

It's Us or Them!

Labor: Shut Down the Airports!

AUGUST 11—In firing the striking air traffic controllers, Ronald Reagan has declared war against the U.S. workers movement. He has also dropped a political bomb that could explode in his face. He is out to utterly destroy the controllers union and cripple the U.S. labor movement, particularly government workers, and incidentally maybe kill the public in plane crashes. The right-wing fanatic in the White House who has been victimizing black welfare mothers and the elderly poor has decided to go after labor, which has the muscle to fight back *if only it will use it!*

What Reagan has done hasn't happened since the rise of the CIO. He has fired 12,000 workers for striking—the entire union. He has declared that the union does not exist, that supervisors, civilian and military scabs will do the jobs while replacements are recruited and trained to replace the striking controllers. Nothing like this has happened in the American labor movement within living memory. Strikes have been broken, unions decertified, militant leaders fired and jailed. But never has the entire membership of a national union been fired. Reagan says this is an illegal strike. Air controllers union chief Robert Poli answered this well: "The only illegal strike is a strike that fails."

Labor solidarity can end this strike quickly with a stunning and important victory—and not just a victory for the small PATCO union on the margins of the union movement, but an act of self-defense for the whole working class. The pilots could do it. The Machinists could do it. The Teamsters could do it. And right now the air controllers internationally are doing pretty good, as the Canadian sympathy boycott of U.S. air traffic stacks up intercontinental travelers at JFK and European airports, forcing the FAA to cancel virtually all flights from the East Coast to Europe.

In an attempt to deflect from the necessary task of labor solidarity, the bureaucrats have turned to the empty moral gesture asking consumers not to fly. The controllers know better as they warn of the hair-raising danger of air travel during the strike but do not call

for a boycott. It will not be through consumer boycotts but through direct labor action—mass pickets and solidarity strikes—that the government can be backed down. For the labor tops, calling on the public to express its support for the strikers by staying off airplanes is simply an *alibi* for their failure to mobilize the sections of the workforce that supply the airports and fly and service the planes.

Reagan has picked this fight and thrown his personal authority behind it. The media-conscious president went on TV from the Rose Garden, casting himself in the role of High Noon gunfighter, rather than throwing Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis into the fray and reserving the role of wise mediator for himself. He wants this showdown with the controllers and he wants it now. He intends to crush PATCO with such force that the impact will be felt by all government workers, particularly the postal workers who appear to be voting down the government/bureaucrat sellout contract. Thus the strike quickly transcended the immediate interests of the air controllers, posing the issues of the right to strike and simply the right to organize for the entire working class.

The *Wall Street Journal* (5 August) saw even larger reasons to editorialize for "No Compromise" with the controllers. Behind Reagan's jaw-jutting was the authority of the imperial presidency itself, including "a whole range of issues with global implications. They include, for example, commitments to rebuild military strength...to resist Soviet imperialism." Indeed, part of the Reagan administration's shoot-em-up-tough-guy stance is doubtless meant for consumption by foreigners: Kremlin bureaucrats, European leaderships and Third World *caudillos* are supposed to understand that a man who is cheerfully prepared to make war on 12,000 American workers is hardly going to be soft on foreigners. The same week that the administration fired the controllers it leaked the news that it was building neutron bombs despite European objections. And Polish Solidarity should take



Time

Labor enemy number one: Bust the union-buster Reagan!



Downing/Newsweek

note: this is what happens to "free" trade unions which strike against the state in the capitalist West.

So intent is Reagan on crushing the controllers strike that he is risking becoming the air disaster president. Even under normal circumstances air traffic control is an incredibly stressful job, and PATCO is entirely right to demand a reduced workweek from 40 to 32 hours for safety reasons. But now the 8,000 supervisors and scabs, including *previously disqualified* personnel and *inexperienced* military controllers, are working 10 hours a day six days a week! In the New York area two planes came within seconds of colliding before a crash alarm went off. PATCO reports 34 such near-collisions. In a 1973 French controllers strike, the Gaullist regime also brought in military controllers. Within a few days two planes collided in mid-air; one exploded killing all 68 aboard, and the International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations banned French air space.

