

We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!



**Oust the Stalinist
Bureaucracy!**

**Sixtieth
Anniversary
of the
Bolshevik
Revolution**

**Extend the
Gains of October!**

The 1917 October Revolution was the shaping event of our century. The seizure of state power 60 years ago by the revolutionary Russian proletariat, led by its Bolshevik vanguard, was a monumental advance toward world socialism. Even today—decades after the usurpation of political power in the USSR by the Stalinist bureaucratic caste whose counterrevolutionary betrayals block the international extension of the revolution and jeopardize this historic gain—all purported communists must seek to clothe themselves in the revolutionary mantle of October 1917.

Today the pro-Moscow Stalinists commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution with nauseating appeals for "peaceful coexistence"; Maoists wave red flags while demonstrating for NATO as the bulwark

against "Soviet social-imperialism"; centrists salute Lenin while ignoring his life-long struggle for an international proletarian vanguard as the road to new Octobers; and the now-reformist SWP sloughs off defense of the USSR as an impediment to its social-democratic appetites. Only the international Spartacist tendency—the legitimate political continuators of Lenin's Bolsheviks and of Trotsky's Fourth International—stands solidly on the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialism and counterrevolution, combined with the struggle for political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers states to establish the proletarian democracy of soviet rule.

Today, as Jimmy Carter beats the drums for an anti-Soviet mobilization in the name of "human rights," this

program is as valid as it was 40 years ago. One of its most powerful presentations is the speech, reprinted below, by James P. Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism, to the New York branch of the Socialist Workers Party on 15 October 1939. Cannon's speech was originally reprinted in the February 1940 New Internationalist; we are republishing it from his book, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, which originally appeared in 1943.

by James P. Cannon

The Russian question is with us once again, as it has been at every critical turning point of the international labor movement since November 7, 1917. And there is nothing strange in that. The Russian question is no literary exercise to be taken up or cast aside according to

the mood of the moment. The Russian question has been and remains the question of the revolution. The Russian Bolsheviks on November 7, 1917, once and for all, took the question of the workers' revolution out of the realm of abstraction and gave it flesh and blood reality.

It was said once of a book—I think it was Whitman's "Leaves of Grass"—"who touches this book, touches a man." In the same sense it can also be said, "Who touches the Russian question, touches a revolution." Therefore, be serious about it. Don't play with it.

The October revolution put socialism on the order of the day throughout the world. It revived and shaped and developed the revolutionary labor movement of the world out of the

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bloody chaos of the war. The Russian revolution showed in practice, by example, how the workers' revolution is to be made. It revealed in life the role of the party. It showed in life what kind of a party the workers must have. By its victory, and its reorganization of the social system, the Russian revolution has proved for all time the superiority of nationalized property and planned economy over capitalist private property, and planless competition and anarchy in production.

A Sharp Dividing Line

The question of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state which is its creation has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world the Mensheviks, Social Democrats, Anarchists and Syndicalists, Centrists, Stalinists.

The main source of division in our own ranks for the past ten years, since the Fourth Internationalist tendency took organized form on the international field, has been the Russian question. Our tendency, being a genuine, that is, orthodox, Marxist tendency from A to Z, has always proceeded on the Russian question from theoretical premises to political conclusions for action. Of course, it is only when political conclusions are drawn out to the end that differences on the Russian question reach an unheard-of acuteness and permit no ambiguity or compromise.



Lenin speaking in Red Square, 1919.

Conclusions on the Russian question lead directly to positions on such issues as war and revolution, defense and defeatism. Such issues, by their very nature, admit no unclarity, no compromise, because it is a matter of taking sides! One must be on one side or another in war and revolution.

The Importance of Theory

But if the lines are drawn only when political conclusions diverge, that does not at all signify that we are indifferent to theoretical premises. He is a very poor Marxist better say, no Marxist at all who takes a careless or tolerant attitude toward theoretical premises. The political conclusions of Marxists proceed from theoretical analyses and are constantly checked and regulated by

them. That is the only way to assure a firm and consistent policy.

To be sure, we do not decline cooperation with people who agree with our political conclusions from different premises. For example, the Bolsheviks were not deterred by the fact that the left S.R.s were inconsistent. As Trotsky remarked in this connection, "If we wait till everything is right in everybody's head there will never be any successful revolutions in this world" (or words to that effect). Just the same, for our part we want everything right in our own heads. We have no reason whatever to slur over theoretical formulas, which are expressed in "terminology." As Trotsky says, in theoretical matters "we must keep our house clean."

Our position on the Russian question is programmatic. In brief. The theoretic-

cal analysis—a degenerated Workers' State. The political conclusion—unconditional defense against external attack of imperialists or internal attempts at capitalist restoration.

Defensism and Defeatism

Defensism and defeatism are two principled, that is, irreconcilable positions. They are not determined by arbitrary choice but by class interests.

No party in the world ever succeeded in harboring these two antipathetic tendencies for any great length of time. The contradiction is too great. Division all over the world ultimately took place along this line. Defensists at home were defeatists on Russia. Defensists on Russia were defeatists at home.

The degeneration of the Soviet state under Stalin has been analyzed at every step by the Bolshevik-Leninists and only by them. A precise attitude has been taken at every stage. The guiding lines of the revolutionary Marxist approach to the question have been:

See the reality and see it whole at every stage; never surrender any position before it is lost; the worst of all capitulators is the one who capitulates before the decisive battle.

The International Left Opposition which originated in 1923 as an opposition in the Russian party (the original nucleus of the Fourth International) has always taken a precise attitude on the Russian question. In the first stages of the degeneration of which the Stalinist bureaucracy was the hanner bearer the opposition considered it possible to rectify matters by methods of reform through the change of regime in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Later, when it became clearer that the Communist Party of Lenin had been irretrievably destroyed, and after it became manifest that the reactionary bureaucracy could be removed only by civil war, the Fourth International, standing as before on its analysis of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, came out for a political revolution.

All the time throughout this entire period of 16 years the Bolshevik-Leninists have stoutly maintained, in the face of all slander and persecution, that they were the firmest defenders of the workers' state and that in the hour of danger they would be in the front ranks of its defense. We always said the moment of danger will find the Fourth Internationalists at their posts defending the conquests of the great revolution without ceasing for a moment our struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Now that the hour of danger is at hand—now that the long-awaited war is actually knocking at the door—it would



Pathfinder

The "Russian Question" remains an acid test for Leninists. The context for the speech of James P. Cannon, left, was set by the imminent World War II. In particular, following the September 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, a sanctimonious social-chauvinist clamor arose for a holy war by the imperialist "democracies" against Stalinism. This pressure found a response even within the ranks of the American Trotskyists, as petty-bourgeois elements cast around for a new "theory" of the USSR's class nature to justify abandoning the Trotskyist program.

The ferment over the "Russian Question" was to lead to a deep split in the party. The forces around Max Shachtman indignantly denied that their abandonment of Soviet defensism signaled their decisive break from Bolshevism, but Trotsky and Cannon understood that the Shachtmanites were heading toward capitulation to their "own" bourgeoisie. The Shachtmanites were masters of obfuscating left rhetoric—even indulging in reasonable criticisms of the SWP from time to time—but their break from defensism found its culmination in reconciliation with imperialist American social democracy.

be very strange if the Fourth International should renege on its oft-repeated pledge.

"Conservatism" on the Russian Question

Throughout all this long period of Soviet degeneration since the death of Lenin, the Fourth Internationalists, analyzing the new phenomenon of a degenerating workers' state at every turn, striving to comprehend its complications and contradictions, to recognize and defend all the progressive features of the contradictory processes and to reject the reactionary during all this long time we have been beset at every new turn of events by the impatient demands of "radicals" to simplify the question. Thrown off balance by the crimes and betrayals of Stalin, they lost sight of the new system of economy which Stalin had not destroyed and could not destroy.

We always firmly rejected these premature announcements that everything was lost and that we must begin all over again. At each stage of development, at each new revelation of Stalinist infamy and treachery, some group or other broke away from the Fourth International because of its "conservatism" on the Russian question. It would be interesting, if we had the time, to call the roll of these groupings which one after another left our ranks to pursue an ostensibly more "revolutionary" policy on the Russian question. Did they develop an activity more militant, more revolutionary, than ours? Did they succeed in creating a new movement and in attracting newly awakened workers and those breaking from Stalinism? In no case.

If we were to call the roll of these ultra-radical groups it would present a devastating picture indeed. Those who did not fall into complete political passivity became reconciled in one form or another to bourgeois democracy. The experiences of the past should teach us all a salutary caution, and even, if you please "conservatism," in approaching any proposal to revise the program of the Fourth International on the Russian question. While all the innovators fell by the wayside, the Fourth International alone retained its programmatic firmness. It grew and developed and remained the only genuine revolutionary current in the labor movement of the world. Without a firm position on the Russian question our movement also would inevitably have shared the fate of the others.

The mighty power of the October revolution is shown by the vitality of its conquests. The nationalized property and the planned economy stood up under all the difficulties and pressures of the capitalist encirclement and all the blows of a reactionary bureaucracy at home. In the Soviet Union, despite the monstrous mismanagement of the bureaucracy, we saw a tremendous development of the productive forces—and in a backward country at that—while capitalist economy declined. Conclusion: Nationalized and planned economy, made possible by a revolution that overthrew the capitalists and landlords, is infinitely superior, more progressive. It shows the way forward. Don't give it up before it is lost! Cling to it and defend it!

The Class Forces

On the Russian question there are only two really independent forces in the world. Two forces who think about the question independently because they base themselves, their thoughts, their analyses and their conclusions, on fundamental class considerations. Those two independent forces are:

(1) The conscious vanguard of the world bourgeoisie, the statesmen of both democratic and fascist imperialism.

(2) The conscious vanguard of the world proletariat.

Between them it is not simply a case of two opinions on the Russian question, but rather of two camps. All those who in the past rejected the conclusions of the Fourth International and broke with our movement on that account, have almost invariably fallen into the service of the imperialists, through Stalinism, social and liberal democracy, or passivity, a form of service.

The standpoint of the world bourgeoisie is a class standpoint. They proceed, as we do, from fundamental class considerations. They want to maintain world capitalism. This determines their fundamental antagonism to the U.S.S.R. They appreciate the reactionary work of Stalin, but consider it incomplete, insofar as he has not restored capitalist private property.

