

French Local Elections



Thousands of students and workers marched in support of striking pressmen at Parisien Libéré in early December.

Lutte Ouvrière

Far Left Bloc Tails Popular Front

No to the Union of the Left!

Break with Class Collaboration! Toward a Workers Government!

PARIS—As the campaign period officially opens for the mid-March French municipal elections, streets in the capital have become a massive billboard for slogans of the competing parties. "To Improve Life," wistfully promise posters for the Communist Party (PCF) ticket. "Socialism—An Idea That's Going Places," declares Socialist Party (PS) leader François Mitterand from an advertisement reminiscent of Marlboro commercials. One would hardly suspect that during the last year French workers have been subjected to sharp attacks on their standard of living. The government austerity program has frozen salaries and increased unemployment to 1.5 million, an unprecedented level for recent times.

In a country with long traditions of working-class political combativity, where barely suppressed memories of May 1968 haunt the bourgeoisie and its reformist labor lieutenants, the electoral campaigns of the mass workers parties have been so innocuous that attention has focused almost exclusively on the squabbling confrontation between President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Gaullist former prime minister Jacques Chirac (who is running for mayor of Paris).

Attempting to demonstrate their "suitability" for office, the reformist bureaucrats have imposed a moratorium on mass demonstrations and are keeping the lid on strike action. Pressures are nonetheless building up,

posing the possibility of an explosion of sharp class battles at any moment. Recent strikes have frequently shown a high level of militancy, such as that at the state-owned Caisse d'Épargne savings bank, where the workers held out for three months (including an occupation of the bank) before the strike was sold out at the beginning of January.

At the end of January, union bureaucrats staged one of their periodic attempts to defuse labor militancy by calling a week of rotating 24-hour strikes in the public and service sectors. This time, however, these often marginally effective "strikes" were supported by as much as 90 percent of the workers in some mining districts and railroad sectors. But the bureaucrats remained fully in control and the liberal bourgeois *Le Monde* (12 January) could observe with satisfaction that "the various actions have rarely yielded results in line with the strikers' combativeness."

Although municipal elections are not usually a major political event in France, the upcoming two-round balloting (on March 13 and 20) is seen as a crucial test pitting the fraying, discredited Giscard government and neo-Gaullist forces led by Chirac against the popular-front Union of the Left. The government suffered a series of setbacks in cantonal elections last November, and there is widespread speculation that the Union of the Left might win over 50 percent of the popular vote, or make gains significant enough to raise the possibility of a left majority in the parliamentary elections scheduled for next spring at the latest.

As in Italy, the PCF is basing its strategy on enlarging the popular front to include "broad sectors" of the bourgeoisie, in this case dissident

Gaullists such as Charbonnel, a former minister. But this has reportedly caused grumbling among the Communist ranks. In the case of Charbonnel, notorious for his anti-working-class policies in May 1968 and later, the Stalinist apparatus may have difficulty keeping its troops in line and turning out the vote.

The bitter harvest of the French popular front—which defeated the 1936 general strike and paved the way to Vichy and fascism—was as predictable as the price paid in blood by the Spanish proletariat during the Civil War and the holocaust which Chilean workers suffered in 1973. This lesson must not be lost. Electoral success for the Union of the Left will not be a victory for the working class. This class-collaborationist coalition, which ties the workers to the bourgeois Left Radicals and now a "fourth element" (the dissident Gaullists), cannot be a vehicle for working-class struggle. Rather it is a roadblock standing in the way of the independent mobilization of the prole-

tariat around its class interests.

A vote for the Union of the Left is a vote for a *bourgeois* political formation, not for working-class independence. As a *minimum precondition* for electoral support to candidates of the PCF and PS, the workers must demand that the reformist parties break with their capitalist bloc partners and with the "Common Program" which provides the framework for this class-collaborationist alliance. But instead of fighting for the mobilization of the proletariat against the class enemy, the main would-be Trotskyist groups in France have been jockeying for position on the left flank of the popular front.

"Far-Left" Slate Tails Union of the Left

As the possibility of an electoral victory for the left in France has grown over the last two years, centrist forces have been searching for a way to "regroup" all those to the left of the mass reformist workers parties. Thus the

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Vladimir Bukovsky

Bukovsky on Parade for Imperialist Warmongers.... 7

FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND MALCOLM X: Developing a Social Conscience

I began, with the commencement of the year, to prepare myself for a final struggle, which should decide my fate one way or the other. My tendency was upward. I was fast approaching manhood, and year after year had passed, and I was still a slave. These thoughts roused me—I must do something. I theretore resolved that 1835 should not pass without witnessing an attempt, on my part, to secure my liberty. But I was not willing to cherish this determination alone. My fellow-slaves were dear to me. I was anxious to have them participate with me in this, my life-giving determination. I theretore, though with great prudence, commenced early to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition, and to imbue their minds with thoughts of freedom. I bent myself to devising ways and means for our escape, and meanwhile strove, on all fitting occasions, to impress them with the gross fraud and inhumanity of slavery. I went first to Henry, next to John, then to the others. I found, in them all, warm hearts and noble spirits. They were ready to hear, and ready to act when a feasible plan should be proposed. This was what I wanted. I talked to them of our want of manhood, if we submitted to our enslavement without at least one noble effort to be free. We met often, and consulted frequently, and told our hopes and fears, recounted the difficulties, real and imagined, which we should be called on to meet. At times we were almost disposed to give up, and try to content ourselves with our wretched lot; at others, we were firm and unbending in our determination to go....

We now began to feel a degree of safety, and to prepare ourselves for the duties and responsibilities of a life of freedom. On the morning after our arrival at New Bedford, while at the breakfast-table, the question arose as to what name I should be called by. The name given me by my mother was, "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey." I, however, had dispensed with the two middle names long before I left Maryland so that I was generally known by the name of "Frederick Bailey." I started from Baltimore bearing the name of "Stanley." When I got to New York, I again changed my name to "Frederick Johnson," and thought that would be the last change. But when I got to New Bedford, I found it necessary again to change my name. The reason of this necessity was, that there were so many Johnsons in New Bedford. It was already quite difficult to distinguish between them. I gave Mr. Johnson the privilege of choosing me a name, but told him he must not take from me the name of "Frederick." I must hold on to that, to preserve a sense of my identity. Mr. Johnson had just been reading the "Lady of the Lake," and at once suggested that my name be "Douglass." From that time until now I have been called "Frederick Douglass," and as I am more widely known by that name than by either of the others, I shall continue to use it as my own.

—Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
[autobiographical]

I think that an objective reader may see how in the society to which I was exposed as a black youth here in America, for me to wind up in a prison was really just about inevitable. It happens to so many thousands of black youth....

I think, I hope, that the objective reader, in following my life—the life of only one ghetto-created Negro—may gain a better picture and understanding than he has previously had of the black ghettos which are shaping the lives and the thinking of almost all of the 22 million Negroes who live in America.

—The Autobiography of Malcolm X

"ROOTS": Romanticizing an Individual Heritage

Then, under the moon and the stars, Kunta raised the baby upward, turning the blanketed bundle in his hands so that the baby's right ear touched against his lips. And then stowly and distinctly, in Mandinka, he whispered three times into the tiny ear, "Your name is Kizzy. Your name is Kizzy. Your name is Kizzy." It was done, as it had been done with all of the Kinte ancestors, as it had been done with himself, as it would have been done with this infant had she been born in her ancestral homeland. She had become the first person to know who she was....

Even beyond what she had hoped, George seemed to be building up his own image of his grandpappy, and—to the limits of her endurance—Kizzy tried to help it along with tales from her own rich store of memories. "Boy, I wish you could o' heard 'im singin' some o' dem African songs to me when we be ridin' in de massa's buggy, an' I was a 'lil gal, right roun' de age you is now."... She said to George, "Yo' gran'pappy like to tell me things in de African tongue. Like he call a tiddle a ko, or he call a river Kamby Bolongo, whole lotsa different, tunny-soundin' words like dat." She thought how much it would please her pappy, wherever he was, for his grandson also to know the African words.

—Alex Haley, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*

The American Left Views "Roots"

The *Roots* craze (see *WV* No. 147, 4 March) has generated some controversy among (and evidently within) a number of fake-left groups. Typically their "reviews" of Alex Haley's book and its TV dramatization shed far more light on these opportunists' own political proclivities than on the social viewpoint of *Roots* or the reasons for its phenomenal popularity.

The most slavish in pursuing the *Roots* bandwagon have been the International Socialists (I.S.) and the Communist Party (CP). In the 31 January *Workers' Power*, the I.S.'s Kate Stacy offers no less than 27 paragraphs of plot summary and concludes with the comment: "It is a fine book, worth all 580 pages of reading. Haley's writing is flowery, but the content is fascinating. And he is an excellent story-teller." The CP's *Daily World* (5 February) lauded *Roots* and raised what must surely be one of the most minimal "demands" ever: the major networks should "draw the lessons" of *Roots* and "schedule quality, informative programs at prime viewing time." (The I.S., which speaks out of the left side of the mouth of reformism as the CP does out of the right, can certainly congratulate itself on being "in the vanguard" this time: some months ago *Workers' Power*

solidarized with *Roots* first in the name of vicarious race war and then, more guardedly, on behalf of liberal "Ellis Island to the suburbs"-style ethnic pluralism. First came Omari Musa's review of the TV show, which saw the leading black characters as some kind of freedom fighters and predicted *Roots* would foment an upsurge of what evidently constitutes militancy for Musa; describing the show as "one big consciousness raiser" that "will increase black pride," he gave two examples:

"A young brother stopping in a coffee shop before work said, 'I tell you one thing, those white folks better not mess with me today. I just might have to stomp one.'... four Black students at Harrisburg Middle School were suspended after a shoving match with some white students. The Black students had been chanting 'Roots, Roots' before the scuffle began."

—*Militant*, 11 February

Perhaps Musa thought the SWP was still courting militant-talking nationalist hucksters instead of ultra-respectable black ministers and liberal politicians. Musa's more calculating comrades must have realized that stomping white folks would not set well at NAACP headquarters, for the *Militant* (4 March) abruptly switched to a new interpretation of *Roots* in Malik Miah's book review.

Although hedging his bets by criticizing Haley for not paying enough attention to "the big political and social developments in the period he writes about," Miah locates the source of "black pride" in *Roots* in... genealogy! Miah actually calls genealogy "a subject of immediate concern to all Black Americans" which "shows where we are from and why we are in the situation we find ourselves in." That this petty-bourgeois hobby can be offered as an antidote to racial oppression speaks volumes about the tame reformism of the SWP.

But in neither incarnation can the SWP show the feeblest grasp of what *Roots* is all about: the "African heritage"—pushed in the 1960's as the alternative to bankrupt civil-rights reformism—now so smoothly reconciled with accommodation to the racist status quo. *Roots* is the pop-culture reflection of daishiki-clad black administrators doling out capitalism's crumbs to the impoverished black masses. The past and present enthusiasts of black nationalism are incapable of understanding that nationalism and liberal integrationism share the same class standpoint; thus, either can serve as the ideology of black petty-bourgeois advancement, depending on the prevalent social-political climate, and elements of each can be easily grafted onto the other.

Apparently working on the assumption that "130 million Americans can't be wrong," the "Third Worldist" *Guardian* editors were loath to sharply criticize *Roots*. Instead, they sagely advised "Marxist-Leninists" to unite with the good aspects (whatever they may be) and struggle against the bad (ditto).

But while the *Guardian* cautions that *Roots* may evoke "narrow Black nationalism," the Maoist October League (OL) attacks it for being insufficiently nationalist! Articles in the OL's *Call* (14, 21 and 28 February) take Haley to task for failing to depict "the development of the Afro-American nation out of the many African peoples," citing for example the "process" which led to the "forging of one common language out of many" African tongues as "one of the features of slave life" that generated a distinct black nationality in the South.

