

Merchants, Generals, Princes Flee

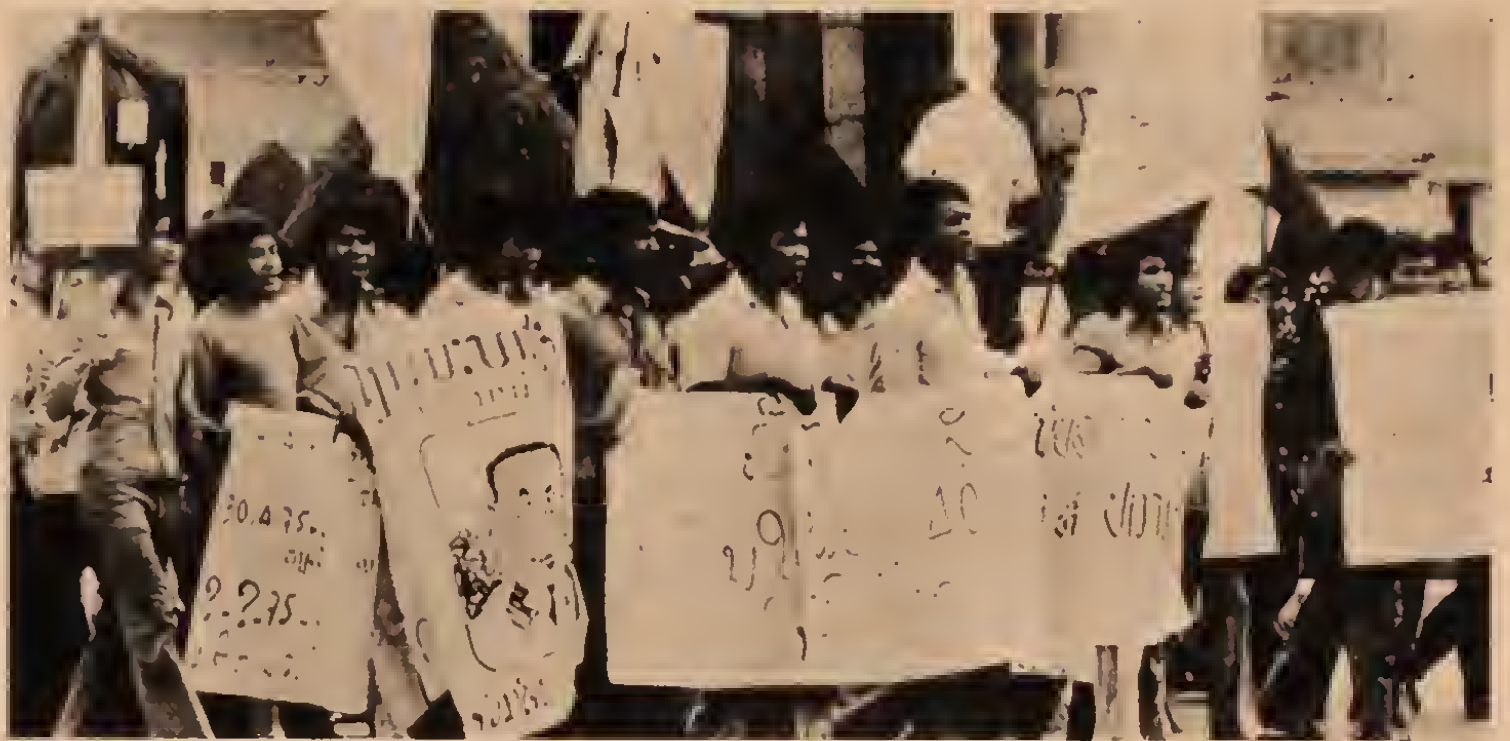
Pathet Lao Taking Over

MAY 31—The minuscule Laotian capitalist class (little more than a conglomeration of comprador merchants) is presently fleeing the country with an entourage of rightist generals, corrupt government officials and feudal princes. Power is being consolidated in the hands of its coalition partners, the Pathet Lao, with the impotent neutralist Premier Souvanna Phouma and aging King Vattana presiding over the process. Until recently, however, State Department Laos-watchers had remained confident of the good intentions of the Stalinists in the Laotian coalition government. A scant two weeks ago sentiment was that "the Pathet Lao has no immediate plans for an armed take-over." One unnamed Western diplomat gave voice to this optimism, predicting that "things will go back to the way they have been" (*New York Times*, 12 May).

Unfortunately for messrs. diplomats—but fortunately for the Laotian toilers—vacuums are no more tolerable in politics than in nature. For several months strikes and student demonstrations have mounted in protest against soaring inflation and continued imperialist economic and political domination. While Pathet Lao organizers were involved in these actions, it was only with reluctance. Well aware of the fate of two previous coalition governments (both ousted by rightist coups), the Stalinists felt the need to establish a base of support in the towns previously held exclusively by the reactionaries.

But their commitment to class collaboration was no less real. Pathet Lao/rightist negotiating teams were routinely sent to bargain with the dissidents, occasionally resorting to arrests as a form of persuasion. Evidently this "cooperation" was unique among the coalition partners. In the cabinet where every rightist minister was assigned a Pathet Lao deputy (and vice versa) each side boycotted the other.

"I won't tell them about my army until they tell me about their army," pouted the then Defense Minister and rightist prince, Sisouk na Champassak. The *New York Times* (14 April) bluntly admitted that the coalition was barely "hanging together" because "the United States, the Soviet



Anti-American protesters in Laos last month.

Union, China and North Vietnam seem content to keep the current government intact." This miracle of détente did not, however, prevent U.S. military aid from going to the Royal Laotian Army. A curious example of this international "support" for the shaky coalition occurred a year ago when Souvanna Phouma suffered a mild heart attack. Doctors from Thailand, France, the U.S., the USSR and China rushed to the side of the ailing prince while their sponsoring governments fretted lest a few missed heartbeats bring down the "bloc of four classes."

All the king's horses, however, were unable to re-assemble the shattered government during the past two weeks. The collapse of the Lon Nol and Thieu regimes terrified the Laotian, Chinese and Indian merchants who dominated the economy in Laos. These parasites unjustifiably feared intervention by the triumphant Hanoi regime. In reality the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has steadily reduced its forces in Laos since the ceasefire agreement of February 1973. Those troops remaining have shown no

interest in the recent events. The DRV army units stationed in Laos had, after 1973, demonstrated support for the "progressive" coalition government by doing nothing while Pathet Lao guerrillas were besieged by the Royalist army and a CIA-financed "secret army" headed by "general" Vang Pao. Nevertheless, the bourgeois merchants fantasized that the Hanoi bureaucrats would behave like revolutionaries.

Terror turned to panic when several thousand students and teachers demonstrated in Vientiane during mid May carrying such slogans as "Cut the Throats of the Rightists." The rightist ministers immediately resigned from the cabinet and the flow of well-to-do emigrés out of the country turned into a stampede. The government, now dominated by the Pathet Lao, quickly proceeded to ban any further demonstrations in an effort to stem the tide and save the coalition. The end, however, had begun.

The cowardice of the comprador merchants was matched only by their cupidity. As their counterparts in Viet-



Gamma

Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma

continued on page 11



Workers Press

Police riot against anti-fascist demonstrators, 15 June 1974, in London's Red Lion Square.

Fascism: How Not to Fight It...4

Vietnamese Refugees

The management of New York television station WPIX refused to broadcast this SL statement in response to its editorial welcoming Vietnamese refugees. Specifically, WPIX refused to permit any reference to "war criminals," "mass murderers," "mass killing" or the Daily News' virulently chauvinist articles against foreign workers.



Marshall Ky with wife, 1966. In September 1970 Ky stated: "I have only one hero—Hitler. I want to infuse in our youth the same fanaticism, the same dedication, the same fighting spirit as Hitler infused in his people."

WPIX EDITORIAL

There has been so much controversy over so long a period of time about the war in Southeast Asia that it is not surprising that some resentment has developed over the plan to resettle 130,000 Vietnamese in the United States. Those who oppose the plan believe that we have done enough for the Vietnamese, and that all of our attention should be directed to our own people and their problems, which have been made all the more serious by the recession.

In thinking about the dilemma caused by the Vietnamese who cannot stay in their country for fear of retaliation by the new rulers, and our own very real needs here at home which severely tax the resources of the government, it is wise to remember an ancient saying about faith. It goes like this: "For those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible."

For our part, the Management of WPIX believes that everything our country stands for cries out for us to take in those homeless unfortunates, as we have done so many times before. We think that to do otherwise would be to deny our heritage as a nation of aliens. To do otherwise would be to deny one of the great strengths of this land, which comes from the amalgamation of a variety of cultures and peoples.

We who live in the Greater New York area have a special reason to welcome the refugees. We have a foreigner in our midst, a beautiful lady who was born in France and came to this country many, many years ago. She lives in the New York harbor, and in the words of the poetess Emma Lazarus, "Lift (s her) lamp, beside the golden door..."

Unless we are willing to put out the lamp and close that door and call the Statue of Liberty a relic from another age, we must support the resettlement of the Vietnamese in our country.

Our nation may not be all that much richer for allowing these 130,000 refugees to enter, but it will be infinitely poorer if it turns them away...

What's your opinion? We'd like to know.

18 May 1975

SPARTACIST LEAGUE STATEMENT

In an editorial broadcast last week, the management of WPIX called for asylum to Vietnamese refugees. Just who are these refugees? Many of them are like Nguyen Cao Ky, who declared that Adolf Hitler is his idol. They are directly responsible for the mass murder of millions of Indochinese. Such professional killers should not be allowed to escape punishment for their heinous crimes. They don't deserve asylum any more than did the Nazi High Command.

WPIX appeals to the spirit of the Statue of Liberty and "our heritage as a nation of aliens." This is pure hypocrisy. In February, the *Daily News* (which owns WPIX) published a rapid series of articles which accused immigrant workers of every conceivable social ill and suggested mass deportations as the answer to unemployment. To protest this vicious smear attack—and the more than 800,000 deportations of so-called illegal aliens last year—the Spartacist League picketed the offices of the *Daily News*, calling for a program to fight the real cause of unemployment: capitalism.

This is a class question. U.S. rulers are now importing tens of thousands of Indochinese reactionaries—exploiters, grafters and mass murderers—just as they earlier brought in right-wing and middle-class Cubans. Meanwhile, thousands of victims of the torture chambers of the reactionary Chilean military junta—among them many prominent labor leaders—are refused entry to the U.S.

The Spartacist League calls for no asylum to Indochinese reactionaries; instead, open the doors to Chilean refugees from right-wing terror! End the deportations and grant full citizenship rights to foreign-born workers! And send the war criminals (including the Calleys and Nixons) to Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Saigon, so that the napalmers, defoliators and terror bombers can be tried by a jury of their victims!

27 May 1975

Protest Portugal MRPP Ban

In coordinated pre-dawn raids on May 29 troops of the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (MFA) struck national and neighborhood headquarters of the Movement for the Reorganization of the Proletarian Party (MRPP), the largest Maoist organization in the country. Five hundred leftist militants were arrested in the sweeps and are now imprisoned on an off-shore island. The MRPP's files and propaganda equipment were also confiscated in the raids.

The "progressive" officers have moved against the MRPP because the Maoists enjoy support from among soldiers in key units. The MRPP has also angered the MFA by being one of the few groups on the Portuguese left to unambiguously declare that this officers' movement heads a bourgeois regime, incapable of achieving socialism.

