

U.S./OAS Hands Off! Defense of Cuba, USSR Begins in El Salvador

Reagan Targets Central America

JANUARY 27—Now that the embassy hostages have returned from Teheran, the Reagan administration has its hands free to deal with the central concern of U.S. imperialist foreign policy: the intensified Cold War onslaught against America's own "Great Satan," the Soviet Union. And the first place that Reagan plans to get down to business is Central America, where Salvadoran guerrillas have launched a "general offensive" against a U.S.-backed military junta. In Reagan's anti-Soviet demonology, the U.S. is "the last domino" and El Salvador the front line in the battle against Communist "expansionism." "Must we let Nicaragua, El Salvador all become additional 'Cubas,' new outposts for Soviet combat brigades?" he asked during the campaign. "Will the next push of the Moscow-Havana axis be northward to

Guatemala and thence to Mexico, and south to Costa Rica and Panama?" (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 11 January). And it's no joke—the new U.S. commander-in-chief actually believes this "north to Texas" hogwash.

So Ronald Reagan is going to play Cold War dominoes. If China's Deng intended to teach the Soviets a "bloody lesson" by attacking Vietnam in collusion with the U.S., Reagan wants to hand-deliver a "bloody warning" to Moscow in Central America. In the El Salvador crisis he sees the hand of the "Marxist" regime in Nicaragua; behind it stands the "red menace" in Havana. And with all his talk of blockading Cuba, the real target is clearly Castro's "big brother" Brezhnev. In Senate confirmation hearings, Reagan's secretary of state telegraphed his message to

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Hawkins/Sygma

Hostage Mania, Cold War Fever

The clock finally stopped at day 444. After frantic last minute haggling between Iranian mullahs and American banks, the 52 hostages were spirited away to Wiesbaden, West Germany to be "decompressed." Not wishing any repeat of the embarrassing statements sympathetic to Iran which occurred when Khomeini earlier released some women and black hostages, U.S. officials made sure that newsmen and hostage moms got no closer to the 52 than what they could see through a telephoto lens. Meanwhile, the lights on the White House Christmas tree were lit, floodlights on the Statue of Liberty turned on and the Empire State Building glowed in red, white and blue.

After 14 months of highly orchestrated media hype, prayer vigils, letters from school children and yellow rib-

bons, the long simmering frustration and humiliation felt by a large part of the American population are now being egged on by lurid accounts of supposed "torture" (see box). Too bad "Saturday Night Live" doesn't have the guts to interview 52 people coming out of Attica about "human rights" violations. The pious outcry over the plight of the hostages was never a concern for human lives: eight Marines died in Carter's hotched raid (the *only* Americans killed in Iran), and it turns out (what a surprise!) that the hostages unanimously opposed this crazed adventure.

Americans were made to feel that the national honor had been tarnished, and something should be done, like "nuke Qom." While the sentiment is now largely anti-Iranian, the bourgeois propaganda mills seek to galvanize this

into popular support for the imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union, for which the technological implements (e.g., neutron weapons, cruise and MX missiles) are already being assembled. While Khomeini sought to bolster his regime by whipping up anti-Americanism, we pointed out that the fierce anti-communism of the reactionary Islamic clerics could make possible an anti-Soviet hostage deal. Amid all the recent talk about ransom and retribution, the *Wall Street Journal* (21 January) described and advocated the fundamental interests of U.S. imperialism in "the Swap":

"That swap could eventually open the way for a more effective American policy to check Soviet influence in Iran, long a buffer between the Soviet Union and the Persian Gulf oil states."

The burst of chauvinist fever which greeted the embassy takeover not only temporarily revived Jimmy Carter's sagging political fortunes but quickly was tied into his larger anti-Soviet ambitions, particularly after the Red Army went into Afghanistan. Reagan huddled from the sidelines, using Carter's seeming impotence to help propel him into the White House. And with the release, the bankers got the hucks—of the \$8 billion supposedly given back as "ransom," the Iranians got only \$2.9 billion, the rest going directly to American banks or being held in escrow to cover outstanding Iranian debts. When you add the shah's stash at Chase, the bankers' loot comes to a cool \$13 billion. Not content with this plunder, the *Wall Street Journal* urged

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Military Victory to the Left-Wing Insurgents! Break with the Bourgeoisie! For Workers Revolution! Anti-Communist Exclusion Fails at El Salvador Demos

In several El Salvador demonstrations around the U.S. last week there were sharp political confrontations between Stalinist reformists and the Spartacist League (SL).

• In L.A.'s MacArthur Park on January 21, demo organizers threatened exclusion of the SL contingent, muttering about "communists" and "Trotskyist counterrevolutionaries." Spartacist placards in the march called, in both English and Spanish, for "U.S. Hands Off El Salvador," "Military Victory to the Leftist Insurgents" and "Popular Frontism Disarms Workers Before White Terror." Despite the threats no incidents occurred.

• Also on January 21 in Chicago, at a protest against a State Department junta speaker, demo organizers sought to prevent the SL from marching with its signs. This time they not only tried to

suppress our communist propaganda against popular-frontism, but even tried to drown out SL chants for military victory to the Salvadoran left-wing rebels. Again they were unsuccessful.

• The next day in New York, at a rally sponsored by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), a speaker for the Revolutionary Democratic Front threatened from the platform to exclude the SL from future marches. Goons tried to force SLers to take down their signs, particularly the placard reading, "FDR Popular Front Roadblock to Revolution: For Workers Revolution in El Salvador!" But the signs stayed.

The Spartacist League will not be intimidated by such attempts at Stalinist censorship. The reformists who seek to tie the workers to the "democratic" capitalist politicians and generals can-



El Salvador demonstration, L.A. January 21.

not escape communist opposition to this treacherous strategy. Break with the bourgeoisie—For workers and peasants

governments in Central America! The Trotskyist program of permanent revolution will be heard! ■

Hostages...

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Reagan to renounce the remainder of the deal if it doesn't "benefit American interests."

So the mullahs didn't get the moolah and they didn't get the shah. But they did achieve their main purpose: to focus domestic unrest on empty anti-Americanism. The rest of the left hailed the embassy takeover as proof of the mullahs' "revolutionary" fiber. While they slavishly ignored their savage persecution of women and homosexuals and the murderous repression of the national minorities in Iran, we wrote:

"The mullahs have not been waging a struggle against imperialism at all—on the contrary, Khomeini's government has most recently been negotiating with Washington for resumption of billions of dollars in military aid to be used against Kurdish rebels, Arab oil workers, Iranian leftists and the Soviet Union. The Teheran embassy seizure and hostage-taking was a diversion. It was fundamentally an attempt to refurbish Khomeini's anti-shah credentials in a period of growing disillusionment, and opposition to, his clerical-reactionary rule."

—"Iran Embassy Crisis," *WV*
No. 244, 23 November 1979

A deal might have been struck earlier—recall Carter's Afghanistan

speech proposing an Islamic/imperialist united front against "atheistic communism"—but the hostage diversion was still too valuable to the mullahs in their efforts to gain domestic political supremacy. This they have largely done—witness the savage attacks and expulsion of the left from the universities—and the Iran-Iraq war has since replaced the hostage crisis as a rallying point for national unity. With oil income cut off by the war, the mullahs needed cash to buy weapons and parts, so they settled for what they could get.

As for the claim that the action was to retaliate against CIA crimes in Iran, this is sheer nonsense. The embassy was most certainly a "nest of spies," but no CIA flunky was ever treated to the Islamic "justice" reserved for Kurds, "adulterers" or Iranian leftists. Least of all do the mullahs wish to expose the real CIA crimes against Iranian workers and peasants, since opening that Pandora's box could reveal their active participation in the 1953 CIA-sponsored coup, which reinstated the shah.

Washington's intentions toward post-shah Iran are by no means hostile in the long run. Even now, the more far-sighted American business leaders are openly talking about limited resumption of trade, especially since the mullahs paid all their debts to the big banks. Khomeini himself may not want to strike a deal with the "Great Satan," but that's a temporary obstacle—either Allah will recall him, or he can be replaced by more "moderate" mullahs like Shariatmadari with the aid of "pragmatic" generals.

The current ballyhoo about national honor and Reagan's "national renewal" are an integral part of the U.S. imperialists' desire to whip the population into a patriotic frenzy against "foreign threats," first and foremost against the Soviet degenerated workers state. In the face of the chauvinist fervor and anti-Soviet Cold War drive, Leninists stand for unconditional military defense of the USSR. Just as the Iranian workers, under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard party, must topple the ayatollahs, the American proletariat must "begin the world over again" by revolutionary expropriation of the decaying capitalist class before they blow up the earth. ■

Militants Break Gag Rule

Hostage Flag-Waving Flops in NMU

At the January 26 New York port meeting of the National Maritime Union (NMU), hamhanded local bureaucrats got a much-needed lesson in workers democracy.

Ever since the takeover of the U.S. embassy in Teheran, the traditional moment of silence for sailors of all nations who have been lost at sea—the normal opening of NMU meetings in New York—has been replaced by a prayer for the CIA agents, career diplomats and Marine lifers who were held hostage in Iran. The class-struggle Militant-Solidarity Caucus (M-SC) in the union has refused to stand at attention for such disgusting displays of patriotism. For this the caucus members have been showered with abuse by the ayatollahs who run the union.

At times this took the form of barely veiled threats of violence. In recent months Port Agent and perennial meeting chairman Andy Rich made it clear that he would not recognize any M-SC members during meetings because they refused to stand and pray for the hostages. Needless to say, this had did not extend to supporters of the *Daily World*, who each and every month dutifully rose out of concern for the CIA trainers of SAVAK torturers.

But this time around, it was a little different. With the patriotic hoopla accompanying the hostage release, the NMU bureaucrats really laid it on thick. But they were visibly shaken when ten or more seamen joined with the caucus in refusing to stand in thanks that "our prayers" had been answered. In fact, as Rich began his monthly attempt to smuggle religion and Cold War foreign policy into the union meeting, one seaman yelled out, "Is this a union hall or a church?"

When discussion was called after

the Port Agent's report, Rich could not keep caucus spokesman Gene Herson from taking the floor. God knows, he tried. When Rich refused to call on Herson, cries of "Let him speak" went up through the hall. Next, the chairman (violating union procedure) demanded a vote on whether Herson could speak. But this backfired, too, as almost no one but the bureaucrats' flunkies opposed this basic right. So naturally Rich called for a revote!

No such luck—Herson was already at the mike. The M-SC spokesman received applause as he denounced the NMU bureaucrats for using the hostage issue as part of their policy of kowtowing to Carter and now Reagan, and to silence the membership in the upcoming June contract fight with the ship-owners and oil companies. Members were angry, he said, about the continued loss of jobs and the recent 5 percent dues rakeoff out of the seamen's vacation checks.

The pro-company union leaders, hackers of KKK-endorsed Reagan in this predominantly black and Puerto Rican union, resorted to the worst kind of flag-waving censorship to silence class-struggle opposition. But it didn't work. The Militant-Solidarity Caucus' 15-year struggle in the NMU has won the respect of the union members. Even on such an emotional issue, with the bureaucrats trying to whip up the members into a jingoist frenzy against radicals—and anybody else who wants to fight for the working class—the caucus was able to force its right to speak.

And in this climate of racist reaction and anti-unionism, it is good to see there are some stout-hearted sailors who'll tell Andy Rich what he can do with his yellow ribbons!

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Spartacist Demos Protest Orange Terror

Bernadette Devlin Shot-Outrage!

"Devlin shot--outrage!" chanted protesters outside the British Consulate in New York City on January 19. Three days earlier, Irish Republican militant Bernadette Devlin and her husband, Michael McAliskey, were critically wounded in an assassination attempt by right-wing Loyalist thugs. Devlin was shot seven times and her husband three times in their cottage near Coalisland, west of Belfast, Northern Ireland. In broad daylight three masked gunmen cut the telephone lines to the cottage, then bashed in the door with a sledgehammer and blasted away at the McAliskys as they were getting their children ready for school. Although the British authorities have released only the most scant information about the McAliskys, it has been reported that Devlin went into a coma following surgery and her husband's condition was listed as serious.

To protest this outrageous murder attack the Spartacist tendency called protest demonstrations internationally. At the January 19 New York demonstration called by the Spartacist

earlier the INA held a rally there protesting the threatened extradition of Dessie Mackin, a Belfast-born Republican who fled to this country after he was charged with shooting two British soldiers two years ago. On the eve of his departure for the Irish Republic, Mackin was arrested in New York and jailed at the Metropolitan Correctional Center pending extradition hearings. The SL-initiated demonstration also raised the slogan, "Free Dessie Mackin—No Extradition!"

