

## Peronism Paved the Way



Helicopter carries Isabel Perón from the roof of the Casa Rosada after generals took power in Buenos Aires last week.



Army tanks and armoured personnel carriers guard the presidential palace on the day of the coup.

Gente

# Military Coup in Argentina

## Down with the Junta! For Workers Revolution!

MARCH 30—When the strategically situated tanks started to move on the Casa Rosada and troops took up their assigned stations in downtown Buenos Aires, it was all over in a matter of a few minutes for the government of Isabel Perón. Not a shot was fired and the only one taken by surprise seemed to be the Argentine president herself. The helicopter that was to take her home around midnight last Tuesday instead deposited her in the military section of the municipal airport. There she was arrested at gunpoint, then swiftly spirited off to an isolated Andean lake resort in Neuquén province.

The March 23 coup d'état was certainly one of the most precisely executed and publicly prepared "conspiracies" in history. "More German than Argentine" was the reported verdict of one approving rancher. But the true significance of the fact that army commander Lt. General Jorge Videla could hatch his plans so openly—not even leaving the timing a secret—lay not in national characteristics but in the total isolation and impotence of the Peronist government.

The bloodless coup revealed the political paralysis of the strongest organized labor movement on the South American continent, left prostrate before the *gorilas* (reactionary militarists) by the treacherous bourgeois

populist, Peronist leadership of the unions. Fake revolutionists from the Brezhnevite Communist Party and the Castroist PRT/ERP to ostensible Trotskyists have for years capitulated before the bourgeois populists, so that the Argentine working class saw no revolutionary alternative. When their Peronist misleaders fled, they were without direction. There was no reported resistance.

That the reactionary putsch came as an anti-climax does not make it any less dangerous. The new regime is taking pains to appear as reconcilers. Videla's speech to the nation talks of a "healing process"; the news agencies publish photographs of soldiers feeding the pigeons in the Plaza de Mayo. But behind the "moderate" image of the junta, including Videla, navy chief Vice Admiral Emilio Massera and Air Force commander Lt. General Orlando Agosti, lurk numerous "hard-liners" screaming for blood.

Despite the cynical talk of reconciliation, it is clear that the generals have taken power in order to smash the workers movement. Videla's program for the Argentine workers is the same as Pinochet's remedy for Chile. To the extent that rigidly enforced "moderation" is unable to break the back of organized labor—which will now be made to pick up the tab for

bankrupt Argentine capitalism—the *gorilas* are prepared to drench the workers quarters in rivers of blood.

### Imperialists Gloat

Now that only two South American countries (Venezuela and Colombia) remain with elected civilian governments, the *New York Times* (28 March) haughtily editorializes about "Latin America, the Growing Graveyard for Democracies." But like most of the imperialist press, the *Times* has all but demanded just such a coup throughout the last year. It only regrets that it took so long in coming. The U.S. government—and its closest allies in the Latin countries, Spain, Brazil and Chile—is no less enthusiastic. Its diplomatic recognition of the new government came almost before the seizure of power was under way.

So far the junta's moves show careful attention to the sensibilities of world bourgeois opinion. Taking into account the vicissitudes of a U.S. election year and the generalized revulsion caused by the Chilean bloodbath, the new rulers in Buenos Aires characterize their projected policies as "pragmatic liberalism." Renouncing Peronism's occasional flights of "Third World" rhetoric, the level-headed officers call for a reconciliation with the international financiers. On that score, the junta can undoubtedly

ly expect a certain generosity.

Under the regime's announced plans for a drastic austerity plan (for the workers), imperialist refinancing of the more than \$1 billion in debts due this May now becomes likely, along with further loans, investment and aid from the imperialist coffers. The new economics minister, José Martínez de Hoz, is a major industrialist and managing director of the Acindar steel concern. His plans for "economic recovery" will no doubt be inspired by the experience of the 1975 Acindar steel strike in Villa Constitución, where the army and police arrested more than 200 union militants and occupied the city for weeks.

### Restoring "Essential Values"

The junta undertook its "national reorganization" early Wednesday, vowing that its "fundamental objective will be to restore the essential values which guide the state." Military officers are replacing civilian administrators in all major institutions, as the governmental apparatus is flushed out from top to bottom. A string of tough communiqués dissolved congress, provincial legislatures and city councils; removed judicial authorities, and suspended all political activity. In addition, six leftist parties were outlawed, including the ostensibly

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Novosti Press

## Soviet Agriculture: A Stalinist Disaster .....6



# For An S.F. General Strike Against Anti-Labor Offensive!

## LATE BULLETIN

As we go to press the San Francisco Labor Policy Committee has announced that S.F. municipal employees are on strike beginning at midnight, March 30. A key issue is the city board of supervisors' threats of a no-strike law. Also announced today was an outrageous reduction of the city's original \$6.5 million wage offer to \$2.3 million. Craft unions are now being asked to accept substantial pay cuts. All S.F. labor must join the fight against this provocation!

SAN FRANCISCO, March 26—The San Francisco County Board of Supervisors renewed its long-standing offensive against city labor this week as 18,500 workers in several departments awaited an April 1 deadline on a new wage package. Leaders of key municipal unions have issued strike warnings. However, these labor fakery have a long history of groveling capitulation to "friend-of-labor" politicians in city government who are leading the charge. Despite obvious militancy and solidarity in the ranks, the union tops are refusing to prepare for the necessary city-wide general strike to stop these attacks.

At issue is the wage package for "miscellaneous" city workers represented by numerous unions, most important being the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the various building trades craft unions. Included in the list are the city clerks, hospital workers and others, plus the craft unions (machinists, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc.).

Newly-elected San Francisco mayor George Moscone and the city supervisors have clearly been preparing to carry out their anti-labor election appeals to the "taxpayer" vote. The passage of the infamous Proposition B in the last election allows the Board to move directly against the craft unions, whose wages previously had to be pegged to those in private industry. In January, the supervisors began preparing a new city charter amendment for the June ballot which would make striking an offense punishable by firing for all city workers (the previous rule had covered only police and firemen). "There's no place in our city for yet another crippling public strike," warned Moscone (*San Francisco Examiner*, 21 February).

The negotiations have been conducted as a deliberate provocation to test labor resistance. The Board did not even begin the talks until March 1, only one month away from the deadline. In the meantime they hired a \$3,000-a-month "negotiator," Patrick Mahler, and passed a special ordinance barring all negotiations which did not include him. Stanley Jensen of the Machinists' Union described one meeting with Mahler in which the latter told the union it would have to forego double-time rates for overtime work and make other reductions. Mahler's conclusion: "No nego-

tiations are possible. This is it" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 19 March).

Thus the Board of Supervisors, the governing agents of the San Francisco employing class, had thrown out a direct challenge to the workers movement. In ruling-class circles, the only question was: "Will they fight? Or will they take it lying down?" The weak-kneed response of the trade union bureaucrats was to attempt to preserve labor "peace" through capitulation. Jensen later reported that the leaders of the S.F. Central Labor Council (CLC) had gone so far as to offer to submit to final binding arbitration in order to avoid a "mass strike." No doubt sensing weakness, the Board turned down even this sellout proposal to turn the workers' fate over to "neutral" mediation.

Forced by the intransigence of the city government bosses into making a show of militancy, the top labor leaders—including Jack Crowley of the CLC, Harry Bridges of the ILWU, Stanley Smith from the Building Trades, Joe Mazzola of the Plumbers Union and Tim Twomey of the SEIU—issued a joint warning of a city-wide strike, and held a pep rally on March 22. Terrified by the prospect of a real class-struggle mobilization of San Francisco labor's ranks, the bureaucrats contented themselves with the usual gestures. Instead of preparing for a city-wide general strike, nine building trades unions filed "unfair labor practices" charges against the city.

At last week's rally for city workers, the labor traitors denounced the "politicians," ignoring their own gross culpability in having helped elect Moscone, despite the latter's openly anti-labor campaign. Mazzola harked back to Joseph Alioto, the previous mayor, as a model, "forgetting" Alioto's crushing of the 1974 city workers strike with the help of state police. Mazzola's conclusion was that he really didn't want a strike, although he had earlier complained, "I don't know how to negotiate a downgrade agreement." He will learn fast—through capitulation to the bosses' politicians in order to avoid waging a successful strike!

The only sign of verbal militancy at the rally came from Larry Martin, whose union, the Muni transit workers' local of the TWU, is not directly involved in the negotiations but has a very militant membership. Transit workers have voted to back the city

workers and were hoping for reciprocal support when the Muni contract expires in July. Martin's speech received a standing ovation, but when it was suggested to end the meeting by singing "Solidarity Forever," the nervous bureaucrats quickly ended the rally before the singing could start.

Only a militant struggle can prevent a rout of the workers at the hands of city government. Already it is beginning: as soon as the Board of Supervisors announced a partial settlement with the major unions except the craft unions, Crowley sighed with relief that a strike was now "much less likely" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 March). The SEIU leadership quickly rammed through a tentative ratification vote on March 25.

The agreement includes a gross exacerbation of pay differentials, providing lowest-paid categories—including many women clerical workers—with only a 3 percent increase, while the highest brackets get an 11 percent jump. The deal reduces premium rates for overtime, knocking double- or triple-time rates down to flat rates or time-and-a-half in some categories—a gross betrayal in a period of high unemployment, when more workers, not less, should be hired at shorter hours with no loss in pay. In addition, department heads have been granted the authority to send employees home when no "appropriate work" is available (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 March).

The ploy by the city rulers to isolate and destroy the powerful craft unions, beginning with the invidious Proposition B, has for the time being succeeded: the union leaders are now simply hoping to avoid a pay cut. In a further attempt to weaken their main target, the municipal tops are trying to slice out the critical Operating Engineers—who allowed sewage to drain into the Bay during the 1974 strike—with a piece-off of 15 percent.

Taxes will be raised, services slashed and fares increased—and all of it will be blamed on the "greed" of the municipal unions—regardless. City workers must not pay by worsening their living standards for the economic ills of the capitalist system! Only through militant class struggle can city employees both defend themselves against the union-busting, wage-slashing Board of Supervisors, and come to the aid of other working and poor people in the city who depend on the buses, trolleys, hospitals, etc. But the trade-union leaders stand in the way of a city workers general strike, city-wide labor solidarity and a class-struggle program. The buzzards in the halls of labor know only one purpose: how to find accommodation with the bosses. The workers' interests require a different program!

*Oust the bureaucrats!* Build a class-struggle union leadership!

*For a city-wide general strike!* No wage cuts! For the right to strike of all city workers!

*Not cutbacks, but jobs for all!* For a shorter workweek at no loss in pay! Essential social services must be provided free for all working people!

*Break from the capitalist parties!* No more capitulation to the Aliotos and Moscones! Build a workers party to fight for a workers government! ■

## Warmongering on the Campaign Trail

## Kissinger Threatens Blockade of Cuba in Defense of Apartheid

"I solemnly warn Fidel Castro," intoned Gerald Ford, promising to "take appropriate measures" to prevent "another Angola." Since February 28, when imperialism's commander-in-chief pronounced Castro an "international outlaw," the sound of sabre-rattling in Washington has grown deafening. Kissinger declared that "it is time that the world be reminded that America remains capable of... decisive action." In Dallas this week he reiterated his threat to militarily confront Cuba (and necessarily the Soviet Union) over the possibility of a Cuban intervention into the guerrilla war against Ian Smith's white supremacist regime in Rhodesia.