It is significant that the arrests were carried out in order to frustrate Maoist plans for an anti-NATO demonstration in conjunction with Ford's visit to Spain on Saturday. This dramatically exposes the

quandary of the Portuguese Maoists: they avidly oppose NATO as an anti-communist alliance, but the Chinese bureaucracy supports the efforts of European members of NATO to build up their military strength as an objective blow against "Soviet social imperialism."

In more than 50 issues of *Peking Review* since the dictatorial Caetano regime was toppled in Lisbon last April, not one word has appeared on Portugal. This is despite the fact that both the MRPP and the other leading Maoist group, the PCP-MI, sent their leaders to Peking last month in order to get the official franchise. In the U.S. Maoist press, the explosive pre-revolutionary situation in Lisbon has been almost totally ignored, except for Wilfred Burchett's denunciations of the MRPP in the pages of the *Guardian*.

While warning the workers against the treacherous reformism of the MRPP's Maoist/Stalinist policies, the Spartacist League vigorously denounces this effort by the military rulers to silence the Portuguese left. *Free the MRPP Militants! No Confidence in the MFA—For Proletarian Revolution in Portugal!*

CORRECTION

The "KGB agents" mentioned in the last sentence of the editor's reply to Al Greengold's letter on page two of *WV* No. 69, 23 May, were actually "GPU agents."

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California Enacts Farm Labor Bill

Chavez Submits to Government Arbitration

MAY 31 A farm labor law which is supposed to usher in a new era of labor peace to California's agricultural battlefields will be signed into law next week by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. Originally three bills were put forward to resolve the conflict between Cesar Chavez' beleaguered United Farm Workers and a union-busting alliance of Teamsters and agribusiness: one by the UFW, one by Governor Brown and one by the growers and Teamsters. Many weeks of maneuver and "compromise" followed, the result being a bill which all parties now claim they "can live with." Brown claims credit for accomplishing the impossible in the course of his personal negotiations.

The Agricultural Labor Relations Act provides for government-conducted representation elections. (Farm workers are excluded from the National Labor

essential for the protection and upgrading of farm workers into the skilled jobs created by increasing mechanization of agriculture.

Chavez claims this piece of legislation as a great victory, evidently expecting that elections will regain for the UFW the union recognition stolen from it by Teamster sweetheart deals. (Teamsters now hold 95 percent of the agricultural workers' contracts in California.) But whatever the number of contracts won by the UFW (it can hardly decrease), this law is a move toward greater state control of the unions and must be opposed by all class-conscious militants.

As always, it is the class struggle, not "understandings" with the capitalist politicians, which will determine defeat or victory. Governor Brown, like all bourgeois politicians whatever their posturing, is no "friend of labor." Chavez was forced to admit as much—momentarily—when he mounted a statewide campaign against the governor's original bill. He told a crowd of 1,000 at San Francisco State University: "We elected a man last year and we thought we had a man who would be pretty good for the farm workers.... It's a pleasure to stand up and fight your enemies, but what do you do when your friends come around and try to do you in?"

Yet it is Governor Brown, whose job is to defend the interests of the capitalist class (including the agribusiness bosses), who will appoint the board that decides who gets to vote in these binding elections. The legislative representative of the growers' California Farm Bureau Federation assured reporters, "The governor has told us he'll do everything he can to appoint people who don't represent a special interest." The "special

interest" that will not be represented, though, is that of the farm workers. A Teamster representative in San Francisco told a *WV* reporter that his union was satisfied with the bill precisely because it was confident that the composition of the board would favor its interests.

"Fair labor practices" depend on whom you're being fair to. The interests of the working class require breaking the stranglehold of the capitalists and fighting for the independence of the unions from the bosses' state. The power to win the farm workers' struggles lies in mobilizing the organized strength of the working class, and it is precisely this that is outlawed by the new legislation. The Spartacist League has agitated for militant organizing strikes by the UFW (banned under the law), a statewide general strike to defend the Farm Workers, and "hot-cargoing" (labor boycott) of scab agricultural produce (also outlawed under the new farm labor bill). Chavez accepted these restrictions because he never has had any intention of resorting to a policy of class struggle, preferring instead the impotent liberal tactic of a consumer boycott.

From suing the Teamsters union in the capitalist courts, to fingering undocumented foreign workers to the Immigration Service for deportation, to supporting this bill for state control of the unions, Chavez' policy has consistently been that of cooperation with the class enemy and hostility to working-class independence. Only by ousting the UFW bureaucracy—as treacherous as the most entrenched reactionary professional sellout artists—through a struggle within the unions for a militant class-struggle leadership can lasting victories be won by farm workers. ■



César Chavez.

WV photo

Relations Act which stipulates this procedure for most other sectors of the workforce.) Among its provisions:

—Within seven days of the filing of a petition representing 50 percent of the workers on a farm (during that farm's peak employment season) secret-ballot elections for union representation will be held.

—The governor will personally appoint a five-member Agricultural Labor Relations board to supervise the elections. It will rule on the key question of who is entitled to vote and on complaints of alleged unfair labor practices.

—Strikes to gain bargaining representation are banned. Harvest-time strikes over contractual terms are permitted, however.

—So-called "hard" secondary boycotts (i.e., attempts by members of a union to get employees of another company, such as a supermarket, to refuse to handle scab goods) are banned. Consumer boycotts are allowed so long as the union has not lost a representational election at the ranch whose produce is involved.

Under the terms of the bill, all agricultural employees on a farm are to be organized into a single union. At one stage in the negotiating the old question of industrial versus craft organization became a major bone of contention, pitting the UFW against not only the Teamsters but also the California Building and Construction Trades Council and the state AFL-CIO. The UFW correctly insisted that industrial organization was



Teamsters and Farm Workers clash at May 12 hearing on farm labor bill in Sacramento.

Fascism: How Not to Fight It

On 15 June 1974 London's Red Lion Square witnessed one of the bloodiest confrontations between police and left-wing forces in recent British history. Countless demonstrators were beaten with police truncheons, a number were trampled under mounted patrols, and one young man, Kevin Gately, was killed by the cops, his head so brutally battered that he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. The occasion was a protest against a rally scheduled by the fascist-inspired National Front.

The NF is one of many extreme-rightist organizations that have been surfacing and spreading in Europe during recent months. Their breeding ground is the fear of economic ruin, in particular an intensified competition for jobs in the wake of a worldwide capitalist economic slump.

As in the past, one of the common fascist themes is race hatred against Jews, blacks and now immigrant workers. Former National Front führer John Tyndall was quoted in 1969 as saying: "the Jew is a poisonous maggot feeding on a body in an advanced state of decay" (*Sunday Times*, 30 March 1969). Along with NF national organizer Martin Webster and others in the group's leadership, Tyndall was during the early 1960's a member of the now-defunct British National Socialist Movement, which called for "deportation of all non-Aryans" from Britain.

While many of these groups seek to put on respectable airs, their aim is to recruit enraged petty-bourgeois and lumpen elements for the purpose of brutally smashing "the reds" and organized labor. As the history of the rise of Nazism tragically demonstrated, it is literally a life-and-death matter for the workers movement to crush such reactionary paramilitary organizations while they are still weak.

With the growth of the NF in recent years (it polled 113,000 votes in last October's parliamentary elections), many leftists and labor militants have understood the need to stop this racist anti-communist outfit. The occasion for their protest last June was a National Front meeting against the Labour Party government's decision to grant amnesty to persons deemed "illegal immigrants" under the discriminatory 1971 Immigration Act.

Police Riot at Red Lion Square

On the day of the rally, the 1,500 NF marchers drew up in military formation, drums beating and Union Jacks flying. Many of the flags were mounted on steel-pointed poles, some of the marchers were dressed in black shirts while others wore army surplus uniforms. A counterdemonstration of about 1,000 was organized by the Communist Party (CP) and Liberation, with contingents of the International

Socialists (IS) and International Marxist Group (IMG).

Trouble began as the anti-fascist demonstrators approached Red Lion Square, occupied (according to the IS account) by about 500 police including mounted patrols. The bourgeois press and police claim the marchers were told in advance to make a right turn as they entered the square, moving away from the meeting hall where the NF rally was to take place. The left organizations say they were told no such thing. In any case it is clear that a section of the march, with the IMG toward the front, sought to break through the police lines to get to Conway Hall.

The police thereupon launched a baton charge, kicking and punching their way into the crowd. As the momentum of the march carried more people into the square, units of the elite Special Patrol Group, notorious for smashing workers' picket lines, were brought in. They formed a wedge and drove through the crowd, splitting it in two.

The fighting intensified as they cornered one section of the marchers in a side street. Then the arrests began. Blood-soaked demonstrators were dragged by

and chanting, "We got to get the reds!"

The cops' vicious attack, including an unprovoked horse charge and the death of Kevin Gately, are the responsibility of the Wilson government. Gately's funeral drew thousands of angry marchers and the wanton police assault has been vigorously condemned by numerous socialist and union organizations. Yet, incredibly, the government has sought to blame the left, and in particular the IMG, for the violence! The recently published Scarman Tribunal report rejected most charges of police brutality and denied any responsibility of the cops in Gately's death. This is in spite of the fact that the demonstrators used no weapons, only the police had instruments which could have caused the head wounds (truncheons and horses' hooves), and there were witnesses to the beating. This "report" is a shameless whitewash of what was in fact a police riot.

However, our proletarian solidarity with the victims of bourgeois "law and order" must not be an excuse to cover up serious errors committed by some leaders of the anti-fascist demonstration at Red Lion Square. It is not enough to want to fight fascists—one must know how to do

It is less clear why the IMG took this dangerously mistaken step. But whatever the prior arrangements with the police; whether demonstrators had made plans beforehand or simply fell into a police trap; if it was bravado or confusion—in any case, the decision to try to push through the police lines was a disastrous move. The fact that the demonstrators lacked any means to defend themselves from the cops' murderous onslaught, while it refutes police theories of a conspiracy to attack the police, only makes this move all the more grievously wrong.

Marxists do not uphold a spurious "right" of fascists to freedom of speech; we call on the labor movement to mobilize to prevent the reactionary terror gangs from spewing out their race-hate poison in mass rallies and by provocations such as their marches in military uniform. But to prevent them from speaking through militant mass action requires a favorable balance of forces—something that was obviously not present in Red Lion Square.

Yes, 20,000 workers could, and should, have prevented the NF from holding its racist meeting. The failure of the unions to mobilize against these anti-labor scum is criminal. But this betrayal cannot be corrected by false heroics, sending several score demonstrators against well-equipped riot police. Not only was one militant killed and many injured, but the National Front scored a significant publicity victory as a result.

"Far Left" Battles Cops in Paris

Unfortunately, such confrontationism is not an isolated phenomenon. In France, while the Stalinists and social democrats systematically abstain from mobilizing the working class against the fascists, the fake "Trotskyists" of the United Secretariat (of which the IMG is the British affiliate) have taken a different approach: adventurist clashes with police protecting the fascists. The classic case of this substitutionism occurred on 21 June 1973.

On that date the Ligue Communiste (now Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire), French section of the USec, organized a counterdemonstration against a rally by the fascist Ordre Nouveau ("New Order"). The ON had for some time been campaigning against "wildcat immigration" with virulently racist rhetoric, and had succeeded in provoking assaults on immigrant workers. They planned to highlight this campaign nationally with a mass rally at the Mutualité meeting hall in Paris.