Their fundamental attitude determines an inevitable attempt at the start of the war, or during it, to attack Russia, overthrow the nationalized economy, restore a capitalist regime, smash the

every stage. We have discussed it and taken our position anew at every stage of its progressive development and its degeneration. And, what is most important, we have always acted on our conclusions.

The Decisive Criterion

The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers' state. As a result of the backwardness and poverty of the country and the delay of the world revolution, a conservative bureaucracy emerged and triumphed, destroyed the party and bureaucratized the economy. However, this same bureaucracy still operates on the basis of the nationalized property established by the revolution. That is the decisive criterion for our evaluation of the question.

If we see the Soviet Union for what it really is, a gigantic labor organization which has conquered one-sixth of the earth's surface, we will not be so ready to

hastily-improvised theory, having already denounced the union as a company union, renounced support ("defense") of the strike. They denounced it as a "fake" strike. Thus their ill-considered radicalism led them to a reactionary position. They were denounced, and rightly, throughout the needle trades market as strike breakers. To this day they suffer the discredit of this reactionary action.

To defend the Soviet Union as a gigantic labor organization against the attacks of its class enemies does not mean to defend each and every action of its bureaucracy or each and every action of the Red Army which is an instrument of the bureaucracy. To impute such a "totalitarian" concept of defense to the Fourth International is absurd. Nobody here will deny defense of a bona fide trade union, no matter how reactionary its bureaucracy. But that does not prevent us from discriminating between actions of the bureaucracy which

Lenin's General Staff of 1917

STALIN, THE EXECUTIONER, ALONE REMAINS



The Central Committee of The Bolshevik Party in 1917

foreign trade monopoly, open up the Soviet Union as a market and field of investments, transform Russia into a great colony, and thereby alleviate the crisis of world capitalism.

The standpoint of the Fourth International is based on the same fundamental class considerations. Only we draw opposite conclusions, from an opposite class standpoint.

Purely sentimental motivations, speculation without fundamental class premises, so-called "fresh ideas" with no programmatic base—all this is out of place in a party of Marxists. We want to advance the world revolution of the proletariat. This determines our attitude and approach to the Russian question. True, we want to see reality, but we are not disinterested observers and commentators. We do not examine the Russian revolution and what remains of its great conquests as though it were a bug under a glass. *We have an interest! We take part in the fight!* At each stage in the development of the Soviet Union, its advances and its degeneration, we seek the basis for revolutionary action. We want to advance the world revolution, overthrow capitalism, establish socialism. The Soviet Union is an important and decisive question on this line.

Our standpoint on the Russian question is written into our program. It is not a new question for us. It is 22 years old. We have followed its evolution, both progressive and retrogressive, at

abandon it because of our hatred of the crimes and abominations of the bureaucracy. Do we turn our backs on a trade union because it falls into the control of bureaucrats and traitors? Ultra-leftists have frequently made this error, but always with bad results, sometimes with reactionary consequences.

We recall the case of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union here in New York. The bureaucrats of this union were about as vile a gang of labor lieutenants of the capitalist class as could be found. In the struggle against the left-wing in the middle twenties they conspired with the bosses and the A.F.L. fakers. They expelled the left-wing locals and used hired thugs to fight them and to break their strikes. The difference between them and Stalin was only a matter of opportunity and power. Driven to revolt against the crimes of these bureaucrats the left-wing, under the influence of the Communist Party in the days of its Third Period frenzy, labelled the union—not merely its treacherous bureaucracy—as a "company union."

But this same "company union," under the pressure of the workers in its ranks and the increasing intensity of the class struggle, was forced to call a strike to defend itself against the "imperialist" attack of the bosses. Workers who had kept their heads, supported ("defended") the strike against the bosses. But the Stalinists, trapped by their own

involve a defense of the union against the bosses and other actions which are aimed against the workers.

The United Mine Workers of America is a great labor organization which we all support. But it is headed by a thoroughgoing scoundrel and agent of the master class who also differs from Stalin only in the degrees of power and opportunity. In my own personal experience some years ago, I took part

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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Supreme Court Says Homosexuals Can't Teach

The Supreme Court last month declared open season on homosexuals in refusing to hear the cases of two teachers, James Gaylord of Washington state and John Gish of New Jersey. These men were fired from their jobs on one, and only one, charge: homosexuality. Thus "the highest court in the land" gives the green light to every local Anita Bryant higt to hound homosexuals out of the classrooms and their jobs. Make no mistake about it, this victimization of "social deviants" is part of an ominous and wide-ranging assault on democratic rights.

Fresh from a series of reactionary decisions attacking husing, housing desegregation, unemployment benefits for striking workers and abortions for the poor, the Supreme Court has again proved a reliable ally of the racist mobs in the streets and fundamentalist crusaders for social conformity and conservatism. Having trampled on the democratic rights of blacks and other racial minorities, women and workers, now under the hypocritical banner of "community standards" the courts have targeted homosexuals as scapegoats. This opens up the possibility of any teacher being victimized as "deviant" or "immoral." It is urgent that the labor movement, and teachers unions in particular, be mobilized against these frame-ups in order to block the mounting reactionary trend.

Government Out of the Bedroom!

Local school boards and the state have no business snooping about in anyone's private sex life, the personal relations of consenting individuals. A dangerous precedent has been set in these two cases whereby the job of any teacher can be taken away by bigots in alliance with the courts, using the open-ended criteria of what is deemed good and bad influence on children. It is not hard to see communists being fired on the same grounds, and a long experience of court-ordered repression of teachers strikes (most recently in the bitter Franklin, Massachusetts strike) suggests that the very idea of unionism might be considered offensive to "community standards" by headline school boards and anti-labor judges.

If there is any doubt about the leeway which the courts have granted to reactionary witchhunters, just consider the cases of James Gaylord and John Gish. Gaylord was fired from Tacoma's Wilson High School in 1972. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Washington, he had an exemplary record during his 13 years as a social studies teacher. His tenure and record, however, were ignored once a vice principal, acting on expressed suspicions of one of Gaylord's former students, confronted the teacher over whether or not he was a homosexual. *Never charged with any misconduct*, Gaylord was fired for "immorality" when he admitted his homosexuality.

Ultimately the dismissal was upheld on the argument that he must have committed illegal acts; after all, he hadn't denied it. As Gaylord explained the frame-up to a *WV* reporter: "I was not dismissed for conduct; I was never accused of any misconduct. I was never asked about my sexual conduct. As a matter of fact, it was not the school district that first advanced this line of argument about conduct. This was something the trial court judge came up

with more than three years after I was fired."

Since Gaylord was dismissed the state of Washington has legalized all sexual activity between consenting adults in private. Such laws, hailed as a bill of rights for homosexuals by the bourgeois media, provide little protection, however, as long as "immoral" can be substituted for "illegal" in a courtroom.

John Gish, who has never acknowledged being a homosexual, was removed from the classroom and ordered to undergo a psychiatric examination by the Paramus Board of Education after he became president of the New Jersey Gay Activist Alliance in 1972. In refusing, Gish has rightly contended that this violated his rights of privacy, liberty, freedom of expression and equal protection under the law.

The Supreme Court, however, had already made its position perfectly clear, saying the right of privacy does not apply to homosexuals, thus laying the legal basis for victimization of Gaylord and Gish. The Court ruled in March 1976 in upholding Virginia's anti-sodomy statutes, making homosexual acts illegal. The Court brazenly declared that the constitutional right to privacy applied only to "marriage, home or family life. It is enough for upholding the legislation to establish that the conduct is likely to end in a contribution to moral delinquency."

Ironically, it is still to the bourgeois courts and legislatures that various reformists and liberals, including gay rights activists, foolishly look for salvation, even as the courts systematically reverse the token gains of the 1960's.

The Witchhunt Is On

The Supreme Court's refusal to hear the Gaylord and Gish cases fuels the fires of anti-homosexual hysteria ignited by Anita Bryant's obscene campaign to rescind the Dade County, Florida ordinance prohibiting discrimination against homosexuals.

California now has its own version of Anita Bryant in state senator John Briggs, who is running for governor on his sponsorship of an initiative (referendum) that would enable school boards to fire homosexual teachers at will. Briggs was a participant in Bryant's Dade County campaign. He explained, "What I'm after is to remove those homosexual teachers who, through word, thought or deed want to be a public homosexual, to entice young impressionable children into their lifestyle" (*Los Angeles Times*, 4 August).

Supporters of this initiative are working to collect the 312,404 signatures necessary to put the measure on the ballot in the June 1978 elections, when California voters would be given the "opportunity," as Briggs told an L.A. news conference, "to tell homosexuals that we are tired of your aggressive movement into our society, to have us accept you are normal people, because you are not normal people."

Social issues touching on questions of sex and the family are so emotionally loaded that ignorance and irrationality can be easily manipulated by demagogues to produce a witchhunt atmosphere. Thus Briggs, like Bryant, can seriously make the appeal of an utter idiot: "Homosexual families, to my knowledge, do not breed children, and the only way they can get children is they have to recruit our children. I can't think



Anti-Anita Bryant demonstration in New York City last June.

of a better setting [for recruitment] than a classroom."

Across the board this wave of reaction is presented as a crusade for children. "Save Our Children" was Anita Bryant's battle cry. Attacks on freedom of the press are launched in the name of ridding society of "kiddie porn." Anti-busing racists screamed about the "innocent little children" supposedly inconvenienced by bus rides. And the ultimate "innocent"—the fetus—is protected by right-to-lifers who dismiss as irrelevant the mental anguish, physical danger and even death of women seeking abortions.

Behind this hypocritical concern for children is nothing but the attempt to enshrine family-centered bourgeois morality, rooting out all "deviants" and challenges. Hailing the family as the "natural unit" of society, the reactionary obscurantists would also legislate procreation as the "natural" (i.e., the only permissible) purpose of sex if they could get away with it. The terrible reality is that under capitalism children are daily battered to a pulp in families where parents are frustrated beyond reason. The oppression of women and children in the nuclear family will continue until socialist society has created the material basis for its replacement.

Yet the Stalinists sing the praises of the "proletarian family," and thus fall in line with the reactionary bigotry which is the natural by-product of the backward social attitudes fostered by capitalist society. The Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party, which marched side-by-side with the anti-busing racists in Boston, now take up the logic of the viciously anti-homosexual, anti-labor Briggs campaign:

"To deny such rights as housing or jobs is persecution and is no more correct than denying alcoholics housing or jobs. Of course there are limits. Parents should have the right to remove notorious homosexuals from any and all jobs working with children, just as they would rather not have some juice-head guiding their children either."