Thanks to Reagan, American air

space is now about as safe as a grenade range. And everyone is waiting for the crash. When it comes, Reagan will try to blame it on the strikers. But as they remove the charred bodies from that wreckage, everyone had better know the dead are on Reagan's hands and his alone.

PATCO and the Labor Movement

It is ironic that PATCO has been thrust into the front lines in this confrontation between the Reagan administration and labor. The air controllers are a highly paid group who view themselves as middle-class professionals akin to engineers rather than to auto workers or airplane mechanics. PATCO's first spokesman was flamboyant trial lawyer F. Lee Bailey. The controllers have almost no sense of the traditions of trade unionism and this is most graphically seen in their view of scabs. One striker actually handed out an open letter in which he praised the "courage" of union members who

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Economic Chaos Engulfs Poland...6

Midwest Trade Unionist Quits CP

Real Communists Don't Call Cops on Leftists!

We publish below an exchange of correspondence between Iowa Communist Party dissident Mike Messina and CP District Organizer Tim Yeager. The letters document Messina's separation from the CP for the "crime" of protesting a real crime by the CP: the calling of the cops against the Spartacist League-led contingent at the May 30 El Salvador march in Chicago. After reading of that incident in *WV*, comrade Messina, then a member of the CP, wrote in a letter to the CP dated 8 June that "Even if I did not support the SL's slogans, I would still support their right to express themselves without police oppression, and when that oppression is instigated by the Communist Party, then I believe we have a major scandal on our hands" (see *WV* No. 283, 19 June, for the full text of the letter).

In a Leninist organization, oppositionists have the right to struggle inside the party to change its line (or to take their differences outside if the issues are severe and urgent enough to warrant a public split). But in the Stalinist CP, there is no internal factional democracy, no way to organize inside the party to change its policies; you either raise your complaints in public or you just shut up. Confronted by an urgent question of basic class principle, Messina sought to bring his criticism before his comrades by distributing his protest to a CP public meeting in Chicago. The CP's response was to demand Messina's resignation.

In the hope of stifling membership disgruntlement with its May 30 bloc with the cops, the CP leadership had to drive this respected union activist out of its ranks. But the questions raised by comrade Messina will not go away. The CP's use of the armed thugs of the capitalist state against the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League on May 30 expressed the CP's implacable hostility to those who fight for the program of international revolution against reformist class collaboration. It was a provocation which endangered every participant in the demonstration. Communist Party supporters who out of mistaken organizational loyalty acquiesce to its May 30 betrayal place themselves on the wrong side of the barricades.

Iowa Communist Party to Messina

June 24, 1981

Michael Messina

Dear Mike:

It has become apparent that your primary loyalties no longer lie with those of us in the Communist Party, and that you do not wish to abide by the rules of the Party as contained in our Constitution.

Based upon the events of last weekend I feel that you have already made some choices about your affiliations. So this letter should probably come as no great surprise to you.

Questions about your style of work were discussed at the regular meeting of the Joe North Club on Monday night. While noting that members of the Club bear no personal animosity toward you, it was the unanimous decision of the club that I write to you to formally request your resignation from the Party.

The comrades in the club felt that it would be best for everyone to handle this in a manner which would simply recognize the reality of what has taken place, and to give you an opportunity to



Chicago, May 30: CP calls cops to exclude Anti-Imperialist Contingent from El Salvador protest.

withdraw on your own. I would appreciate it if you would indicate your resignation by the return of your membership card in the mail by Monday, June 29.

If you want to talk about this, please contact me at my home, and we can arrange to meet somewhere securely.

Sincerely,

Tim Yeager
District Organizer

* * * * *

July 17, 1981

Michael Messina

Dear Mike:

As I am not in receipt of your membership card, the club will proceed to consider your case pursuant to the provisions of Article VII of the Party Constitution. A trial committee has been appointed by the club membership to hear the charges I am making against you. You have the right to appear and to bring witnesses, including non-members if the trial committee so agrees, and to testify. (Article VII, Section 4)

If you wish to bring non-members to the hearing, please communicate that wish to me at my home.... I will forward your request to the trial committee and get back to you on it.

