

Starvation, Repression Will Continue in India

Gandhi Toppled

MARCH 28 -- For the first time in 30 years, the Congress Party of India has been decisively repudiated at the polls, winning only 153 out of 542 parliamentary seats. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi suffered the additional personal humiliation of a crushing defeat in her own constituency, as did her controversial playboy son, Sanjay.

Riding the crest of massive discontent over Gandhi's 21-month suspension of civil liberties and particularly over the forced sterilization campaign, an unstable coalition of the major opposition parties formed the Janata ("Peoples") Party and took 271 seats. With the parliamentary cushion added by the 28 seats of its ally, the Congress for Democracy (CD), Janata holds a clear majority, and on Thursday its chairman, Moraji Desai, was sworn in as the new prime minister.

The election capped two interrelated processes, long evident but greatly accelerated by the state of emergency: the steady peeling off of key components of the Congress, and the emergence of various opposition coalitions (hitherto only at the state level) as serious contenders for power. The three-decade hegemony of the Congress Party was shattered as Indira Gandhi's clique was increasingly reduced to two peo-

continued on page 10



Prime minister Indira Gandhi campaigning early in the election.

Laffont/Sygma

FBI Targets the Spartacist League

Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark got the full blast of "human rights" American style in Chicago in 1969. The secret police infiltrated their organization, set them up, and then in the dead of night the cops kicked their door down and machine-gunned them in their beds.

The rest of us have been luckier. For most of us in the left, labor and black movements, relations with the American political police have been more routine. We have had our phones tapped, our mail opened, our offices burgled, our garbage "covered," our organizations "penetrated," our leaders tailed and jailed. We have been the victims of systematic attempts to deprive us of our livelihood. We have been personally and collectively slandered by "anonymous" letter-writing campaigns and by planted lies disingenuously called "disinformation." We have been witchhunted by the grand jury and "selectively audited" by the IRS. The FBI has talked to our friends, neighbors, landlords and especially employers. Some of us have been framed up and jailed. But what the Panthers met was the full-blown terror which stands

behind the shadowy routine of FBI/CIA snooping, harassment and disruption.

No group or individual wants the attention of these legal outlaws and official hitmen. Left-wing political organizations which become objects of their "surveillance" have also become objects of the now notorious "disruption" which is a logical outgrowth of FBI/CIA "counterintelligence." So we of the Spartacist League (SL) looked carefully at a short article titled "FBI Hit List" (see illustration) in a recent issue of the muckraking journal *CounterSpy* (December 1976).

CounterSpy reproduced an FBI standard file form known as "ADEX," the "abolished" index that boiled down the detention lists to 7,500 Americans (see accompanying article). The ADEX form included a category designated by the letters "SPL" as one of the 16 organizations given top priority for FBI "special" treatment. *CounterSpy* speculated that "SPL could mean Spartacist League." Documents subsequently obtained by an individual through the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act confirmed *CounterSpy's* guess.

"SPL" is indeed the FBI's computer code for the SL; we are on their "hit list."

It is anybody's guess why the FBI in 1971 selected the SL as a target of its "special" attention. The 16 groups in the ADEX code (which includes a few ultra-rightist groups) encompass among others the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Panthers, Progressive Labor and SDS (under which category some Maoists were probably subsumed). But why the SL, which at that time had not yet begun widespread involvement in the labor movement, nor made the major breakthroughs that were to create significant international ties? We do not know. Nor can any firm answer be provided for the interesting omission of groups like the International Socialists and Workers League which were at the time bigger and louder than the SL.

Who Are the Conspirators?

The documents subsequently obtained show that the FBI had manufactured for ADEX and related activities a standard definition for the "SPL." The FBI wants to portray the Spartacist League as some sort of

criminals, the category of individuals the FBI has a legal license to hunt. But everyone knows that the SL is not criminal and does not engage in felonious acts. So the FBI's definition of the "SPL" includes a "fallback": the "SPL," says the FBI, "does not openly advocate the violent overthrow of the U.S. government at this time." This of course is explicitly true, but the implication is false and nefarious: that the SL is conspiring to insurrect. With the one word "openly," the FBI seeks to justify its spying and disruption activities directed at our organization.

The SL is not conspiratorial. It is well known for its straightforward presentation of its political ideas and program. This is recognized not only throughout the left, but has been acknowledged even in some bourgeois circles. In a 1972 address at Harvard, Daniel Patrick Moynihan favorably compared the SL youth group to other leftists in attendance because "they sail under their own colors." Moynihan quoted from a statement proclaiming our aims:

"... to develop young radicals into lifetime communist militants, and to

continued on page 2

(continued from page 1)

build a socialist youth organization which can intervene in all social struggles with a revolutionary program based on the politics of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky."

Moynihan concluded, "It is doubtless perverse to do so, but I happen to find that an honorable statement of purpose" (Commentary, December 1972). No one misunderstood. No one thought Moynihan was in favor of building the communist vanguard. But the SL's forthright presentation of its views had to be recognized even by this imperialist politician.

The SL deserves its reputation for honesty. We have nothing to hide. How outrageous that the FBI, which does its dirty work in secret, should label us as not "openly" planning the "violent overthrow of the government." In fact,

"The nation must to a degree take it on faith that we too are honorable men devoted to her service."

—Richard Helms

"Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply."

—CIA document

the capitalist government is not "overthrown" violently or non-violently. In fact, the historical probability is that in a revolutionary situation there may well be little government to "overthrow," and likely not this government in its present form. A revolutionary conjuncture in the U.S. will be defined by the fact of *dual power*. Most probably it will pose the choice between the democratic soviets of the working class and a tottering bonapartist dictatorship headed by a militarist perhaps in the mold of a General George Brown, unencumbered by the trappings of a Congress.

On the basis of historical probability in the future, the FBI wants us to plead guilty to "advocacy" to "overthrow the government" today. We are not able to. It is simply self-serving nonsense for the FBI to imply that the SL is planning a secret putsch against the U.S. government. Any organization that fits the FBI's conspiratorial definition would have to be a group of suicidal psychopaths.

According to the *Communist Manifesto*, the proletarian revolution is made by the "immense majority." It is not until a majority of the working people are prepared for a revolution against a capitalist government isolated and unable to rule that a proletarian revolution can occur. But in any case the issue is hardly that of *our* democratic good will. The criminal terror of the FBI is only part of the vindictive savagery

which the ruling class unleashes against those who seek to challenge its dominion. We know full well the story of the heroic Spartacist Eugen Leviné. After the unsuccessful 1919 uprising in Bavaria, Leviné proclaimed to the bourgeois court which sentenced him to death, and to the workers movement which honors him as a martyr, "Communists are dead men on leave."

Unable to feed the hungry or provide jobs for the unemployed, periodically plunging the population into devastating inter-imperialist war, sacrificing every vestige of rationality or decency to its insatiable hunger for profit, the bourgeoisie cooks up a spectre of the revolutionary movement as a criminal conspiracy. With this big lie oft repeated, they attempt to discredit the Marxists in the eyes of the masses and create a climate of opinion favorable to their witchhunting. Thus they hope to evade the verdict of history for their crimes against humanity.

Another way that the bourgeoisie attempts to discredit revolutionaries is by portraying socialism as an endless totalitarian horror of state repression. In this distortion it gets invaluable aid from the Stalinists, Stalin's usurpation of the mantle of the Russian Revolution provided the truly horrifying spectacle of the Moscow trials in which so many

"I find it inconceivable that a covert agency is expected to obey all the overt orders of the government."

—James Angleton, former CIA chief of staff

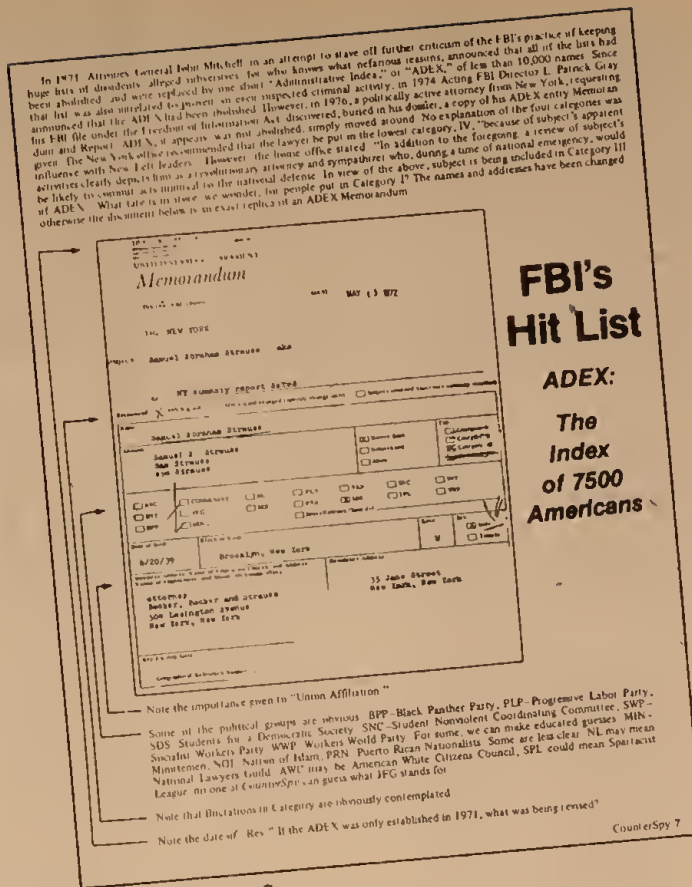
working-class revolutionists were humiliated and destroyed as part of a bureaucratic counterrevolution. The prison camps for "thought criminals" in Russia and China facilitate the CIA crusade for "human rights." The bourgeoisie is delighted to point to these degenerated and deformed workers states as examples of the "Communist future." Imitating the capitalist state apparatus, the Stalinists have created a state apparatus of general state terror, in the process gutting the Marxist conception of the withering away of the state. Both the Stalinists and the witchhunters have an interest in identifying Stalinism with socialism. Trotskyists unconditionally defend the deformed workers states against imperialism and capitalist restorationism, but we have nothing in common with the apologists for totalitarianism.

Marxism and the Role of Force in History

It is the FBI itself which is the outlaw and terrorist organization. As a covert arm of a government that claims the confidence of the vast majority of the population, the FBI is one sign of the inherent weakness and decay of that system. It is the FBI which is guilty of proven criminal conduct by the bourgeoisie's own laws. It is the FBI which should be prosecuted!

Unwilling to admit the simple truth that a crucial purpose of its secret police is to control thoughts, not acts, the ruling class falsely portrays the Marxists as "dangerous to society." Revolutionary Marxists are dangerous only to this system of institutionalized mass misery and those who profit from it.

The attempt to slander Marxism as some kind of violence cult is far more than an abstract anti-communist propaganda campaign. It is the cynical rationale for the ADEX file and the



Sample page from Justice Department "ADEX" file of "subversives" as it appeared in CounterSpy magazine article.

concentration camps which wait in the wings, for the FBI assassination squads that are the ultimate "disruption." It is an irony that this secret arm of the ruling class that has perpetrated the most massive organized worldwide violence should mount this attack on the "dangerous" thought of the Marxist tradition. Not mere irony; it is historical perversity.

In line with this need to turn the victim into a "criminal," part of the FBI's standardized definition of the SL attempts to invoke the "speech crimes" provisions of the Smith Act; the FBI claims the "SPL does believe that eventual violent revolution to overthrow the present capitalist system of government in the U.S. is inevitable."

Marxists have no position on violence as an abstract principle. For us it is not a question of "belief," but of recognizing reality. As Trotsky said, "A disbelief in violence is equivalent to a disbelief in gravitation... renunciation of the use of force for purposes of liberation is equivalent to giving support used for oppression which now rules the world" (*Where Is Britain Going?*). Marxism has never refrained from speaking the plain truth about violence. But Marxism has done more than that. Marxists analyzed class society as the source of violence and developed a program to root it out at the source once and for all.

Pacifists have made an escapist religion of the notion of "non-violence," but for Marxists the truth is always concrete. In 1931 Gandhi discussed sacrificing the lives of the Indian people for national independence. In what must be one of history's most repulsively illogical statements, he said, "whether it is one life or a million that we have to pay, I am praying it will be possible for the future historian to say that India fought and won her liberty without shedding human blood" (quoted in Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*). For Marxists, it makes a great deal of difference whether it is one or one million. Force must be understood in terms of its actual consequences. We do not equate the violence of the oppressor with the possibility of resistance by the oppressed seeking their liberation.