Presidential candidate Fred Harris sent a telegram to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 25 saying that "trusted sources have indicated to me that the Ford Administration is planning a blockade of Cuba, related to Cuba's possible involvement in Africa" (*New York Times*, 26 March). So the Cuban "missile crisis" is again on the political and military drawing boards as the Pentagon and Ford "review" contingency plans. According to military sources interviewed by the *New York Times* (24 March), "A naval blockade... appears to be the most obvious military option available to the United States" but that perhaps "a

## CHICAGO

Spartacus Youth League Forum

### The Struggle Against Fascist Terror

- For Labor/Black Defense
- Stop Nazi Terror in Marquette Park
- The Lessons of History

Speaker:  
PAUL HUNTER

Thursday, April 8, 12 Noon  
University of Illinois  
Circle Center  
Room to be announced

## CHICAGO

Spartacus Youth League Forum

### Mao's Foreign Policy—Long March of Betrayals

Speaker:  
LEN MEYERS

Wednesday, April 7, 7:30 p.m.  
Roosevelt University  
Herman Crown Center  
Blumkovler Room



demonstration of the accuracy and lethality [sic] of new American weapons might reinforce Mr. Kissinger's warnings."

Much of the warmongering talk coming out of Washington is of course campaign warfare against Ronald Reagan, who has appealed to right-wing Cuban exile groups by declaring that the Ford administration is "soft" on Cuba. But stinging from the defeat in Angola, Ford and Kissinger have taken to demonstrations that they too are willing to blow up the world if necessary to defend the considerable interests of imperialism in southern Africa. Such threats cannot in any case be taken lightly.

The threats against Cuba are calculated to provide arguments for a possible military intervention on the side of apartheid and white minority rule in southern Africa. No doubt understanding that the Smith regime in Rhodesia is doomed, the U.S. is officially on record as favoring "majority rule" in Rhodesia and South Africa. But in fact the core of U.S. policy since the 1969 Kissinger-authored Operation "Tar Baby" (which poured U.S./NATO economic and military aid into a regime the U.S. had hypocritically condemned in the UN since 1963) has been to back—sometimes openly, mostly secretly—the status quo in southern Africa, that is, white racism. So, while saying the U.S. will "do nothing" to prop up minority rule, the U.S. prepares instead to fight the "Communist menace"—with the same operational results. Imperialism is consistently anti-Communist and racist.

The same "logic" which demanded the destruction of Vietnamese villages in order to "save" them was employed by Kissinger last week as he announced that the U.S. "cannot permit the Soviet Union or its surrogates to become the world's policeman" (*New York Times*, 23 March). This from imperialism's top cop—the terror bomber of Southeast Asia, the godfather of CIA assassination squads, the bankroller of right-wing military movements all over the world.

No one knows better than the Cubans who really is "the world's policeman": U.S. imperialism, which organized an armed invasion of Cuba, which has backed to the hilt every rabid Cuban exile group and counterrevolutionary scheme, which tried for years to assassinate Castro, which risked a nuclear war in a naval blockade, which has for years maintained an economic embargo against Cuba. Now these vicious warmongers threaten Cuba in the name of "freedom." Socialists must stand prepared to unconditionally defend the gains of the Cuban revolution, as the sabre-rattlers' election bravado exposes imperialism's murderous cutting edge. Hands Off Cuba! Down with White Supremacist Rule in Southern Africa! ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Free Desmond Trotter!

Desmond Trotter's last chance for action by the imperial judiciary of the British Commonwealth to save him from the hangman's noose came to a bitter end March 18. The British Privy Council refused to hear an appeal for the young "black power" militant, despite international protest against the outrageous guilty verdict and death sentence handed down by "Her Majesty's Court" on the Caribbean island of Dominica. Trotter, who has been in solitary confinement for nearly two years, can now only hope that the boss of Dominica, Premier Patrick John, is unable to ignore the outcry on his behalf and will be forced to grant a reprieve.

In a telephone interview with the London-based defense committee for Trotter, *WV* learned that the prisoner has only a 21-day grace period for his sentence to be commuted by a six-man "Mercy Committee." If John has his way, Trotter will hang. On Monday, March 29, John called for a "patriotism" demonstration in the capital. Reports indicate that this show of force was ineffective and poorly attended.

Most important, it was reported that after the rally, Patrick John replaced the head of the Mercy Committee with himself! The former head was against the hanging of Trotter. The international workers movement must forcefully protest against this threatened judicial murder of an innocent young man, whose "crime" is to dare to speak out against the vicious little dictatorship in the West Indies! Save Desmond Trotter!

### Who Is Desmond Trotter?

The youthful prisoner was formerly the editor of *Twavay*, newspaper of the Movement for a New Dominica (MND), and a political figure on the impoverished island of 72,000 people, now an "associate state" of Britain. He led the Manicou movement which in 1970 exposed governmental corruption in Dominica, a political embarrassment for John. Trotter was the main speaker at African Liberation Day rallies during 1971-73 and was generally regarded as a "black power leader." His defense committee writes that "He called for liberation of the suffering Dominican masses and began organizing youth to work collectively on the land as a

concrete example of working for change while linking with hard working peasants." Trotter's self-styled "socialism" is an eclectic mixture of "Third World" rhetoric and mystical references to the will of "the Almighty."

Trotter was arrested in May 1974 and charged with the murder of an elderly white American tourist shot during the annual two-day carnival celebrations. The sole accuser was a 16-year-old barmaid from the neighboring island of Antigua, who said that on the day of the killing Trotter told her that he "had shot a white man." During a line-up before

## FREE DESMOND TROTTER



Sentenced to hang in Dominica

the trial the barmaid pointed vaguely in Trotter's direction, all the time keeping her face and eyes hidden. Back home on Antigua, she sought out a lawyer and confessed that she had been intimidated by the Dominica police into signing the identification statement. During the trial, the judge kept this crucial piece of evidence from the jury and denied the defense the right to cross-examine the "witness" on her contradictory statements. Additionally, Trotter's lawyer was killed prior to the trial and the accused murderer died in jail under equally suspicious circumstances.

The Trotter case took place against a background of surging social turbulence and lynch-law repression. A political strike by civil servants, dockers and hospital workers in June 1973 produced a "state of emergency." Uprisings by field laborers temporarily "collectiv-

ized" key plantations. The two urban port towns of Roseau and Portsmouth swelled with jobless youth, many of whom call themselves "Dreads" and wear their hair in "locks" like Jamaica's Rastafarian religious violence cultists. The Dominican Dreads, however, have not followed the violence cultism of the Rastafarians. Instead, they advocate land reform and a romantic pastoral life-style.

With unemployment at 50 percent and inflation out of control, Premier John proclaimed the "solution" to Dominica's grinding poverty: tourism. In the name of "public safety" for the white tourists, the despot decreed a series of so-called "anti-Dread laws" which ban strikes and "subversive" literature and grant citizens the "legal right to shoot dead on sight suspected radicals" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 12 April 1975). John's small-time tyrannical plantation regime, masked as a "Labour Party," has been on the rampage against those he calls "pseudo-intellectuals" and "agents of international Communism." He has brought down his boot (the party's electoral symbol) particularly hard upon the Dreads. A large number of these unorganized youth claim general agreement with the black power/nationalist rhetoric of the MND.

The MND, of which Trotter was a leading member, is but a pale and unfocused reflection of the black power movement that swept the Caribbean islands during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Since 1972 the MND has sought to breathe new life into that failed mixture of nationalism, "Third Worldism" and peasant romanticism. These illusions are no hope for the oppressed plantation laborers, and still less for urban workers. Only a socialist revolution led by the proletariat can establish a socialist federation of the West Indies, by throwing out the sugar planters, banana kings, village tyrants and petty despots like Dominica's Patrick John.

### No Détente in Dominica

Some had hoped for a "détente" inspired by the Labour Party government, but there seems to be no "new era" in Dominica. Any concession on the part of John will be the result of public outcry for Trotter's freedom, and will reflect a weakened position of the government. It does not guarantee that Trotter's life will be saved! International protest must be raised to save him. Already, the Amalgamated Workers Union and the longshore union in Dominica have publicly supported freedom for Desmond Trotter, according to a member of his U.S. defense committee. The *Chronicle*, the island's only newspaper, ran a front-page banner headline, "Save Trotter's Life," and the London *Sunday Times* reports that 50 Parliament members have signed a petition on Trotter's behalf. The Partisan Defense Committee urges that letters and telegrams demanding freedom for Desmond Trotter be immediately directed to: Premier Patrick John, Government Headquarters, Roseau, Dominica, West Indies. Copies and messages of support should be sent to: Committee in Defense of Desmond Trotter and Political Prisoners in Dominica, P.O. Box 231, Roseau, Dominica, West Indies. Desmond Trotter Defense Committees may be contacted as follows: London—37 Tollington Park, London N4, phone 01-272-0594; New York—853 Broadway, Room 414, New York, NY 10003, phone (212) 254-6062 or (212) 666-8451. Attend support actions (see ad this issue), send telegrams, send contributions for defense efforts! Only mass protest will save Desmond Trotter! ■

## PDC TELEGRAM

22 March 1976  
Government and Premier of Dominica  
Government Headquarters,  
Roseau, Dominica, W.I.

DEMAND FREEDOM FOR DESMOND TROTTER. STOP THE WITCHHUNT AGAINST THIS CLEARLY INNOCENT YOUNG MAN. DESMOND TROTTER MUST NOT HANG—FREE HIM!  
Partisan Defense Committee

## Stop the Hanging of Caribbean Political Activist SAVE DESMOND TROTTER

RALLY: Sunday, April 4 at 4 p.m.

### BROOKLYN

Bellrose Ballroom / 1391 Bedford Avenue / corner of St. Marks Avenue  
(8th Avenue train to Franklin Avenue or No. 2 to Eastern Parkway)

### SPEAKERS

C.L.R. JAMES, Author of *Black Jacobins*

BERNARD WILTSHIRE, Lecturer: Caribbean History

CRISPIN GREGOIRE, Desmond Trotter Defense Committee; Founder:

L'Echele Youth Group

MIKE KELLY, United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA)

ALFIE ROBERTS, Chairman: Caribbean Writers Congress, Montreal  
REPRESENTATIVE of Puerto Rican Socialist Party

SPONSORED BY: USLA, Desmond Trotter Defense Committee, Caribbean Student League, Organisation for Total Independence of Dominica, Student Coalition Against Racism, Partisan Defense Committee, Socialist Workers Party, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (partial listing)



# Argentina...

(continued from page 1)

Trotskyist PST and Política Obrera (guerrillaist groups such as the PRT/ERP were already banned).

Other decrees closed the universities, ordered the death penalty for attacks on military installations, and death or indefinite imprisonment for sabotage and attacks on police or military personnel. The borders were closed and any strikes or other activity impeding production banned. The military took over all state-owned enterprises and slapped censorship on the press. Although the junta has not issued figures, an estimated 2,000 Peronists and labor leaders, Communists and suspected "subversives" have been arrested (*Economist*, 27 March).

Prisoners were seen being loaded onto two military transport ships anchored in Buenos Aires harbor. This repression can be expected to deepen and encompass a broad range of labor and left militants of all parties. Particularly endangered are tens of thousands of political refugees from neighboring countries who now have nowhere to go and no borders to slip across. The international workers movement has an urgent obligation to protest the sweeping repression and demand freedom for all class-war prisoners in Argentina.

Immediately after the declaration of the coup a military administrator took over the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and all unions were put into receivership and their bank accounts seized. The headquarters of Argentina's most powerful union, the UOM (metal workers) is now occupied by soldiers in battle gear. In effect, the labor movement was beheaded in one fell swoop. CGT chief Casildo Herreras was out of the country at the time, however, and UOM leader Lorenzo Miguel, Isabel Perón's staunchest supporter in the union, reportedly escaped to Uruguay, as did many other bureaucrats.