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On slave ship—scene from television show "Roots."

called for prime time for another media hit, "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman"! Meanwhile Progressive Labor (PL), attempting to stem organizational disintegration with another round of ritual "self-criticism," is openly airing its confusion in the pages of *Challenge*. An article in the 10 February issue noted that Haley appeals to racial solidarity rather than class unity; *Roots*, "a nest of distortions" filled with "racist and sexist stereotypes," "appeals to crude nationalism." But in the 24 February issue one "H.H."—perhaps a grizzled veteran of PL's numerous campaigns against racist textbooks—rebutted the earlier writer for a "non-dialectical and sectarian approach to culture." H.H., apparently a true believer in PL's anti-Marxist notion that the root of racial oppression is racist ideas, evidently noticed that *Roots* effectively tapped the wellsprings of liberal white guilt to which PL's "anti-racism" campaigns are geared: by "making racism a mass issue," *Roots* enables "communists to put forward revolutionary conclusions within that discussion." Elevating idealism to new heights of absurdity, H.H. contends that *Roots* "represents a reform of bourgeois ideology vis a vis racism" which "is analogous to a wage increase on the economic front!"

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has the dubious distinction of having

Sino-Soviet Clinch in the Lawyers Guild

NORMAN, Oklahoma—As about 300 participants met here for a three-day conference of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) national executive board on February 18-20, opportunist politics were once again in command. The question was, whose?

Was there a "two-line struggle" in the NLG, as Peking-loyal Maoists contended? Or was a "non-sectarian" "third force" emerging, as aging New Lefters hoped? Through it all, Communist Party (CP) supporters remained deliberately unobtrusive, but managed to win the key votes. The conference demonstrated the capacity of the NLG's chummy petty-bourgeois radical milieu to accommodate wildly divergent political positions ... so long as they stay within the limits of smooth-talking class collaboration.

However, "peaceful coexistence" is becoming increasingly difficult as organizational squeeze play follows bureaucratic hatchet job in the ongoing Sino-Soviet tug-of-war in the NLG. The uneasy stalemate reached at the 35th Guild conference in Houston last winter, between supporters of the Maoist October League (OL) and Brezhnevite friends of the Moscow-loyal CP (see "Détente in the National Lawyers Guild," *WV* No. 98, 27 February 1976), has given way to a bitter guerrilla war of maneuvers, threats, back-stabbing and red-baiting.

Maoist Hundred vs. Trotskyist "Gang of Three"

The battle lines were drawn on the first night of the conference. Feeling its oats in Oklahoma, close to its southern base, the OL aggressively announced a meeting to "Build a Fighting Guild." Although called "to unite" around four OL slogans (including "Oppose the two superpowers!" and "Oppose the CPUSA!"), leaflets for the meeting claimed it was open to all, including NLG members who "may be unclear about the exact meaning of some or all of these slogans."

As OL-sympathetic chairmen abruptly shut down workshops so everyone could attend this caucus, it drew nearly a third of those attending the conference. But while the leaflet advertising the meeting had promised the "fullest possible discussion," it immediately became clear that the OL intended a policy of exclusion. The first

agenda point was the proposed ejection of anyone sympathetic to the politics of the Spartacist League (SL)—obviously aimed at a staff counsel and two supporters of the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC).

"There are one hundred of you and only three of us," the SL spokesman pointed out. "What you are really afraid of is our politics, not 'disruption.'" To which the Maoists could only respond: "Out, Out, Out!" But the exclusion attempt didn't work. While the OL has hardened up its following within the NLG, so too have its Moscow-Stalinist and social-democratic opponents. Irritated by the OL's organizational bullying, the few independent radicals in the room threw a monkey wrench into the proceedings by implicitly threatening to make an issue of this blatant exclusionism on the plenary floor. Mike Withey, who had been a speaker in an earlier workshop cut short by OL interference, shouted out that the Guild would not tolerate undemocratic exclusionism and asserted that Spartacist League supporters had every right to be at the meeting. He demanded to know whether the Maoists intended to call the cops to remove SL supporters.

The Maoists backed down for the moment and continued the meeting but made sure that no SL supporter was recognized during the discussion. During a "criticism-self-criticism" session following the first plenary, NLG president Bill Goodman angrily took the floor to blast the Maoists for disruption of conference activities and for the attempted exclusion, warning them that such behavior would not be tolerated in the Guild.

Two Lines or Three?

The confrontation revealed a familiar pattern. At the beginning of a typical NLG confab the OL comes on strong with organizational shenanigans appropriate to a takeover bid; but when faced with opposition it soon backs down. This occurred last winter in Houston and again at the August national executive board meeting in New Jersey when the OL failed to stop the NLG from endorsing the Wilmington Ten/Charlotte Three demonstration pushed by the CP-dominated National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression (NAARPR).

At their meeting the OL supporters

argued that a "two-line struggle" exists between themselves and the CP "revisionists." This struggle is, however, really nothing other than an organizational dogfight reflecting the Sino-Soviet split—a falling out among Stalinists. The so-called independents generally vote in accordance with the views of the CP even without heavy-handed CP orchestration; their mainstream populist radicalism is more akin to the CP's bland appeal to "progressives" and "peace-loving people" than to lining up behind Peking's alliance with U.S. imperialism. Yet it is in the hopes of capturing a chunk of this sizable group that the OL has been posturing as a left pole of attraction.

The residue of New Leftists in the NLG is itself a mass of political contradictions. A recent position paper by six Guild "independents" indicated that like the "independent" *Guardian* this tendency wants to criticize the OL on international issues and the CP on domestic ones:

"The international line of the OL objectively supports many facets of the foreign policy of the U.S. bourgeoisie. The domestic positions of the CPUSA legitimize the state apparatus of that same bourgeoisie. We must develop our own analysis, our own theory, our own direction and our own party."

But while the *Guardian* can pretend to "develop theory" by reprinting quotations from Lenin year in and year out, the "independents" in the NLG are called upon to vote resolutions, and in the post-Angola period they almost always vote with the CP.

More fundamental than the organizational maneuvering of the various Stalinist factions and their hangers-on is the political battle to draw the class line. There are only two sides in this battle, with reformists of all stripes—including the pro-Peking and pro-Moscow Stalinists and the "independents"—on the side of class collaboration while the SL and PDC stand for intransigent defense of the working class. Ultimately it is only their shared appetite for class collaboration which continues to unite the squabbling reformists of the NLG.

Helping Sadlowski Sue the Unions

The labor project workshop, comprising many of the "independents" who were later so distressed by OL supporters' violations of democracy, planned a panel on United Steelworkers presidential candidate Ed Sadlowski which excluded from the panel a militant steel worker who opposed Sadlowski from the left. During the discussion this steel worker challenged the positions of both the pro-Sadlowski CP and the anti-Sadlowski OL. What, he asked OL supporter Fred Klonsky, is the difference between Sadlowski and the United Mine Workers Arnold Miller? Unable to dredge up an appropriate quotation from Chairman Mao, Klonsky admitted that perhaps some errors had been made in the OL's support for Miller.

But if the feuding Stalinists and New Leftists cannot agree on support to aspiring bureaucrat Sadlowski, they have no difficulty in coming together on the treacherous policy which is the hallmark of the NLG's recent labor defense work: suing the union. In an outrageous display of political hypocrisy, the reformist lawyers followed their silver-tongued orations on how the courts are instruments of bourgeois class rule with instructions for taking "tactical advantage" of them by bringing them into union affairs. Only the Spartacist League and the PDC have fought in the Lawyers Guild for a principled stand for the independence of the trade-union movement from the capitalist state.

When a resolution was introduced advocating NLG legal assistance to

Sadlowski's "Fight Back," an SL supporter pointed out that this not only indicated political support to Sadlowski but it failed to distinguish between suits against the company and suits—such as Sadlowski has brought in the past—against the union. Despite their formal opposition to Sadlowski, the utterly unprincipled OL supporters voted for the motion.

NLG Ducks Soviet Dissident Issue

During the discussion on international issues, OL supporters presented a motion supporting the "Azanian [South African] people's just and heroic struggle." This in itself was fine with the "Third Worldist" NLG, but the resolution added a call for resistance to "all forms of intervention"—a disguised attack on Soviet intervention. The resolution was quickly amended to replace criticism of "both superpowers" with an attack only on "all forms of U.S. intervention." Recognizing that their "main enemy" was slipping off the hook, the Maoists voted against this motion, which was passed by the usual bloc of CP supporters and New Leftists.

The PDC introduced a resolution on Soviet dissidents which, if passed, would have put the NLG on record against the continuing cold-war hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism, while expressing political hostility to the "Stalins, Brezhnevs and Maos" (for the text of the PDC resolution see box this page). But, since China regards even the most reactionary, tsar-loving dissident as a hero while the Moscow Stalinists see them all as villains, the Guild dodged the issue completely by ruling the PDC resolution "out of order" and later voting it down with little discussion.

Instead, the convention passed a resolution of uncritical support to the Vietnamese "re-education camps," which have lately come under critical attack by liberal doves and anti-communist "peaceniks" seeking respectability. The resolution, which praises the "spirit of moderation, restraint and clemency" of the Vietnamese, is, in effect, a blank check of political support to the Stalinist bureaucrats of Vietnam.

For United-Front Defense to Free Gary Tyler!

In domestic defense work the NLG displayed yet more cynical opportunism. The main issue was the defense of Gary Tyler, a black youth facing life imprisonment on a murder frame-up in Louisiana. The OL wanted the NLG to support its defense campaign and sponsor a tour for a speaker from the OL-dominated Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF).

The OL-supported resolution made
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PDC Resolution on Soviet Dissidents

The National Lawyers Guild strongly condemns the crusade by anti-communist elements regarding "Soviet dissidents" now taken up by President Carter and the U.S. State Department. This crusade demonstrates its utter shameless hypocrisy and its direct subservience to U.S. imperialism by ignoring the ruthless suppression of democratic rights in reactionary regimes supported by U.S. imperialism (e.g., South Korea, the Philippines, Iran, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay).

In countries where capitalism has been abolished (the Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba) the "dissidents," prisoners, refugees, ethnic militants, etc. are often saturated with legitimate grievances against the repressions and pervasive oppression of the societies ruled by authoritarian, nationalistic bureaucracies. As a touchstone, those "oppositions" who center their appeals toward the "Western conscience" willy nilly and with a logic of inevitable fulfillment are tools of capitalist imperialism.

Therefore the NLG goes on record for the defense of the "forgotten" militants, those mostly faceless and nameless communists, often directly from the working people, who struggle—generally in the name of Leninism—within their own societies to remove the Stalins, Brezhnevs and Maos in favor of a just and egalitarian socialist order.

Implementation: That the NLG not participate in or sponsor projects or activities for the defense of "Soviet dissidents" which are subordinated to a cold war propaganda mobilization.

Partisan Defense Committee

Jacob Braun
Valerie West
Rachel Wolkenstein
18 February 1977

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Weekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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PRODUCTION MANAGER: Karen Allen

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Anne Kelley

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jon Brule, Charles Burroughs, George Foster, Liz Gordon, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

Published weekly, except bi-weekly in August and December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 260 West Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10013 Telephone: 966-6841 (Editorial), 925-5665 (Business). Address all correspondence to Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, N.Y. 10001 Domestic subscriptions \$5.00 per year Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint

Spain: Powder Keg of Revolution

NEW YORK—Over 100 people attended a Spartacist League forum here February 26 on the explosive prerevolutionary situation in Spain and the tasks facing Marxists. The speaker, Spartacus Youth League national committee member and *WV* staff writer Sam Lewis, described the bonapartist regime's precarious balancing between fascist provocations and massive working-class mobilization. The Suárez regime remains in power only because of toleration from the reformist leaders of the working class and their popular-front strategy of a negotiated transformation of the Francoist dictatorship.

There has seldom been a government with such a narrow base of support, Lewis said, and its clientele is dwindling rapidly. It is trying to buy time by making concessions, first to the right, then to the left. But every concession to the left cuts away another layer of the extreme right, and every concession to the right leads to a militant protest by the workers. The state apparatus is increasingly hostile to the cabinet.

"The hatred of Francoism is so intense that virtually any mass gathering of a cross section of the Spanish population can turn into a political demonstration against the government. You can't have Catalan or Basque cultural events. In the Basque country it has become a tradition during soccer games, with thousands and tens of thousands of people in the stadium, for someone to take out a Basque flag and begin to wave it. At that point the entire stadium will begin to chant, 'Prisoners into the streets—Cops into the jails!'"