Although the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) was informed well in advance about the demonstration, it refused to attend or even to call its own protest. Yet the SWP's *Militant* of January 30 hypocritically calls for "a campaign of protests directed against the British government..."! Meanwhile, the Spartacist League/Britain held a demonstration at the Northeast London Polytechnic College January 23, and the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand held a protest the next day in Sydney.

Devlin has long been on the hit list of Orange terrorists who hate her because she has become a symbol of the struggle of the oppressed Catholic minority of Northern Ireland. Devlin became prominent in the Catholic civil-rights movement during the late 1960s as a leader of the social-democratic People's Democracy and later was a founding member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. Recently Devlin received death threats as a result of her activity with the campaign in support of Irish Republican hunger strikers jailed in the infamous H-Blocks of Long Kesh's Maze prison. Last year four other leaders of the H-Block solidarity committee were assassinated in similar terrorist attacks.

The gunmen who tried to kill the McAliskys reportedly are members of the Red Hand Commandos, a Protestant terrorist group formed in 1972, outlawed the following year and since then associated with the Orange paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force. Shortly after the shooting, the gunmen were arrested by a British army patrol, which military officials insist just happened to be in the area by "sheer luck" (*New*



NYC, January 19: Outside the British Consulate.

York Times, 17 January). However, the McAliskys' residence has supposedly been under military surveillance at least since Devlin became politically active with the H-Block solidarity campaign.

The British government has officially frowned upon the shooting of the McAliskys, fearing of course that it will become social dynamite in Northern Ireland. Devlin often has been cursed by the British establishment—for example, after she punched the Home Secretary Reginald Maudling in the House of Commons during a heated exchange over the "Bloody Sunday" massacre in 1972. But in oh-so-proper Britannia, you're not supposed to blow away somebody who's served in Her Majesty's hallowed Parliament. However, in Northern Ireland the IRA Provos retaliated for the McAliskey shooting by assassinating two prominent Unionist politicians, Sir Norman Stronge and his son, on January 21.

While the IRA's acts of sectarian terror that victimize innocent Protestants (such as the pub bombings) must be categorically condemned, Marxists have no tears for the Stronges, who were

symbols of the hated Unionism of the Orange Order. But the Provos' Green nationalism makes the Protestant working people of Northern Ireland look upon the Stronges as *their* martyrs, rather than representatives of the class enemy. What is needed in Northern Ireland is not these acts of despairing terrorism but the perspective of united working-class struggle.

At the January 19 protest in New York City SL speaker Dave Eastman stressed that Devlin was shot because "she was a symbol of the resistance to the British occupation of Northern Ireland." He explained that a Trotskyist party was urgently needed to provide the working people, both Catholic and Protestant, with an alternative to the Orange and Green nationalism that can only keep the sectarian divisions hardened. The only solution to the nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland, Eastman concluded, is "an Irish workers republic in the context of a socialist federation of the British Isles." The rally ended with a vigorous chant, "Orange thugs will not escape the wrath of an Irish workers state!" ■



Bernadette Devlin

Colman Doyle

League/U.S. (SL) about 50 people, including a spirited group from the Irish Northern Aid (INA—U.S. supporters of the Provisional Irish Republican Army), chanted slogans like "British Troops Out of Northern Ireland!" and "A United Workers Movement Must Avenge Bernadette Devlin!" Two days

CIA Atrocities, Hostage Hypocrisy

The Real Torture, Inc.

You couldn't pass a newsstand without seeing the 96-point type: "ANIMALS!" Jimmy Carter screamed about "atrocities"; Reagan called the Iranians "barbarians." Who the hell are they kidding? The hypocrisy and arrogance of U.S. imperialism is truly staggering—it is *they* who have a worldwide Torture, Inc., complete with schools to train sadistic operatives in the use of electronic implements the likes of which even the Gestapo never dreamed. For the atom bombers of Hiroshima, terror bombers of Southeast Asia and anti-Soviet nuclear first-strikers to yell "Torture!" is outrageous.

Despite the medical verdict that the hostages were all in good health, they're now claiming "atrocities." The bourgeois press is filled with rumors of solitary confinement, death threats and beatings after escape attempts...and horror of horrors, the "barbarians" even took the wristwatch of one of the hostages! Poor food? They had the embassy cook until Carter's "rescue mission"—and at worst they ate better than most Iranians. Mock executions? The shah's infamous SAVAK filled mass graves with the real thing.

SAVAK learned its ABCs from its CIA teachers. Survivors of the dungeons have recounted the horrors: children mutilated while their parents were forced to watch, burning with candles and red hot

irons, electrocutions, fingernails pulled out. Some SAVAK sadists got their just desserts after the shah fell, but this has hardly meant the end to torture in Iran. In July 1980 four people accused of "sexual crimes" were buried up to their chests and stoned to death. Not so the CIA's "nest of spies"—the mullahs seemed quite careful not to harm the "Great Satan's" brood.

The U.S. imperialists' CIA built SAVAK after the 1953 mullah-supported coup which reinstalled the shah. Later they spawned the assassins and torturers of the Chilean DINA. The "Phoenix" program in Vietnam systematically tortured and liquidated at least 20,000 people. They were dragged behind trucks and thrown from helicopters. This was the "rural pacification" which led to My Lai. Today it produces the grim harvest of corpses in El Salvador under the guise of "land reform."

The Iranian mullahs do employ torture to combat the enemies of their Islamic "revolution"—rebellious Kurds, unveiled "adulterers" and "Satanic communists." But their primitive methods pale before the technological savagery of U.S. imperialism: swords and stones versus napalm and nuclear weapons. No doubt the mullahs will seek to bridge this "torture technology gap" and when an anti-Soviet deal is



Victim of SAVAK

ISA

sealed, the U.S. will be quick to provide. Unless the Iranian proletariat overthrows Islamic reaction, the CIA mouthpieces who today yell "torture" will tomorrow bring their electrodes back to Iran.

Central America...

(continued from page 1)

Moscow—as the *Chicago Sun-Times* headline put it, "Haig Warns Soviets: Won't Shun A-War." Meanwhile, the new Republican head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, North Carolina senator Jesse Helms, thinks Salt II is a commie plot and raves about how "We've got to draw the line" against creeping Castroism. We've got news for Reagan & Co. Russia ain't no domino.

But the Republicans figure they can get away with mass murder in Central America because it is part of a U.S. "sphere of influence." Within hours of assuming his committee chairmanship, Helms convened a secret hearing to lift the ban on U.S. aid to the Salvadoran junta imposed by Carter after the rape/murder of three American nuns in November. Unwilling to take second place in anti-Communist hysteria, in its last week the Democratic administration authorized \$10 million in "lethal" military aid to the junta (including helicopters and "advisers") and promised \$65 million in "economic" assistance. The State Department blustered about supporting the "struggle against Marxist terrorism, supported covertly with arms, ammunition, training and political and military advice by Cuba and other Communist nations" (*New York Times*, 19 January). And two days after Reagan took office it was announced that all U.S. aid had been cut off to Sandinista Nicaragua, accused of supplying the Salvadoran leftists' offensive.

To dramatize the United States' unconditional support to the junta, which last year massacred 12,000 workers, peasants and slum dwellers, the leading Salvadoran newspaper ran a full-page blow-up of a letter from Carter to junta president José Napoleón Duarte, in which the lame-duck president assured the Christian Democratic front man, "I am certain that you will bring El Salvador into a new age of democracy, order, and justice" (*Prensa Gráfica*, 19 January). Carter's man in San Salvador, ambassador Robert White, who had previously opposed new American aid, changed his tune and assured the army killers running the country that the U.S. "will not permit the establishment of a Marxist government in El Salvador" (*La Prensa* [Managua], 17 January). But this did not save White, labeled an "extreme leftist" by Republican Helms, from being recalled to Washington by the Reagan team.

Meanwhile, the forces of "democracy, order, and justice" were dropping incendiary bombs on the slum dwellers around at least three Salvadoran cities, barbaric actions recalling the desperate, murderous last days of Nicaragua's Somoza. A virtual news blackout in this country and the persecution of journal-

ists in El Salvador has made it difficult to obtain hard information on the guerrilla offensive. It appears that after initial successes (including several army officers going over with their troops to the rebels), forces of the guerrilla coalition, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), gradually withdrew from departmental capitals and towns in eastern El Salvador. A general strike in the capital met with mixed results. Then, after a brief lull, fighting resumed January 22 as government forces (armed with helicopter gunships and bombs rushed to San Salvador by the Pentagon) pounded guerrilla columns in the west.

The junta quickly claimed victory, but the guerrilla offensive appeared to aim at demonstrating the Front's



30,000-strong Salvadoran solidarity demonstration in Mexico City.

military capacity and presence in the country. Thus rather than being an all-out insurrection it was subordinated to the opposition's "diplomatic offensive" and intended as the beginning of a longer civil war. FMLN spokesman Fermán Cienfuegos announced that the next stage would be "the new revolutionary government that will be established soon in some part of El Salvador" (*Le Monde*, 17 January). The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the popular-front coalition including the FMLN as well as mass-based worker-peasant-student blocs and bourgeois politicians, has appealed to the U.S. for a negotiated settlement. "We want to deal with the circus owner, not the acrobats," said Guillermo Ungo, the former junta member and "social-democratic" liberal leader of the FDR. The popular front is looking to such allies as Mexico, Panama and the West German-dominated Socialist International and exposure in the UN to ease its way to power.

Even if successful this exercise in domestic/international class collaboration would threaten the Salvadoran working masses, whose blood would be shed only to install a new capitalist regime, one which sooner or later would clamp down on left-wing unions and peasant organizations in order to "stabilize" bourgeois rule. But whatever prospects such policies may have had under Carter, with his "human rights" demagoguery, there is little chance that Reagan's Washington would permit the installation of any kind of left-leaning government (even of the impotent "constitutionalist" Allende type) in El Salvador short of outright military victory by the insurgents. Already American plans are far advanced for some kind of imperialist "peace-keeping" intervention to strangle the revolutionary upsurge on the isthmus.

It is urgent that the U.S. left and labor movement vigorously oppose such a Santo Domingo-style imperialist adventure! A Washington-aided rightist victory in El Salvador would soon extend the bloodbath to Nicaragua. And the bloody implications of U.S.

intervention would go far beyond Central America: this could be the opening shot of anti-Soviet war escalation. Reagan and his advisers are looking at El Salvador as the "Angola" of their administration. Ford was stymied, but if they get away with it here, the Yankee imperialists will attempt military threats elsewhere, from the Near East to Europe. Class-conscious militants must demand: U.S./OAS Hands Off El Salvador, Nicaragua! No U.S. Aid! Labor: Boycott Military Goods to Central American Rightist Dictators! Defend Cuba and the Soviet Union!

Yankee Imperialists Go Home!

Shortly after Reagan's election a group of self-described "current and former analysts and officials" of the CIA, Department of State and other agencies leaked a "Dissent Paper on El Salvador and Central America" to the press. This widely circulated document, confirmed by authoritative sources, exposes the extensive plans for American intervention in El Salvador and argues for a U.S.-mediated "Zimbabwe option." Their policy is a pipedream, but the evidence the Carter administration dissenters marshal certainly supports their description of "an allocation of bureaucratic and financial resources exceeding those made to any other hemispheric crisis since 1965." As they noted, "Should President Reagan choose to use military force in El Salvador, historians will be able to show that the setting for such actions had been prepared in the last year of the Carter Administration." They confirm at the concrete diplomatic/military level our insistence that Carter's anti-Soviet offensive paved the way for Reagan reaction. This is important to remember as liberal Democrats begin to posture as an alternative to the incumbent Cold Warriors.

Listing the steps already taken by Washington, the "Dissent Paper" points to U.S. military men in El Salvador, recent training of several hundred Salvadoran officers in American counterinsurgency schools in the "former" Panama Canal Zone, operational plans for deploying Guatemalan and Honduran armies in El Salvador, plans for disrupting the guerrilla supply lines and improved communications among military and paramilitary organizations (the ultra-rightist death squads) throughout the region. It also revealed that "A paramilitary strike force made up of former members of the Nicaraguan National Guard, anti-Castro Cubans, Guatemalan military personnel and mercenaries has been formed in the past year." Already at the turn of the year it was confirmed that 500 ex-Somoza troops crossed from Guatemala into El Salvador where they reportedly clashed with FMLN columns last week. Also, the well-informed British business publication *Latin American Weekly Report* (16 January) quoted a Honduran officer who asserted, "There are 3,000 of us Hondurans and 2,000 Guatemalans from the third division, second battalion; we'll go in and kill those communists."