## Workers Demobilized

The cowardly trade-union leadership, which only three days before had bragged that any putsch attempt would be prevented by a general strike, collapsed like a house of cards. Trapped between their seething ranks—who refused to accept a wage freeze in the face of the 424 percent annual inflation rate which was literally devastating their incomes—and the Peronist government that enforced their bureaucratic power, the union tops' only contribution was to demobilize the working class. Although factories had been shut down by strikes in Córdoba and Buenos Aires province in recent weeks, the struggles remained locally isolated.

In mid-March, strikes and demonstrations in the key industrial centers were squashed by Peronist labor fakers hurling accusations that any anti-government protest would encourage a military coup. Thus, when more than 30,000 metal workers in the industrial belt around the capital struck on March 10 against Mrs. Perón's insulting 20 percent wage increase, the leaders called off the powerful protest after only two days. Such a general wave of working-class militancy could have been translated into a political force capable of crushing the military plotters. But to do so would have meant the workers organizations themselves taking power, thus breaking with the Peronist regime and posing the most fundamental challenge to the capitalist state.

This the union tops were not prepared to undertake, so instead they preached passivity in the vain hope that this would satisfy the bloodthirsty generals. When the auto industry had been crippled for a week, José Rodríguez, secretary general of the auto workers, told union delegates:

"The labor movement must not be responsible for bringing down this



Left to right: Admiral Emilio Massera, General Jorge Videla and Brig. General Orlando Agosti swear allegiance to god, fatherland, national constitution and the "Process of National Reorganization."

Government, even if it is a bad one... If a military government comes in and tells us there will be no wage increases for three years, this is worse than the Government's offer of wage adjustments to match price increases."

—New York Times, 14 March

So in the name of preventing a coup, the Peronist union bureaucracy unrolled the red carpet for the military's unopposed stroll to power. As in 1955, when General Juan Perón advised his followers not to mobilize against the threat of a military takeover, once again, by preaching reliance on the benevolence of "pro-labor" populist politicians, Peronism tied the workers' hands and thus paved the way for the coup.

## Failure of Peronism Without Perón

During the 1940's, the Argentine bourgeoisie sought to use the charismatic young Perón to head off a threatening labor upsurge by channeling it into state-controlled unions supervised by the ministry of labor. As the unionization of previously unorganized workers proceeded, however, even the Peronist-controlled unions became difficult to control. His foreign exchange reserves used up and faced with a boycott by domestic capitalists, Perón the bonapartist cracked down on the unions, smashing several important strikes during the early 1950's. By 1955, the working class was sufficiently demoralized for the generals to oust the strongman in a misnamed "liberating revolution." For the next 18 years, Argentina's union movement was subjected to periodic severe repression, government intervention and semi-legality. Real wages fell by more than 40 percent.

But through the 1960's a new generation of workers grew up which was prepared to fight the military dictators and their civilian puppets. While the Peronist leadership sought to maneuver with different factions of the military, repeated militant strikes broke out among Tucumán sugar workers. Then a three-day general strike and popular insurrec-

tion exploded in the interior industrial center of Córdoba in May 1969. Ever since the powerful *cordobazo* a pre-revolutionary situation has existed in Argentina.

After several waves of guerrilla activity and, much more importantly, repeated mass strikes assuming semi-insurrectionary proportions on a local level, the armed forces leadership decided to appeal once again to "el viejo" (the old man), in the hopes that he could once again derail the labor movement. Perón returned from exile in Spain firmly committed to root out the "Marxist disease" in the unions and purge leftists from the heterogeneous Justicialista movement. He succeeded in ousting a number of liberal state governors and enforcing a wage freeze, but died before the job was complete. His wife and vice president Isabel proved unequal to the task of Bonaparte, and the Peronist movement began to fall apart at the seams.

The regime of the former cabaret dancer, whose ticket to power was her marriage, stayed in power almost from the beginning solely through a virtual state of siege. The only way she could keep unity within the Justicialist Liberation Front (FREJULI) was through the use of widespread terror carried out by the so-called Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA), a cover for the death squads made up of Peronist gunmen and "off-duty" secret police. The AAA night-and-fog operations were run by her personal secretary, José Lopez Rega, who was also minister of social welfare and one of the leaders of a small fascist wing of the Peronist movement.

## "Let Peronism Hang Itself!"

However, Lopez Rega's Rasputin-like appetites for total power came into conflict with the rest of the Justicialist leadership. His corruption was legendary, and the stench extended to his patron as well. (The discovery of a \$600,000 check for state funds which was mysteriously deposited in Isabel's

private account instead of in a Peronist social charity foundation is certainly only the tip of the iceberg.) Lopez Rega was forced to flee into exile in Spain once again last summer after ultimatums from both the army and union leaders.

In recent months, despite the absence of their leader the AAA commandos have intensified their murderous work so that many politicians and union activists were willing to countenance even a military coup in the belief that systematic repression was preferable to the unpredictable violence wreaked by the Peronist pistoleros. For the Peronist tops, the main incentive in sticking with the totally discredited president was the realization, as she put it, that "if my head rolls, they will then cut the heads off those who come behind" (*New York Times*, 20 March). In this case, "they" could have been either the military or the union ranks.

With widespread looting of the government coffers, running the treasury printing presses at top speed and deliberate sabotage by the leading capitalists, the Peronist regime managed to drive the economy into the ground. The military leaders issued periodic threats and calls for a return to order, but the generals willingly let "Isabelita's" follies stagger on. Their obvious purpose was to demolish the myth of Peronism as the "great benefactor" of the working class. "Let Peronism hang itself," was their implicit motto. The ignominious removal of the president in the dead of night, and the threat to try her for corruption, are part of this same operation. And Peronism did discredit itself, to the point that today it lies in a shambles, fragmented possibly beyond repair.

## The Bankruptcy of Guerrillism

But while many erstwhile Peronist youth and militant unionists are certainly disillusioned with the leaders who brought them to this disaster, they lack a revolutionary Marxist vanguard capable of drawing the lessons of the



Isabel Perón and the Argentine general staff in 1975.

Informations Ouvrières



Peronist experience. In recent years, the most publicized of those aspiring to this mantle were various guerrillaist groups ranging from the left-Peronist Montoneros to ostensibly Trotskyist groups. Yet the last months before the coup also demonstrated the utter impotence of the guerrillaists in the face of serious action by the military.

The most dramatic early demonstration of the inability of Castroite *foco* theories and guerrillaist actions to mobilize the working masses was the police coup in Córdoba in February 1974. Even though this was the center of urban guerrillaism in Argentina, and both the ERP and Montonero squads could freely operate in the factory districts, they presented no opposition whatsoever to a power grab by the provincial police commander who ousted the left-Peronist local administration and drove socialist union leaders underground. Yet a united general strike by the tens of thousands of auto workers on the day of the coup could have easily swept away the socially isolated police torturers.

Even the most spectacular guerrilla action to date, the attack on the Quilmes arsenal 10 miles south of Buenos Aires, last December 24 revealed the bankruptcy of guerrillaism. The operation reportedly involved a massive attack by more than 100 commandos seeking weapons and explosives. Although the details of the operation are not clear because of obvious propaganda distortions by the armed forces, some combination of military mistakes or inadequate firepower forced the guerrilla fighters to retreat. Yet even though the Quilmes arsenal is located in a poor district which could be expected to be sympathetic to the anti-government forces, there was no popular response. The troops were able to rake the district with murderous fire, killing at least 100 and perhaps many more who went unreported in the press.

In a Christmas day message, General Videla hailed the "resounding triumph for the forces of order" represented by the guerrillas' defeat at Quilmes. He also denounced "passive complicity" of many Argentines with "subversive delinquents" and the "evidence of close connections" of the Montoneros and ERP with left-wing factories. An article in the *New York Times* (24 March) also reported: "The influence of the guerrillas on the factory floors has grown partly because left-wing labor leaders have been largely wiped out or driven underground while the more conservative Peronist trade unionists have been torn between their allegiance to President Isabel Martínez de Perón's economic austerity measures and the demands of their rank and file."

## For a Trotskyist Party in Argentina!

The article chronicles the murders of left-Peronist labor leader Atilio López and "socialist" unionist Agostin Tosco, and the driving underground of auto union leader René Salamanca in Córdoba during the last year. These leaders of the left wing of the labor movement in the center of Argentine working-class militancy were at one time in a position to challenge the reactionary CGT tops such as Lorenzo Miguel and Casildo Herreras. However, despite occasional verbal militancy they were never prepared to offer a political challenge to the Peronist union bureaucracy. Never did Tosco and Salamanca put forward a transitional program of demands leading beyond simple trade unionism to pose the question of working-class state

power. Concretely, despite numerous provocations and direct armed attacks inspired by the CGT misleaders, Tosco-Salamanca never organized a class-struggle opposition in the unions or united workers militias to defend the leftist unions' offices. They were part of the union bureaucracy, and those ostensible socialists who tailed after them were playing the game of Isabel Perón.

Throughout the second Peronist regime—from May 1973 to March 1976—the pro-Moscow Communist Party (PCA) tailed after the capitalist demagogue it once denounced as a "Peronazi." In the September 1975 elections the PCA uncritically called for votes for General Perón. Although the Castroite PRT/ERP was formally in opposition to the regime, it repeatedly sought to distinguish between Peronist officials and the armed forces, calling for a popular front against the *gorillas*. Castro himself enthusiastically lauded every phony "anti-imperialist" utterance of Perón.

In contrast to these class-collaborationist Stalinist forces, the burning need of the Argentine workers was—and continues to be—the formation of a Trotskyist party capable of breaking the working class from its populist misleaders and leading it on the road of class independence. Unfortunately, however, the legacy of two decades of Pabloist revisionism has taken its toll, with the largest ostensibly Trotskyist organization in Argentina, the PST, adopting a policy of de facto "critical support" for the Peronist regime. (This was a duplication of the policies of its main "theoretician," Nahuel Moreno, toward Peronism during the late 1950's.) Pledging its support to "institutionalization" (bourgeois law and order) and the "continuity" of Isabel Perón's government, the social-democratic PST lumped the guerrillas into the same category as the anti-communist terrorists of the AAA.

A Trotskyist party in Argentina would have warned the working class of the mortal danger represented by Peronist bonapartism. A *bourgeois* political current, this strain of nationalist populism was not based on the labor movement, as the PRT suggested in theory and the PST pretended in practice. Unlike pro-capitalist social-democratic and Stalinist labor reformists, the Peronists were quite capable of *smashing* the labor movement without destroying their own existence. And they were well along in the process of physically liquidating all independent union leaders when the military stepped in to complete their terrorist purges.

While defending the leftist guerrillas against state repression, the task of an authentic Trotskyist vanguard is not to undertake isolated military adventures but rather to demonstrate to the workers the need to break with all wings of the bourgeoisie, including the most left as embodied in sections of the Peronist movement. Through implacable struggle against the anti-labor measures of the Justicialista government, such a Marxist leadership could begin to group around it the most resolute sections of the working class and draw the lessons of the present tragic defeat.