Southern California Worker, July-August 1977

Labor Must Defend Victimized Teachers

It is not accidental that the reactionaries have gone after Gaylord and Gish.

Teachers are an important target for those who would enforce reactionary bourgeois morality. But the fact that a large percentage of teachers is now organized in unions would give them some social power—if they were not hamstrung by the labor bureaucrats.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is formally committed to defend its members victimized for homosexuality. The Tacoma AFT affiliate mounted a legal defense of Gaylord, gave him a job and did everything short of what was really necessary to force his reinstatement. The labor movement, mobilized on the grounds that an attack on one is an attack on all, could have smashed this victimization. But the paper opposition of the AFT and the National Education Association to the persecution of homosexual teachers has not stopped the firings or put an end to the anxiety under which homosexuals are forced to work.

In fact, the AFT hasn't devoted nearly as much energy to defending Gaylord and Gish and to defeating the Briggs referendum as it does to supporting the racist pro-Bakke campaign to roll back the paltry educational opportunities opened up to blacks by special admissions programs. The AFT's narrow

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Dissidents Appeal to Carter's Anti-Soviet "Human Rights" Crusade

On October 18 a Prague court found four Czechoslovaks guilty of charges of "subversion against the state." Sentences of three-and-one-half and three years' imprisonment each were handed out to former theater director Ota Ornest and journalist Jiri Lederer on charges of maintaining "conspiratorial links" with foreign diplomats and agents of France and Italy. Receiving sentences of 17 and 14 months respectively, although suspended for three years, were writer and director Frantisek Pavlicek and playwright Vaclav Havel. Pavlicek was deemed to have "slandered the state" in articles published abroad, while Havel was found guilty of trying to smuggle out of the country the banned memoirs of a former minister of the government of liberal Stalinist Alexander Dubcek.

The trial of the four, all prominent supporters of Dubcek during the 1968 "Prague Spring," was the biggest political trial held in Czechoslovakia in the last five years. Clearly it was one more attempt by the Husak regime, installed in power by Russian bayonets following the Warsaw Pact invasion of August 1968, to crack down on the Charter 77 group. Lederer, Pavlicek and Havel

were all signatories of its original manifesto, and Havel had been designated as one of three official spokesmen for the Charter 77 group.

The charter was issued on January 1 of this year. Signed by some 257 Czechoslovaks, it presented the plight of thousands of supporters of the former Dubcek government, and contrasted the absence of elementary democratic rights with the formal guarantees for such rights contained in the constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the 1975 Helsinki treaty:

"By its symbolic name, Charter 77 stresses that it has been established on the threshold of what has been declared the year of political prisoners, in the course of which a meeting in Belgrade is to review the progress—or lack of it—achieved since the Helsinki conference."

—*New York Times*,
27 January 1977

In essence, therefore, Charter 77 is an implicit but open appeal to the imperialist signatories of the Helsinki accords to pressure Husak and his Soviet mentors to live up to the "human rights" provisions of that treaty. The strategy of the Czechoslovak chartists in this regard is no different from that of the Soviet pro-imperialist dissidents represented by physicists Sakharov and Orlov.

The reaction of the Husak regime was abrupt and harsh. Here was no narrow stratum of disaffected intelligentsia such as compose the dissidents in the USSR. The list of signatories of Charter 77 was studied with former members of the Dubcek central committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CP) and former ministers of the government toppled by the Warsaw Pact invasion. Also among the signers were the widow and son of Rudolf Slansky, the former CP secretary who was hanged in 1952 during Stalin's anti-"Titoist" purge.

The Charter 77 manifesto was immediately and hysterically denounced by government authorities as "written on the command of anti-communist and Zionist centers and then published by the most reactionary mass media in the West" (*Guardian* [London], 8 January 1977). The Communist Party paper *Rude Pravo* warned, "Those who lie on the rails to stop the train of history" must expect to get their legs cut off. A few days later the same mouthpiece for the bureaucracy blustered:

"A few piqued, ineffectual wrecks and self-appointed, but in fact agents of imperialism without a mite of honor and conscience, are spitting plans that have not and cannot have any mission but the preparation of counterrevolution.... The people who wanted to smuggle counterrevolution into our



Carter and flunkies Young, Brzezinski at U.N.

Luce/Newsweek



Havel

Oer Spiegel

homes have already received their just deserts.... They must be aware that any new attempts will founder in embryo. The year 1968 will not be repeated. After the debacle suffered by reaction in our country in 1948 and again 20 years later, these Don Quixotes want to sow the seeds of a new counterrevolutionary adventure and throw our socialist society into chaos and uncertainty."

—quoted in *New York Times*,
13 January 1977

Along with the propaganda barrage came the persecution. Leading members of Charter 77 were harassed, mauled and threatened by the police, dragged in for long interrogations and often deprived of their jobs. Sensing a golden opportunity, the new Democratic administration in Washington used Charter 77 and the repression directed against it to kick off its phony "human rights" campaign. The very first act of Carter's State Department was to fire off a letter charging Czechoslovakia with violation of the Helsinki agreement—precisely as the Charter 77 framers had hoped.

Meanwhile, in the face of Husak's persecution the Charter 77 movement evoked widespread support among dissidents in East Europe and the USSR. It should be recalled that many of the current generation of Soviet dissidents first became active out of revulsion over the 1968 Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Further, like their Prague counterparts, a large fraction of the dissidents in the rest of the Soviet bloc share or peddle illusions in the good will of the "democratic" imperialist bourgeoisies. For the "Eurocommunists" of the French, Italian and Spanish CP's, solidarity with Charter 77 was a chance to prove to their own bourgeoisies their "independence" from Moscow—i.e., their reliabil-

ity as bloc partners in future popular-front governments.

After its initial hysteria, the Husak government has carefully modulated its persecution of the Charter 77ers, clearly hoping to slide through the Belgrade conference with minimal trouble. So far they have succeeded. The Czechoslovak economy badly needs Western credits for the import of new technologies from the capitalists, and Husak's Soviet mentors don't want unnecessary obstacles to reaching a new arms limitation agreement with U.S. imperialism. And after the collapse of U.S.-USSR arms control talks in Moscow last spring, Carter has toned down his anti-Soviet propaganda sallies—although far from abandoning this cornerstone of his "moral" foreign policy, despite the fervent hopes of the dreamers in the Kremlin.

Whereas late last winter Czechoslovak newspapers were insisting that the Charter 77 appeal was illegal and unconstitutional, the claim now is that the movement is at "the limit of limits of legality." Thus the prosecutor of Ornest, Lederer, Pavlicek and Havel requested "light sentences" while insisting that the trial had to do with subversion and not Charter 77. In the meantime the persecution of the chartists continues. As of September over 100 signers of the manifesto had lost their jobs. Two, Vladimir Lastuvka and Ales Machacek, have been charged with subversion for having periodicals and books published by Czechs living in the West.

As far as the trial of Havel et al. in Prague goes, it was held in a tiny courtroom packed with plainclothesmen. Newsmen, including reporters from the French Communist Party's *L'Humanité* and the Italian Communist Party's *L'Unità*, were barred from the proceedings. Prominent chartists came home the evening before the trial to find their homes ransacked by security cops and themselves hauled off for "interrogations." These trials were clearly a juridical farce and reflect above all else the fear of the Czechoslovak Stalinists that they will lose their stranglehold on the proletariat. While we do not defend the politics of the Ornests, Lederers, Pavliceks and Havels, we must demand that they be released immediately and that all charges against them be withdrawn.

The issue of the trial was raised at the Belgrade conference by representatives of the U.S., Britain, France and the Netherlands. But in fact the Belgrade conference has been if anything a boring marathon of diplomatic doubletalkers. In terms of the perspectives of Charter 77 and the various pro-imperialist dissidents it has so far been a monumental failure and one likely to throw them into future disarray.

The people who framed Charter 77
continued on page 11



Cambio 16

Belgrade conference in session.

On the sixtieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, both the Stalinist bureaucrats and the Western imperialists have highlighted the question of Soviet bloc dissidents. For Jimmy Carter they are a godsend to his campaign of moral rearmament of U.S. imperialism, for in their vast majority the current crop of dissidents look to the West for their salvation. All are united in demanding that Washington use economic sanctions (capitalist blackmail) to force concessions from the Soviet degenerated workers state. Bourgeois commentators echo the theme of Solzhenitsyn's Gulag, that all the deformations and bureaucratic terror in the USSR today have their source in Lenin.

For the Kremlin, the implicit or direct call by the dissidents for a return to capitalism is an invaluable gift, enabling the bureaucracy to pose as defenders of the October Revolution and the tremendous gains it brought Soviet workers. When Solzhenitsyn longs for the days of the tsarist knout, Bukovsky jokes about exchanging Brezhnev for Pinoclet, Amalrik chides the West for being "soft" on the "monsters of Marxism" and Sakharov expresses indifference toward the struggle of the Indochinese workers and peasants against the American war machine, it is the Stalinists who benefit, for such sentiments are deeply repugnant to the proletariat.

Thus both the Pentagon and the Kremlin have an interest in portraying all opposition to Stalinist rule as counter-revolutionary. It is not true. Stalin's Gulag was not built to incarcerate capitalist-restorationists but communist oppositionists, chief among them those who led the October Revolution. The "gravedigger of the revolution" murdered virtually the entire surviving Bolshevik central committee of 1917 during his bloody purges of the late 1930's. The numbers of Soviet Left Oppositionists who were cut down by the Stalinist executioners are counted in the tens and hundreds of thousands.

In the prison camps, the Trotskyists were the most resolute defenders of the prisoners' rights. This produced innumerable cases of individual and collective heroism which won the admiration of even those fellow prisoners who did not share their revolutionary Marxist convictions, as well as of many ex-Stalinists and loyal bureaucrats caught in the web of Kremlin terror. This tremendous respect was caught by former Soviet intelligence officer Leopold Trepper in his memoir *The Great Game*. To the question, "Who did protest at that time?" against Stalin's blood purges, he answers:

"The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor.... By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing wastelands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the tundra.

"Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess' for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

But the Trotskyists' voices were not lost in the tundra and their fight has not been in vain. They alone fought for a program which can win the allegiance of millions of class-conscious Soviet workers. They, and those who continue their struggle today, are the true heirs of October, not the complacent bureaucrats who luxuriate in their privileges while eternally seeking a deal with the imperialists. We print below a moving eyewitness account of the Bolshevik-Leninists at the notorious Vorkuta labor camp, which bears vivid testimony to the unshakable commitment to principles of these Trotskyist Left Oppositionists.

Here were real heroes of the struggle



Red soldiers marching in Moscow, 1917.

Stalin Murdered the Revolutionaries of October Trotskyists at Vorkuta



Left Oppositionists in exile colony (ca. 1928) demonstrate on anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution.

of the Soviet people against Stalinist bureaucratic domination! These Leninist cadres had been hardened by the experience of three revolutions. Trotskyist revolutionaries of today draw strength from their example. In the words of Kote Tsintsadze, an "Old Bolshevik" from 1903 on who was one of the first Left Oppositionists to die in Stalin's Gulag:

"...many of our comrades and friends have been forced to end their lives in prison or somewhere in deportation. Yet in the final analysis this will be an enrichment of revolutionary history: a new generation will learn the lesson. The Bolshevik youth, learning from the struggle of the Bolshevik Opposition against the opportunist wing of the party, will understand on whose side the truth lies...."

(The following account, signed only "M.B.," first appeared in the October 1961 issue of the Russian Menshevik émigré journal *Sotsialistichesky Vest-*

nik. This translation was taken from Samizdat: *Voices of the Soviet Opposition* published by Monad Press in 1974.)

During the middle and at the end of the 1930s, the Trotskyists formed a quite disparate group at Vorkuta; one part of them kept its old name of "Bolshevik-Leninists." There were almost 500 at the mine, close to 1,000 at the camp of Ukhta-Pechora, and certainly several thousands altogether around the Pechora district.

The Orthodox Trotskyists were determined to remain faithful to the end to their platform and their leaders. In 1927, following the resolutions of the fifteenth congress of the party, they were excluded from the Communist Party and, at the same time, arrested. From then on, even though they were in prison, they continued to consider themselves

Communists; as for Stalin and his supporters, "the apparatus men," they were characterized as renegades from communism.

Among these "Trotskyists" were also found people who had never formally belonged to the CP and did not join the Left Opposition, but who tied their own fate with it to the very end—even when the struggle of the Opposition was most acute.

In addition to these genuine Trotskyists, there were in the camps of Vorkuta and elsewhere more than 100,000 prisoners who, members of the party and the youth, had adhered to the Trotskyist Opposition and then at different times and for diverse reasons (of which the principal were, evidently, repressions, unemployment, persecutions, exclusion from schools and university facilities, etc.) were forced to "recant their errors" and withdraw from

WORKERS VANGUARD

the Opposition.

The Orthodox Trotskyists arrived at the mine during the summer of 1936 and lived in a compact mass in two large harracks. They categorically refused to work in the pits; they worked only on the surface, and for only eight hours, not the ten or twelve required by the regulations, as the other prisoners were forced to do. They did so on their own authority, in an organized manner, openly flouting the camp regulations. In the main they had already served nearly ten years in deportation.

In the beginning, they were sent into political isolators and then afterwards exiled to Solovka; finally, they arrived at Vorkuta. The Trotskyists formed the only group of political prisoners who openly criticized the Stalinist "general line" and offered organized resistance to the jailers.... Their leaders were Socrates Gevorkian, Vladimir Ivanov, Melnais, V. V. Kossior and Trotsky's ex-secretary, Poznansky....

In the autumn of 1936, soon after the frame-up trials against the leaders of the Opposition, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others, the entire group of "Orthodox" Trotskyists at the mine got together to confer with one another.

Opening the meeting, Gevorkian addressed those present: "Comrades! Before beginning our meeting, I ask you to honor the memory of our comrades, guides, and leaders who have died as martyrs at the hands of the Stalinist traitors to the revolution."

The entire assembly stood up. Then, in a brief and very trenchant speech, Gevorkian explained that it was necessary to examine and resolve the key problem: what should be done and how should they conduct themselves from now on.

"It is now evident that the group of Stalinist adventurers have completed their counterrevolutionary coup d'etat in our country. All the progressive conquests of our revolution are in mortal danger. Not twilight shadows, but those of deep black night envelop our country. No Cavaignac spilled as much working class blood as has Stalin. Physically annihilating all the opposition groups within the party, he aims at total personal dictatorship. The party and the whole people are subjected to surveillance and to summary justice by the police apparatus. The predictions and the direst fears of our Opposition are fully confirmed. The nation slides irresistibly into the Thermidorian swamp. This is the triumph of the centrist petty-bourgeois forces, of which Stalin is the interpreter, the spokesman, and the apostle.

"No compromise is possible with the Stalinist traitors and hangmen of the revolution. Remaining proletarian revolutionaries to the very end, we should not entertain any illusion about the fate awaiting us. But before destroying us, Stalin will try to humiliate us as much as he can. By throwing political prisoners in with common criminals, he strives to scatter us among the criminals and to incite them against us. We are left with only one means of struggle in this unequal battle: the hunger strike. With a group of comrades, we have already drawn up a list of our demands of which many of you are already informed. Therefore, I now propose to you that we discuss them together and make a decision."

The meeting lasted only a short time; the question of the hunger strike and of concrete demands had already been debated for some months by the Trotskyists. Some Trotskyist groups in other camps (Usa station, Chib-Yu, Kochmes, etc.) had also been discussing the matter and had sent their agreement to support the demands and to participate in the hunger strike. These demands were ratified unanimously by those present. They stipulated:

1. Abrogation of the illegal decision of the NKVD, concerning the transfer of all Trotskyists from administrative camps to concentration camps. Affairs relating to political opposition to the regime must not be judged by special NKVD tribunals, but in public juridical assemblies.

2. The work day in the camp must not exceed eight hours.

3. The food quota of the prisoners should not depend on their norm of output. A cash bonus, not the food ration, should be used as a production incentive.

4. Separation, at work as well as in the barracks, of political prisoners and common criminals.

5. The old, the ill, and women political prisoners should be moved from the polar camps to camps where the climatic conditions were more favorable.

It was recommended, at the time of the meeting, that the sick, the invalids, and the old should not participate in the hunger strike; however, all those in question energetically rejected this proposal.

The meeting did not decide the day on which the hunger strike should begin; a five-member directorate, headed by Gevorkian, was delegated to inform the other Trotskyist groups spread over the immense territory containing the camps of Ukhta-Pechora.

Three weeks later, October 27, 1936, the massive hunger strike of the political prisoners began, a strike without precedent and a model under Soviet camp conditions. In the morning, at reveille, in almost every barrack, prisoners announced themselves on strike. The barracks occupied by the Trotskyists participated 100 percent in the movement. Even the orderlies struck. Close to 1,000 prisoners, of whom half worked in the mine, participated in this tragedy, which lasted more than four months.

The first two days, the strikers stayed in their usual places. Then the camp administration busied itself in isolating them from the rest of the prisoners, concerned lest the latter followed their example. In the tundra, forty kilometers from the mine, on the banks of the Syr-Yaga River, there were primitive half-demolished barracks, which previously had been used during the preliminary boring of the mines. In great haste, these barracks were put into makeshift condition; a call was sent out to the inhabitants of the region, who, with their teams of reindeer, transported the hunger strikers there, where they soon numbered about six hundred. The others were brought together not far from Chib-Yu.

After having isolated the strikers, the GPU took measures to prevent the movement from spreading in the country and from becoming known outside the frontiers. The prisoners were deprived of the right of corresponding with their families; the salaried employ-

ees of the camp lost their holidays and their right to leave. Attempts were made to incite the other prisoners against the strikers. At the mine there were food reserves beyond what was required to sustain those who worked in the pits; the camp administration contended that it had to use up its large reserves of fat and sugar, intended for the underground workers, for artificial feeding of the Trotskyists.

At the end of the first month of the strike, one of the participants died of exhaustion; two others died during the third month. The same month, two strikers, non-Orthodox Trotskyists,

spoke unwillingly and rather enigmatically. But little by little, the bonds between them became tighter and the conversations franker. Without letup, new prisoners arrived from Russia; old friends and acquaintances discovered each other; it no longer was possible not to believe the stories.

In spite of these obvious facts, a certain number of prisoners waited with impatience for the autumn of 1937 and the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution; they hoped, on this occasion as in 1927, that the government would declare a large-scale amnesty, particularly since a little while earlier the



Monad



AFL

Map showing suspected forced labor camp sites (dots) in the Soviet Union produced by the AFL during cold war period.

voluntarily gave up striking. Finally, just a few days before the end of the strike, still another striker died.

Having begun the end of October 1936, the hunger strike lasted 132 days, ending in March 1937. It culminated with the complete victory of the strikers who received a radiogram from the headquarters of the NKVD, drawn up in these words: "Inform the hunger strikers held in the Vorkuta mines that all their demands will be satisfied."

The Trotskyists were then taken back to the mine, received food reserved for the sick and, after a period of time, they went back to work, but only above ground; certain of them worked in the office of the director of the mine, in the capacity of paid workers, bookkeepers, economists, etc. Their work day did not exceed eight hours; their food ration was not based on their production norm.

But little by little the other prisoners' interest in the strikers began to diminish. Everyone's interest was now focused on the new trial at Moscow, which was being broadcast by radio; besides, new prisoners began arriving at the end of June. Their stories described mass arrests, outrages, executions without trial behind the walls of the NKVD, and this all over the country. At the beginning, no one wanted to believe this, particularly since the new arrivals

very promising "Stalinist Constitution" had been adopted. But the autumn brought bitter disillusion.

The harsh regime of the camps grew abruptly worse. The sergeants and their assistants in maintaining order—common criminals—having received new orders from the camp director, armed themselves with clubs and pitilessly beat the prisoners. The guards, the watchmen close to the barracks, tormented the prisoners. To amuse themselves during the night they fired on those who went to the toilets. Or else, giving the order "On your bellies," they forced the prisoners to stretch out, naked, for hours on the snow. Soon there were massive arrests. Almost every night, GPU agents appeared in the barracks, called out certain names and led away those called.