These not-so-secret plottings in Washington and San Salvador recall the days before the botched Bay of Pigs raid or the CIA-led military operation

mounted from Honduras in 1954 to overthrow the "reform" Arbenz government in Guatemala. It's been some years since then, and the United States suffered a humiliating defeat in Vietnam. But it's still the same imperialist tiger, the same stripes, and no UN resolutions or appeals from the Maryknoll Sisters to respect "human rights" are going to stop this bloodthirsty predator. Nor will it confine its rampaging to the borders of tiny El Salvador. The American-supplied ex-Somoza Guardsmen are itching to attempt a counterrevolutionary return to Nicaragua. Over the past year they have repeatedly staged murderous raids across the border from their camps in Honduras.

The petty-bourgeois bonapartist Sandinista (FSLN) leadership in Managua has sought to precariously balance between the competing pressures of imperialism and domestic capitalism on the one hand and their worker-peasant supporters on the other. And while the FSLN denies, apparently truthfully, sending sizable aid to the Salvadoran rebels, many thousands of Sandinista fighters remember that only a year and a half ago leftists from El Salvador were their comrades-in-arms in the fight against the Nicaraguan tyrant. Pressures are rising sharply, and continued efforts by the FSLN *comandantes* to placate imperialism (a policy endorsed by Castro) by preserving the private sector, curbing working-class militancy and refusing to militarily aid the Salvadoran guerrillas could endanger their own existence.

Under the prodding of their imperialist masters the mini-bourgeoisies of the Central American mini-states have drawn together to "roll back Communism." For them there are no distinctions between the amorphous petty-bourgeois Sandinistas, who include bourgeois liberals among their supporters, and the worker/peasant-based leftists in the more class-polarized Salvadoran situation. What is needed to answer this reactionary alliance is not more attempts at conciliation or reliance on imperialist or Latin American bourgeois pressure, but a far-reaching workers revolution which must quickly spread throughout Central America or face bloody defeat. The fighting has commenced and a maximum effort is needed to mobilize the toiling masses in insurrectionary action for clear class goals. This is what reformist programs of class collaboration prevent, why the demand that Salvadoran workers break with the "democratic" bourgeois politicians and "progressive" colonels of the FDR is a matter of life and death for thousands. Break with the bourgeoisie—For workers revolution in El Salvador—For workers and peasants governments throughout Central America!

Meanwhile, American intervention has already begun. Beginning with El Salvador they have their own version not of a "domino theory" but a domino tactic. From El Salvador to Nicaragua, to Cuba, to Poland, to the Soviet Union. It is not just the plight of martyred people, suffering thousands of hideous deaths at the hands of Pentagon-trained killers, which is at stake, but the danger of imperialist war. The defense of the Soviet Union begins in El Salvador! ■

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Spartacist League Forum:

"Facing the Reagan Years"

We reprint below excerpts from a speech by comrade George Foster of the Spartacist League Central Committee at an SL forum at the University of California at Berkeley on January 17.

I want to discuss the question of Reagan and Reagan's administration as a revolutionary Marxist, as a Trotskyist. To approach the question from the point of view that our task is the abolition of capitalism, our aim is socialism and our method is proletarian, that is, working-class revolution. And to accomplish this task requires the construction of Leninist parties which base themselves on the experience of the 1917 October Russian Revolution, the first four congresses of the Communist International and the struggle led by Trotsky against the Stalinist bureaucracy and for the Fourth International.

There's a lot of history compacted into those phrases—people should try to assimilate it. It's necessary to do it, to understand and change the world. October 1917 in Russia is the touchstone for understanding all subsequent political events of the 20th century.

Now, we're going to talk about the Reagan years. Before doing that I'd like to read a quote from a lecture on the 1905 Revolution:

"We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution. But I can, I believe, express the confident hope that the youth which is working so splendidly in the socialist movement of Switzerland and of the whole world will be fortunate enough not only to fight but also to win in the coming proletarian revolution."

Those words were penned in Switzerland on 22 January 1917 by V.I. Lenin. So it's a problem to be a prophet and have foresight—sometimes events overtake you. It's interesting that Lenin would write that scarcely a month before the February Revolution which destroyed tsarism in Russia.

Okay, "Facing the Reagan Years." It may be an optimistic title. We hear that Reagan is unlikely to launch a witch-hunt, for example, against the California Peace and Freedom Party. But on the other hand, he and his advisers could get us into World War III without believing it. And don't assume, as liberals do, that with power comes a sense of responsibility. You recall when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Reagan's response was: Well, we ought to blockade Cuba. "We"—the American bourgeoisie. If the USSR goes into Poland, which is a distinct possibility, and he tries to blockade Cuba, people should reflect on what response the Soviets could make to that. There's a joke that's been circulating that must have reached Khomeini. What's flat and sandy and glows in the dark? The answer is, Teheran five minutes after Reagan takes office. Unfortunately, this reflects a certain reality. So the Iranians are scrambling pretty fast to seal this hostage deal.

Reagan's election means a sharp turn to the right on all social and political questions. The right-wing yahoos are feeling their oats. They want to abolish rent control, slash all these "entitlements," which just happen to be things like welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, pensions, unemployment compensation. Barry Goldwater, Jr. wants to help the post office out by allowing it to sell advertisements on the postage stamps. The oil companies have sent their people into the administration to deregulate oil. Boeing has sent their people in to regulate aeronautics. If Reagan's new



Reagan's America: Closed plants, KKK, support for junta terror.

administration is not solidly Orange County kooks, the rest of it's pretty solid Wall Street: right-wing, without much of a façade.

The main manifestation of this rightward turn is anti-Sovietism. It began with Carter's "human rights" crusade which now has to be seen as a transient manifestation of bourgeois hypocrisy. It was designed to refurbish U.S. imperialism's image which was pretty tarnished coming out of the Vietnam War, and then Watergate came on the heels of that. Carter's "human rights" crusade was mainly aimed at the Soviet Union, and his anti-Soviet war drive paved the way for Reagan. It also encouraged the Klan and the Nazis—biggest resurgence since the 1920s. These people are basically the far-right cheering section of the anti-Soviet war drive. They've been pretty much confined to the backwaters in the past, but now they're trying to raise their heads in the urban centers. And our policy has been to try to interdict them in these centers, to mobilize labor and minorities to crush them in the egg.

Poland and Afghanistan

So the question of the Klan is connected with this drive against the Soviet Union. It goes pretty deep, too, and we exist in capitalist society. The Spartacist League docs, the rest of the left groups, the self-proclaimed socialists and revolutionaries. And it puts

pressure on us as an organization and on them. One can see it very clearly on questions like Afghanistan, one of Carter's "human rights" *causes célèbres*, where human rights apparently means backing people who are opposed to women being able to read and write, who are for bride price—essentially to be able to buy and sell women like so much cattle.

You get people like the Socialist Workers Party, who used to be a Trotskyist organization, but now they're

through and through social-democratic. Originally they had a position of soft support to the Soviets against the reactionaries. Actually it wasn't the Soviets—what they supported was the so-called Afghani Revolution. They didn't want to support the USSR militarily; they didn't want to deal with that question. So they cooked up this Afghanistan Revolution that nobody ever heard of. They recently changed their line and decided it was wrong for the Soviets to go in. Why? Well, the most outrageous argument was: This will give the American bourgeoisie and imperialists an excuse to start new Vietnams in Latin America, in Nicaragua and Cuba. At least Fidel Castro has a little more guts than they do on that question.

Poland. We were the only tendency of people who call themselves Trotskyist in the world who did not deny or underplay the reactionary role of the Catholic church in the current events in Poland. All the other groups just wish that away as some minor event. Why do they do that? It flies in the face of reality. The reason is, because it poses the possibility of a confrontation between the bureaucracy and at least a section of the Polish population led by clerical reactionaries and social democrats like the KOR who proclaim that they want to turn Poland into a Finland, i.e., a capitalist country. They don't want to take a side in that.... Again it reflects this anti-Soviet pressure.

We're Trotskyists. We don't prettify the Soviet bureaucracy. The Soviet workers state to us is a degenerated workers state, deformed through a political counterrevolution by Stalin and the bureaucracy he led. And we call for workers political revolution to overthrow that bureaucracy. But it's still a workers state. A lot of the historic gains of the October Revolution remain, particularly the economic ones, the nationalized property forms, the planned economy. And just as we defend the Teamsters in strikes against the employers, even though it's a corrupt union run by a bunch of gangsters, in the same way we side with the Soviet Union or the other deformed workers states in military conflicts with imperialism.

Now the main thing in Poland is that this is a condemnation of Stalinism as a system. Because that's what brought on the events in Poland. Here we have 30 years of so-called socialism, and all it's succeeded in doing is driving the Polish working class into the arms of the

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"Experts do not usually take sufficient account of the strength of the human will. If human beings are really determined to do something, they will do it, even if all calculation shows it to be impossible." Tito, April 1943



Eupra

There's trouble in "the Trend" these days. The former New Leftists who several years ago baptized themselves the "anti-revisionist, anti-dogmatist trend"—because they don't like either Russia ("revisionist") or China ("dogmatist")—are finding out that double-negative politics lead nowhere. As the Peking Stalinists developed their anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism during the late '70s, the "Trend" picked up disillusioned Maoists who felt uncomfortable walking hand-in-hand with the bloody butchers of Indochina. But as the Carter/Reagan Cold War drive heats up, they have found fence-sitting an increasingly impossible position. Today the trend of the Trend is clearly slouching toward Moscow. And No. 1 trend-setter is Irwin Silber, former associate editor of the *Guardian* and long-time RCA Victor mascot of Moscow Stalinism.

Two years ago Silber split from the *Guardian* to form his "National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs" (NNMLC). The clubs have since been replaced by the looser form of discussion groups, study projects and forum series sponsored by his *Line of March* journal. While Silber calls for "rectification" of the disoriented "Marxist-Leninist" milieu, the Trend's other main pole around the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) calls for "fusion" with the everyday struggles of the working class. This was embodied in the so-called Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center (OCIC), formed by assorted Maoist local collectives in 1978. But lately the OCIC has undergone a process of self-mutilation in the form of Stalinist "white chauvinism" trials which boomeranged and sparked mass resignations. Many of the departees are now leaning toward Silber's *Line of March* (LOM).

Particularly with Silber's present political line, someone unfamiliar with the American left might think the "Trend" and the Spartacist League (SL)

Ex-Maoists On the Road to Moscow



Irwin Silber

WV Photo

Where Is the "Trend" Going?

major force in the struggle against imperialism."

Of the Trend one can truly say, "left in form, right in essence."

There is another crucial difference as well. Although the politics of the hard Maoist and ex-Maoist Stalinist organizations—Mike Klonsky's Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (CP-ML), Jerry Tung's Communist Workers Party (CWP), Bob Avakian's Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), Nelson Peery's Communist Labor Party (CLP), Milt Rosen's Progressive Labor Party (PLP)—are profoundly counter-revolutionary, their cadre are far more

first time Chinese foreign policy utterly repelled broad radical sentiment. In particular, black radicals and even liberals instinctively solidarized with the Angolan nationalists and Cubans fighting the armed forces of apartheid imperialism. Whatever sympathy American black militants had for Maoism was killed along with white-supremacist South Africa's commandos on the Angolan battlefield. And the *Guardian's* turn to critical Maoism was marked by the departure of its long-time Peking loyalist, Carl Davidson. Henceforth, the "independent radical news-weekly" took a posture of "comradely criticism" toward China, but had no independent policy of its own.

When Peking attacked Vietnam in early 1979 in collusion with the United States, *Guardian* editor Jack Smith could only throw up his hands in despair. Commenting "evenhandedly" on the Chinese invasion of Soviet-aligned Vietnam and Hanoi's invasion of Pol Pot's Cambodian land of death, a front-page headline lamented, "End Wars in Indochina" (*Guardian*, 7 March 1979). Rebelling against this middle-of-the-road policy, Irwin Silber resigned from the editorial board. In a pamphlet, "The War in Indochina," he proclaimed, "Today, China's international line and actions represent a greater concession to U.S. imperialism than the Soviet Union ever dared propose." His call for complete political solidarity with the "genuine Marxist-Leninist" Vietnamese leadership was Silber's bridge back to the Moscow camp.