A Trotskyist party would emphasize that no answer to the military junta will be found in the formation of popular-frontist alliances with "progressive" capitalists (such as Allende's Popular Unity, which led to the bloody Chilean coup), or in tailing after the Peronist misleaders. In close alliance with revolutionary Marxists in neighboring countries (Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay), and resolutely defending the labor movement and all left organizations and militants against *gorilla* repression, its task must be to construct the independent revolutionary workers party, as part of the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International, to prepare for workers revolution to smash the junta. ■

## Trotskyists Excluded for Criticizing Peronism

# NYC Demo Against Argentine Junta

MARCH 27—About 60 people picketed today in front of the Argentine Airways office in New York to protest the right-wing military takeover in Argentina. The demonstration was called by MASA (Anti-Imperialist Movement for Socialism in Argentina), a heterogeneous leftist group. MASA supporters confined their chanting to bourgeois-democratic slogans like "We want free elections—right now!" and "We want civil liberties—right now!"

Also present was the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), which called for freedom for all left prisoners in Argentina. The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL) demanded "Free All Class-War Prisoners in Argentina!" along with other slogans pointing the way forward for the working class: "For Workers Revolution to Smash the Junta" and "Break with Peronism, Guerrillism, Stalinism—For a Trotskyist Party in Argentina!"

One Spartacist sign condemned Perón's advice to his followers 20 years ago, "Del trabajo a casa y de casa al trabajo" ("From Work to Home and From Home to Work"). This cowardly watchword was Perón's craven advice to the workers who were prepared to take up arms against the generals who overthrew him in September 1955. Fearful that an armed proletarian uprising would spell the doom of bourgeois rule, the so-called "Great Benefactor" ignominiously stepped down, leaving the Peronist-led unions to suffer 18 years of vicious military repression. The SL sign pointed out that then, as now, "Peronism Paved the Way for the Coup."

The SL's revolutionary criticism of their "jefe máximo" (supreme chief) so antagonized left-wing Peronists in the demonstration that MASA leaders insisted these signs be taken down.

When the SL/SYL marchers refused to stifle their politics, they were excluded from the line. They then crossed the street, joined by supporters of the PDC, and attempted to hold a brief demonstration but were quickly stopped by the cops. Significantly diminished in size, the MASA demonstration did not last much longer.

Straggling behind the Peronists were a few supporters of the International Workers Party, International Socialists, U.S. Committee for Justice in Latin America (USLA), Solidarity Committee with the Argentine People, Communist Cadre, Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee (RMOC) and others. Most of these groups claimed to disagree with MASA's act of political censorship, but without exception they remained on the picket line and did not protest.

Several embarrassed MASA members afterward approached the SL/SYL contingent and attempted to justify their organization's sectarian exclusion. No such political scruples troubled the pseudo-Trotskyist RMOC, however, whose leader, Hedda Garza, not only did not protest the exclusion but viciously attacked the SLers for raising criticisms of Peronism "at this time." Tailing left-talking Peronists even as they attack revolutionary Trotskyists, the Mandeliste RMOC once again demonstrates that its pursuit of the "new mass vanguard" only takes it deeper into the morass of class collaboration. At a time when Peronist treachery has once again left the working class prostrate and leaderless in the face of a military coup, the RMOC joins hands with the Socialist Workers Party-dominated USLA in solidizing with more than two decades of Pabloist capitulation to Perón and his heirs, the populist roadblocks to socialist revolution in Argentina. ■



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## Reaping the Harvest of 50 Years of Bureaucratic Misrule

# Soviet Agriculture: A Stalinist Disaster

The head of yet another Soviet Minister of Agriculture rolls. After a 30 percent drop in the grain harvest in 1975, it was predictable that Dmitry Polyansky would be sacked. It is standard Stalinist practice that after a disaster those directly in charge are punished while the top leaders are held blameless. But Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin know that the worst harvest in a decade is not due to mismanagement by Polyansky. To be responsible for agriculture in the Russian degenerated workers state is an unenviable position. The bureaucracy's inability to ensure the steady growth of food production is endemic to the post-1929 Soviet political economy.

Frequent and major declines in agricultural production are the most serious factor retarding improvement in living standards and disorganizing national economic planning. With much bureaucratic self-congratulation, the 1970-75 Five Year Plan had announced a reversal of the traditional pattern of heavy industry growing faster than consumer goods. This target had to be abandoned after the bad harvest of 1972.

Given this year's far worse harvest, the 1976-80 Five Year Plan reverts back to heavy industry vanguardism, with consumer goods projected to increase at a very modest 31 percent, compared to 44 percent in the original 1970-75 plan (*Economist*, 20 December 1975). It will take until 1980 to restore the livestock which had to be overslaughtered this year due to lack of fodder.

The sorry state of agriculture is not only the most important contributor to the material deprivation of the USSR's population, but it is also the most immediate current source of external weakness. U.S. imperialism regards Soviet dependency on American grain exports, usually on an emergency basis, as its best weapon for political blackmail. One of the themes of presidential hopeful Henry Jackson, mouthpiece of the hard "cold warriors," is using American "food power" against the "Reds."

After 50 years of economic planning, the Russian bureaucracy still cannot guarantee even modest steady growth of agriculture. The wound inflicted on the Soviet economy by Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture continues to bleed. The present agricultural crisis can be understood only in the context of the entire history of the relations between the peasantry with the regime emerging from the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, as well as with that which was the product of its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin.

### Peasant Smallholding and Soviet Economic Development

Peasant discontent with the forced requisitioning system of "War Communism" forced the Bolshevik government in 1921 to introduce the New Economic Policy (NEP) instituting free trade in farm produce. The egalitarian break-up of the great estates had created 25 million smallholding families generally cultivating scattered strips rather than compact farms. Thus in the 1920's

by Joseph Seymour



Mechanization on a collective farm.

Novosti Press

Russian agriculture was more backward and far less market-oriented than under tsarism, when great landed estates had dominated.

In addition, the destruction of industry during the imperialist war and then the post-1917 civil war made it impossible to supply the peasants with manufactures at pre-war terms of trade. This manifested itself in the so-called "scissors crisis" (a widening disparity between agricultural and industrial prices) of 1923. This further discouraged peasants from supplying produce for the urban market.

In 1914, grain production per capita had been 584 kilos; by 1928 it had fallen to 484 kilos. But the most drastic declines were in production for the market (i.e., the surplus over peasant household consumption). In 1913, marketed grain was 1,300 million poods (a pood is about 36 pounds). In 1928, it was less than half, 630 million poods. Even more startling than the fall in marketed surplus was the share available for export; in 1925-26 Russian grain exports were only 24 percent of the pre-war level.

Naturally the wealthiest farmers, the kulaks, contributed a disproportionate share of marketed produce. While 3-5 percent of the farming population were kulaks, they supplied 20 percent of marketed grain. The kulaks sold twice

as much of their harvest as the rest of the peasantry.

During the early 1920's, when the main task was recovering from the effects of the war and the revolution, the NEP was more or less successful. By 1925, this process was essentially completed and the new situation required the systematic expansion of the economy. Here the contradictions of NEP, with its backward, smallholding agriculture, came to the fore. After 1926, food production stagnated while the industrial labor force continued to expand. The winter *zagotovki* (state procurement of grain following the harvest) became a dominating, crisis-ridden event in the economic life of the country.

The policy of the Stalin/Bukharin bloc, the ruling group after 1925, was to encourage greater output from the wealthiest, most productive farms, thereby increasing class differentiation in the countryside. This attitude was encapsulated in Bukharin's notorious slogan directed at the kulaks: "enrich yourselves." In 1925 the laws restricting the hiring of farm labor and the renting of land were greatly liberalized.

The early NEP legislation, drawn up under Lenin's direct guidance, while allowing free trade in agricultural produce, severely restricted the use of wage labor and acquisition of land. Stalin/Bukharin's post-1925 policies



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Modern Irrigation system in Ararat Valley. Water is delivered through massive pipes (above) and monitored at control center (below).



Novosti Press

were not a continuation of Lenin's NEP, but were far more permissive toward agricultural capitalism.

The Stalin/Bukharin strategy for economic development was to allow the pace of industrial expansion to be governed by the freely marketed agricultural surplus. To maximize this surplus, the regime tended to concentrate land, labor and finance in the hands of the wealthiest, most productive farmers. By 1927, this policy had not only failed on the economic level, but had also strengthened consciously anti-Communist elements in the villages.

### The Left Opposition

As early as the 1923 "scissors crisis," Trotsky and other left oppositionists had rejected an industrial policy governed by peasant demand for manufactured consumer goods and equipment. As against Stalin/Bukharin, the left regarded an acceleration of industry as a necessary precondition for increasing agricultural production by both encouraging mechanized collectivization and improving the terms of trade for farm commodities. The initial resources for expanded industrialization would have to come from additional taxation on the wealthier peasants. But the long-term strategy of the left was extracting a larger share of farm output on the basis of increasing the productivity of the entire agricultural sector. The heart of the left's approach to agriculture was summarized by its leading economist, Evgeni Preobrazhensky, in *The New Economics*:

"The task of the socialist state consists here not in taking from the petty-bourgeois producers less than the capitalists, but in taking more from the still larger incomes, which will be secured to the petty producers by the rationalization of the whole economy, including petty production, on the basis of industrializing the country and intensifying agriculture." [emphasis in original]

When differences between the Bukharin and Stalin factions emerged in 1927, the latter began viewing collectivization as a panacea, a cheap means for overcoming the agricultural crisis. The



left absolutely rejected the utopian notion that collectivization could succeed without fundamentally raising the technological basis of agriculture. The 1927 *Platform of the Joint Opposition* called for "the systematic and gradual introduction of that most numerous peasant group [the middle peasants] to the benefits of large-scale mechanized collective agriculture."

The Left Opposition rejected any notion of achieving collectivization through state coercion. Its policy was to encourage collectivization through strictly economic means, primarily a steeply progressive income tax on private farms coupled with subsidies and easy credit for cooperatives.

Because of Trotsky's insistence that the fundamental solution to the agricultural problem was inseparable from industrialization and the technological advancement of agriculture, the Stalin clique accused him of "underestimating the role of the peasantry." Trotsky acidly retorted that:

"There ought to be an end to the jabbering about underestimating the role of the peasantry. What is really needed is to lower the price of the merchandise for the peasants."  
—*The New Course*, 1923

It must be emphasized that the Left Opposition's policies were in no sense anti-peasant. The 1927 *Platform* called for an increase in agricultural procurement prices, particularly for grain, and for reduced taxation on poor peasants and no tax increase on middle peasants. From the kulaks, however, it called for a forced loan of 100 million poods of grain.



Russian peasants in the 1930's.

Keystone

The economic strategy of the Left Opposition can be summarized as follows: Increased taxation of the wealthier peasants was needed for the initial breakthrough on the industrial front. This expanded industrialization would in turn provide the means for encouraging agricultural collectivization, increasing farm productivity to allow a larger surplus to be extracted from the mass of peasant producers. In addition, expanded industrialization would lower the cost of manufactured goods, further stimulating the peasants' marketed surplus. Central to the left's policy was the need for balanced growth with complementary increases in industrial and agricultural productivity.

#### Stalin's Terrorization of the Peasantry

The growing contradictions of NEP reached a crisis point in the winter of 1927-28 when state procurement of agricultural produce fell to 10.1 million tons compared with 10.6 million the previous harvest. Stalin launched an emergency confiscation campaign which he kept secret from the rest of the party. Emergency confiscation only worsened the underlying situation as the peasants reduced their sown acreage and total output fell still further. Stalin then resorted to an even greater confiscation campaign against the kulaks and

"speculators" but the 1928-29 *zagotovki* was only 9.5 million tons.