In fact it has always been clear that

force and violence can have an inverse relationship. This is true not only in the everyday sense in which an overwhelming balance of forces can prevent an eruption of violence, but also in the historical sense: force in the service of human liberation aids in the creation of less violent societies. We stand with Thomas Paine against Edmund Burke on the legitimacy of force in the French revolution.

That force and its use is not an abstract principle is amply demonstrated by the Marxist tradition, whose overwhelming judgment is summed up in *Capital*: "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power." Here Marx recognizes not only the social violence endemic to a decaying society but also the inherent force of the state. The bourgeoisie's hypocritical finger-wagging at the "violent" Marxists has as its purpose the legitimization of the terror tactics of its consummately violent state: executions, frame-ups, concentration camps.

Marx made it clear that he understood the question of violent revolution as an assessment of concrete conditions rather than an abstract principle when he spoke of the possibility of revolution coming "peacefully" to Britain and America. This speech, made at the Hague in 1872, was directed at the Blanquists who made violence into a "revolutionary principle." Marx stated:

"The worker must one day seize political supremacy in order to establish the new organization of labour. He must overthrow the old politics sustaining the old institutions."

"But we have never said that the means to arrive at these ends were identical. We know the allowance that must be made for the institutions, manners and traditions of different countries. We do not deny that there exist countries like America, England, and, if I knew your institutions better, I would add Holland, where the workers may be able to attain their ends by peaceful means. If that is true we must also recognize that in most of the countries of the Continent force must be the lever to which it will be necessary to resort for a time in order to attain the dominion of labour."

quoted in Nicolaevsky and Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx Man and Fighter*

The statement has been used by those who would falsely attempt to use Marx

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FBI ON "SPL"

SPARTACIST LEAGUE

The Spartacist League (SPL), founded in 1965 by former members of another Trotskyist-communist organization, advocates the destruction of the capitalist system and the creation of a workers class system and a workers class society. The SPL national headquarters is located in New York City. While the SPL does not openly advocate the violent overthrow of the U. S. Government at this time or violations of other Federal or state laws, the SPL does believe that eventual violent revolution to overthrow the present capitalist system of government in the U. S. is inevitable. The objective of the SPL is to organize a membership to take action to precipitate such a revolution when conditions are ripe and to direct and seize control of the revolution when it occurs.

himself to excise Marxism of its revolutionary content. Thus Kautsky, in the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, used the Hague speech to assert his own position that the proletariat can win political power simply at the polls, "using the liberties that exist." But the social-democratic chimera of a "peaceful transition" to socialism was as alien to Marx as is Blanquist putschism. For Marxists, force is not a principle;

Marx's prognosis was a specific historical judgment based on a set of historically empirical assessments that may be accurate or inaccurate.

Lenin in his *State and Revolution* (1917) defended not only Marx's approach but also his particular judgment as "understandable in 1871." Lenin argued that in that period Britain and the U.S. had not yet developed a "militarist clique" and were "to a

considerable degree, without a bureaucracy." He argued that with the imperialist war and its "filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions" Marx's projection was no longer "valid." Again, it was not the question of violence that was at issue, but a prognosis about reality.

One can very easily argue that on the specific case Marx was wrong. In England in 1872 there was a standing army trained in the oppression of the Irish, Indian and Egyptian peoples, a notably cohesive ruling class with a sizeable state bureaucracy, and the greatest navy in the world. Even for America, it may be persuasively argued that Marx underestimated the solidity of the bourgeoisie's consolidation of the state. But whether or not one judges that proletarian revolution could have come peacefully to Britain or America in 1871, the point is that violent revolution is not a principle.

In the introduction to the second English edition of *Terrorism and Communism* Trotsky was quite clear that Marxists have no sympathy with the fetishization of "revolutionary violence." Discussing the Fabian socialists' position that the English proletariat could come to power peacefully through parliament, he said:

"...The Fabian hope must, I fear, be held from the very beginning to be out of the question. I say 'I fear,' since a peaceful, parliamentary change over to a new social structure would undoubtedly offer highly important advantages from the standpoint of the interests of culture, and therefore those of socialism. But in politics nothing is more dangerous than to mistake what we wish for what is possible."

It should be evident that Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and the SL share a common approach to the question of violence: that it is not a matter of principle but of specific concrete historical estimations.

This approach was shared by the Socialist Workers Party when it was still a revolutionary organization. When the SWP was prosecuted in the first Smith Act trials, party leader James Cannon put forward the Marxist position:

"Q: Now, what is the opinion of Marxists with reference to the change in the social order, as far as its being accompanied by violence?"

"A: It is the opinion of all Marxists that it will be accompanied by violence."

"Q: Why?"

"A: That is based, like all Marxist doctrine, on a study of history...."

"Q: What would you say is the opinion of Marxists as far as the desirability of a peaceful transition is concerned?"

"A: The position of the Marxists is that the most economical and preferable, the most desirable method of social transformation, by all means, is to have it done peacefully."

"Q: And in the opinion of the Marxists, is that absolutely excluded?"

"A: Well, I wouldn't say absolutely excluded. We say that the lessons of history don't show any important examples in favor of the idea so that you can count upon it...."

"Q: Then the theory of Marxists and the theory of the Socialist Workers Party, as far as violence is concerned, is a prediction based upon a study of history, is that right?"

"A: Well, that is part of it. It is a prediction that the outlived class, which is put in a minority by the revolutionary growth in the country, will try by violent means to hold on to its privileges against the will of the majority. That is what we predict."

"Of course, we don't limit ourselves simply to that prediction. We go further, and advise the workers to bear this in mind and prepare themselves not to permit the reactionary outlived minority to frustrate the will of the majority."

Socialism on Trial

In this stacked "debate" in a bourgeois courtroom, Cannon defended the basic principles of Marxism. These principles have now been renounced by the SWP, which has come to believe along with classical social-democracy that the proletariat in "democratic" countries can simply electioneer its way to power.

Beginning in December 1974 the SWP won a series of important legal victories compelling the government to disclose some of COINTELPRO's

"disruptions" against the SWP. These ex-Trotskyists' cringing prostration before the bourgeoisie was, however, as important as the Watergate climate of opinion in securing the "landmark" ruling. It was not merely that the SWP wallowed in the legalistic illusion that court decisions would seriously impede the FBI's extralegal machinations. The SWP evasively but unmistakably renounced the party's Trotskyist traditions in its testimony. The deposition by SWP organization secretary Barry Sheppard disclaimed violence in terms which preclude the right to self-defense:

"The SWP does not engage in or advocate violence or any other illegal activity...."

"The policies and facts outlined above are in no way altered or contravened by anything that may appear in the writings of such revolutionary figures as Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, Frederick Douglass, Eugene V. Debs and others."

The SWP introduced into evidence its social-patriotic telegram of condolences on the occasion of the assassination of J.F. Kennedy:

"The Socialist Workers Party condemns the brutal assassination of President Kennedy as an inhuman, anti-social and criminal act. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy and the children in their personal grief...."

It also provided the government with evidence of the expulsion of its left-wing minority faction. Both the telegram and the ouster of the minority were cited in the judge's decision as proof of the SWP's "current non-violent beliefs."

"Speech crimes" laws such as the Smith Act are the bourgeoisie's attempt to criminalize what revolutionists say when they exercise their "free speech." Of course, as we explained, we do not "advocate" the "violent overthrow" of the government. But neither did the SWP, and they were clapped into jail anyway. The current climate of bourgeois opinion militates for the present against the application of the kind of "Catch 22" for which the FBI lusts: legislating the "criminality" of the communist program in order to force the left into the defensive semi-clandestine status which would then serve as a definitive self-justification for the illegal conspiracies and murderous machinations of the secret police.

For Proletarian Revolution!

The overwhelming perpetrators of violence are the bourgeoisie, with untold millions of dead, maimed and starved proletarians sacrificed on the altar of profit. It is the bourgeoisie which left ten million dead in the nationalist irrationality of World War I and then cried bloody murder when the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution claimed a handful of victims on the streets of Petrograd. The real violence came later when the counterrevolutionaries mounted a concerted war against the proletarian state.

In Russia in February 1917, the tsar could no longer rule; by November, Kerensky could no longer rule. War-ravaged Russia needed the Bolsheviks—they were Russia's best chance. Then as now it is the bourgeoisie which represents criminality and chaos and the revolution which represents law and order: real international law and the order of workers democracy. It is the revolutionists who struggle for a state which will wither away; it is the bourgeoisie which concocts an ever more grotesque terror apparatus for its oppressive state.

The FBI's vicious campaign against the SL is criminal. That the FBI has targeted the SL, lined it up in the cross-hairs of its "disruptive" artillery, marked it for the concentration camps is criminal not just in terms of the bourgeoisie's own self-serving laws. It is criminal in the largest historic sense. For the SL is a very precious commodity in its infancy; like the Bolshevik Party for Russia, the SL may be America's last best hope. ■

What Is the ADEX File?

The Spartacist League has the unhappy distinction of being one of 16 organizations singled out for special scrutiny by the FBI's so-called ADEX "hit list." In its lawless terror rampage against the American people, the government's secret political police have added a special insult to the injury: the ADEX file was proclaimed abolished in 1974!

During the Nixon administration, the practice of keeping secret records of "subversives"—against whom no criminal activity need be proved, or often even alleged—came under fire. In 1971 Attorney General Mitchell promised that he would reduce the list to under 10,000 names. This shortened list became known as the "administrative index" (ADEX). In 1974, at the height of the Watergate revelations, FBI head L. Patrick Gray announced that the ADEX file would be dismantled entirely.

But in 1976 a politically active left-wing lawyer filed for his dossier under the Freedom of Information Act. Among other materials, he obtained his supposedly "abolished" ADEX file card, no doubt through some unusual bureaucratic error. This information was reprinted by *CounterSpy* (see illustration), a liberal/New Left magazine animated partly by former CIA agents whose aim is to impede the conspiratorial machinations of the CIA and FBI. *CounterSpy* estimates that the FBI now maintains files on 6,500,000 people!

In the post-Watergate era, exposés of the FBI's illegal and sinister conspiracies have become commonplace. Most often, the stage-managed exposures do not outrun the carefully contrived cover-ups. But sometimes "clean-ups" are proclaimed. The liberals, sunk in the blissful ignorance of complicity, are smug in their conviction that the promised "reforms" show that the "democratic process" has triumphed again. But what really happens? The government's covert operations may be reshuffled and reorganized, streamlined and prettified, renamed and swept further underground. But the FBI continues to carry out its dirty work of spying, intimidation and harassment, slander and disruption of the political and personal lives of people whose only "crime" is their political convictions.

The ADEX file is a recent atrocity in the long and ugly history of FBI list-making. In 1948 the FBI began a program of burglary of the homes and offices of left-wingers, initiating "lock studies" for its agents. It was at this time

that it began what came to be known as the "Do Not File" file, which was either destroyed on a yearly basis or shuffled in a way that made it inaccessible to the uninitiated.

The McCarran Act of 1950 officially legitimized secret FBI record-keeping on "subversive" individuals. It called for the registration of organizations and individual members who "advocated violent overthrow" of the government, thereby providing by their own self-incrimination a basis for prosecution under the Smith Act as well. It authorized the preparation of "detention camps" in case of "national emergency," and the keeping of lists of those to be interned. It also provided for deportation of aliens found to be Communists at any time in their lives.

The Smith Act of 1940 had provided for the prosecution of political dissidents for "advocating" or "teaching" revolution in the U.S. and for membership in organizations deemed guilty of such "advocacy." Its first victims were the Trotskyist leaders of the SWP, who were jailed in 1943. Later the Communist Party, which had applauded the victimization of the "counterrevolutionary Trotskyites," became the law's main target.

In the heyday of the Smith Act, defendants were convicted on the basis of their libraries, as the prosecution pulled quotes from Marx or Lenin and demanded, "Do you believe in that?" This procedure was a lot simpler than framing up radicals by relying on planted "evidence" and the perjured testimony of notoriously unreliable informers and provocateurs.

The Smith Act and McCarran Act, together with the Voorhis Act which made international political association a crime, were the three-pronged weapon of legislative anti-Communism.

