

It's Official

Spanish CP Goes "Eurocommunist"

Reformist Betrayers by Any Other Name...

In his three-hour report to the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), the first to be held inside the country under conditions of legality in 46 years, PCE leader Santiago Carrillo summed up the party's new orientation: "We have opted, with all the consequences, to build an authentic 'Eurocommunist' party." In adopting a series of 15 theses submitted by the central committee, the 1,500 delegates approved Carrillo's policy of a "negotiated breakthrough" with the Suárez government; accepted the monarchy; endorsed the "Paet of Moncloa," a joint economic and political program signed by the cabinet and the "opposition"; and formally renounced Leninism. In his report Carrillo underlined that remaining loyal to the party's origins "does not mean today dependence on any particular socialist state nor acceptance of a specific leading center" (*Mundo Obrero*, 20 April).

The purpose of the congress was threefold: to formalize the party's adherence to Carrillo's Eurocommunist policies, to demonstrate to the bourgeoisie the moderation and commitment to "democracy" of the PCE leadership, and to begin the homogenization of the ranks through allowing a modicum of debate and opposition. Overall the operation must be judged a success, as the theses passed easily, the imperialist media were duly impressed and the extent of tolerated internal debate and opposition easily surpassed anything experienced in a Stalinist party. However, the international projection of the PCE's Ninth Congress is as yet undetermined (with both the Italian and French Communist leaders reacting coolly to Carrillo's initiative), and the level of internal dissidence raises the possibility of large splits to the left.

Burying Leninism

The main axis of the debate during the congress and the preceding discussion was over the question of "Leninism." The term must be placed in quotation marks, for while the leadership was frank in its rejection of every one of Lenin's contributions to Marxism, the opposition was far from



PCE functionaries applaud opening of the 9th Congress in Madrid.

UPI

presenting an authentic Leninist program. Since the PCE for the last 50 years had known only the anti-Leninist practices and program of Stalinism, the debate was largely symbolic. However, the proposal in thesis no. 15 to abandon the self-description of "Marxist-Leninist" and replace it with "Marxist, revolutionary and democratic," was intended to (and did) represent a formal renunciation of proletarian revolution.

Thus the discussion, taken together with the PCE's earlier renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, confirmed that the party is wholly committed to defending the rule of its "own" bourgeoisie, to the exclusion of any competing loyalties to the Kremlin bureaucracy of the Soviet Union. The merit of Carrillo is the directness with which he has posed the questions. Thus in his speech at the central committee meeting of January 21-22 he specifically rejected the conception of a "centralized international party, ruled by a strong discipline as in the Communist International," and also the idea of "a revolutionary, proletarian party as vanguard of

the revolution." He concludes:

"And it is true that we, and not only we but also other Communist parties of the West, also have not practised Leninism as a global strategy inspiring our strategy."

"It is obvious that for many years in a whole series of concrete aspects of our practical political struggle we have dropped concrete Leninist conceptions."

In his summary remarks Carrillo challenged those who opposed the proposed change:

"If there is opposition in the party to what we are agreeing to today, I only ask one thing of them, that they be consistent and say, 'yes to the dictatorship of the proletariat!'; and that they say, 'yes to the Communist International!'; and that they say 'yes, take power through armed insurrection!'; and that they say, 'yes, the policy which the party has followed all these long years is wrong!'"

Mundo Obrero, 26 January

The general secretary did not find any takers for his challenge. He did, however, run into considerable opposition in some of the main party strongholds. In Asturias, home province of both

Carrillo and PCE president Dolores Ibarruri (La Pasionaria of Spanish Civil War fame), the party branches in the three main cities (Oviedo, Gijón and Avilés) opposed dropping the label "Marxist-Leninist." On March 29 the press in the Andalusian city of Málaga printed a statement by 200 party members strongly denouncing the PCE leaders for excessive criticisms of the Soviet Union. Subsequently the provincial congresses of Badajoz and Soria, two peasant regions, also rejected thesis 15.

But the center of opposition was Catalonia, the northeastern industrial region which supplied eight of the Communists' 20 deputies in the Cortes (national parliament). The semi-autonomous PSUC (Socialist Unity Party of Catalonia) has 46,000 members out of a national total of 200,000. Thus the PCE leadership was understandably shocked when the PSUC conference at the end of March reaffirmed its self-designation as Marxist and Leninist, by a vote of 97 to 81 on its central

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committee. This vote led to a mass resignation by PSUC president Gregorio López Raimundo, general secretary Antonio Gutiérrez Díaz and the entire executive committee! Finally, after a week of closed-door meetings, the CC of the Catalan party voted a second motion endorsing thesis 15 and declaring:

"There does not exist a basic contradiction between the amendments voted by the First National Conference of the PSUC and the thesis of the PCE."

Mundo Obrero, 13-19 March 1978

Eurocommunist Congress

Under a huge banner proclaiming, "A Communist Discussion for Democracy and Socialism," the PCE Congress opened on April 19 at the sumptuous Mella-Castilla Hotel in Madrid. Carrillo also played up the democracy theme in his report and grandiloquently offered to step down as general secretary if that is what the delegates wanted. In his own defense, however, he declared that "instead of making this an open, transparent, democratic party the leadership team could have made this a hermetic party, closed, without any possibility of dissent." This did not impress some of the delegates, however, who argued that if the leadership could do all that by itself it could also undo it by itself (*Le Monde*, 23-24 April).

Anti-leadership sentiment was reportedly widespread in the regional conferences, although considerably less prominent in the congress itself. In Asturias 115 of the 500 delegates walked out of a meeting in response to the peremptory intervention of Simón Sánchez Montero, a leading Carrillo lieutenant. At the PSUC conference in Barcelona there were even objections to Carrillo's participation in defense of his Eurocommunist theses, seeing as he was formally only a member of a "fraternal party." In the Madrid provincial conference there were protests over the imposition of Sánchez Montero as head of the regional organization.

At the congress itself there was substantial grumbling among the delegates at the political analysis presented by the leadership. Thesis 1, which evaluated the current political situation in Spain, was criticized for its "triumphalism"—i.e., its claim that the regime had achieved the PCE's goal of a "democratic breakthrough," although by different means! Amendments to this thesis insisted on the important role played by mass mobilizations in winning gains such as the legalization of the PCE. Thesis 4, which praised the Pact of Moncloa (and thus the wage-restraint austerity plan endorsed and enforced by the PCE), was revised in commission to delete an entire passage which praised the benefits of the pact. These benefits, said the delegates, had not been realized since the program had only partially been put into effect.

The ostentatious show of democracy at the congress was only partly for the benefit of the press. It was also a symptom of the considerable heterogeneity of the PCE, which has multiplied

several-fold since the death of Franco in late 1975. The party ranks have swelled with younger members not brought up in the school of Stalinism. For now considerable dissension is tolerated (although 23 of the Málaga dissidents were suspended for their anti-leadership declaration), but the PCE bureaucracy under Carrillo is visibly concerned to impose some "order" on their unruly party. This has already begun with the installation of large numbers of union officials of the Workers Commissions (CC OO.) as delegates and provincial-level party officials, often replacing dissident intellectuals.

Another evidence of the party apparatus' shaky control is the upsurge of nationalist sentiment inside the party. In addition to the PSUC and the Galician and Basque sections of the party—each of which have traditionally had their own central committee—in the last year sections have been organized in



PCE leader Santiago Carrillo

Asturias, Andalucía, the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands as well. Nationalist sentiment in the Basque region is so strong that the old centralist leadership was removed last year and the "abertzale" (Basque nationalist) leaders have been calling for self-determination for the region, in opposition to the official PCE position of autonomy.

Thesis 15

By the time the delegates had been sifted, the strong opposition in the provincial and regional conferences to removing the term "Marxist-Leninist" (averaging well over one third of the delegates) had been considerably reduced in size and vehemence. In addition to the label, said Manuel Azcárate, the head of international relations of the PCE and the second most prominent exponent of the Eurocommunist line next to Carrillo, it is necessary to purify the PCE of other connotations of the word Leninist: taking power through armed struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the worker-peasant alliance, the hegemony of the working class. In the place of these phrases (long since emptied of Leninist content in reformist practice of the Stalinists) the PCE now uses the windy phrase "the alliance of the forces of labor and culture."

The actual debate over "Leninism" was quite short—ten minutes in all—with the party leadership allowing only one speaker against thesis 15, Francisco Frutos of the PSUC. Significantly he argued that Leninism and Eurocommunism are compatible, a clear absurdity since one of the key aspects of Carrillo's line has been to generalize to the level of vulgar social-democratic "theory" the reformist class collaboration long practiced by the Stalinists. The job of responding to this pathetic pseudo-"Leninist" fell to the unpopular Sánchez Montero, who shocked the delegates out of their seats by repeating Lenin's remark at the time the Russian Bolsheviks changed the name of their party from Social Democracy to Communist: "It is necessary to take off a dirty shirt and put on clean clothes."

(This penchant for inappropriate quotes from the Marxist classics seems to be universal among the theoretical

midgets of the PCE leadership. In justifying the abandonment of Leninism Carrillo remarked that so much had changed since World War I, in fact, "the earth has risen on new foundations" paraphrasing a line from the *Internationale* referring to the triumph of the revolution!)

In the final vote, 968 delegates voted in favor of thesis 15 and 248 against. In the elections to the 45-member executive committee, however, not one representative of the "Leninist minority" was included.

Significance of the Ninth Congress

The immediate international impact of the Ninth Congress of the Spanish Communist Party has not been great. The two other main West European parties associated with the term "Eurocommunism," the French and Italian, had already cooled to Carrillo's abrasive attitude toward the Soviet Union some time ago. At the "Eurocommunist summit" in Madrid in July 1976, PCF leader Marchais and PCI leader Berlinguer refused to agree to a PCE request for a joint condemnation of the Kremlin's repression of dissidents. And when Carrillo was refused permission to speak at the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow, Berlinguer refused to issue a joint protest with the Spanish Communist leader.

At the recent congress the PCI message of greetings referred to "differences, even profound ones... in the political propositions" of the two parties (*Corriere della Sera*, 21 April). This was interpreted as a criticism of the elimination of the phrase "Marxist-Leninist" from the PCE constitution. Carrillo's relations with the French party have been even more strained, as the PCE blamed Marchais for the defeat of the Union of the Left in the March parliamentary elections. The PCF response came in a commentary on the Madrid congress:

"Erasing all the specific ideological character of the Spanish CP, proposing to the Socialists to forget about the 1921 split and to construct a common labor party. Carrillo hopes to overcome electoral disadvantages. In substance he undertook the inverse operation from that undertaken by the Communists in France to gain new ground."

L'Humanité, 20 April

The key international reaction, however, will come from Moscow, and it appeared that there was a tacit non-aggression pact between Carrillo and Brezhnev during the PCE congress. Thus there was not one direct criticism of the Soviet Union during the proceedings, and only the single objection to subordination to "a particular socialist state" in Carrillo's report. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) sent a generally friendly greeting which, however, stated elliptically:

"The guarantee for the democratic transformation of the struggle for social progress is the existence of a strong and combative Communist Party which follows the scientific theories of Marxism-Leninism..."

The message couldn't be clearer, but the version of the message published in the PCE's *Mundo Obrero* left out the offending passage!

During the congress itself the leader of the CPSU delegation, *Pravda* editor Viktor Afanasiev, was frequently sought out by the press for commentary which he gave freely. Making it clear that he was no "liberal" by Kremlin standards, Afanasiev remarked baldly, "In the Soviet Union we suffer from an excess of democracy!" Asked what he thought of the discussion during the congress, he replied dryly:

"Some discussions are useful, others not. I am afraid that a discussion on principles will only weaken the party. The strength of a Communist Party rests on its unity. But I did not find very great unity in the course of the congress."