Afghanistan soon made it clear that this was the real content of Silber's call for a "rectification of the general line of the the US communist movement." Mao clinking glasses with Nixon while B-52s carpet bombed Hanoi may have made New Left Maoists queasy; with Angola and the China-Vietnam war many of them passed from critical Maoism to becoming Stalinoid lost souls wandering in the no man's land between Russia and China. And here was the USSR supporting a leftist regime under attack by a gang of Islamic clerical reactionaries backed by U.S. imperialism and the Peking bureaucracy. Silber commented:

"Therefore, the Soviet leadership frequently *does* support revolutionary struggle as a way to weaken its major foe—always carefully weighing the possible consequences if it should go too far in confronting the U.S." "In many of the crucial confrontations with imperialism (i.e., Vietnam, Angola, Zimbabwe, Palestine, etc.), the Soviet Union winds up on the correct

side of the barricades."

—Irwin Silber, "Afghanistan—The Battle Line Is Drawn"

Silber made his mark by seizing on the Cold War uproar over Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as the moment for the soft/critical/ex-Maoists' crossing of the Ussuri on the road back to Moscow.

Irwin Silber and the Guardian Tendency

As indicated by its wishful self-designation, "the Trend" likes to present itself as a new, broad, dynamic current in the American left. This is a completely false picture. When one speaks of the Trend, one is basically talking about Silber's *Line of March*, not simply because it is the largest and most dynamic group. In the midst of the disillusioned, disoriented "M-L" milieu, Silber is a man who knows where he wants to go. He knows, because he's been there. For over three decades the *Guardian* has represented a relatively defined radical/liberal audience. It has sought to be the voice of the fellow traveler, the petty-bourgeois wing of a (non-existent) popular front. And Silber is now calling the tune because he first and most clearly recognized that rad/lib stomachs were too weak for Peking's increasingly unpopular front with U.S. imperialism.

It is anything but a historic accident that the *Guardian* originated as the organ of the Progressive Party of Henry Wallace. In 1948 there was a bourgeois popular-front breakaway movement, for which the Communist Party (CP) provided the organization and troops, around FDR's naive and quixotic former Democratic vice president. Volume 1, Number 1 of the *National Guardian* was dated 18 October 1948, in the heat of Wallace's presidential campaign. Its editorial statement stressed the paper's continuity with the liberal politics of the Roosevelt period:

"This editorial point of view will be a continuation and development of the progressive tradition set in our time by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and overwhelmingly supported by the American people in the last four elections."

By 1950 Wallace had renounced the Progressive Party, supported "our boys" in the Korean War and made copious *mea culpas* for having been a "Commie dupe." After a disastrous showing by Progressive candidate Vincent Hallinan against Adlai Stevenson in 1952, the CP returned to its old policy of boring from within the Democratic Party.

A number of CP fellow travelers

1948:

First issue of the *National Guardian*, a mouthpiece for the Progressive Party campaign for Henry Wallace.



Marzani & Munsell



today occupy positions relatively close together on the political spectrum. Silber's support to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, for instance, led Eurocommunist Dorothy Healey to bait him for "Trotskyism." However, such a view is an optical illusion. The Trend set is moving from soft right-wing Maoism to fellow traveling with the Kremlin. For Silber this marks a return to his political stance of the 1950s. A *Guardian* (8 October 1979) "On the Left" column was not being demagogic when it commented:

"However, in reacting against China's reactionary foreign policy, LOM has increasingly dropped the struggle against revisionism and tends more and more to view the Soviet Union as a

serious-minded than the trendy Trenders. What separates the "Trend" from the Spartacist League is not just or even primarily our Trotskyist world analysis (which we suspect they crib for use against Maoist opponents). Rather it is our willingness to swim hard against the stream of prevailing radical/liberal public opinion. This Bolshevik hardness they see as "sectarianism." Thus the main components of the Trend are centrally defined by Menshevik-type anti-vanguardism.

The "Trend" dates its origins from Peking's support to the CIA-engineered South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76. Angola was the first fruit of Maoist China's alliance with Washington against the Soviet Union, and the

associated with the Progressive Party and the American Labor Party (ALP) in New York—Hallinan, *National Guardian* co-editor James Aronson. Paul Sweezy—dissented from this policy. This did not represent a more leftist impulse compared to the Communist Party, simply a more freelancing style. William Z. Foster's demoralized CP labeled McCarthy fascist and prepared to take a dive. But how can a milieu of fellow travelers operate in semi-clandestinity? This would require a discipline and commitment utterly alien to them. Without CP backing the moribund Progressive Party and ALP folded entirely, but the Hallinan/Aronson group maintained the paper and the politics. The *Guardian* came to see itself as the candle of nostalgia for the popular front in the dark night of McCarthyism.

This amorphous popular-front literary politics of the *National Guardian* ("the Progressive Newsweekly" as it then called itself) on a journalistic level was reflected by Sweezy's *Monthly Review* on an academic level. Both catered to the largish CP periphery and saw themselves as somewhere within the world Stalinist movement. The paper served as the "collective organizer" not of a communist vanguard, but of what editors Cedric Belfrage and Aronson referred to in a chapter heading of their book as "The Extended *Guardian* Family":

"As radical America became more and more an undefined ghetto, our advertising columns were modestly swollen by inmates who depended on taking in each other's washing."

—*Something to Guard: The Stormy Life of the National Guardian, 1948-1967*

Soon they were "peddling coffee tables, Guatemalan skirts, 'Kantwet' baby beds"; later came the *Guardian* picnics, tours, etc. Insofar as they had a political perspective at all, they were waiting for (or at any rate hoping for) a new and more successful version of the Progressive Party.

In the early/mid-'60s, the *Guardian* began to favor the "Third World" Stalinist regimes—Castro's Cuba, Mao's China, Ho's Vietnam—as against Moscow. (Here again the parallelism with the *Monthly Review* holds.) Wilfred Burchett, the *Guardian's* former Moscow correspondent, turned up in Hanoi, and the paper gradually took on many characteristics of the New Left: Third Worldism, black nationalism, sectoralist politics in the U.S. This gave it an entrée to the new radical generation, in more than a few cases the sons and daughters of old Stalinists and fellow travelers, who were looking for a militant alternative to the stodgy Khrushchev/Brezhnev bureaucracy.

In February 1968 there was a palace coup in the *Guardian* offices, and the insurgents declared their solidarity with



Der Spiegel

the Vietnamese guerrilla fighters. In order to abolish hierarchy the "new *Guardian* collective" demolished former editor Aronson's office with an axe. But real control was in the hands of mod-rad journalist Jack Smith who brought in writers from SDS and the "underground press." Irwin Silber signed on a few months later as "cultural editor" (he had earlier published the folk music magazine *Sing Out*) and eventually became the paper's political guru. The "new *Guardian*" declared itself to be part of the "Marxist-Leninist" movement. This was, of course, *de rigueur* in New Left radical circles at the time, as even English professors were waving Mao's Little Red Book. In the absence of a genuine popular front and lacking an established Stalinist party in the U.S. to identify with, the distinction between vanguard party and "progressive" fellow traveler was unclear. In actuality, the basic nature of the *Guardian* tendency did not change, as subsequent developments showed.

In the wake of the 1969 split in SDS, the various Maoist tendencies and collectives regrouped themselves into competing "M-L" vanguards: Klonsky's October League, Avakian's Revolutionary Union, Peery's Communist League. (Indeed, many of the *Guardian's* new staff members soon departed on their way to joining various left parties, including the Spartacist League.) But the *Guardian's* role in all this was to maintain that such "party-building" formations were "premature." The more serious Maoists in the early 1970s were not especially concerned with Silber & Co.'s positions on the nature of the Soviet Union, the power struggles in China, the black question, etc.—positions which were ill-defined, tenta-

tive and changeable. What Silber was known for, what he was really "hard" about, was opposition to the formation of any Leninist vanguard party.

This was not simply a matter of dilettantism or personal softness. From its inception as the voice of the Progressive Party, the *Guardian* has been the expression of American popular frontism *par excellence*. Silber himself left the Communist Party together with the right-wing opposition led by *Daily Worker* editor John Gates. The Gatesites concluded on the basis of Khrushchev's "secret report" to the CPSU 20th Congress and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution not only that Stalinism was bankrupt, but the future lay in Democratic Party liberalism. Silber's *Guardian* looked forward to the creation not of a communist vanguard party, but rather of a broad "radical" party embracing even left-wing bourgeois politicians (analogues of Henry Wallace) and trade-union bureaucrats, as well as self-styled "Leninists."

So what are Irwin Silber's credentials for leading a "Marxist-Leninist" organization? Far and away the most important thing about him is that for years he has passed himself off as a "Marxist-Leninist," but for the past quarter century has made a science out of fellow traveling—first with "Uncle Joe," Nikita, Fidel, then Mao and now once again back to Brezhnev.

"Rectification" versus "Fusion"

The *Guardian's* popular-frontist opposition to a would-be Leninist vanguard party created a natural bloc between it and various localized New Left Maoist collectives—such as the PWOC, the Tucson Marxist-Leninist Collective, the Potomac Socialist Organization—which for their own particular reasons had stood outside the "party-building" process of the early/mid-1970s. This anti-"vanguardism" is the real origin of the Trend, whatever positions were developed later on. As we noted in our article "The Maoists United Will Never Be Repeated":

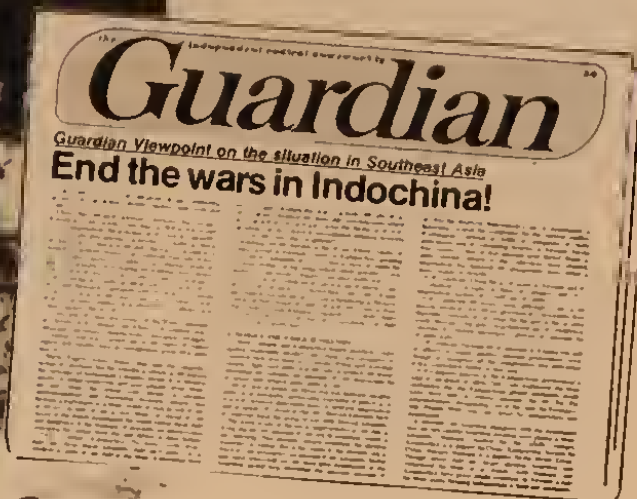
"In general those New Left collectives which did not adhere to serious party formations by the end of the Maoist regroupment period of the early 1970s degenerated into hardened circle-spirit Menshevik groups. Cliques, local ultra-parochialism, extreme hostility to Marxist theory and program and sub-reformist activism became the norm. The very existence of these collectives represented a contradiction. As self-proclaimed 'Marxist-Leninists,' they were formally committed to building a centralized party; in practice they rejected such a formation."

—*WV* No. 183, 25 November 1977

It is enough to list the political backwaters where the collectives subsist—Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Tucson, Eugene, Oregon, etc.—to understand that they are New Left holdovers preserved in a time capsule by their isolation.

1978:

Guardian sits on the fence when China invades Vietnam. Silber resigns and looks to Moscow.



But even for these left-wing mugwumpers, some form of national ties is useful if only as a pretense to politics. So in February 1978 some 30 "M-L" collectives got together under PWOC leadership to form the Organizing Committee for an Ideological Center. The OCIC was based on 18 points of mush-mouthed generalities—for socialism, against capitalism, for the working class, against the CP, fight racism/sexism/opportunism—plus the obligatory "Trotskyism equals bourgeoisie," the "main enemy is US imperialism" (against Pekinese running dogs yapping about the "polar bear"), and the real political core: "fusing of the communist movement with the class struggle." In platitudes inherited from their strange encounter with Maotse-tung thought, this is the PWOC/OCIC "fusion" line—that all questions can be resolved through immersion in the daily struggles of the proletariat.

Over the next two years there was a running crossfire in the pages of the *Guardian* between Silber's "rectificationists" and the "fusionists" led by PWOC's Clay Newlin. The mutual charges were usually correct, though understated. Newlin would repeat over and over "practice is primary," and issue such polemical gems as:

"For the simple reason that as soon as one understands the full meaning of essence as organizing principle—particularly its indication of the role of essence as the pivot of connection between the basic features of a process—one can easily expose the idealism inherent in the rectificationist formulation of the essence of party-building. Whereas 'essence' means particularity tends to obscure that idealism."