During the cold-war period, the FBI maintained a "Security Index" of 11,982 people, supposedly Communist leaders. Then came the "Communist Index" of 17,783 additional "members." These lists were kept at FBI national headquarters, while field offices held lists containing another 200,000 names of those considered by the FBI to constitute a danger in time of "national emergency" (Government Select Committee on Intelligence Agencies, *Final Report*, 1976, quoted in Halperin et al., *The Lawless State*, 1976).

After the cold-war period the detention lists were kept up to date with information swept up in the FBI's vacuum cleaner apparatus of agents,

continued on page 11

"Socialist" Colonel Unleashes Bloodbath in Ethiopia

Shootout at the Derg

On February 3 Ethiopia's Provisional Military Administrative Council (Derg) met in Addis Ababa to discuss policy differences among the top leaders. When the meeting was over, eight Derg members lay dead on the floor and Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam stepped away from the pile of corpses as the (currently) unchallenged leader of Ethiopia's "socialist" army.

Since then the imperialist press has been increasingly hostile to the military rulers in Addis Ababa, and in mid-February U.S. secretary of state Cyrus Vance announced that American arms aid had been cancelled due to "human rights violations." The Soviet bloc, meanwhile, has hailed the "revolutionary" Mengistu regime, this support culminating in Fidel Castro's visit to the Ethiopian capital in mid-March.

But as the smoke clears, it is evident that the latest power shuffle in the Derg simply consolidated the grip of one treacherous nationalist military strongman at the expense of his personal rivals. Those pro-Moscow "Communists" who see this as a "progressive" shift are only preparing their own doom when the baton passes to yet another power-hungry officer, or when Colonel Mengistu finds it to his advantage to switch alliances in order to get Arab petro dollars to bolster a sagging economy and to obtain American support against the territorial claims of Soviet-backed Somalia.

Though the palace intrigues within the military cabal that overthrew the decrepit feudalistic regime of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 remain murky, recent press accounts make it possible to sketch the rough outlines of Mengistu's coup d'état and the issues behind it. Perhaps even more important is to discern the complicated "great power" maneuvering between the U.S. and USSR over the strategically important Horn of Africa.

Palace Intrigue

Ever since coming to power the Derg has been wracked by personal/political rivalry, as recurring shootouts have reduced the original membership of 120 to around 60-80 today. (The names of the junta members are such a closely guarded secret that often their identities are revealed only when they are removed feet first from the ruling circle.) The first chairman, U.S.-trained General Aman Andom, was shot in an earlier (November 1974) power struggle, accused of complicity with the CIA.

In the triumvirate which replaced Andom at the head of the Derg, Colonel Mengistu was the strongest single figure. However, his road to untrammelled personal dictatorship was blocked, first by General Tafari Banti, the chief of state, and then by a group of "moderates" around Captains Almayehu and Mogus. (In the Ethiopian army, which for years received U.S. aid and training, the label "moderate" in the imperialist press can usually be taken as indicating close ties to the Pentagon.)

An account in *Le Monde* (27-28 February) cites as chief among the issues in this clique warfare traditional rivalries between graduates of the Holoita military academy (including Mengistu and his second-in-command, Atnafu Abate) and the more aristocratic Harar academy group around Tafari. A lengthy *New York Times* (1 March)



Keystone

Ethiopian Derg before Brig. Gen. Tafari (center) was killed. Left, strongman Mengistu, right, Lt. Col. Atnafu.

report points to sharp differences between Mengistu and the "moderates" over how hard a line to take toward civilian leftists, in particular the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP).

Faced with growing unrest in the strategically placed trade unions (where the EPRP had taken over after ousting the corrupt American-trained leaders who held sway under Haile Selassie) and among land-hungry peasants, the Derg last spring replaced its original "Ethiopia first" program with one calling for the "total eradication of feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and imperialism." Simultaneously a proposal was launched—reportedly by Tafari and Major Sifay Haote, the third-ranking member of the junta—for a "socialist" political party in order to reconcile EPRP supporters with the Derg. According to the *Times* account: "Colonel Mengistu is described as a hardliner, who would slap his revolver on the table in anger when any such settlement was proposed."

"Reorganization"

The Derg's "Politburo," a group of civilian braintrusts for Mengistu, sabotaged that scheme and tried to grab the EPRP's labor base by declaring the existing Ethiopian Confederation of Labor Unions illegal and setting up a new government-controlled federation in its place. Mengistu also controlled a special Israeli-trained terror squad, called the Nebelbal ("flame"), which beginning last July savagely persecuted and assassinated EPRP members. Sifay was executed at the same time. Evidently in response, an attempt was made to ambush Mengistu on September 22. After this failed, scores of leftist students and trade unionists were murdered (see "Anti-Communist Terror in Ethiopia," *WV* No. 136, 3 December 1976).

The *New York Times*, obviously supplied with detailed intelligence by "Western diplomats," reports that in November and December the Derg met almost continuously and a "reorganization" plan was worked out to remove Mengistu from the operational levers of

command by elevating him to "chairman of the council of ministers," while giving increased powers to Tafari, who until then had been largely a figurehead chief of state. Almayehu and Mogus were behind this maneuver. Then, in a mass rally of 200,000 held four days before his murder, Tafari read off a long list of enemies of the revolution which notably did not include the EPRP.

According to the *Times* account, at the February 3 Derg meeting Mengistu berated Tafari and his supporters for being soft on the EPRP. He then left the room and within minutes seven Derg members were summarily executed, including Almayehu and Mogus. Colonel Daniel Asfaw, head of security and a close associate of Mengistu, was somehow also killed in the shooting. Outside, the Nebelbal division was posted at the perimeter of the palace and remained stationary when the shooting began.

Within 24 hours the hot-tempered colonel was addressing another huge rally in Revolution Square, waving a red handkerchief in each hand. And a week later he had himself proclaimed chief of state, head of national defense, commander-in-chief of the armed forces and chairman of the Derg's general

assembly, central committee and standing committee. But his rule is far from secure: "He is said to have lost the support of much of the army, garrisoned in distant towns to fight wars that are going badly. Potential assassins are everywhere.... For security reasons he has moved into the palace once occupied by Emperor Haile Selassie," reports the *Times*.

Diplomatic Battle Over the Horn

Immediately following the February 3 showdown, Mengistu reportedly received telegrams of congratulations from Moscow, Havana and Peking. However, there are signs that the new regime is leaning toward the Kremlin rather than the Heavenly Palace. On 25 February, the Soviet news agency Tass published a dispatch quoting Atnafu as saying in Yugoslavia that Ethiopia would henceforth obtain its arms from the "socialist camp."

Moscow has long sought a foothold in the straits of Bab el-Mandab which divide the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean. To date its main successes have been diplomatic alliances with the demagogic military dictatorship in Somalia (which describes itself as a "scientific socialist" regime) and the nationalist "Peoples Democratic Republic of [South] Yemen" (which postures as "Marxist-Leninist").

Repeated attempts to woo Haile Selassie came to naught. The "Lion of Judah" was received with great pomp in Moscow in 1959 and again in 1967 and 1970. The USSR granted a 40 million ruble credit to Ethiopia and signed accords for construction of a technical school and refinery. However, the U.S. effectively countered by pouring in millions to build up the Ethiopian army.

Then in 1971, following Mao's reconciliation with U.S. imperialism, China granted the feudalist monarchy a \$90 million loan. On that occasion the Peking bureaucracy praised Haile Selassie's contributions "to the promotion of the cause of anti-imperialist unity" (*Peking Information*, 20 October 1971). And this to the despot who supplied Ethiopian troops to the imperialist UN interventions in Korea and the Congo!

Having struck out with the "king of kings," the Kremlin consequently supported Somalia's irredentist claims to Ogaden province in eastern Ethiopia

continued on page 8



Die Internationale

May Day march of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party.

For International Labor Solidarity!

Avenge Sharpeville and Soweto!

The following Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League leaflet was distributed at several marches around the country last weekend in commemoration of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa.

Following the bloody police massacre of hundreds of young black protesters in the turbulent upheavals which began in South Africa last summer, labor militants and leftists in the U.S. and throughout the world expressed their revulsion for apartheid rule in numerous rallies, marches, petitions, boycotts and labor actions. This weekend, the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR) is organizing demonstrations in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and a number of other cities to mark the anniversary of another apartheid bloodbath—Sharpeville, 21 March 1960, when 72 black men, women and children were slaughtered for peacefully protesting the notorious pass laws which subject the non-white majority in South Africa to police-state controls.

Regrettably, this campaign, based as it is on a liberal program of moralistic protest, will not advance revolutionary struggle against racial oppression in the U.S. or South Africa. Rather, it is an act of consummate cynicism by the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) which created NSCAR. The "coalition"

Coalition Against Apartheid," the NSCAR-initiated vehicle for this weekend's actions). In order not to offend the likes of Dellums, the official march slogans call only for "black majority rule" in South Africa, a demand which has even received lip service from Jimmy Carter's UN ambassador, Andrew Young.

In addition, NSCAR/SWP must ride herd on the occasional nationalist elements they have attracted from time to time, lest they get out of hand and annoy NAACP liberals. In building for its March 26 demonstrations, NSCAR has sponsored a national tour by Soweto student leaders Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seatlholo. In his speeches and interviews, Mashinini engaged in virulent anti-white demagoguery and outright race-baiting, which the SWP dutifully covered up in its press accounts. But then the South African militants hit the SWP where it lives: they attacked the traditional petty-bourgeois nationalist movements, the liberal-oriented, Stalinist-backed African National Congress (ANC) and the violently anti-communist Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

This caused an uproar among NSCAR's periphery, as the Communist Party (CP) objected to the criticisms of the ANC. Ever sensitive to the whims of its liberal milieu, the SWP called

is to refrain from eating sardines, attending Broadway musicals from South Africa and buying Kruggerrand gold coins.

NSCAR's main slogans for this weekend's actions—"U.S. Interests Out of South Africa" and "Black Majority Rule Now"—amount to a call for the utopian and ultimately reactionary gimmick of an open-ended, total boycott on principle of South Africa... by the imperialists who invest there! These demands might appear to some well-intentioned militants, unfamiliar with the SWP's policy of deliberately selecting demands in order to appeal for liberal support, as posing the question of black liberation in South Africa. After all, why shouldn't all supporters of majority rule unite?

They cannot all unite because their perspectives are mutually contradictory. Only revolutionary struggle by the working people can liberate the oppressed from imperialist domination. The SWP/NSCAR "single-issue" strategy is a program directly counter to the interests of the non-white proletariat (African, "coloured" [mixed race] and Indian) of South Africa. The essence of this strategy is to pressure the American imperialists to use the levers of their economic and political power to force the white South African ruling class to create a non-racialist bourgeois-democratic state.

In the first place, this program *cannot* accomplish its stated goal. The super-exploitation of black labor in South Africa nets a tidy 17 percent profit for imperialist concerns, perhaps the highest return on investments world-wide. It is obviously utopian to expect that the "multinational" corporations, whose business is to jack up their profits by exploiting labor on the best-possible terms (for them), will turn their noses up at a 17 percent take because racism is morally repugnant.

Moreover, the South African bourgeoisie rules an industrially advanced economy, backed by massive gold reserves and nuclear capacity, and with close ties to British, French and West German capital as well as the U.S. It has a wide margin for economic self-sufficiency in the unlikely event of an effective international boycott; and, in any case, the imposition of such a boycott would reflect not new-found moral sensitivity among the imperialists but rather *sharpening trade rivalries building toward a new world war*. But since the SWP calls on the U.S. army to "protect" black people in Boston, it would not be illogical for it to demand an American invasion of South Africa!

Even supposing for a moment that the impotent consumer boycott tactic were to work, it would not advance the struggle; it could in fact create enormous obstacles to the revolutionary struggles necessary to liberate the black masses. The central issue on South Africa is how the oppressed non-white working people can wrest power from the white ruling class. Certainly, it is not through the withdrawal of foreign corporations and a contraction of international trade. That would only spell increased unemployment of black and "coloured" workers and a weakening of their social power, which has been



One victim of Vorster regime.

wielded with increasing confidence in the wave of strikes since 1973. Does NSCAR really believe massive layoffs and forcible return to the "bantustan" wastelands (Vorster's "solution" to black unemployment in the cities) will aid South African blacks? In reality, this is a program for the consolidation of a desperate, nuclear-armed white-supremacist laager.

International Labor Solidarity, Not Liberal Moralizing!