Le Monde, 25 April

The Soviet delegate mentioned in passing that he had given out several hundred Lenin pins to Congress participants who had asked him for them in the

corridors!

Carefully using every opportunity to make a positive remark about Carrillo (such as praising the PCF's empty phrase about the "unity of labor and culture"), at the same time Afanasiev was careful to place a question mark at the key points. Asked whether the PCE was becoming a social-democratic party, he replied that "the policies which it has applied up to now do not indicate that it has ceased to be revolutionary. We will see what happens next."

Neither side wished to make this meeting the occasion for a dramatic break. Nevertheless, it is clear that the intention of the PCE leadership was to make this the "Eurocommunist congress." Before the vote on removing the label "Marxist-Leninist," the Soviet chief delegate told the Madrid paper *Informaciones*, "Eurocommunism does not exist." (His arguments were that neither Marchais nor Berlinguer attended a significant fact—and Carrillo mentioned the term only once in his lengthy report.) After the vote on thesis 15, Carrillo retorted, "We have demonstrated that Eurocommunism exists" (*Corriere della Sera*, 23 April).

While the Ninth Congress marks the formalization of the PCE's shift from Stalinism—which has already provoked small splits by party leaders Enrique Lister and Eduardo García and threatens to produce considerably larger splits as the Carrillo bureaucracy asserts its control—both now and when it first put forward the policy of "national reconciliation" during the late 1950's and during the Spanish Civil War the party has remained true to its heritage: as a sworn enemy of proletarian revolution. The grandmotherly Pasionaria, who today presides over a party which champions "classless" democracy, was the rabid witchhunter of Trotskyists and anarchists during the 1930's. These blood crimes cannot be wiped away. And the role of the PCE in frustrating the powerful surge toward a general strike against the Francoist regime in 1976-77 is neither more nor less counterrevolutionary than its role in smashing the Barcelona uprising of 1937.

The future of Eurocommunism as an international current is not yet decided. In any case, this category—vague as it is, corresponding to a journalistic invention rather than a scientific characterization—is no resting place; it can only be an intermediary position in the process of the social democratization of the Stalinist parties. But while the French and Italian CP's are evidently not prepared to take such a dramatic step as the PCE's flamboyant renunciation of "Leninism," it is clear that in the case of Carrillo's party a definitive break with the Moscow bureaucracy has taken place, so that it can no longer be termed Stalinist. Moreover this is asserted in the controversial thesis 15.

"...We reject as something alien to Marxism the phenomenon of bureaucratism and Stalinism. We Spanish communists, thanks to self-criticism, have surmounted Stalinism and are in the process of recovering the democratic and anti-bureaucratic essence of Marxism."

This is clearly more than a Khrushchevite rejection of a "cult of the personality." Today Trotsky's picture can appear in the pages of the PCE journal *Vuestra Bandera* and Carrillo can even say in his book, *Eurocommunism and the State*, that it was a myth that Trotsky was a Nazi agent and that "It is high time that Trotsky's role in the Revolution was presented in an objective manner." But the evolution of the Spanish Communist Party is in no sense to the left. Santiago Carrillo has made his choice between the "Third Rome" of the Kremlin and his "own" bourgeoisie. As the PCE has made clear throughout the post-Franco period, it seeks to be the most reliable support for the state which has emerged from the Francoist dictatorship, "whatever the consequences." Santiago Carrillo is a Eurocommunist "for king and country"—and not for the USSR. ■

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12 May 1978

Brittle Pinochet Junta Arrests 600

2,000 Rally on May Day in Santiago



Carabineros lead away anti-junta demonstrators.

Vergara/Hoy Magazine

For the first time since the blood-drenched Chilean junta seized power in 1973, May Day was celebrated on the streets of Santiago this year. As hundreds of street demonstrators braved police forays and the near certainty of arrest, over 2,000 opponents of Pinochet's reign of terror crowded into a nearby church to hear speeches by trade-union leaders and defiantly chant "Freedom! Freedom!" Police armed with billy clubs descended upon the street rally (which had been forbidden by the Minister of the Interior, Sergio Fernández), arresting more than 600 workers and union officials, but chose to round up the organizers of the indoor meeting only after it had broken up.

The May Day protests were held in defiance of the official government "celebration" of the traditional day of labor solidarity. The junta had planned to use May Day as a "human rights" media event, granting illusory "collective bargaining rights" for unionized workers and lifting the government straitjacket on the unions "if the economy allows." But the militant working-class protest organized by pre-coup union leaders forced the Pinochet junta to reveal its true face: eyewitnesses reported the vicious clubbing of many demonstrators, and those arrested run the grave risk of police and DINA reprisals.

The police repression was, however,

noticeably restrained as compared to the torture and "disappearance" of victims which became standard practice following the massive bloodbath at the time of the 11 September 1973 overthrow of Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular government. Under the impact of international isolation, continued economic chaos and the seething discontent of the Chilean working masses, Pinochet's rule has begun to fray—with widespread talk of dissent reaching into the upper echelons of the junta itself. Without any semblance of mass popular support for the dictatorship, Pinochet has attempted to adapt the junta's rule to satisfy the "human rights" veneer of his American patron, Jimmy Carter. In January there was the much touted plebiscite in which the population was forced to the polls for a rigged "electoral consultation." Last month an American right-winger living in Chile was handed over to U.S. authorities as the Pinochet regime tried to forestall the growing international scandal over its complicity in the Washington murder of Orlando Letelier. Now Pinochet has pledged an "amnesty" for political prisoners and exiles and a new constitution by year's end, while prominent members of the Communist Party (CP) rounded up in the last two years sit in jail. The international Spartacist tendency demands the immediate release of CP leaders Victor Díaz López, Exequiel Ponce, Mario Zamorano, Jorge Muñoz, Jose Weibel, Fernando Ortiz and Carlos Lorca (of the Socialist Youth of Chile)—as well as all victims of junta terror!

In response to the slackening of the junta's iron grip, the Chilean labor movement has slowly begun to revive. Last November copper miners at the huge El Teniente mine went out on strike, and former union leaders have attempted to press the government for collective bargaining rights. The May Day protests were thus an important challenge to the junta's efforts to dress up its image for foreign consumption. The organizers of the protest which included the president of the Maritime Workers Union Eduardo Rios (a long-time associate of the CIA-front AFLD) the head of the railway workers union Ernesto Vogel and the former leader of the central labor federation (CUT) Clotario Blest—invited visiting Spanish and Scottish trade unionists to participate in the protests and thus forced the image-conscious junta to create an international incident with its repression. Moreover, the police dragnet at



Gamra

General Pinochet.

12 May 1978

Virginia Miners Still Out After Five Months

Coal Bosses Try to Crack National Bargaining

More than a month after the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) concluded its nationwide strike, some 250 miners in Lee County, Virginia are still walking the picket lines in a fight to fend off a contract even inferior to the one signed by Arnold Miller. The operators of seven small mining companies near St. Charles, who in the past were signatories to the contract negotiated nationally with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), are demanding individual agreements from the striking union locals. Currently no negotiations are being conducted and the miners are standing by their militant traditions: no contract, no work.

The key issue in the strike is the refusal of the operators to continue to pay royalties into the UMWA health and retirement funds. The operators are demanding that the miners be enrolled not only in commercial health insurance plans, which Miller accepted in the nationwide contract, but in company-by-company pension plans as well. Under such a policy, service time accumulated would not be transferable were a miner forced to work elsewhere, and pensions would be tied to the fate of the individual companies, thereby dampening militancy. "They say they're going to set up their own pension trust," one miner told *WV*. "Naturally, when you go into that, they can be working today and shut down tomorrow, and there you'd be—out."

The operators are offering slightly higher wages and benefits than are provided under the BCOA contract. Such tactics are common among the numerous scab operators in the coalfields. The miners correctly perceive that if they accept this deal, not only will their health and pension benefits be jeopardized, but the companies would take a major step forward in their campaign to drive the union out of the St. Charles pits altogether. The miners are determined to resist this company assault.

Some already mined coal has been brought out of the struck mines, while coal from scab outfits in Kentucky has been trucked into St. Charles rail depots past the pickets, who are prevented by

cops and court order from interfering. At least one striker has been arrested and harassment from cops is common. On Easter Sunday dynamite destroyed the union's subdistrict office, and copies of pending grievances were reported missing after the blast. Despite these provocations the strikers are holding solid, with only a few defectors sneaking into work. The company ordered the workers at one mine to report on May 1 and they did—carrying copies of the 1978 UMWA-BCOA contract. "Go ahead and sign it, and we'll go to work," the strikers told the boss. They left when he refused.

At a meeting of 200 strikers last Friday, UMWA International vice president Sam Church, who is from the St. Charles area, promised the miners the International's "support." But it would be foolhardy for the Virginia miners to place any confidence in the International, whose treacherous conduct of the 110-day national strike was responsible for the sellout contract forced on the UMWA ranks. And it was precisely the union tops' policy of ordering the membership back to work before all UMWA-contract companies agreed to settle that has forced the St. Charles mine workers to wage an isolated strike.

This policy, combined with the UMWA's demonstrated willingness to sign similar contracts in the western mines that also eliminate the union's health and pension funds, has acted as a spur to hard-line operators, particularly in areas where the union is weak. Scab operations already abound in Virginia's District 28 where, according to figures published in the March *UMWA Journal*, coal production during the strike was fully two-thirds its normal level. The bosses are clearly determined to further weaken the union here.

The St. Charles miners must take the initiative in winning their battle. Militants in the striking locals must demand that a joint strike committee be elected to insure that no one returns to work until the companies agree to meet the minimum standards of the BCOA contract, including continued payments to the UMWA funds. But they also

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Just Out!

Here is the true story of the Great Coal Strike of 1978—from the miners' side of the barricades. And much more besides: the bankruptcy of Arnold Miller and Miners for Democracy; class war in Harlan and Stearns; wildcats in the coalfields; crisis in the UMWA. Not just reporting but hard analysis... and a program for victory!

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For a Proletarian Perspective in Ireland

The Irish question played an important role in the struggle of the Trotskyist Faction within Alan Thornett's worker-centrist Workers Socialist League (WSL), which has a characteristically confusionist, semi-nationalist position on this decisive question for the British revolution. After resigning from the WSL the Trotskyist Faction fused with the London Spartacist Group in early March to found the Spartacist League/Britain. This document, originally brought out in the WSL Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin No. 13, February 1978, is reprinted from Spartacist Britain, April 1978.

"The International will not judge the British comrades by the articles that they write in the *Call* and the *Workers Dreadnought*, but by the number of comrades who are thrown into gaol for agitating in the colonial countries. We would point out to the British comrades that it is their duty to help the Irish movement with all their strength, that it is their duty to agitate among the British troops, that it is their duty to use all their resources to block the policy that the British transport and railway unions are at present pursuing of permitting troop transports to be shipped to Ireland. It is very easy at the moment to speak out in Britain against intervention in Russia, since even the bourgeois left is against it. It is harder for the British comrades to take up the cause of Irish independence and of anti-militarist activity. We have a right to demand this difficult work of the British comrades."

Karl Radek, in *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, Vol. 1, New Park, pp. 127-128



Donald McCutlin/Magnum

British troops terrorize a Catholic community in Derry, Northern Ireland 1971.

