a general strike organized through shop stewards' committees for the following demands:

- Victory for the Miners and Railwaymen—Smash Government Wage Control!
- For a Major, Across-the-Board Wage Increase with Full Cost-of-Living Adjustment!
- Smash the Lockout—Restore the Five-Day Workweek and Rescind the Budget Cuts!
- Abolish the Industrial Relations Act! Repeal the Emergency Measures Act!
- Britain Out of the Common Market!
- Oust the Tory Government! For a Labour Party/TUC Government Pledged to a Socialist Program of Expropriating the Capitalist Class! ■



British miners demonstrate in front of Parliament during 1972 strike.

WORKERS PRESS

VICTORY TO THE BRITISH MINERS' STRIKE!

British miners are today waging one of the most crucial strikes since the end of World War II. The future of all British workers for the next several years will be determined by its outcome! Aiming to break through Heath's vicious state wage controls (similar to those which plague U.S. workers), British miners are in the vanguard of the world working class in resisting the bosses' attempts to place the cost of mounting economic crisis on the backs of the working people. Their fight is our fight!

The Spartacist League urges that during the next momentous days demonstrations in support of the British miners be held in key cities around the country. We propose that such demonstrations should be called by solidarity action committees seeking to include all those labor and socialist organizations, and other individual militants and radicals, who recognize the urgency of uniting in common around the single critical issue of victory for the British miners. This demand does not exhaust the issues raised by the miners' strike, and we of course expect all individuals and groups to exercise their right to raise additional slogans or demands expressing their own particular viewpoints, as we also intend to do. In addition to victory to the British miners' strike, the Spartacist League calls for: Smash State Wage Controls in Britain and in the U.S.! Defend the Miners—Smash the Wage Freeze with a General Strike in Britain! Down with the Queen's Army, Only a Labor Militia Can Defend Working People! Smash British Bosses' Rule—Same Enemy in Ireland and the Mines! Labour to Power! For a Real Workers Government—Nationalize All British Industry Under Workers Control!

We believe it is urgent that all interested individuals and groups come together in the next few days to form com-

mittees for solidarity actions in support of the British miners' strike in the main U.S. cities. In this important task the Spartacist League pledges its wholehearted assistance. We also draw attention to additional acts of labor solidarity with the British miners' strike which can aid the struggle. A telegram by United Auto Workers President Leonard Woodcock shortly after the announcement of the strike stated:

"I send to all members of the NUMW [National Union of Mine Workers] of Britain our strongest sentiments of solidarity with you in your courageous struggle for justice and equality.

"You had no responsibility in creating the inflation from which you seek relief, for it is a worldwide event spurred by complex causes totally foreign to you as miners—or us as auto workers—for that matter.

"To men of property, workers are always a convenient scapegoat or potential object to teach a lesson to. We thus stand with you in your refusal to become victims and to have your fair demands for economic and social justice met."

A resolution in support of the British miners' strike passed recently by UAW Local 6 (Chicago) puts teeth in Woodcock's empty "solidarity" rhetoric. The Local 6 resolution calls on the International to contribute financially and demands hot-cargoing of all shipments to Britain of goods which could be used to break the strike (such as coal).

(Those militants whose only contact with the projected demonstrations is through this announcement are encouraged to contact the Spartacist League in their locality in order to cooperate in common action. Consult the directory elsewhere in this issue for addresses and telephone numbers.)

of working people in struggle against the bosses and their wage controls, these cringing cowards fall in line behind the policies of the bosses' government and crawl on their bellies to their Democratic Party "friends of labor" to wheedle a few crumbs to take back to the union ranks.

When the most elemental class-struggle opposition to their bureaucratic sellouts arises these labor skates try to brutally suppress it. Witness the 1,000-man goon squad mobilized by the "liberal" Woodcock to crush the Mack Avenue wildcat last summer. The crocodile tears these fakers shed over the lack of democracy in the Stalinist-ruled countries are sheer hypocrisy. The internal regimes in many of their own unions are hardly better than those prevailing in the deformed workers states.

For a Class-Struggle Alternative

Seeing that Nixon's ship was going down some time ago many of the bureaucrats rushed to save themselves and draw attention from their betrayals by denouncing Nixon. Hence Meany, who had given tacit support to Nixon in the election, rushed an impeachment resolution through during the AFL-CIO Convention held in Miami Beach, the favorite watering spot for these fat overaged piecards. Realizing along with the bourgeoisie that Ford is at best an interim stand-in, and feeling acute pressure from the union ranks, they are casting about for an alternative that will let them and the capitalist order they serve off the hook. The best bet is that they will solidarize with the cold-war liberal wing of the Democratic Party, with the Senator from Boeing, Henry "Scoop" Jackson. Jackson's prescription for social peace is a strong dose of anti-communism, a vastly expanded defense budget and a few crumbs to the working class coated with a lot of New Deal rhetoric.