—*Organizer*, August 1980

Apparently Newlin is seeking to invent a new Kantian category, the jabberwock imperative! But the PWOC honcho gets some good digs in against Silber, whose perpetual "pre-party period" (PPP) excludes actual "party-building" as "premature." According to Silber:

"The particularity of organization in the pre-party period (ignored by the leading organizations of the new communist movement) means that all organizations must be conscious of their limitations...."

"The all-sided form in a period without a material basis fostered the tendency toward organizational competition, the drive for organizational hegemonism, and the sectarian characteristics of the period."

—NNMLC, "Developing the Subjective Factor" (May 1979)

No material basis—in 1979, 62 years after the Russian Revolution?! But then the kind of party a "serious" Silber would build could have nothing in common with the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. Rather than a communist vanguard it would be another Klonsky-type "party" which can only be an obstacle to proletarian revolution.

Initially, many Trenders saw the
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1968:

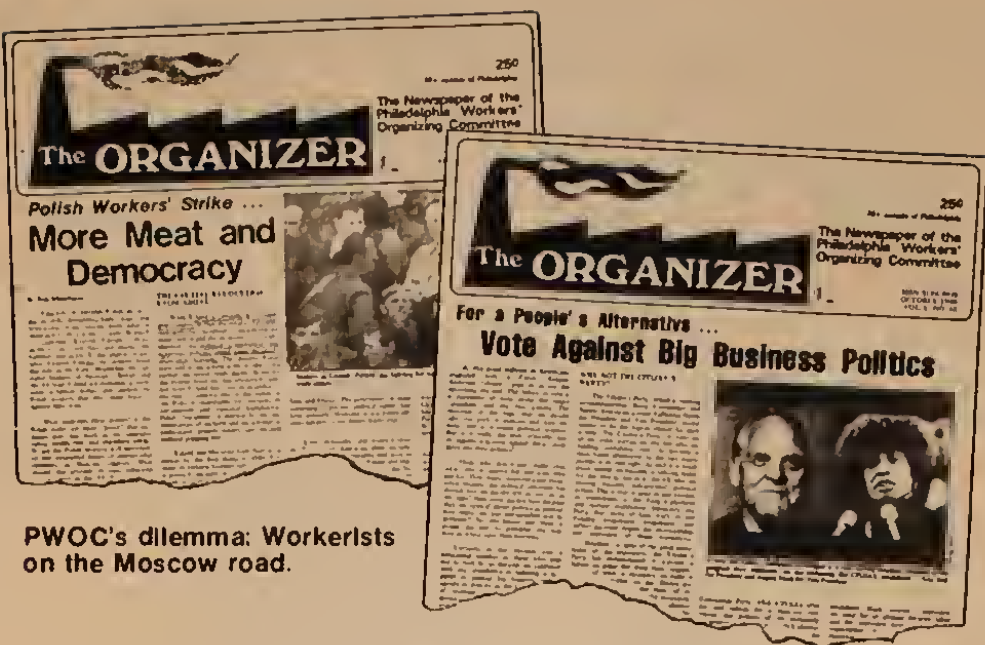
First issue of the "new" "independent" Guardian marks the shift to Maoist/New Left radical milieu. Without a popular front the Guardian traveled with the popular.

"Trend"...

(continued from page 7)

PWOC/OCIC as the more serious pole. They went into the unions, actually tried to make something out of the hodge-podge collectives. But in the last six months OCIC has experienced massive internal hemorrhaging as a result of a seemingly bizarre "anti-white chauvinism campaign." Was this a throwback to late-'60s New Left guilt-tripping about "white skin privilege"? But then why such an exodus? The resignation/expulsion list reportedly includes the entire Tucson, Minneapolis and Eugene, Oregon collectives, fragmentation of the Potomac Socialist Organization, as well as half of the Bay Area Workers Committee and 40 percent all told of OCIC's western region. Newlin recently admitted that "approximately 100" people had "voluntarily quit" the PWOC/OCIC.

An "Open Letter to the Party Building Movement" signed by 50-plus dissidents denounced Newlin's campaign as a cynical maneuver: "It is employing opportunist methods to whip the cadre into line and eliminate all opposing views rather than face political struggle on the fundamental questions before our movement head-on." Surprise! "White chauvinism" witchhunts have a hoary tradition in the American Stalinist movement, being used to harden up the membership as far back as 1931. This time around it was no doubt intended to divert attention from—or scapegoat the ranks for—the OCIC collectives' failure to go anywhere with their low-level economist organiz-



PWOC's dilemma: Workerlists on the Moscow road.

ing. It always worked fine before, but when PWOC tried it the result was a giant fiasco. Newlin asks:

"What kind of *communist* movement is it that when challenged to combat white and petty-bourgeois chauvinism in its ranks suffers not only extensive opposition, but even a mass of resignations." —*Organizer*, December 1980

No kind, of course. Behind this so-called "white flight" from the OCIC is the fact that the collectives are not made up of Stalinist cadre but of soft New Leftovers. When bureaucratic strong-arm tactics are used on these fellow travelers (from the Russian term *sputnik*), instead of abjectly confessing many just spin out of orbit. So the attempt to hammer this Menshevik mush into a vanguard party predictably failed (this sure looks like the death

knell for the OCIC). In any case, a low level of class struggle is hardly favorable to workerist groups, and the force of world events is making itself felt even on these committed parochialists. Four years ago they could perhaps bury themselves in the latest Philadelphia garbage strike and dismiss such questions as Angola as having no relevance on the shop floor. But with the post-Afghanistan Cold War drive and Reagan in the White House, it is impossible to ignore international issues in the plants, particularly the all-important Russian question.

Afghanistan, Poland and the Soviet Union

The PWOC/OCIC Stalinoid workerlists have been forced out of their ostrich

holes and are now stumbling empirically from position to position, trying to orient themselves by keeping an eye on the "main enemy." Reluctantly they came out for Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. A few months later they enthusiastically backed the Communist Party's Hall/Davis election campaign, praising in particular the fact that the CP platform doesn't call for socialism. On the other hand, they hailed the Polish strikes in August for "More Meat and Democracy." However, in September the PWOC declares, "The political thrust of the movement is predominantly progressive," while the next month a more contradictory verdict is returned:

"The demands won by the workers, while registering important democratic gains for the working class, also create political space for forces that are basically hostile to socialism or at the very least oppose those policies necessary to move Poland forward. This includes the powerful Catholic Church, much of the dissident community and elements of the peasantry." —*Organizer*, October 1980

But just what is to be done to "move Poland forward"? Where does the PWOC stand vis-à-vis the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy?

That, of course, is the heart of the question, the one they can't escape. "Poland is certainly not a capitalist country," writes the PWOC. What is it then? They don't say. This confusion is expressed even more elaborately in a lengthy double-talking treatise by the academic-Eurocommunist Tucson Marxist-Leninist Collective:

"We do not believe that there are *no significant restraints* on the growth and reproduction of capitalism in Poland, nor do we find that a new bourgeoisie

Anti-Klan Network Doesn't Fight Fascism

"New strategies" trumpets the conference call of the "National Anti-Klan Network" (NAKN) for the meeting in Washington, D.C. at the end of January. But what is the strategy of NAKN "to counter the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and racist violence"? It is a very old strategy in fact, a very treacherous strategy, and one which even in the short period of the Anti-Klan Network's existence has proved it can only stand in the way of efforts to actually stop the race terrorists, who are acting with increasing boldness and frequency from coast to coast.

The Anti-Klan Network's grand strategy, like the strategy of the Communist Party (CP), is captured in the slogan, "Ban the Klan." Simply stated, it is a strategy for reliance on the capitalist state to stop fascism and racism, an open appeal to legalistic liberalism, passivity and sometimes outright cowardice. Even as the cops and courts protect the KKK/Nazis while victimizing the left and anti-Klan demonstrators, these "Klan banners" continue to call on the armed bodies of the capitalist state to reform themselves into anti-fascist fighters. Even if these reformists are successful in getting some "banning" laws passed (which is highly unlikely at present), history as well as the ABCs of Marxism show that these laws will be used against the left, not the fascists. Quite a "strategy": if it loses, it loses; if it wins, it loses; and in the meantime its propaganda disorients, demoralizes and debilitates forces which may be trying to find a road to struggle.

But the NAKN strategy is not just an ineffective way to fight fascist terror. It is not just that it doesn't work. It is not intended to fight fascism at all. Those who attend the Washington conference will hear again the tired old call for "the broadest possible unity" to "ban the Klan." But these are code words for the strategy to get behind the "progressive" bourgeoisie. The real strategy behind the "fight the right" rhetoric is to help the Democratic Party shore up its tattered image as the party of "the

people" now in loyal opposition. It is appropriate that the Washington conference builds toward the address by black liberal Democrat John Conyers.

Don't just take our word for it. As Mao used to say, "No investigation, no right to speak." So let's look at the record to see what the "new strategy" is in practice. There is practically no Anti-Klan Network practice on the East Coast. But on the West Coast, particularly the Southern California Anti-Klan Network run by Irwin Silber's front group, National Anti-Racist Organizing Committee (NAROC), we can find the strategy in full bloom. What did the Southern California AKN do when Klansman Tom Metzger campaigned for race terror on the Democratic ticket in San Diego? They picketed the Democratic Party headquarters in Los Angeles, chanting "Democratic Party take a side against the right-wing tide." That the Democratic Party was and is instrumental in creating the "right-wing tide" and the climate for Metzger is unthinkable for these reformists.

The *Southern California Anti-Klan Newsletter* spells out the strategy:

"To stop Metzger, the government, the Democratic Party, and the media must join in a united effort with anti-Klan forces. People in the public eye must take a stand against open and institutionalized racism. The Democratic Party should close its ranks to racism and fight it forcefully."

To attempt to fight the Klan through or with the Democratic Party is criminally insane and a betrayal of the blacks, Latins, Jews, unionists and others targeted by the fascist killers. The party of the Dixiecrats, "ethnic purity" Carter and racist NYC mayor Koch is the key ruling party of racist, capitalist America!

But there is another strategy, one that can work—the strategy of class struggle. Not little bands of leftists in adventurist substitutions, nor calls upon the state to "ban the Klan." The enormous power of labor and blacks must be mobilized to smash the KKK/Nazis. But when faced

with such mobilizations to actually stop the Klan, the Anti-Klan Network actively tried to sabotage them. In San Francisco the Nazis said they would "celebrate Hitler's birthday" last April 19 with a rally at the Civic Center. The Spartacist League then initiated a united-front demonstration called for the same time and same place for all who were willing to come out and stop the Hitler-loving scum in their tracks. The Anti-Klan Network said no. They along with the Communist Workers Party formed the "Anti-Klan/Nazi Coalition," went begging to SF mayor Dianne Feinstein to "ban the Klan" and *forswore* any attempt to confront the Nazis.

What happened? Some 1,200 trade unionists, socialists and community people came out to the SL-initiated April 19 Committee Against Nazis (ANCAN) demonstration which was endorsed by 35 Bay Area union leaders and nine local unions. ANCAN made sure there were no Nazis marching in SF that day. The "Coalition" held their own little "educational" rally blocks away, where they could be sure of staying safe and sound. Later the Coalition was forced by internal pressure to make a damning "self-criticism" at a public meeting in Oakland last July 12:

"We thought the only people who would come to that [the SL-initiated demonstration] were basically the people who may be in this room and a few others.... Now, we may have been wrong... we did not bring a lot of mass elements to our rally....

"We did have some struggle inside [the Coalition] where the rightist line of a fear of any confrontation with the Nazis convinced people to stay far enough away. That was a rightist line that we all fell to, and that's got to be an honest self-criticism." [our emphasis]

—*"Maoists Admit: 'Fear of Confrontation with Nazis,'"* W/V No. 261, 25 July 1980

So on April 19 there were two sharply counterposed strategies—take your pick.

The Anti-Klan Network's bright "new" strategy? At a January 8 forum in

the Bay Area, a speaker for Irwin Silber's *Line of March* "essentialized the correct response" to rising fascist terror as "the legacy of George Dimitrov and the analysis of the Seventh World Congress" (of the Stalinized Third International). It was this 1935 Congress which blessed the popular-front alliance of class collaboration with the "democratic" bourgeoisie under Dimitrov's misnamed "United Front Against Fascism." But it was Trotsky who called for genuine united-front action based on the powerful organizations of the working class to smash the fascist terrorists. The leadership of the Stalinists and the social-democratic parties had already paralyzed the struggle of the working class. And it was when Hitler came to power without having to fire a single shot, despite the presence of a mass, influential Stalinist party, that the Third International became unredeemable in the eyes of the most class-conscious workers. It is against that historic betrayal that Trotsky began to build the Fourth International.