The question of the correct policy to take towards Ireland is a crucial test of the revolutionary fibre of any of the nominally Marxist tendencies on the British left. Clearly the correct and necessary demand for the unconditional removal of British troops from the North is wholly insufficient to deal with the complex national questions which must be addressed.

Nations emerge through social conflict, and their composition, geographical boundaries and cultural makeup are determined by the results of that conflict. The national problems which presently exist in Ireland are the products of previous social conflicts, just as the destiny of the Protestant population of the northeast will be determined by future conflicts the results of which are as yet by no means pre-determined.

The rising of 1798 led by the Protestant Wolfe Tone offered the

possibility of a unitary bourgeois Ireland undivided by sectarian strife, with an essentially undifferentiated working class and an indigenous bourgeoisie. The defeat of this uprising represented the failure of the nascent bourgeoisie to wrest independence from England and to assert supremacy over the Irish landlords themselves an extension of the English aristocracy. This defeat removed for more than a century the possibility of the crystallisation of a single nation from the peoples of Ireland and blocked the achievement of any but the most minimal of bourgeois-democratic gains. The crushing of the Wolfe Tone uprising laid the basis for the development of Loyalism among the Protestants. Contrary to the Green nationalist mythology which is widely accepted by the self-proclaimed "Marxist left" in Britain, Loyalism did not originate as an imperialist plot but is rather a phenomenon rooted in the material development of capitalism in Ireland which essentially pre-dates the development of Irish Catholic nationalism.

In the 1870's the more far-sighted Liberal defenders of British imperial interests under Gladstone attempted to institute Home Rule for Ireland, an early experiment in "neo-colonialism," as an alternative to direct military control. This attempt ran up against the intense opposition of the entrenched Protestant interests. While Orange mobs led by reactionary landlords had been the traditional means of disciplining the Catholics, the social weight of the landlords could not have resisted the

plans of British imperialism if the Belfast bourgeoisie had not intervened and assumed command of the opposition to Home Rule. Not seventeenth century settlements but very modern considerations inspired the Belfast industrialists who feared that the consequences of Home Rule would be the milking of their industry to sustain a corrupt and indolent state bureaucracy in Dublin under the stultifying influence of the Catholic Church and its counterpart to the Orange Order, the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

The Belfast industrialists took control of the Orange movement and the opposition to Home Rule with the Ulster Convention of 1892 (for which the Organising Committee had prudently ensured an urban preponderance among the delegates). At the Convention the Belfast bourgeoisie succeeded in taking the mass base from the landowner-aristocrats and placing it under the banner of something akin to an Ulster nationalism. To dampen any suggestion of frivolity, women were excluded altogether from the proceedings of the Convention and the floor of the pavilion was sanded in order to make the movement of the delegates absolutely silent. The point was to project an image of the Ulsterman as sober, industrious and tradition-bound, in every way a different species from the feckless, irresponsible rebel that was supposed to populate the rest of Ireland.

The partition of 1920 which produced the Northern Irish statelet was not simply the result of a conspiracy of plutocratic landlords in London sup-

ported by backwoods Tory politicians rather it was essentially a compromise worked out between British imperialism (which had no direct economic interest in dividing Ireland) and the Belfast bourgeoisie. Partition had long been a possibility, based on the difference between the industrial development around the Lagan Valley and the rest of Ireland which remained basically agricultural.

In fighting for the unity of the working class James Connolly had vigorously opposed the dismemberment of Ireland, correctly recognising that the nationalist passions unleashed on both sides could lead only to a "carnival of reaction." But, in the absence of a revolutionary party capable of undermining the communal polarisation and leading the struggle along class lines, the bourgeoisie succeeded in severely exacerbating the divisions and so in 1920 the possibility of a single Irish nation was again removed from the agenda. The division in Ireland was achieved at a cost which fully vindicated Connolly's opposition: thousands of anti-unionist workers were driven from their jobs in Belfast and there were bloody pogroms and forced rural population transfers. It is necessary to recognise that the situation which confronts revolutionaries almost sixty years after the formation of the Six County state is very different from the one Connolly faced. Thus, while it was absolutely correct to oppose partition in order to unite Catholic and Protestant workers before the division, the achievement of work-

**British Troops
Out of
Northern
Ireland!**
**No to Forced
Reunification!**

ing class unity today requires us to oppose the forcible reunification of the six counties with the clericalist bourgeois state in the south.

The partition resulted in a deformed expression of self-determination for the south and the west of the island with a section of the Catholic nation trapped inside a "white settler state" in the northeast. But unlike Algeria or Rhodesia the "white settlers" (Protestants planted centuries before from England and Scotland) were not only the administrators of the colony and the holders of most of the skilled and prestigious jobs but were also the majority of proletarians and small farmers (and in some areas also farm labourers), as well as a sizeable component of the reservoir of unemployed

The Leninist Position on the National Question

Bolsheviks are the most consistent fighters for democracy and champions of the oppressed. For this reason the democratic right of nations to self-determination is an integral part of our programme. What does this demand mean? For Lenin it meant that:

"As democrats we are hostile to any, however slight, oppression of any nationality and to any privileges for any nationality. As democrats we demand the right of nations to self-determination in the political sense of that term (see the Programme of the RSDLP), i.e., the right to secede. We demand unconditional equality for all nations in the state and the unconditional protection of the rights of every national minority. We demand broad self-government and autonomy for regions which must be demarcated among other terms of reference in respect of nationality too."

—"Draft Programme of the Fourth Congress of Latvian Social-Democrats," *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 116

We are in favour of the political equality of nations, concretely the right of national self-determination or the right of each nation to separate and establish its own state. Self-determination means no less and no more than that. The right to self-determination does not imply support to the revisionists' advocacy of the supposed "right" of each nation to completely "determine its own future." When small nations in the imperialist epoch are totally dependent on a world market quite beyond their capacity to manipulate or control we must reject slogans such as "No British Plans for Ireland," "Freedom from all outside interference and control" as expressions of petty-bourgeois romanticism.

Support for the right of self-determination in no way implies that we extend support to any kind of nationalism—in fact our opposition to national oppression is rooted in our desire to remove the question of national oppression from the historical agenda in order to sharpen the fundamental class antagonism and thus hasten the socialist revolution.

Leninists advocate only those democratic demands (such as the right of self-determination) which concretely serve to enlarge the democratic terrain and thereby facilitate the development of the class struggle. If a particular demand fails to do so there is no point in advancing it—indeed in some cases such a demand could retard the development of the class struggle. In the "Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up" Lenin put it like this:

"The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute but only a *small part* of the general-democratic (now general socialist) world movement. In individual concrete cases the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected."

Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 341

The Protestant Population

In order to determine whether any application of the call for self-determination could advance the

struggle for socialist revolution in Ireland we must first delineate the nature of the national problem there. The Protestant majority in the northeast is distinguished from the oppressed Catholic minority by the fact that they have a different religion, a distinct culture, their own social institutions (the Orange lodges, sporting and drinking clubs, newspapers, etc.) and a self-image based on the rejection of the existence of a single Irish nation. Are the Protestants therefore a separate nation? Are they merely agents of British imperialism? Or are they misguided members of the unitary Irish nation? The answer is that at this point in history the Protestants of the Six Counties do not fit into any of

Ulster Protestants through the familiar liberal plea that British or other socialists cannot tell the Irish how to wage their struggles or the argument that only the oppressed have rights should be rejected out of hand as petty-bourgeois moralism. The Protestants are neither a colonial administration (i.e., mere agents of British imperialism) nor simply a colonial extension of the motherland like the whites in Rhodesia, nor even a closed colour caste like the South African whites. Arguments that the Protestants should be accorded no democratic rights because they were originally settlers and/or because the present Six County state is an artificial imperialist creation are based ultimately

B&ICO's reactionary position of open support to the imperialist occupation of northeast Ireland and its implicit support to the continuing oppression of the Catholic minority of the Six Counties.

The Protestants may yet be incorporated in a reformed Irish nation, which they would at present bitterly reject; they may become a separate nation of their own; or they may find a democratic accommodation with the Catholics outside the framework of strictly national solutions under the rule of the working class. Their destiny is not yet decided. But it is clear that there is a Protestant working class, and that those who turn their backs on it by ignoring its democratic rights have no real perspective for proletarian revolution in Ireland.

We reject the reactionary view that the Protestant workers are irredeemably lost and that only force will persuade them where their true interests lie. By posing as a precondition for their salvation the destruction of the Six County statelet, a stagist conception is advanced which suggests that national unity is a task which must be completed before the socialist tasks can be placed on the agenda. Those who reject the possibility that in future struggles for their common class interests Protestant workers may again unite with their Catholic brothers (as they have in the past) reveal a profoundly anti-revolutionary pessimism about the historic capacity of the proletariat, under revolutionary leadership, to transcend narrow sectional interests.

"Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole"?

The northeast of Ireland is one case (Palestine, Lebanon and Cyprus are others) where the right of the nation "as a whole" to self-determination is, taken literally, meaningless precisely because there is no sense in which we can speak of the people as a whole. In reality there are two peoples intermingled in Ireland. The Protestant community comprises 60 per cent of the population of the Six Counties and 25 per cent of the population of the whole island.

In its early years the Communist International addressed analogous situations of intermingled populations. Speaking at the Second Congress of the Third International Comrade Mereshin argued that:

"The experience of the mutual relations between the majority and minority nationalities in territories with a mixed population (in the Ukraine, in Poland and in White Russia) has shown that the transfer of power from the hands of the big bourgeoisie into the hands of petty-bourgeois groups forming democratic republican states, does not reduce national tensions but on the contrary sharpens them in the extreme. The republican democracy, which is forced, in the struggle against the working class, to confuse the class struggle with national war, is quickly permeated with national exclusiveness and easily adapts itself to the experience of older teachers of national oppression...."

"there are no 'democratic'... forms that can secure the rights and the cultural interests of the national minorities in areas of mixed populations in the republican-democratic order and guarantee true equality and equal influence on the course of the business of state. National personal autonomy based on universal suffrage, leads not only to the division of the proletariat into national groups, but also to the complete cessation of the revolutionary struggle and even to the worsening of the cultural position of the working class in the national minority."

Second Congress of the Communist International, Vol. 1, New Park, pp. 162-3

In the northeast of Ireland with a Protestant majority amongst workers and small farmers we have to ask in what way does the demand for "self-determination for the Irish people as a whole" advance the struggle for socialism? The answer is that it worsens it. It means driving the Orange workers, whose allegiance to their own bourgeoisie is fueled by legitimate fears of

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Gilles Peress/Magnum

Bloody Sunday, January 30, 1972. Victim of British troop assault on civil rights demonstrators.

these simple categories. They are a community which has long been distinct although its degree of separation from the Catholics has fluctuated, allowing both episodes of united class struggle, and at the other extreme, the last eight years of intense sectarian polarisation.

Many of the more sophisticated "Marxist" apologists of republicanism—notably the Pabloites of the IMG—cite Connolly as their authority in describing the Protestant workers as simply a labour aristocracy. Lenin defined the labour aristocracy as a narrow upper stratum of the proletariat whose substantial material privileges derived from the imperialist bourgeoisie lead them to identify their interests with those of their own bourgeoisie. The Protestants are not separated from the Catholics in a higher income group by a horizontal line across society, but are a *community represented in all strata*, even if they compose a proportionately smaller fraction at the lower end of the spectrum. The extension of the concept of labour aristocracy to the mass of Protestant workers in Ireland robs it of its Leninist meaning. The Protestant workers in the Six Counties "share" in the lowest wages, highest unemployment and poorest housing in the whole of the UK.

Attempts to ignore or deny the separate identity and interests of the

on notions of nationalist irredentism and historical justice.