Certain Trotskyists, including Vladimir Evanov, Kossior, and Trotsky's son, Sergei Sedov, a modest and likeable youth, who had imprudently refused to follow his parents into exile in 1928, were taken in a special convoy to Moscow. We can only believe that Stalin was not satisfied simply to hurl them into the tundra; his sadistic nature thirsted not only for blood; he wished first to immeasurably humiliate them and torture them, coercing them into false self-accusations....

Toward the end of the autumn, about 1,200 prisoners found themselves in the old brick field; at least half of these were Trotskyists. They were all lodged in four barracks; their food ration was 400 grams of bread a day and not every day. The barracks were surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Nearly a hundred freshly recruited guards, supplied with automatic arms, watched the prisoners day and night.

The prisoners arrested at the mine, at Usa and in other nearby camps were taken to an old brickyard. Those

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**For the REBIRTH
of the FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL!**

—SPARTACIST



We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution...

(continued from page 3)

in a strike of the Kansas miners which was directed against the enforcement of a reactionary labor law, known as the Kansas Industrial Court Law, a law forbidding strikes. This was a thoroughly progressive action on the part of the Kansas miners and their president, Alex Howat. Howat and the other local officials were thrown into jail. While they were in jail, John L. Lewis, as president of the national organization, sent his agents into the Kansas fields to sign an agreement with the bosses over the head of the officers of the Kansas district. He supplied strike breakers and thugs and money to break the strike while the legitimate officers of the union lay in jail for a good cause. Every militant worker in the country denounced this treacherous strike-breaking action of Lewis. But did we therefore renounce support of the national union of mine workers? Yes,

some impatient revolutionaries did, and thereby completely disoriented themselves in the labor movement. The United Mine Workers retained its character as a labor organization and only last Spring came into conflict with the coal operators on a national scale. I think you all recall that in this context our press gave "unconditional defense" to the miners' union despite the fact that strikebreaker Lewis remained its president.

The Longshoremen's Union of the Pacific Coast is a bona fide organization of workers, headed by a Stalinist of an especially unattractive type, a pocket edition of Stalin named Bridges. This same Bridges led a squad of misguided longshoremen through a picket line of the Sailors' Union in a direct attempt to break up this organization. I think all of you recall that our press seathingly denounced this contemptible action of Bridges. But if the Longshoremen's Union, headed by Bridges, which is at this moment conducting negotiations with the bosses, is compelled to resort to strike action, what stand shall we take? Any ordinary class-conscious worker, let alone an educated Marxist, will be on the picket line with the Longshoremen's Union or "defending" it by some other means.

Why is it so difficult for some of our friends, including some of those who are very well educated in the formal sense, to understand the Russian question? I am very much afraid it is because they do not think of it in terms of struggle. It is strikingly evident that the workers, especially the more experienced workers who have taken part in trade unions, strikes, etc., understand the Russian question much better than the more educated scholastics. From their experiences in the struggle they know what is meant when the Soviet Union is compared to a trade union that has fallen into bad hands. And everyone who has been through a couple of strikes which underwent crises and came to the brink of disaster, finally to emerge victorious, understands what is meant when one says: *No position must be surrendered until it is irrevocably lost.*

I, personally, have seen the fate of more than one strike determined by the will or lack of will of the leadership to struggle at a critical moment. All our trade union successes in Minneapolis stem back directly to a fateful week in 1934 when the leaders refused to call off the strike, which to all appearances was hopelessly defeated, and persuaded the strike committee to hold out a while longer. In that intervening time a break occurred in the ranks of the bosses; this in turn paved the way for a compromise settlement and eventually victorious advance of the whole union.

How strange it is that some people analyze the weakness and defects in a workers' organization so closely that they do not always take into account the weakness in the camp of the enemy, which may easily more than counterbalance.

In my own agitation among strikers at dark moments of a strike I have frequently resorted to the analogy of two men engaged in a physical fight. When one gets tired and apparently at the end of his resources he should never forget that the other fellow is maybe just as tired or even more so. In that case the one who holds out will prevail. Looked at in this way a worn-out strike can sometimes be carried through to a compromise or a victory by the resolute will of its leadership. We have seen this happen more than once. Why should we deny the Soviet Union, which is not yet exhausted, the same rights?

The Danger of a False Position

We have had many discussions on the Russian question in the past. It has been the central and decisive question for us, as for every political tendency in the labor movement. That, I repeat, is because it is nothing less than the question of the revolution at various

stages of its progressive development or degeneration. We are, in fact, the party of the Russian revolution. We have been the people, and the only people, who have had the Russian revolution in their program and in their blood. That is also the main reason why the Fourth International is the only revolutionary tendency in the whole world. A false position on the Russian question would have destroyed our movement as it destroyed all others.

Two years ago we once again conducted an extensive discussion on the Russian question. The almost unanimous conclusion of the party was written into the program of our first convention:

(1) The Soviet Union, on the basis of its nationalized property and planned economy, the fruit of the revolution, remains a workers' state, though in a degenerated form.

(2) As such, we stand, as before, for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

(3) The best defense—the only thing that can save the Soviet Union in the end by solving its contradictions—is the international revolution of the proletariat.

(4) In order to regenerate the workers' state we stand for the overthrow of the bureaucracy by a political revolution.

But, it may be said, "Defense of the Soviet Union, and Russia is a Workers' State" those two phrases don't answer everything." They are not simply phrases. One is a theoretical analysis; the other is a political conclusion for action.

The Meaning of Unconditional Defense

Our motion calls for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. What does that mean? It simply means that we defend the Soviet Union and its nationalized property against external attacks of imperialist armies or against internal attempts at capitalist restoration, without putting as a prior condition the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Any other kind of defense negates the whole position under present circumstances. Some people speak nowadays of giving "conditional" defense to the Soviet Union. If you stop to think about it we are for conditional defense of the United States. It is so stated in the program of the Fourth International. In the event of war we will absolutely defend the country on only one small "condition": that we first overthrow the government of the capitalists and replace it with a government of the workers.

Does unconditional defense of the Soviet Union mean supporting every act

of the Red Army? No, that is absurd. Did we support the Moscow Trials and the actions of Stalin's G.P.U. in these trials? Did we support the purges, the wholesale murders of the forces in Spain which were directed against the workers? If I recall correctly, we unconditionally defended those workers who fought on the other side of the barricades in Barcelona. That did not prevent us from supporting the military struggle against Franco and maintaining our position in defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

It is now demanded that we take a big step forward and support the idea of an armed struggle against Stalin in the newly occupied territories of old Poland. Is this really something new? For three years the Fourth International has advocated in its program the armed overthrow of Stalin inside the Soviet Union itself. The Fourth International has generally acknowledged the necessity for an armed struggle to set up an independent Soviet Ukraine. How can there be any question of having a different policy in the newly occupied territories? If the revolution against Stalin is really ready there, the Fourth International will certainly support it and endeavor to lead it. There are no two opinions possible in our ranks on this question. But what shall we do if Hitler (or Chamberlain) attacks the Sovietized Ukraine before Stalin has been overthrown? This is the question that needs an unambiguous answer. Shall we defend the Soviet Union, and with it now and for the same reasons, the nationalized property of the newly annexed territories? We say, yes!

That position was incorporated into the program of the foundation congress of the Fourth International, held in the summer of 1938. Remember, that was after the Moscow Trials and the crushing of the Spanish revolution. It was after the murderous purge of the whole generation of Bolsheviks, after the People's Front, the entry into the League of Nations, the Stalin-Laval pact (and betrayal of the French workers). We took our position on the basis of the economic structure of the country, the fruit of the revolution. The great gains are not to be surrendered before they are really lost. That is the fighting program of the Fourth International.

The Stalin-Hitler Pact

The Stalin-Hitler pact does not change anything fundamentally. If Stalin were allied with the United States, and comrades should deny defense of the Soviet Union out of fear of becoming involved in the defense of Stalin's American ally, such comrades would be wrong, but their position would be understandable as a subjective reaction prompted by revolutionary sentiments. The "defeatism" which broke out in our French section following the Stalin-Laval pact was undoubtedly so motivated and, consequently, had to be refuted with the utmost tolerance and patience. But an epidemic of "defeatism" in the democratic camp would be simply shameful. There is no pressure on us in America to defend the Soviet Union. All the pressure is for a democratic holy war against the Soviet Union. Let us keep this in mind. The main enemy is still in our own country.

What has happened since our last discussion? Has there been some fundamental change in Soviet economy? No, nothing of that kind is maintained. Nothing happened except that Stalin signed the pact with Hitler! For us that gave no reason whatever to change our analysis of Soviet economy and our attitude toward it. The aim of all our previous theoretical work, concentrated in our program, was precisely to prepare us for war and revolution. Now we have the war; and revolution is next in order. If we have to stop now to find a new program it is a very bad sign.

Just consider: There are people who could witness all the crimes and betray-

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als of Stalin, which we understood better than anybody else, and denounced before anybody else and more effectively—they could witness all this and still stand for the defense of the Soviet Union. But they could not tolerate the alliance with fascist Germany instead of imperialist England or France!

The Invasion of Poland

Of course, there has been a great hullabaloo about the Soviet invasion of Polish Ukraine. But that is simply one of the consequences of the war and the alliance with Hitler's Germany. The contention that we should change our analysis of the social character of the Soviet state and our attitude toward its defense because the Red Army violated the Polish border is even more absurd than to base such changes on the Hitler pact. The Polish invasion is only an incident in a war, and in wars borders are always violated (If all the armies stayed at home there could be no war.) The inviolability of borders—all of which were established by war—is interesting to democratic pacifists and to nobody else.

Hearing all the democratic clamor we had to ask ourselves many times: Don't they know that Western Ukraine and White Russia never rightfully belonged to Poland? Don't they know that this territory was forcibly taken from the Soviet Union by Pilsudski with French aid in 1920?

To be sure, this did not justify Stalin's invasion of the territory in collaboration with Hitler. We never supported that and we never supported the fraudulent claim that Stalin was bringing "liberation" to the peoples of the Polish Ukraine. At the same time we did not propose to yield an inch to the "democratic" incitement against the Soviet Union on the basis of the Polish events. The democratic war mongers were shrieking at top of their voices all over town. We must not be unduly impressed by this democratic clamor. Your National Committee was not in the least impressed.