Now, as then, there are only two fundamental strategies on the left to fight fascism: the dead end of reformism and the hard road of revolution. Reformists of every stripe have at their hard core a strategy of class collaboration to reform the capitalist state. The Stalinist tradition of the popular front adopts the slogan: "Ban the Klan." The reformists of the Socialist Workers Party tail the civil-libertarian bourgeoisie calling for "free speech for fascists." While the Silberites begged the Democratic Party to cleanse itself of Tom Metzger, the SWP debated the KKK Democrat. Both reformist strategies despair of working-class/black action. Turning to the bourgeoisie they turn away from the most urgent task: to mobilize the power of labor and blacks to smash the KKK/Nazis as part of the struggle for socialist revolution. This is the strategy to finally banish the threat of fascism from the face of the earth—that is the uncompromising Trotskyist program of the Spartacist League. ■

has been created which holds state power as a class.... Poland may not be capitalist, but that in no way minimizes the very serious problems with which it is faced."

—Theoretical Review,
November-December 1980

In contrast, a *Line of March* spokesman simply condemned the Polish strikes and supported the bureaucracy: "The government's policy of opposition to independent trade unions was correct. The line of the Soviet Union which saw the settlement as a retreat was correct. The tendency toward capitalist restoration will be exacerbated" (*Guardian*, 17 September). So for all Silber's talk of Moscow still being "revisionist headquarters," he has nothing to say to the Polish working class except that they should once again obey their Stalinist masters!

As Trotskyists we emphatically defended Soviet intervention against imperialist-aided Islamic reaction in Afghanistan ("Hail Red Army!" was our famous headline), and we have loudly warned against the capitalist-restorationist danger in Poland, calling for solidarity of Polish workers with the Russian proletariat. If and when it comes to military defense of the revolutionary gains of the deformed workers states, we shall be at our posts. But in the contradictory situation created by the Baltic strikes, we do not write off the Polish working class, consigning them to the camp of clerical nationalism. The key task for a revolutionary (Trotskyist) vanguard in Poland would be to *split* the new union movement, winning over the mass of workers from the Catholic church-led forces. The PWOC workerists have no program for such an independent struggle for communist leadership, and to a dyed-in-the-wool fellow traveler like Silber it is literally inconceivable.

Silber does admit, however, that at issue in polemics over Afghanistan (and Poland) is really the role of the Soviet Union, and he makes the obvious point: "In order to assess the actions of the USSR, one needs first to determine what kind of society it is and what general policy or line guides its development." He contends that "despite serious shortcomings and deformations in the theory and practice of Soviet socialism, a capitalist counter-revolution has not been affected in the USSR" ("Afghanistan—The Battle Line is Drawn"). Silber has seized on American radicals' strong emotional attachment to Vietnam and capitalized on Afghanistan, where Moscow (for once) is supporting a clearly progressive cause. But barely critical support to "Soviet socialism" isn't going to be an easy pill for his ex-Maoist audience to swallow, as he realizes:

"In addition, this trend was deeply infected by the anti-communist prejudices of U.S. society in general and the New Left in particular, so that there existed in the anti-revisionist movement a ready audience for the wildest slanders which could be concocted about the Soviet Union."

—Bruce Occeña and Irwin Silber,
"Capitalism in the USSR? An Opportunist Theory in Disarray," *Line of March*,
October-November 1980

Hence the need for a "rectification movement" to overcome the anti-Soviet views in the "M-L" milieu, to bring the popular front back into kilter... with the Moscow camp.

So part of the polymorphous Trend is a Soviet Union Study Project, whose first publication is a new pamphlet, *The Myth of Capitalism Reborn: A Marxist Critique of Theories of Capitalist Restoration in the USSR*, by Michael Goldfield and Melvin Rothenberg. *Line of March* praises this "break-through theoretical work" whose political significance "can hardly be overstated," since it refutes "the two main theories advanced on behalf of the restoration thesis," those of Martin Nicolaus and Charles Bettelheim. This is sheer political dishonesty. You wouldn't know it from *LOM*, but Nicolaus' attempt to

prove Russia capitalist was first trumpeted from the pages of the *Guardian*, which ran it as a 28-part series from February to October 1975. And the associate editor and chief "theoretician" of the then-Maoist *Guardian* was today's great rectifier, Irwin Silber (who privately claimed to be "unconvinced" by Nicolaus). Moreover, the first, central refutation of Nicolaus' and Bettelheim's "restoration theses" was published by *Workers Vanguard* in the fall of 1976, later reprinted as the Spartacist pamphlet, *Why the USSR Is Not Capitalist*, many of whose arguments are repeated in the Trend pamphlet.

Goldfield and Rothenberg do not, however, answer the most basic questions facing revolutionaries. If there is "an enormous growth in bureaucracy" in the USSR, how do you get from there to the communist goal of the withering away of the state? The authors admit that their "break-through" pamphlet leaves out "the international role of the Soviet Union" and that it doesn't "represent a fully developed line on the Soviet Union." Concluding that Russia is not capitalist, something the bourgeoisie has known ever since 1917, they fail to say what Russia *is*. In contrast, Trotsky's analytical conclusion—that the Soviet Union is a bureaucratically degenerated workers state—and the programmatic consequence, his call for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic caste, are a Marxist guide to action. This is, in fact, the only coherent basis for intransigent defense of the degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism and for communist opposition to both Moscow and Peking Stalinism.

Trotskyism: The Only Answer

While generally preferring to disappear contemporary Trotskyism, the Silberites are nonetheless forced to concede: "The great-power chauvinism of the Soviet Union (and subsequently China) lent new credence to Trotsky's long discredited opposition to building socialism in one country" (*Line of March*, May-June 1980). Long discredited opposition? The credibility (scientific validity) of a theory is the result of its predictive power. So where did this great-power chauvinism come from? As early as 1929, Trotsky predicted that the doctrine of "socialism in one country" would lead to national chauvinism not only within the Russian leadership but throughout the world Communist movement:

"If it is at all possible to realize socialism in one country, then one can believe in that theory not only *after* but also *before* the conquest of power.... It will be the beginning of the disintegration of the Comintern along the lines of social-patriotism." [emphasis in original]

—*The Third International After Lenin*

Unlike the Maoists' truly discredited "theory" of the restoration of capitalism in Russia, Trotsky's analysis and program have stood the test of time, explaining as well the Stalin-Tito split, the Sino-Soviet dispute, the China-Vietnam war and the rise of Eurocommunism.

And what about China's reactionary alliance with U.S. imperialism, which certainly no one in the "Trend" anticipated. Eleven years ago, when Silber & Co. couldn't praise Mao's China enough, we wrote:

"At the present time, the Vietnam war and the extreme diplomatic and internal difficulties of the Chinese state have forced the Maoists to maintain greater hostility to imperialism and verbally disclaim the USSR's avowed policy of 'peaceful coexistence' while themselves peacefully coexisting with Japan. However, we must warn against the growing objective possibility—given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal with China. Should the imperialists adjust their policies in terms of their long run interests (which would take time, as such factors as U.S. public opinion would have to be readjusted), the Chinese would be as willing as the

Russians are at present to build 'Socialism in One Country' through deals with imperialism at the expense of internationalism."

—"Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League" (30 August 1969), *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9, Part II, 30 August 1969

Only when empirical reality simply overwhelms him does Silber recognize the great-power chauvinism of the Chinese as well as the Russian regimes. Shortsightedness (always a hallmark of Stalinism) is hardly a qualification for revolutionary leadership.

But Silber has focused on a real contradiction: a whole generation educated in the New Left which is hostile to the Soviet Union, partly out of anti-Communism, as we have pointed out before, but also out of revulsion for the sellout Kremlin bureaucrats who starved the Vietnamese revolution of sophisticated weapons to face the U.S. terror bombers; who stood for "peaceful coexistence" while Mao and Castro called for "picking up the gun." Silber tries to lay claim to Vietnam and Cuba, the popular causes and symbols of struggle of yesteryear. But to bring the ex-60s radicals to Brezhnev is a big hurdle to cross—this is the job of the "rectification movement" for a new "General Line." If Silber & Co. are gaining over the *Guardian* crowd it is because they have a clear line of march down the Moscow road. As for the collectives around the PWOC, they will doubtless remain mired in sub-reformist activism and parochial irrelevance.

It is truly unconscious irony that *Line of March* takes as its watchword the classic Marxist dictum that "its purpose is not just to understand the world, but to change it." For the Silberites have nothing to do with changing the world, even in terms of paper program. Their concept of program never goes beyond the vague hope that some element in the Russian or Chinese bureaucracy might "rectify" itself. Sort of a reverse Khrushchev—back to the "good old days" of Stalin and Beria, minus the "errors," of course. They don't fight for a communist party to carry out socialist revolution in the capitalist West; they aren't for a communist party to carry out an anti-bureaucratic political revolution in the Stalinist East. The Silberites, like the *Guardian*, simply put out a publication, hold forum series, start a few study projects: just a base to pressure the rad/lib milieu. They can "study" forever and it will lead to nothing. They cannot study the history of the Third International without examining the Stalin-Trotsky conflict. And this they seek above all to *avoid*. A party flows from program, and it is the revolutionary program of Trotskyism they refuse to confront.

Irwin Silber has come full circle, from Bulganin to Brezhnev. It would, however, be too bad if many of those radicals who broke with Chinese Stalinism over its connivance with American imperialism end up tailing the Kremlin betrayers they once rightly despised. The difference between the "Trend" and Trotskyism is the gulf between the communist perspective of a vanguard party leading a conscious working class to power and the non-perspective of finding the most "progressive" of the powers that be. As we stated in the introduction to our pamphlet *China's Alliance with U.S. Imperialism* (1976):

"It is not enough to dissent from the outright counterrevolutionary acts of Chinese foreign policy. It is not enough to support whatever forces appear to be battling imperialism or domestic reaction at any given moment. The counter-revolutionary policies emanating from Peking and Moscow must be destroyed at their root. And that root is the privileged bureaucracy which 'defends' collectivized (proletarian) property relations by intriguing with imperialism—in a word, Stalinism. It is the historic task of Trotskyism, and no other tendency, to lead the working class to the overthrow of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies and place the enormous resources of the Sino-Soviet states totally in the service of world revolution." ■

Reagan Years...

(continued from page 5)

Catholic church. It reflects the fact that the present Polish state did not come about through an indigenous revolution, even a deformed one, but came with the baggage trains of the Red Army. It was imposed from the top down. There's the difference between the USSR and Poland, because the memory of the revolution in the USSR still exists. These dissidents who occasionally show up in Red Square really don't need the KGB to repress them. A lot of them are seen for what they are—the pro-imperialist ones—simply traitors, very unpopular.

Targeting the Communists

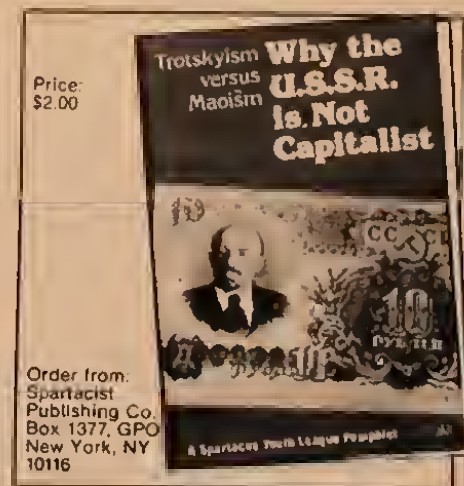
There are other pressures. Things are getting hot in the U.S.—people are getting shot. Greensboro—the acquittal of these Nazi murderers gives them the green light. Detroit [November 10] and [San Francisco] April 19—we were very serious about those demonstrations; we intended to march. We were quite prepared to take 400 or 500 arrests in Detroit and we were quite prepared to have a confrontation—not an adventure, but a confrontation with the Nazis should they show up. Because we didn't want them marching in San Francisco on April 19.

So things are getting more serious than they have been in the past. A sign of the times, of the rightward shift: so you can say anything about communists now, right? All across the country we're hearing it. In Detroit there was a fire at Wayne State in a room that the SYL—the Spartacus Youth League, our youth section—was going to have a forum in the next day. It was written on the blackboard, "Sparticus Revolution Begins" [sic]. It was a pretty bad fire, and a picture of Carter or somebody like that, some bourgeois notable, was purposely left half-burned on the floor. The student newspaper simply printed a story giving an account of this stuff that was a patent attempt to frame us up for arson.