The speaker cited as an index of the spread of political activity by the workers the sharp rise in strikes last year. "In 1976, one out of every two workers in Spain participated in strike activity," an extremely high figure since many workers are in outlying regions. "And one must remember that in Spain

every one of these acts was an open defiance of the government, since all strikes are illegal." Last year strike activity exceeded that of the last ten years combined.

These militant working-class actions have remained, by and large, regionally isolated. To the extent that a national structure has emerged, it has been in the workers commissions, under bureaucratic control from the Communist Party (PCE). With the eclipse of the "vertical" CNS state "unions," the PCE has decided to transform the workers commissions into a normal trade union. But this is only in order to more effectively clamp down on the seething ranks, Lewis said.

The speaker also remarked on the recent spectacular actions by GRAPO (Armed Revolutionary Groups of the First of October), noting the suspicions about the origins and provocateur actions of this obscure group. "This so-called leftist organization conducted the kidnapping of the fourth- and thirteenth-ranking cabinet ministers.... They held one for over two months and the other for eleven days. Here was a group with the capacity to kidnap a man whose schedule was a top secret, who was heavily protected, and then do it again. They granted interviews to the press, but the police could never find them."

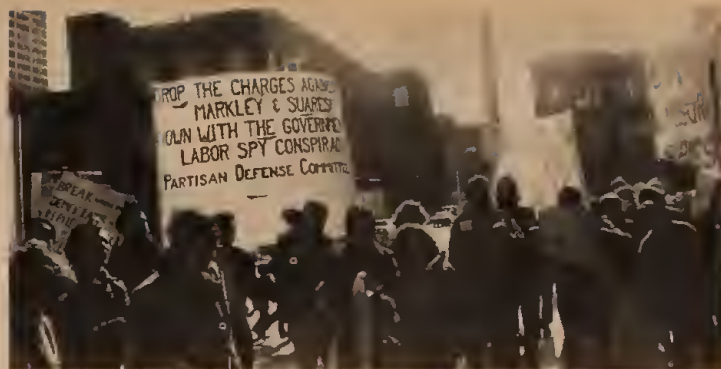
"Then the police staged a dramatic rescue," he went on, noting that this came two days after the press began to say maybe these people weren't leftists, why hadn't anyone ever heard of them, etc. "Only one shot was fired, and one of the 'captives' turned and kissed his alleged abductor good-bye. They both began to give stories, but they forgot to coordinate them. One of them said it was traumatic, 'we never knew whether we would live or die'; the other said they were wonderful people, 'I felt like a guest in a country house.'" The big discrepancy is that Oriol said he never saw General Villacampa—the other kidnap victim—during the whole time, he only read it in the newspaper. Villacampa, however, says they spent eleven days together in confinement! "It's suspicious, to say the least," Lewis added.

A main theme of the talk was the popular front. "Spain will not be another Portugal," the speaker said. Here there already was a popular front and a civil war which is impossible to forget. Today the PCE and social democrats sabotage their own calls for general strikes in order to preserve their alliances with bourgeois politicians. One of these, he noted, is José María Gil Robles, "the butcher of the 1934 Asturian miners uprising and the man who appointed Franco head of the army in early 1936. These are the politicians the PCE is trying to pacify!"

An example of what the popular front in power would be, Lewis pointed out, is the behavior of the Republican government during the May Days uprising in Barcelona in 1937. Following the Francoist officers' rebellion in July 1936 there was a dual power situation. "The popular-front government had no repressive force of its own. It couldn't do anything—the workers militias were the only effective armed groups in Catalonia. But only eight months later, this government, which was dominated by the workers parties, had built up a force of 20,000 carabinieri—police—to use against the workers."

The speaker quoted George Orwell's

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Rally Saturday in defense of Markley and Soares.

WV Photo

UE Organizer Victim of Federal Labor Spies

Demo Demands Drop Charges Against Markley/Suares

SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts—A crowd of over 200, largely trade unionists, marched through downtown Springfield Saturday, protesting the frame-up trial of United Electrical Workers (UE) organizer Alex Markley and his friend Tony Soares. The two men face years in prison on a phony conspiracy rap because of Markley's principled refusal to serve as a labor spy for the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

The militant demonstrators gathered at Court Square where they were addressed by Markley, representatives

of the Massachusetts and Springfield-area labor councils, locals of all three electrical workers unions (UE, IUE and IBEW), a Boilermakers local and Robert Meeropol, son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. The speakers demanded dropping of the charges and Congressional investigation of the little publicized but massive build-up of the ATF's spy apparatus.

Despite the union officials' emphatic insistence that "friends of labor" like Congressmen Silvio Conte and Michael Harrington will protect labor from the government's secret police agencies, the rally served as an important demonstra-

Urgent PDC Fund Appeal Exiled Chilean Militant Needs Your Aid

Fernando Marcos is a 30-year-old Chilean miners union organizer now exiled in France. He was blinded in a 1972 industrial accident, but continued to aid the workers' struggles until the bloody Pinochet coup forced him to flee the country. Previous operations to regain his eyesight have failed due to inadequate medical attention, first from a pro-junta doctor in Chile and then in a charity ward in exile. His last chance to see again involves a delicate corneal transplant operation at the world-renowned Barraquer Clinic in Barcelona. The cost: \$10,000. The Partisan Defense Committee has undertaken to raise the funds necessary for this operation, one which will determine if Marcos can again dedicate himself with his fullest abilities to the cause of the oppressed. The PDC solicits and welcomes your financial support in this effort.

☐ Enclosed please find my contribution of \$_____ to aid the campaign on behalf of Fernando Marcos (Make payable to Partisan Defense Committee and earmark "Marcos Fund.")

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tion of labor solidarity in the face of outrageous government provocation. A contingent of the Spartacus Youth League and Partisan Defense Committee participated, raising slogans such as "Courts/Cops/Spies, Hands Off the Labor Movement!"

Markley and his friend Soares were arrested last July by ATF agents and charged with "conspiracy to damage and destroy vehicles" and "transferring destructive devices." For 12 hours at the bureau's office, Markley was alternately threatened with jail and offered a payoff to induce him to spy on several unions in western Massachusetts. When he refused, the agents went ahead with the frame-up.

When the trial opens on March 14, the government's case is expected to hinge on the testimony of an ATF undercover agent claiming that the defendants supplied him with cardboard toilet paper tubes filled with black powder to "take care of" scab trucks during a three-month strike in Holyoke. Defense lawyers expect to easily prove that Markley and Soares had nothing to do with these oversized firecrackers. The fact that no violence took place during the strike, that eight months elapsed between the strike and the arrests and that *not a single UE member was questioned* during those eight months indicate the trumped-up nature of the government's case.

The ATF's only hope of conviction is on the catch-all conspiracy charge. Markley makes no secret of the fact that the ATF agent did try repeatedly, and without success to involve him in sabotage of scab trucks. The agent, using an assumed name, had been introduced to Markley by a mutual acquaintance who, unknown to the UE organizer, was under indictment after being set up by the ATF on a weapons charge. The attempt to force Markley into finking on fellow unionists is thus revealed as part of a vicious chain of entrapment, provocation and illegal spying by which the ATF, like the more notorious FBI and CIA, hopes to intimidate and break militant unionists, leftists and oppressed minorities.

Markley and Soares are not the only trade unionists feeling the brunt of government repression in Massachusetts. In December, after the defeat of the bitterly fought seven-month strike at Cambion-Thermionic Corp. in Cambridge, strike leader Sandi Polaski was sentenced to up to five years in jail for allegedly throwing a rock at a scab's car; strike supporter Mark Brier received up to two years. The sentences are under appeal. Since then, the company has succeeded in forcing an NLRB decertification election, which is to take place on March 9. This assault on the very existence of the UE at Cambion must be beaten back!

The Mass. labor movement must mobilize its full resources in struggle against the ATF frame-up of Markley and Soares and the vicious union-busting campaign at Cambion! ■

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1,500 Demonstrate in NYC

Hot-Cargo J.P. Stevens Goods!

MARCH 1—Nearly 1,500 demonstrators marched outside the Stevens Towers building in New York today during the annual stockholders' meeting of the J.P. Stevens Company. Organized by a coalition of liberal church groups and unions, the protesters were backing the AFL-CIO-endorsed consumer boycott against Stevens, the nation's second largest textile manufacturer and main organizing target of the recently merged Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). The dominant theme of the liberals and union leaders—both on the picket line and inside the stockholders' meeting, where about 100 union supporters dominated three hours of discussion—was a moralistic appeal to "conscience" explicitly patterned on the Cesar Chavez-led Farm Workers' boycotts of the late 1960's and early 1970's.

As could be expected, ACTWU spokesmen and the standard sympathetic luminaries (Central Labor Council chief Harry Van Arsdale, City Council president Paul O'Dwyer and perennial Democratic candidate Bella Abzug) paraded before the TV cameras with insipid and pointless appeals to Stevens to "obey the law" and "be fair." Nevertheless, the plight of tens of thousands of viciously exploited textile workers came through in the demonstration.

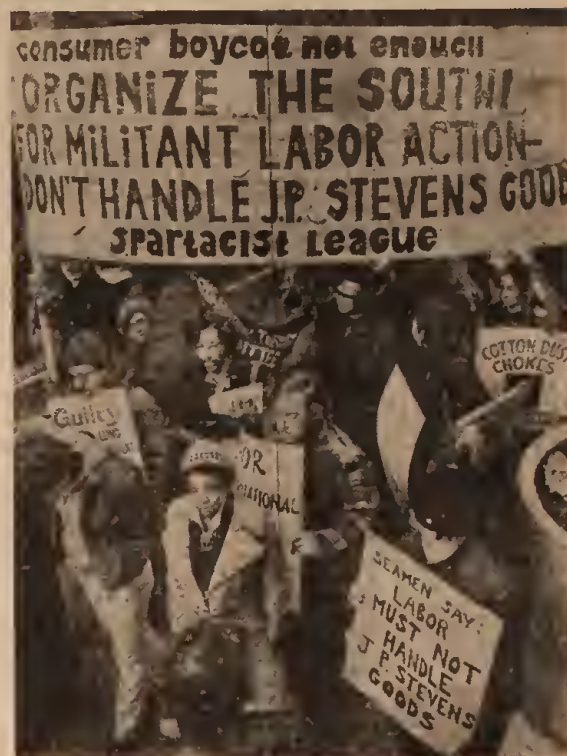
ACTWU members carried signs with the names of J.P. Stevens employees above the legend, "fired for union activity" (even the National Labor Relations Board has found Stevens guilty of at least 289 illegal firings over the past 13 years). Others carried placards calling attention to those stricken with "brown lung," a disease affecting an estimated 100,000 U.S. textile workers.

The low wages and miserable working conditions notorious in the largely unorganized textile industry also brought out at least token support from many local labor unions. Members (mostly officials) of the Garment Workers, Auto Workers, Transit Workers, Seafarers, Service Employees, Typographers and many others demonstrated their solidarity with the textile workers.

The real "strategy" and utter impotence of the cowardly labor hacks and their liberal friends running the boycott campaign was clearest inside the shareholders' meeting. Five church groups, who hold a piddling 42,000 of the corporation's over 11 million outstanding shares, joined with union backers to plead, beg, cajole and finally even "threaten" the company with boycott action.

But board chairman James D. Finley presided over the meeting with the arrogance of a tsar. When his many arbitrary rulings were challenged he imperiously informed the assembly that the meeting didn't operate under Ro-

Demonstrators outside J.P. Stevens stockholders' meeting last Tuesday protested company's union busting practices.



Katchian/New York Post

berts Rules but under "J.P. Stevens rules of order."

When asked if stockholders had a right to appeal his decisions, he replied coolly (and accurately): "You have a right, but I sit here with a vast majority of the proxy votes." And indeed, when two controversial motions (demanding company disclosures on racial and labor policies) finally came to a vote, they garnered less than 5 percent of the proxies.