While traditionally the Paris police had not mobilized heavily in conflicts between the right and left, this time they clearly were preparing to defend Ordre Nouveau. First they looked on as the ON turned the meeting hall into an armed camp, moving



Socialist Worker

The body of dying Kevin Gately being dragged from London's Red Lion Square.

their hair to waiting police vans and several bodies were left lying in the square, among them Kevin Gately. Some of the remaining protesters regrouped on the side street and jeered the NF marchers, who were now approaching from a different direction. After a pause of about ten minutes, the police suddenly launched a mounted charge against the leftists, a savage and totally unprovoked attack. The National Front column looked on jubilantly, then paraded triumphantly into Red Lion Square cheering the police

it. A New Left policy of confrontation with police who obviously intended to defend the National Front is not the way.

There is no doubt that the IMG sought to break through police lines in order to arrive in front of the meeting hall. Jackie Stevens, a member of the IMG, gave this report: "We came across a line of police, and behind them were mounted police. When we tried to get through to Conway Hall, the police drew their batons and charged..." (*Intercontinental Press*, 24 June 1974).



Well-armed police units (right) await left-wing demonstrators (left) in Paris, 21 June 1973.

in van loads of iron pipes, clubs and other assorted weaponry. Then, by the Ligue Communiste's own report, the Mutualité was surrounded by 2,000 police, a veritable army to protect the fascists, waiting for the "far left" demonstrators to make the slightest move.

The LC, which early in the day realized that the police were ready to break up the anti-fascist demonstration, encouraged people to come to the march prepared for a confrontation. The leftists were heavily armed with clubs and molotov cocktails. Thus it was clear from the beginning that the Ligue fully expected a hash with the cops—a battle which, however, they could not possibly win without massive contingents of workers and left militants from all quarters.

When the police cordoned off the area around the hall they were homharded by incendiaries. The anti-fascist demonstrators then broke up into small groups and long into the night isolated clashes continued throughout the area. While there was no clear military defeat of the leftists, they were unable to do more than harass the cops and did not stop the fascists. The next day, Ligue headquarters were occupied by the police, 25 of its supporters were arrested and the organization was outlawed.

The Spartacist League immediately and vigorously protested this viciously anti-democratic government attack and called for united defense of the Ligue. But we also criticized its adventurist tactics:

"The Trotskyist movement has a long history of resistance to fascist groups, including attacking and dispersing fascist meetings. ... In this case, however, the presence of massive police force made the relation of forces unfavorable to the left. It would appear that the Ligue Communiste recklessly entered into an adventurist confrontation by attempting to take on the armed power of the state under circumstances which could lead only to the defeat of the left. The correct tactic, given the government's authorization of the meeting, was to mount a campaign calling on the mass workers organizations... to mobilize tens of thousands of their members to prevent the fascist meeting. In their absence, the Ligue could certainly have organized a mass protest demonstration. This is not the same thing, however, as a futile attempt to overwhelm the police with 1,000 youths."

—"Repeal the Ban on the French Ligue Communiste," *WV* No. 25, 10 July 1973

Portugal: A Hair's Breadth from Disaster

Another instance of stupid guerrillaist confrontation tactics occurred earlier this year in Portugal, where it could easily have had disastrous consequences in an explosive pre-revolutionary situation. On the night of January 25-26 several thousand youth and workers in the northern city of Porto surrounded a meeting hall where the rightist Social Democratic Center (CDS) was holding its national congress. This party's leaders include numerous former officials of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship.

Four leftist organizations—LUAR, MES, PRP, and LCI—called a demonstration in front of the meeting hall. Their joint communiqué merely announced a protest action. After an hour, however, a second demonstration arrived on the scene, this one led by the OCMLP (Portuguese Communist Organization Marxist-Leninist, a left-Maoist group), which in an attempt to stop the congress

proceedings attacked the paramilitary police who were protecting the building (*Esquerda Socialista*, 28 January).

This infantile "heroic" gesture led to baton charges by the special police and a tear gas barrage followed by shots, leaving a dozen demonstrators injured, some seriously. The leftists' only means of defense was to hurl bricks. Then beginning around 8 p.m. the regional military commander sent in several army units. The officer in charge asked the CDS to end the meeting (which it did), while the ranks outside fraternized with the demonstrators.

Due to the hostile attitude of the troops, rightist politicians in the Crystal Palace were afraid to leave the building, however, and during the early morning hours a second paramilitary police unit attacked on horse and in personnel

Leon Trotsky on Fighting Fascists:

"In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists; it wants to 'arbitrate.'... Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehensions on the part of the 'arbiter,' its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbiter without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the state itself. That is the whole point."

—reprinted in *Intercontinental Press*, 2 December 1974

carriers. Soldiers reportedly resisted the police assault. Finally, at 7 a.m. parachutists from a base commanded by conservative officers managed to extract the besieged reactionaries (*Luta Popular*, 2 February; *Revolução*, 7 February).

A demonstration against the CDS congress, particularly if attended by large numbers of workers, could have been useful in exposing the viciously anti-working class and anti-democratic character of this ostensibly moderate party, which is in reality a front for Salazarist forces. Massive militant action by the labor movement in response to open counterrevolutionary activity by such a group could put it out of business.

But the attempt to stop the congress by launching a chaotic unarmed crowd against police guards was perilously dangerous adventurism. Although the CDS did call off its meeting, this was due to the attitude taken by the troop commanders, not to a few hundred demonstrators. And the armed forces' action could very easily have been the opposite, leading to a bloodbath of the anti-fascist militants.

(Although there is great ferment in the army and navy, most of the ranks still have confidence in the "progressive" officers of the Armed Forces Movement. It was by no means assured, or even probable, that the soldiers would have

fraternized with anti-CDS demonstrators if explicitly ordered not to. On November 4 of last year, troops commanded by the most leftist officers of the Armed Forces Movement arrested the top leadership of another Maoist group, the MRPP, for attacking a CDS local office.)

A strong show of force against the "far leftists" on January 25-26 would have greatly strengthened reactionary elements in the military who at the time were trying to oust the more leftist top officers, in order to then crush the organized workers movement. The action initiated by the OCMLP-led demonstrators could have sparked a counterrevolutionary mobilization.

Sowing Dangerous Democratic Illusions

It was characteristic of the complacent reformism of the Stalinists and social democrats in the mid and late 1930's that they sought to pressure the bourgeois state into checking the fascists. The workers paid for this criminal passivity with rivers of blood as the jackbooted legions strode to power over the corpse of the organized labor movement.

Today an international capitalist depression is once again generating a host of ultra-right and overtly fascist formations. It would be a serious mistake to pretend, as do some New Left/anarchist elements (along with Gerry Healy), that fascism is "just around the corner." But the reactionary terror gangs are an important weapon in the capitalist arsenal and it is essential for the labor movement to know how to crush them. This is particularly true for the young generation of workers who have never seen the unions smashed, labor leaders jailed and killed, the socialist press hanned and the entire proletariat brought to its knees by a bourgeois desperate to maintain at all costs its brutal class dictatorship.

The reformists' democratic illusions in the ability and willingness of the bourgeoisie to "control" reactionary ultras are by no means dead and buried, nor restricted to overtly Stalinist and social-democratic organizations. In Boston today it is the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party which leads the liberal/reformist chorus pleading for *federal troops* to protect black school children and communities from racist night riders and lynch mobs.

The centrist European majority of the USec also expresses confidence in the class enemy. The French LCR supports the SWP call for federal troops to Boston (*Rouge*, 5 January). Moreover, after fighting the police all night in the June 1973 Paris anti-fascist demonstration, the Ligue Communiste sent an appeal to "working-class elements" in the Autonomous Federation of Police Unions, asking: "Do you consider it natural [!] for you to be used to protect fascists and to intervene against strikers struggling to improve their wages and working conditions?" (*Rouge*, 27 June 1973). What Marxist would expect anything else of the hired guns of the capitalist class?!

As for those "workers in police uniforms," Trotsky wrote in "What Next?" (1932) that "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist

state is a bourgeois cop, not a worker." Revolutionaries do not appeal to the cops but to the workers movement to smash the reactionary gangs, and demand the expulsion of police from the unions.

The Ligue also called on the French government to ban the Ordre Nouveau meeting, just as the IMG in Britain called on the Labour government to ban the National Front rally. Not only does this foster the dangerous illusion that the bourgeois state can or will stop the fascists (in fact, cops and military officers are often closely connected with fascist groups), but the laws under which it would ban a fascist meeting will be used tomorrow to cancel demonstrations by the "extremist left." The French government's "impartial" banning of both Ordre Nouveau and the Ligue Communiste following the June 1973 clash is a classic example.

United Workers Action, Not New Left Confrontationism

The Marxist policy on how to fight the fascists was stated unambiguously by Leon Trotsky during the 1930's, and directly contradicts the policy of both wings of the United Secretariat. "Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them, can successfully prevail against the fascist bands," states the Transitional Program. And in "War and the Fourth International," Trotsky writes: "To turn to the state, that is, to capital, with the demand to disarm the fascists means to sow the worst democratic illusions, to lull the vigilance of the proletariat, to demoralize its will."

Trotsky was quite explicit that the task of defense of the workers movement from the reactionary terror gangs was not the job of small groups, but requires united action by the workers and their mass organizations. Our movement has not been passive in the face of fascists, and in 1939 the then-revolutionary SWP called a demonstration to protest a fascist rally at Madison Square Garden in New York. When 50,000 anti-fascist demonstrators arrived, they did not hesitate to break through police lines. Many of the fascists received a good thrashing from the protesters as they left the meeting.

But the perspective of the USec majority is a different one, of "minority violence" by the vanguard as a stimulant to "excite" the workers to follow its example. D. Bensaid, a leader of the LCR, writes that "...acts of minority violence, presently lumped together under the general heading of terrorism, can play their role as a tactical recourse among others within a strategy of conquest of power by the masses" ("Terrorism and Class Struggle"). They may excite Bensaid, but the history of the last century, from the Russian Narodniks to the Tupamaros, has demonstrated the utter impotence of such a policy.

The incidents reported above show clearly that "minority vanguard violence" against police who are protecting fascist and ultra-rightist meetings either has had or easily could have had the most disastrous consequences. It serves to drive the state and the fascists together, precisely the opposite of what revolutionaries seek to achieve. When they are defeated (as usually happens) by the superior force of the state military apparatus such confrontations greatly embolden the reactionaries.

Marxists call for no confidence in the bourgeois state and warn the working people that they must rely on their own forces to protect against the vicious attacks of capitalist reaction. It is possible even for small groups to play a decisive role in sparking organized workers self-defense actions. But this will not take place through New Left confrontationism but by providing political leadership within the mass organizations of the exploited and oppressed and by building the revolutionary vanguard party capable of leading the workers forward to the conquest of power. Not voluntaristic militarism but a struggle to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership—this is the only road to victory over fascism!■



Police cordon guarding the fascist National Front marchers last June.

Spartacist League/Workers Vanguard Forum

THE BLACK WORKER AND THE DEPRESSION

Speaker: Paul Collins
Spartacist League
Guest Speaker: Member of
Committee for a Militant
UAW, Local 1364

Friday, June 6
7:30 p.m.