In the winter of 1929-30, the Stalin regime embarked on the immediate forced collectivization of agriculture, the so-called "liquidation of the kulaks as a class." Under the slogan of combatting the kulaks, all peasants who resisted joining the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) had their property confiscated that is, whatever they did not destroy first. The poorest peasants had been induced to join the *kolkhoz* by promises of unlimited credits for mechanization, a demagogic commitment impossible to fulfill. When the poor peasants became rapidly disillusioned and sought to dissolve the *kolkhozy*, they were met by violent repression of the Red Army and special terrorist squads of party and Komsomol members.

Once undertaken, Stalin's brutal campaign for "complete collectivization" proceeded with frightening swiftness. The proportion of collective farms, which at the beginning of 1929 had been 1.7 percent, reached 23.6 percent in 1930 and 52.7 percent in 1931. The toll in terms of human suffering was incalculable; the legacy of material destruction and the alienation of the peasantry from the Soviet regime remain to haunt the bureaucracy to this day.

The peasants resisted forced collectivization in the only way they could—the mass destruction of agricultural capital, particularly the slaughter of livestock, important for draft power and wool clothing as well as for food. In the terrible winter of 1929-30, 30 percent of Soviet livestock was destroyed. By 1932, the number of horses and pigs was only

modern equipment, the private plots produced more than half the potatoes, vegetables and livestock. The free market contributed about two-thirds of the peasants' money income.

By 1935 the Stalinist regime had evolved a two-tier agricultural system which remained little changed until 1958. Grain was produced on the collective fields and requisitioned by the state at confiscatory prices. On the other hand, more than half of all potatoes, vegetables, dairy and meat products came from the private plots, while free-market sales accounted for the bulk of peasant money income. This system could only be maintained by the use of state coercion to prevent the peasants from deflecting their labor from the *kolkhoz* grain field to the private plots.

Although real industrial wages fell 40 percent between 1929 and 1938, conditions on the collective farms were so terrible that peasants flooded into the cities looking for jobs. In Stalin's Russia in the 1930's those peasants who could not find work were rounded up and shipped back to their village—or, if they resisted, to Siberian labor camps. The peasants were legally bound to the *kolkhoz* and could not leave without official permission. In fact, children born on collective farms had a legal status different from that of other Soviet citizens. They were bound to the *kolkhoz* and even on reaching the age of legal adulthood could not leave without government approval. Thus Stalin had reimposed elements of serfdom on the Russian peasants!

#### Khrushchev's Hare-Brained Schemes and Brezhnev's "Rationality"

Not only did Stalin starve the peasants, he also starved agriculture for productive resources. In the Stalin period, only 10-15 percent of total investment was directed toward agriculture, a sector involving more than half the labor force. For example, in 1940 only one percent of electricity was consumed in rural areas (*Voprosy Ekonomiki*, June 1974, translated in *Soviet Review*, Winter 1975-76). With a labor system based on coercion and a backward technology, it is far from surprising that agriculture has been the weak link in the Soviet economy. While heavy industry recovered its 1940 level by 1948, agricultural production did not reach the pre-World War II level until 1955.

Attempting to overcome the backwardness of agriculture has been the dominating economic problem for the post-Stalin regimes. Nikita Khrushchev's farm policies were marked by erratic, get-rich-quick schemes. Crop/geographical patterns were changed overnight. Concessions to peasant interests were made with one hand and taken back with the other.

Maize (corn) was to become the main fodder crop and was planted in northern climes where it did not grow well. And then there was the extension of grain to the drought-ridden Siberian "virgin lands"—a project once considered by the tsarist bureaucracy and rejected as unsound. In 1958, the Machine Tractor Stations through which Stalin had controlled the *kolkhozy* were disbanded and their equipment sold to individual collective farms. Believing the peasants now had adequate capital, Khrushchev actually reduced production of farm implements. Having raised procurement prices, Khrushchev felt he could take measures against the private plots. The results were predictable. Agricultural production barely kept pace with population growth and in 1963 fell below the 1958 level. Shortly thereafter, Khrushchev fell below his 1958 level!

The new Brezhnev-Kosygin regime denounced Khrushchev's subjective voluntarism and hare-brained schemes. Their policies have been conservative, consistent and a serious attempt to overcome the traditional backwardness of agriculture. The failure of these

policies, despite their apparent rationality, demonstrates that the backwardness of Soviet agriculture is deeply rooted and cannot be overcome through quantitative changes in planning within the bureaucratic framework.

Efforts have been made to improve the living standards of collective farmers and narrow the income gap between them and the rest of the working population. Shortly after Khrushchev's fall, state-financed pensions were first extended to the *kolkhoz* aged. State procurement prices have been steadily raised and in 1972-73 stood 22 percent higher than in 1965. Since the prices of manufactures purchased by collective farmers have remained fairly constant, this represents a significant increase in peasant incomes.

The main effort of the Brezhnev regime has been more mechanization, chemical fertilizer and land reclamation. In 1960, only 15 percent of state investment was directed to agriculture; in 1975 the share had risen to 31 percent (*Economist*, 14 February 1976). Between the 1960-65 and 1970-75 Five Year Plans, the production of tractors increased from 1.1 to 1.7 million and of chemical fertilizer from 90 to nearly 300 million tons (*Izvestia*, 5 December 1975).

Agriculture is no longer the abused step-child of Kremlin investment priorities. Unlike in Stalin's day, a large and increasing share of industrial output is devoted to agriculture, where the resulting increase in labor productivity is far lower than it is for investment in manufacturing. The regime's frustration comes through clearly in Kosygin's economic report last December:

"For the past ten years the country has continually invested large and ever-growing sums in agriculture. The Party and the government have a right to demand that these funds be spent properly, thriftily and with a high rate of return. Unfortunately, wastefulness, carelessness and indiscipline still survive in some quarters."

Why does productivity lag so far behind the increase in non-labor inputs? The answer is, as it has been for decades, the lack of incentives for collective farmers. While the income gap between *kolkhoz* members and state employees has narrowed since the 1950's, it remains significant. In 1971, the income of *kolkhoz* members was 73 percent of those of state-farm employees doing comparable work. And the latter, in the same year, were receiving only 77 percent of the average industrial wage (*Voprosy Ekonomiki*, June 1974). Moreover, these figures understate the real difference in living standards since city dwellers have access to social and cultural services unavailable in the countryside.

#### Peasant Youth Vote with their Feet

The practice continues of neglecting the *kolkhoz* fields to work on the private plots (which still produce about 25 percent of marketed food and account for about a quarter of peasant money incomes). However, the main deflection of labor from the collective fields is not toward the private plots but out of agriculture altogether. Both the collectives and state farms are being systematically stripped of the most energetic, educated and skilled rural youth—the very worker-cadre needed for a technological revolution. The collective farm is becoming the home of the old, the backward and the ignorant.

A necessary condition for Stalin's agricultural policy was the prohibition against urban migration by *kolkhoz* members. With the relaxation of totalitarian terror in the mid-1950's the law hindering the peasants to the land became unenforceable. Moreover, the USSR's loss during World War II of 20 million dead—largely youth—and the slowdown in the birth rate thereafter led to a significant fall in population growth. With the steady increase in industrial production, the Soviet labor market has

continued on page 11



# UAW Local 600 Leaders Call Mass Meeting

# Plant Closure Threatens River Rouge Complex

**No Layoffs!  
No Sellouts!  
For A Class-Struggle  
Leadership!**

DETROIT, March 28—After numerous meetings between the union leadership and management got nowhere, the Ford Motor Company recently announced that it intends to phase out the engine plant at the giant River Rouge complex in Dearborn by July 9. Approximately 1,500 workers on two engine lines are to be permanently laid off, and an additional 500 radiator and fuel tank workers will lose their jobs soon thereafter. The leadership of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 600, whose leaders brag of being the "world's largest local union," has called a mass membership meeting for April 4 to address the question of the shutdown.

Having failed to "persuade" management to change its mind at the bargaining table, Local 600 president Mike Rinaldi and UAW International vice-president and Ford director Ken Bannon are attempting to put up a facade of resistance. The threatened engine plant closure is a "morally indefensible" act, they wait: "Ford workers are sick and tired of losing their jobs" (*Ford Facts*, 22 March). But the mass membership meeting is likely to be little more than a controlled protest rally, since Woodcock, Bannon, Rinaldi & Co. have already made it clear that they are dead-set *opposed* to the militant action and class-struggle program

needed to stop mass layoffs and plant closures.

## Occupy the Dearborn Engine Plant!

The mass layoffs from the Dearborn Engine Plant will affect the rest of the sprawling, multi-plant Rouge complex, since higher-seniority workers are allowed to "bump" into other plants. The union's entire River Rouge membership of 27,000 is thus directly attacked by the shutdown. Including temporary layoffs, as many as 5,000 workers from Local 600 could be out of work by summer. Ford's profit-hungry, cynical decision to throw thousands of workers into the streets permanently is nothing new, of course. Since the massive, "self-sufficient" Rouge complex began production with 100,000 workers in the late 1920's, Ford has shut down operations such as cement, plastics, transmissions, axles and springs.

Preparations must begin immediately to *occupy the engine plant* under the slogans: *No layoffs! No plant closures! For a shorter workweek at no loss in pay*

solidarity.

In addition to such back-stabbing national chauvinism and protectionist schemes, the other "answer" of the UAW officials is Congressional legislation to "deal with" plant closures. Woodcock gives the union's backing to the pitiful Mondale-Ford bill, which does nothing whatsoever to save or create jobs. The measure would simply require notification by employers of their intentions to close plants and promises only tokenistic retraining programs for the workers.

Reliance on bills such as this typifies the UAW bureaucracy's total dependence on the capitalist politicians of the Democratic Party. Their subordination of the workers' interests to Democratic presidential aspirations will be one of the UAW tops' primary excuses for opposing any militant actions against the Rouge plant closure, for keeping demands minimal in the contract bargaining and for avoiding a national contract strike in September. It is up to the ranks to reject this class-collaborationist betrayal and struggle for a workers party based on the trade

# Teamsters...

(continued from page 12)

movement will inevitably be used to weaken organized labor, no matter what the pretext.

Despite the propaganda barrage in the big-business press against "high-paid" Teamsters, the union ranks' will to fight is not dampened. When the negotiations outside Chicago failed to produce enough crumbs from the companies' table to recommend any kind of serious offer to the membership, 700 IBT officials met to order local-by-local strike authorization votes. The response was overwhelming. In Cleveland the members of Local 407, the largest general freight local in the area, voted heavily for a strike, as did the 18,000-member Local 299 in Detroit. Detroit-area long-haul drivers in Local 337 registered strike sentiment by a 99-to-1 margin. In Oakland (Local 70) and St. Louis (Local 600), the pro-strike tally was over 90 percent.

In contrast, the head of the Fraternal Association of Steel Haulers, William Hill, announced that his 5,000 over-the-road owner-operators had voted Saturday night not to stop work. He called on union drivers to quit the Teamsters in the event of a walkout. The Steel Haulers waged violent strikebreaking attacks on the union in 1967 and 1970, and have filed petitions with the National Labor Relations Board to decertify the IBT at 14 trucking companies. On the other hand, the steel-hauling division of Local 299 in Detroit voted to strike.

## Employers Plead Poverty

The freight companies, represented nationally by Trucking Employers, Inc. (TEI), have been taking a hard line since the beginning of bargaining late last year. Demanding that the union give up past gains, the TEI at one point walked out of negotiations. Their latest insulting "offer" was a meager 85 cents-per-hour increase spread over three years, representing a pitiful 10-cent increase over their previous position. This is despite the fact that Teamsters have lost nearly \$1 per hour in real wages since 1973 because of an 11-cent "cap" (maximum) on their annual cost-of-living (c-o-l) adjustments. Over-the-road drivers have suffered additional losses in their mileage-based wages due to the federal 55 mile-per-hour speed limit (a product of the oil companies' 1973-74 "fuel crisis").