In the absence of a conscious intervention and sharp struggle by revolutionaries to crystallize a class-struggle alternative to the capitalist political parties, Meany, Woodcock and Co. will succeed in their schemes to keep the working class bound to the bourgeois order. But the present conjuncture of events—Watergate on the heels of the Vietnam War, a sharp decline in the living standards of the working masses in the face of grinding inflation, severe dislocations caused by the "energy crisis" which squeezes the masses and enriches the giant oil companies and the present extreme fragility of the ossified, narrowly based trade-union bureaucracy—presents unparalleled opportunities for revolutionaries to conduct such a struggle and intervention. The primary arena for this struggle must be in the organizations of the workers, the trade unions. The widespread disgust with all aspects of the Nixon regime and the broad sentiment for impeachment must be tapped and used as a springboard to launch a fight for a labor party counterposed to the twin parties of capitalism, the Democrats and Republicans, and committed to a class-struggle program.

Impeachment Is Not Enough!

Impeachment is not enough! To follow the lead of George Meany and Co. and call simply for the impeachment of Nixon is to give open support to the presidency of the wretched 95 percent anti-labor (according to the AFL-CIO)

Correction

In WV No. 36 (18 January 1974) our introduction to the article "Australian Labor Government's Wage/Price Controls Referendum Defeated" incorrectly referred to SWAG, Socialist Workers Action Group, as a Maoist-Stalinist organization. SWAG is rather a small Shachtmanite group, similar to the U.S. International Socialists, located in Melbourne.

Gerald Ford. This is the line of the Communist Party U.S.A. which is having somewhat more trouble peacefully coexisting with Nixon than its mentors in the Kremlin. The Maoist wing of American Stalinism is no better than the CPUSA. The so-called Revolutionary Union says "Throw The Bum Out! Organize To Fight!" while admitting that it does not "give a damn who replaces Nixon" (*Revolution*, November 1973). The RU's rival, the October League, screams "Dump Nixon! Stop the Fascist Tide!" In no case does any of these or-



Nixon and Brezhnev

BLACK STAR

ganizations offer a class alternative to Nixon. Instead they simply tail Meany and the liberal wing of the ruling class.

If the Stalinist wings of reformism have been revealed as bankrupt by the revolutionary tasks posed by the present period, so too have been the ex-Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party. The chief activity of the SWP in the past months has been to push its series of lawsuits against Nixon and the government for conspiring "against the rights of dissenters." These lawsuits have been useful in exposing the hypocrisy and corruption of the ruling class, revealing a government campaign of harassment, surveillance and provocation directed against the SWP and other left organizations. But to the SWP these suits are the alpha and omega of revolutionary policy, the "socialist offensive" against Watergate. This "offensive" reveals the SWP to have a set of priorities more in keeping with an outfit like the American Civil Liberties Union than a revolutionary organization and is typical of the reformism of these ex-Trotskyists.

What is more, the Socialist Workers Party, like the Stalinists, seems to feel that impeachment is the answer. This at least is the position of James P. Cannon, one of the founders of American Trotskyism and now national chairman emeritus of the SWP. In a recent interview on Watergate Cannon says:

"This morning I received a copy of the *Workers Vanguard*.

"Q. That's Robertson's paper.

"A. Do you know what they say on the headline? 'Impeachment is not enough!' (Laughs.)

"Q. He has to be hanged by the thumbs, or something?

"A. (Laughs.) Returning to what the attitude of the radical movement used to be..."

—*Intercontinental Press*, 19 January

So impeachment is enough? Gerald Ford takes over a slightly tarnished

state apparatus of the imperialist bourgeoisie and American capitalism continues its spiral toward a third imperialist war. What does the SWP care? After all, even with Ford as President the bourgeois judicial system, Nixon and the FBI will still be around so that the SWP can pursue its court cases.

The Socialist Workers Party

What, Comrade Cannon and comrades of the SWP, should the aspiration of the workers movement be toward dealing with Richard Nixon? To hang him by the thumbs? No. Certainly not for his crimes against bourgeois democracy. Rather, as we stated in *Workers Vanguard* last August:

"The proper aspiration of the American workers movement is to extradite this man and his 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."

—*Workers Vanguard*, 3 August 1973

This historic task will not be accomplished by the SWP's "socialist offensive" (court cases) against Watergate, which is at best a secondary tactic to expose and utilize the contradictions inherent in bourgeois democracy. Rather what is required is the mobilization of militants in the labor movement around the Transitional Program in a struggle to oust the present misleaders of labor and to replace them with a class-struggle leadership fighting for a workers government. The SWP, which for factional reasons (the fight in the "United" Secretariat) finds it convenient to put on an orthodox front, has recently taken a verbal turn to the left and begun to pay lip service to this perspective.

Thus a statement issued by the SWP 1974 National Campaign Committee reads:

"They [the union bureaucrats] will have to be swept aside and a new leadership constructed if the unions are to be transformed into organs of revolutionary struggle, instead of remaining the tail of the Democratic Party kite!"