Finley's naked assertion of power contrasted with the alternating moral appeals and blustering threats of the dissident stockholders and their union sponsors. Not surprisingly, no one challenged the company's "right" to exploit its workers. In fact, an officer of the ACTWU repeatedly stressed that he believed in free enterprise and the capitalist system.

Coretta King, quoting her late husband, said piously: "Our struggle is not for putting the...company out of business but to put justice in business." Finley thanked her courteously and went on to the next speaker. He was, Finley said, prepared to go on all night—and since he held all the cards, why not?

Labor Organizing and the Consumer Boycott

The labor movement must vigorously support the fight against J.P. Stevens and back the ongoing boycott. Not only are textiles the backbone of Southern

manufacturing, but J.P. Stevens is the industry's outstanding example of anti-union and racist practices. It closed its Statesboro, Georgia, plant rather than recognize the union and has refused for over two years to agree on a contract at its seven-plant complex in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. A victory at Stevens could spearhead the unionization of the South.

Labor militants must also realize that the consumer boycott campaign comes after years of organizing failure. The weak-kneed and flabby unionization attempts of the ossified AFL-CIO leaders have proved little match for employer intransigence: only one textile worker in ten holds a union card. The ACTWU bureaucrats are now putting all their eggs in the consumer boycott basket only because reliance on NLRB elections has been futile: they have lost 13 out of 14 certification votes since 1963.

But the consumer boycott is a diffuse and usually marginal weapon in labor's arsenal, particularly so in this case. Only about 30 percent of Stevens' sales are marketed directly under its many labels and almost half go directly to other manufacturers. Finley confidently told Wall Street analysts last summer that

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WV Photo

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Rosa Luxemburg flanked by portraits of Marx and Lassalle speaking at SPD meeting in 1907.

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Speaker:
ELIZABETH KENDALL
Spartacus Youth League National Committee

Thursday, March 10 at 7:45 p.m.
Hamilton Hall, Room 703
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Phone: (212) 925-5665

PURCHASE

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ELIZABETH KENDALL
Spartacus Youth League National Committee

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Conference Room, C.C.S.
State University of New York
Purchase

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Speaker:
PAT SHEPPARD
Trotskyist League of Canada

Thursday, March 10 at 12 Noon
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Ross Building, S130
Wednesday, March 16 at 7 p.m.
University of Toronto
Morning Room
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From "Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International" Moscow, July, 1921:

"What Communism offers to the women, the bourgeois women's movement will never afford her. So long as the power of capitalism and private property continue to exist, the emancipation of woman from subservience to her husband cannot proceed further than her right to dispose of her property and earnings as she sees fit and also to decide on equal terms with her husband the destiny of their children.

"... The right to vote does not remove the prime cause of women's enslavement in the family and in society. The substitution of the church marriage by civil marriage does not in the least alleviate the situation. The dependence of the proletarian woman upon the capitalist and upon her husband as the economic mainstay of the family remains just the same. The absence of adequate laws to safeguard motherhood and infancy and the lack of proper social education render entirely impossible the equalization of women's position in matrimonial relations. As a matter of fact, nothing that can be done under the capitalist order will furnish the key to the solution of the problem of the relationship of the sexes.

"Only under Communism, not merely the formal but the actual equalization of women will be achieved. Then women will be the rightful owner, on a par with all the members of the working class, of the means of production and distribution. She will participate in the management of industry and she will assume an equal responsibility for the well-being of society.

"In other words, only by overthrowing the system of exploitation of man by man and by supplanting the capitalist mode of production by the Communist organization of industry will the full emancipation of woman be achieved."

Grand Jury Witchhunts Puerto Rican Nationalists

The FBI is continuing to use the grand jury system as a vehicle for its campaign to smash the Puerto Rican independence movement. Last week two members of the Episcopal Church National Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Raisa Nemikin and Maria Cueto (executive director and secretary respectively), were imprisoned for refusing to testify before a New York grand jury "investigation" of the Puerto Rican nationalist group Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN).

Meanwhile, the *Chicago Sun-Times* (7 March) has reported that several persons face possible contempt-of-court charges for refusing to testify about the FALN in grand jury hearings running concurrently in that city. Among those facing imprisonment are Myrna and José López, teachers in the "Rafael Cancel Miranda High School" which the government claims some alleged members attended at one point. (Rafael Cancel Miranda is one of four Puerto Rican nationalists unjustly imprisoned for a 1954 machine-gun raid on the U.S. House of Representatives.)

Frustrated in its attempts to bust up the FALN, the FBI is now incredibly attempting to smear the Episcopal Church with financing the group! The FBI alleges that Carlos Alberto Torres, an unpaid worker for the church's Hispanic Commission in 1975, is a member of the FALN; it claims to have found a cache of explosives in Torres' Chicago apartment last year. Now Nemikin and Cueto, who are accused of no connection whatever with the



Sauro/New York Times

Raisa Nemikin (left) and Maria Cueto

FALN, face up to 14-month prison sentences simply for stating that they could not testify because the FBI's witchhunt violates their religious ethics as lay ministers.

Serious questions are raised by the statement of Nemikin and Cueto that they have nothing to say to the grand jury since they already told the FBI everything they knew when questioned last November. However, their refusal to testify before the grand jury is principled and courageous. Socialists must demand that all charges against them be dropped.

The church hierarchy initially backed up the two women, arguing that the

continued on page 10

Feminists vs. Spartacists in Australia

At a January 18 planning meeting for International Women's Day in Sydney, Australia, the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ, section of the international Spartacist tendency) attempted to return this socialist celebration to its revolutionary heritage by proposing a genuine united-front demonstration around concrete *class-struggle* demands addressed to the immediate needs of workers, including: "Jobs for all through shortening the workweek with no loss in pay!" "Free abortion on demand!" "Free 24-hour child care!" "Free quality health care for all!" and "Reverse the cut-backs!" Our comrades also proposed a speakers' platform where the differences confronting the women's movement could be openly raised and debated instead of being papered over by phony "sisters unite" slogans.

Although this proposal was eventually sabotaged in favor of one more classless, pointless crawl for "sisterhood," the January 18 meeting overwhelmingly endorsed it.

Despite their professed differences, reformist supporters of both the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) had no qualms about working together to defeat the SL/ANZ motion. The CPA dropped its usual opposition to the SWP's liberal demand to "repeal all abortion laws," and the two organizations mobilized their supporters, members of the SWP-dominated Women's Abortion Action Coalition and other feminists in a rotten bloc to pack the following week's meeting and reverse

the vote.

The initial support for the SL/ANZ's proposals for a class-struggle International Women's Day demonstration was so threatening to a variety of pseudo-Marxist class collaborators that at the February 27 general meeting of Sydney women's liberation a proposal was put forward by Margo Moore, a "Marxist"-feminist academic at Sydney University, to expel the Spartacist League. This anti-communist exclusion, which comes up for a vote at a special meeting on April 17, must be opposed by all socialists and by everyone committed to struggling for a program for the emancipation of women.

The Spartacist League maintains that working women must be mobilized around the same program as working men—the Trotskyist Transitional Program. As a recent article in *Australasian Spartacist* points out ("Fight Women's Oppression Through Class Struggle," *ASp* No. 40, March 1977):

"Only this program links the immediate felt needs of the working class and all the oppressed to the struggle for socialism and the eradication of all forms of social oppression through the independent mobilisation of the proletariat. Special organisational forms, linked to the revolutionary party, are crucial vehicles in reaching out to specially oppressed strata of the population. Thus a key aspect of the strategic task of awakening the masses of women from centuries of subjugation is the construction of a non-male-exclusionist communist women's movement, section of a Trotskyist vanguard party. The banner of women's liberation is the banner of the reborn Fourth International!" ■



Ukrainians greeted invading Nazi army in 1941. Nazis began by killing Communists, Jews, Russians and finally the Ukrainians themselves. This is the sort of "democracy" Imperialists are calling for.



Bukovsky on Parade for Imperialist Warmongers

On March 5 in New York, the social-democratic accomplices of the bourgeoisie's hypocritical crusade for "human rights" in the USSR were treated to a graphic display of the reactionary menace which lurks beneath the "classless" rhetoric of pro-imperialist anti-Stalinism. A large contingent of Eastern European emigrés was on hand at Stuyvesant High School when Vladimir Bukovsky (exiled from the USSR in December 1976 for his dissident activities) addressed an anti-Soviet "human rights" rally organized by the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners.

These Black Hundreds, the losers in Hitler's World War II, enthusiastically greeted Bukovsky's declaration that "totalitarianism is a direct consequence of the communist idea." And they were equally vociferous in rejecting the "democratic socialist" verbiage of imperialism's "left" apologists, hooting and howling when the democratic avowals of some speakers did not accord with their blood-thirsty ultra-rightism.

Since joining the growing army of "dissidents" who are performing yeoman service for the U.S. State Department as props in Carter's "human rights offensive," Bukovsky has been a busy man. Within the last two weeks he has addressed the AFL-CIO Executive Committee in Bal Harbour, Florida, testified before a U.S. Commission on Europe, breakfasted with Walter Mondale and met with Jimmy Carter. Before a committee chaired by Florida Congressmen Dante Fascell, Bukovsky urged economic and trade sanctions against the USSR. At a press conference in Washington, he called for a "firm, relentless and consistent stand by the West" to force the Soviet Union to its knees. Even starvation is not too ugly a weapon for this "humanitarian," who stands to the right of the U.S. govern-

ment in opposing the sale of grain to the Soviet Union.

To highlight its appeal to "all people of good will," the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners invited, in addition to Bukovsky, an array of speakers which included pseudo-Trotskyist Ralph Schoenman, "democratic socialist" Michael Harrington, and the son of former Soviet general Pyotr Grigorenko. But the reactionary audience that Bukovsky attracted was in no mood for leftist window-dressing. Even veteran anti-communist Harrington was savaged by this audience.

Harrington began his speech by launching an attack against "the bureaucratic nationalization of property in the Soviet Union." Speaking as "an American socialist" he expressed his "delight that the President of the United States is speaking out on behalf of human rights in the Soviet Union."

Such touching jingoism earned him a few minutes of grace—but only a few. His mention of the "struggle for socialism" in the Soviet Union quickly netted a rising crescendo of boos and yells of "shut up." When he referred to the "responsibility" that "we have... in this society for the repression of human rights in Chile," Harrington was blasted with cries of "Communist propaganda" and "get him off the stage."

Schoenman, who lies within the orbit of the SWP, fared even worse. Describing himself as a "revolutionary socialist," he attempted to placate the crowd by comparing the method of rule of the Stalinist bureaucracies with that of fascists in power. But despite these efforts, Schoenman was not spared. His downfall came when he uttered the word "Lenin." The response was instantaneous. A red-faced, black-robed Orthodox priest thundered "shame on you!" The "freedom fighters," increasingly frenzied, followed this lead, chanting "Out! Out!" Disconcerted, Schoenman appealed, "Comrades." It was an unfortunate word to use. "There are no comrades here" somebody yelled in a thick Slavic accent.

At that point, the rally had clearly taken on the atmosphere of an Einsatz reunion; there was no mistaking its

politics. Schoenman's allusion to the "brutal rule, now fifty years old" in the USSR was met with a loud "sixty!" By the time Schoenman was driven from the podium, there was virtual pandemonium. The audience was so rabid that they turned on the next speaker almost preventing him from being heard.

The sight of wretched social democrats attempting to conciliate a host of Hitlerite counterrevolutionaries and being hysterically rebuffed was pathetic and ominous. But Bukovsky who claims to advocate "democracy" in the USSR, sat through it all with what the *New York Times* described as an "amused" look on his face. Since being freed from imprisonment in Stalinist "psychiatric hospitals" last fall, with his jokes about exchanging Brezhnev for the butcher Pinochet, his calls on the imperialists to use economic (and other) blackmail against the USSR, and his association with the most reactionary cold warriors, Bukovsky has shown an anti-communist fervor that puts him in a class with Solzhenitsyn, nostalgic for the days of the tsars.