YMCA—Morgan Lounge
33rd Street & Macdonald
RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

Violent Wildcats Sweep Province

Quebec Government Seizes Construction Unions

FTQ Capitulates

TORONTO, May 23 A series of wildcat strikes spread across the province of Quebec early this month as construction workers protested the report of the Cliche Commission—a government inquiry into the construction industry—made public May 6. The Commission urged that four construction locals affiliated with the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ—Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec) be put into direct government receivership for a period of three years.

The strikes culminated May 12 in a bloody battle between enraged workers and riot police at a United Aircraft plant in the Montreal suburb of Longueuil. Several hundred workers travelled to the plant site—on strike for the past 16 months by the UAW—from a rally where they had heard FTQ president Louis Laherger denounce the Cliche Commission's findings. Five police cruisers immediately arrived on the scene but were turned over and burned after angry workers forced the cops to leave their cars. Some demonstrators entered the plant, took seven hostages (mostly scabs who had kept the plant running), and demanded that the strike be settled and government legislation against the unions be withdrawn within 48 hours.

Outside the plant, 135 fully equipped riot police shot heavy barrages of tear gas into the crowd. At 1:30 a.m. police prepared to storm the building. When warned of the imminent attack, occupants inside stated over 2-way radio that they were giving up and wanted ten minutes to leave the building quietly. A few minutes later 85 policemen poured into the building carrying truncheons. Jose Ledoux, a radio news reporter taken hostage, broadcast from inside the plant:

"The occupants tried to surrender and offered no resistance but the police massacred them. They are being rounded up in a corner like cattle and at the moment I am speaking to you the police are beating them with their truncheons on the head, the back and the legs."

"It is scandalous, unimaginable, ugly and inhuman. It's disgusting, unthinkable, inhuman scenes. They're bleeding from the head, they're piling up bodies like animals. People are moaning everywhere.... people are being massacred."

Globe and Mail, [Toronto], 14 May

At this point police forced Ledoux to stop broadcasting and set up a smokescreen to carry out hostages and occupants—many on stretchers—by a back door. A senior Longueuil police official later said that his men had only used "necessary force against occupants in the plant" (*Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 14 May).

Following the Longueuil incident, wildcat actions intensified with almost all construction work in Quebec grinding to a halt. More and more workers called in sick to protest the vicious beating of the aircraft plant occupants. The government's response was to suspend regular debating rules in the Quebec National Assembly which quickly passed, "in principle," legislation authorizing receivership of the construction unions. The next day, "The QFL put aside its opposition to the trusteeship legislation, sensing that popular opinion is against it on that issue" (*Globe and Mail*, 16 May).

A province-wide FTQ protest strike on May 21 was limited to a single day—merely a gesture, not a serious struggle against the viciously anti-labour government.

From the Greased Palm to the Mailed Fist

The construction industry in Quebec is a rat's nest of corruption. One third of the construction firms go bankrupt each year, only to reappear soon afterwards under new names. Last year only 47,009 of 144,000 workers were able to work more than 500 hours. Safety regulations are not enforced. During the height of the 1975 construction season, more than one worker a week was killed on the sites and several more injured. The industry is

reportedly controlled by Mafia capital and is infested with graft and patronage.

In this volatile situation, which since 1968 has been characterized by spontaneous explosions of rank-and-file discontent, the government attempted to buy labour peace through the direct bribery of union officials and the promotion of inter-union rivalry. Legal advantages given to the FTQ enabled it to build up a strong network of "stewards" (thugs) whose chief occupation was the raiding of the construction sites of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN—Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux) and intimidation of the FTQ workforce. Strife between the FTQ and CSN was the direct cause of violence at the James Bay Hydroelectric site in northern Quebec last year which provided the opportunity for

the government to move toward direct control of the construction unions.

The Cliche Commission began its inquiry after a fire at the James Bay site caused \$2 million damage. The FTQ tops, headed by "Dede" Desjardins had attempted negotiation of a ten-year no-strike contract in James Bay in return for a monopoly of union representation. When the FTQ failed to have the CSN legally excluded from James Bay, it began a campaign of goon terror which culminated in the fire fourteen months ago.

The government took advantage of the James Bay incident to change its "labour relations" strategy in the construction sector. The greased palm gave way to the mailed fist. The Quebec provincial government of Liberal Robert Bourassa began the Cliche Commission inquiry under the pretext of "fighting corruption" in the construction unions. But the clear purpose is to lay the basis for the repression of the entire Quebec labour movement by promoting the integration of the trade unions into the state apparatus and thereby imposing the "industrial peace" that decades of collusion among the trade-union bureaucracy, the government and the employers have failed to secure.

On 22 May a bill based on the Commission report was passed by the Quebec Assembly. A government-appointed council will run the construction unions, with the power to amend union by-laws and replace union officers. The bill included restrictions on "criminals" holding office; presumption of guilt (guilty until proven innocent) will be used against union leaders prosecuted in connection with illegal strikes or unauthorized work stoppages (wildcats). A proposal for the union hiring hall to be replaced by a "construction agency" composed of representatives of labour, management and government was, however, tabled.

"Anti-Capitalist" Labour Fakers Aid Government Intervention

The Bourassa government's anti-union offensive has been facilitated by the treacherous bureaucratic misleaderships of the labour movement, including the CSN, FTQ and the Quebec Teachers Corporation (CEQ). The head of the inquiry, Judge Robert Cliche, is himself a former provincial leader of the New Democratic Party, Canada's ultra-reformist social-democratic party. The leaders of the CSN, Marcel Pepin and Michel Chartrand, have given back-handed support to the Cliche Commission because it primarily concerned the "representatives of the American unions"—the CSN's term for the FTQ (which is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress and the AFL-CIO). Last year, CSN leaders repeatedly sought court injunctions against FTQ raids.

The Quebec Teachers Corporation even permitted its vice-president, Guy Chevette, to participate as one of the three members of the Commission. When questioned about Chevette's involvement, Yvon Charbonneau, president of the CEQ, responded by saying that while many members and officers disagreed with Chevette's participation on the Commission "the union allows its mem-



Louis Laberge, leader of the Quebec Federation of Labour at rally during one-day province-wide general strike last month in Montreal.

hers to publicly dissent! This criminal position on the decisive question of state control of the unions exposes the complete hollowness of the anti-capitalist rhetoric the CEQ and CSN bureaucrats are so fond of indulging in. Militant workers must demand that the unions maintain absolute independence from the bosses' state agencies, and that all labour officials resign from such government boards and commissions.

The corruption of the FTQ cannot be separated from the pro-capitalist character of the bureaucrats that presently control the trade unions. Those who are willing to sell away the safety, working conditions and economic gains of the rank and file in exchange for favours from the bosses and their government also give political support to the capitalist parties in Quebec and oppose the independent political mobilization of the working class in its own interests. Gangsterism and bribery are an endemic feature of the class collaborationist policies that these labour fakers practice daily.

The corruption of the FTQ bureaucrats must be fought by the rank-and-file unionists themselves. As clearly evidenced by the Quebec government's history of rampant bribery of union officials, the capitalists are hardly interested in "honest" bureaucrats. Bourgeois governments have always intervened to smash the trade-union movement, not to "clean it out."

Thus, for instance, the McClellan hearings led by Robert Kennedy against the Teamsters union in the late 1950's—the first implementation of the U.S. capitalists' "anti-corruption" Landrum-Griffin Act—were a thinly disguised effort to weaken the leadership of a powerful union, using the convenient guise of "fighting corruption." A decade later the U.S. Labor Department's open hacking of Arnold Miller as the "honest" candidate for the presidency of the United Mine Workers succeeded in heading off a rising class militancy by placing in office a bureaucrat who talked "left" but was only too willing to sacrifice the interests of mine workers on the altar of class collaboration. While reformist and centrist socialist groups in the U.S. fell into line behind the Labor Department, hacking the "honest reformer" Miller against the corrupt Tony Boyle, the Spartacist League refused to support class collaboration with the capitalist state.

Class Struggle or Class Collaboration?

The Quebec working class is currently the most militant and class-conscious on the continent. In past weeks it has defied its leaders to register an outraged protest against government takeover of the construction unions. Unlike the disgusting raiding tactics of the construction bureaucrats, strong sentiments for class solidarity have been repeatedly demonstrated, as in 1971 when rank-and-file pressure created the Common Front, a unity of the FTQ, CSN and CEQ to fight for a single contract for Quebec government employees. Struggle around this issue led in May 1972 to a massive general strike of 110,000—the largest in the history of North America.

Like the recent wildcats against government intervention, the 1972 strike was a direct offensive against the government. Strikers demanded unconditional release of three union presidents jailed in connection with the government employees' strike and withdrawal of legislation which would outlaw strikes in the public sector. A situation of embryonic dual power emerged as the Common Front virtually ran some of the towns. But the strike dissipated through lack of a principled and united leadership: within six months the Common Front was disbanded due to internal squabbling and the bureaucrats felt safe to return to their usual capitalist party electioneering.

The tremendous militancy of the Quebec working class can achieve lasting gains only through the development of a class-struggle leadership in the trade unions. Corruption and class treason of the labour movement will end only when the labour lieutenants of capital who now dominate the workers movement are replaced by a leadership committed to a real socialist program, something that goes far beyond the phony anti-capitalist rhetoric of the Laherges, Charbonneaus and Pepin/Chartrands. Such a leadership would not crawl before the bribes of the capitalist class because it could only come to power through mobilization of class-conscious ranks and because of its unequivocal commitment to a program of working-class independence, from refusal to participate on government commissions or sue the unions in the capitalist courts to complete expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers government.

Immediately, the offensive of the Quebec government demands a swift response by the labour movement—a complete mobilization of the militant ranks of the FTQ, CSN and CEQ. A general strike of Quebec labour could bring the government to its knees, smash the trusteeship imposed on the construction unions and prevent similar intervention in the future.

Government out of the union movement!

For a province-wide general strike to smash the trusteeship!

For a class-struggle leadership in the trade unions!

SPARTACIST LEAGUE LOCAL DIRECTORY

BERKELEY/
OAKLAND (415) 653-4668
Box 23372
Oakland, CA 94623

BOSTON (617) 492-3928
Box 188, M.I.T. Station,
Cambridge, MA 02139

BUFFALO (716) 882-3863
c/o SYL, Box 6,
Norton Union, SUNYAB,
Buffalo, NY 14214

CHICAGO (312) 427-0003
Box 6441, Main P.O.,
Chicago, IL 60680

CLEVELAND (216) 621-3379
Box 6765,
Cleveland, OH 44101

DETROIT (313) 921-4626
Box 663A, General P.O.,
Detroit, MI 48232

HOUSTON (713) 926-9944
Box 9054,
Houston, TX 77011

ITHACA (706) 277-3211
c/o SYL, P.O. Box 578
Ithaca, NY 14850

LOS ANGELES (213) 485-1838
Box 26282, Edendale Station,
Los Angeles, CA 90026

MADISON
c/o SYL, Box 3334,
Madison, WI 53704

NEW HAVEN (203) 776-5953
c/o SYL, Box 1363,
New Haven, CT 06505

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

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

PHILADELPHIA ... (215) 667-5695
Box 25601,
Philadelphia, PA 19144

SAN DIEGO
P.O. Box 2034,
Chula Vista, CA 92012

SAN FRANCISCO
Box 5712
San Francisco, CA 94101

TORONTO (416) 366-4107
Canadian Committee of the Inter-
national Spartacist Tendency
Box 6867, Station A,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

VANCOUVER (604) 879-7623
Canadian Committee of the Inter-
national Spartacist Tendency
Box 26, Station A
Vancouver, B.C., Canada



Painting depicting Lenin arriving at Finland Station, after crossing Germany in famous "sealed train." (Stalin is faked in behind him.) On arrival Lenin called on the working class to take power. Ever since bourgeois and social-democratic propagandists have accused the Bolsheviks of being agents of the Kaiser.