—*Militant*, 8 February 1974

Words are cheap! And for the SWP this is just so much hot air. It costs them nothing because they have nothing in the labor movement...to sell out. Comrades of the SWP, are you really finally going to counterpose yourselves to the fake militants and Democrats like Miller, Morrissey and Chavez whom you have been tailing from your armchairs all these years? Now you say a labor party could "win support from the Black and Chicano communities, from the students and women." What, then, has happened to your perspective of community control and for independent black and Chicano parties?? Are you really preparing to part company with fakers like Fuentes in New York City? Do you really think petty-bourgeois hustlers such as he will support a labor party based on trade unions that are organs of revolutionary struggle? The only thing this teasing display of orthodoxy proves is the complete cynicism of the SWP leadership. Their betrayal of the

working class is conscious; it does not flow from ignorance of Trotskyist principles.

Not Ford, but a Workers Government!

No, the historic tasks of the working class will not be accomplished under the leadership of scoundrels like those of the SWP, but under the leadership of revolutionaries committed to the Trotskyist program of proletarian revolution. Raise the cry in the unions that impeachment is not enough! The workers movement must demand new elections in order that it can field its own candidates, committed not to the Democratic and Republican parties of the bosses but to the creation of a workers party based on the trade unions, with a class-struggle program fighting for a workers government. If the bourgeoisie refuses, labor must be prepared to launch a general strike to force new elections so that it can run its own candidates against the capitalist parties: Dump the Meanys, Woodcocks and Millers! Forward to a workers government!

This is the Trotskyist perspective of utilizing the current political crisis of the bourgeoisie to advance the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The future belongs not to the sorry reformists of the SWP with their strategy of "Watersuits," their chasing after every petty-bourgeois fad, their capitulation to the present consciousness of the masses in the name of "tactics." Rather, the task of revolutionaries is, in the words of the Transitional Program: "To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's program on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives—these are the rules of the Fourth International. It has shown that it could swim against the stream. The approaching historical wave will raise it on its crest." ■

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...Steel

to pit U.S. workers against their foreign brothers:

"So you, an American steel worker, will have to let them know... that you, personally, are out to increase the productivity of your country's steel industry. Know that you are in a man-to-man fight with your steel-making 'opposites' in Japan, Germany, France, wherever. A one-to-one contest. Take the offensive...."

—from "Where's Joe?" a film produced jointly by the USWA and the steel companies

Frustrated in their most direct attempts to smash work rules and eliminate jobs in the 1959 strike, the steel companies hoped to achieve these aims indirectly by establishing the misnamed "Human Relations Committee." Transformed into Productivity Committees at the plant level by Abel, these joint union/management plant bodies provide for a more gradual erosion of labor's gains through promoting "orderly and peaceful relations with employees to achieve uninterrupted operations" (eliminating strikes), "more efficient use of production time" (speed-up), "boosting employee morale" (company loyalty), and "focusing employee awareness on the productivity problems and the real threat of foreign competition." In similar language, a USWA pamphlet allows for the possibility of "displacement" (mass layoffs) of members in cases of "demonstrable technological change."

Abel justifies his program of improving company productivity through speed-up, layoffs, eliminating strikes, etc., by the need to "protect American jobs" against foreign competition. In fact, it has nothing to do with job protection at all. (In twenty years, U.S. steel productivity, which has been constantly rising, has led to a workforce reduced by one third. Each worker now produces twice the amount of steel as a generation ago!) Rather, Abel's program is a reflection of the *companies'* interests in fighting foreign competition. The *workers* will benefit above all from international labor solidarity against their common class enemies.

American steel companies are locked into a deadly battle for control of

also demanding the lifting of price controls, promising to sacrifice, to the last drop of their workers' blood, in order to improve the position of U.S. industry!

In December, Bethlehem promised a huge expansion program if the government lifted price controls. This was temporarily turned down. On February 7 of this year, the company announced a massive cutback involving layoffs at its Sparrows Point and Lackawanna plants, ostensibly because of the "coal shortage." But the *New York Times* (8 February) quoted an executive of another steel company as saying, "we can't see why Bethlehem is getting so excited all at once, unless they're trying to get some price relief somehow!"

As long as capitalism survives, the inevitable result of the cutthroat international competition of the steel companies is a new world war. Abel is a direct agent of the capitalists in their drive toward war, through his incitement of chauvinist hatred against foreign workers. But the working class has no interest in supporting this capitalist competition and the resulting imperialist wars. Labor's interests lie in improving the living standards of all workers, since unequal wages only promote the movement of capital to the areas with the highest rate of exploitation and greatest profits. To the capitalists' nationalist competition, the proletariat must counterpose international working-class solidarity. But in order to do this, steel workers will have to oust the rabidly chauvinist and reactionary Abel bureaucracy and replace it with a leadership based on a program of class struggle.

CP Supports "Struggle"—In the Courts

Of all the ostensible revolutionary alternatives, the reformist Communist Party is by far the most influential in steel. The CP supports and influences the National Steelworkers Rank and File Committee and the groups with which the NSRFC forms coalitions. Among these are the Rank and File Team (RAFT), which grew out of the dues protest movement led by Donald Rarick; the Workers for Democracy Group of New-Left syndicalist Staughton Lynd; and the Ad Hoc Committee of Concerned Steelworkers, which was formed in 1964 as an organization of black staff members pressuring for more black repre-

End No-Strike Pact," blared the front-page headline of the *Daily World* (9 January). The CP-supported suit was filed by 35 plaintiffs from 14 locals. It asks a federal district court to rule the ENA null and void, and seeks an injunction to prevent the union from submitting unresolved issues to arbitration without first securing rank-and-file approval.