It is logical that social-democrats build a movement for "democracy" that features a Bukovsky and attracts blood-thirsty fascist dinosaurs. The Russian Mensheviks launched their Georgian republic in the heat of the Civil War, while Kornilov aimed his blade at the heart of the Russian workers movement. It was the German SPD that collaborated in the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

There is clearly nothing democratic about Bukovsky's movement for "human rights." Its goal is not workers democracy but the destruction of the Soviet Union. The March 5 meeting evoked the spirit of the Ukrainian peasants who welcomed their Nazi "liberators" in 1941 and gleefully participated in the slaughter of Communists and Jews. The Nazi conquest unleashed home-grown anti-semitic fascists among the Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Slovaks, etc., who often outdid the German Nazi butchers in their zeal for exterminating every Jew in the East.

The struggle for workers democracy in the deformed workers states must begin from a commitment to the defense of the gains of the October Revolution against reaction. There is no classless struggle for democratic rights just as there are no classless democracies. As Trotskyists, we defend the rights of even a Bukovsky against repression by the Soviet bureaucracy. But the restoration of workers democracy in the USSR will



WV Photo
Bukovsky speaking at meeting last Saturday.

be accomplished only by a proletarian political revolution, certainly not by the U.S. State Department. Those who cynically prate about uniting "all people of good will" against "totalitarianism" are in the last analysis the "left" cover for the murderous counterrevolutionary frenzy which surfaced at the Bukovsky meeting. In this extreme but so logical case, these "democrats" have made common cause with the felt losers of World War II, who look to U.S. imperialism to bring back the "final solution" of Babi Yar. ■

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French Elections...

(continued from page 1)

municipal elections have been the catalyst for an electoral bloc between the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs (OCT). This "far-left" slate will run candidates in over 20 cities under the title "For Socialism, Power to the Workers."

While the electoral agreement pretends to be a "credible" "alternative" to the popular front, like the Democrazia Proletaria bloc in last summer's Italian parliamentary elections it seeks to pressure the popular front to the left. The joint LCR-LO-OCT declaration proclaims that a vote for the "revolutionary" candidates will "allow all workers to state...that they have no confidence in the left parties' policy of compromise, and that if these parties enter the government they are determined not to let them carry out the policy of the right, as they have done so often in the past" (*Rouge*, 22-23 January 1977). But at the same time, in order not to arouse the ire of the reformist bureaucracies, it explicitly states:

"It is not our intention to prevent the PC and PS from conserving or extending their positions in the municipal governments against the right. We already state that this is what will determine whom we will vote for on the second round."

This "far-left" pressure group is more than a simple no-contest agreement; it is a full-fledged political coalition around a parochialist minimum program for the municipal elections. Proving that the centrists have learned a few tricks from the Union of the Left, the "United Manifesto of the Revolutionaries" (as *Rouge* headlined it) contains a ritual mention of socialism in its title, some economic demands (35-hour week, no factory shutdowns, rejection of the wage freeze) in the preamble—with nothing about how to implement them—and then a detailed campaign program of "community control" reforms.

This recipe for "popular" control of the cities is the translation of 1968-vintage calls for "red universities" into the arena of sub-parliamentary electoralism. The classic minimum program turns out to be "sewer socialism" of municipal reforms only slightly more "advanced" than that practiced by Labour-led local councils in Britain, the Italian Communist Party in its Bologna "showcase" of clean government and the PCF in 1,100 cities, towns and districts which have Communist mayors. In the capital, which has not had a mayor since 1871, the LCR-LO-OCT bloc would have its constituents believe that a "far-left" victory in the municipal elections would peacefully usher in an "autogestion" (self-management) version of the Paris Commune.

The "revolutionary" municipal program has a series of caveats ("a municipal government, even one headed by revolutionaries, would be unable to prevent money from continuing to confer privileges...") followed by a series of "however's" which paints a rosy picture of municipal bliss. The "red municipalities" would "support striking workers"; they would "grant all aid to women struggling and organizing against their oppression and double exploitation" (providing birth control centers, "freedom of abortion," child-care centers, women's centers); there would be free transportation for the unemployed, full access to city facilities for the unions, etc. The "pact of alliance" even promises that "the municipal government will stand on the side of the workers in struggle in opposing the intervention of the official or parallel police..."

Of course, it notes, it is not possible for "a city [to] be transformed into an 'island of socialism'...." Beginning from

Pour des CITOYENS LIBRES et RESI



"Union of the Left" leaders Mitterand (Socialist), Fabre (Radical) and Marchais (Communist).

this obvious fact, Leninists would put forward a program for struggle by the labor movement which would include local issues but extend to the national and international scale. This would include calling for strikes and plant occupations against layoffs and cutbacks and demanding that the PCF and PS break from the popular front (or, in the United States, calling for a workers party based on the unions). The LCR-LO-OCT pact, however, limits itself to reforms within the limits of bourgeois constitutionality. Thus it notes that to simultaneously build public housing, nurseries, schools, etc. is beyond the financial resources of municipal governments. The conclusion: "Nonetheless, the city budget will be subjected to the control of the entire toiling population...."

Leninists do not take office in bourgeois governments. Our program is for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for a soviet regime based on democratic organs of the workers movement. For revolutionaries to come to power on a local scale would mean the establishment of dual power, which would have to be extended or be crushed. But the LCR-LO-OCT pact is electoralist; LO well knows what this minimum program of "popular control" amounts to and has raised the possibility that, if elected, its representatives might have to "resign in order not to succumb to reformism" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 19 February). On the other hand, Alain Krivine must dream of entering into a local government coalition with the PCF and PS, as have representatives of the Italian Democrazia Proletaria with the Stalinists and social democrats in the Milan city council.

No Vote to the Democrazia Proletaria Under French Colors!

Not only is the "pact of alliance" program parochialist but, while criticizing the Union of the Left on several points, it never calls on the mass reformist workers parties to break with the bourgeois Left Radicals and dissident Gaullists. Moreover, in different ways, all three of the "far-left" bloc partners are prepared to vote for even the bourgeois components of the popular front.

The OCT, which was formed last year from a fusion of Révolution with the "critical Maoist" Gauche Ouvrière et Populaire, calls openly for a vote for all the candidates of the Union of the Left on the decisive second round (when the "pact of alliance" candidates will have dropped out of the running). Lutte Ouvrière claims to be Trotskyist, and in 1973 called for votes to only PCF and PS candidates on the second round. But now LO, too, has demonstrated its willingness to vote for bourgeois politicians in order to avoid the unpopular step of opposing the popular front. In parliamentary by-elections in Bordeaux last November, LO withdrew its candidate on the second round in favor of a Left Radical representing the Union of the Left. It explained quite frankly this unabashed opportunism:

"We do not believe that the Socialist-Radical candidate is a representative of

the workers. He is a bourgeois politician. And the illusions the workers have concerning such types might be very dangerous tomorrow. But Lutte Ouvrière is in solidarity with the overwhelming majority of workers who want the left to win. And it is out of solidarity that [the LO candidate] calls for a vote for the candidate of the Union of the Left."

—quoted in *Rouge*, 20-21 November 1976

As for the LCR, it has wobbled from one capitulation to another in an effort



Jacques Chirac

Fauchard/Norms



Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

la Actualidad Espanola

to intersect the elusive "broad vanguard" of radicalized youth. In the 1973 parliamentary elections the Ligue called for votes on the second round to the Union of the Left as such. Under sharp criticism internally and internationally within the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), of which it is the French section, the LCR performed a grudging "self-criticism" and ran Alain Krivine in the 1974 presidential elections. However, it called for a vote on the second round to Mitterand, the single candidate of the Union of the Left.

In the 1977 municipal elections the LCR is calling for votes on the second round to those Union of the Left slates which are not headed by bourgeois politicians. (Under French election law, in towns of over 30,000 it is not possible to vote for individual candidates but only for the entire slate *en bloc*.) Thus in effect it calls for votes to Left Radicals and dissident Gaullists where they are in positions other than the top slot of the ticket. Clearly this is a purely tokenist and empty gesture of distaste at the presence of direct representatives of the bourgeoisie.

The attempt to form rotten-bloc electoral coalitions of the various centrist groups to the left of the popular

front is common to the USec majority throughout Europe. (Ironically, many of these groups were formerly known as the "extra-parliamentary opposition" and at one time refused to participate in elections on principle!) In Portugal, when the USec majority Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) joined in forming the so-called "Revolutionary United Front" (FUR), the LCR criticized it *not* for having entered this popular-frontist bloc (which called for support to the Armed Forces Movement and the Stalinist-influenced government of Vasco Gonçalves), but only because the terms of the accord were insufficiently leftist. And during the 1976 Italian parliamentary elections, both the LCR and Révolution uncritically supported Democrazia Proletaria, whose leaders called for what they themselves described as a bourgeois "government of the lefts."

The Key Issue: The Popular Front

To reconcile this endless opportunist maneuvering with their threadbare pretensions to Trotskyism, the USec majority has sought to deny that various popular fronts are just that. Following the overthrow of Allende's Popular Unity (UP) coalition in Chile in September 1973, Ernest Mandel & Co. issued a declaration denying that the UP was a popular front and instead labeled it "reformist." In the same year, the Ligue Communiste described the Union of the Left as a "global reformist alternative" and likewise denied it was a popular front.

In both cases the essential argument was that the bourgeois parties in the coalitions were numerically insignificant compared to the preponderance of the mass workers parties. But this would also "re-define" the Spanish popular front of 1936-39 out of existence since, in Trotsky's cogent phrase, it contained only the "shadow of the bourgeoisie" among the bloc partners. Now the LCR is trying to give its opportunism more of an orthodox appearance by claiming the Union of the Left has "class-collaborationist intent." But it still draws a qualitative distinction between this and the "classic popular front," denying that the Union of the Left is a bourgeois political formation.

This is at the level of the Mandelites' pseudo-theory. Their real argument against a principled position of refusing to vote for these popular fronts is that to do so would be unpopular with the workers. This was clearly expressed by the LCR majority during the debate prior to its recent second national conference: "If we call for a blank ballot, the workers will view this as the LCR preferring to see a slate led by the PC and PS beaten by the right rather than voting for it (while naturally regretting publicly the 'venal sin' imposed by bourgeois law).... The workers are electoralists.... This would distort the debates by forcing us to reply to a secondary question [i.e., voting for bourgeois candidates!].... Our audience will shrink..." ("Special Congrès, No. 7).

This attempt to dissolve the fundamental question of the class nature of the Union of the Left into intricate "tactical" decisions is typical of Pabloite justifications for tailing after non-proletarian leaderships. And in this endeavor Krivine and his crew have gotten plenty of "theoretical" ammunition from Mandel himself. Interviewed recently in an LCR journal, he outlined the USec majority's perspective toward the current wave of popular frontism in southern Europe:

"In a situation as complex and delicate as a left government which the masses identify as a government of working-class organizations, the policy of the united front... implies that the attitude of revolutionary Marxists toward such a government must be carefully calculated even to the fine shadings.... Such a government would be a bourgeois-workers government, and the masses would see it as such. It would be sectarian and completely unproductive

to adopt toward such a government an attitude identical to that toward not only a bourgeois government but even a popular-front government....

"When this kind of government begins to repress the masses, the attitude of the revolutionaries would change. But as long as the government doesn't do this, we must adopt an attitude that I would term a critical 'attitude of tolerance,' of propagandist and pedagogical opposition, so that the masses will go through their own experience." [emphasis in original]

—*Critique Communiste*,
September 1976

Thus, it is not objective criteria which determine the class character of a political formation, but how the masses see it! This is an open door to supporting such populist formations as the Peronist Justicialista party (seen for decades by the Argentine masses as representing the downtrodden "shirtless" masses), or even the U.S. Democratic Party (the capitalists' reputed party of the "common man"). And until the moment



François Mitterrand

when the bourgeois popular front actually begins breaking strikes and locking up workers' leaders (France 1938-39 and 1947, Chile 1946) or is overthrown by the reactionary forces it has conciliated (Chile 1973) it should be "tolerated" by revolutionaries instead of ruthlessly exposed as an enemy of the working class. Such "leadership" the proletariat can do without!