Trying to look militant, Fitzsimmons began with an early demand for \$2.50 per hour over three years, plus full c-o-l. However, by last weekend's meetings, he had moved down to a paltry \$1.25, with no c-o-l in the first year, a 25-cent cap in the second and an uncapped escalator clause only in the third year. Furthermore, the IBT leadership has done nothing to fight unemployment, which is still running high despite the business upturn in the industry during the first three months of 1976. Teamsters are also suffering layoffs due to the companies' heavy use of "casual" labor and the effect of trucking firm mergers, where drivers of numerous smaller bought-out companies are unable to transfer their seniority protection. Despite rising traffic, employers are keeping new job openings down through use of longer trailers and double and triple hitches.

The bosses' shrieks that wage increases cause inflation are nothing but their usual cynical defense of profits. However, the capitalists do have something to worry about. As the Midwest-centered 1970 wildcat demonstrated, even local Teamster strikes can quickly cause plant shutdowns throughout the country. A militant nationwide Teamster strike genuinely determined to defend trucking industry workers against the ravages of inflation and unemployment could quickly galvanize the entire labor movement. An IBT



Power plant at River Rouge complex in Detroit.

WV Photo

to divide the available work—the company, not the workers, must pay for the anarchy of capitalist production! Such a plant occupation would quickly mobilize the active support of all workers at Rouge, and would lay the basis for an industry-wide, North American strike of all auto workers for 30 hours work at 40 hours pay.

A plant occupation and class-struggle program is the only way to *win* against the corporate giant. But Rinaldi has another idea. Explaining that "We as Ford workers here at Local 600 have always felt ourselves to be close to the heart of the Ford Motor Company," this phony pretends to have suddenly discovered a "new" flame in management's heart: "the business of making profits in whatever way, shape or form" (*Ford Facts*, 22 March). Hoping to keep the romance alive, Rinaldi pleads with the bosses for "Ford work for Ford workers." This reactionary demand is directed even against other UAW members doing contracted work from Ford! Another "solution" of the UAW tops and Local 600 leadership is to combat imports through trade quotas and to urge UAW members to "buy an American-made car." These slogans only pit worker against worker, when what is needed is international labor

unions to fight for a workers government.

While the UAW leadership was politically class-collaborationist from the beginning, it was forced to give lip service to a few demands in the workers' interest. Thus Walter Reuther made endless promises to achieve the shorter workweek, and Local 600 inscribed this goal on its giant banner at the 1955 UAW convention. Today, even this pretense has been dropped, and Woodcock's "short worktime" proposal is nothing but a thinly-veiled absentee-control program for the companies.

Unless a class-struggle program is actively put forward from the ranks, the Local 600 mass membership meeting, under the misleadership of Rinaldi and Bannon, will turn out to be a *diversion* from the struggle. In the absence of a fight to build a new, class-struggle leadership for the UAW, the present "leaders" will have a free hand to continue to lull the workers to sleep with bogus promises of favors from the bosses.

—No layoffs! No plant closures!  
—Occupy the Dearborn Engine Plant!  
—For a shorter workweek at no loss in pay!  
—Build a new class-struggle leadership for the UAW!

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strike will have an immediate effect on negotiations for Teamster warehousemen and UPS drivers, as well as for food industry workers whose contracts are coming up shortly.

In addition, rubber companies fear a major strike in mid-April, and the auto giants face a contract renewal in September. As a loyal servant of capitalism, Fitzsimmons (and the rest of the IBT bureaucracy) is entrusted with the job of subordinating the workers' demands to the trucking companies' profits, so as not to "upset" the fragile business "recovery." On Wall Street, business analysts seem to be confident he will do his job, expressing the belief that he will "moderate" demands still further. But even they admit the industry is in "relatively good shape" (*New York Times*, 29 March).

### For a Class-Struggle Opposition in the Teamsters!

The problems facing truck drivers are not the result of particularly tight-fisted bosses, but reflect the over-all capitalist economic crisis. Against inflation and

unemployment, Teamsters should mount a militant, nationwide strike for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay and full cost-of-living protection (a sliding scale of wages and hours). To check the treacherous union bureaucracy and mobilize the membership for struggle, such a strike should be democratically run through elected strike committees. It must also aim at providing support to other workers engaged in struggles with the capitalists, most immediately the UPS drivers, food industry and rubber workers.

The Fitzsimmons "leadership" stands squarely in the way of all these goals. Already it is trying to prevent a serious strike by moving to clamp down on key areas of militancy, keeping negotiations secretive, preparing to knuckle under to a government injunction and selling out the most fundamental demands of the membership. As for labor solidarity, Fitzsimmons' vicious union-busting raids on the United Farm Workers is vivid testimony that IBT tops don't even know the meaning of the words.

In the past, many Teamsters had looked to Jimmy Hoffa for a "militant" alternative to the conservative craft division "barons" now in power in the IBT. However, Hoffa's removal from the scene in a mysterious kidnapping last summer left anti-Fitzsimmons forces without a recognized leadership. On the other hand, in 1970 Chicago-area truckers union leaders sparked "unauthorized" strikes as far west as California. The independent Chicago Truck Drivers Union and IBT Local 705, bargaining for a local agreement not covered in the national Master Freight Agreement, held out for 55 cents per hour above the official settlement. Eventually, Fitzsimmons and the employers were forced to adjust wage settlements for the whole union upward to meet the Chicago figure.

This year, however, Fitzsimmons has carefully prepared to prevent a similar outbreak of militancy and independence. He elevated the 70-year-old Ray Schoessling (head of the IBT's Central States Conference) to replace a younger man as International secretary-treasurer. Louis Peick, who as head of Local 705 was one of the leaders of the 1970 wildcat, was named an International vice-president. With the national contract talks moved from IBT headquarters in Washington to a Chicago suburb, Fitzsimmons has Peick sitting tightly on the local bargaining in town. So the "militants" who led the struggle for "more" six years ago are now firmly locked into the bureaucratic "team" effort to prevent a powerful strike in 1976.

With Hoffa out of the way and Chicago under Fitzsimmons' thumb, would-be militants in the Teamsters have turned an eye toward the only available opposition grouping, Teamsters for a Decent Contract (TDC). Facing a highly "unpopular" union president and with Hoffa supporters having nowhere else to go for the moment, TDC rallies in several cities have attracted relatively large audiences. The group has also performed some elemental services, such as leaking the official contract demands, which IBT tops would otherwise have kept secret from the membership.

TDC agitation has no doubt been responsible for some of Fitzsimmons' nervous gestures in the direction of militancy, although employer intransigence is primarily responsible for the belated official talk of "no contract, no work." The TDC has also drawn the fire of the bureaucracy in the form of goon-squad attacks on leafletters, bureaucratic railroading at local meetings and scurrilous red baiting. It is the duty of all militant unionists to defend the TDC against these attacks and protect its right to exist within the Teamsters.

Nevertheless, the program of Teamsters for a Decent Contract is thoroughly reformist. In no sense can TDC represent the kind of class-struggle

opposition needed in the Teamsters. Despite the uncritical political support it receives in the pages of *Workers' Power*, newspaper of the social-democratic International Socialists (I.S.), the TDC leadership has refused to raise such crucial demands as a call for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. Its call for an end to "casual" labor to make more work for regular members can only have the effect of pitting the employed union members against the unemployed or sporadically employed drivers who have not yet been able to "make the list."

On the crucial question of labor solidarity, the TDC restricts its support of other workers to attempts to link up with UPSurge, an allied group of IBT members in the United Parcel Service, and other Teamsters. It has consistently opposed defending the United Farm Workers as part of the TDC program, nor does it raise the issue of racism, despite the fact that the percentage of black drivers in over-the-road operations is notoriously low.

From its inception, Teamsters for a Decent Contract has seen its role as a pressure group seeking to push the bureaucracy to the left. This meant that Fitzsimmons could neutralize the opposition of the TDC simply by appearing to raise his demands somewhat. This has already happened, and in consequence the TDC has made several conciliatory statements extending the benefit of the doubt to the sellout Teamster chief. Thus, at the Local 70 strike vote meeting in Oakland, TDC leaflets did not even call for a walkout. Challenged on this by Spartacist League supporters, TDC spokesman John Larson said that the demand for a strike "depends on what the company is offering. We'll hear about it in the meeting!"

### Smash Redbaiting, A Tool of the Bosses!

Teamsters for a Decent Contract has been discredited in several areas because of its failure to vigorously respond to redbaiting. In one instance, Oakland's Local 70 passed TDC contract demands during the absence of its Local president, Chuck Mack. Upon his return, in a stewards' meeting Mack launched a violently anti-communist attack on TDC which went virtually unopposed by TDC supporters. As a result, the Local's motion was altered to remove all mention of the TDC, and was turned instead into support for the IBT leadership.

Failure to oppose redbaiting is a national policy of the TDC, which has itself adopted anti-communist statements in an attempt to appear respectable. At the January 10 national steering committee meeting of the TDC, a motion was passed stating the group's opposition to "political change by any means other than by lawful, constitutional procedures." As reported in the *Torch* (15 March-14 April), newspaper of the Revolutionary Socialist League, the motion went unopposed by the bulk of the members, including alleged supporters of the I.S.

The motion was put forward by Washington attorney Arthur Fox, an open anti-communist who opposes "socialists" in rank-and-file union groups and favors government investigation of the union. According to Teamster members in Cleveland (TDC headquarters), TDC spokesmen confirm that the motion in question was passed. They declare it irrelevant because, "no one is going to get up and harangue Teamsters about socialism, anyway."

Teamsters for a Decent Contract continues to work with Fox, despite the fact that the latter's demand for government investigation has just been adopted by the Senate Permanent Investigation Sub-Committee in a move obviously aimed at laming and discrediting the IBT during the crucial contract period. Such investigations will hamstring the membership's militancy rather

than rooting out the notorious gangsterism associated with the Teamsters bureaucracy. Earlier investigations against Dave Beck, Jimmy Hoffa et al., did nothing about corruption in the IBT and were primarily intended to prevent "union bosses" from tying up industry with a national Teamsters strike.

Only the workers can clean up the unions. To work with the supporters of "investigation" by the Ford administration or the Democratic Congress at the same time Taft-Hartley threats are being thrown at the Teamsters is a gross betrayal of the union cause. The I.S. bears co-responsibility for this betrayal with its hypocritical silence on the relationship between TDC and lawyer Fox ever since the January steering committee meeting. (Earlier, *Workers' Power* reported that Fox was the TDC lawyer and that the group worked with PROD, Fox's "professional drivers" organization.)

Redbaiting can only be defeated by openly fighting for a full transitional program that goes beyond simple contract demands to pose the real answer: the struggle for a workers government. The TDC opens itself to charges of harboring "secret reds" because, while it attracts the support of opportunist fake-socialists, its program is limited to simple trade unionism: "to force Fitz to put more on the bargaining table," as the L.A. *Teamster Grapevine* (No.6) put it. "More" for the IBT, and to hell with the unemployed, other workers, racial minorities, defense of the labor movement against government interference, etc.! This is the program of aspiring union bureaucrats. The only difference between the TDC and Louis Peick is that no one has bothered to buy off the TDC yet.