It also attempts to get the courts to give the rank and file the right to ap-



Workers protest use of Toft-Hartley injunction against 1959 steel strike. UPI

prove contracts. "The top officialdom of the United Steelworkers of America is under a siege of legal suits from several sources challenging its bureaucratic and class-collaborationist politics," cheers George Morris in the *Daily World* (6 December 1973). Morris had earlier called for legal action under "labor's bill of rights" section of the Landrum-Griffin Act!

Though the CP was no less reformist at the time, its literature during the 1959 strike (after the government had ordered steel workers back to work under the Taft-Hartley law), wasn't so generous about what could be achieved by workers with anti-labor laws such as Landrum-Griffin. The latter was correctly identified as part of "the open war of the steel lords against the steel workers" ("Steel Profits vs. Steel Labor," Communist Party leaflet). This, of course, was before suing the union to enforce anti-labor laws became popular with various "socialists" and aspiring bureaucrats.

The incredible absurdity and crass betrayal of asking the U.S. courts, state instruments of the bourgeoisie, to counteract the class collaborationism of the trade-union bureaucracy and grant wholesale democratic rights to the workers can only come in a period of tremendous political disorientation of the workers, aided by misleaders such as Abel and the CP. These tactics completely ignore the class nature of the bourgeois state.

The government and its courts, agents of the corporations, will only intervene in the labor movement to enhance the integration of the unions into the capitalist system, rob their independence and freedom of action, lay the basis for further class collaboration and, where possible, to bolster illusions as to the "neutrality" of the state in the class conflict. Only an organization which has no interest whatsoever in promoting the *independent* class organization of the workers could, like the CP, see taking the unions to court as a simple tactical question, sometimes acceptable and sometimes not.

CP Gives "Critical" Support to Sadlowski

The utter reformism of the Communist Party's strategy of pressure tactics directed at one or another wing of the bureaucracy is quite evident from the character of the caucuses it supports in the Steelworkers. Despite some nice phrases in the NSRFC program, it and other CP-backed groups support court cases seeking to overrule union elections and they support would-be bureaucrats regardless of their pro-

grams (or lack of such). Thus the CP lauds the court suit of Ed Sadlowski, a former International staff representative in District 31, who unsuccessfully tried to unseat the Abel-backed district director. Sadlowski's program is explicitly modeled on that of Arnold Miller of the Mine Workers. He has close ties with anti-Daley Chicago liberal aldermen Des Press and Singer, and he is quarterbacked by the same

Joseph Rauh, the lawyer who stage-managed Miller's elevation to the UMW presidency via Labor Department intervention. Occasional criticism of Sadlowski in the CP press for such minor "details" as failure to oppose the ENA (i.e., for being politically indistinguishable from his opponent) do not prevent members of CP-backed rank-and-file caucuses from supporting his campaign as well as his court suit.

Attempts to pursue the struggle against the sellout union leadership through the bosses' courts can only benefit the class enemy. The capitalists can only gain from the pitting of one section of the workers movement against another before their courts, permitting them to pick their preferred instrument to subordinate the unions to their interests. This is true despite the fact that partial and temporary gains are occasionally (but not usually) obtained for the plaintiffs. While taking the *companies* to court is not unprincipled for socialists, it is only a secondary tactic and often a court suit will be turned against its initiators, actually serving to divide the workers even when token gains are won for one section of the class. There is no better example of this than the Fairfield, Alabama ruling on discrimination in U.S. Steel, which the CP views as a "great victory" for steel workers.

Discrimination is deeply rooted in steel, despite the fact that black workers have long been present in the industry and have often played an important and leading role in building the union, as in the crucial Bethlehem Lackawanna strike in 1940. Discriminatory hiring and upgrading patterns have kept blacks in the hot, dirty, dangerous jobs in the coke ovens and blast furnaces. Gross racial segregation still extends in many plants even to the eating and clean-up facilities, with blacks strictly isolated in inferior areas, in both the North and the South. The departmental seniority system "locks in" all workers in whatever department they were first hired into by restricting advancement to within that department. Transferring to another department means starting at the bottom of the list, losing all seniority and often involves a loss in pay.

Since the civil-rights upsurge of the 1960's such a continuation of old patterns of rigid segregation and blatantly open discrimination in industries such as steel has become a liability for the capitalist system as a whole. Such gross injustices create a very large and potentially revolutionary minority of doubly oppressed workers in key sectors of American industry. The capitalists are willing to appease one section



The Memorial Day Massacre at Republic Steel, South Chicago, 1937.

the world steel market. They feel at a disadvantage, partly because the Japanese and Germans have more completely modernized plant and equipment (the result of having their industry destroyed in World War II), and partly because other countries (Japan, Britain) are further along the road of monopolization. Having lost their predominant position in world trade, the U.S. steel companies are predictably beginning to clamor again for the abandonment of anti-monopoly regulations, so that they can undertake mergers and joint ventures, thereby achieving additional economies of scale. They are

sensation in the higher levels of the union.