Then in L.A., the *Daily Bruin*: there was a letter to the editor of the *Daily Bruin* that was written by some anti-Iranian rightist that ranted and raved about PL, the RCP, the Spartacus Youth League and these groups and what the California attorney general has to say about them. We thought, well, you know, it's possible we're in this report, but we didn't believe it. We got a copy and sure enough, there we were in it. Now this is a report on "Organized Crime in California, 1979," by the California attorney general George Deukmejian. And presumably it's supposed to deal with organized crime. But a lot of it is devoted to terrorism. This is "Part II, Terrorism: Summary, Political Terrorism, Prison Gangs in California, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs...." This is the company we're in: the Mansons, the SLA, Hell's Angels, Mexican Mafia, the Aryan Brotherhood.

Presumably this is the sort of stuff that the lieutenants in the LAPD read before they brief their guys about dealing with the demonstration we called. And it's not even a "subversives" list. There are some people missing from here: SWP, CP.... It's essentially an

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Reagan Years...

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attempt to label us in particular as terrorists, as people whom you deal with militarily, "mad dogs—shoot 'em down." Very simple.

Well, it happens we're not terrorists. We're revolutionary Marxists. We oppose terrorism as a political strategy, because it's substitutionalist—it substitutes heroic individual acts for mobilizing the masses. And secondly, it doesn't work. And we oppose indiscriminate mass terror where, in the name of fighting oppression, innocent people are destroyed. Ulster is a good example: you set off a bomb in a pub, you set off a bomb in a working-class pub in Britain...

But they want to try to push us; they want to try to make it stick. And we're getting this stuff all around the country, that you can say anything about us, therefore you can do anything to us. So we intend to take legal steps to fight this thing. Because while the other groupings on there, the left groups, might be flattered by this, they don't understand what it means, and the danger behind it. And we're going to give the State of California a big pain in the ass over this thing. We want a retraction.

A Few Good Communists

Okay, so it's not so easy to be a communist any more. We're expecting a rotten time with Reagan and the social climate in the country. So you're going to see political dives. I've mentioned a couple on the part of the so-called left. We're going to see other stuff too, mainly a loss of nerve and a loss of will. Which is going to find a program: run and hide, drop out. Suddenly Michael Harrington and DSOC seem to be the wave of the future—right?—we'll work in the Democratic Party. This stuff is going to find a program. You can see it in the past. In the '50s, during the witchhunt, the Communist Party got a lot of heat, COINTELPRO stuff though they didn't call it that then. People being fingered, victimized through their jobs, hounded, and so on. But what really corroded the CP then was it took a dive. It was fear—they didn't believe in their program any more. They sent some of their members underground; they didn't fight. It was corrupting.

Now, they were already an organization that had been reformist for a long time. But you have to fight this stuff. The contradictions of U.S. capitalism are not going to go away. Castro landed in Cuba with 12 men. We have our political disagreements with Castro, but his landing party got wiped out, yet he didn't stop—he kept going. A few years later, they led a successful revolution. There's another quote I'd like to read, this one from Tito, in April '43:

"Experts do not usually take sufficient account of the strength of the human will. If human beings are really determined to do something, they will do it, even if all calculations show this to be impossible."

So we don't particularly welcome the coming political period. But we're going to use it to temper our cadre, and to find out who the nervous nellies are. There's something else. It's not all bleak. We're entering a strategically defensive period. But there are going to be opportunities. Every section of the oppressed is going to get it. We want to be cautious, but we don't want to have a policy of caution. The unions are going to get it from Reagan. Already he's given a green light to go after the unions. The cost-of-living allowances are the first things they are going to go after. And black people in this country—with Strom Thurmond as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. NAACP solutions are not going to seem very realistic with Reagan in office. But where can black people hide? They can't. They can't take a dive like a lot of petty-bourgeois students who give the best four or five years of their lives to the revolutionary movement and move off to smoke dope, and whatever, sit in their hot tubs. It's not an option for the minorities in this country.

And Reagan is going after the working class. The problem is, it's very likely there's going to be a lot of illusions... Carter's going to look pretty good in two years to a lot of people, compared to Reagan. There's going to be a lot of illusions again in liberalism, the Democrats, and getting a "veto-proof" Democratic Party Congress. So we have to combat those. The labor skates already are doing two things. One, they're essentially laying down and dying. Well, Reagan's in power—it's going to be a rough time, we've got to take a dive. So Doug Fraser recently negotiated a new wage cut for the Chrysler workers so that there could be a new bailout. At the same time they're starting to talk militant. But a lot of it is talking Democratic Party. Just like the Labour Party in Britain when it's in power screws the workers, and when it gets out suddenly it becomes militant again.

So we have a defensive period. There's going to be a lot of turmoil as people get squeezed. A lot of tactical openings for us then, and possibilities for recruitment. Not a lot of people, though, I don't think—but maybe ones made of a bit sterner stuff than the people we picked up in the '70s, which was an easy period.

I read that quote from Lenin in the beginning. Now this can all change overnight, all these projections. One big labor upsurge, some explosion that takes off, that you can't predict, could change the climate overnight. France in '68 was the example. Ten years prior to that De Gaulle administered a country that was very passive socially. The French New Left were writing that the French working class had been bought off, that they had cars, they had television, and we saw the largest general strike in the history of France. We can't guarantee people that a revolutionary situation will occur in your lifetime in the country you happen

to live in. But the contradictions are there. In the imperialist epoch revolutionary situations are pretty rare, but they develop very quickly and they can be missed if you don't have a party that's prepared. And it may be a generation before you have a chance at another.

Now as proletarian revolutionists, we're after state power. We're not for diddling with the state, the bourgeois state, or trying to reform it. History has shown that's impossible. We want our own state. The problem is right now we're about 500 people on the planet. And that's hardly big enough to step on, or worth stepping on. With 5,000 people in the country we can be a factor in the working class. 50,000 rooted mainly in the industrial proletariat and with a revolutionary situation arising and knowing what to do, you can take power. Sometimes I feel like the Marine Corps. You see that slogan, "The Marine Corps Is Looking For a Few Good Men"? Well, we're looking for a few communists in the coming period who will be in for the duration.

Reaganomics: It's Better to Fight

Reagan wants to tinker with the economy a lot. He's got his economic game plans. But U.S. capitalism is in hot water. Reagan can cut welfare, he can cut unemployment, he can cut Medicare, but it's not going to make the Japanese or West German automobile and steel industries go away. Or be less productive. The U.S. has fallen quite a bit: in 1979 the United States ranked only 10th among the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in per capita income, outranked by Switzerland, Denmark, West Germany, Sweden, Luxembourg, Norway, Belgium, Iceland and France. So the country is heading in the direction of Britain. The bourgeoisie is running it into the ground. Chrysler's an example, a looted industry: they took the profits out of it, kept outmoded, outdated capital, and so on.

So the U.S. was top dog in a period from the end of World War II until the early '70s when Nixon devalued the dollar, which was the sign of the fall from pre-eminence of U.S. capitalism. But the reason it was top dog in that period is it won World War II. It came out of World War II with its economic plant intact, basically barely scratched, compared to its imperialist rivals who lost their colonies and many of whom were on the verge of civil war. Germany was shattered, divided. So they were able to put the capitalist world on the dollar ration. But over this period the Vietnam War intervened—the U.S. tried to be the world's policeman, and Vietnam proved they couldn't do it. Also a big economic factor was the fact that the Japanese and the Germans had all their industry bombed out and built new and modern plants that were more efficient.

So we have Reagan and he's going to tinker a little with the budget. But the stuff is absurd, because the cuts he's talking about are in any case minuscule, and at the same time he wants to up the military spending—the so-called 7 percent solution, right, 7 percent a year. In various magazines you can look at a graph of what defense spending will be like at the end of his administration. It'll be over \$300 billion. And how is he going to pay for it? Guess how. Print money—so the inflation is not going to go away.

And we can expect trade wars. Not only are the labor bureaucrats pushing them, but we're going to see the bourgeoisie increasingly pushing them. You see, a lot of Reagan's advisers argue that what America needs is a good dose of capitalism—"free enterprise," the term Adolf Hitler coined. But free trade? In steel? The trouble is that the U.S. bourgeoisie, a significant chunk of it, is tied to the steel and auto industries, and they're not going to let their industries be driven out of business by Japanese and German imports. And so, if they can't economically compete, by

speeding up their working classes and squeezing people so they have more money for capital, they're going to compete through trade wars. And if that doesn't work, there's another way you compete: it's called a shooting war.

He's going to balance the budget. That's another laugh. I read in the paper that New York City has balanced its budget. I go to New York often, and every time you go there something else is falling apart. It's like balancing the budget by not paying the electric bill, getting the phone ripped out; windows are broken, you let them remain broken. The place is falling apart. That's a possibility they could try, too, if they are really inept. Education in this country is an abomination. Almost every graduate of the Soviet secondary schools has one or two years of calculus. Maybe 50,000 to 100,000 in the U.S. who get out of high school have a year of calculus.

That doesn't bode well for having a competitive labor force. Then they run off to the Sun Belt because wages are low there, but a lot of those people have never worked in industry. It'll take a generation at least to get a layer of skilled industrial workers. In the meantime they get people who can't weld, shipyards that build ships that sink. Literally, Litton Industries built a shipyard in Mississippi; sure, they pay low wages, and a lot of the workers hadn't even heard of unions. But the ships, almost all of them, were rejected, and they had to go back time after time. So things don't look good for the American bourgeoisie. The contradictions are not going to go away.

And so we have our opportunities. And we'd better be prepared to take them. It's always better to fight. In Chile, the workers didn't fight, mainly because they had illusions in the democratic nature of the army. In Spain 1936 Franco rose up in a right-wing coup, but the Spanish working class didn't have illusions in that army because they didn't have a long period of bourgeois democracy. They fought a civil war that opened up the possibility of a revolutionary situation. It couldn't be taken advantage of—the Trotskyist forces were too weak. But there was that historic possibility. It's always better to fight.

As I said, we don't welcome this period, but we will use it to temper our cadre. Revolutionary situations are very rare and one thing is crystal clear: the United States badly needs a socialist revolution, not only for itself, but for the rest of the world. Because we've got a bunch of maniacs running the country who could very well destroy the world. In order to get that socialist revolution, you need a revolutionary party, tested, rooted in the working class, when a revolutionary situation occurs in this country. Engels said, "Freedom is the recognition of necessity." And the proletarian revolution is going to be critical to the survival of the human species. And we don't have the time to botch it a couple times. Time is short, and it's necessary to prepare. ■

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Destruction of Chrysler's Dodge Main Plant, January 1981—It was here that the original organizing strike of 24,000 Chrysler workers in 1939 succeeded in forcing the company to sign up with the UAW. The plant was one of the centers of black militancy in Detroit in the late 1960s—in 1968 the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) led a wildcat strike protesting company firings and discrimination. Chrysler ran the plant into the ground; by 1975 the plant workforce had dropped to 10,000, by 1979 it was 5,000, and now there are none. The real crime is not that the dilapidated plant is being wrecked (GM is building a new plant, tax free), but that Solidarity House allowed this repository of union militancy and thousands of jobs of black, white and Arab workers to be destroyed without a fight. The Spartacist League and class-struggle auto workers showed the way to win: "Sit Down to Save Dodge Main!"

Dodge Main, 1914-1981



Chrysler...

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workers, also picked up the chant, "No Concessions! Sit Down!" Brian Mendis from Warren Truck Local 140 and Frank Hicks from the Rouge Militant Caucus of Ford Local 600 were invited up front to speak to the rally. Mendis drew large applause when he laid out a class-struggle fight against Chrysler blackmail:

"We are the people who work in these plants, we are the people who built those plants. We are the ones who should get whatever it's worth, not the bankers and stockholders who have been milking us dry for the last 75 years."

However, supporters of the Revolutionary Socialist League tried to help out the local bureaucrats by using their bullhorn to drown out the chant for sit-down strikes.

Coupled with opposition to the contract is a widespread sentiment among tank plant workers that they should bail out of the losing auto division of the UAW. The main strategy put forward by Local 1200 president Lou Caponechia was to force the UAW to switch them over to the aerospace division. Especially with Reagan entering the presidency, tank plant workers know that they will keep their jobs producing the XM-1 tanks for a long time to come. But clearly a breakaway would only isolate the tank workers and undermine the UAW. Instead of splitting the ranks of Chrysler production workers, strikes at the few remaining profitable Chrysler plants, especially vital "defense" plants, could serve as a powerful weapon to bring both Chrysler and the government to their knees.