OCI: Backhanded Support to the Union of the Left

In the current political maneuvering in France, all of the major "far-left" formations are attempting to find their appropriate niche in the event of a left electoral victory. The left-social-democratic PSU majority is angling for an invitation to join the Union of the Left; the LCR-LO-OCT bloc is trying to cover the area just to the left of the PCF, and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) is following its usual policy of tailing after the Socialist Party. It is currently doing so with a barrage of "orthodox" denunciations of the popular front, vehemently declaring that "the OCI will not call for a vote to the slates of the Union of the Left" (*La Verité*, February 1977).

The OCI correctly states that Trotskyists must call for the workers parties to break with the popular front, insisting at great length that the presence of Radicals such as Fabre, bankers like Filippi and dissident Gaullists like Charbonnel is the bourgeoisie's guarantee that a "left government" would behave itself. But then, in the same breath that it denounces the Union of the Left as a popular front, the OCI urges a vote to the coalition's candidates except for the small number of actual bourgeois politicians.

The election law requiring voters to select an entire slate makes this somewhat difficult, so the OCI is calling for a vote to the Union of the Left in those districts where its list contains no capitalist politicians. But it does so in a way that highlights the absurdity of its

attempt to pick and choose among the popular-front candidates:

"Thus in the 13th, 17th, 18th and 20th districts in Paris, the toiling masses will vote massively for the slates presented by the PS and PC, without Gaullists and Left Radicals."

—*Informations Ouvrières*,
23 February 1977

What about the remaining 16 districts of the capital? Are we to believe that the workers will not vote massively for the Union of the Left there? There may be discontent over the presence of the bourgeois politicians, but the working masses understand—even if the OCI does not—that the Union of the Left is a real political formation. One either votes for it or not. Trotskyists do not vote for the popular front; centrists try to squirm out of this elementary obligation by ducking the issue.

Still, the OCI does make at least a half-hearted attempt to preserve its virtue, if not forswearing the "venal sin" of voting for the popular front, then at least by renouncing the "mortal sin" of actually calling for votes to bourgeois politicians. This contrasts with the LCR, LO and OCT, all of which have declared their willingness to vote for Left Radical and Gaullist candidates of the Union of the Left. Candidates running on the OCI's positions could merit critical support from Trotskyists as a partial and deformed opposition to

the popular front. But there are no OCI candidates in the municipal elections, and not by accident.

The OCI's preferred tactic for cozying up to the reformists has been to denounce the popular front in the abstract while not putting up any candidates of its own (thus avoiding the charge that it siphoned off votes from the Union of the Left). When in 1974 the OCI called for a vote to Mitterrand on both the first and second round, it justified its refusal to present candidates on the grounds that to do so would aid the right (which, of course, is exactly what the PCF and PS say about any left opposition to the popular front): "Helping the [Gaullist] UDR (even unconsciously) is not our job. That is why the OCI is not running a candidate" (*Informations Ouvrières*, 10 April 1974).

This continues to be the thrust of the OCI electoral policy. Defending it against left criticisms by OCI militants, a long article in *La Verité* (December 1976) insisted that Trotskyists should not present candidates if that would mean: "deciding to confront the union leaderships, risking cutting ourselves off from the masses who do not see the need for this confrontation.... We must not brutally confront the masses' preoccupations." Having maintained this back-

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20 Years Ago

When the OCI Said No to the Popular Front

In the 1974 French presidential elections, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) called for a vote for François Mitterrand, Socialist candidate of the popular-front Union of the Left. The OCI claimed that voting for the candidates of the reformist workers parties was not inconsistent with opposition to popular frontism.

But this position was diametrically counterposed to the stance taken two decades earlier by its forerunner, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI). In the legislative elections of 2 January 1956, the PCI refused to vote for the candidate of a reformist workers party in a popular front: Guy Mollet, leader of the Socialist Party (SFIO, now PS).

Those elections took place in the wake of a massive strike wave in August-September 1955 and in the context of the rapid escalation of the Algerian war, marked by widespread demonstrations against the recall of the reserves in fall 1955. It was clear that the new government would be called upon to take repressive measures against the working class and to beef up the French colonialist expedition in Algeria.

For the elections, the SFIO formed a popular-front electoral bloc, the "Republican Front," with two bourgeois formations, the wing of the Radicals led by Mendès-France and the small Gaullist party, which had recently suffered major splits and defections. The SFIO slates were even linked with the Radical Daladier, one of the key figures of the 1936-39 popular front, and Jacques Soustelle, "butcher of the Algerian people" and later one of the leaders of an attempted right-wing coup against DeGaulle in 1961.

The Communist Party (PCF) called for a new popular front along the lines of 1936 and requested admission into the "Republican Front." The PCI pointed out that the PCF's "speeches asserting that there can be no 'left majority' without the PCF are unequivocal" (*La Verité* No. 385, 16 December 1955) and refused to vote for either of the workers parties committed to the

popular-frontist formation. Although its argumentation tended toward ultra-left abstentionism (it did not run candidates on the grounds that the elections were a "disgusting farce"), the PCI was correct to refuse to vote for the SFIO and PCF and to counterpose a class-struggle perspective:

"We must draw our inspiration from August 1953 and August-September 1955. The position taken by the CGT and FO leaderships toward the postal strike demonstrates that their participation in this election campaign is part of a policy which implies putting working-class demands, the aspirations of young soldiers, the struggle for independence by colonial peoples, into cold storage."

—Stéphane Just in *La Verité* No. 386, 23 December 1955

The French Pabloists, capitulators then as now, took up the 1936 Stalinist popular-front slogan against the "200 families" and called for a vote for the PCF. They retained only the barest figleaf to cover for their accommodation to popular frontism, claiming to oppose it only "as long as the popular front has not been realized in fact"—leaving the door open to support it when it did come to power.

The Socialist-led government which emerged from the elections soon called for "special powers" to help suppress the Algerian uprising and, with the PCF voting in favor, parliament duly granted the government a free hand on 12 March 1956. Shortly thereafter, the government proceeded against both the Pabloists and the PCI, arresting and instituting suits against leading figures.

The principled, if flawed, response of the PCI sharply contrasted with the Pabloists' capitulation—and with the present position of the OCI! The OCI's 1974 electoral stance signalled its consolidation around right-centrism and prefigured its present attempts to sneak back into the Pabloist "United Secretariat" through a deal with the latter's reformist right wing, the American SWP. The "continuity" of the anti-Pabloist struggle of the PCI tendency in the early 1950's resides not in the OCI but in the Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency. ■

LCR Ducks Soviet Defense Guilty Whispers

At a recent press conference called to launch the LCR-LO-OCT lowest-common-denominator electoral bloc, a simple question from the representative of *Le Bolcheviek* (organ of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency) brought on a fit of squirming from the fake-Trotskyist LCR. The question—"What would your position be in the event of a war between the Soviet Union and France?"—elicited the following dialogue (transcribed from a tape recording of the meeting):

"OCT: First of all, we should say that that is absolutely not part of the agreement on the city elections [laughter]. No, I don't know, I have the impression that..."

"Krivine, LCR: ...that the problem isn't posed [relieved laughter]."

"OCT: ...yes, [not] right away."

"Krivine, LCR: Generally, we have to try, I think, when one is a revolutionary militant, to pose the problems which are posed, and thus to give political answers to the problems which are posed; and I think that we have the weakness of believing that it [the question] isn't directly current presently, so that it can be dealt with at another press conference."

"OCT: In any case, we wouldn't see how the normal course of the city election campaign could be upset by such a..."

"LO: Of course, we have positions on these problems, just as we have positions on many other problems, but I think we have come together here to discuss the common policy which we have agreed to in the framework of these city elections. 'Métain, LCR (whispered aside to Krivine): We will be denounced if we reject the question..."

"Krivine, LCR: (inaudible)"

"Métain: We reject the question."

Thereupon the press conference was terminated in short order.

The question of defense of the USSR against imperialist attack is far from academic. Soviet dissidents like Plyushch and Amalrik are all over the French political scene with denunciations of Stalinist totalitarianism—which, in addition to acutely embarrassing the Communist Party (PCF) on the eve of the elections, have a far more sinister thrust as part of the world bourgeoisie's hypocritical outcry over "human rights" in the USSR, objectively serving to prepare the ideological groundwork for an imperialist "holy war" against the deformed workers states. The PCF itself has jumped on the "anti-repression" bandwagon in its "Eurocommunist" maneuver to reassure the French bourgeoisie of its independence from Moscow as part of its bid for trusteeship of the bourgeois order through the popular-front Union of the Left.

The LCR-LO-OCT minimum-program propaganda bloc is a test run for an unprincipled "regroupment" of the "revolutionary" movement. The Russian question is a good index of just what a zoo such a rotten "regroupment" would be: the Pabloist LCR, the left-social-democratic PSU, the soft Maoist OCT (which considers the USSR "imperialist") and LO (which considers the Soviet Union a degenerated workers state but East Europe "state capitalist") will achieve nothing but a living demonstration, in microcosm, of the futility of "peaceful coexistence." They can look forward only to an endless vista of dodging principled questions, under the fire of revolutionary criticism from the authentic Trotskyists of the Ligue Trotskyste de France.

British Ranks ...

(continued from page 12)

people consider the most politically powerful in the country, neither the SWP supporter nor the WSL leader has one word to say about British imperialism, even concerning Ireland! In fact, the "left" Jones supporter John Miller has taken a more forthright stance in his campaign by calling for British troops out of Northern Ireland than has the "Trotskyist" Alan Thornett.

The significant difference between the WSL and SWP does not lie over programme for class struggle in Britain. Claiming to be an orthodox Trotskyist group, the WSL maintains that the Soviet Union is a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and as such should be defended against imperialism. Tony Cliff's SWP considers Russia to be "state capitalist" and it takes a "third camp" position in the cold war. However, this important difference has not impinged on the T&GWU election since neither candidate raises any demands against British imperialism. Neither calls for withdrawal from NATO, or even from the Common Market (which is actually a popular demand). Neither opposes trade protectionism or other forms of economic nationalism.

Both platforms have a few sentences about the rights and interests of women and of coloured immigrants. But this is strictly for the record, not a major campaign issue. Significantly, Thor-

nett's mass flyer dropped any mention of the woman question in catering to his backward, male-chauvinist constituency. This can hardly be dismissed as irrelevant in the aftermath of the hard-fought Trico strike for equal wages for women workers (see *Women and Revolution* No. 14, Spring 1977).

Even on domestic economic policy, Thornett's programme does not go beyond left reformism. The call for nationalisation of failing industries does not even specify "without compensation"! Particularly in Britain today, compensated nationalisation of unprofitable plants is by no means necessarily an anti-capitalist measure. Furthermore, the call for nationalisation is limited to bankrupts. There is no mention of the general expropriation of capitalist industry by a workers government.

Neither Thornett nor Riley seriously confronts the question of state power. Riley ignores the question of the Labour government altogether, implying that through militant industrial action British workers can force Callaghan to do their bidding. This is in keeping with the syndicalist line which the IS/SWP has followed in recent years.

Thornett, by way of contrast, calls for "the removal of Callaghan and Healy by left MP's" to form a government to carry out Thornett's demands. There is the little problem here that the "left" Labour parliamentarians—Tony Benn and the Tribune group—support wage restraint in principle, oppose a shorter workweek with no loss in pay and do not favour the nationalisation of unprofitable firms, even with compensation.

However, even if a group of Labour MP's emerged which did support the left-reformist programme outlined by Thornett, this would still be a qualitatively inadequate basis for supporting them against their more right-wing social-democratic colleagues. The essentially economistic, and ultimately chauvinist, nature of the WSL's policies is revealed by its willingness to politically support conscious agents of imperialism, like Eric Heffer and Tony Benn, provided they improve the conditions of British workers.

The WSL's capitulation to British social democracy is further revealed in its revision of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme. Not only does the WSL demand that "the lefts" fight to remove the Callaghan-Healy leadership, and themselves take responsibility for forming a leadership answerable to the working class," but it associates this demand with a "workers government" (*Socialist Press*, 19 January).