Lenin and German Gold

Talk of the "international communist conspiracy" is usually associated with J. Edgar Hoover, Dr. Tom Dooley, Barry Goldwater and other relics/remnants of the cold war. But with the U.S. increasingly on the defensive lately, professional liberal anti-communist pundits are seeking to revive the shibboleth of "outside agitators" and gold from Moscow. In a scurrilous article on the West German Baader-Meinhof neo-anarchists in the *New York Times Magazine* (11 May), Melvin J. Lasky concludes there was no bankrolling by foreign powers in *this case*. But often there is, he adds, "and occasionally it is decisive."

Proof? What we get next is the long-deceased and utterly discredited German gold slander against Lenin and the Bolsheviks!

"We know now that Lenin in exile received millions from the Kaiser's secret political fund and that the money helped finance a plethora of Bolshevik publications."

"We know" that, do we? And how do we know? Lasky offers no evidence, but to allay suspicions of partiality he immediately demonstrates his evenhandedness:

"We also know that the CIA in the postwar years secretly supported many activities that helped stabilize Western European security and 'destabilize' the Communist and neo-Marxist European left."

Now here is knowledge more believable! Lasky ought to know what he is talking about because he is co-editor of *Encounter*, a British magazine published by the Congress of Cultural Freedom, a liberal anti-communist outfit which for years was funded by the CIA. (See Victor Marchetti's *CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, p. 49.)

Like Dr. Goebels, the Nazis' master propagandist, Lasky understands the simple technique of the Big Lie: tell it often. In addition to the Baader-Meinhof article, a recent hook on *The Sealed Train* (by Michael Pearson) and an article on "German Money and Bolshevik Honour"

by Joel Carmichael in *Encounter* (March 1974) have recently elaborated the theme that the "Bolshevik putsch" (the October Revolution) was really a plot by the Kaiser. Carmichael assures us that he at first thought the charges against Lenin were "corny"; but he was, he says, "convinced" by the "hard evidence" that the "German subsidy" was "decisive" in forming Bolshevik policy.

All the "hard evidence" is contained in a slim volume of documents from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry, edited by Z.A.B. Zeman and published in 1958 under the title, *Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915-1918*. These papers are interesting insofar as they reveal the cloak-and-dagger intrigues of Prussian diplomats, but supply nothing even remotely resembling damning evidence against the Bolsheviks. Assuming the authenticity of the documents, they "prove" what is generally accepted: that German imperialism was interested in immobilizing the eastern front in order to transfer troops to the western battlefields, and that they tried to funnel money to Russian defeatists and pacifists whose agitation they perceived to be in the German military interest.

The facts are that far from having a "plethora" of Berlin-financed publications during the exile period, the Bolsheviks had trouble even getting out their monthly newspaper; that a collection of articles by Lenin and Zinoviev (*Against the Stream*) had to be circulated clandestinely in Germany because of censorship; that Trotsky was sentenced *in absentia* by a German court for his pamphlet "The War and the International." Moreover, there is not a shred of evidence that the Bolsheviks received a single Reichsmark; not one sentence in one document shows Lenin on the take.

Even if it could be proved that Lenin did get his hands on some German money, those who would argue that the Bolsheviks were the instruments of the Kaiser's imperialist designs must show that Bolshevik policy was influenced by German gold. But Lasky, Carmichael and Pearson are unable to prove either charge. They are reduced to printing as "evidence" the tired gossip of such "impartial" sources as the bitter anti-Bolsheviks Eduard Bernstein and Kerensky.

Then there are the innuendos: Why did Lenin "take to his heels" to hide in July when the Kerensky government ordered his arrest as an agent of the Central Powers? Did he have something to hide—after all, "Lenin risked absolutely nothing but imprisonment" (Sukhanov, quoted by Carmichael). On the very razor edge of world history it is suggested that Lenin risk a jail sentence (actually execution) to

continued on page 10

Class-Struggle Candidates Challenge Reformists at River Rouge

Anti-Woodcock Sentiment in Detroit UAW Elections

DETROIT—Elections for local officers held in most UAW locals here recently reflected growing dissatisfaction in the ranks with the criminal inaction and betrayals of Leonard Woodcock's Solidarity House bureaucracy. After smashing a spate of wildcat strikes in 1973, including mobilizing 1,000 official goons to break a small sitdown strike at Chrysler's Mack Avenue stamping plant in August of that year, the Woodcock leadership signed a contract with a 3-percent (!) wage increase and no protection against layoffs. Immediately massive layoffs hit the industry during the so-called "energy crisis."

Since then, as layoffs in auto worsened and a general economic downturn set in, Woodcock hastened to lament dwindling corporate profits and the rising market share of foreign autos. Mobilizing the union's powerful 1.5 million-strong membership in strike action to stop the layoffs and fight for the union's stated goal of a shorter workweek at no loss in pay was, for the UAW misleaders, totally out of the question. Now, as the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression promises only to get worse for auto workers—despite predictions by bourgeois economists of a pickup later this year—Woodcock continues to preach reliance on capitalist politicians and pressure on the bosses' government.

The elections were highlighted by evidence that the auto union ranks remember these betrayals and are receptive to oppositionists of various hues. In many locals incumbent administrations were dumped and in others challengers made a strong showing, including ostensible radicals and explicitly anti-Woodcock groupings. These encouraging signs pointing to sentiment for a class-struggle opposition to the dominant bureaucratic reformism were marred, however, by the rampant opportunism and reformism of most of the challengers themselves. Indeed, the elections showed that while the betrayals by the leadership have not been forgotten by the workers, neither have opportunism and mistakes of many of the oppositionists.

In Dodge Truck, Local 140, incumbent President Arthur Harvey was dumped by two challengers, Nate Gooden and Steve Smith, who were thrown into a run-off. Harvey was identified with support for the last contract (in a local which rejected it twice); for weakening the token 1973 Chrysler strike, by letting outside-contracted workers cross picket lines; and for helping break a massive, three-day wildcat strike in June 1974 over bad conditions and the firing of a steward.

Smith was a key leader of the wildcat, and a victim of heavy red-baiting in the Detroit press at the time of the strike. His personal record in the plant helped garner him nearly 1,000 votes, but the Workers Unity slate of which he was a part had an abysmally minimalist program: "Organize to fight attacks by Chrysler. Make the Local hall a workers fortress and unite with other workers to deal with our common problems inside and outside the factory." The slate was supported by the Maoist Revolutionary Union.

In the Mack Avenue Local 212, the 1973 sit-down and goon squad were a key issue. Inspired by open supporters of Progressive Labor Party/Workers Action Movement, the 1973 strike had very little real support in the plant, making the bureaucracy's strikebreaking work easier. During the election, the incumbents



Ford River Rouge plant in Detroit.

denounced the strike as a "commie takeover," and tried to identify the oppositional United National Caucus (UNC) slate with WAM, despite the latter's lack of presence or intervention in the election.

The UNC's response opposed the goon squad while characterizing the WAM action as an adventure, and denounced bureaucratic anti-communism. The rest of the UNC program, however, was utterly reformist: for democratic unionism and membership participation. Damaged by the legacy of WAM adventurism, the UNC slate received only 20 to 30 percent of the vote. Thus the election demonstrated both the poisonous results for the left of idiot adventurism and at the same time the inability of reformist opportunism to overcome bureaucratic anti-communism.

The UNC, which is uncritically tailed after by the reformist International Socialists (IS), was the biggest single oppositional grouping in the elections, with supporter groups or individuals running in five locals. The UNC is anti-Woodcock, setting it apart from a number of run-of-the-mill, pro-machine bureaucratic oppositions, but it has always been a grouping of would-be bureaucrats with a reformist program parochially centered on the UAW. Its formal "program" ("30 for 40," industry nationalizations, labor party, etc.) is always opportunistically buried or dropped altogether when getting elected is at stake. As a result, its individual leaders once in office become virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the bureaucracy. Ironically, the UNC's opportunism both helped and hindered it in this election: in some locals it cornered the opposition vote, but in the Tool and Die Unit of Local 600 (the giant Ford River Rouge complex) UNC incumbent president Al Gardner got caught in a general anti-leadership sweep in which nine of the 14 unit leaderships in Local 600 were dumped! The skilled-trades tool and die unit is traditionally the UNC's base.

The UNC generally has been moving to the right in recent months in preparation for the elections. Thus it was Gardner and the UNC Unemployed Committee (dominated by supporters of the IS brand of social-democratic reformism) which recently sponsored a demonstration under the slogan, "Ford Work for Ford Workers," which was aimed at keeping work at River Rouge which the company wanted to send—not even to Japan or to a non-union shop—but to a UAW Budd plant in Philadelphia!

This criminal parochialism and company protectionism was matched by blatant exclusionism at a UNC demonstration against unemployment on April 3. UNC slogans included a shorter workweek at no loss in pay and independent labor political action, but also a demand for *cutting* (not eliminating) the military budget. When the Spartacist League showed up to participate in the demonstration with its own slogans, the "militant" UNC leadership was offended by our demands for expropriation of industry without compensation and for workers control.

UNC leaders demanded that the SL take down its signs. Upon our refusal, UNC co-chairman Pete Kelley demanded that we leave the demonstration entirely, saying that the UNC didn't want to be associated with socialist organizations. This was immediately supported by UNC Unemployed Committee leader Mark Levitan, a supporter of IS views!

The UNC electoral programs made no mention of broader social and political issues facing the working class, such as busing, which is looming on the Detroit horizon, or the need to stop deportations of undocumented foreign-born workers. The most radical UNC campaign, that of Dave McCollough, another sympathizer of IS politics, for president of Local 869, broke out of trade-union parochialism only far enough to call for the nationalization of Chrysler under workers control and for a labor party. (He identified the latter with European reformist labor parties, saying that "In Sweden, for

example, the unions have been running the country for years." This not only completely blurs the class character of capitalist Sweden, but implies that the unions ought to have as their goal running the capitalist state for the benefit of the bosses!)

Unlike other UNC campaigns, however, McCullough ran alone, not in coalition with assorted bureaucratic aspirants, and made an attempt to represent the usually forgotten UNC "program" in his campaign. For this he was rewarded not with the humiliating defeat one would expect from the opportunist UNC viewpoint, but with the best vote percentage of all the UNC campaigns except Al Gardner: one third of the vote (509 votes to the incumbent's 1,012).

In the Chrysler Jefferson Ave. Assembly plant, Local 7, the Jefferson Avenue Revolutionary Union Movement (JARUM) slate, which is supported by the Stalinist Communist Labor Party, ran on a program which represented a refreshing change from narrow UNC opportunism, but still fell far short of a class-struggle program. JARUM insisted on support to busing, calling on workers to "Smash the KKK, the Nazi party and other fascist gangs." The program, however, failed to mention any way to implement its demand that Jefferson, which Chrysler has threatened to close, be kept open. It also revealed abysmally reformist dependence on the federal government, reflected in demands for government subsidies to provide jobs and implementation of federal health and safety legislation.