The methods of the proletariat are based on a strategy of independently mobilizing the working masses to take power. It is necessary to militantly fight for democratic rights in South Africa—*smashing* apartheid through struggles to win full trade-union and political rights for non-whites, to destroy the industrial color bar, contract labor, pass laws and the whole serpent's nest of apartheid practices, as well as for a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage. But these demands cannot be realized outside the struggle for a black-centered workers and peasants government. NSCAR, on the other hand, refuses to touch these questions because they threaten its political bloc with the ANC and bourgeois liberals in the U.S.

Nor can the SWP/NSCAR, who now pose as consistent opponents of the Pretoria regime, hide the fact that they were guilty of criminal abstention during the U.S.-backed, South African invasion of Angola last year. At that time they raised the slogan of "U.S. Hands Off Angola," but categorically refused to take sides in the military confrontation between the Soviet/Cuban-backed MPLA forces and the South Africa/FNLA/UNITA alliance.

The SWP/NSCAR formula of total consumer/imperialist boycott of South Africa is an attempt to gain instant popularity by taking a position just to the left of mainstream bourgeois liberalism, rather than providing a program to lead the working people forward to revolutionary struggle that alone can bring down the white-supremacist regimes of southern Africa. To their utopian/reactionary moralism, the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL) counterposes a program of international labor solidarity. We call for a strategy based on mobilizing the organized power of the working class: a labor boycott of all military cargo to South Africa, and for unions of imperialist corporations with investments in South Africa to demand that the employers recognize black unions at those enterprises.

Class-struggle demands such as these are not mere "pie-in-the-sky," as the SWP/NSCAR reformists will contend. In San Francisco, ILWU Local 10 has repeatedly called on the union to implement a labor boycott of South African cargo; in Chicago, UAW Local 6 has gone on record demanding that Ford, GM and Chrysler recognize non-white unions at their South African plants. In both cases, a key role in

continued on page 8



Students in the streets of Soweto last summer.

was built as a vehicle for the SWP to cozy up to pro-busing liberals at the height of the struggle over school integration in Boston; but as the black "establishment" began to take a dive on busing, NSCAR found its "mass movement" dwindling. Now it hopes to stave off organizational disintegration by tapping mass sentiment against white-supremacist rule in southern Africa. By shelving almost all activities in favor of busing and orienting to an apparently "safe" issue far from home, SWP/NSCAR hopes to win back the support of fickle liberals who want to duck the crucial fight for school integration.

Liberal Fallout

But in chasing the will o' the wisp of liberal popularity, the reformists must carefully tailor their propaganda to exclude a proletarian revolutionary perspective for the struggle against apartheid. Their aim is to attract endorsements from black Democrats such as Congressman Ron Dellums (one of the sponsors of the "March 26

Mashinini and Seatlholo to order in a February 26 NSCAR meeting in New York. SWP'er Vince Eagan remarked peremptorily: "While they have differences over some questions with the ANC and PAC, these have nothing to do with the U.S. tours" (*Militant*, 11 March). Things had apparently gone too far, however, and at a meeting this week at Harvard to build support for the Saturday demonstration a spokesman for the CP youth group, the Young Workers Liberation League, announced that all supporters of the ANC were pulling out of the March 26 Coalition.

Appealing to the Imperialist "Conscience"

Parroting the liberals, Stalinists and nationalists, with whom they hoped to "unite" before their March 26 Coalition blew apart, NSCAR puts forward the moralistic position of boycotting everything South African. This boils down to the assertion that the most effective action that U.S. workers and students can take to aid anti-apartheid struggles

"Trotskyism" Added to Sins of "Gang of Four"

Pro-Peking Spokesman Repudiates Cultural Revolution

The Chiang Ching group was generally regarded, with good reason, as the most fervent and loyal supporters of Mao Tse-tung within the Chinese leadership. Thus the violent purge of the "gang of four" as "bourgeois counter-revolutionaries" immediately after the Great Helmsman's death was received by the world Maoist movement with shock, dismay, dissent and outright opposition. In West Europe "critical Maoist" groups such as the West German Kommunistischer Bund, the Swedish Förbundet Kommunist and the French Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs have declared that the purge of Chiang Ching signaled the victory of "capitalist roadism." In the U.S. the philistine-workerist Revolutionary Communist Party has been

Revolution as seventy percent success and thirty percent failure..." Were Mao's severe criticisms of the Cultural Revolution made known to the Chinese people before now? No, because (you guessed it):

"China's newspapers have never mentioned the faults of the Cultural Revolution. I think that this is because the 'gang of four' controlled the mass media, and that the major mistakes of the Cultural Revolution were linked in some ways to their damaging interference."

And the 30 percent of the Cultural Revolution that Mao didn't like? "Armed conflicts and the attacks on and mistreatment of a large number of cadres, which violated the Party's longstanding policy." Not only does Hsin condemn violence against the veteran party cadres, but he opposes the removal of most of them from authority:

"The Sixteen-Point Decision concerning the Cultural Revolution also stated that it is necessary to achieve the unity of more than 95 percent of the cadres. The majority of the cadres who carried out Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line did it unconsciously. They were merely following orders from their superiors."

Hsin would have limited the Cultural Revolution to the ouster of Liu followed by "sincere self-criticism" by the party and state apparachiks.

Hsin's revisionist views should greatly upset the many Western Maoists who were won to the cause precisely because of the Cultural Revolution. It was not the palace coup against Liu in July-August 1966, but the subsequent mobilization of student youth (the Red Guards) against the party/government establishment that was seen by Western radicals as the very essence of the Cultural Revolution, as proof that it was an "anti-bureaucratic, revolutionary" campaign. It was the appearance of the overthrow of the governing apparatus from below that distinguished the Cultural Revolution from a typical Stalinist bureaucratic purge or previous Maoist "rectification" campaigns. It was the sight of Red Guards dragging the foreign minister through Peking in a dunce cap which caused New Left radicals in the West to view the Chinese Maoists as their political kith and kin.

In arguing that the Chiang Ching group violated Mao's policy by attacking more than five percent of the cadre, Hsin cites the 8 August 1966 Decision of the CPC Central Committee which officially launched the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." As everyone in China knows, this document was not the last word in Cultural Revolution policy. An authoritative editorial in the 22 January 1967 issue of *People's Daily* puts forth a rather different line:

"Right from the beginning, the great proletarian cultural revolution has been a struggle for the seizure of power. This great cultural revolution means precisely the arousing of millions of people to liberate themselves and to seize power from the handful of people within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road... 'Power of every sort controlled by the representatives of the bourgeoisie must be seized!'"

— *Peking Review*,
27 January 1967

In reality, power was not seized by the revolutionary masses nor even by Chiang Ching's Red Guards. It was



Hua Kuo-feng

Atkins/Contact

seized by Lin Piao's People's Liberation Army officer corps, who in 1968 dispersed the credulous Red Guards by force and violence. The Cultural Revolution shifted power, for a time, from one grouping within the Chinese bureaucracy to another.

Even more important for Hsin than revising the Cultural Revolution is proving that Mao opposed the "gang of four," although everyone in the world (including all Maoists) believed otherwise. Hsin claims that the "gang" tricked Mao and only fully revealed their counterrevolutionary nature after he died. However, so as not to make the Great Helmsman seem too gullible, Hsin asserts:

"Since the beginning of the year [1976], as Mao's health was deteriorating, he had decided to deal with them. But his advanced age made it impossible for him to do it directly; he had to rely on Hua Kuo-feng and others to deal with the problem."

This supposedly authoritative pamphlet provides not a single documented quote that Mao opposed the Chiang Ching clique or even seriously criticized it. Rather Hsin cites the ever-convenient wall posters for Mao's anti-"gang" remarks. And these statements have the character of palace gossip, such as one might pick up from a chauffeur or maid in the Forbidden City.

However, even if a veritable document by Mao seriously criticizing Chiang Ching were available, this would be irrelevant. Mao played a *bonapartist* role within the Chinese bureaucracy, maneuvering between its various cliques and power blocs. He simultaneously encouraged and supported the Chiang Ching clique and criticized and opposed it as the occasion warranted. But there is one thing which no pro-Peking propagandist can deny. Mao was far more hostile to Teng Hsiao-ping, whose

return to power is imminent, than he ever was to Chiang Ching.

Rehabilitating Teng

The New Left, "critical Maoist" *Guardian*, true to its political spinelessness, has come out both for supporting Hua's purge of the "gang" and for offering an olive branch to those who are still soft on Chiang Ching. It views the purge as a "legitimate struggle against left dogmatism" but denies that the Chiang Ching group were "capitalist-roadsters," much less "bourgeois counterrevolutionaries."

To show its fair-mindedness toward the present rulers of the Heavenly Palace, the *Guardian* has opened its pages to a series of articles by Pat and Roger Howard, two Canadians now working at the Guangdong Institute of Foreign Languages in Canton, who unsurprisingly present the views of the new Hua regime. The Howards' articles are more effective than official Peking propaganda because they avoid the scholastic nonsense of Mao Thought.

Rather they focus on the real crimes of the Chiang Ching clique, particularly inhuman brutality toward heroic veteran party cadre like the guerrilla chief Ho Lung. Thus the Howards evoke sympathy for the victims of the "gang." Having demonstrated that the Chiang Ching clique committed violence against innocent persons and disrupted the economy, the Howards evidently believe they have proved their case. As orthodox Mao-Stalinists they cannot



Wall poster denouncing the "Gang of Four."

moving toward an open break with Peking and is probably waiting only for the official restoration of Teng Hsiao-ping to make it formal.

While the attitudes of "fraternal Marxist-Leninist" parties have absolutely no influence in Peking politics, the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy finds it useful (if sometimes embarrassing) to have loyal, active supporters in the capitalist world. Therefore Peking is expending a certain propaganda effort to convince doubters and critics among its erstwhile supporters that the Chiang Ching group got what it deserved.

Repudiating the Cultural Revolution

The most significant defense of the Hua regime published in the U.S. is a pamphlet, "The Rise and Fall of the 'Gang of Four,'" put out by Books New China. This pamphlet is a translation of an article by one Hsin Chi in the December 1976 issue of *The Seventies*, a Chinese-language Hong Kong magazine which serves as an unofficial organ for the Peking regime.

Since the Chiang Ching group came to power through the Cultural Revolution and since many of their now victorious enemies were the victims of that period, Hsin is impelled to in effect repudiate the Cultural Revolution—or, at least, its "revolutionary" aspects. Hsin informs us that "Mao Tse-tung viewed the results of the Cultural

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Red Guard demonstration in 1967 during Cultural Revolution.

comprehend the difference between bureaucratic criminals in a deformed workers state and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries.

However, the Howards' purpose is not so much to attack the Chiang Ching group as to justify the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping. In this purpose, they show real understanding of their audience. The return to power of Teng, far more so than even the purge of Chiang Ching, will be viewed by Western radicals as the overthrow of Maoism in China. Many Maoists who could accept the Cultural Revolution activist Hua Kuo-feng cannot stomach Teng Hsiao-ping—twice purged as a "capitalist-roader"—as the most powerful political figure in People's China.

The Howards begin by arguing that Teng was a right deviationist but not a

"capitalist-roader":

"...we began to collect and translate quoted statements of his that appeared in the press. We planned to use this material to write an article explaining the movement to criticize Teng Hsiao-ping. However, after several weeks, we gave up the project. Why? Because we found the evidence—hundreds of quotes taken out of context—too flimsy and unconvincing."

—Guardian, 9 March

The Howards, needless to say, cite wall posters indicating that Mao shared their views on Teng:

"Since the arrests of the four it has been revealed in the wall posters that Chairman Mao had stated clearly that in his estimation the contradiction with Teng Hsiao-ping was one among the people."

And here is the kicker:

"Will it be an indication that Teng's deviationist line has become predominant in the central committee if he is



Mao and Chiang Ching in Yenan Province in 1947.

Chiang Ching

rehabilitated? Certainly not, if—and only if—he makes sincere and thorough going self-criticism of his mistakes.... If Teng Hsiao-ping is able to analyze for us the nature and source of his errors, he will be able to make a considerable contribution to the revolutionary process in China."

It is typical of Stalinist sycophants like the Howards that they are always prepared to vilify those they praised yesterday and praise those they vilified yesterday. For that reason, as revolutionary human material the Howards and those like them are worthless.