A left-Labourite government based on a bourgeois parliament is seen here as a kind of weak version of a workers government. There is no mention that a workers government must be at least a dual power counterposed to the capitalist state, based on the independent organs of proletarian rule—factory committees, workers militia, soviets. There is no sense that a workers government requires a communist vanguard to win over the mass base from the reformist labour traitors. In short, this perspective denies that a workers government is the popular expression for the dictatorship of the proletariat, even if in embryonic form.

Critical Support

The election of Jack Jones' successor can be an important focus of political struggle within the British workers movement. It is therefore desirable for revolutionaries to actively intervene through critical support rather than advocate abstention. Critical support is neither tailing the illusions of the ranks (as the U.S. left did with Arnold Miller or Ed Sadlowski), nor is it a vote of confidence in the individual candidate. Rather, critical support is a means—a tactic—for the Trotskyist vanguard to win support for its programme and authority by voting for a candidate who represents, even if only in a partial and contradictory way, a class-struggle

opposition to the pro-capitalist bureaucracy. This must be expressed programmatically, in raising at least some key element(s) of the Transitional Programme.

We have asserted that the Social Contract is the central question facing the British proletariat at this moment. Workers who vote for Riley or Thornett are consciously opposing and breaking with the principal form of class collaboration in Britain today. Therefore a vote for Riley or Thornett, despite the overall economistic nature of their programmes, is supportable and preferable over abstention. In order to smash the pro-capitalist alliance between the trade-union bureaucracy and the La-



Alan Thornett

bour government, the British working class must go beyond the nationally limited industrial militancy espoused by the SWP and WSL.

Because of Thornett's reputation as a leading union militant, certain ostensibly Trotskyist groups have sought to seduce him ever since he broke with Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party in 1974-75. Prominent among Thornett's suitors are the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat; and the centrist confusionists of the International-Communist League (I-CL). The T&GWU election is a perfect opportunity for the IMG and I-CL to show Thornett that they are the best political friends he has. Normally the IMG and I-CL support IS, SWP candidates running on programmes similar to that of Riley. But now they have discovered that Thornett is a "real socialist alternative," while maintaining that Riley does not go beyond trade-union militancy. Although the WSL is a serious centrist formation, while Tony Cliff's IS/SWP is a cynical left-reformist outfit, their electoral campaigns for the T&GWU general secretaryship are indistinguishable.

The IMG's support to Thornett is so enthusiastic one might believe that he is a member of their organisation. The I-CL, at least, recognises that Thornett's electoral platform is something less than a revolutionary programme. They attribute such omissions as workers control, expropriation without compensation and opposition to British imperialism to "space limitations" and observe that such lapses occurred "unintentionally no doubt" (*Workers Action*, 10 February)! We might point out that a large fraction of Thornett's campaign literature is given to building up his own personality cult as a trade-union militant.

Under conditions of severe economic crisis and a mounting revolt against the Social Contract, the T&GWU election reveals that the British "far left" remains bound to the traditions of left-Labourite economism and narrow trade unionism. It is the task of a British section of the international Spartacist tendency to establish a truly revolutionary opposition, one which does not tail, echo or foster illusions in British social democracy ■

ABONNEZ-VOUS

Le Bolchévique

publication de la Ligue Trotskyiste de France
pour toute correspondance
Pascal Alessandri, B.P. 336, 75011 Paris, France

"Roots" ...

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What this new language is, in contradistinction to English, is conveniently left unsaid.

The OL's lengthy presentation of "The Story 'Roots' Forgot to Tell" is an attempt to manufacture "black history" to refurbish the "Third Period" Stalinist call for "self-determination" for the "black belt." As we pointed out in our last issue of *WV*, there are plenty of historical inaccuracies and omissions in *Roots*. But the *Call's* repeated assertion that "history reveals" an unbroken tradition of "continuous mass rebellions and organized armed resistance to slavery" is a Stalinist fairy tale. Black historian W.E.B. DuBois, whose "revolutionary stand" the OL salutes, noted the relative quiescence of slaves in the U.S. and contrasted this with the massive organized revolts which repeatedly rocked other slave colonies of the Americas. DuBois noted a key factor—the overwhelming military might of the whites:

"The system of slavery demanded a special police force and such a force was made possible and unusually effective by the presence of the poor whites. This explains the difference between the slave revolts in the West Indies, and the lack of effective revolt in the Southern United States.... Gradually the whole white South became an armed and commissioned camp to keep Negroes in slavery and to kill the black rebel."

—*Black Reconstruction in America*, 1935

The OL rails that "Haley's story is the story of the 'house Negro'" and not of "the millions of slaves who picked the cotton and tobacco and were the backbone of the liberation struggle."

Puerto Rican Nationalists ...

(continued from page 6)

attempt to force them to testify was a violation of the constitutional separation of church and state. However, it was reported in the newspaper of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, *Claridad* (20 February), that on orders of the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, all records of the Hispanic Commission have now been turned over to the FBI.

The FALN has been credited by police with a total of 43 bombings since 1973. In many cases it has left notes demanding Puerto Rican independence and freedom for five long-imprisoned Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners held in U.S. jails. While most of the bomb attacks have been directed against symbols of imperialism (banks, giant corporations, etc.), the FALN also claimed credit for the 1975 bombing of Frances Tavern in New York's Wall Street district, in which four innocent patrons were killed.

This anti-working-class act of indiscriminate terror is completely indefensible and must be condemned. (To be sure, it pales in comparison to the indiscriminate terror of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and the colonial oppression of Puerto Rico.) But the grand jury fishing expedition against the FALN is an attempt to break up the Puerto Rican independence movement. Despite its misguided and impotent terrorist strategy, the FALN and all fighters for Puerto Rican independence must be defended against bourgeois repression!

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee call for the immediate release of Cucto and Nemikin, for dropping of the contempt charges against Myrna and José López and others who refused to testify before the Chicago grand jury, and for an immediate end to the grand jury/FBI witchhunt of the Puerto Rican independence movement! ■

Lawyers Guild ...

(continued from page 3)

clear the sectarian basis of its campaign, which ties the defense of Tyler to agreement with the OL position of "self-determination for the Afro-American Nation." The OL-supported motion was finally amended to eliminate this relic of early 1930's Stalinism (when the CP, on Stalin's orders, called for a "black republic" in the deep South) and sponsorship for the OL-preferred speaker, as Maoists and CP supporters reached a rotten highest-common-denominator program designed to be a basis for exclusion from their sectarian defense activities. The PDC's call for a united-front defense under the slogan "Free Gary Tyler!"—which could build a powerful movement to free Tyler while allowing all participants to raise their own politics—was ignored.

Whither the NLG Convention?

One of the hottest battles at the conference was over where to hold the next NLG convention—Seattle or Chicago? Intense and lengthy debate over which city was more "democratic," culminating in the only roll-call vote at the conference, resulted in a majority for Seattle. This was not surprising, considering that the OL national headquarters are located in Chicago.

It is difficult to say how long the increasingly uneasy détente in the NLG will last. One thing, however, is certain: the class-collaborationist defense work to which the NLG is committed will do much to suppress the crucial political issues in the name of "keeping the Guild tradition." Suing the unions, offering political support to petty-bourgeois nationalists and one or another Stalinist bureaucracy, refusing to participate in non-sectarian united-front defense work—all this reflects the NLG's fundamental willingness to cross the class line. This is the rotten core of the NLG tradition of popular-front politics.

Those NLG members who do not simply want to tail after some current of Stalinism in the NLG but who seek to draw a class line in defense work, should look now to the principled political defense work of the Partisan Defense Committee. ■

That Kunta Kinte and his descendants were relatively privileged slaves (a gardener, a coach driver, a gamecock trainer, a blacksmith, etc.) is true and a key to understanding that Haley's "Saga of an American Family" is a black Horatio Alger story. However, the OL's myth of the field slave as "backbone of the liberation struggle" is a simple-minded ideological projection of the Third Worldist fallacy that the most oppressed are the most revolutionary. If this were true, the Bolsheviks should have joined the Narodniks in looking to the priest-ridden, backward and immiserated Russian peasantry, rather than to the combative urban proletariat, to lead the revolution.

Real "black history" punctures the OL's balloon. The leadership of the significant slave revolts of nineteenth-century America was drawn from among the more privileged and skilled slaves, in contact with broader social reality. Nat Turner was a foreman; Gabriel Prosser was a blacksmith; Denmark Vesey was a freedman whose lieutenants included an overseer, house servants and skilled mechanics; the great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass was an escaped house servant. These leaders of what was effectively a form of class war under the most desperate conditions displayed the personal courage, organizational capacity and social consciousness which are prerequisites for the formation of class leadership.

The vicarious black nationalists and NAACP cheerleaders join in embracing the *Roots* version of "history." The destruction of racist myths about the innate docility and backwardness of black people is important; a Marxist understanding of history is a crucial weapon in the arsenal of the working-class movement. But the legacy of centuries of brutal oppression will not be wiped out by a romantic genesis myth of "African traditions" transmitted down the generations. It is wrong at best; at worst it is a deliberate diversion from struggle for the black workers who will play a vanguard role in the U.S. proletarian revolution.

The "tradition" which shows a way forward for the oppressed black masses is neither the consoling pastoral, warrior myth of Kunta Kinte nor the individual/family "up from slavery" saga of his descendants. Rather, it begins from the development, out of the experience of oppression and injustice, of social consciousness, as indicated for example by Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X. While neither of these authentic black heroes (products of different epochs) espoused the cause of the proletariat as a class, the conscious vanguard of an integrated socialist revolution will embrace as its own their struggles for black freedom. ■

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Spain Forum...

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comment, in *Homage to Catalonia*, that "A government which sends boys of fifteen to the front with rifles 40 years old and keeps its biggest men and newest rifles in the rear is manifestly more afraid of the revolution than of the fascists."

During the May Days the Barcelona proletariat rose up against a provocation by the Stalinist gendarmes and in defense of workers control. The only political groups which stood with them, however, were the small left-anarchist "Friends of Durruti" group and the even tinier Trotskyist nucleus, the Bolshevik-Leninist Group. They issued a joint leaflet calling for the workers to disarm the Republican National Guard and Assault Guards and extend the general strike to all except essential war industries. But the masses kept waiting for the support of the anarchist unions and the centrist POUM; the uprising was crushed.

Lewis cited recent declarations by the PCE and social democrats in which they join Prime Minister Suárez in calling for calm and "reconciliation" in the aftermath of the murder of five Communist Party members last month. No less disgusting was a declaration by a cabal of "far-leftists" in Catalonia together with bourgeois liberals calling on the Francoist dictatorship to establish democracy. These charlatans, among them self-proclaimed Trotskyists, are repeating the betrayals of the POUM. An authentic Trotskyist party which fights an irreconcilable battle against popular frontism is necessary to lead the revolutionary struggle for a Spanish workers republic, he said.

He concluded with a quote from Leon Trotsky, writing on Spain 40 years ago: "There are three conditions for the victory of the working class—the party, the party and once again the party. So long as the leadership of the Spanish working class rests in the hands of the reformists and centrists the red in the streets of Spain will not be the color of the new state power's flag but will be the color of working class blood that has been spilled." ■

CORRECTIONS

We apologize to our readers for the fact that lines were dropped at the beginning of a paragraph in two of our recent issues. In "Maoist OL Somersaults Over Sadlowski" (*WV* No. 144, 11 February) the opening sentence of the final paragraph should read: "There is another reason beyond mere jockeying for position." And in the article, "For a Strike Against NYC Subway Cutbacks!" (*WV* No. 145, 18 February), the paragraph at the bottom of the third column on page 10 should read: "There is a felt need in this beleaguered city, not only among the workers and poor but extending to large sections of the petty bourgeoisie as well, for a militant fight against the banks and corporations who triggered and have greatly profited from the NYC 'fiscal crisis'."

Also, in "The Agony of Japanese Americans in U.S. Concentration Camps" (*WV* No. 139, 7 January), we wrote that several of the World War II camps still exist and could be reactivated in a "national emergency," when "under provisions of the anti-communist McCarran Act thousands of 'potential spies and saboteurs' on a 'master pick-up list' can be arrested overnight." The detention provisions of the notorious McCarran Act were repealed in 1971. But despite this formal housecleaning, the act still stands, the camps still exist and the FBI still maintains an "Administrative Index" listing "individuals who pose a realistic, direct and current danger to national security."