Only in the Dearborn Assembly Plant (DAP) unit of Local 600 did two candidates, Keith Dodds and Jerry Harris, running for president and vice-president respectively, put forward a principled class-struggle program. The unit's incumbent president (and subsequent victor in the runoff election), Hank Wilson, is a demagogic militant who claims to be for a labor party and other "left" positions in the abstract, while

toeing the Solidarity House line on every important question. Wilson supported Woodcock for re-election at the last convention and supported the incumbent Local and International leaderships in his current campaign (as did his opponent Ross). Only Dodds and Harris pointed to the futility of an oppositional or radical "local program" within the context of support for the reformist bureaucracy as a whole.

In contrast to the bureaucratic slates, the UNC, and CLP- and RU-supported slates in other locals, Dodds and Harris called for using the strike weapon—including factory occupations to stop mass layoffs or plant closures—to struggle for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. Dodds and Harris also campaigned for the UAW to take the lead in mass organization of the unemployed, for citizenship rights for foreign workers (against deportations), and for international working-class solidarity—against economic protectionism, imperialist wars and interventions and against the UAW holding Israeli war bonds.

Dodds and Harris made a particular effort to raise the busing issue, putting out a special leaflet during the campaign, calling for defense of busing through labor-black defense and extension of busing to Detroit's "white donut" ring of suburbs. This principled stand was appreciated by many black workers in the plant—even the "militant" Wilson refused to mention the issue—but, Dodds told a *WV* reporter, "undoubtedly cost us many white votes." Pointing to the need for a break with Democrats and Republicans, and for a workers party based on the trade unions, Dodds and Harris avoided the reformism of the UNC by calling for a workers government to implement expropriation of large corporations. Without this as its fundamental goal, a labor party could turn out to be merely an alternative means of tying the workers to ("reformed") capitalism.

The DAP campaign was marred by two examples of the grossest "dirty politics" which characterize most trade-union elections. An obviously fraudulent leaflet purportedly in support of Wilson's white opponent Ross, signed by the "klan" and "White Citizen's Council," could only have been the work of an anonymous Wilson supporter.

Another leaflet by the crackpot National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) ran pictures of Dodds and Harris under a huge headline, "These are FBI Agents." Incredibly, the leaflet condemned Dodds and Harris for their stand on busing while also apparently confusing them with the RU, which opposes busing! The gross slander received no response in the plant, and Wilson (who was opportunistically supported in the NCLC leaflet) issued a principled statement repudiating any charges that Dodds or Harris were FBI agents, and affirming freedom of political expression within the union.

Running for the first time, Dodds and Harris received 126 (6 percent) and 280 (15 percent) votes respectively. The lower total was in the hotly contested presidential race and reflected the fact that many workers felt the right-wing candidate must be defeated at all costs. Dodds and Harris refused to capitulate to this "lesser evil" sentiment, and it is significant that they won sufficient support to force a runoff election for president.

A leaflet by Dodds and Harris pointed to the significance of their campaign: "For a change, someone is running not on a watered down vote-catching basis, or avoiding controversial issues for the sake of temporary popularity, but is instead posing the fundamental tasks the UAW must take up to oppose the mounting attacks of [Ford] and the government." It is only such a principled course, not opportunist aping of the reformist bureaucracy, that is capable of forging a class-struggle leadership for the trade unions and taking them forward, under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party, on the road to victory over capitalism. ■

Who Do They Think They're Kidding?

SWP "Explains" Gangster Attacks

The anti-communist campaign of slander, exclusionism and thuggery being carried out by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) against the Spartacist League as well as individual trade-union militants, has recently led to public assassin-baiting of the SL and a physical assault upon three longshore union militants who protested the exclusion of the SL at the May 2 Militant Labor Forum in San Francisco. The excuses put forward by the SWP are so outrageously fraudulent and despicable that a number of organizationally unaffiliated individuals and known SWP sympathizers have joined with the SL in denouncing this pattern of smear tactics and hooliganism (see "Denounce SWP Gangsterism!" *WV* No. 69, 23 May).

Only concerned with deodorizing the stench of its Stalinist-style thuggery now that even its own periphery is gagging on the vile slanders, the SWP has at last come forth with an official "explanation" of its new policy of excluding all SL supporters from SWP forums in the Bay Area. This is contained in a greasy fabrication entitled "Spartacist League Thugs Attack SF Forum" (*Militant*, 6 June).

Dredging the septic tank of social democracy, this foul "reply" avoids answering any of the charges leveled by the SL and numerous unaffiliated individuals who have vehemently protested the SWP's contemptuous violations of workers democracy. Concerning our alleged role as accomplices to would-be counterrevolutionary assassins, the *Militant* dares not "explain" the fact that several SL supporters rushed to the

defense of SWP co-thinker Juan Carlos Coral during the gusano attack in Chicago, nor that subsequently the SWP on its own initiative solicited the assistance of the SL to defend Coral forums in Los Angeles and New York City. Indeed, the prepared statement assassin-baiting the SL which was read at the May 2 San Francisco forum is so indefensible and damaging to the SWP that the *Militant* "reply" refrains from repeating its content. Moreover, the Bay Area SWP has failed to provide the SL with a copy despite repeated requests.

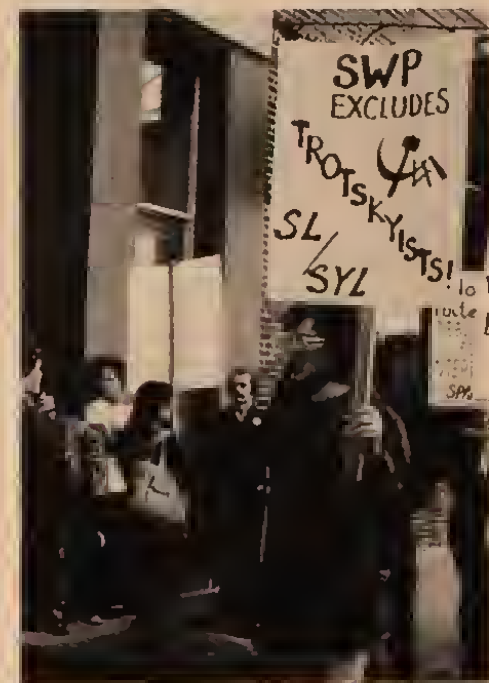
The SWP also has not bothered to identify the five SL supporters who allegedly "disrupted" Coral forums in the Bay Area in March or to detail the incidents of so-called "disruption." And the *Militant* does not explain why the SWP continues to deny the SL permission to make a copy of the tape upon which it recorded the May 2 forum, including the allegedly "disruptive" intervention of the three ILWU union militants and the SWP's response.

Cynically portraying the SWP as an ever-so-tolerant and victimized champion of workers democracy, the *Militant* resorts to open red-baiting, viciously slandering the union militants as "SL representatives" and "SL hooligans." With well-practised consummate hypocrisy the *Militant* piously intones, "Members of the Spartacist League have always been welcome to ask questions and make comments at the Militant Labor Forums, along with everyone else in the audience, provided only that they abide by time limits, confine their discussion to the discussion period, and

respect the right of others to speak."

We rub our eyes in disbelief! Who does the *Militant* think will swallow this? For years the SL in its press and in leaflets has exposed and documented unending incidents of SWP exclusionism and suppression of the "question and comments" of the SL and other working-class tendencies critical of the SWP at its so-called "public" forums and conferences. Instances of such bureaucratic chicanery must be known to virtually every SWP member. Smarting at the sting of Trotskyist criticism, the SWP has long "welcomed" the SL by shouting down our speakers during "discussion" periods, routinely refusing to recognize known SL supporters (even if they are the only ones seeking the floor) and even physically excluding our comrades and supporters from "public" events on a number of occasions.

The *Militant* asserts that at the March



WV photo

I attended the National Peace Action Coalition at Hunter College held on the 4 July 1971 weekend. At that time I was a member of the Socialist Workers Party and had previously been a member of the Southern Regional Executive Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance. I was also a "marshal" at the conference.

Every group has the right to develop a defense guard to prevent its meetings from being disrupted, but the NPAC "marshals" did not form such a group. They were virtually entirely selected on the basis of their support for the SWP, and those individuals hostile to the SWP's politics were consciously excluded as I was told at the time by an SWP leader. Thus they were not present to insure that democratic procedures would be followed, but rather to insure that the SWP's policies were adopted, even if this meant that they themselves would be the disruptive force.

The SWP had decided before the meeting that U.S. Senator Vance Hartke would speak along with Victor Reuther, a leader of the UAW. When the Spartacist League challenged the SWP's agenda, called for the removal of Hartke and called for discussion and vote on its motion, the chairman (an SWP member) ruled the motion out of order on the grounds that "the meeting had not yet started." Thus from the very beginning, the SWP, not the SL or the Progressive Labor Party, disrupted the democratic functioning of the meeting.

Denied this right by the SWP, both PL and the SL proceeded to heckle Hartke and in general, keep him from speaking. While PL additionally attempted to shout Reuther down, the SL chanted "Labor Strikes Against the War" about three times and then sat down. As the PL chanting began to wane, SWP head marshal Fred Halstead suddenly led a select group of SWP marshals against PL, an activity which brought the other SWP-selected marshals into the attack as well. The SL leader at the conference clearly stated that the SL was walking out on its own accord. Despite this, marshals attacked the SL as well, resulting in several injuries to the SL members present. I repeat, the SWP itself was the group that disrupted the meeting by ruling out of order any call for discussion and vote on its previously selected agenda, and SWP leader Fred Halstead, not PL or the SL, began the physical attack.

Paul Abbot
31 May 1975

19 Coral forum in San Jose the SL "yelled loudly" and "interrupted other speakers." It was not the SL but the SWP entourage that yelled loudly and interrupted a woman, duly recognized by the SWP chairman, who, after identifying herself as a member of the Committee for a Militant UAW (Local 1364), raised pointed political criticisms of Coral based on the SL leaflet which she received at the door. As the fuming SWP chairman red-baited this militant, and arch-demagogue Coral tiraded against the SL, heaping slander upon slander, the SL supporters sat silently with hands raised waiting for the chair to "welcome" their "questions and comments." A full 30 minutes later, as the chairman was clearly preparing to end the meeting, an SL member rose, after Coral had finished a reply, to ask why the chair was refusing to recognize known SL spokesmen. SWP supporters began shouting before he even completed one sentence, and a goon squad immediately rushed him. At this and the subsequent forums, the SWP deliberately disrupted the meetings to prevent any voicing of criticisms of the reformist Coral and the SWP's bureaucratic exclusionism.

The other "example" of alleged SL "disruption" mentioned in the *Militant* article was the July 1971 National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) meeting, where the SL is accused of joining Progressive Labor "in a violent attempt to break up"

continued on next page

Letter from ILWU Militants to San Francisco State Student Newspaper

We understand that the Young Socialist Alliance is active on the State campus and recently ran an election campaign for student government. We believe that the student movement must be closely linked to the workers' movement. Thus we feel it's appropriate to communicate our experience with the YSA SWP's strategy for the working class.

Last Friday night (2 May) we attended a public forum given by the SWP YSA on Chile. We had been very active in a boycott of Chilean goods undertaken by our union, the ILWU. For two days last fall in defense of the Chilean working class. So we were particularly anxious to talk to the guest speaker who is active in the Chilean underground. However, we were physically assaulted and thrown out of the meeting.