The Spectre of Trotskyism

Among the endless attacks on the "gang of four" coming out of China is a front-page article in the Peking daily *Jenmin Ji Pao* (28 January) by one Chung Lien likening the Chiang Ching group to the Trotskyists. The Peking-loyal October League, ever desirous to smear its rivals, like the Revolutionary Communist Party, with accusations of apostasy, reprinted excerpts in the 21 February issue of the *Call*.

The *Jenmin Ji Pao* article is expectedly on the intellectual level of the 1930's Moscow show trials. It contains nothing but gross, obvious falsifications and imbecilic self-contradictions. No serious Maoist group in the West would dare write such a stupid and brazenly dishonest anti-Trotskyist polemic. If they did, it could only discredit them among any questioning members and contacts who had access to Trotsky's writings. This atrocious article could only be written in a country where Trotskyist literature is inaccessible.

The article tries to equate the "gang's" economic policies with those of the Left Opposition during the late 1920's, which it totally distorts:

"The Soviet Union, then in a period of economic rehabilitation, achieved marked successes in developing industry and agriculture and improving the livelihood of the workers and peasants even though there were still some problems. The Trotskyites, however, issued an anti-party declaration in which they prophesied an inevitable, grave economic crisis and the fall of Soviet power. They did not make a single definite proposal for the improvement of industry and agriculture or for the betterment of the conditions of the working people."

The article tries to associate Trotskyism with the Chiang Ching clique's advocacy of austerity and supposed disinterest in improving the economy.

However, the 1927 "Platform of the Joint Opposition" is replete with definite proposals to improve agriculture and industry and raise the living standards of the workers and peasants. For example, it called for the removal of all taxes from the poorest 40-50 percent of peasant families, no tax increase for middle peasants, and higher taxes on and forced loans from the wealthiest farmers (kulaks). In industry, the "Platform" called for a higher rate of investment, the extension of workers control and increased wages in line with higher productivity. These economic policies were set in the framework of the fundamental demand for the restoration of soviet democracy.

The economic crisis which the Trotskyist opposition predicted did, in fact, occur. Between 1927 and 1929 the state procurement of agricultural produce fell from 10.6 to 9.5 million tons. In response Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture led to the murder and starvation of millions of peasants. The forced-draft industrialization led to a severe fall in the workers' living standard, which did not return to the 1929 level until the early 1950's!

Chung's attempts to liken Trotskyism to the Chiang Ching clique are so self-contradictory that a five-year-old child could see through them. It is well-known, admitted even by Stalinists, that Trotsky denied the possibility of socialism (the first stage of communist society) in one country; the Chiang Ching clique, however, allegedly "wanted to realize communism overnight."

continued on page 8

Sentenced to Life Imprisonment

All-White Jury Convicts Assata Shakur

After a six-week trial in which a vendetta-minded prosecution accused her of "executing" a state trooper, former Black Panther Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard) was found guilty March 26 by an all-white jury in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on two charges of murder and six counts of assault. She was immediately sentenced to life imprisonment and joins her comrade Sundata Acoli (Clark Squires), one of the Panther 21 who was convicted earlier in this same 1973 turnpike shootout case and is now doing life plus 24-30 years in a Trenton maximum security prison.

The state of New Jersey has held Shakur prisoner for the past four years, while trying time and again to pin a frame-up conviction. Now it has finally succeeded in pushing through a racist railroad job on the woman it labeled the "soul of the Black Liberation Army."

The jury's "guilty" verdict confirmed the sharp rightward shift in the U.S. social climate, graphically demonstrated in the recent acquittals by all-white juries of two New York City cops who, in separate cases, shot down point-blank and killed unarmed black youths. The Shakur conviction also falls on the heels of the second murder frame-up of Rubin Carter and John Artis, in the face of sworn admissions by the state's "witnesses" that they had lied on the stand; and the outrageous conviction of Wendy Yoshimura, despite the lack of even a shred of evidence, on trumped-up charges of possession of explosives.

In Shakur's case, this black militant was manifestly denied even a semblance of a "jury of her peers," and the hanging judge denied a defense motion for a change of trial site. Yet a National Jury Project survey showed that due to the atmosphere of racist hysteria drummed up by sensationalist news accounts at the time of her arrest, 70 to 80 percent of the Middlesex County, New Jersey, population was convinced of Shakur's guilt.

As to the "execution" charge, the defense pointed out that the state troopers had flagged down the car in which former Panthers Shakur, Acoli and Zayd Malik Shakur (James Costan) were riding, then started blazing away with their guns. Zayd Shakur was murdered by the cops and a trooper killed in the crossfire, with a bullet from a police revolver. In a classic example of American-style capitalist justice, the two black militants who survived the attack were then charged with and convicted of the murder of the cop and of their own comrade!

Assata Shakur was so badly wounded herself that she nearly died, yet the cops were, of course, charged with nothing. And the defense presented medical evidence showing that Shakur's wounds were received while she was sitting the back seat of the car with her hands over her head.

At the beginning of the trial, Lenox Hinds, national director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, said he

continued on page 11

Derg...

(continued from page 4)

and kept its options open with the secessionist Eritrean forces.

Eritrean Nationalists Used as Diplomatic Football

The ups and downs in Russian and Chinese aid to the Eritrean independence fighters are a damning indictment of the opportunist foreign policies of these bureaucratic, anti-working-class regimes—and an expose of the impotence of petty-bourgeois nationalists who can only exist on handouts from one or another reactionary patron.

The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) began its struggle in 1961, the more leftist Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (EPLF) emerging in 1970. In the late 1960's the rebels received aid from China. This, however, was discontinued after December 1970 when Peking established friendly relations with Addis Ababa. Thereupon the USSR took up the slack by furnishing arms via South Yemen just across the straits. An article in the French Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité*, (translated in the CPUSA's *Daily World*, 22 March 1975) boasted that "the Eritrean liberation struggle received important aid in the past 13 years from some progressive [i.e., temporarily pro-Soviet] Arab and African countries...."

"After Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed," the article went on, "it might have been thought that the situation was ripe for change." The Kremlin was, as always, eager to curry favor with a left-talking nationalist regime, so "this aid [to the Eritrean independence fighters] was abruptly cut off the moment the Ethiopian military...proclaimed themselves in favor of a socialist path of development."

But for the ELF/EPLF the battle continued, now directed against the "socialist" army of Andom/Tafari/Mengistu that continued to assert the imperial claims of the Amharic dynasty. Consequently the Eritreans were forced to turn to Libya and Saudi Arabia for aid; and, not surprisingly, while the "Marxist-Leninist" EPLF had been in the ascendancy during the period of Moscow aid, now it was eclipsed by the Muslim traditionalist ELF.

L'Humanité concluded: "While these contradictory elements cannot cast doubt on the right of the Eritreans to independence, at the same time they do raise the question: in regard to Eritrea, are we confronted with a 'Bangladesh' which is turning into a 'Biafra'?" Behind the elliptical analogies the Stalinist logic is clear. The Bangladesh secession from Pakistan was "progressive" because the Pakistani government was pro-Chinese and the Indian government (the new overlords of "independent" Bangladesh) was pro-Soviet. However, the 1967 struggle of the Ibo people of Biafra

against a genocidal war of extermination by Nigeria was "reactionary" because the federal Nigerian regime was on good terms with Moscow.

The forlorn Eritrean nationalists made a last appeal to Moscow's hollow internationalist pretensions at the February 1976 Soviet party congress, where the ELF delegation's memorandum praised the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the "socialist bloc" for having "always stood beside the right of all peoples to self-determination." Then it begged plaintively, "We hope that this principled stand will be extended to include our Eritrean people" (*Eritrean Revolution*, January-April 1976). But the Kremlin resolved its "principled stand" in favor of the Derg.

This is to be expected from nationalist bureaucracies which are guided not by the Leninist principle of support to the right of self-determination but solely by passing diplomatic considerations. Moscow decides whether to turn on or off the aid spigot according to the foreign policy options of the oppressor state. This is hardly surprising coming from the USSR, which in pursuit of cabinet posts for the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in the post-World War II Rome government, supported Italian control over Eritrea, only changing its position when the PCI was excluded from the cabinet after the 1948 elections!

As for the "anti-imperialist" Eritrean nationalists, they too are singing a different tune these days. A year ago the ELF attacked "the immorality and falsehood of the American campaign against Cuba's 'intervention' in Angola and the defamation of Cuban internationalist assistance to the Angolan Revolution." But now the same group claims that Cuba has agreed to supply troops to put down the Eritrean rebellion, and appealed to Jimmy Carter, "a true man of principles, to help head off an external intervention" (*New York Times*, 8 March).

Red Sea an "Arab Lake"?

The current Soviet stand on Ethiopia was faithfully interpreted in an article by Tom Foley in the 8 January 1977 *Daily World*. Without once mentioning Eritrea's right of self-determination, he comments: "Ethiopia's one outlet to the sea is Eritrea province, which has a long Red Sea coastline. Without Eritrea, Ethiopia would be a landlocked state and its revolutionary developments would be much less influential in Africa and the Middle East."

Foley trumpets the USSR's recent diplomatic success in the region, noting: "So the imperialists are faced with a potential Ethiopia-Somalia-South Yemen bloc of revolutionary states which, acting together, could have a decisive influence on East Africa, North Africa and the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula." The imperialists are also concerned with this possibility, however, and thus the U.S. has recently strengthened its ties to the Numeiry regime in the neighboring Sudan. The Khartoum government is simultaneously aiding the ELF/EPLF in Eritrea and providing a refuge for another anti-Derg guerrilla force, the Ethiopian Democratic Union, made up of dispossessed feudalists of the old regime.

Last month the Sudanese regime signed a joint treaty with Egypt and Syria affirming their determination to maintain Arab dominance over the Red Sea. While partly directed against Israeli demands for "international" (imperialist) control of the straits of Bab el-Mandab, this is also a threat to (predominantly Christian, non-Arab) Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, at least, took the treaty seriously enough to issue a warning that it would resist all efforts to "make the Red Sea an Arab lake."

The U.S. is evidently hipping to break the Muslim states of Somalia and South Yemen (formerly Aden) away from the USSR through offers of extensive aid and credits. The *New York Times* (15 March) reports that appeals to Somalia

by Arah states "include urging that Soviet technicians and military advisers be expelled as they were by Egypt." It sees some hope for success, since "the oil producing Arah led by the Saudis and Kuwaitis have recently made heavy investments in Southern Yemen, which while still the only pro-Soviet country on the Arab peninsula has suddenly and sharply softened its antagonism to its anti-Soviet neighbors."

The issue will come to a head when Ethiopia's only other outlet to the sea, the French-controlled port of Djibouti and its surrounding hinterland (a vest-pocket colony called the Territory of the Afars and Issas) become independent in June. The territory has a sizable Somali population and an active nationalist movement advocating unification with Somalia. Should this happen, an Ethiopia cut off from the sea by a pro-Soviet Somalia could quickly flipflop back into Washington's lap. Or, should Somalia prove attentive to the siren song of the Saudi/Kuwaiti oil sheiks, a pro-Soviet Ethiopia could suddenly find itself surrounded by pro-American Somalia, South Yemen and Yemen and with Arab-financed Eritrean rebels increasingly effective against a demoralized Ethiopian army.

Clearly, Mengistu hoped that Castro's visit to both Ethiopian and Somali capitals could help to avert this dangerous predicament and restrain elements in the Somali regime who want to exploit the (for them) presently favorable situation to "unify all the Somalis." But whatever the outcome, it is clear that the "revolutionary alliance" hailed by Foley is anything but stable and could easily go the way of Egypt, where a decade of painstaking Soviet diplomacy and several billion rubles of aid and sophisticated weaponry were unceremoniously dumped by Sadat in 1971.

The blind followers of Moscow and Peking have shown their true reactionary colors in the cynical maneuvering over the Horn of Africa. The Ethiopian EPRP, however, is now left without any hope of an international mentor. Previously seeking to remain available to either Moscow or Peking, its terminology was Guevarist/Castroist. But now Castro himself is playing a key role in the Kremlin's intricate wheeling and dealing between the strutting bonapartes in Ethiopia (where they are shooting down anyone who claims to be a communist) and Somalia (where local leftists have been kept in jail for years).

Pro-Moscow papers are now extolling the "revolutionary" measures of the "new" Derg, such as "arming the workers." What this really amounts to is to prepare a massive bloodletting of leftist students and workers. Already at the beginning of March the press reported that more than 200 presumed EPRP supporters had disappeared or been shot in the wake of Mengistu's coup. The Stalinists who hail every Soviet- or Chinese-hacked "progressive" dictator, the New Lefters who cheer Cuba's "revolutionary foreign policy" of backing "anti-imperialist" despots in Africa are apologists for this bloodbath.