Aside from their general reformist programs, what is shared by all these groups is their willingness at every opportunity to invite the capitalist state to decide the internal affairs of working-class organizations, thereby helping to undercut the independence of the trade unions from the state. The entire thrust of these groups' response to the ENA, besides collecting names on petitions, has been to attempt to overturn the no-strike deal in the courts.

The CP backs this reformist tactic all the way. "Steel Unionists Sue to

of the working class at the expense of another as long as *they* don't have to pay the price. Court actions against the steel companies by black workers on the basis of the 1964 Civil Rights Act have thus begun to reverse the historic patterns of discrimination and replace them with new patterns, less extreme perhaps, but no less divisive.

Fairfield Ruling Cannot Unite Steel Workers

The most sweeping ruling was made in May of last year by a federal district court in Birmingham, Alabama as a result of a suit brought by individuals and joined by the Justice Department against U.S. Steel's Fairfield, Alabama works. Highly touted by the CP, the court order purports to establish plant-wide rather than departmental seniority throughout the entire plant, which would eliminate discrimination and allow transferring between departments. Although its October meeting in Cleveland had a long debate as to whether the effects of this ruling would inflame or calm racial tension, the NSRFC calls for the implementation of its principles throughout the industry.

There is no doubt that these principles will be of some immediate benefit to blacks, but there is also no doubt that the ruling will tend to further divide the workers. The order makes no mention, of course, of the overall number of jobs available. In a limited job market, advances for blacks into new areas can only come at the expense of white workers. This, in turn, can only create new tensions, with the government seen as the protector of blacks and with the union, which was named as a co-defendant with the company, seen as the enemy of blacks and a legitimate target of government attack.

Furthermore, under a cloud of anti-discrimination rhetoric and the insistence on plant-wide seniority for all workers, the CP-backed ruling incorporates and extends aspects of favoritism based on race. Interdepartmental transfers are allowed for all, but the guarantee of rate retention ("red-circling," i.e., no pay cut) is extended only to blacks. The order also calls for the back pay owed to some of the black plaintiffs in the case to be paid half by the company and half by the workers, through an assessment on the union!

This will clearly arouse racial antagonisms on the part of white workers who will feel they are being punished for historic discrimination by the companies. The court furthermore set out quotas for blacks in skilled trades, technical and management sections of the plant and established a joint committee composed of three elements: the company, the union and the black workers, the latter being represented by individual workers. These provisions will inevitably serve to break down union solidarity, to pit blacks against whites in competition for a shrinking number of jobs and to endear the government to black workers for its "protection" of their status against fellow workers.

While the NSRFC criticizes some of the shortcomings of the Fairfield ruling and also calls for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to make more jobs available for all workers, nevertheless its campaign in favor of implementing the court order is not only

an endorsement of government intervention against the union as well as the company, but is a substitute for the class-struggle organization required to mobilize the ranks in the struggle for plant-wide seniority, and end to all forms of discrimination and a shorter workweek.

Revolutionists must oppose all forms of racial and sexual discrimination (the Fairfield ruling omits all reference to women) and support specific actions which break down such barriers, but they do not look to the courts to implement this program, a strategy which can only create illusions and build new divisions. Revolutionists in steel should support specific implementations of court rulings against the companies which eliminate discrimination against blacks (while opposing all actions against the union by the state). But they must sharply criticize the inadequacies of the court orders, point out how competition for a limited pool of jobs aids the companies and turns the workers away from united class struggle and warn against the dangers of a "program" to fight discrimination through reliance on the bosses' government.

The Abel bureaucracy, for its part, is playing into the hands of the government by stalling on implementation and collaborating with the companies to avoid massive back payments by the companies to workers who were discriminated against, thereby leading blacks to view the union as the enemy of struggle against discrimination and of basic trade-union solidarity. That Abel is no friend of black workers is not in doubt, but the bureaucracy is not the union. The function of the CP's actions is to create a parallel false perception—namely that the U.S. government is a "friend of labor."

Is the Justice Department the friend of black workers? Hardly. The bourgeoisie is merely in the process of re-adjusting the priorities in its constant policy of dividing the workers so that they compete against each other rather than fight the system which causes their oppression. In this effort, the capitalists are aided, on the one hand, by the reactionary, racist union bureaucracy and, on the other, by an assortment of liberal lawyers, petty-bourgeois, anti-labor, government-financed black groups (such as Jesse Jackson's PUSH in Chicago), and reformist fakers like the Communist Party. Against this unholy alliance it is necessary to fight to reorient the unions along the path of united labor action against capitalism.

At the present time, faced with a solidly entrenched union bureaucracy, this effort centers on the building of class-struggle caucuses in the unions, caucuses which represent not simply one more motley collection of left-talking fake militants trailing after out-bureaucrats, but which are instead committed to a consistent class-struggle program in the interests of the entire proletariat. Rather than pushing the divisive schemes of the bosses' government, such caucuses would mobilize the ranks to fight for real plant-wide seniority at no expense to presently employed workers, through ending all discriminatory barriers, ensuring fair hiring through union control and uniting all workers in struggle to make more jobs through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. Instead of encouraging illusions in abstract justice under capitalism, the "fairness" of the bourgeois courts and the capitalist politician "friends of labor," as does the reformist CP, such caucuses would promote working-class politics through the struggle against protectionism, for proletarian internationalism and for a workers party based on the trade unions to fight for a workers government.