The Protestants are clearly not at this time a part of the Irish Catholic nation but a separate people, and any attempt by the Catholic bourgeoisie to forcibly incorporate this large and relatively well-armed community into a common state could only precipitate a bloody communal conflict offering nothing for the proletariat. However, the Protestants have not crystallised into a separate nation of their own either, and it would require considerable class-divisive bloodshed for them to impose their exclusive right to a territory capable of sustaining a nation-state.

The pseudo-Marxist apologists of Green nationalism in the British left attempt to smear those who recognise the existence of a distinct Protestant community in Northern Ireland with the charge of sharing the "two nation" theories and pro-imperialist positions of the British and Irish Communist Organisation (B&ICO). The B&ICO's belief that the Protestants are at this time a nation is not their only error. We completely reject the B&ICO's assertion that the reactionary Orange statelet of the North, created by the imperialist partition of 1920, represents the legitimate "self-determination" of the Protestant population. We furthermore stand in total opposition to the

"...this will be final message from Saigon Station. It will take us about twenty minutes to destroy equipment.... This experience unique in the history of the United States does not signal necessarily the demise of the United States as a world power. The severity of the defeat and the circumstances of it, however, would seem to call for a reassessment of the policies of niggardly half measures.... Those who fail to learn from history are forced to repeat it.... Saigon signing off."

As CIA station head Thomas Polgar tapped out this final communiqué to Washington from his abandoned office, thousands of North Vietnamese tanks and trucks, headlights blazing, were heading toward Saigon from Xuan Loc in the early morning hours of 30 April 1975. Meanwhile, on the U.S. Embassy roof, marines were helicoptering out the last few Americans from among the crush of desperate Vietnamese collaborators surrounding the compound.

A few hours later the last U.S. whirlybird lifted off. Ex-CIA agent Frank Snepp, in his book *Decent Interval* (New York: Random House, 1977), describes America's final farewell to Saigon.

"At 7:30 A.M., Saigon time, Major Kean's men slammed the Embassy's huge oaken doors, barred them and ran into the stairwells. On the first and fourth floors they threw gas grenades into the elevator shafts and pulled the steel shutters closed behind them on the landings. But even as they leaped up the last few steps to the rooftop pad, the panic-stricken Vietnamese from the courtyard were smashing through the doors on the ground floor and surging up after them.

"At the top of the stairwell the marines managed to lock and bar the small door leading to the pad, buying themselves a few precious moments to clamber aboard the waiting chopper. But by the time the last of them shinned into the cabin, several Vietnamese were already scrambling up over the edge of the pad. Just as those in the lead dove for the wheels, the helicopter pulled off. It was 7:53 A.M., Saigon time, 30 April."

The sweaty panic of that final American scramble to escape the clutching fingers of their former Vietnamese "partners in democracy" occurred only three years ago. But somehow it seems

WV BOOK REVIEW

Decent Interval by Frank Snepp

more distant, as the deep trauma of U.S. imperialism's unprecedented defeat remains a largely unexplored and still touchy subject within the American ruling class and military apparatus.

Ex-CIA agent-on-the-make Frank W. Snepp III's *Decent Interval* is a slashing, no-holds-barred assault on his superiors in the CIA and government for their bungling incompetence, deception and the panicky abandonment of thousands of Vietnamese collaborators in the last days of the war. Snepp has kicked up quite a storm, not only because he has gone public with the dirty, embarrassing behind-the-scenes details of those final days, but also because his aggressively unrepentant hook could well provide a lightning rod for the many disgruntled elements inside and outside the administration and military who have plenty of their own scores to settle over Vietnam.

In contrast to this hawkish broadside against incompetents who "lost" Viet-

CIA Young Turk Tells How U.S. Imperialism "Lost" Vietnam

Indecent Interval: The Last Days of Saigon



U.S. official punches Vietnamese trying to board overloaded evacuation plane.

UPI

nam for U.S. imperialism, the French former colonial masters have marked the third anniversary of the North Vietnamese army's triumphant entry into Saigon with the smugness of a defeated imperial power that has lost its empire for good. After their crushing defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the debilitating Algerian conflict—a no-win war no matter how dirty they made it—the French have adopted a posture of worldly wise "friends of the Third World." Thus while Paris has stepped up trade with Hanoi, *Le Monde* publishes annual starry-eyed accounts of "socialist reconstruction" in Vietnam.

The American liberal establishment, striving mightily to keep up its position as number-one imperialist power, has taken a rather more hostile attitude. Washington still refuses to recognize Vietnam while the *New York Times* has devoted heavy coverage to the festering, squalid nationalistic border war between Cambodia and Vietnam, smugly implying that both sides are getting what they deserved. Meanwhile both liberals and conservatives are campaigning for the U.S. to bring in tens of thousands of Vietnamese "boat people" it left behind in the precipitous flight from Saigon. Almost all the recent American movies and books about Vietnam have struck a sad and wistful note—a mourning chorus of regret for some supposed American "lost innocence" in the rice paddies and jungles so far from home.

Decent Interval, a heated polemic tearing open still unhealed wounds, cuts through this self-pitying, self-excusing atmosphere of distancing and mythologizing. While aspiring imperialist cadre Snepp's explicit purpose in publicly washing the CIA's dirty linen is to clean up and rearm the bourgeoisie's main spy/assassination agency, his hook

nonetheless provides a wealth of fascinating detail from which more can be learned than in all the mushy musings of former peaceniks and antiwar Viet vets.

Decent Interval gives an inside story on all those press "leaks," inflated body counts, "ongoing reappraisals," hysterical threats and out-and-out lies which the CIA and U.S. Embassy fed the press and Congress in their last-ditch efforts to prop up the dying Thieu regime. Snepp savages ambassador Graham Martin and Saigon CIA station head Thomas Polgar for their cynical manipulation of information (in which Snepp, of course, participated as long as he thought it would work). He contends that they ended by deceiving themselves as to the North Vietnamese Stalinists' intentions, hence the final panic as they realized too late that the game was really up.

As revolutionaries we called for military victory of the NLF-DRV (Viet Cong/North Vietnamese) forces over imperialism, demanding "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" and—as the ARVN (South Vietnamese puppet army) retreat became a headlong rout in March and April 1975—"Take Saigon!" Thus we naturally take pleasure in Snepp's detailed account of the chaos and panic in the losers' camp as the North Vietnamese army finally closed in.

This question of "self-deception" is, however, more complex than Snepp realizes. As chief analyst of North Vietnamese political affairs in Saigon, Snepp was in a position to know as much as anybody about the inner workings of the Hanoi Stalinist bureaucracy. His reports on the Political Bureau's debates and reluctant approval of the final offensive, which was initially to be only a limited one with the aim of pressuring the imperialists, confirm our analysis of the Stalinists' intentions. As

Decent Interval emphasizes, the Hanoi Stalinists were receptive to striking a last-minute deal with imperialism up until nearly the last week of their smashing military campaign. They finally took power in their own name *only* because they could find no coalition partners in the total vacuum of leadership that was left by the fleeing ARVN and Saigon bourgeoisie in a situation where the U.S. could no longer intervene directly.

Since Snepp cannot accept the fact of the U.S. defeat, the book has a curiously disjointed quality at times as he lashes out wildly in all directions at once, and his prescriptions for how to have avoided the debacle are rather vague. Implicitly, however, Snepp's bias is that of a right-wing, "honn' them into the stone age" military hardliner.

The Final Days—Total Chaos

In its rich, raw detail concerning the collapse of the South Vietnamese puppet regime the book tells a good bit of the truth. The U.S. nightmare began in mid-March when, after decisive North Vietnamese victories at Ban Me Thuot, Kontum and Pleiku in the central highlands and Quang Tri and coastal cities in the north, South Vietnamese "president" Nguyen Van Thieu ordered a precipitous retreat of the ARVN, which quickly degenerated into a total rout. Despite the advantage of decades of U.S. training and an arsenal of sophisticated military equipment so huge that it couldn't all be used, the ARVN collapse was reminiscent of the ragtag, warlord-dominated Kuomintang in 1949. In typical mercenary fashion, the ARVN soldiers dissolved into bands of brigands, trampling, terrorizing and robbing civilians along the ever more clogged escape routes,

WORKERS VANGUARD



Ambassador Martin arrives on board evacuation ship carrying embassy files.



NLF tank storms through the gate of the presidential palace in Saigon.

shoving aside women and babies to jam themselves, their motorbikes and their war booty aboard trucks heading south and ships waiting offshore to pick up refugees.

The bloody panic in Danang in late March was particularly gruesome, and Snapp adds detail to the reports of the horrible situation which dominated the press at the time—of the last blood-spattered U.S. plane bumping over bodies as it took off with scores of desperate people clinging to (and falling off) the landing gear. One of Snapp's heroes, a CIA officer who spent hours trying to pluck his friends and collaborators out of the marauding hordes of soldiers, told of the hellish scene aboard the U.S. *Pioneer Contender* off Danang:

"...over 1,500 South Vietnamese troops were sprawled, lounging, fighting among themselves and practicing their aim at the hapless Vietnamese civilians in their midst. Less than thirty yards away an ARVN soldier was in the process of raping a Vietnamese woman while another soldier held her male companion at gunpoint. The thirty-five or more American evacuees already on board were cringing by the gangway."

Against this background of abysmal chaos, Snapp's sardonic portrait of Thieu's departure some weeks later is exquisitely revealing. Thieu realized that the time had come to cash in his chips and slip quietly out of town. Snapp, who personally chauffeured the impeccably dressed despot to his plane, describes their brief halt in the dead of night to allow Thieu's aides to pull mammoth suitcases (from which clinking metallic sounds emanated) out of the woods bordering the presidential palace, before the suave imperialist lackey was given his goodbye handshake on the tarmac by Ambassador Martin.

Four days later, on April 29, it was Martin's turn to leave in the last-minute

U.S. helicopter evacuation. With his puppet (and his puppet's moneybags) long gone, it was left to Martin to play John Wayne. With attaché case and neatly folded American flag packed up, the ambassador was photographed striding firmly from his helicopter, tie neatly knotted, composed to the last, but pale and haggard behind his sunglasses.

He left behind him a scene of murderous chaos, as thousands of desperate Vietnamese besieged the embassy. Snapp recounts one American attaché's memory of that embassy wall "front line":

"Everything ran smoothly at first. A ninth, then a tenth police official was pulled into the compound. ... Several of

the police officers suddenly became very agitated and tried to climb up on the wall themselves, and within seconds countless hands and groping fingers were locked over the parapet. Some of the stronger Vietnamese managed to wriggle over by themselves, bumping and jostling the Americans up top. Moorfield himself almost lost his balance. "Give us a hand here!" he screamed. The marines were at his side in an instant. They went to work with appropriate military precision, cracking heads with rifle butts, stomping on hands and fingers as wave upon wave of humanity broke on the wall below them like a storm tide. It took them less than three or four minutes to restore calm. ... "They were just standing back, staring up at us," Moorfield recalled. "I don't know if it was with hostility, disdain, disinterest or what. Their faces were blank, like death masks."