Real class-struggle militants must begin with the objective, immediate needs of the workers and struggle for the only program that can achieve these goals: a sliding scale of wages and hours, domestic and international labor solidarity, opposition to all government intervention in the unions, nationalization of industry without compensation, workers control and an independent workers party struggling for a workers government. The TDC, in contrast, capitulates to backward elements in the union in order to build the "broadest" possible group around the most immediate trade-union demands. Rather than building a new leadership that can put an end to Fitzsimmons/Hoffa betrayals, this course only seeks to rejuvenate the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. What is needed are caucuses based on a full class-struggle program. ■

## Local Teamster Hacks "Prepare" for Strike

While Teamster union leaders went through the motions of consulting the membership in strike ballots around the country last Saturday and Sunday, a spot check with key IBT locals indicated that officials are doing nothing to prepare the ranks for a real strike struggle.

CHICAGO: Following a meeting of over-the-road Local 710, Teamster members told *WV* reporters that neither strike authorization nor the latest management offer had been on the agenda. Local members were told to stay on the job, and simply instructed to call the union if they saw pickets.

During the meeting an official goon squad appeared outside to tear up the literature of Teamsters for a Decent Contract. A number of members who left the meeting early complained that it was all "bullshit" inside, and that they would refuse to work after the contract expired.

The same intimidation of the membership took place in the independent Chicago Truck Drivers Union (CTDU), where president Ed Fenner refused to call a general membership meeting or to open discussion on the contract in separate division meetings. Fenner is working closely with IBT vice-president Louis Peick in joint Chicago-area negotiations.

BAY AREA: In the San Francisco-Oakland area, employers are pressing especially hard to take away union conditions won in past contracts. In particular they seek to end the union hiring hall, unique to the northern California supplement to the Master Freight Agreement.

They also want to introduce staggered starting times. Under present rules, workers must be paid from 8 a.m. on, even if they don't start work at that time. The companies' proposal would mean shifts beginning at 5 a.m. It is estimated that the employer demands would lead to the elimination of one out of every five drivers currently employed.

Local 70 president Chuck Mack said after the strike vote meeting that the management was serious about these drastic attacks on union conditions and jobs. Yet Mack insisted he had no intention of defying the expected government anti-strike injunctions.

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## Transit...

(continued from page 12)

was approved by the EFCB. The September NYC teachers contract—which didn't even include a wage increase—has yet to be approved by the EFCB. Guinan and the Local 100 leadership have, significantly, never ruled out the possibility of a deferred wage increase, nor have they even indicated how much money they are asking for. *No deals with the Financial Control Board—No wage deferral!*

The state law also permits a monetary settlement in the form of cost-of-living (c-o-l) adjustments. But c-o-l without a wage increase will not make up for the erosion of wages by inflation under the last contract. The TWU's own chief counsel, John O'Donnell, has argued during the present negotiations that while the c-o-l clause netted union members 22 cents an hour under the last contract, inflation had forced the cost of living up by \$1.16 an hour in the same period!

Obviously, the existing c-o-l clause is woefully inadequate. The current formula provides for an increase of 1 cent for every 0.4 percent rise in prices; this

legislation calling for a payroll tax on employees, a 5-cent increase in gasoline taxes, and the installation of tolls over the now-free bridges crossing the East and Harlem rivers. Cuthacks in transit service and/or another fare hike are other possibilities. *No cuthacks! No transit or toll hikes! No new city wage tax!*

The banks and bondholders have profited for years at the expense of the city's working people. The subways were once owned by the banks, who deliberately drove them into bankruptcy, sold them for a whopping profit to the city and then lent the city the money to pay for them! Simply the interest on the transit debt provides many tens of millions of dollars annually to the financiers. This robbery must be ended. *Cancel the city debt, expropriate the banks and provide essential social services free of charge!*

Transit workers still bitterly recall the contract sellout perpetrated in 1972. Guinan and Local 100 president Ellis Van Riper are not about to lead a militant transit strike in 1976, either. Today they are encouraging illusions that the TA may come through with a decent contract without a strike. Tomorrow it is not unlikely that they will



WV salesmen outside transit workers meeting last Sunday.

WV Photo

means that anyone earning over \$2.50 an hour falls behind! Transit workers need a *sliding scale of wages* (equal increase in pay for every increase in prices, with no cap)! To win this they will have to smash the EFCB and its anti-labor "guidelines."

Guinan and his cronies assert that the TWU has not given anything away. This is false. In the past 12 months alone the TA claims to have realized so-called "productivity" savings of \$80 million. These savings have come from speed-up, cutting corners on maintenance and safety, and eliminating jobs. Over the last two years the payroll has been trimmed by over 2,000 employees. The TA would like to lay off even more full-time employees and replace them with part-timers who would receive reduced pay and benefits. Already, laid-off transit cops have been hired into jobs, displacing the normal civil service hiring lists. (TWU leaders say they "welcome" the racist and anti-labor cops into the union.)

Wage increases must not be financed by speed-up, layoffs, part-timing, service cuthacks, and neglect of safety and maintenance. Transit workers must demand a *sliding scale of hours* (a shorter work week with no loss in pay) to create more jobs and fight unemployment. *No productivity deals! For 30 hours work for 40 hours pay!*

Guinan and the TWU leaders claim to support a free mass transportation system, but they have never mobilized the TWU membership in militant labor actions to oppose a single fare increase. The danger exists that the TA will attempt to make the rest of the city's working population pay for any contract gains granted transit workers. Already the TA's parent body, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, has urged the state legislature to pass

announcement approval for another sellout contract, order the TWU back to work and conduct a phony mail ballot—all without calling a single union meeting where the contract terms can be discussed and debated. To ensure a militantly conducted strike in the interests of the membership, *strike committees must be elected* in the garages and barns, and a centralized strike leadership created on this basis!

At the rally, Local 100 secretary-treasurer Cronin and other TWU officials asserted that "ripping off the poor has been a way of life since Nixon." This is a feeble attempt to distract attention from the TWU's collaboration with the equally anti-labor Democratic Party. Today it is Democratic mayor Beame and Democratic governor Carey who are enforcing the city wage freeze, cuthacks in schools and social services, and layoffs of city workers. Both the Democrats and Republicans are committed to making working people pay to preserve capitalist profits. *Break with the Democrats and Republicans—Oust the bureaucrats—Build a workers party, based on the unions, to fight for a workers government!*

Neither the present TWU bureaucracy nor any existing rank-and-file group in the union is capable of fighting for a program that breaks with the class collaborationism of Guinan & Co. The spineless Transit Workers Action Caucus (TWAC) passed out a leaflet at the TWU rally that didn't utter a peep of criticism against either Local 100 or the International leadership, that did not call for a strike, and that didn't even demand "no contract, no work"! Only an opposition dedicated to an independent, militant mobilization of the membership on a class-struggle program can provide a leadership capable of winning victory for transit, and all, workers. ■

## Anti-Communist Sabre-Rattling at Manhattan Center

# Plyushch Caught in Henry Jackson's Anti-Soviet Web



WV Photo

Senator Henry Jackson (left) and Leonid Plyushch at podium during meeting.

Over 4,000 people, many of them Ukrainian emigrés, filled Manhattan Center to capacity March 27 for a rally sponsored by the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners. The meeting was addressed by a broad spectrum of anti-communists, including ex-Soviet dissident Pavel Litvinov, grandson of Stalin's foreign minister; a former Lithuanian seaman, Simas Kudirka, who jumped ship off Massachusetts several years ago; Michael Harrington of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC); Inez Weissman of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry; Congressman Ed Koch and Senator Henry Jackson. The principal attraction, however, was the keynote speaker, Leonid Plyushch, a Ukrainian dissident who was recently freed from a Soviet psychiatric hospital after nearly three years' incarceration.

Unlike many Soviet dissidents who translate hatred of the Stalinist bureaucracy into outspoken anti-Communism, Plyushch claims to be a "neo-Marxist." But his appearance on Saturday night—following a number of speeches by "cold war" ideologues and professional reactionaries who several times unfavorably compared the Soviet regime with Nazism and tsarist autocracy—left no doubt that despite his professed commitment to socialism, Plyushch is already being drafted into the anti-Soviet chorus of apologists for imperialist "democracy."

Following Plyushch's release by the Russian authorities and his emigration, *Workers Vanguard* solidarized with dissidents victimized by the Soviet regime for the "crime" of criticizing the repressive bureaucracy. At the same time we warned:

"... now that he is out of the USSR Plyushch must face a concrete choice: he will either reaffirm and systematize his socialist, anti-bureaucratic convictions or become a witting or unwitting pawn of pro-imperialist anti-Communists anxious to use the issue of Soviet dissidents as a cynical justification for exploitation and oppression under capitalism."

—"Stop Stalinist 'Psychiatric' Torture in USSR!" *WV* No. 96, 13 February 1976

In recent interviews, Plyushch has

stressed his lack of information on a number of important issues. He also has been reported to be "sharply critical" of Ukrainian groups in the U.S. with ties to the American government. But whether consciously or unconsciously, with whatever criticisms or hesitations, he is now lending his authority as a professed socialist to the attempt of the rabidly anti-communist American social democrats to ingratiate themselves with the capitalist candidate of their choice: the "senator from Boeing," Henry Jackson. (Jackson recently was the featured speaker at an NYC meeting of the Social Democrats USA; among the sponsors of another Plyushch meeting this week are DSOC, the Socialist Party USA and Americans for Democratic Action.)

Plyushch understands that the Russian bureaucracy's current anti-Zionist campaign serves as a cover for anti-Semitism. Yet he then turns a deaf ear to the manner in which agitation against repression in the USSR can be similarly utilized by imperialist apologists as an anti-communist weapon against the Soviet Union. Not only was Plyushch more than willing to share a podium with such notorious war-mongers as Jackson, but he expressly saluted this sabre-rattling imperialist "for his participation in the struggle for human rights in the Soviet Union." Plyushch went on to tell Jackson that "your authority is very great" and appealed to him to exert his influence on behalf of Chilean political prisoners.

Marxists support the democratic rights of political dissidents, with the exception of active counterrevolutionaries, in the deformed workers states. Our goal is the restoration of workers democracy in the Soviet Union through a proletarian political revolution to oust the privileged ruling clique and restore political power to the working masses. Our enemy is not only the bureaucratic usurpers in Moscow, but also the ideologues of international capital, such as Jackson (who demands that the U.S. government intervene economically against the workers states), with their dreams of the destruction of the nation-

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WORKERS VANGUARD



# Soviet Agriculture...

(continued from page 7)

become very tight and any rural youth who can get to a city has a job.

It is impossible for the bureaucracy to keep trained youth on the farms. A recent survey of rural secondary school seniors in the Russian Republic indicated that less than 20 percent intended to remain in the countryside. In Novosibirsk province, Siberia, collective farms lose 20 percent of their machine operators each year, according to a study done by the Soviet sociologist T.I. Zaslavskaya (summarized in *Problems of Communism*, November-December 1974).

Between 1958 and 1970 the rural population of the Russian Republic and the Ukraine declined by 20 and 18 percent respectively. But in both Republics the rural population aged 20-24 dropped by 50 percent, according to economist Y. Karimovsky (*Ekonomicheskaya Nauka*, August 1973, translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 13 February 1974), who concluded that:

"...the age-group structure of migration and the unregulated 'drainage' of young people from rural areas is the main explanation for the insufficient high level of labor productivity in agri-

culture. The irrational out-migration of rural young people is apparently the reason why levels of technical equipment available to agriculture in the USSR and USA are drawing together much faster than the levels of agricultural labor productivity." [our emphasis]

The Novosibirsk study revealed that only 7 percent of those moving to the city gave higher money wages as a reason. But 30 percent said they desired a better quality of life, 20 percent indicated they wanted more free time and 34 percent expressed dissatisfaction with the conditions of labor on the *kolkhozy*.