While not opposing individual court suits against the companies, a class-struggle leadership would expose the danger of government intervention into the labor movement and the futility of seeking changes of benefit to labor as a whole through the courts. In the short as well as the long run, bourgeois "justice" is a trap for workers: there is only class justice, and this must be fought for through mobilization of the entire working class against capitalism. ■

Continued from page 1

Truckers' Protest Fizzles...

York charged Shell Oil last week with hoarding one million barrels of heating oil for speculative purposes in the first such case to reach the courts (*New York Times*, 7 February).

The response of the Nixon government has been quite different, however. With actual fuel supplies down only 5 percent in December, the U.S. ordered gasoline production and allocation to be cut back by 20 percent in January and February. And with domestic petroleum now substantially cheaper than Near Eastern crude, the government authorized companies to raise prices at will on all production above 1972 levels, leading to a doubling in price in the space of two months for this so-called "new" production. The clear intention of U.S. energy policies is to pass all increased prices through to the consumer while attempting to blame the Arabs for the situation.

Independent ("owner-operated") truckers reacted sharply to these policies during early and mid-December and again during the last two weeks, calling a nationwide work stoppage, blocking truck stops, picketing terminals, etc. Their demands centered primarily on a fuel price rollback, although other issues such as uniform interstate weight and size regulations were also added. In the negotiations with Nixon cabinet officials last week, however, the government managed to convince trucker association leaders to settle for rapid approval of higher freight rates instead. As we go to press it appears that the administration has been successful in this tactic, although thousands of individual operators continued to express vehement dissatisfaction with the "settlement."

We are far from glorifying the independent truckers, who are part of the petty bourgeoisie rather than the working class. They are of the same social stratum from which the Chilean capitalists recruited thousands of supporters for their counterrevolutionary plans of economic sabotage of the Allende regime. In the U.S., which has proportionately one of the largest and relatively affluent petty bourgeoisies of all the major capitalist countries, fostering illusions about a "progressive" middle class can be disastrous. Nevertheless, this protest was clearly directed against the monopolies and their government and required from the labor movement both firm support and, above all, leadership. It received neither.

The powerful Teamsters' union, led by the pro-Nixon Fitzsimmons bureaucracy, did not lift a finger to support the independent truckers. Despite the fact that several hundred thousand Teamster over-the-road drivers have had their wages substantially cut (up to 20 percent) by Nixon's needless reduction of speed limits, it took several weeks of protest from the ranks before the IBT leaders demanded a reopening of contract talks with the freight companies. Even then they did not call on the membership to join the stoppage.

During the last ten days, when the administration was attempting to buy off the protesters with promises of higher freight rates, decisive intervention by the truck drivers' union could have galvanized the small owner-operators into fighting for their original demand of a full fuel price rollback, a demand which is in the interests of the working class as well as wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie. By leading a fight against fuel price increases the IBT leaders could also have won broad public support for

their demands to reopen the contract, allowing them to initiate a fight against Nixon's until-now effective yet highly unpopular wage controls. But to do this would have required a class-struggle union leadership rather than the present conservative pro-capitalist bureaucracy.

A revolutionary leadership would not simply beg for a few more crumbs from the government and the companies but attack the capitalist "fuel crisis" conspiracy at its source. In a situation in which even the U.S. government has no independent information about the actual stocks of petroleum in the hands of the oil monopolies (except, it says, for CIA reports), the demand for opening the books of the fuel companies to workers' inspection would prove what is widely asserted (namely that stocks are at record levels). With oil profits up 50-60 percent in the last year, as consumers suffer from manipulated "shortages" and skyrocketing prices, the demand for expropriation of the oil trusts, without compensation, under workers control would be enthusiastically supported by sectors of the population far beyond the numbers of convinced socialists.

Trotskyists raise such transitional demands at all times in their propaganda, for their task is to take isolated trade-union and reform struggles and direct them toward the only solution which corresponds to the interests of labor—a workers government which would expropriate the capitalists as a class. Reformists and opportunists, such as the Communist Party, are content to raise slogans such as nationalization now when they are popular, but shrink from anything so radical when times are quieter. The existing trade-union bureaucracy, however, is as conscious of its role as defender of the capitalist system as we are of ours as its gravediggers. Consequently they consistently refuse to raise a program threatening the continuation of the exploitation system—even if the alternative is ignominious defeat for labor at the hands of the companies.