It was the sight of those thousands of abandoned U.S. collaborators, and the screams into walkie-talkies of others in Saigon buildings where no helicopters would ever arrive, that turned themselves into Snapp's memory and inspired his most bitter polemics against Martin, Polgar and others for their incompetence in the final hours. Snapp lists some of those who were abandoned:

"...the 400 members of the Special Service branch, whose training the CIA had financed and supervised; 400 working echelon members of the Central Intelligence Organization, also our proteges; a large staff of clerks and computer operators which the Station had set up to keep book on PRG [Provisional Revolutionary Government] personalities; the young Vietnamese who served as our clandestine radio operators at the Embassy; the staff which maintained our special radio links with Vietnamese police headquarters; the hundred or more Vietnamese, including maids, waitresses and agents, who had collected at the Duc Hotel on the final day; several agents from Bien Hoa, the 70 translators whom 'Harry Linden' [a CIA agent] had tried to rescue; literally hundreds of high-level defectors who had worked closely with the Station over the years to pinpoint and hunt down their former Communist comrades; and countless counter-terrorist agents—perhaps numbering as high as 30,000—specially trained to operate with the Phoenix Program."

Thousands of intelligence and personnel dossiers were also left in abandoned offices, providing the victors with detailed evidence on the collaborators with U.S. imperialism. Snapp grinds his teeth over the fact that names of those still under detention, released by Hanoi in June 1976, "...read like a roster of those the CIA Station and Embassy had left behind."

We, of course, find this statement, from one who should certainly know, a vindication of our hope that at least some of those traitors, imperialist puppets, torturers and assassins did not walk away scot-free from the scene of their crimes.

Decent Interval's spotlight on the humiliating details of America's first total defeat have ripped through the seemingly selective memory of the U.S.

ruling class concerning Vietnam. The uproar over his book would not have surprised that student of the American elite (of an earlier generation), F. Scott Fitzgerald, who commented that "the mature Aryan has never benefitted from a humiliation" (*Tender Is the Night*).

In large part Snapp's hook is so upsetting to the U.S. because of its chronicle of the blatant self-interest, naked brutality, and dirty, raw, primitive violence with which the U.S. finally pulled out—marines crushing those clutching Vietnamese fingers with rifle butts were a long way down for those cool, bright, modern technocrats who were going to run the world from their spanking-new, air-conditioned, computerized Pentagon East and mammoth U.S. Embassy. It was a dirty, nasty end, which hunted the self-confidence of these crusaders for American imperialism.

"Moral Casualties"

If the ruling class would prefer to hurry the more unpleasant details of its humiliation, though, the liberal anti-war movement of the 1960's seems equally committed to its own brand of amnesia regarding the victors. Thus, by default, the popular American perception of Vietnam is as a peculiar aberration, a tragedy, a quagmire, a place where American boys learned to become mass murderers and monsters; it is a metaphor for insanity. It is almost as if the bourgeoisie were preparing a defense of "temporary insanity" before some ultimate court of proletarian justice for its decades of brutal aggression, vicious terror-bombing, torture, exploitation and cynical manipulation in Indochina. Needless to say, it won't wash.

A more immediate explanation for all this whining, however, is that *the U.S. lost!* If the U.S. had won, it would all have made a lot more sense.

Recently a whole series of ahistorical, apolitical treatises about the Vietnam "experience" have come out. The most popular genre centers on the feelings of guilt and victimization of the rank-and-file American soldier in Vietnam, who by all appearances spent more time sullenly smoking pot than actually fighting, listening to Jimi Hendrix tapes while waiting to get blown away in the rice paddies and figuring out how to frag officers. Except, that is, for the murderous maniacs like the Lt. William Calley who shot down, burned and tortured Vietnamese at random. (An exception to this all-sided craziness was apparently provided by the pilots who flew bombing raids over North Vietnam, who maintained a cool, professional elite *esprit*. A two-part series by a former pilot in the trashy *Soldier of Fortune* magazine for "professional adventurers" is an interesting parallel

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Frank Snapp

CIA Tries to Gag Ex-Agent

Washington's spies, assassins and torturers are feeling persecuted these days. Various post-Watergate "investigations," harassment and ridicule in the media and embarrassing revelations of some of the CIA's more bizarre ploys (like the plot to defoliate Castro's beard) have been undermining the morale of the spooks in Langley, Virginia. But now, in the midst of a major bourgeois faction fight over reorganization of imperialism's spy agencies (see "New License for FBI," *WV* No. 202, 21 April 1978), a young ex-agent, Frank W. Snapp III, has gone public with a

detailed exposé of CIA incompetence in Vietnam, adding fuel to the already heated debate.

It matters little to the CIA tops that such unkind cuts as appear in Snapp's *Decent Interval*—an angry, articulate detailing of U.S. bungling in the last days of the Vietnam war—are aimed at purging incompetency and creating a better spy agency. Bureaucratic inertia, the tradition of protecting one's own and, most importantly, the embarrassment of having the colossal Vietnam fiasco examined under a microscope by

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Indecent Interval...

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from the military side to Snepp's gung-ho, hard-nosed CIA assault.)

The screwed-up Vietnam vet is now a stock character in the movies—nice-young-man Henry Winkler in *Heroes*, icy killer Robert DeVane in *Rolling Thunder*, up-tight Marine officer Bruce Dern in *Coming Home*. This New Left version of *The War We Were*, awash with 1960's music and golden sun, shows us Jane Fonda finding true love (in its 1970's incarnation as her first orgasm) with the antiwar, Viet vet, good paraplegic, while her pro-war, Marine officer, bad husband goes crazy and commits suicide by marching into the Pacific at dawn (apparently a preferred ending in California melodramas) to the heavily ironic strains of the Rolling Stones' *Out of Time*. This soap opera is the latest rendering of the hoary myth of American "innocents abroad," which, after a good solid 100 years or so of the most blatant, bloody expansionism and imperialist aggression, is wearing just a little bit thin.

So antiwar activist Jane Fonda's major film statement on Vietnam turns out to be how it liberated her from girdles and nylons and hair curlers so she could wear blue jeans and smoke pot and have orgasms i.e., a question of lifestyle. But then it always was for a large part of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie of the 1960's. After all, her ex-SDSer husband, Tom Hayden, now an aspiring Democratic Party pol, was reported to have watched the David Frost interviews with Nixon in the company of his flashy, Hitler-loving neighbor, ex-Marshall Ky! Well, times certainly do change.

"I was a moral casualty of Vietnam"—type memoirs are also popping up like weeds these days. A few examples: ex-Marine Philip Caputo's *A Runner of War*—how all-American would-be hero gets sick to his stomach at war atrocities; Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July*—same story; Ronald Glasser's *365 Days*—recounting his suffering in a burn ward; and, perhaps most characteristic of the genre, Michael Herr's *Dispatches*. Herr, who covered the war for *Esquire*, sums it all up: "I think Vietnam was what we had instead of a happy childhood." *Dispatches*, with its Fritz-the-Cat-Goes-to-Vietnam discovery that "Hell Sucks" (chapter title on the battle for Hue), was described in one glowing review as revealing "how different this war was from any we fought."

Yeah, America lost! That's what's so different, and that's the *real* "moral casualty" in the popular American consciousness.

The antiwar intelligentsia, while hailing such sob stories, has also been busy covering up its former enthusiasm for the "heroic people's liberation fighters" of Vietnam, since (what a surprise!) they turn out, once in power, to be mere Stalinist bureaucrats (as did their brother "liberal agrarian reformers" in China 30 years earlier). Thus the *New York Review of Books* crowd, which used to feature the defeatist polemics of Mary McCarthy, I.F. Stone, et al., has been doing penance by highlighting William Shawcross, Jean LaCouture and others on the suddenly discovered horrors of Stalinist rule. The right wing of the defunct peace movement has also demonstrated its loyalty to "democratic" U.S. imperialism via its highly publicized 1976 "confidential" letter to the Vietnamese Stalinists, protesting their "violations of human rights" in holding thousands in "re-education camps" (those same lists which Snepp noted read like a roster of those the CIA left behind!).

"The Spitting Image of What an American Agent Should Be"

Snepp at least doesn't pretend to be some violated virgin. The quality of his



Barge loaded with refugees and motorbikes leaves Da Nang dock littered with corpses left behind.

book was caught precisely by Kevin Buckley in the *New York Times Book Review* (8 January 1978), who commented, "Brooding over Snepp's brooding, one might imagine a German counterpart of *Is Paris Burning?* that might have reflected the Gestapo's efforts to rescue its French collaborators."

This hot-shot imperialist cadre, once described by a Saigon newsman as the spitting image of an American agent, obviously considers himself a very bright young man. His hook's dust jacket bio notes he attended Columbia, "following family tradition," where he majored in Elizabethan literature, then took a master's in International Affairs—one of the standard routes for promising upper-class young men into the CIA, which he joined in 1968. He spent eight years in the agency, in Saigon in 1969-71 and 1972-75, where he was chief strategy analyst for North Vietnamese political affairs, handled spy networks and interrogation of high-level prisoners and provided lists of likely suspects to the notorious Phoenix Program.

Snepp's heroes (besides himself, of course) are a small band of fellow Young Turks in the CIA, army and government who, concluding that their elders were doddering old idiots, finally decided to take matters into their own hands. Snepp enthusiastically details their running around South Vietnam like a bunch of cowboys with walkie-talkies, rounding up their mistresses, har huddies, and collaborators and channeling them out of the country, hastily burning incriminating files as the DRV forces closed in.

With the entire ARVN crumbling around them on the eve of the historic victory of the Vietnamese people against imperialism, the image of Snepp's free-lancers picking a few scraps out of the wreckage recalls General Edward Lansdale (then a CIA agent) and his Hanoi crew pouring sugar in Viet Minh gas tanks in 1954 in the last days of French imperialism. Snepp, in fact, refers admiringly to that childish stunt, which David Halberstam, in his excellent description of early U.S. policy in Vietnam (*The Best and the Brightest*) accurately described as "a gesture of no small mindlessness...mosquito bites, they were, at a historic moment."

Vietnamese Stalinism: Decades of Betrayal

Nothing if not self-assured, Snepp calls Vietnamese People's Army Chief of Staff Van Tien Dung his "unsung collaborator" in writing *Decent Interval*. The general's memoirs of the 1975 campaign, *Our Great Spring Victory* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), which Snepp utilized extensively, are a testament to the efficiency, good planning and power of the DRV forces, while providing interesting vignettes about the personalities of some of the major Stalinist leaders.

For example, his portrait of Le Duc Tho, Kissinger's debating partner in the Paris Peace Accords, is an appealing one. Just as a meeting of the DRV military leadership in the South was about to begin to plan their final assault on Saigon, Dung tells us, they heard a roar outside the door as "a motorbike came to a stop in the courtyard. The rider was a tall comrade wearing a light-blue shirt, khaki trousers and a stiff troops' hat. He had a big black leather sack slung over his shoulder. We immediately recognized him as comrade Le Duc Tho." Poor Henry the K with his unfulfilled cowboy fantasies.

As a fairly narrowly focused memoir of a military victory hailed by revolutionaries and socialist militants throughout the world, *Our Great Spring Victory* is appealing. But when set against the history of decades of betrayal and holding back from the final military assault, Dung's paeons to the glorious victory have a bitter-sweet, hollow ring.

Particularly noticeable is the absence from Dung's account of any mass "uprisings in the South" as the DRV swept through. The Stalinists had for

years suppressed any independent mobilization of the proletariat (slaughtering the Saigon Trotskyists in 1945 who had fought against the French return, withholding aid for years from the insurgents rounded up, tortured and massacred by Diem in the South). Dung's account strikingly confirms their bureaucratic method of seizing power, giving the lie to such Stalinist propaganda as Wilfred Burchett's *The Grasshopper and the Elephant*, which pretends that "popular uprisings" and not the North Vietnamese army caused the final collapse.

The triumphant entry of the DRV into Saigon came far too late in the day for those millions who suffered and died needlessly in the previous decades, and the responsibility for their deaths lies squarely with the Stalinists.