In order to penetrate a little deeper into this question and trace it to its roots, let us take another hypothetical example. Not a fantastic one, but a very logical one. Suppose Stalin had made a pact with the imperialist democracies against Hitler while Rumania had allied itself with Hitler. Suppose, as would most probably have happened in that case, the Red Army had struck at Rumania, Hitler's ally, instead of Poland, the ally of the democracies, and had seized Bessarabia, which also once belonged to Russia. Would the democratic war mongers in that case have howled about "Red Imperialism"? Not on your life!

I am very glad that our National Committee maintained its independence from bourgeois democratic pressure on the Polish invasion. The question was put to us very excitedly, point-blank, like a pistol at the temple: "Are you for or against the invasion of Poland?" But revolutionary Marxists don't answer in a "yes" or "no" manner

which can lump them together with other people who pursue opposite aims. Being for or against something is not enough in the class struggle. It is necessary to explain *from what standpoint* one is for or against. Are you for or against racketeering gangsters in the trade unions?—the philistines sometimes ask. We don't jump to attention, like a private soldier who has met an officer on the street, and answer, "against!" We first inquire: who asks this question and from what standpoint? And what weight does this question have in relation to other questions? We have our own standpoint and we are careful not to get our answers mixed up with those of class enemies and pacifist muddleheads.

Some people—especially affected bosses—are against racketeering gangsters in the trade unions because they extort graft from the bosses. That side of the question doesn't interest us very much. Some people—especially pacifist preachers—are against the gangsters because they commit violence. But we are not against violence at all times and under all circumstances. We, for our part, taking our time and formulating our viewpoint precisely, say: We are against union gangsterism because it injures the union in its fight against the bosses. That is our reason. It proceeds from our special class standpoint on the union question.

So with Poland: We don't support the course of Stalin in general. His crime is not one incident here or there but his

whole policy. He demoralizes the workers' movement and discredits the Soviet Union. That is what we are against. He betrays the revolution by his whole course. Every incident for us fits into that framework; it is considered from that point of view and taken in its true proportions.

The Invasion of Finland

Those who take the Polish invasion—an incident in a great chain of events—as the basis for a fundamental change in our program show a lack of proportion. That is the kindest thing that can be said for them. They are destined to remain in a permanent lather throughout the war. They are already four laps behind schedule: There is also Latvia, and Estonia, and Lithuania, and now Finland.

We can expect another clamor of demands that we say, point-blank, and in one word, whether we are "for" or "against" the pressure on poor little bourgeois-democratic Finland. Our answer—wait a minute. Keep your shirt on. There is no lack of protests in behalf of the bourgeois swine who rule Finland. The *New Leader* has protested. Charles Yale Harrison has written a tearful column about it. The renegade Lore has wept about it in the *New York Post*. The President of the United States has protested. Finland is pretty well covered with moral support. So bourgeois Finland can wait a minute till we explain our attitude without bothering about the "for" or "against" ultimatum.

Vorkuta...

(continued from page 7)

arrested in more distant camps—at Pechora, Izhma, Kozhma, Chib-Yu, etc.—were kept near Chib-Yu.

The whole winter of 1937-38 some prisoners, encamped in barracks at the brickyard, starved and waited for a decision regarding their fate. Finally, in March, three NKVD officers, with Kashketin at their head, arrived by plane at Vorkuta, coming from Moscow. They came to the brickyard to interrogate the prisoners. Thirty to forty were called each day, superficially questioned five to ten minutes each, rudely insulted, forced to listen to vile name-calling and obscenities. Some were greeted with punches in the face; Lt. Kashketin himself several times beat up one of them, the Old Bolshevik Virap Virapov, a former member of the Central Committee of Armenia.

At the end of March, a list of twenty-five was announced, among them Gevorkian, Virapov, Slavin, etc.... To each was delivered a kilo of bread and orders to prepare himself for a new convoy. After fond farewells to their friends, they left the barracks, and the convoy departed. Fifteen or twenty minutes later, not far away, about half a kilometer, on the steep bank of the little river Verkhnyaya Vorkuta (Upper Vorkuta), an abrupt volley resounded, followed by isolated and disorderly shots; then all grew quiet again. Soon, the convoy's escort passed back near the barracks. And it was clear to all in what sort of convoy the prisoners had been sent.

Two days later, there was a new call, this time of forty names. Once more there was a ration of bread. Some, out of exhaustion, could no longer move; they were promised a ride in a cart. Holding their breath, the prisoners remaining in the barracks heard the grating of the snow under the feet of the departing convoy. For a long time there was no

sound; but all, on the watch, still listened. Nearly an hour passed in this way. Then, again, shots resounded in the tundra; this time they came from much further away, in the direction of the narrow railway which passed three kilometers from the brickyard. The second "convoy" definitely convinced those remaining behind that they had been irremediably condemned.

The executions in the tundra lasted the whole month of April and part of May. Usually one day out of two, or one day out of three, thirty to forty prisoners were called. It is characteristic to note that each time, some common criminals, repeaters, were included. In order to terrorize the prisoners, the GPU, from time to time, made publicly known by means of local radio, the list of those shot. Usually broadcasts began as follows: "For counterrevolutionary agitation, sabotage, brigandage in the camps, refusal to work, attempts to escape, the following have been shot..." followed by a list of names of some political prisoners mixed with a group of common criminals.

One time, a group of nearly a hundred, composed mainly of Trotskyists, was led away to be shot. As they marched away, the condemned sang the "Internationale," joined by the voices of hundreds of prisoners remaining in camp.

At the beginning of May, a group of women were shot. Among them were the Ukrainian Communist, Chumskaya, the wife of I.N. Smirnov, a Bolshevik since 1898 and ex-peoples' commissar; (Olga, the daughter of Smirnov, a young girl, apolitical, passionately fond of music, had been shot a year before in Moscow); the wives of Kossior, of Melnais, etc.... one of these women had to walk on crutches. At the time of execution of a male prisoner, his imprisoned wife was automatically liable to capital punishment; and when it was a question of well-known members of the Opposition, this applied equally to any of his children over the age of twelve.

In May, when hardly a hundred prisoners remained, the executions were interrupted. Two weeks passed quietly; then all the prisoners were led in a convoy to the mine. There it was learned that Yezhov had been dismissed, and that his place had been taken by Beria....

I personally feel very deeply about Finland, and this is by no means confined to the present dispute between Stalin and the Finnish Prime Minister. When I think of Finland, I think of the thousands of martyred dead, the proletarian heroes who perished under the white terror of Mannerheim. I would, if I could, call them back from their graves. Failing that, I would organize a proletarian army of Finnish workers to avenge them, and drive their murderers into the Baltic Sea. I would send the Red Army of the regenerated Soviet Union to help them at the decisive moment.

We don't support Stalin's invasion only because he doesn't come for revolutionary purposes. He doesn't come at the call of Finnish workers whose confidence he has forfeited. That is the only reason we are against it. The "borders" have nothing to do with it. "Defense" in war also means attack. Do you think we will respect frontiers when we make our revolution? If an enemy army lands troops at Quebec, for example, do you think we will wait placidly at the Canadian border for their attack? No, if we are genuine revolutionists and not pacifist muddleheads we will cross the border and meet them at the point of landing. And if our defense requires the seizure of Quebec, we will seize it as the Red Army of Lenin seized Georgia and tried to take Warsaw.

Foreseen in Program of Fourth International

Some may think the war and the alliance with Hitler change everything we have previously considered; that it, at least, requires a reconsideration of the whole question of the Soviet Union, if not a complete change in our program. To this we can answer:

War was contemplated by our program. The fundamental theses on "War and the Fourth International," adopted in 1934, say:

"Every big war, irrespective of its initial moves, must pose squarely the question of military intervention against the U.S.S.R. in order to transfuse fresh blood into the sclerotic veins of capitalism...."

"Defense of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labor organization."

Alliances were contemplated. The theses say:

"In the existing situation an alliance of the U.S.S.R. with an imperialist state or with one imperialist combination against another, in case of war, cannot at all be considered as excluded. Under the pressure of circumstances a temporary alliance of this kind may become an iron necessity, without ceasing, however, because of it, to be of the greatest danger both to the U.S.S.R. and to the world revolution."

"The international proletariat will not decline to defend the U.S.S.R. even if the latter should find itself forced into a military alliance with some imperialists against others. But in this case, even more than in any other, the international proletariat must safeguard its complete political independence from Soviet diplomacy and thereby also from the bureaucracy of the Third International."

A stand on defense was taken in the light of this perspective.

A slogan of defense acquires a concrete meaning precisely in the event of war. A strange time to drop it! That would mean a rejection of all our theoretical preparation for the war. That would mean starting all over again. From what fundamental basis? Nobody knows.

There has been much talk of "independence" on the Russian question. That is good! A revolutionist who is not independent is not worth his salt. But it is necessary to specify: Independent of whom? What is needed by our party at every turn is class independence, independence of the Stalinists, and, above all, independence of the bourgeoisie. Our program assures such independence under all circumstances. It shall not be changed! ■

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Free All Political Prisoners? What About Hubert Matos?

The following leaflet was distributed by the New York Spartacist League at a forum given by Peruvian socialist militant Hugo Blanco on 5 November 1977.

Tonight, as throughout his American tour, Hugo Blanco will be speaking under the banner of the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA). That banner states: "Free All Latin American Political Prisoners." This has been the position of USLA since it was formed in 1966 by the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

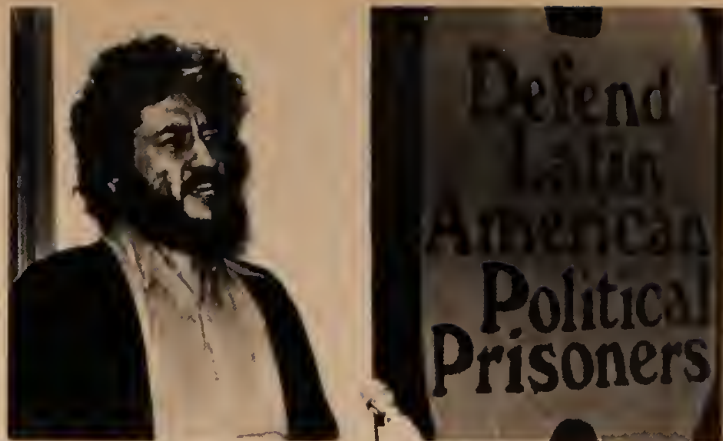
The slogan is a hallmark of "class-neutral" civil libertarianism as exemplified by Amnesty International. It is generally coupled with demands such as "stop totalitarianism on both sides of the Iron Curtain"—a slogan which denies the fundamental class difference between the degenerated and deformed workers states of the Soviet bloc and right-wing military dictatorships such as Chile. For Marxists—and anyone who bases himself on class criteria—not all political prisoners are the same. Since the Cuban deformed workers state is, if not the "first free territory of America," at least the only country where capitalist rule has been overthrown in this hemisphere; and since Blanco and the SWP claim to defend Cuba against *yanqui* imperialism, the question arises: do Blanco and USLA call for the freedom of "Latin American political prisoners" such as Cuban counterrevolutionary Hubert Matos?