The independent truckers lacked clear direction and were weakened by their contradictory position as small entrepreneurs. They could easily have been organized by firm proletarian leadership in a key section of the labor movement, thereby possibly sparking a general working-class offensive against the capitalists' "fuel crisis" attack on the masses' living standards. Once again, the key question is one of revolutionary leadership. ■

Spartacist Local Directory

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Opposition Mounts to Steel No-Strike Deal

Abel Pushes "Productivity," Speed-up

The announcement last March of a special, four-year no-strike agreement for the steel industry by United Steelworkers (USWA) President I.W. Abel and company representatives was probably the most blatant in a string of class-collaborationist betrayals by every section of the trade-union bureaucracy last year. The union leadership's complete unconcern for the needs of the membership managed to head off what could have been a massive confrontation of labor and capital, utterly destroying Nixon's pro-business wage controls in the process. Instead, not one of the major contracts signed in 1973 even came close to maintaining the workers' living standards in the face of an 8.9 percent rate of inflation of consumer prices.

Bourgeois press pundits predictably hailed the "historic" nature of Abel's sellout and the "restraint" of labor. However, contrary to many hopeful predictions from highly interested observers outside the ranks of labor, Abel's new version of the no-strike pledge has yet to be adopted by a major union, or any section of the Steelworkers other than basic steel. Even here there has been widespread protest from a large number of locals. The crucial test of the bureaucracy's ability to implement this anti-labor deal is drawing near, in the struggle surrounding the negotiations over the basic steel contract. The negotiations have already begun, despite the fact that the present contract does not expire until August.

Abel's No-Strike Pledge

The no-strike deal, the "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" (ENA), represents the codification of the most reactionary trends within the labor bureaucracy, toward increasing cooperation with the bourgeois state and with the imperialist appetites of capitalism. The ENA provides that there will be no national strikes in the steel industry until 1977. Regular three-year contracts would continue to be signed, but with all unresolved issues going to binding arbitration.

In return for this "historic" betrayal, the steel companies guaranteed a minimum three percent yearly wage increase (?), cost-of-living escalator (totally inadequate, naturally), and a one-time \$150 bonus. Local strikes are allowed, but these are controlled directly by the International President, who will of course time them in accordance with the spirit of the ENA—namely, so as to create as little "disruption of production" as possible.

In direct violation of a decision of the 1972 USWA convention, which stipulated that any arbitration deal would have to be approved by the membership, Abel put his ENA sellout over without even informing rank-and-file steel workers, let alone allowing them to vote on it. It was sprung on the Basic Steel Industry Conference, a delegated body composed largely of local officers, without any advance notice. Since steel workers have never had the right of contract ratification anyway, the ENA was thus considered passed and in force! Thus after secret negotiations between their "leaders" and the companies, and for a pittance in contract concessions and an insulting bribe, steel workers were told



I.W. Abel

to peacefully surrender their right to strike—the only real weapon the workers have in the battle against the bosses (see WV No. 20, 11 May 1973).

Since then, Abel's "experiment" has remained alive, but it is in trouble. The *New York Times* (14 September 1973) sounded a warning of rank-and-file protest scarcely six months after the agreement went into effect. Moreover, petitions against ENA circulated by the Right to Strike Committee of District 31 (Chicago and Gary) and rank-and-file groups supported by the Communist Party have collected tens of thousands of signatures. At the January Basic Steel Industry Conference in Washington there was a picket protesting the ENA, and 100 coke oven workers from Bethlehem's Sparrows Point works invaded the meeting shouting, "Whose union is this?" and carrying signs which read, "End slave labor," "The right to strike is not for sale," and "I.W. Abel—traitor to labor, waiter to the bosses."

Equally significant was the rebuff handed Abel by sections of the union other than basic steel and by rank-and-file revolts in local USWA elections at the end of last year. All incumbent local presidents except one were thrown out in District 28 (Cleveland area), and machine-backed district directors were returned only through the most blatant election fraud in at least two districts, including the crucial District 31. The aluminum and can sections of the union, also approaching contract expirations, rejected the ENA pledge. The Container Industrial Conference insisted on further preconditions which the companies turned down. A sign of the times—District 9 Director William Moran, who chaired the conference, allowed criticism of Abel to flow uninterrupted in order to improve his chances in the next International elections, in which Abel will be ineligible to run.

The ENA represents the concerted efforts of the companies and labor tops to destroy the independence of the trade-union movement. If successful, it could lead to compulsory arbitration for all workers and complete integration of the union organizations into the bosses' state apparatus. Nazi Germany, which destroyed all independent unions, was only the most extreme example of

this trend, which is present in all capitalist countries in the imperialist epoch. Like the union bureaucracy's support for bourgeois political parties, its defense of imperialist wars, productivity schemes and direct government interference in the internal affairs of the unions, the ENA is one more expression of the subordination of the union bureaucracy to the interests of the capitalists.