As we have already written in the past, a Trotskyist party in Ethiopia would doubtless recruit many dedicated militants from the EPRP. "But to come over to the position of permanent revolution they would have to break sharply with all forms of Stalinism; rather than seeing their struggle within narrow national limits of one of the most economically backward countries of the world, they would have to fight to build a world party of socialist revolution, a reformed Fourth International." ■

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(continued from page 5)

fighting for these policies and for their implementation has been played by class-struggle oppositionists within the unions.

The mass struggles against apartheid and imperialism in southern Africa demand the solidarity of all revolutionaries. Militant protests must demand the immediate release of all anti-apartheid prisoners in Vorster's jails. But the present protest movement underlines the grievous need for revolutionary leadership. The liberal-Stalinist ANC joins gold magnate Harry Oppenheimer and the white opposition United Party in calling for a white coalition government which would convene a national convention to draw up a new "multi-racial" constitution (i.e., not universal suffrage). Militant youth of the "black consciousness movement" have rejected this plan for "reforming" white supremacy, but could counterpose nothing but the idealization of spontaneous revolts, blithely ignoring the fact that the anti-apartheid fighters are qualitatively weaker militarily than Vorster's police and army.

Tailoring its program to match that of the liberals (troops to Boston, black majority rule and moralistic boycotts), SWP/NSCAR has nothing to offer but protest marches, rotten-bloc coalitions (which occasionally even fall apart before their joint actions) and ducking issues (such as busing) which have evoked a hard-line "backlash" and would therefore be unpopular with its sought-for wishy-washy liberal allies. These reformists are a roadblock in the struggle against racial oppression, from Boston to South Africa. Join the SL SYL! ■

Cultural Revolution...

(continued from page 7)

And this is why the Chiang Ching group are like the Trotskyists!

Why do Peking propagandists bother to drag Trotskyism into their attacks on the "gang of four" at all? The threat of Trotskyism would appear to be very remote from the present concerns of the Chinese bureaucracy. In Russia, Stalin defeated and suppressed the Left Opposition 50 years ago. Trotsky himself was assassinated on Stalin's orders in 1940. No group espousing Trotskyism exists in China. What the Chinese people know about Trotskyism comes entirely from the regime's own lying and slanderous propaganda.

The core of the Trotskyist program is proletarian political revolution against the privileged, oppressive and nationalist bureaucracies ruling in the Soviet bloc and China. The Stalinist regimes, however much they lie and distort, comprehend that Trotskyism stands for internal communist revolution against them. The Chinese bureaucracy under Mao and Chou, and under Hua and Teng, knows full well it is removed from the Chinese masses whom it governs, in the last analysis, through military terror. The bureaucrats sense the profound discontent within the toiling masses who strive for a social order which is just, egalitarian and democratic and opens the path toward world socialism. The rulers in the Heavenly Palace fear revolution from below, and know that their bureaucratic opponents do also; that is why they raise the spectre of Trotskyism. ■

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Vengeance and Proletarian Justice

Rahway, N.J.
January 18, 1977

Dear comrades:

This letter is in response to your reply to David Herreshoff's meandering and inchoate criticism of your stand on prison and capital punishment. First of all let me unequivocally state that I agree with the Marxist aim of a classless society—which will necessarily be stateless and prison-free.

The sense I get from your reply to Herreshoff is that the Spartacist League is against capital punishment *in principle*. In the first paragraph of your response you write "Neither Herreshoff nor Marx nor the Bolsheviks nor the Spartacist League advocates forced labor prisons or punishment."

The SL has in the past called for the extradition of Nixon to Vietnam to stand trial for war crimes against the Vietnamese. I enthusiastically support this demand. But it must be more than obvious that if Nixon were tried in a court of law by his Vietnamese victims he would be found guilty and given capital punishment. The SL has also called for the extradition of "ex"-Nazis Artuković, Trifa, and Menten to Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Poland respectively to stand trial for their war crimes. Surely it must be just as obvious that if this were done they too would be given the death penalty in payment of their crimes. I also support their extradition and subsequent fates.

How then can you say that the working-class can never be motivated by revenge against its most despicable enemies? What would the trials of the above four be if not revenge, which in my opinion is most justified?

Another case you might consider is that of Roman Malinovsky. Malinovsky was a Tsarist police spy and agent-provocateur. He was also a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party, as well as the Bolshevik floor-leader in the Tsar's Duma (to further pile irony upon irony!). In his capacity as police spy he was responsible for the execution and exile of dozens of Bolsheviks. Around World War I he grew tired of his role and retired to Paris. I believe, to live high off the hog on his ill-gotten money. After the Bolshevik Revolution he evidently had some change of heart, brought on no doubt by the Bolsheviks' opening of the Tsarist secret police files which exposed his role. He wrote to Lenin asking for permission to return to Russia to make amends. He was told he could return. Upon arrival he was arrested, tried and rightfully executed! If this wasn't Bolshevik revenge upon this spy-murderer I don't know what is!

Would not a victorious socialist revolution in the U.S. mete out ultimate justice to (among many many others) cops who cold-bloodedly kill ten year old black kids under the pretext that the latter were toting pistols, rifles, grenades or whatever occurs to the Vyshinsky-like minds of police/dept. heads? What about those who ordered the atom-bombing of Nagasaki or Hiroshima, or the napalming of Vietnam? Would these escape justice? I find this a bit hard to accept.

In short all these examples (and *WV* readers could easily add to the list)—Nixon, Nazis, killer-cops, police-spies, etc., etc. *ad nauseum*—are cases where proletarian justice is but organized revenge (justified). If you oppose the death penalty on principle you must oppose on principle the extradition of Nixon, Artuković, Trifa, Menten, et.

al., because in their cases extradition means death.

Comradely,
A.G.

WV replies: Comrade A.G. raises decent and valid concerns, but he seems to fear that Marxist opposition to capital punishment renders us helpless to defend ourselves against murderous reaction after the victorious proletarian revolution. Saying we oppose the death penalty "in principle," he ascribes to us the views of pacifists: "thou shalt not kill." In contrast to religious hypocrites, this is not a commandment for revolutionaries.

On the contrary, self defense is a cardinal commandment of the workers movement. It is the first responsibility of the dictatorship of the proletariat to take those measures necessary to consolidate workers rule against counterrevolutionaries. But A.G. confuses these extraordinary measures with the functions of a judicial code. The executions ordered by revolutionary tribunals are *not* capital punishment. Our first article on the death penalty ("Abolish the Death Penalty!" *WV* No. 117, 9 July 1976) explained this relationship:

"The Bolsheviks carried out revolutionary terror in defense of their new state. For this task not only the Red Army but the Cheka (Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counterrevolution and Sabotage) was required. The war against counterrevolution was understood as a temporary episode which would need temporary and drastic measures. But the penal code was a more permanent feature of the proletarian state. The Cheka was set up as a temporary instrument reflecting the necessity to consolidate and defend soviet power against bourgeois restoration and imperialist invasion. The penal code embodied the Bolsheviks' expectations that the securing of soviet power and the extension of the revolution internationally would open up a period of social reconstruction on the path to the gradual 'withering away of the state'."

At bottom the confusion is over the Marxist understanding of the state. But A.G. is also off base in his view that the death penalty would be the "ultimate justice" of a "victorious socialist revolution in the U.S." In his laudable revolutionary fervor, the writer wants to extend capital punishment to include not only Nazi war criminals but also presidents, cops, the planners of napalming, those who ordered the atom bombing of Nagasaki and so forth. But what about the entire personnel of the CIA, bank presidents and reactionary bourgeois politicians? Are they to avoid A.G.'s "ultimate justice"?

The socialist revolution is not an act of blood vengeance; our purpose is not to physically annihilate the capitalist class but to economically expropriate it, and our "ultimate justice" is to create a classless society. One of the key tasks of Marxists is to take the workers' entirely legitimate desire to avenge their oppression and lead it to embrace a *social* solution rather than mere vengeance against individuals. To focus on the individuals is to embrace atomistic responses ranging from settling of personal scores (such as Detroit auto workers who vent their rage over working conditions by killing foremen) to the anarchists who mistake the individuals who are the instruments of class rule for that rule itself.

To take the cry for individual vengeance against exploiters and oppressors to an extreme conclusion, we can consider the case of notorious anti-union press baron William Randolph

Hearst II. During the uproar over the kill-crazy "Symbionese Liberation Army" there were many petty-bourgeois leftists who justified the kidnapping of Patty Hearst on the basis of genealogical culpability: "The Hearst kid is a ruling-class pig." (Ironically, when she was miraculously transformed into "Tania the urban guerrilla," this strange logic went on to justify her terror against store clerks and the like.)

The Spartacist League, in contrast, pointed out that "Patty/Tania" bore no inherited individual guilt for the crimes of capitalism. (The case of a feudalist monarchy is different, as Trotsky pointed out with regard to the Romanovs; if the tsar's children survived they could serve as rallying points for support to the dynasty.) We insisted that the SLA was a lumpen violence cult bent on seeking personal revenge against individuals on their "hit list" who were neither representatives nor symbols of capitalism. The SLA was a weird mixture of Mansonite sex and murder plus leftist rhetoric, and its wanton violence was wholly indefensible by Marxists.

Just as we do not advocate the killing off of the bourgeoisie and their offspring, proletarian communists must fight to the end against the nationalist logic of genocide, even when it is directed against an oppressor people. To call for the annihilation of the Hebrew people of Israel or white Afrikaners of South Africa is at best a simple-minded, obstructive substitute for the struggle to emancipate Palestinian refugees or South African black workers from exploitation and national oppression; if it proved feasible to accomplish, it would be a proposal to replace one racist crime by another, ultimately an irremediable one. By such "logic," the genocide of European Jews by Nazi generals, if only it had been complete enough, would have been the "progressive" defense of Palestinian Arabs! Meanwhile, such rhetoric gives the present-day Zionist oppressors and willful destroyers of a people *their* smokescreen to continue their real role in the here and now.

A.G. believes he has caught us in a contradictory position when he demands to know how we can simultaneously oppose the death penalty and call for the extradition/prosecution of Nazi war criminals. In these cases, our purpose is to expose the bourgeoisie's hypocrisy and make concrete the demand for justice. This point is brought out vividly when considering the demand to extradite Nixon to Hanoi. Unlike the liberals who thought that the interests of justice would be amply fulfilled if Nixon "got his" for his Watergate crimes against bourgeois law, the Marxists demanded the imperialist chieftain be called to account for his monumental crime against the working masses. Unfortunately, although in disgrace, Nixon is a former chief of the world's strongest imperialist power, who is not about to be turned over to the Vietnamese by Jimmy Carter in order to prove his commitment to "human rights." Clearly our task as communists is to build the movement which can smash imperialism and thus bring war criminals such as Nixon to justice, not to dream up some kind of utopian international proletarian prisoner transport system.

Our readers will recall that at the end of the Vietnam war, when the U.S. imperialists were evacuating their pup-

pets from Saigon, we demanded:

"Justice would demand that the defolators would be brought before the hungry, that the napalmers be confronted by the burned and maimed, that the terror bombers be judged by the survivors of their mass savagery, and that the architects of 'tiger cages' now come face to face with the 'tigers'."

—*WV* No. 68, 9 May 1975

We hope it is clear even to the most literal-minded that this is neither a call for the reintroduction of the Roman arena, nor an advocacy of cannibalism.

A.G. rhetorically asks if the working class "can never be motivated by revenge" and cites the case of the police spy and provocateur Malinovsky who was executed after a trial by a Bolshevik revolutionary tribunal. Certainly that death sentence against a man responsible for the murder of hundreds of Bolshevik party members was a just and necessary act. There are quite a few sadistic torturers, war criminals and the like who richly deserve to die at the hands of the surviving victims, and the dictatorship of the proletariat will not establish an ex-post facto limitation on culpability for these crimes.

Moreover, it is crucial to understand that a revolution is an act of tremendous passion. The U.S. bourgeois press raised a hue and cry over Castro's "drumhead trials" of Batista hangmen in May 1959, but had summary justice not been meted out to these butchers, the masses would have erupted in an orgy of bloodletting.