For the past 18 years, Matos has been imprisoned in Cuba on clearly "political" grounds. Following the June 1959

expropriation of the very largest *latifundios* on the island, a right-wing opposition crystallized among military leaders of Castro's heterogeneous July 26 Movement. Matos, then military chief of Camagüey province, was to be the rallying point for the plotters—many of whom, like Manuel Rey, were to show up 18 months later at the Bay of Pigs in the company of former Batista torturers. It was for his role in this counterrevolutionary conspiracy that Matos was arrested.

Today the release of Matos is the calling card of every anti-communist "concerned democrat"—concerned, that is, with the restitution of Mafia-dominated capitalist rule on the island 90 miles from the Florida shore. The *New York Times* and Chilean butcher Pinochet have both championed his cause. For Marxists, advocating the "freedom" of this clearly political prisoner is as unthinkable as calling for the release of the sole remaining political prisoner in Berlin's Spandau prison, Rudolph Hess!

The question of demanding freedom for Matos (or, for example, fascists in Francoist jails and Georgian fascists locked up in the USSR) is central in determining the defense policies of those who claim to stand on the side of the working class. However, built on the SWP's reformist program of appeasing American liberals, USLA consciously rejects the class axis which has guided the defense work of revolutionary organizations in this country since the time of the International Labor Defense. The demand for the freeing of all political prisoners in Latin America or



Hugo Blanco speaking at forum in Boston.

WV Photo

elsewhere is of a piece with such "consistently democratic" reformism as the SWP's advocacy of "free speech" for murderous fascist scum.

In contrast, the Spartacist League (SL) and the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC) demand "Free all prisoners of right-wing repression." Unlike USLA and the SWP, the PDC—a class-struggle, anti-sectarian defense organization which is in accordance with the political views of the SL—has consistently drawn the class line in its defense activities. At the time of the Chilean coup, we unhesitatingly demonstrated in defense of imprisoned leaders of the MIR while other organizations (including USLA) were solidarizing only with the treacherous Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders who had led the workers organizations into the popular-front debacle. We also publicized the plight of a number of naval seamen and even high-level officers who were arrested (while Allende was still in power) for their refusal to go along with plans for the bloody September 11 coup. The PDC organized campaigns (from which the SWP and USLA criminally abstained) to rescue Chilean trade-union leader Mario Muñoz from the

clutches of the Videla junta in Argentina and to aid blinded Chilean militant socialist and trade unionist Fernando Marcos in his battle to regain his eyesight. In the 1960's when the SWP was basking in the popularity of the Cuban Revolution (labeling Castro an "unconscious Marxist"), it was the SL which fulfilled its revolutionary duties by defending Cuban supporters of Trotskyism who were languishing in the prisons of the *fidelista* Stalinists.

The American and European left must vigorously protest the murder of thousands of leftists and unionists, the torture of tens of thousands and the jailing of hundreds of thousands under the blood-stained military dictatorships which stretch across almost all of Latin America. But genuine solidarity with the victims of Pinochet, Videla, Stroessner and Co.—unlike the moralistic gesture of boycotting everything Chilean which Blanco is so fond of—must take as its point of departure the only force which can eradicate once and for all the brutality of militarist bonapartist rule, the working class.

So, Comrade Blanco, we pose the question: Free *all* political prisoners? What about Hubert Matos? ■

Butcher Shah...

(continued from page 12)

and daughters of prisoners in front of them.

By no means all of the inhabitants of the SAVAK's torture chambers began as oppositionists. Thousands of artists, teachers and writers who were suspected of being critical of Iranian society have been "interrogated." Sometimes they are charged with not having been sufficiently laudatory of the monarch and his "White Revolution." An Iranian poet and professor writes: "Almost all the prominent writers and poets of the country have suffered incarceration and torture at the hands of SAVAK agents in recent years.... In Iran one cannot stage Hamlet, Richard III or Macbeth because no Iranian should see the death of a prince or a king on the stage" (Reza Baraheni, *Crowned Cannibals* [1977]).

The Shah has long sought to pose, with the aid of U.S. publicity agents, as a social reformer. But the hundreds of thousands of imprisoned and tortured oppositionists, and the Pahlavi dynasty's combination of banana republic-style corruption and grandiloquent posturing as heirs to the ancient Persian empire (the present Shah's father took power in a palace coup in the 1920's), make a mockery of Carter's "human rights" crusade. This grotesque torture regime is strategically vital for the primary aim of the U.S. policy: isolating and pressuring the USSR. Iran is not only Western imperialism's policeman of the Persian Gulf, where its troops and jets sustain the tottering sultanate of

Oman, but a major component (together with Turkey and Pakistan) of the string of U.S. allies along the southern frontier of the Soviet Union.

Maoists and Nationalists in Crisis

Ever since the 1953 CIA-engineered coup which reinstalled the Shah on his throne, the Iranian student movement has hurled itself against the bloody regime. In the mid-1960's the Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS) broke with the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh (Masses) Party, criticizing the Soviet trade deals with Iran and the Kremlin's reluctant refusal to politically attack the Shah. But, tragically, many of these

militants who then turned to Maoism have since hardened into fanatical defenders of the Sino-Iranian alliance.

Beginning in 1971, Peking began its treacherous course of supporting the Shah as a bulwark against "Soviet social-imperialism," as the pages of *Peking Review* spewed forth Mao's full support to Iranian "defense" policies (directed against the USSR). In late 1973, Peking abruptly ended all Chinese aid to the Peoples Front for the Liberation of Oman, which was fighting a guerrilla war against the sultan and his Iranian, British and Jordanian backers. This accumulation of betrayals by the Mao-Stalinists shattered the CIS and its American affiliate, the ISA.

The issue came to a head at the sixteenth conference of the CIS, held in January 1975 in Europe, when hard-line Maoists put forward a resolution stating that one of the most important tasks of the confederation was "to expose the reactionary policies of the Soviet Union." This was defeated by a majority grouped under the name of the "National Front," which included some critical Maoists, others with politics parallel to the U.S. Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and various guerrillaists with less defined politics. A motion was passed proposing to "direct the main blow against U.S. imperialism, the number one enemy of the peoples of the world, while exposing the anti-revolutionary policies of the Soviet Union whenever necessary."

Within the United States, the ISA splintered into a half-dozen factions, particularly under the impact of the purge of the "Gang of Four" in Peking. While the largest grouping is sympathetic to the RCP, and shares its ostrich-like agnosticism on the events of

the last year in China, a group on the West Coast calling itself the Union of Iranian Students has split, condemning China's foreign policy outright as "reactionary" and backing Albania. Simultaneously there has been a split in one of the groups which presented a hard pro-Peking front, the Toufahn group. A slavishly pro-Hua tendency recently expelled by the group revealed that Toufahn sent a confidential letter of protest to China after the visit of the Shah's notoriously bloodthirsty sister in 1971, and is now allegedly also backing the Gang of Four. As for the expelled group, it raves about American "appeasement" of the USSR and advocates striking "the main blow at the Munich policy!"

Despite their differences, what unites all the splinters of the ISA and CIS is a shared commitment to the strategy of "two-stage" revolution to overthrow the monarchy and install a revival of the 1951-53 "National Front" government

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Smash Administration Anti-Red Ban!

Armed Cops Throw SYL Leader Off Chicago Campus

CHICAGO—On October 27 Spartacus Youth League (SYL) spokesman Sandor John was thrown off the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus (UICC) by armed policemen. The university administration announced that he was "permanently barred" and would be arrested for criminal trespass if he ever set foot on UICC property again. As John was "escorted" off the grounds, one of the cops warned: "If we get any more complaints from these people [the university administration] about you being in the building or on campus, you will be locked up."

When he was nabbed by university authorities the SYL spokesman was engaged in a conversation in an area of the campus traditionally used by political groups. Approaching from behind, UICC administrator Willie McKay fingered John as a "non-student" to the campus cops he had brought along to do the dirty work. The accusation of being a "non-student" is a complete fraud at this sprawling commuter campus frequented by many who are not enrolled for classes.

Further, the building is open to the general public and John has regularly carried on political work of the SYL—an officially recognized UICC student organization—on campus. The charge of "outside agitator" is one of the oldest ploys in the book of redbaiting. The administration action against Sandor John and the Spartacus Youth League is an outrageous violation of democratic rights and a crude attempt to intimidate all left-wing groups on campus. If this anti-red ban is not broken, UICC authorities will be emboldened in their McCarthyite purge of "undesirables."

Recognizing the threat posed by the "permanent bar," a number of campus organizations and individuals attended a meeting on November 3 initiated by

the SYL. Representatives of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) and the UICC student government, as well as students from the Union for Mexican-Chicano Students and the Circle Women's Liberation Union (CWL) attended the meeting, which formed an ad hoc Committee to Stop Administration Harassment. The purpose of the Committee is to mobilize protest around the slogans: End the administration's harassment of the left and campus organizations! Stop the administration's anti-communist "ban" on Sandor John! While the Maoist Revolutionary Student Brigade left the meeting without comment, the united-front Committee has been endorsed by the SYL, YSA, the student government, Janis Gutfreund of the CWL and left-wing professor Julia LeSage. More endorsements are being gathered along with signatures to a protest petition.

The meeting "adjourned" to an administration meeting, where the students confronted assembled bureaucrats and underlings with the Committee demands. Administrator Stanford Delaney excused himself from responding, saying that it would take too long to explain the university's position. But the administration's position is quite clear: they want "reds" off campus. As the most active left group on campus, especially in defense of busing, the SYL has become the first target of an escalating witchhunt. The ad hoc Committee is equally clear in its purpose: it intends to mobilize the necessary support to crack the administration's anti-communist ban. A public meeting has been called for November 10 by the Committee to Stop Administration Harassment.