Why? After we arrived, a picket line was set up in front of the meeting by the SL SYL (Spartacist League & Spartacus Youth League). They were protesting the fact that they were being physically excluded even though the forum was public. When the meeting began, one of us rose to question the exclusion. We pointed out that during the dock boycott the SL SYL was the only left group outside the union to actively support and build it. They picketed the *Santa Maria* in SF and L.A. The SWP YSA itself was nowhere to be seen. Thus we felt the SL SYL would have much to contribute to any discussion on Chile.

The chairwoman responded by announcing there would be no debate on the exclusion till after the speaker, assuring in effect that the SL SYL couldn't participate. She then read a statement which accused the SL SYL of disrupting meetings addressed by the Argentine socialist Coral, which actions set him up for assassination! The SWP statement asserted that the SL had become far more aggressive than in the past, and this "Would have given any assassin a chance to do his work," and it became clear it was "the intent of the SL to do that!"

When we arose again to protest this in light of the highly principled work of the SL SYL in defense of the Chilean working class and to demand that they be permitted to attend, we were jumped. Nine of them attacked three of us, punching and shoving. One of us was thrown to the ground and choked. For a moment they threatened to throw us down a flight of stairs. In all our experience in the labor movement, we've rarely seen even the most reactionary trade union bureaucrats use such violence to silence dissent.

We believe in principle that the only way the workers movement can arrive at the strategy it needs to win a workers' government is through full and open debate within the workers movement. Exclusion and physical attacks are the methods used by union bureaucrats who support the capitalist government's policies to suppress militants. Implications that militants are actually CIA FBI operatives are currently a favorite ploy of union bureaucrats who themselves for years never seriously opposed the policies carried out by the CIA FBI.

The lessons of Chile are vital to the workers and oppressed throughout the world. As the result of mistaken policies in the workers movement which preached confidence in the liberal representatives of capitalism and the peaceful reform of the state, tens of thousands are dead. To prevent a repeat in countries like Portugal or the US itself, the lessons must be carefully drawn. By physically attacking union militants active in defense of the Chilean working class and excluding a left political organization from the discussion on Chile, we believe the SWP YSA disqualifies itself as a leader either of the working class or its ally, the radical student movement.

Bob Mandel
Pete Farrugio

SWP "Explains" Gangster Attacks

(continued from page 9)

the convention "because they didn't agree with what some of the speakers were saying." At that meeting supporters of the SL and PL SDS verbally protested the keynote address of imperialist politician Vance Hartke and labor bureaucrat Victor Reuther. The SWP responded by viciously assaulting the PLers. When the SL rose to defend the victims of this goon attack and then announced we were leaving the meeting in protest against the thuggery, our comrades were also set upon by the NPAC "marshals" (see statement below by a former SWPer who was a member of the NPAC goon squad). A classic example of the SWP's protective attitude toward capitalist politicians was provided by the recent April 26 jobs rally in Washington. When over 1,000 justly angry workers drowned out the cackling Hubert Humphrey with chants of "Jobs Now!" the SWP shrieked "disruption" and proffered its services to the labor skates as "marshals" with experience in keeping such crowds under control.

For the SL workers democracy is a principled question, and we are determined to struggle to uphold the rights of all working-class militants and tendencies, including our own, in any meeting open to the public. We call upon all left and labor organizations to do likewise and demand that the SWP repudiate its cop-baiting, assassin-baiting, red-baiting, and exclusionism and thuggery at once! ■

German Gold...

(continued from page 7)

"clear himself" of concocted charges. Lenin knew better, and responded in the Bolshevik press: "there is no guarantee of justice... in the hands of infuriated counter-revolutionists for whom the whole accusation against us is a mere episode in a civil war" (quoted by Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*).

And what about the "sealed train"? Lenin made no attempt to hide the fact that his journey to the Finland Station from exile in Switzerland went through Germany in a train provided by the German government. There were no commitments and no other way to get there. But Carmichael finds a hidden "logic" sufficient to convict Lenin of being an instrument of German imperialism: "if he accepted a train from Ludendorff, why should he not accept money?" Michael Pearson extends this "logic" to conclude that there must have been a conference between Lenin and German Foreign Office officials while the train passed through Berlin, and that Lenin's famous "April Theses" calling on the Russian workers to overthrow the Provisional Government were cooked up as a result of this interview. Once again, proof is considered superfluous.

Behind all the slimy innuendo and totally unsubstantiated charges is one of the main Big Lies of reactionaries everywhere: social disorder and revolutions are plots hatched by the enemies of "our country." The Paris communards were agents of Bismarck. Lenin was in the pay of the Kaiser. Trotsky was a tool of the Mikado, etc. The best answer to such drivel was provided by the Russian Revolution itself and the untiring efforts of the Bolshevik party under Lenin and Trotsky to spark a revolution in Germany. As Trotsky put it in a speech on 17 July 1917:

"Lenin has fought thirty years for the revolution. I have fought twenty years against the oppression of the people. And we cannot but cherish hatred for German militarism.... A suspicion against us in that direction could be expressed only by those who do not know what a revolutionist is."

For a Citywide Strike Against Layoffs!

(continued from page 12)

employees given union seniority rights.)

When the pressure mounts from the union's ranks on whose political support and dues the labor bureaucracy rests, even the conservative labor leadership is forced into taking some kind of action—thus Gotham's "labor boycott" of Citibank. After coming in to the city in December, Gotham announced he was joining the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee to "work to make good men like Paul O'Dwyer understand the human suffering the crisis is causing." Now that Gotham has been successful—O'Dwyer pulled his personal savings out of Citibank—presumably the crisis is solved! The program of social democracy is to pressure the bourgeoisie for reforms; in bad times like the current depression this class collaboration is translated into giving up gains won in the past. The role that Victor Gotham will surely play this time around was already demonstrated in his leadership of the farcical 1971 bridge tenders' strike, which he called off after two days, losing every demand in order to avoid a fight with city hall.

Cops are Workers' Enemies

AFSCME's Gotham after announcing he was through with making contractual concessions turned around and said that "the unions have to give up some of the crap they got at the bargaining table. They never should have got some of it" (*New York Times*, 23 May). In response Kenneth McFeeley, president of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, said: "If his workers are happy to give up anything, I'm happy for him. But I won't concede any part of my contract nor will I ask my membership to do so."

In the past six months it has been only the head of the PBA who has even put a credible front of opposition to Beame, rejecting plans for cuts in benefits and hours which the unions accepted. The total subservience of the union leaders may have deluded many workers into believing that McFeeley and the PBA will be the strongest defenders of the unions. The opposite is true. Soaring crime rates which accompany economic slumps mean that more than ever the capitalist class needs armed bodies of men to protect its property and to prevent social unrest. It is the PBA's ability to exploit this situation which accounts for its present "militancy." The gains of the police "union" will never benefit organized labor, but will be used instead to smash it.

Since December the PBA has been fighting to abolish the city's wage-parity scale (under which firemen receive the same pay as cops, and sanitation workers get 90 percent of "parity"), insisting that police alone should get higher pay. And during the 1974 Baltimore city workers' strike, cops who are in the same union—AFSCME—arrested sanitation men who were defending the picket line from scabs! The police, the direct arm of the capitalist class are not part of the working class and should be kicked out of the unions and all labor organizations!

Cancel the Debt, Expropriate the Banks

Victor Gotham's "discovery" that the banks write the songs the politicians sing is itself an old populist tune. But the current New York City financial crisis is more than just a shell game or a Rockefeller-masterminded conspiracy. Crackpot populist schemes to boycott or tax the banks can never make them change their policies for the bankers are

capitalists, and function largely irrespective of an individual's will. Faced with the need to make profits or go bankrupt, the logic of their own situation in an economic crisis means the capitalists can only respond by trying to slash labor costs and prevent social unrest through cracking down on the unions, controlling them and ultimately smashing them if necessary.

Similarly, suggestions for cutting down on the military budget and re-allocating it to New York as proposed by the Communist Party (as if the military budget to oppress the working masses of the world would be okay if New York wasn't broke)—or the old Labor Committee slogan, now adopted by the Socialist Workers Party, for a debt moratorium—leave the capitalist system untouched. Lest anyone should fear that the ex-Trotskyist SWP is trying to sneak in an attack on the profit system leading to the seizure of power, these reformists made sure their call for a debt moratorium specified *when the moratorium would end!*

"This much is obvious: the starting point for solving the crisis of the cities cannot be the payment of bank profits. It has to be improving the communities themselves and providing jobs. Until there are viable programs to answer these needs, there should be a complete moratorium on bank debts."

—Militant, 30 May

For 1975 the city owes the banks \$1.8 billion dollars in debt service, almost twice the amount of the cash flow deficit being used to justify the threatened 67,000 layoffs. Instead of "solutions" which would allow banks to continue their exploitation once the crunch is eased, the debt should be cancelled in its entirety. The banks cannot be reformed or pressured. The only way out of the financial crisis is the expropriation of the banks and all major industry, without compensation—not as an attack merely on the Republicans, or as part of a giant "anti-monopoly coalition" containing everybody including the mayor, but as part of the program for the overthrow of the capitalist system by a workers government.

For a City-Wide Strike Against Layoffs

As Gotham should have learned on last month's March on Washington, the very act of mobilizing the labor movement brings with it an explosive potential which constantly threatens to rush beyond its leaders' limited aims. Thus the AFL/CIO was forced to halt its own rally when angry unionists shouted down the capitalist politicians Hubert Humphrey and Bella Abzug. But despite the clear appetite for struggle visible in Washington, without a clear program and leadership it could go nowhere (except a few times around second base).

The social democrats and the Stalinists must be replaced by a leadership based on methods of militant class struggle and a program to break the unions' political ties with the Democratic Party through the independent mobilization of labor in its own party. The main obstacle in this struggle is the misleaders such as Gotham who today stand at the head of the unions. The key focus now is for the organizing of a general strike of all city workers against the layoffs. In addition a class-struggle leadership would fight for massive programs of public works at union scale and under control of the labor movement; for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to open up significant numbers of new jobs; for unlimited, unconditional unemployment compensation for all at union wages; and for amalgamating welfare, unemployment and social security programs into a single fund at the highest rates.

—Cancel the Debt—Expropriate the Banks, No Compensation!

—For a City-Wide General Strike Against Layoffs!

—Break with the Democrats and Republicans—Build a Workers Party Based on the Unions to Fight for a Workers Government!

Pathet Lao ...

(continued from page 1)

nam began to desert the sinking Thieu regime, carefully hoarded Vietnamese gold had to be exchanged for more easily transportable U.S. dollars. The Laotian thieves jumped at the chance to clean up through speculating in gold and began to funnel every available U.S. dollar out of the country and into Vietnam. As a result, the kip (the Laotian unit of currency) was tremendously devalued and an already skyrocketing rate of inflation was multiplied in a matter of days. The angry masses responded with intensified demonstrations like the one in Vientiane while the barges and ferries laden with businessmen, generals and feudalists and their loot began to stream across the Mekong River into Thailand.

From Coalition to Coalition

The Laotian struggle against U.S. and French imperialism has shared a parallel and often combined course with that of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. As in Vietnam resistance developed under Japanese occupation. Again following the path of Ho Chi Minh, the provisional government—set up by Souvanna Phouma and his "communist" half-brother Prince Souphanouvong to maintain independence after the war—placed no obstacle in the path of the reoccupying French Army in 1946.