It is true that during the period of intense direct American military involvement and heavy saturation bombing of the North, the military situation was indeed difficult—but where was the massive Russian and Chinese military assistance which could have made the difference? The Stalinist betrayals go back far beyond the time that the Americans first landed in force. They extend from the 1930's, when the Stalinists under Ho Chi Minh supported the popular front of French imperialism; to 1945, when they welcomed British and French imperialism back into Saigon; to the 1954 Geneva Conference sellout; up to the turbulence surrounding the assassination of Diem in 1963. Throughout this entire period there was no all-out, unrelenting assault on the weak puppet governments and no attempt to organize the working class in the cities.

Even after the American pullout, as Snepp's book makes clear, the Hanoi Stalinists waited and watched, pressured by the Russians to lie low in the interests of détente. Under this pressure the North Vietnamese actually pulled out large sections of their forces from Laos and Cambodia, while the USSR and China cut their (already pathetically inadequate) military assistance to Hanoi by 50 percent in the first year-and-a-half after the accords. The North Vietnamese Political Bureau's initial projections on the military situation



South Vietnamese storm wall at the U.S. embassy compound, seeking to join in evacuation as marine tries to keep them out.

Wheeler/Sipa-Liaison

...concluded that total victory could not be expected before 1979 at the very earliest, and that a concentration on northern "reconstruction" should be the main policy. As late as December 1974 when, after much prodding from the military (who sensed that the opportune moment for a big push had arrived), the PB reluctantly authorized plans for a major new offensive, it was only with the proviso that any possible opportunity for a cease-fire and renewed negotiations would be seized. It was not their fault that they encountered not adversaries but only clouds of dust kicked up by the pell-mell flight of Thieu's army.

Vietnam: The Imperialist Gamble that Failed

With the massacre of hundreds of thousands of workers and communists in Indonesia in 1965 and the consolidation of the Sino-Soviet split propelling Mao's China into the arms of the waiting imperialists, several key U.S. aims in Southeast Asia were accomplished. Consequently key sectors of the American bourgeoisie increasingly came to view direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam as a diversion from more pressing tasks. The Vietnam war was distorting the U.S. domestic economy, weakening the bourgeoisie's competitive position against the other imperialist powers in the face of renewed inter-imperialist economic rivalry and stirring up domestic unrest. Thus the huge growth in the social-patriotic, liberal antiwar movement and the shift of U.S. policy toward negotiations with Hanoi, the outcome of which was the Paris Peace Accords of 1973.

The Nixon regime took the calculated gamble, with assurances from Moscow and Peking, that it could achieve yet another negotiated sellout by the



Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky and wife: "Hitler is my hero," he said until he found a friend in the U.S.

Borsari/Camera 5

Hanoi Stalinists. That this gamble failed, as the Spartacist League pointed out at the time, is a confirmation of the Trotskyist analysis of the incapacity of weak bourgeoisies of the backward, neocolonial countries to carry out their own bourgeois revolution. They must either cling to the imperialists or be swept away by social revolution, as occurred in Indochina. The Vietnamese Stalinists, caught up in this intractable social and historical contradiction, were thus forced to take power when the puppets fled.

A Prisoner in a Snow-White Cell

While *Decent Interval* presents some fascinating facts on a searing experience for U.S. imperialism, the interests of historic justice would have been far better served had Snapp not escaped to write his book.

One of his special tasks, which was not discussed in the book but came out in an interview, was providing lists of "targets" to the grisly "counter-terrorists" Phoenix Program. "Now,

what they did with that data was something I never got into..." he coolly explained, although he did casually point out that while Phoenix kept killing and killing and killing, somehow their estimates of the total number of "Communist agents" never shrank. While William Colby (then in charge of this huge squad of imperialist hit men) claimed some 20,000 victims for this mammoth torture/assassination bureau, Snapp puts the number closer to 30,000 "one for each member of the program" (*Columbia Daily Spectator*, 26 January 1978).

Another chilling story he relates concerns the fate of a high-level North Vietnamese intelligence officer captured by the U.S. puppets.

Nguyen Van Tai, who was captured in 1970, had been sent south in 1962 to take charge of Communist espionage and organizing in Saigon, where he helped organize the spectacular 1968 attack on the U.S. Embassy. The Americans helped the Thieu regime to organize Tai's long ordeal, constructing a snow-white cell kept thoroughly chilled by

heavy-duty air conditioners. (Tai reportedly believed the frigid air would constrict his blood vessels.) Despite years of solitary isolation, with no external sense of time and heavy interrogation, he remained steadfast. So Snapp was finally put in charge of him, spending months insulting and cajoling the highly disciplined cadre, gaining a few details here and there, but never the final break. Snapp then says he lost track of Tai and went on to other things, but provides a laconic postscript.

In the final days of the war, a senior CIA official suggested it would be a good idea if Tai "disappeared," so the South Vietnamese took him up in a helicopter and kicked him out over the South China Sea. Naturally Snapp relates this grisly assassination. But after putting down this revealing and informative book a socialist reader cannot help but think that had Snapp been captured by the victorious Vietnamese, given his criminal responsibility for murder on a massive scale, this fate would have been an infinitely more just ending for him. ■

Snepp...

(continued from page 7)

a well informed insider have impelled the Department of Justice to sue Snapp for "breach of contract" in not submitting his book to CIA censorship before publication.

Although Snapp's book, unlike former agent Philip Agee's *Inside the Company*, is not charged with revealing classified material or blowing an agent's cover (nor would we expect it to do so), its indictment of CIA and government deception, incompetence and abandonment of thousands of Vietnamese collaborators in the final panicky American pullout hit plenty of raw nerves. The agency is presently in the process of releasing some 800 "operatives," and if Snapp gets away scot-free with writing whatever he wants about his CIA days, who knows what damaging revelations may come out from other disgruntled elements? The lawsuit is designed explicitly to discourage any potential authors from writing anything critical about the CIA.

Just this week the head of the CIA's Angolan task force during the 1975-76 fighting, John Stockwell, published his memoirs. In *Search of Enemies*, with damaging revelations. Not only did the agency mislead Congressmen about the scope of its activities (\$30 million and CIA-recruited military advisers supplied to anti-communist nationalist groups), but agents in the field sent doctored dispatches to CIA headquarters. Stockwell confirms the obvious (but repeatedly denied) fact that the South African invasion was undertaken "in step" with the escalating U.S. attempts to overthrow the Soviet-backed MPLA.

Decent Interval, subtitled "An Insider's Account of Saigon's Indecent End Told by the CIA's Chief Strategy Analyst in Vietnam," was written by Snapp after he resigned from the CIA in protest over his superiors' refusal to conduct his requested in-house evaluation of the CIA's role in Vietnam. It was brought out last November by Random House in deepest secrecy. The CIA

knew Snapp was working on the book, but he used the tricks of his trade to meet with his editors in various New York parks, restaurants and "safe houses" far from Random House, prying CIA bugs and possible pre-publication interception. Both he and Random House, whose subsidiary Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. had published Victor Marchetti and John Marks' *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, were aware of the sweeping and arbitrary deletions the CIA had inflicted on that manuscript. (Knopf took revenge by publishing the book with the original CIA deletions later grudgingly allowed—in hold-face print, and blank space left for those deletions upheld by the court. This vastly increased the book's titillation value and made the spy-censors look like narrow-minded idiots.)

Since no one in the case contends that "national security" has been violated or "secrets" revealed, the Justice Department is basing the civil suit brought against Snapp on February 15 by Attorney General Griffin Bell on the fact that Snapp had signed a CIA contract stating that employees will submit anything they write after leaving the agency to pre-publication censorship. The government is seeking to recover damages that would include all profits from *Decent Interval* and to restrain Snapp from speaking publicly about the agency for the rest of his life!

Civil liberties organizations have pointed out that this is the first time the government has tried to censor speech or publication of material by government employees when "national security" was not at issue; it thus goes even further in its dangerous implications than the Marchetti case. This insidious government and CIA attempt to make an example out of Snapp in order to shut up anyone with knowledge of the crimes committed by U.S. imperialism's organized hoodlums must be opposed!

But Snapp is no innocent victim. Unlike the disillusioned authors of previous CIA exposés, notably primitive leftist radical Agee and naive liberals Marchetti and Marks, or even Daniel Ellsberg of *Pentagon Papers* notoriety, Snapp is an ambitious,

arrogant and aspiring cadre of U.S. imperialism. He has explicitly affirmed his "absolute" commitment to the CIA as an institution and dissociated himself from Agee and Marchetti. In a *Penthouse* (May, 1978) interview, Snapp explained: "The thing that makes me different is that I'm not really not antiagency. I'm not in the demolition business.... I have no respect at all for someone like Philip Agee. He simply blew every secret he knew...."

As a committed anti-communist who has chosen to hit his elders on their most tender spot—the humiliating debacle of Vietnam—Snapp is in a good position to win influential friends among both cold-war liberals and the embittered Vietnam hawks from General William Westmoreland on down, who have plenty of their own scores to settle. Snapp, who was asked to address the New York Council on Foreign Relations, has correctly pointed out that he is "not entirely anathema to the old establishment" (*Columbia Daily Spectator*, 26 January 1978).

Snapp is not just another "public servant" publishing his memoirs. As a once (and quite possibly future) member of the elite secret gang of terrorists and murderers known as the CIA Snapp, breaking ranks and going public with his angry denunciations, does threaten the shadowy world of the spies—if merely by example, no matter what his motives.

The great debate over the CIA's "legitimate" problems with "maintaining secrecy" and how to reconcile this with the First Amendment, which such defenders of Snapp as the *New York Times* have editorialized over with ponderous solemnity, is ultimately a grotesque fraud. In the end, the CIA, like any other criminal gang, knows perfectly well how to protect its most vital secrets—and it has the advantage of state power besides (although some recent incidents tend to make it look more like the gang that couldn't shoot straight than something the Gallo family would recognize as kindred spirits). Agee, for example, is still being hounded from country to country as punishment for his spilling the beans.

The workers movement must be concerned about the safety of those such as Agee and Seymour Hersh of the *New York Times*, who have exposed the CIA's murderous skullduggery and who may become victims of retaliation.

In the short run Snapp's book has opened the door to a closet jammed full with skeletons at a time when U.S. imperialism is still struggling to refurbish its badly tarnished image in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate. There are plenty of other "bright young men" around, inside the CIA and out, itching to make their reputations over the bodies of their elders, who still hear the stigma of these disasters for the bourgeoisie. In the process they are bound to kick up quite a storm. Caught in these hazardous crosscurrents, the Carter administration looks increasingly erratic and inept, as Attorney General Bell goes after Snapp to preserve CIA morale, while at the same time stirring up a hornets' nest at the FBI with his indictments of Hooverite agents for getting caught at their dirty work.

The Justice Department has already lost the first round in the Snapp suit. On March 31 Judge Oren R. Lewis rejected the government's plea for a summary judgment and stated that he would rule that the case should go to a jury trial, thus ensuring a long drawn-out process which should provide a perfect forum and focus for even more public argument and recrimination about Vietnam and CIA activities.

While this falling out among thieves has a certain fascination, it is important that the vicious implications of the government suit he recognized. Although Attorney General Bell had to hack off his staff lawyers' somewhat too enthusiastic development of the theory that all federal employees should be subject to censorship, the obvious desire of the government is to clamp down hard on any and all criticism. Ever since the Ellsberg revelations, the government has been seeking an "official secrets act" to plug up every leak—even by those 100 percent loyal to U.S. imperialism. This dangerous Justice Department suit against Snapp must be opposed! ■

Ernest Mandel...