It is vital that such *exceptional measures* taken in the course of consolidating a proletarian regime be as much as possible carried out in an orderly way and limited in scope so that the legitimate desire for revenge does not degenerate into an orgy of bloodletting. The Marxists must constantly struggle to make clear that the task is smashing the economic system of capitalist exploitation, not the physical liquidation of individuals.

Marx repeatedly stressed that the question of law and punishment were but reflections of the question of the state:

"...it would be very difficult, if not altogether impossible, to establish any principle upon which the justice or expediency of capital punishment could be founded in a society glorying in its civilization. Punishment in general has been defended as a means either of ameliorating or of intimidating. Now what right have you to punish me for the amelioration or intimidation of others? And besides, there is history—there is such a thing as statistics—which prove with the most complete evidence that since Cain the world has been neither intimidated nor ameliorated by punishment."

"Plainly speaking, and dispensing with all paraphrases, punishment is nothing but a means of society to defend itself against the infraction of its vital conditions, whatever may be their character. Now what a state of society is that which knows of no better instrument for its own defense than the hangman, and which proclaims...its own brutality as eternal law?"

"On Capital Punishment,"
February 1853

When the Russians reintroduced the death penalty in 1922 as part of its civil code, it was a sign of the new state's weakness and not its development. It is through the internationalization of the proletarian revolution and the elimination of scarcity that mankind will proceed toward socialism, not through ever more thorough elimination of class enemies. A penal code based on vengeance and death is not the instrument of a revolutionary workers state in the process of withering away on the path to communist society. ■

Gandhi...

(continued from page 1)

ple—herself and the despised Sanjay. The myriad of regional, state and local bosses, caste, language, religious and ethnic satraps which once made up the kaleidoscopic Congress has now been reshuffled in Janata.

While the old Congress warhorses parade before the grave of the "Mahatma," pledging to rededicate themselves to Gandhian ideals of asceticism, the imperialist press is wildly praising the return of Indian "democracy." Yet under Janata as under Congress, India

together as threats to social stability. But the broad scope of the political repression and particularly the bloody excesses of the sterilization program (see "Murderous Sterilization Campaign in India," *Women and Revolution* No. 14, Spring 1977) drove even bulwarks of Congress support such as the Muslim and "untouchable" communities into the arms of the opposition. These specially oppressed groups (together composing about a quarter of the population) saw the government's population control policies as particularly directed at them.

The regime's fate was essentially sealed last month when Jagjivan Ram, leader of the "untouchables" and a

never before attempted by even the most despotic regimes, stood out in the catalog of grievances.

Moreover, Congress was faced for the first time with a united opposition bloc. This fact alone drastically reshaped the elections. Over 400 constituency races were essentially straight contests between Congress and Janata or one of its allied parties, preventing Congress from gaining plurality victories against its normally divided opponents.

Illusory "Democracy"

The American bourgeoisie jubilantly hailed the outcome because Desai's announced foreign policy of "proper

expenditures for building up the police force doubled in five years and state after state saw its elected administration dissolved and replaced by "presidential rule," few bourgeois "champions of democracy" called Gandhi a "dictator" or "empress."

But jubilation over the election will prove short-lived on all sides. The bourgeoisie will not get social peace and efficient, honest government. The masses will not get bread and freedom. Already fissures have appeared in post-election maneuvering for the prime minister's post: as a figure of equal prominence with Desai, Ram reacted to Desai's selection with a fit of pique. After the new prime minister publicly announced that Ram would have a seat in the cabinet, the CD leader sulked for two days before accepting the ministry of defense.

Ram Dahn, a general secretary of the Janata Party, resigned his post, protesting that the behind-the-scenes deal was conducted "in the dictatorial style of the Congress." George Fernandes, the railway workers' leader who had taken the reformist Socialist Party (SP) into Janata, also initially refused a proffered cabinet post, complaining that "an effort to create what is termed a consensus... amounts to foisting the point of view of a group." But having sold out the workers' struggles by allying with the communalist/ reactionary Jan Sangh and the conservative old Congress hordes, he was not going to turn up his nose at the spoils of victory. Fernandes soon changed his mind and entered the cabinet on the same day as Ram.

The squabbling over political booty and sharp political divergences will likely surface at every turn. On one point, however, there will be broad unity. This will unmistakably be a regime of "law and order," although it will no doubt be far more cautious than Gandhi in directly interfering with the bourgeoisie's exercise of its rights. While lifting the state of emergency, the government is retaining the Maintenance of Internal Security Act which codifies the latent police-state powers available to any prime minister. Nor will the new cabinet be unwilling to use those powers against the masses. As Bombay chief minister in 1956, Desai suppressed riots over the state language issue by issuing shoot-on-sight orders and drowning the conflict in blood. Significantly, the *New York Times* (28 March) describes the new federal home minister as "known for high integrity and insatiable quest for power."

Especially ominous is the presence of at least two Jan Sangh members in the



Left, Indira's son, Sanjay Gandhi; right, the new prime minister Morarji Desai.

will not be the "world's most populous democracy," but a dictatorship of a tiny stratum of zamindari (landlords), corrupt Oxford-educated bureaucrats and Mewari capitalists over a mass of 600 million impoverished peasants, workers and unemployed. For these downtrodden masses, Gandhian "democracy" is a cruel hoax.

Congress Hemorrhages

Indira Gandhi rode out the 1969 split with Desai and such Congress notables as Asoka Mehta, Chandra Bhan Gupta and P. C. Sen. A few cosmetic reforms and much populist demagoguery were sufficient to retain the financial backing of the bourgeoisie and the votes of the masses. In the 1971 general election, Gandhi successfully portrayed the leaders of the splinter Congress Party (Organization) as tools of the monopolists and foisted responsibility for all the government's failures on them. Her "New" Congress Party swept the elections with its "Abolish Poverty" sloganeering and captured two-thirds of the seats. But blatant corruption, steep inflation, mass famine and economic stagnation soon caused the so-called "Indira wave" to recede, provoking massive struggles in Gujarat and Bihar.

In our last article on India ("Indira Gandhi Nods to Right Wing," *WV* No. 141, 21 January), we noted that Gandhi's "steps toward unfettered police-state rule" represented "an attempt to find a stable footing for her increasingly bonapartist regime." The state of emergency was an attempt to gain a breathing space by suppressing both left- and right-wing opponents. The trade unionists, leftists, bourgeois politicians and journalists, black marketers, Hindu communalists, regional secessionists, etc., who swelled the prisons (150,000 jailed during the "emergency," and 30,000 still in prison at the time of the election) were lumped

member of every post-independence cabinet, resigned as minister of agriculture, taking a number of Congress kingpins into his newly formed CD. Ram's defection signaled the Indian bourgeoisie's unwillingness to further tolerate Gandhi's attempt to elevate herself and her brash upstart son above the old-boy network of regional, caste and class alliances on which Congress traditionally rested. The prime minister's hopes to gain post-facto legitimation for the draconian measures of the past period backfired, and the electoral tallies dramatically revealed the regime's isolation.

Desai, Ram, power broker/mystic Jaya Prakash Narayan and other veterans of the independence struggle took pains to portray themselves as the legitimate heirs of Indian bourgeois nationalism, especially the reactionary utopian elements associated with Mohandas Gandhi. Desai, in particular, is devoutly religious; abstains from alcohol, meat and (since 1928) sexual intercourse; espouses rural self-sufficiency, and spends time each day spinning "khadi" cloth in imitation of the "Mahatma." But such moral posturing hardly explains the spectacular success of the opposition.

Its victory was essentially negative. Votes for Janata (aptly described by Indira Gandhi as "a desperate, strange mixture of ideas and ideologies") were votes *against* the incumbent regime. That landless peasants and workers could vote for the local capitalists, landlords and usurers associated with Desai and despised former Congress Party bigwigs; that Muslims and "untouchables" could vote for the ultra-reactionary Hindu communalist Jan Sangh politicians running under the Janata umbrella, indicates the intense hatred engendered by Gandhi's regime. Virtual gunpoint sterilization of millions of urban and rural poor, a policy

non-alignment" means a shift away from alliance with the Soviet Union. Typically, it draped great power diplomatic considerations in the language of liberal moralism. Thus the *New York Times* (22 March) crowed: "An impoverished people rejected the siren song of authoritarians everywhere that bread must be bought at the price of freedom." But the real point is that Gandhi never delivered on her promise of "bread," by which her suppression of bourgeois-democratic rights had been justified to the masses. The transfer of governmental power represents a rever-



Jaya Prakash Narayan, left, with Jagjivan Ram.

Far Eastern Economic Review

sion not to some idyllic "democracy," but to a less assertive central power.

The Indian and Western bourgeois commentators now fulsomely celebrating the "return of democracy" did not raise a peep over the bonapartist powers invoked by Gandhi in her early attacks on leftists, militant workers and peasants: not a word of criticism at the round-up of thousands of "Naxalite" Maoists, imprisoned and tortured in West Bengal during 1969-71 and still imprisoned today; nor at the mass detention of 50,000 railway workers during their 1974 national strike. When

cabinet. Besides its agitation for state protection and nurture of sacred cows and for faster development of nuclear weapons, the Jan Sangh has made itself notorious by the participation of its organized gangs in attacks on "untouchables" and in murderous pogroms against Muslim areas. Pervasive social discrimination against these two groups has made them extremely volatile and hence likely targets for government repression. Ram and his associates, of course, stayed with Gandhi through 19 months of the "emergency," sharing responsibility for every egregious

breach of democratic rights.

With Indira and Sanjay Gandhi temporarily out of the way, the remaining elder leaders of the Congress Party will certainly seek to carve out a role in the jockeying for position which has already begun. Broad agreement on a pro-U.S. foreign policy, repudiation of the "emergency" measures, curtailment of the troublesome Congress Youth League and more decentralized government may well open the possibility for some form of reconciliation among the old-time Congress politicians, especially to the extent that Desai needs leverage against his partners in Janata. The state politicians, both Congress and non-

Congress, who were repeatedly undercut or kicked out by Gandhi's fiat, can be expected to be particularly assertive.

Stalinists Tail Congress, Janata

After the Congress Party, the big loser in the election was the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI). Despite the CPI's slavish support for Gandhi's police-state measures, the government began to lash out at the Stalinists late last year, censoring their press, arresting CPI members and dredging up the CPI's wretched pro-imperialist policies of the World War II popular-front period. Although the CPI

had proved episodically useful in providing a left face for the regime and cementing the alliance with the Soviet Union, it became distinctly expendable shortly before Gandhi called the elections, when she was making gestures of accommodation to the bourgeois opposition.

Despite this shabby treatment, the CPI did its best to cling to its chosen "progressive" bourgeois-nationalist leader. But when Ram's defection indicated which way the wind was blowing, the pro-Moscow Stalinists undertook an incredibly brazen fence-straddling maneuver. In Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where Congress was clearly going under, the CPI supported Ram's CD to get a foot in the opposition bloc. But in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu where Gandhi could still count on significant support, CPI loyalties never flagged. This wily maneuver exploded in its face on election day. Unwelcome by both sides, the Stalinists tallied a mere seven seats.

The independent Stalinist CPI-Marxist (CPI-M) tied its working-class supporters to the coattails of the bourgeois opposition. Unlike Fernandes' Socialists, however, the CPI-M saved some room to maneuver by not actually entering the Janata Party, but instead entering into no-contest blocs with it. Faring better than the CPI, it netted 22 seats. However, its post-election behavior—promising to support the Janata government in parliament—indicates it will follow the servile road it trod when participating in state coalition governments over the last decade in Bengal and Kerala.

The CPI-M along with the SP and the CPI will one day pay dearly for their treason to the workers' cause. Whether tailing Desai's coalition of venal old Congress bosses with dangerous Hindu communalists or apologizing for Gandhi's blood-stained tyranny, the reformist workers parties are criminally guilty of binding the working masses to an unbroken cycle of poverty and police repression.

Opportunities to wrench the workers and peasants from their misleaders will soon arise as the trade unions decide to test their new-found "freedom" by demanding the pay raises which they were denied throughout the "emergency." As the motley governmental coalition joins hands with the opposition Congress Party to crush any working-class upsurge, the masses will taste the bitter fruits of the class-collaborationist policies foisted on them by the reformists. An Indian Trotskyist party, armed with the program of permanent revolution, consistently defending the political and organizational independence of the proletariat, is required to turn such opportunities to the advantage of the struggle for a revolutionary workers and peasants government. ■

The American government is more comfortable without the category of "political prisoner." Lewis is particularly concerned that in the midst of Carter's anti-communist "human rights" crusade, the Smith Act

"casts a shadow on American claims of freedom. Indeed, a Soviet apologist has recently pointed to the Smith Act as an indication of American hypocrisy in defending Soviet dissenters."