Reformism Bankrupt

It is testimony to Fraser's program of defeats that widespread demoralization has swept over the union at a time when it may be fighting for its life. As one Jefferson Assembly worker told *WV*, "What difference does it make which way I vote? I'll lose my job either way." But it is also telling that of the phony "oppositions" supported by a myriad of fake-socialist groups throughout the '70s, not one is around today. The reformist United National Caucus, hacked by the International Socialists, fizzled out through its own capitulatory momentum when its "in" bureaucrats went out. The Maoist-supported Auto Workers United to Fight disappeared as one by one its stupidly adventurist antics set up its members for firing by the company. And a lash-up like the Communist Party-supported Auto Workers for a Better Contract could never last beyond a contract period.

All of the tiny fake-left oppositions left in Chrysler have two things in common: they have all embraced a warmed-over version of the Chrysler

bailout under the name of nationalization, and not one of them has even the vaguest strategy for combatting the Chrysler/government union-busting attack on the UAW. Supporters of the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the tweedledee and tweedledum of American reformism and two of the main proponents of nationalization, have been remarkably silent since the negotiations began in December. At the Local 140 meeting to discuss the contract today, Joe Allor, who just last week gave an SWP Militant Forum on the Chrysler bailout (which excluded both the Spartacist League and laid-off Chrysler workers who support its program), just sat on his hands without a peep of opposition. But that shouldn't be surprising, since the *Militant* hasn't had a word to say on Chrysler since the negotiations began! Meanwhile, the 30 January *Militant* printed a complimentary picture of Fraser with an announcement of his support for the SWP's lawsuit against the government. Is there a connection?

At the Local 51 (Lynch Road) meeting on January 26, well-known International Socialist supporter Bill Parker passed out a leaflet moaning about the transfer of American auto plants to Mexico. Parker thus joined Fraser in blaming "foreign" workers for the loss of UAW jobs.

A variation of the nationalization theme is presented by a phantom Workers for a Fighting Union in Warren Stamping Local 869. This caucus of one is supported by the newly announced Revolutionary Workers League (formerly the RWG, a/k/a BLT, BLG, etc.) of the Ann Arbor-based Peter Sollenherger cult. At two successive tiny demonstrations outside the Chrysler bargaining council, the only demand raised on its placards relating to Chrysler was to "Open Chrysler's Books!"—which hardly answers the question of what to do if indeed Chrysler proves bankrupt. In a cringing "Open Letter" which would make most UAW militants vomit, these "fighters" appeal to "Brother Fraser" to appeal to the government to establish a "nationalized Chrysler under workers control." But since "Brother Fraser" won't "fight" for their scheme, and Reagan doesn't seem too interested, the Sollenhergerites have run out of proposals for action to defend Chrysler workers—they do not even mention sit-down strikes!

In contrast to the reformists and centrists, who can only exhort Fraser to make the government run all of Chrysler, two militants from Local 140, Carl Weekly and Bill Lauster, presented a motion at their union meeting January 25 which shows what is necessary to beat back the blackmail: sitdowns and plant occupations. The large meeting of 300 unionists was harangued by local officials like Willie Stovall, who threatened the ranks with the line, "You are

voting on your job!" The two militants managed to present their class-struggle program despite cops and goons outside and the goons inside. When Weekly got the floor he began, "We've given up enough. We have to discuss what we are going to take." But when he got to "We ought to take over the plants..." he was suddenly cut off and no motions were allowed.

The tempo of class struggle can change rapidly. The outlook for auto workers during the '30s Depression years looked pretty bleak too, but the will to fight and the sit-down strike in Flint in 1937 changed all that, soon making the UAW into one of the nation's most powerful unions and the backbone of the CIO. Likewise, a sitdown at Lynch Road or an occupation of Jefferson Assembly could be the spark to touch off a massive wave of strikes. What is needed is an organized class-struggle leadership with the program and the will to win.

No concessions to Chrysler—Restore parity with GM and Ford! Prepare for strike sit-down action! No layoffs, no plant closings! Jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! Workers to get all money from any Chrysler liquidation! For guaranteed unlimited SUB/unemployment pay and welfare benefits! Oust the bureaucrats—For a workers party to fight for a workers government! ■

Inland Steel...

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Company guards had herded applicants into a narrow space between the office door and a steel chain link fence—the fence eventually went down under the massive weight. At one point a gas line broke, spewing dangerously into the crowd. Escaping people were tossed over the fence to the outside—some hit the barbed wire at the top and ripped up their limbs. There were numerous stories of weapons being brandished as people fought for places in line, or tried to claw their way out of the crowd.

WV interviewed one laid-off auto worker who was there:

"I got there at 3:30 a.m., and there were 500 people in front of us. People were wrapped up in blankets, everything they could to keep warm. They had their vans out in front, parked over the roadway, trying to keep warm in their cars.

"About 6 a.m. a security guard came around and said no one would be let through the front gate of the personnel department where we were lined up. So we had to run back around to the side gate and try to stay in front of the line. People started jumping the gate. Everyone just took off and ran, shoving and pushing. Imagine being up at the front with 5,000 people behind you pushing into the gate!

"We were lined up between the wall of the personnel department and a fence. It was so close, you couldn't even lift up your arms if they were caught at your sides. A lot of people wanted to leave,

but they couldn't. They climbed up on the window sills of the personnel department and walked along the window sills to get out of the crowd.

"This one guy, they were passing him over and somehow someone knocked him and flipped him before he got to the fence. And the whole middle of his body hit the barbed wire, and he just hung over on it until someone pulled him over on the other side....

"Fifty yards of the fence just went down, seven feet of fence just like that. The company finally walked out with a few handfuls of applications and tossed them in the air, like someone feeding chickens. Thousands of people went diving for the applications. I got an application, then got knocked to the ground and about ten people around me were trying to take my application.... You saw people coming out of the back entrance, after they got in to get their applications, you saw blood, gashes on arms and foreheads and faces, their clothes ripped."

It was Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* in real life. After a long night's wait in the Chicago winter, the stupid brutality of the steel company which made no attempt to accommodate the hordes of job seekers, then showed its contempt by tossing the few applications into their faces. Then it was discovered there were no jobs! The company topped its provocations by announcing on local radio that afternoon that it would not hire at all. They were merely, you see, "updating" their applications list!

The workers at Inland knew what this meant. "The company did this to make a point to us, that there's thousands and thousands of people out there who want your job." "They're going after our cost-of-living and benefits next contract," was the talk inside the plant. Indeed this is the program of the American ruling class—more unemployment, inflation, slashing social services, escalating attacks on hard-won union gains, all designed to squeeze "reindustrialization" out of the hides of working people.

Ironically, this day of desperation at Inland—January 21—was the first day of the Reagan presidency. Steel workers joked that "unemployment is better already—Ronald Reagan just got a job for the first time in six years." But the thousands of desperate workers at Inland clawing after even the faint hope of a decent-paying job, was a graphic view of what the capitalists have in store.

The union movement had better take note, for this represents a mortal danger. Organized labor must lead the unemployed in the struggle for jobs. A shorter workweek with no loss in pay, union hiring halls, full cost-of-living escalator, massive public works programs—these demands must be raised as part of a class-struggle program to fight unemployment. And above all the fight for a workers government, for socialist economic planning, so that to get a decent job you don't have to take your life in your hands. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Auto Workers: Whatever Chrysler's Worth, Take It, It's Yours!

Vote "No" on Chrysler Takeaways!

DETROIT, January 25—After only three hours of discussion last Monday the 250-man United Auto Workers (UAW) Chrysler Bargaining Council caved in to what union president Doug Fraser himself calls "the worst economic agreement we've ever made." Nobody even asked for a hand vote.

This betrayal, probably the worst ever in the history of the UAW, is a threat to the entire union. The policy of capitulation to management ultimatums will not save jobs, and it has already inspired similar takeaway demands from Ford. Chrysler workers must vote down this disgusting sweetheart deal, "negotiated" with a gun at the head, and militants throughout the UAW must demand that the power of more than a million organized auto workers be mobilized to halt the bosses' wage-cutting, job-slashing and ultimately union-busting offensive!

Not satisfied with getting the contract past the lower layer of the union bureaucracy, Fraser is leaving nothing to chance in his effort to ram the extortion scheme down the throats of the rank and file. Ratification votes, scheduled to be held this week, will take place *inside* the plants on company time, making it difficult for the *two-thirds* of the workforce on layoff to vote. Letters sent to "Chrysler workers and families" threaten bankruptcy proceedings in February if the contract is turned down.

At Jefferson Local 3, union officials end conversations with "Vote yes or it's your job!" At a Warren Truck Local 140 union meeting today a scuffle erupted when a goon squad, ironically calling itself the "flying squadron," tried to prevent class-struggle oppositionists from distributing leaflets calling for a "no" vote and sit-down strikes against

layoffs and plant closings. When unsuccessful, the goons called in four cop cars to remove members from outside their own union hall. (The police, however, failed to move the union militants.) It is clear that Fraser's bureaucracy will not take no for an answer.

What the Chrysler contract amounts to is the biggest blackmail scheme ever—to the tune of \$622 million. For starters, auto workers lose their cost-of-living increases dating back to the beginning of the contract—a \$1.15 an hour wage cut. Then they will lose their 3 percent annual "improvement factor," pension increases will be deeply slashed and the remaining paid personal holidays (three for American workers and 19 for Canadians) will be eliminated. To get another \$2.2 million, Chrysler cut five minutes off paid lunch time. By the end of the contract in 1982, assuming a mild 10 percent inflation, workers will have handed over a boggling \$9,600 each to Chrysler boss Lee Iacocca and will be making \$3.00 an hour less than their counterparts at GM and Ford. This, for the hollow promise of jobs aboard the sinking ship of Chrysler? Chrysler workers must demand immediate restoration of wage parity with Ford and GM!

Sitdowns to Stop Layoffs and Plant Closings!

Chrysler workers are not fooled for a minute by the trade-offs which Fraser supposedly "wrestled" from the corporation. Fraser claims the UAW secured a major reprieve on plant closings—that is, all those except those factories the company plans to shut down. Chrysler had agreed to keep open four of their dilapidated Detroit plants, including McGraw Glass, Eldon Axle, Detroit



WV Photo
Detroit auto workers protest Chrysler wage cuts at Warren tank plant, January 15.

Forge and Mack Avenue Stamping, as well as the Windsor Spring plant, for the duration of the contract. But when WV asked Fraser at a press conference why the Lynch Road assembly plant wasn't on the list, Fraser let the cat out of the bag. "Because it's closing. That's why it wasn't in the agreements," he replied. This sudden revelation was big news in Detroit as 2,600 Lynch Road workers found out they would be jobless come April.

But Lynch Road workers don't have to accept the UAW bureaucracy's defeat without a fight. Don't let it shut down—sit down! By occupying the plant, Lynch Road workers can still hit the auto barons, the banks and the government where it hurts: their sanctified private property. A workers' mutiny at Lynch should say to Iacocca: if you are going to

close the plant, we won't let the proceeds from the equipment and the plant go to the bankers and the stockholders. Whatever it's worth will go to the workers. Further, auto workers must demand government-guaranteed, SUB benefits and unlimited unemployment compensation. A sit-down strike at Lynch Road could spark action by all Chrysler workers and turn back the Chrysler/government attack on the UAW.

So far much of the opposition to the Chrysler contract comes from some of the more conservative areas of the union. On January 19, 300 Chrysler tank plant workers from Local 1200 gathered in Sterling Heights chanting, "Vote No! No More Concessions!" Many of them, particularly the black

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10,000 Apply for 0 Jobs at Inland Steel

CHICAGO—It was a scene straight out of the Great Depression. And then it got worse. When Inland Steel Company announced it would take applications January 21 for a future limited hiring, 10,000 desperate working people showed up. Inland is located at East Chicago, Indiana in the heart of America's depressed industrial Midwest where unemployment is now running at 12.5 percent. They began to line up the night before, at 10 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20 outside the Inland Employment Office: laid-off steel and auto workers, older workers caught in the rash of plant closures, women with young children, youth seeking escape from the sub-minimum wage. Blacks, whites, Chicanos, men, women, everybody.

By the time the office opened next morning, people fainting in the crush had to be literally lifted above the crowd and tossed back from hand to hand before reaching medical care.

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