(continued from page 12)

between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars."

At the New York forum Mandel certainly dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's" on his modernized Kautskyan theory of super-imperialism. But his assertion of the impossibility of inter-imperialist war goes back to the 1953 split in the Fourth International when the liquidationist current led by Michel Pablo, seeking to justify its position that the Stalinist parties could be pushed to the left, insisted that the Third World War would inevitably be between a "united imperialism" versus the Soviet Union. Although Mandel never before quite so explicitly spelled out its implications, he has been, in one form or another, peddling various versions of the super-imperialism theory for the past 25 years. Thus in his book *Europe vs. America* in discussing the Common Market Mandel wrote:

"Once private property becomes extensively internationalized it cannot be effectively defended within the framework of a French, German or Italian-state European Capitalist denials a European bourgeois state as an adequate protector and guarantor of profit..."

In response to this blatant claim that capitalism can overcome the limits imposed by the nation-state, the Spartacist tendency asserted that a unification of Europe under capitalism could not be realized by gradual, peaceful and bourgeois-democratic means:

"The creation of a capitalist European super-state can only be achieved through the methods of an Adolph Hitler, not those of a Paul Henri Spaak..."

"Britain and the Common Market." *U.L. No. 71*, 20 June 1975

Throughout the evening Mandel consistently painted an objectivist picture of the world, as if the prospects for socialism were not fundamentally based on the outcome of class battles, on the resolution of the crisis of proletarian leadership, but solely on the workings of economic developments. So from Mandel the audience heard that the "long wave" of capitalist development is now turning down for a long time to come, and that the workers' resistance will be greater than ever before because "not a single sector of the world proletariat has suffered any form of important defeat for the past ten years" (tell that to the Chilean workers). Consequently, he concluded, while the perspective for

socialism is not positively "rosy," it is very bright indeed. All we need to do is keep up the good work. And so, exhorting the audience "Let's really make a big effort for having socialism!" Mandel sat down.

Waffling on Pop Frontism

In its leaflet for the New York meeting the Spartacist League noted that Mandel is once again chasing after the latest fashionable European trends: popular frontism and Eurocommunism. Thus, fearful of "isolation," the French Mandelites refuse to call the Union of the



Leaders of the French Union of the Left. From left: Radical Fabre, Socialist Mitterrand, Communist Marchais.

Left a popular front and have followed the masses in voting for its candidates. At the meeting this was confirmed, with Mandel's efforts to deliberately obscure the class character of the Union of the Left so blatant that they several times evoked widespread chuckling, not only from SL supporters but a number of SWPers in the crowd. At one point the room broke into suppressed laughter when, in evaluating the recent French elections, Mandel said:

"[It] was a setback for the working class. I don't think you need to deny that, whatever opinion we have of the Union of the Left, call it a popular front coalition, a class-collaborationist coalition, whatever you want..."

Bringing more guffaws from the audience, Mandel then lightly skipped over the role of the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in the elections: "I don't want to go into all the ins and outs of the different candidates..." He ended with a perfunctory reference to the USec, the Pabloists' phony "Fourth International," whose "global program" allegedly equipped it to lead the masses.

The first SL speaker challenged Mandel's claim to have a program to lead the working class when the USec has no clear position on the popular front, what Trotsky called the key issue of the epoch. The speaker continued:

"In Chile, you said in 1971 it was a popular front and after it was overthrown in 1973 you said it wasn't a popular front. In France, the SWP says it is a popular front, your people say it isn't. And you never can decide who to vote for, whether to vote for some of its candidates, all of its candidates—how is that a program for leadership? We say no support to the popular front, we say proletarian opposition to it..."

In his reply Mandel tried to trivialize the question by insisting that there was no difference between saying "popular

front" or "class-collaborationist formation." In trying to reduce the popular front to just one more example of reformist class-collaborationist policies, Mandel denies that tying the workers to the class enemy in an explicit political alliance has any importance at all.

Demagogically attempting to reduce the dispute to a question of semantics, Mandel, in one of the many distortions to come, implied the SL was soft on the British Labour Party and that, prior to the current Lib/Lab coalition, would have been satisfied for Labour to administer the capitalist state as long as

it did it in its own name. Resorting to outright lies, he claimed the SL holds the position that workers parties cease to be workers parties once they enter popular fronts. As Mandel knows quite well, while on several occasions the SL has called for critical electoral support to the British Labour Party, we have always condemned the anti-working-class policies of the Labour tops. And rather than stating that the bourgeois workers parties change their class character, we point out that the contradiction in their character is suppressed in favor of the bourgeois element when they are part of a popular front. We demand they run independently in their own name against the capitalist parties as a minimum condition for critical support.

After Mandel's demagogic diatribe a second SL speaker rose to note that the USec's refusal to characterize the Union of the Left or Allende's Unidad Popular (UP) government as popular fronts was a cover for the Pabloists' support to them. Unlike Mandel, the speaker noted, Trotsky did not believe it was a minor terminological question. A third SL speaker hammered home that the USec's inability to draw the class line was not confined to Chile or France, but that its Italian section entered the Democrazia Proletaria electoral bloc, which called for a "left" popular front à la Allende's UP; and that Mandel's French co-thinker Alain Krivine called for a vote to Portuguese General Otello Carvalho, a leader of the bourgeois officer corps (the MFA).

On the defensive, Mandel asserted, "We don't support coalitions with bourgeois parties, even if we don't call them popular fronts." (A voice from the audience called out: "No, you just vote for them.") Mandel then said the USec called only for votes for workers parties in popular fronts which, he said, was

Trotsky's policy, a claim frequently made by the USec and other ex-Trotskyist revisionists but never substantiated. And above all he insisted on the need to vote for popular front candidates as a way to "get the ear" of the Communist masses. While this may sound more orthodox than the actual practice of the Mandelites, in fact in Chile and France the Communist and Socialist candidates constituted 90 to 95 percent of all the candidates for the front. Thus in practice this position amounts to no more than a fig leaf, a barely disguised form of critical support to the popular front.

Moreover Mandel's claim that the USec had "never wavered" in its position on the Union of the Left is blatantly false. In 1973 the USec called it a "global reformist [i.e., working-class] alternative" and called for a vote for the entire Union of the Left. Later the centrists made a mild "self-criticism" and began to talk out of the left side of their mouths about its "class collaborationist" character. However, in the 1977 municipal elections they continued to call for a vote for Union of the Left slates including bourgeois members, although trying to hedge by not voting for slates headed by bourgeois candidates. And in the 1978 elections, where the USec called for a vote for CP and SP candidates, the LCR participated in Union of the Left election meetings, sharing the same platform with bourgeois dissident Gaullists, even boasting of it and calling for "victory to the candidates of the whole left" on the decisive second round of voting (see "French Popular Front Breaks Up," *WV No. 201*, 14 April 1978). Of course Mandel conveniently forgot to mention these incidents, just as he thought it wiser not to comment on his bloc-partner Krivine's call for a vote for Carvalho in Portugal.

In insisting on the need to "get the ear" of the working masses, Mandel constantly confused the question of Leninist electoral policy toward united fronts and popular fronts. For Leninists, the united front is not a question of sidling up to the reformist-led workers through opportunist capitulation; it is a principled tactic only when a particular bloc with a reformist party can advance the class struggle. That is why the guiding slogan for the united front adopted by the Communist International in 1921 was *class against class*. But how can Mandel claim that a vote for the Union of the Left, or even for the CP and SP candidates within it, is a tactic to pit class against class? A vote for Union of the Left candidates is a vote for a bourgeois popular front against the bourgeois right wing. The only way in which it is "class against class" is that this is a vote for the bourgeoisie against the working class! Mandel would like to ignore the existence of the popular front by defining it out of existence as simply one more example of class collaboration, or by an electoral sleight of hand through token abstention in a few isolated cases!

The three Spartacist League speakers posed the question to Mandel in the sharpest terms: "How can you say you have a program for the proletariat when you can't make up your mind on what Trotsky said was the key issue of this epoch?" "What about Trotsky's position that in periods of social crises, fascism on the one hand and popular frontism on the other are the last refuge of bourgeois rule?" "Where do you draw the class line?" Through spreading smokescreens and confusion, Mandel avoided an answer (and significantly the several dozen SWPers in the audience did not rise to help him out of his dilemma). Thus on the key questions of popular frontism and the economic crisis Mandel proved once again he is a thoroughbred revisionist. As the SL leaflet said, "Ernest Mandel is not a Trotskyist but an impostor. Anybody who came to hear a genuine Bolshevik-Leninist should ask for his money back!" ■

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Solidarity with Louisville!

UAW Local Calls for IH Strike

MELROSE PARK, ILLINOIS, May 7—At a well attended meeting today of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 6, International Harvester (IH) workers passed a resolution demanding a company-wide strike in solidarity with striking Harvester workers in Louisville and against the company's concerted campaign of harassment and speed-up aimed at reversing hard-won union gains.

Three weeks ago, Louisville IH workers walked out in protest against layoffs out of line of seniority, cutbacks in incentive rates and accumulated health and safety grievances. Management's attempt to keep production going by importing hundreds of scabs was repulsed by mass picketing.

In response to the strike at the key Louisville parts plant, Harvester has laid off thousands of workers out of line of seniority, without short workweek benefits or SUB pay. This arrogant company violation of union-won rights, coming on top of the speed-up campaign, has sparked real bitterness among IH workers.

The resolution printed below was presented by Marc Freedman, editor of *Labor's Struggle* newsletter and currently a candidate for Local 6 executive board. It was passed by the membership, although the Local bureaucracy—eager to avoid militant action like the mass picketing at Louisville—succeeded in having points 2 and 3 amended out.

Six months ago, the Local 6 membership overwhelmingly voted for strike action against the same sort of provocations that sparked the present Louisville walkout. But the bureaucracy has done nothing but drag its feet. IH militants must intensify their struggle against the obstructionist labor fakery to insure the victory of the embattled Louisville IH workers against the arrogant company offensive.

1. That the International organize an immediate company-wide strike for the following demands:
 - a. Victory to the Louisville strike;
 - b. An end to all speed-up throughout the chain;
 - c. Full pay for all laid-off due to the Louisville strike;
 - d. Removal of all discipline and full back pay for all disciplined during the current harassment campaign (including alternate committeeman Harry Putnam);
 - e. No discipline for E. Moline strikers and removal of discipline for those who walked out at Melrose Park last fall;
2. That we elect a strike committee, made up of people from each department, to run the strike at our Local;
3. That mass picket lines be organized at all Harvester plants to keep anyone from entering the plant, as the Louisville strikers did two weeks ago.

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Chile...

(continued from page 3)

the street demonstration netted *Newsweek's* Latin American correspondent and photographer.

The sizeable May Day protests in Santiago are an important indicator of the resurgence of the Chilean labor movement. They show that despite the tens of thousands of deaths and the severe repression and economic victimization of the working class, the Chilean working class was not decisively crushed by the junta's terror. As the Political Bureau of the Spartacist League noted in the aftermath of the coup:

"In Chile the possibility now exists, more intensely and better than at any time one can think of in Latin America, for the building of a Bolshevik party and a straightforward, virtually linear perspective of proletarian revolution. The working class is still there. It is seething with bitterness; it is down now, but in a few months the first economist tendrils will rise up, testing out the situation perhaps a little strike at first."

quoted in "Perspective of Proletarian Revolution in Chile," *WV* No. 41, 29 March 1974

During the almost five years that Chile has suffered under the junta's iron heel, Stalinists, social democrats and their diverse and sundry apologists have hidden behind the mythical "Anti-Fascist Resistance." Every political attack on the popular-front UP coalition which paved the way for Pinochet is demagogically denounced as "undermining the Resistance." Chilean workers must be warned that under the slogan of "anti-fascist unity" the Stalinist and social-democratic betrayers whose faith in the armed forces opened the road to the September 11 coup are preparing for class collaboration on an even grander scale—notably with the Christian Democratic leaders who played a key role in preparing the generals' bloody takeover. Do not allow the budding working-class struggles to once again be headed as the sacrificial victim of a new popular front! ■

Miners...