A large part of Soviet real income is accounted for not by money wages but by social services provided free or at nominal prices. These services naturally tend to be concentrated in the cities. For example in 1973 only 23 percent of farm households had an indoor water supply and plumbing. The same conditions causing the exodus of peasants also make it impossible to keep good teachers or doctors in the countryside.

Nor is the rural out-migration motivated simply by consumerist interests. The bureaucratic abuse of *kolkhoz* members is also a factor. Collective farmers are treated like state employees without enjoying any of the material benefits. Zaslavskaya's article explains:

"Young people feel that they are not so much the masters as hired laborers in agricultural production; as a rule, they have no share in managing the collective, the section, or the brigade; they do not participate in the making of important decisions, and therefore they have no opportunity to utilize their potential and their knowledge of the productive process."

On the farms, material and cultural impoverishment combines with the bureaucratic arbitrariness integral to every aspect of economic and social organization in the Soviet degenerated workers state. The monopoly of political and economic life by the parasitic bureaucracy deforms centralized economic planning and blocks the worker and peasant masses from collectively undertaking the construction of a society of material plenty for all.

Only the ouster of the Stalinist ruling caste by workers political revolution, and the democratic regulation through soviets of economic life at every level, can remove the bureaucratic fetters on the economy and institute coordinated economic growth in the USSR. Only the obliteration of capitalism on a world scale by international proletarian revolution, liberating the productive forces from the stranglehold of bourgeois productive relations, can open the road to socialist development in the context of a global division of labor. It is only in this context that the wanton chaos and colossal inefficiency of Soviet agriculture can be overcome.

## Reforging the Smychka

After an anti-bureaucratic revolution in the USSR, the soviet regime would inherit the problem of 50 years of Stalinist abuse of the peasantry. This involves not only the fundamental imbalance between agricultural and industrial production, but also a distrustful or even hostile attitude by the peasants to what they view as an urban-based "Communist" regime.

Trotsky demonstrated the intimate relationship between the Stalin clique's advocacy of national economic self-

sufficiency and its promulgation, beginning in 1923, of the doctrine of "socialism in one country" which first wrote off, and then began actively to sabotage, the international extension of the October Revolution. Trotsky pointed



Nikita Khrushchev

out the inherent economic irrationality of "socialism in one country": "To aim at building a nationally isolated socialist society means, in spite of all passing successes, to pull the productive forces backward even as compared with capitalism" (*The Permanent Revolution*, "Introduction to the German Edition," 1930, emphasis in original).

One obvious question for the revolutionary government would be whether to continue the Stalinist policy of attempting self-sufficiency in food production rather than increasing imports. Considered solely from the standpoint of current levels of economic efficiency, the answer would be no. A study by A.K. Il'ichev (translated in *Problems of Economics*, January 1975) compared Soviet production costs with world market prices and reached the not-so-surprising conclusion that the USSR does not have a comparative advantage in food production, but rather in primary metallurgy and oil and gas. Global socialist planning might well involve the massive exchange of North American grain and meat products for Russian steel ingots and Siberian natural gas.

Both from the standpoint of social policy and economic efficiency, it would be better to gradually liquidate much of Soviet farming and import most food from countries whose agriculture already possesses a highly mechanized, capital-intensive technology. But the only nation presently capable of supplying food to the huge Soviet urban population is Gerald Ford's (or maybe Henry Jackson's?) America. It would be criminally negligent for a revolutionary workers government in the USSR to make itself dependent upon food imports from an imperialist USA.

An isolated Soviet Union would unfortunately have to strive for self-sufficiency in basic food production. And this requires gaining the good will of the peasant masses for the revolutionary regime. The strategic need of a revolutionary government in the Soviet Union today requires the reforging of the Leninist *smychka*, the alliance of workers and peasants.

Whenever Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe have been in crisis, there has been a strong tendency for the peasants to abandon the collective farms and return to smallholding. When in 1950 the internationally isolated Tito regime in Yugoslavia moved to secure a popular base, it not only instituted limited workers management in the factories, but also permitted the dissolution of the collective farms in favor of private farming. When Gomulka forestalled a violent upheaval in Poland in 1956, a key policy was the restoration of private agriculture. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 likewise witnessed the self-liquidation of the collectives.

There is certainly good reason to assume that a political upheaval in Brezhnev's Russia would call forth anti-collectivist, individualistic impulses among the peasantry. The dissolution of collectivized agriculture and restoration of smallholding is neither inevitable nor, from a revolutionary socialist standpoint, desirable. But any attempt by a revolutionary government to maintain the collectives by force—to underwrite Stalin's actions in 1929-30—would be dangerous in the extreme. It would risk driving the peasants into the camp of reaction, particularly where economic dissatisfaction coincides with national grievances, as in the Ukraine. Efforts to maintain the collectives, and in fact to encourage the development of state farms, must be through economic means rather than by coercion. The policies of the left opposition in the 1920's provide good guidelines.

The collectives should be transformed into genuine cooperatives whose internal organization should be determined by the members, without direct state administrative control. Collectives should be given easier credit than any emerging private farms, while the latter should be subject to higher tax rates. Should private smallholders emerge nonetheless, it is essential to prevent their development into agrarian capitalists by the strict prohibition of wage labor.

It is important to prevent the development of a class of merchants/users operating between the peasantry and the urban market. The state must have a monopoly of agricultural trade. This can be effective only if the peasants are given the full market price for their commodities. Attempts to force deliveries to the state at artificially low prices will lead to widespread black-marketeering and speculation. The inequalitarian effects of market-price procurement can be limited by a progressive income tax on the collectives, while increased prices of farm products for the urban population can be partly offset by consumer subsidies.

For decades the Stalinist bureaucratic caste has concentrated the scarce wealth of Soviet society in the cities. The health of the economy and loyalty of the peasants to the communist cause require a radical reversal of that situation. Fifty years of Stalinist oppression of the peasantry have made the re-establishment of the Leninist *smychka* a crucial goal of the Soviet political revolution. ■

# Plyushch...

(continued from page 10)

alized property forms of the workers states, by military means if necessary. The struggle for workers democracy in the Soviet Union cannot be divorced from the elementary duty of all socialist militants for unconditional military defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution.

On 16 January 1973 the Spartacist League addressed a letter to the leftist Committee for the Immediate Liberation of the Political Prisoners in the Countries of Eastern Europe (led by the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste [OCI]) in which we stated:

"In the present circumstances, almost all of the American commentaries on repression and persecution of the dissidents in the deformed workers states stem unequivocally from anti-communism.... Thus, Jifi Pelikan's open letter to Angela Davis was widely reproduced by the liberal and anti-communist press in the U.S. with clearly anti-communist commentaries. Thus, the slogan 'Free the political prisoners' does not separate itself sufficiently from directly anti-communist campaigns such as 'Free Soviet Jewry' or from support for Hungarian 'freedom fighters' such as Cardinal Mindszenty. Thus, the open letter by Rev. Daniel Berrigan, S.J., one of the leaders of the 'antiwar' movement, recently addressed to Brezhnev, equated fascism, the persecution of the dissidents in the Eastern European countries and imperialism as repressive and reactionary forces. This is the framework within which we see, for example, the 'Call on Czechoslovakia,' initiated by the League for the Rights of Man and signed by the Committee and by the OCI, in which the signatories commit themselves to oppose repression whatever may be the opinion of the victims of the repression."

Plyushch, the "neo-Marxist," apparently refuses to grasp the principle of class-struggle defense of Soviet dissidents. He is allowing himself to be used to build a platform for anti-communism and to further the presidential aspirations of Henry Jackson. His collaboration with the partisans of imperialist "democracy" serves only to delay the victory of the international proletarian revolution and thereby to prolong the suffering of political prisoners from the camps of the Gulag to the torture chambers of Santiago. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## No Deferrals!

# For a Militant Transit Strike to Smash NYC Wage Freeze!

MARCH 28—An overflow crowd of several thousand transit workers packed a rally at Manhattan Center today and authorized a strike if an agreement has not been reached with the New York City Transit Authority (TA) when the old pact expires at midnight, March 31. The workers, members of Transit Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, booed loudly whenever the names of NYC mayor Abraham Beame or chief TA negotiator David Yunich were mentioned, and were equally vigorous in demonstrating their determination to walk out if no new contract is signed.

Since last summer the wages of New York City municipal employees have been frozen by a state law enforced by

the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB). Although the law permits a deferred wage increase or cost-of-living adjustments, the TA is saying it has no money even for that. The TA claims a current operating deficit of \$332 million and asserts that the subsidies it has been receiving from city, state and federal governments will decline in the future. Mayor Beame has several times reiterated the position of the city administration that it has no money for wage increases.

Speaking time at the union rally was monopolized by officers of Local 100 and the TWU International, who spouted a lot of tough-talking rhetoric. Union officials often repeated that

Local 100 would not give up any of its past contract gains, and drew cheers whenever they referred to the traditional union policy of "no contract, no work." However, behind this militant talk lies a far more treacherous policy for transit workers. International president Matt Guinan tipped his hand when he said: "They put through a law freezing wages of public employees. Maybe that was necessary.... I don't know."

This off-hand remark clearly indicates Guinan's willingness to negotiate a settlement within the confines of the anti-labor city pay freeze. (Last week he tried to get the EFCB to enter the bargaining and indicate what an acceptable settlement might be.) The failure to

attack the wage freeze is not only a betrayal of the interests of thousands of workers and students (as well as millions of subway riders) who have been victimized by the austerity program forced on the city's working and poor population, but is a direct threat to the interests of transit workers themselves.

### A Program for Victory

One way to get around the city wage freeze is to bargain for a pay hike that will be "deferred" until the future. Such a deferment, however, would undoubtedly be *indefinite*. TWU members would not get any money until payment

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## NO CONTRACT, NO WORK! DEFY ANTI-STRIKE INJUNCTIONS!

## Teamster Ranks Eager for Strike

MARCH 29—Bargaining for a new national Master Freight Agreement covering 435,000 over-the-road and local cartage drivers in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) grinds on toward a midnight, March 31, deadline. Voting in local meetings around the country this past weekend indicated a massive majority of the Teamster ranks enthusiastically favor a strike. Nevertheless, widely despised IBT president Frank Fitzsimmons continues to maneuver feverishly between intransigent employers and discontented ranks in a desperate attempt to bridge the gulf with a rotten compromise. While the union membership is suffering from heavy unemployment and loss of real wages due to rampant inflation, Fitzsimmons' only concern is to negotiate a package "sweet" enough to secure his re-election in June.

The government and big corporations are paying close attention to the truckers' contract talks, hoping to forestall a generalized labor offensive. An "out-of-line" settlement "could start a new inflationary surge," blared *Business Week* (29 March), trying to blame "strike pressures welling up from rank-and-file drivers and dissident union groups" for the inevitable future rate

hikes in the industry. The Ford administration is already directly intervening in the talks through Labor Secretary William Usery, and the threat of an immediate 80-day Taft-Hartley back-to-work order is being used to intimidate the ranks.

Threats are also descending on the Teamsters from the Democratic Congress, which announced a new "investigation" into gangsterism in the union late last week. This move was prompted by a multi-part television report on IBT corruption which NBC News just "happened" to run only a week before the contract deadline fell due. This supposedly accidental timing should make clear to those who call on the courts and government to clean up the unions that intervention by the bosses' state into the affairs of the workers

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In April 1971 strike Teamsters stayed out in violation of back-to-work order by the International.



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## Plant Closure Threatens River Rouge Complex.....8