When fighting resumed in 1948 the royal half-brothers had gone their occasionally separate paths. Souvanna Phouma having capitulated to French rule while Souphanouvong took up the gun in alliance with the Viet Minh. The Pathet Lao military campaign was so successful that in 1953 it threatened to take the royal capital (Luang Prabang). Their position weakening both in Laos and Vietnam, the French amassed their forces on the border at Dienbienphu—a tactical error which led to their immediate defeat at the hands of the Viet Minh.

Following the 1954 Geneva Accords and some amount of jockeying for power, Souvanna Phouma became premier in 1956. He then had to face the dismal reality which was to be his "burden" on and off for the next 20 years. The Neo Lao Haksat (the Laotian Patriotic Front, formed in 1956 and usually referred to in the U.S. press as Pathet Lao) clearly had political hegemony in the country and was militarily impregnable in the provinces they controlled along the North Vietnamese border. The venal feudal princes and the greedy merchants (many of whom were either Indian or Chinese) had neither the power, the unity of interests nor the appetite to "fight communism." In the interest of sustaining bourgeois rule the premier moved toward a coalition government with his half-brother, Souphanouvong, armed with Stalin's schema of a "bloc of four classes," gratefully accepted the role as co-protector of "national democracy."

However, when elections to the National Assembly were held in 1958 the Pathet Lao made the blunder of roundly defeating its opposition, whereupon Souvanna Phouma yielded the premiership to Phoui Sananikone, a right-winger. This new regime "requested" that the Pathet Lao turn over its guns to the government. When the guerrillas refused, the reactionaries staged a coup d'état with full American and CIA backing, arresting Souphanouvong among others. (The "red prince" escaped from jail two years later.) Eight coups later, two of which had taken Souvanna Phouma in and out of power again, the half-brothers reformed their "anti-imperialist united front" while the oft-times premier was in Sihanouk's Cambodia during the latter part of 1960.

Back to Geneva

Within a year the rehorn alliance threatened to sweep the country causing President Kennedy to threaten armed American intervention unless "those who support a truly neutral Laos... consider their response." Nikita Khrushchev dutifully complied, assisting in summoning a conference on the Laos question at Geneva. The conference dragged on until mid 1962 when Kennedy accelerated the "negotiations" by landing 5,000 American troops in Thailand.

Souphanouvong duly agreed to participate in the resultant coalition government, but it was not quite a year before assassinations aimed at the left began and the coalition disintegrated, the Pathet Lao delegation trekking its way back to Sam Neua (their capital). Souvanna Phouma's response was to call for American air reconnaissance in 1964 and to O.K. American bombing a year later—a bombing of unprecedented intensity and savagery (more tons of explosives than against either North or South Vietnam) which continued unabated for the next eight years.

It was as part of the hackwash of another robbers' peace, the Paris Peace Treaty, that the preparations for the third "bloc of four classes" began in 1973. Six months after the ceasefire the right wing predictably attempted what was to be its final coup. By this time, however, the U.S. ruling class had responded to the war-weariness at home and the stubborn resistance of the Indochinese worker and peasant fighters by opting to abandon a military strategy, relying instead on "diplomacy." Souphanouvong persevered in the coalition nonetheless. It remained the task of the turncoat Laotian comprador bourgeoisie to thrust power into the insurgents' hands.

No doubt the Maoist apologists of the *Guardian*, October League and Revolutionary Union will sing paeans to the clever and inscrutable machinations of this "red prince" who so cleverly manipulated the imperialists and their local allies into handing him state power. Unmentioned will be the 60,000 to 100,000 Laotian lives (equivalent to 4 to 7 million deaths in the U.S.) sacrificed since the mid 1950's—when, by all accounts, the Pathet Lao could have controlled the

country in the services of this "marvelous" Stalinist strategy of class-collaborationist coalitionism.

Nor will these fakers point out that the history of the Indochinese revolution at every step repudiates Mao's version of Stalin's "bloc of four classes"—most dramatically in Laos where the program of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front was put into practice, not once, but three separate times—each time save the last with disastrous results.

Permanent Revolution

In contrast, the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution explains that the

taking over in Laos. This process, which directly contradicts the Vientiane Agreements setting up a tripartite coalition government, is taking place only because of the power vacuum created by the massive flight of the country's exploiting classes (and in the absence of a proletariat fighting for its own class rule). The Pathet Lao have, in fact, tried to continue the coalition but have been unable to find willing "progressive" rightists with whom to do so.

With the deep and continuing undermining of the economic bases of bourgeois-landlord rule, the disarray in state apparatus (officers being deposed by the troops, a purge of leading officials in

Neue Zürcher Zeitung



"General" Vang Pao, head of CIA-financed "secret army" in 1960's. Along with the bulk of Laotian ruling class, he has fled to Thailand.

weak bourgeoisies of the economically backward countries are, because of their dependence upon imperialism and domestic feudal reaction, incapable of carrying out the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution. The peasantry, socially atomized and lacking a coherent class interest, is also unable to provide independent revolutionary leadership. It is only the proletariat, supported by the peasantry, that can achieve these tasks by establishing its own class rule.

This lesson was confirmed by the Russian Revolution of 1917, where agrarian revolution was possible only after the working class seized power, and has been negatively verified by the repeated failure of bourgeois nationalists from Chiang Kai-shek to Mujibur Rahman to achieve national emancipation, the overturn of feudal production relations, or any of the other tasks of the bourgeois revolution.

The Laotian ruling class is only an extreme caricature of its counterparts elsewhere in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The cringing merchants beholden to U.S. "aid" programs and the underworld opium syndicate are not merely indifferent but actively hostile to breaking with imperialism. Likewise the feudalists of southern Laos, and the rightist generals who are frequently members of the same clans, can hardly be enthusiastic about an agrarian revolution to give "land to the tiller." Yet these are the elements with which the "anti-imperialist" Pathet Lao has made repeated coalitions!

After years of conciliating the most venal and socially impotent reactionaries, the Stalinist Neo Lao Haksat is now

the ministries) and the decisive military predominance of the Pathet Lao forces, only the unlikely events of massive imperialist intervention or a new sellout at the international bargaining tables can reverse the Stalinist-led insurgents' consolidating of state power.

Because of its extreme economic backwardness, with large sections of the country in pre-feudal tribal economy, a Stalinist-ruled Laos would tend to lean on and take on the social character of the neighboring more advanced Chinese and Vietnamese deformed workers states. Whatever the fate of the coalition form and the tempo of nationalizations, the Stalinists as in Cambodia and Vietnam will be forced to create collectivized property forms in order to consolidate and defend their rule. What the Stalinists will not and cannot do is establish democratic organs of working-class rule; rather, they can at most create a bureaucratically deformed workers state. In order to go forward to socialism and extend the revolution internationally a workers political revolution, led by a Trotskyist vanguard party, is necessary.

- U.S. Imperialism Out of Southeast Asia! Unconditional Military Defense of the Deformed Workers States Against Imperialism!

- Down with the Vientiane Agreements—No Confidence in the Pathet Lao! Extend the Indochinese Revolution—For Soviet Forms of Proletarian Democracy—All Indochina Must Go Communist!

- For the Creation of Trotskyist Parties in Indochina—Toward the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Beame Threatens Mass Firings in NYC

For a Citywide Strike Against Layoffs!

JUNE 1—Behind Victor Gotbaum's call for the June 4 city worker rally and the labor boycott of First National City Bank is a recognition that the bourgeoisie is hardening in its determination to have it out with the unions and make the serious inroads on labor contracts it considers necessary in the coming period. Every city union in New York faces layoffs which, while they may not add up to Mayor Beame's worst doomsday figures, will nonetheless cut deep. Already the city government has announced it is sending out 16,590 dismissal notices by the end of this month. Yet even while AFSCME leader Gotbaum is announcing that the chorus sung by the politicians was composed in a memo from the banks and is calling Citibank labor's main enemy, he is on the road to capitulation and has publicly stated that he is prepared to accept layoffs and contractual concessions.

It is now clear that the showdown over the "cash flow crunch" represents a decision of the capitalist class from Ford/Rockefeller on down that it can no longer delay the process of cracking a hard union town. This confrontation must be met by a general strike of city workers. But the degenerate class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy has not said one word about militant labor action. When Beame announced a possible total of 67,000 layoffs, from Shanker, Vizzini, DeLury and Gotbaum came only the hollow mutterings that (while they would assure control over organized labor) they could not guarantee the reaction of enraged residents to the cuts in hospitals, schools, and garbage collection.

The Crunch

New York's "cash flow" crisis is one faced by many large cities whose revenue sources are drying up with the migration of employed workers to the suburbs and rising unemployment rates, while they are simultaneously faced with increased demand for welfare and social services. Faced with the prospect of social breakdown through strikes and riots brought on by its own inability to pay salaries and provide necessary services, the ruling class at a certain point must inevitably go on the offensive against the unions.

New York has been a particular irritant to the bourgeoisie because of the relatively high salaries and benefits won by the municipal unions in the late 1960's and the free-tuition, open-admissions college program, a by-product of the civil rights movement. In recent months the virulently anti-labor *New York Times* has been hammering away at Beame to carry out his previously announced layoffs, complaining that the labyrinthine city



New York City AFSCME members at April 26 jobs rally in Washington, D.C.

WV photo



Victor Gotbaum

WV photo

hall bureaucracy enabled the mayor to play shell games, switching workers from one payroll to another instead of getting rid of them. In fact, while it is useful to Beame to be able to blame the "Republican pincers movement" in Washington for the need to lay off, and for Gotbaum to focus on the Rockefeller banks thereby avoiding having to fight his employer, the Democrats have been moving steadily since last November on a course toward showdown with the unions.

Beame's announcement last month that he needed to come up with \$1 billion before June 30 to meet labor costs and operating expenses brought matters to a head. The response was Gerald Ford's "Dear Abe" letter flatly and categorically denying federal aid which "would only postpone for the coming period coming to grips with the problem." Treasury secretary William E. Simon was quoted by the *New York Times* (15 May) saying that Ford's letter should be a signal to the city that "it take the extremely difficult political actions it must to put its fiscal and financial house in order." The line was clear, and implicitly racist as well, with congressional leaders talking about "sin city... beset by crime," suggesting the city is a bottomless pit of nothing but criminals, black people on welfare and undocumented Latin Americans. From Ford and Simon who themselves are running a federal deficit of \$68.8 billion came paternalistic homilies that New York had to learn how to balance its budget once and for all!

More Than One Shell Game

Abe Beame's shell game is not the only one in town—far more treacherous for the working class is the one being played by Victor Gotbaum. Last December when the city was gearing up to go after the unions, Gotbaum threatened that

Beame would find out he was sitting on a "tinderbox" if he tried anything. At the same time Gotbaum, after trying to horse-trade the forced retirements of older workers, ceded without a fight a week of shorter summer hours and several months of benefits for new employees which were important contractual concessions. In subsequent months he has simply turned his back on significant numbers of layoffs.

The December negotiations were just a warm-up. Deputy Mayor Cavanaugh said the "purpose of the negotiations was not the money-saving arrangements themselves but the precedent of the city's re-entering an existing labor contract and taking back fringe hours that had been previously agreed" (*New York Times*, 22 May). Now the real onslaught is beginning. From Beame's very first hints, Gotbaum was announcing he would accept 38,000 layoffs instead of a four-day week, and has stated flatly he will not fight to save the jobs of provisional employees although they are union members. (The civil service, a phony system set up to go around the unions to "protect" workers actually jeopardizes them by denying provisionals any seniority rights although many have more years in than do many permanents. The civil service must be abolished with all

continued on page 10