Smash the anti-red ban at Circle Campus! Cops off campus, not the left! ■

of the "anti-imperialist" landlord Mossadegh. With the possible exception of the hard-Maoists, they support the petty-bourgeois nationalist guerrilla organizations; the Organization of Iranian People's Fedayeen [Self-Sacrificing] Guerrillas (OIPFG) and the Organization of Majahdeen [Combatants] of the People of Iran (OMPI). Although the OIPFG was founded by young would-be Marxist intellectuals, while the OMPI only declared itself to be "Marxist-Leninist" in 1975 (it had previously styled itself "Islamic-Marxist"), they are both engaged in a fruitless search for the "progressive," "anti-imperialist" petty-bourgeois and "national bourgeois."

But the utterly corrupt, servile Iranian comprador bourgeoisie is incapable of leading a democratic revolution in the age of imperialism. Mossadegh, while partially expropriating the oil industry, did not carry out land reform or arm the masses, thus paving the way for his own overthrow. The working class alone can lead the struggle of the oppressed, granting land to the peasantry, recognizing the national rights of oppressed nationalities (Azerbaijanis, Kurds) and breaking with imperialism, by establishing its own class rule.

The road forward for Iran would be revolutionary: is the road of Trotskyism, not the pseudo-Trotskyism of the Socialist Workers Party and its satellite, the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI). Because of its bourgeois civil-libertarian

orientation, CAIFI refuses to defend the Iranian guerrilla fighters from the Shah's repression, and it shares the Stalin-Menshevik two-stage theories of the rest of the Iranian left. The international Spartacist tendency, in contrast, stands for the Marxist revolutionary perspective of permanent revolution, for workers rule in Iran as the only means of achieving the democratic and anti-imperialist demands of the Iranian toilers.

Hands off Iranian militants—Free all victims of the Shah's white terror! No U.S. arms to the Shah! Down with the bloody Pahlavis! For a workers and peasants government in Iran! ■

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Dissidents Appeal...

(continued from page 5)

with its indirect appeal to the world's foremost imperialists are none other than some of the leaders of the liberal wing of the Czechoslovak Communist Party who came to the fore during 1968. At that time Dubcek and his cohorts claimed to be creating "socialism with a human face"... in one country.

Actually, the main aim of the Dubekites was to "reform" the Czechoslovak economy so badly mismanaged by the Novotny bureaucracy. In particular the Dubcek regime wanted to increase the role of market forces in the economy inherited from the Stalin era, to shut down outmoded plants, to import new technology and to speed up the workforce. Novotny was consequently able to keep some support in the factories for a period by pointing out the intent of Dubcek's economic planners.

The successful struggle against the Novotny wing of the bureaucracy of necessity required that the Dubekites dismantle or neutralize the secret police. Thus the "Prague Spring" presented the novel situation of liberal Stalinist reformers bent on speeding up the Czechoslovak working class, but without the police force to impose their aims. This situation was explosive, and it was the spectacle of Stalinists without cops which impelled the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies to stage the August 1968 invasion. Brezhnev and Ulbricht had no intention of letting the blossoms

of the "Prague Spring" bear the harvest of a "Budapest October."

The brutal Russian-bloc intervention succeeded in cutting short the otherwise inevitable conflicts between the Dubcek bureaucracy and the Czechoslovak proletariat. It also succeeded, however, in conserving the utopian illusions of many in the Dubcek camp that, save for the Kremlin invasion, the bureaucracy could have been peacefully reformed into a social-democratic paradise. The limits of liberal Stalinism so evident in Tito's Yugoslavia were unable to manifest themselves because of that intervention.

The tragedy is that these illusions are catered to in the name of Trotskyism by the opportunist United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel & Co. Both the American SWP and the former International Majority Tendency have shamelessly tailed after and apologized for the former bureaucrats of Charter 77, not only excusing their appeals to U.S. imperialism to "guarantee human rights" but also catering to their illusions that Stalinism can be reformed.

Genuine Trotskyists take as their starting point two intertwined aims: to defend unconditionally the historic gains already embodied in the deformed workers states and to renew and extend the Russian October through revolutionary action of the proletariat: political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies in the Sino-Soviet states and socialist revolution to overthrow capitalist imperialism elsewhere. Those who instead look to the "democratic" imperialists are traitors to the socialist future.

The extreme touchiness which the



Volker Kramer

Russian troops outside of Prague radio station in August 1968.

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Stalinists manifest whenever the question of the most elementary democratic rights is posed is a direct reflection of these usurpers' role as a parasitic bureaucratic caste that has politically expropriated the proletariat. Exactly because the Stalinists are a caste and not a class, and one which maintains it is carrying out the socialist rule of the proletariat while it is in fact trampling any and all proletarian democracy underfoot, the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states are highly unstable, requiring the Stalinists to deploy massive police forces.

For this reason we raise the banner of proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist usurpers and restore soviet democracy. To accomplish this it is necessary to construct Trotskyist parties in the USSR and the deformed workers states. The experiences of Berlin 1953, Hungary 1956, Poland 1956 and 1970, and Czechoslovakia 1968 clearly confirm this as an iron imperative. The crisis of revolutionary leadership extends to the East. It will not be eliminated by tailing muddleheaded Stalinist bureaucrats who dream of "socialism with a human face" in one country and grovel before the liberal imperialists. Only the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International will assemble the revolutionary cadres able to sweep Stalinism from the face of the planet. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

20 Iranian Students Savagely Beaten, Arrested by Chicago Cops

Avenge Victims of Butcher Shah!

In a massive display of official brutality, some 300 Chicago cops attacked a group of 40 Iranian students and their supporters at the YMCA Central Community College on October 28. Evening TV newscasts caught the cops in frenzied action, dragging the demonstrators by the hair, kicking them in the face and head, or poking billy clubs in students' stomachs and groins while others struck and kicked the same victim. Twenty demonstrators, all but three of them Iranian, were arrested, and were reportedly beaten again after they reached the police station. Thirteen of the Iranians were injured, and four protesters were hospitalized, one of them for a week after the incident.

Charges "ranging from mob action to interfering with police" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 October) have been levied against those arrested in this blatant cop riot. The mere arrest of these students raises an immediate threat of deportation. If deported, they face certain imprisonment, likely torture and in many cases death in the Shah's dungeons. The left and labor movement must demand that all charges be dropped, and all victimization of the Iranian militants be stopped now! There must be no deportations. We demand political asylum for all left opponents of the butcher Shah!

Chicago, of course, is a city where the police daily terrorize the black and Spanish-speaking population with impunity. But the degree of viciousness and the large number of students arrested on October 28 has a specific political message. The demonstration was called by two wings of the Iranian Students Association (ISA) to protest increasing harassment by the YMCA College administration and the upcoming November 15-16 visit by the Shah to Washington, D.C. The ISA has held a series of forums and demonstrations around the city, including a demonstration of more than a hundred on November 5 to mobilize as many people as possible for a demonstration in the capital.

The arrests of the ISA demonstrators in Chicago is merely the beginning of a wave of victimization of Iranian students around the royal visit. The Chicago Red Squad, in particular, has a long and well-documented history of spying on Iranian students and has also been linked, along with the FBI, to the



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SAVAK (Persian acronym for Iranian State Security Organization). In Chicago, students organizing for the Washington demonstration and sympathizers who intend to accompany them have received anonymous threatening phone calls during the past few weeks.

SAVAK agents are undoubtedly busily preparing for the Shah's visit. Following the September 1976 Washington, D.C. bomb assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier—in which all leads point to the bloody hand of Pinochet's DINA—the Iranian autocrat brazenly boasted that his agents are active in the U.S., infiltrating organizations opposed to his murderous regime. SAVAK activities go far beyond spying. Last year the CBS television program *Sixty Minutes* documented that assassination squads had been dispatched to the United States and Europe to liquidate opponents of the Shah's reign of terror.

In conjunction with harassment of Iranian student militants, the Shah,



WV Photo

infuriated by ISA-organized demonstrations which greeted his wife when she visited the U.S. earlier this year, has an additional tactic. His plan is to distract media attention from the protest demonstrations by attempting to insure that there will be supporters of the Shah demonstrating in Washington as well. According to the ISA, the SAVAK is offering an all-expense-paid "holiday weekend," including air fare, hotel lodging, meals and \$100 in cash to Iranians in the U.S. for participation in this "welcome the Shah" project. The financial arrangements vary from city to city, and in some cases people willing to go to Washington are offered a flat \$600.

Carter's "Human Rights" Equals Shah's While Terror

The Washington visit by Shah Reza Pahlavi underscores American imperialism's role in propping up its Iranian client state, ranging from cop and FBI repression of Iranian militants in the U.S. to its sale of billions of dollars

worth of sophisticated weaponry to the Shah's army. According to Senate estimates, the number of American military advisors and intelligence-related personnel in Iran will reach 60,000 by 1980. It is not accidental that Carter has appointed William Sullivan—who, as ambassador to Laos, oversaw both the secret U.S. air war and the CIA's organizing of anti-communist mercenary armies of Laotian and Meo tribesmen—as the new ambassador to Tehran.

The scale of repression in Iran is truly staggering. Amnesty International reports that the Shah's jails entomb as many as 100,000 political prisoners, with more than 300,000 locked up at one time or another in the 19-year existence of the SAVAK. This would be the equivalent of roughly 2 million political prisoners in the U.S. More than 600 official executions have taken place in Iran since 1971, making it the international capital of legal murder. In addition countless more die at the hands of secret police torturers.

SAVAK "interrogators" employ all the traditional forms of torture, such as ripping out toenails and fingernails, breaking bones, beatings and rape. But in addition they have made some unique contributions of their own, rivaling in this respect the murderous military regime in Brazil. In one torture a heavy weight is hung from the testicles of a prisoner, almost instantly maiming him; another procedure involves burning holes in the victim's face with a red-hot iron rod, while a third technique burns a victim on a device resembling a bed frame. When all the varieties of physical torture have been exhausted, they supplement it with psychological torture, such as taking a prisoner before a firing squad as if to execute him. One particularly vicious weapon employed by the secret police of this "urbane" monarch is to torture and rape the wives

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