(continued from page 3)

urgently need the support of the entire union and the rest of the labor movement.

The miners are holding a rally in St. Charles this weekend. Strikers should demand that the leaders of District 28 and the other eastern UMWA districts fully mobilize their membership for this event. An assembly of thousands of miners would demonstrate to the operators the union's determination to win this fight. UMWA members must repudiate the sellout policies by which isolated groups of miners, as in St. Charles and Stearns, Kentucky are forced to fight alone, and are picked off one by one. The rally must be utilized as a launching pad to initiate the organized mass pickets, drawn from miners throughout the area and from neighboring states, which are necessary to shut the struck mines down tight. ■

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WL Thug Gets Lesson in Workers Democracy

SAN FRANCISCO, May 2—In another of its many unsuccessful attempts to stifle workers democracy through physical intimidation, the Healyite Workers League (WL) launched an unprovoked goon assault on a Spartacist League (SL) sales team here tonight. The attack occurred in front of the Avenue Theater, where a pro-PLO film—*The Palestinian*, promoted by Healyite Vanessa Redgrave—opened yesterday. The Healyite provocation was doubly dangerous because of the possibility of attack by right-wing Zionists (like the terroristic Jewish Defense League, which has threatened to close the film down) or the cops on left-wing paper salesmen and Palestinians attending the movie.

The previous evening two *Workers Vanguard* salesmen had been harassed and threatened by WL goons, who resorted to cop-baiting, slandering the SLers as "Zionists" and finally to physical violence. WL Central Committee member David Neita had threatened the salesmen—two young women: "If you are around when the movie lets out, I wouldn't answer for your safety."

When an SL sales team arrived at the theater tonight, they were greeted with the same harassment and intimidation. Neita attempted to provoke a fight by poking and shoving three SL supporters. Ripping a newspaper out of one comrade's hands, Neita boasted he would "kill" the three of them. Refusing to be provoked, the salesmen stood their ground and continued selling *WV*.

About ten minutes later, Neita began his provocative routine again, pushing and poking an SL comrade who was standing on the sidewalk. When another comrade intervened to separate them, Neita shoved him too, then started throwing punches. In the brief scuffle that followed, the SLers defended themselves effectively and left when the cops arrived.

The WL must resort to thug attacks to suppress revolutionary criticism of its anti-Leninist tailism of Arab nationalists. Above all, they are desperate to prevent exposure of their corrupt fronting for the reactionary Muslim fanatic, Muammar Qaddafi. But even before the Healy tendency became the publicity agents for the Libyan dictator, these political bandits were notorious for their chronic recourse to gangsterism to suppress political debate. In his 1932 *Writings*, Leon Trotsky denounced gangsterism as fundamentally alien to the revolutionary movement and identified its source:

"The history of the Russian revolutionary movement is particularly rich in bitter factional struggles. For thirty-five years I have observed very closely and participated in this struggle. I can't recall a single instance in which differences of opinion, not only among the Marxists but between the Marxists and Narodniks, and the anarchists, were settled by organized rule of the fist ...

"Lenin saw in ... hooliganism indications and symptoms of a whole school and an entire system: the school and system of Stalin." ■

Ireland...

(continued from page 5)

submergence in the clerical-reactionary bourgeois republic of the south, even more securely into the arms of imperialism and reaction. It means creating the conditions for a conflict not along class lines but along communal lines. For proletarian internationalists this is a course that must be strenuously opposed.

Those who would advocate "self-determination for the Irish people as a

whole" or who would give rights solely to the Catholics must squarely face up to the implications of such a programme. It is in effect a call for the forcible unification of the whole island by the Irish bourgeoisie irrespective of the wishes of the Protestant community, i.e., a call for the Irish Catholics to self-determine at the expense of the Protestants. It is a call whose logic is simply to reverse the terms of oppression, and which necessarily implies inter-communal slaughter, forced population transfers and ultimately genocide. This is not the way forward to the Irish revolution. We are against the forced unification of Ireland under bourgeois rule.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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WORKERS VANGUARD

SL Confronts USec Leader on U.S. Tour

Mandel Weasels on Pop Front

Last week Ernest Mandel, the well-known economist and chief theoretician of Pahlolist revisionism, arrived in the U.S. to begin a speaking tour. This was the first time in ten years the leading spokesman of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec) has been allowed to enter the country. Thus the lifting of the ban and the presence in the U.S. of the figure most widely associated by the media with Trotskyism has made the Mandel tour sponsored by various university economics departments a political event in itself. More than 600 people turned out to hear him at New York's New School for Social Research May 4, and Mandel's speech was followed by a series of sharp polemical exchanges between the European ex-Trotskyist and the Spartacist League (SL).

Mandel last visited the U.S. in 1968, since that time the State Department has repeatedly barred him from the country under the provisions of the reactionary McCarran-Walter Immigration Act. In October 1969 the government's refusal to grant him a visa provoked a legal battle by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) which lasted until June 1972 when the Supreme Court upheld the ban against him. Then in 1976 Mandel was again denied a visa to accept a teaching position at Stanford University. Each time the SL vigorously protested his exclusion.

If the first leg of his tour is any indication, the witchhunting State Department should not have been so worried all these years. Not only has Mandel had nothing very revolutionary to say; his talks on Eurocommunism, the world economic crisis, and France 1968 have been vacuous in the extreme. Where he went beyond platitudes it was to attack the Leninist theory of imperialism. In his New School talk Mandel raised the old Kautskyan social-democratic shibboleth of a united "ultra-imperialism," stating outright that a new outbreak of inter-imperialist war is "impossible." He also assiduously sought to confuse the issue of popular frontism in order to justify capitulation to it, all in the name of "gaining the ears" of the workers.

The New York speech was a bizarre affair with the jet-set professor delivering a condescending "Introduction to Economics" lecture where he uttered such inanities as New York banks have substantial foreign holdings (do tell). This scene was particularly comical considering the audience was almost exclusively composed of SWP members masquerading as economics students, a large number of SL supporters and the pitiful leftovers of every abandoned Mandelite operation in the U.S.

In one part of the hall could be found a clot of dog-faced former members of the SWP's expelled Internationalist Tendency, over there a couple of homeless die-hards of the stillborn Revolutionary Marxist Organizing Committee, and lurking in the back were the products of yet another abortion, the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party. The plight of these comrades was truly touching: on



WV Photo

Ernest Mandel replies to Spartacist League speakers at forum in NYC, May 4.

the rare occasions when they get to commune with their international mentor, they can look on only from a distance, separated from their idol by an SWP goonsquad. But they could hardly have expected better, for every attempt to set up a U.S. Mandelite organization has been stabbed in the back by Mandel himself in the interests of his bloc with the ultra-reformist, cringing legalists of the SWP.

Capitalist Economic Crisis Without Inter-Imperialist War?

At the New York forum the Spartacist League distributed a lengthy leaflet entitled "The Many Faces of Ernest Mandel," listing among them "pseudo-Marxist academic, gutless adventurer and betrayer of Trotskyism." The leaflet attacked the political coward who knows Marxist orthodoxy but uses his "agile mind and his impressive erudition to dream up revisionist 'theoretical' cover for every petty-bourgeois radical eraze," from student power and guerrillaism to popular frontism. Mandel's statements at the forum confirmed the SL's characterizations at every point.

Thus the leaflet referred to Mandel's mid-1960's theory of "neocapitalism," used to write off the working class in the imperialist countries as a revolutionary force in justification of the USec view that the "epicenter" had shifted to the "Third World" and the student youth. Then after the mammoth working-class outburst of the 1968 French May events Mandel quietly dropped this theory, reinterpreting the alleged 1945-66 "boom" as simply the upward cycle of a

"Kondratiev long wave" which since then has been conveniently turning down. In his talk, while dismissing the "post-war boom" as a "not very correct" formulation (although it had been the centerpiece of his own economic writings for a decade), Mandel highlighted another aspect of his old "neocapitalist" theory, namely the assertion that capital has been effectively internationalized.

This was most glaringly obvious on the question of inter-imperialist war. When Mandel stated in an off-hand remark that the outbreak of a new inter-imperialist war was "impossible," gasps were heard. The first questioner from the floor asked Mandel if that was what he really meant to say. Not only did Mandel vehemently confirm his position but he drew out its political conclusions:

"I did not say that the third world war is impossible. I said that an inter-imperialist war is impossible. For me the third world war would be a war between imperialism and the bureaucratized workers states which are not imperialist. What I think is impossible is a war between the imperialist powers, a war of America against Britain, or Germany against France."

In his speech Mandel went on to say that the reason for this was the internationalization of capital, of which he gave as examples the limited industrialization of Brazil, Mexico, Hong Kong and Singapore, and the importance of "multinational corporations." This assertion is truly astounding coming from a self-proclaimed Marxist and Leninist. Mandel may be taken in by the linguistic obfuscation of imperialist

public relations experts (analogous to the discovery of the "oligopoly" in order to mask the power of the monopolies), but Chilean workers were made quite aware that ITT, for instance, was a U.S. corporation. And European governments dependent on oil from the Near East well know that Exxon, Mobil, etc. are no "multinationals."

Mandel treated the audience to his traditional repertoire of *marxist* Keynesianism, arguing in his talk that full employment could be reached if the budget deficit were increased from the present \$150 billion to \$300-400 billion, but only at the cost of doubling the rate of inflation. This concept of an unemployment-inflation trade-off ignores the negative effect on private investment of the government deficit, is utterly un-Marxian and maintains the Keynesian illusion that capitalist business cycles can be managed by fiscal policy. But all this is old hat for Mandel.

The new idea he is now pushing is that of a "crisis of stable leadership of the bourgeoisie" on a world scale. This implies that normally the imperialist world order is subject to some kind of central political direction. In reality, capitalist society is intrinsically atomized and anarchic in both its economic and international political relations. The hegemony exercised over the capitalist world by the United States from 1945 through the late 1960's was exceptional in the history of capitalism. But the rationalist/impressionist Mandel regards the dominance of a single imperialist power, which "lays down the law" to the rest of the capitalist world, as the normal state of affairs.

Thus "before the First World War," he said in his talk, "Britannia ruled the waves." Britain may have ruled the waves, but it was not the dominant capitalist power in the sense that the U.S. was in the 1950's. Throughout most of the nineteenth century Russia, not Britain, was the pivotal military power in Europe. Marx, in fact, denounced British foreign policy for appeasing the rulers in St. Petersburg. Not only did Lenin completely disregard the notion of a hegemonic British imperialism, but in his 1917 "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," he ridiculed the notion of a stable imperialism which implies that the nation-state system can be overcome under capitalism.

Mandel's rationalist notions sound like nothing so much as Kautsky's concept of a period when imperialist wars would cease and there would be "the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital." Attacking what he called either "ultra-imperialism" or "ultra-nonsense," Lenin polemized against this theory which built pacifist illusions and politically disarmed the proletariat.

"Inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances no matter what form they may assume, whether of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing all the imperialist powers are inevitably nothing more than a "truce" in periods

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