The Failure of Simple Trade Unionism

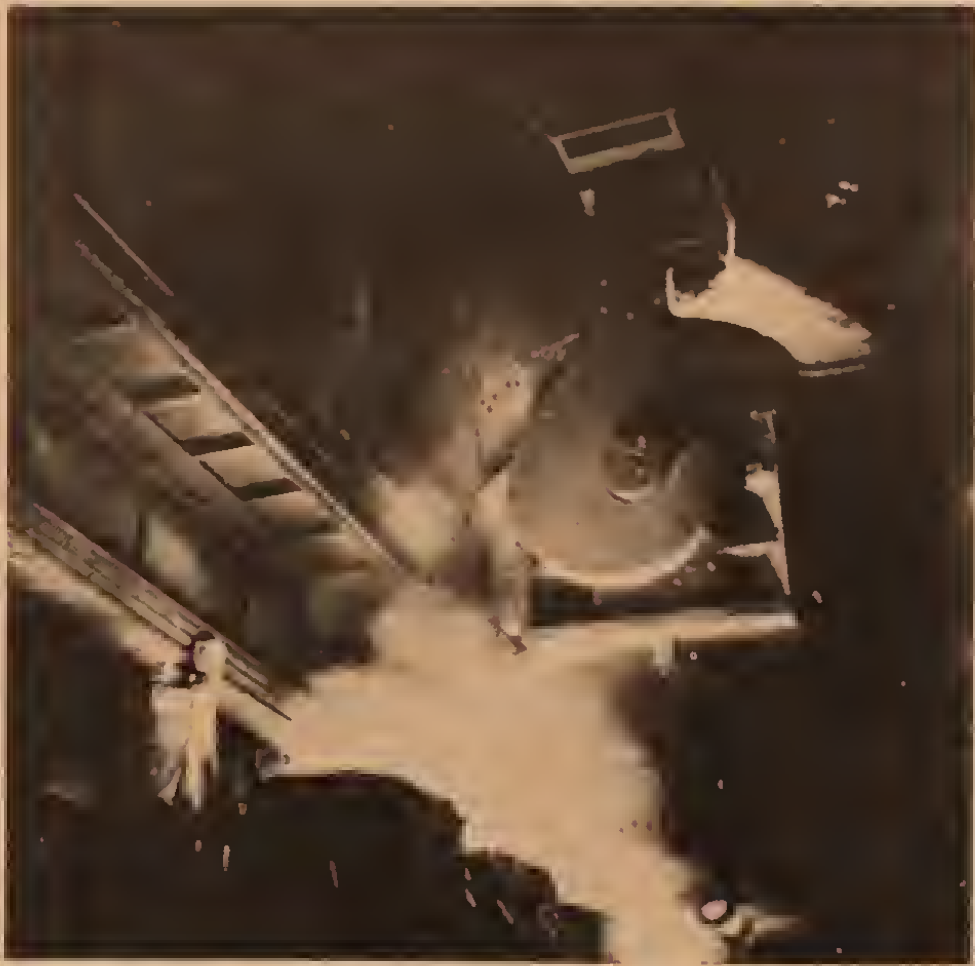
Abel cites the Steelworkers' founding president Philip Murray as the chief authority for his class-collaborationist course—as well he might, since Abel's sellout has been well prepared by the gross bureaucratism and ineffective use of the strike weapon by all past leaders of the USWA. The Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) was set up under the iron hand of John L. Lewis and his lieutenants from the Mine Workers in 1936. U.S. Steel was organized without a strike as a result of the tremendous impact of the auto sitdowns of 1936-37, but the Little Steel campaign in 1938 was lost because the Lewis leadership, aided by the Stalinist Communist Party (whose members were the backbone of the SWOC), urged reliance on the Roosevelt government and refused to arm the workers. The police killed several workers and the strike was defeated.

ferences of any description."

In his turn, Murray's successor, David McDonald, continued the Murray/Lewis tradition by attempting to build "mutual trusteeship" with the companies. The last strike in the steel industry, in 1959, was led so poorly by the McDonald machine and resulted in such insignificant gains for the workers (even though it lasted 116 days), that heavy demoralization in the ranks became rampant. It was after this miserable failure that McDonald, and later Abel, started calling strikes "obsolete." In fact, what was "obsolete" was the bureaucracy's brand of leadership based on cooperation with the companies, their parties and their state. The government issued a Taft-Hartley injunction against the 1959 strike just when the companies were beginning to hurt. A militant struggle against the government at this point could have broken this vicious and justly hated anti-labor law (which the trade-union bureaucrats never effectively fought) and won the strike, but McDonald was bound to betray because of his longstanding political commitment not just to the Democratic Party, but also to the maintenance of the capitalist system.

Productivity Schemes and National Chauvinism

Simple trade unionism, i.e., the struggle for economic improvements for the workers without a struggle



The Lewis tradition from the Mine Workers, including completely undemocratic internal union life (Lewis reigned without opposition in the UMW for a quarter of a century) and support for mechanization and company productivity schemes even at the expense of workers' jobs, was imposed on steel workers from above. The Steelworkers had no internal union life whatsoever, or even autonomy, until 1942, when SWOC finally became the USWA. President Murray faithfully followed in Lewis' footsteps, remarking at the founding conference that, "I do not want this convention to waste a single solitary moment of its time discussing, by resolution or otherwise, internal dif-

against the capitalist system as a whole, has never been able to counteract the companies' introduction of mechanization and automation at the expense of the workers—through layoffs, speed-up, etc.—instead of for the benefit of labor. Non-revolutionary trade-union leaders have either gone along with or endorsed these evils under the proposition that they were necessary for capitalism and therefore could not be opposed. This capitulation leads to national chauvinism. As one of the most rabidly pro-company union leaderships in the U.S., Abel calls on steel workers to increase their productivity in order to meet "foreign competition," seeking

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