French Elections...

(continued from page 9)

handed support to the popular front for almost three years now, it is not surprising that the OCI leadership had to spend a good deal of time at a recent meeting of its trade-union supporters answering many objections from militants, who wanted to know why it refused to vote for the Union of the Left.

Likewise, the oppositional Tendency A of the LCR, whose positions closely parallel those of the OCI, while opposing the formation of the LCR-LO-OCT electoral bloc and calling for votes to PCF and PS candidates, put up only the most token fight on the question of the popular front at the recent Ligue congress. To date, it has not yet submitted its major document on the question—although usually reliable sources report that it will soon do so.

For a Trotskyist Alternative!

The fundamental line of Marxist politics is the struggle for working-class independence from the bourgeoisie. When the revolutionary forces are small, they can seek to gain a hearing from the workers who follow the mass reformist parties by giving critical support to the latter's candidates running in opposition to the capitalist parties. But when the bourgeois workers parties are part and parcel of a popular front, such as the Union of the Left, the class contradiction within them is suppressed; the reformists' socialist pretensions and claims to represent the working class are nullified by allying with a section of the bourgeoisie. Frequently this is expressed in a formal document (like the "Common Program") explicitly limiting the coalition's actions to the framework of the capitalist state.

Under such circumstances, it is unprincipled for revolutionaries to call for votes to the *bourgeois* popular front, even to those candidates who are members of reformist or centrist workers parties. The same is true in the case of informal or disguised "corridor coalitions" when the reformists prop up bourgeois governments in parliament without formally being a member of a coalition. (The most notorious current example is the blatant support of Berlinguer's Italian Communist Party for the government of Christian Democrat Andreotti. Leftist Italian students have dubbed the minority cabinet the "Berlingotti regime.")

Where the Trotskyists are too weak to present their own candidates they can seek to advance the struggle for working-class independence by giving critical support even to other relatively small socialist tendencies. But when the historically evolved parties of the

working class are participating in a popular front, in order to vote for the candidates of smaller leftist groups they must present at least a minimal opposition to popular frontism. Thus in the 1973 French parliamentary elections, even though LO and the OCI voted for PS and PCF candidates on the second round, unlike the Ligue Communiste they denounced the Union of the Left as a popular front and refused to call for a vote to the Left Radicals. It was therefore possible to give critical support to LO and OCI candidates on the first round, while abstaining on the second.

But in the 1977 municipal elections, no tendency of the workers movement is presenting candidates which oppose the popular front. The "pact of alliance" is simply a "left" cover for the Union of the Left. There is no choice for the class-conscious workers in this election.

The French Stalinists like to repeat that the "conditions are not ripe" to overthrow capitalism; consequently they engage in all sorts of parliamentary maneuvers and blocks with the bourgeois parties. For the French centrists, conditions are likewise never "ripe" for "confronting the illusions of the masses" in the reformists; therefore they crawl after the reformists and the popular front. The French workers, however, cannot defend their living standards and class interests by voting in a Union of the Left government. This will neither contribute to the independent mobilization of the proletariat nor avoid austerity policies, anti-communist repression and moves toward imperialist war.

With a new wave of popular frontism in the offing, the French centrists are maneuvering to play the treacherous role of the Spanish POUM, acting as tame "left" critics (and possible future members) of the popular front. These charlatans must be exposed so that in coming class confrontations the road is open to oust the reformist misleaders and organize the proletariat into a powerful striking force, led by an authentic Leninist vanguard. Today the first elements of such a party are assembling under the banner of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency.

No to the Union of the Left! No support for the "far-left" tail of the popular front! For a French Trotskyist party, section of a reformed Fourth International! ■

J. P. Stevens ...

(continued from page 5)

there was no reason to believe a boycott could be effective "because of the diversity of the company's product mix, the non-identifiable nature of a large portion of our goods and the wide geographic dispersion of our customers" (*New York Times*, 15 August, 1976).

The Spartacist League was unique at today's demonstration in posing the key tactic necessary to aid the unionization drive: refusal by the entire labor movement to handle or transport J.P. Stevens products. While other left groups parroted the bureaucrats' boycott chants, the SL's prominent banner proclaimed: "Consumer Boycott Not Enough, Organize the South! For Militant Labor Action, Don't Handle J.P. Stevens Goods!" If the entire labor movement were to "hot cargo" or refuse to work J.P. Stevens products, it could bring the company to its knees in a matter of weeks. Although ACTWU vice president DuChessi announced at today's post-demonstration news conference that the union was prepared to boycott for "20 years, if necessary," the masses of textile workers must not be made to suffer such prolonged torture. Unionize J.P. Stevens! Mobilize the labor movement to refuse to handle its products! Organize the South! ■

JUST OUT!

WOMEN AND REVOLUTION

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WORKERS VANGUARD

British Union Ranks Rebel Against "Social Contract"

LONDON—Workers' anger is cracking the fragile social peace imposed on the British working class by its reformist Labourite leadership. The hottest spot at present is a militant month-old strike over wage restraints by workers at the British Leyland Motor Corporation, which has led government managers to threaten a shutdown of the nationalised car manufacturer.

In the most visible display so far of rank-and-file opposition to the Labour government's austerity policies, 6,000 protesting workers at Leyland's important Longbridge plant downed tools on February 11 to confront leading union bureaucrats Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon and Secretary of Industry Eric Varley. The disgruntled demonstrators were protesting the Social Contract ("voluntary" wage controls) of which Jones and Scanlon are the prime builders. When these former darlings of the left arrived at the plant for talks with management on speed-up, they were greeted with signs demanding, "End the Social Contract Now" and "Social Contract—Social Con-trick" among others.

The Longbridge demonstration was not an isolated incident as strike activity has climbed sharply in recent weeks and union leaders scrambled to put on a show of militancy in response to increasing opposition to the "social contract" on the shop floor. Proposals for one-day national protest strikes are now common. The Communist Party is making a vigorous attempt to "head in

"Now the workers are going to go through Christmas. They're going to have a cold New Year's and by February there ought to be ripping hell in Britain," the speaker noted. "Break the Social Contract—that's the key question now. And with a Labour government in power to take responsibility for what they've done, because they did it."

—WV No. 133, 12 November 1976

T&GWU Election

Behind the rising tide of class struggle lie the following conditions: in the last quarter of 1976, inflation outpaced wage increases by 18 percent (annual rate) to 12 percent; unemployment stands at a post-war record high of 5.6 percent (equivalent to 8 percent by U.S. standards); massive cutbacks in social services have been made and are projected to continue.

Under these devastating conditions, the members of Britain's largest union, the 1.8-million-member Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU), are electing their general secretary by balloting in the locals between 21 February and 19 March. This is a rare occasion in the massive T&G, as the general secretary—the only full-time officer of the union who is elected—is elected *for life*. The retiring incumbent is none other than Jack Jones, once hailed as one of the "terrible twins" of British "left" trade unionism. The former strongman of "left" Labourism today stands exposed as the chief architect of the increasingly despised Social Contract.

Fourteen candidates are standing in the fight for the top post of this key union, which combines not only transport and allied workers of all types, but also workers in the car industry, dock workers, rubber workers, oil and chemical workers, hotel and food workers and a myriad of other trades. The T&GWU is a "general" rather than an industrial union, admirably suited for bureaucratic control. Additionally, in many of the industries where it is present, it is not the only union in the industry.

With its economic muscle and numerical weight, the T&GWU is the single most powerful institution within the British labour movement. It accounts for one fifth of all votes in the Trades Union Congress and one sixth of the votes at Labour Party conferences. A recent Gallup Poll indicated that 54 percent of the voters regard Jack Jones, not Prime Minister James Callaghan, as the most powerful political figure in Britain today (*Economist*, 8 January).

The odds-on favorite to succeed Jones is Moss Evans, a colorless bureaucrat who is the present national organiser. The Tory *Economist* (26 February) describes him quite accurately: "happy to pay lip service to left-wing language, but round the negotiating table, a trimmer prepared to settle for less than the socialist vision demands."

While Evans has continued to back the Social Contract, the other contenders are trying to distance themselves from a policy of continued wage restraint in the wake of the factory-floor revolt. Three bureaucrats are particular-



Auto workers at British Leyland plant in Birmingham demonstrate against the "social contract" last month.

ly keen to don the mantle of loyal left critics: Alex Kitson, John Cousins and John Miller. In addition there are two candidates associated with ostensibly revolutionary socialist organisations: Alan Thornett, president of a T&G local at Leyland's Cowley plant who heads the Workers Socialist League (WSL), and Tommy Riley, a deputy convenor for Metal Box in Bolton, who is backed by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP—formerly International Socialists) and their "Right to Work" campaign.

Kitson, touted as the "left" with the best chance of scoring an upset, has produced an election platform which is a masterpiece of hot air, addressing not a single question facing British workers, including the wage restraint he now claims to oppose! John Cousins, the son of former T&GWU leader Frank Cousins, has only just left a government agency to return to the union proclaiming his new-found opposition to wage controls. Cousins' main programmatic point is advocacy of a "planned economy," by which he means class-collaborationist schemes for higher investment and productivity.

The most left of the several bureaucratic contenders for Jack Jones' throne is John Miller, national secretary of the Chemical, Oil and Rubber Trades group within the union. His platform comes out against wage restraint in a "capitalist market economy." This is ambiguous language, however, since Jones/Callaghan maintain that Britain under a Labour government is not a "capitalist market economy." But whatever he now says about the Social Contract, Miller's credibility is worthless since he fulsomely supports the Jones regime, of which he is a loyal component. To oppose the Social Contract while supporting Jack Jones is like opposing racism while supporting Enoch Powell. Needless to say, Miller's opposition to the Social Contract has not been strong enough for him to lead or advocate strikes and other militant actions to break it.

The "Revolutionaries"

The two self-proclaimed "revolutionary socialist" candidates, Tommy Riley

and Alan Thornett, have programmes so similar they may well have copied from one another. Both predictably condemn the Social Contract and all forms of wage control or restraint. Both call for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay. Both advocate occupations of closed-down plants and demand their nationalisation. Both heavily emphasise democratising the T&GWU. Both declare themselves socialists without further defining that much abused term.

Insofar as Riley's campaign differs from Thornett's, it is less serious and more willing to water down its mass agitation to the level of pure and simple trade-union militancy. Riley makes little pretence of being a serious alternative to the Jones bureaucracy, viewing his candidacy as a publicity stunt for the Right to Work Campaign. At a meeting in London on 25 February, he said jokingly, "I hope Moss Evans has a long and fruitful life. I don't want to go through this again."

Symptomatic of the unserious nature of Riley's campaign is that his employer's house organ, *Metal Box News*, ran a "human interest" story about him, "Checker Bids for Top Union Job." Riley and the SWP, of course, are not responsible for this article. However, given the light-mindedness of Riley's campaign, it is scarcely surprising that British capitalists view him as an interesting eccentric rather than a threat to their class rule.

Riley's official platform calls for nationalisation of bankrupt firms, opposition to discrimination against women and coloured immigrants, and for "socialist planning." However, a mass flyer put out by the T&GWU Right to Work Campaign contains none of these demands. This flyer contains absolutely nothing to justify Riley's claim to be a "revolutionary socialist."

Thornett is both a more serious candidate and a more credible and authoritative union militant than Riley. Yet the programmes of both can be summarised as *militant, nationally limited economism*. Running for an office which the majority of the British

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Jack Jones

Economist

order to behead" the swelling tide of discontent, and has taken its Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions out of mothballs for the occasion.

At the first public meeting of the London Spartacist Group last October, the speaker analyzed the factors which have led to this tense situation:

"In Britain...one can see a massive explosion coming and practically name the month when it will occur. The financiers and Labour government already got a bad scare in September when, despite massive pressure from the Trades Union Congress, the Seaman's Union nearly struck to break the Social Contract."