—New York Times, 10 March

FBI witchhunting has never been fundamentally affected by the conveniently oscillating moods of bourgeois law. It is surely more than coincidence that at the very time the courts were making "speech crimes" prosecutions more difficult, the FBI in 1956 began its now infamous COINTELPRO ("counter-intelligence program") against the Communist Party and "related organizations." In 1961 COINTELPRO was expanded to include the Socialist Workers Party, against which the FBI conducted an admitted 92 burglaries between 1960 and 1966.

Abolish the CIA/FBI!

The liberals' campaign against "intelligence abuses" has not stopped the FBI's criminal activities. On the contrary, it has offered a sophisticated cover-up in the form of the idea that exposure itself is reform. Meanwhile, the FBI compiles new "dirt" for ADEX and the like. The "reforms" simply streamline and prettify the American imperialists' reign of terror at home and abroad.

The Congressional investigations, carried out after the exposures have been leaked to the public through the press, have not curtailed the illegal actions of the CIA/FBI (except perhaps to discourage sloppy and promiscuous "bag jobs" against bourgeois parties). Their main result has been to try to plug up the leaks by creating stiffer penalties for the "leakers." Congress has proved to be the best cover-up and "plumbing" operation.

Muckrakers and "reformers" will never outgrow their illusions that the U.S. government's secret political police can be cajoled into acting like "gentlemen." As new "abuses" of the FBI's so-called "legitimate authority" are announced and piously decried, the liberals can only shake their heads and wonder why the FBI and CIA show such a persistent penchant for violating the conventions of bourgeois "law and order." It is their class allegiance which blinds the liberals to the simple fact that these agencies' central purpose is to do the dirty work considered inappropriate to the "normal" administrative mechanisms of bourgeois democracy.

Revolutionists welcome any measure that actually makes more difficult the murderous business of the official and unofficial terror organizations of U.S. imperialism. But the liberal streamlining attempts have no such intent. Nothing less than the victorious proletarian revolution can abolish capitalism's secret political police and their death-dealing "dirty tricks." ■

ADEX...

(continued from page 3)

informers, "listening posts," mail surveys, warrantless wiretaps and the rest of its domestic spy machinery. The FBI reportedly deployed about one-third of its "total investigative force"—nearly 16,000 agents controlling 5,000 informers—in this "security" operation. *CounterSpy*, relying on Sanford Ungar's book, *FBI*, estimates that today one-fourth of the FBI resources are devoted to "internal security and counter-intelligence matters." This may be a conservative estimate.

With the end of Joseph McCarthy's particular style of anti-Communist witchhunting and the inability to sustain public support for this level of anti-Communism, the witchhunt of the left went on more or less as usual, i.e., both "legally" and extralegally. Court rulings after 1956 tended to restrict the applicability of the "speech crimes" laws as violating provisions of the First and Fifth Amendments (the Voorhis Act has never been used as the basis for any prosecution).

In the courts the definition of Smith Act "advocacy" became narrowed to a call for immediate action. This rendered the law largely useless judicially, but it is still the rationale for things like ADEX. As Anthony Lewis, guardian of old-time liberalism, recently pointed out:

"The Supreme Court has found such constitutional difficulty in that act [the Smith Act] that it is almost a dead letter as far as prosecutions go; but it has provided a justification for many F.B.I. investigations of supposedly subversive groups, with wiretaps and other doubtful actions."

—New York Times, 14 March

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Assata Shakur...

(continued from page 7)

was convinced that "unless citizens interested in maintaining [!] a fair and impartial judicial system intervene, this woman will not leave the New Jersey prisons alive." And following the conviction, defense lawyer William Kunstler remarked: "The reality is, this beautiful young black woman never had a chance, but we, like liberal fools, still had hopes" (*New York Times*, 26 March).

The naiveté of Msrs. Hinds and Kunstler in relying on bourgeois "justice" will no doubt appear touching to many other "liberal fools," but it is Assata Shakur and other militants who pay for such liberal illusions with their lives. The key to saving the ex-Panthers from the prison hellholes was a massive mobilization of the left, labor and black movements, which regrettably never took place.

Mass murderer Charles Manson will be eligible for parole next year, while Jimmy Carter self-righteously excoriates the Soviet bureaucracy for violations of human rights. But Assata Shakur is a bonafide political prisoner of American capitalist "democracy," who may well sit in jail until she is released by a victorious workers revolution—that is, unless she falls victim to death penalty laws or cold-blooded prison murder, as in the case of George Jackson. The left must not let this case be forgotten. We continue to demand the immediate, unconditional release and dropping of all charges against Assata Shakur! ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Shop Committee Fired

Fremont GM Provokes Walkout

FREMONT, California, March 29 — Workers at the huge General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD) plant here, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1364, walked off the job at noon yesterday.

The strike involving some 5,000 workers was called by the shop committee when management refused to meet union demands to remove a foreman from his supervisory position. The foreman in question had racially insulted an alternate committeeman and assaulted another committeeman attempting to file a grievance against deliberate company harassment of an injured worker.

Management arrogantly announced its refusal to consider the union's demand and denounced the strike as "illegal" citing Paragraph 117 of the GM/UAW national contract. In retaliation for the strike action GM promptly fired the entire shop committee!

The company's hand was immediately strengthened by the UAW International which informed the 1364 leadership that it too considered the strike a wildcat!

This is just one more in an unbroken chain of atrocities by the Woodcock leadership. While the company attacks the union head-on, the sell-out Solidarity House gang stabs its striking brothers and sisters in the back!

Local 1364 must demand the UAW International reverse its treacherous position and give full sanction to the strike. Let Woodcock come to Fremont and explain why it is that he feels it is "illegal" for the union to strike to defend its representatives from being assaulted, abused and insulted!

Local 1364 members should also demand that the Local's leadership stop calling the strike a "wildcat" or "unauthorized." The strike was called by the elected Local leadership over a just demand. The membership shows enthusiasm and support of the strike and has plenty to strike over. No union can exist without the right to strike over working conditions. To call this strike a "wildcat" or "unauthorized" is to fall into the hands of those who want to crush the strike — GM and pro-company UAW bureaucrats.

It is clear from GM's hard-line posture and its firing of the entire shop committee that the company has deliberately provoked this strike. GMAD is intent upon getting in on the year-long anti-labor offensive in the Bay Area. It wants to break the back of one of the most militant UAW locals in the country.

At stake is not simply the issue of the assaulted and insulted committeemen but of the very ability of the union to fight to protect its members. The incident which provoked the strike is just the tip of a very large iceberg. Local 1364 has been working without a local contract since the UAW national contract expired last September while the company has carried on a brutal ranipage of forced overtime, speed-up, and harassment.

If the company can force the union in this strike, many militants, including the Local leadership, may face the axe. Company harassment of workers and the union representatives will become even more intense than the already harsh treatment dished out daily.

Unfortunately, the leadership of Local 1364, having stumbled into an unexpected strike, is attempting to keep the strike confined to the narrow issue of the removal of a foreman. Such a policy is, of course, of a piece with their agreement with Woodcock and Company that the strike constitutes a "wildcat."

According to the strikers interviewed by *WV* reporters, the policy of the Local 1364 leadership and its shop chairman Earle Mays has been to keep a lid on the militancy. Only token picketing has been organized (to avoid injunctions not even issued!). Recently hired workers have been encouraged to report to work (i.e., to scab). And Teamster trucks have been permitted to go and come from the plant grounds freely.

"This is a gentlemen's strike," complained one picket to *WV*. He went on to explain how the union should have struck when the skilled tradesmen in the plant rejected the proposed Local contract for a second time.

To ensure that only their version of the strike gets out, the 1364 bureaucrats have from the beginning tried to enforce a policy of censorship on the members, ordering them not to talk to any reporters. At the same time they have told the membership to wait until the International representatives arrive to negotiate an end to the strike.

This is a suicidal policy. Right now Woodcock, fresh home from his journey to Vietnam as an emissary for imperialist chief Carter, is busy breaking a similar strike in a Chrysler plant in Indianapolis. There, 3,100 workers "wildcatted"—i.e., were left to hang and turn in the wind by the International. Four officers, five committeemen and 14 shop stewards have been fired, and 44 of the most active picketers suspended. In addition Chrysler has filed a multi-million dollar damages suit. Today, Woodcock's hand-picked successor Doug Fraser harangued a mass meeting of the Indianapolis Chrysler strikers, ordering them back to work with vague "promises" that he would "attempt" to get "some" of the suspensions lifted. A similar fate awaits the Fremont GM workers if things are left to continue as they have been.

The company, for its part, is clearly taking a tough stand. Mounds of grievances over speed-up, harassment, medical and health and safety issues have piled up. Discipline has been intense. A short while back another committeeman was fired when he tried to defend himself against an assault by a foreman. More recently, 11 workers from the truck line received disciplines. The company alleges that a leaflet issued by supporters of the October League's *Call* proved that the 11 disciplined



UAW picketers outside Fremont GMAD plant March 28.

WV Photo

workers were engaged in an unauthorized work action.

The 1364 brass, while doing nothing for the 11 workers, brought charges against one of the *Call* supporters—an act of utter hypocrisy and cynicism. A leaflet issued by the class-struggle opposition group, the Committee for a Militant UAW (CMUAW), entitled "Hands Off the Idiots," pointed out that while the *Call* leaflet was indeed stupid and irresponsible, it provided no basis for the company discipline. The CMUAW demanded that the bureaucrats drop the charges against the *Call* supporters because the local union tops, with their policy of appeasement and collaboration with the company, were the real criminals intent on trying to purge anyone associated with an "unauthorized" work action.

Nevertheless, such bureaucratic purge attempts are indicative of a rise in a red-baiting purge mentality among the Local leadership. The irony is that just one month after the attempt to purge the *Call* for having had a hand in an "unauthorized work action," the self-same bureaucrats are now in hot water with the Solidarity House gang for leading such an action. The red-baiting atmosphere whipped up by the Mays/Malone/Nano leadership may very well backfire as the International dumps them for their inability to "handle" the Local 1364 workers.

Why has the Mays bureaucracy felt compelled to call a strike? There have been allegations that Mays & Co. wanted to refurbish their badly tarnished reputations as militants. Elections for delegate posts for the United Auto Workers convention this spring are coming up, and many militants were predicting that Mays would lose. In any case, the cause is just and however badly prepared the union, the battle lines have been drawn! The strike must be won and GM soundly defeated!

The only alternative to the UAW tops' call for a capitulation, with all its dire consequences, is to wage a solid strike. GMAD's attack must be stopped in its tracks! It is high time the labor movement—and auto workers in

particular—stopped taking it in the neck.

It is clear that the basis of the strike should be broadened to obtain a Local contract with real protection. Key to this, as the present strike so clearly shows, is the right to strike without prior International authorization over working conditions, including line speed and hours. Paragraph 117 must be junked!

Mass picketing should shut down the GM Fremont plant tight with *nothing* and *no one* being allowed in or out!

The union should call a mass meeting of all its members at the plant to democratically elect a strike committee with representatives from each work group in the plant to organize the picketing and conduct of the strike.

The experience of the San Francisco city workers' strike last year shows that it is not good enough to rely just on the promises of the leaderships of the various central labor councils to build solidarity with the strike. Mass delegations from Local 1364 should be sent to the other GM plants in California to shut them down, and militants in other unions must push for delegations to the Local 1364 picket lines to demonstrate their solidarity.

Mass delegations should also be sent to the transportation unions, Teamsters, rail and longshore, to demand that all GM goods be "hot-cargoed" for the duration of the strike. Transport workers must refuse to handle any GM goods in California for the duration of the strike!

But a solid strike that can force GM to back down will not come about automatically. Not only will Local 1364 members face the full fury of GM and its cops, courts and judges, but also very real opposition from the UAW tops. A genuine but limited victory can be won in the present strike, but only in spite of the present UAW leadership. Such a victory could help lay part of the basis for the formation of a movement to oust these treacherous misleaders from their positions in the union in favor of a class-struggle leadership willing to wage a genuine struggle in the interest of the workers and against the companies. ■