The time and place of the hearing is as follows:...

The substance of the charges I am making are as follows: 1. You have engaged in actions detrimental to the interests of the Party and of the working class. 2. You have violated the security of certain comrades in mass movements. 3. You have placed yourself at the disposal of a group which is acting as an agent of the class enemy, and which regularly disrupts the activities of movement organizations. 4. You have violated the Party rule against factionalism by failing to raise your criticisms to collective discussion within the Party organizations, and have sought to mobilize members and non-members to affect the decision-making procedures of the Party. 5. You have failed to respond positively to constructive criticisms of Iowa comrades concerning your style of work.

If the trial committee votes by two-thirds majority to expel you from the Party, your case will be automatically reviewed by the District Committee at its next meeting.

On behalf of the Joe North Club,

Tim Yeager, D.O.

xcc: CPUSA Control Comm.

III. District

Messina to Communist Party

Tim Yeager
Communist Party of Iowa

23 July 1981

Dear Tim

This letter will serve to break all ties that have existed between me and the Communist Party USA. I take this step at your request, as indicated in your letters of the 24 of June and the 17th of July.

On the 8th of June, 1981, I wrote a letter of protest to you because the police had been called by a leader of the Communist Party to keep 150 marchers of the Anti-Imperialist Contingent from joining a May 30th El Salvador protest rally in Chicago III. I was, as I wrote, particularly upset because less than a year before the police had been called by party leaders in Gary Ind. to keep members of the Spartacist League from taking part in a TUAD conference. In my letter of the 8th, I asked that the issue be raised at a meeting of the Central Committee of the CPUSA. After a reasonable length of time had passed and I did not hear from you, I went into Chicago to express my solidarity with the Spartacist League in this matter. By coincidence, the national chairman of the CPUSA was speaking in Chicago that same weekend. The leadership of the SL asked me if I would distribute my letter, to you, at the door of the meeting hall. I agreed, and did just that. While I was passing out copies of my letter, you came out and informed me that "we don't wash our dirty linen in public." And, you asked me to stop passing the letter out, which I refused to do. To the best of my knowledge, that is the basis of your letters of the 24th and the 17th.

In neither of your letters do you address the issue of leaders of the party calling the police. The Communist Party may wish to pretend the incident never took place but there now exists documented evidence that the police were taking their instructions from Chicago CPer Sylvia Kushner. She ordered the police to exclude the Anti-Imperialist Contingent in direct violation of a vote taken at the final marshalls meeting only five days before the March. I was not the only one who was outraged by the May 30th injustice; the CP/cop exclusion of the SL has been condemned by the Communist Workers Party, the Red Rose Collective, the Madison Wisconsin Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and the Revolutionary Socialist

League, and others. I can't understand why the Joe North Club CPUSA, rather than condemning this injustice, has moved to expel me for raising a protest. I am comfortable with what I have done, you will have to live with your decisions too.

In your letter of July 17, you charge me with having "engaged in actions detrimental to the interest of the party ..." Neither the Communist Party, nor any other organization, is sacrosanct or above public criticism. The rights of free expression and dissent are basic and fundamental to Marxism-Leninism. The suppression of these rights is one of the hallmarks of Stalinism. I think your charge speaks for itself.

I have no idea what you mean by your second charge: "You have violated the security of certain comrades in mass movements."

Your 3rd charge is: "You have placed yourself at the disposal of a group which is acting as an agent of the class enemy, and which regularly disrupts the activities of movement organizations." My reading of Lenin has taught me that the police are the "agents of the class enemy." So if you want to condemn that you should address yourself to CPers Fred Gaboury and Sylvia Kushner. As for the charge that the Spartacists "regularly disrupts the activities of movement organizations," no evidence whatsoever exists to support such a statement. The CP, on the other hand has a habit of disruption. In *Workers Vanguard*, July 17, 1981, is the following statement: "Communist Party: we have nailed you with the truth. *You* are the disrupters who bring the capitalist police into the workers movement and resort to despicable practices of slander and bureaucratic exclusion."

Your 4th charge accuses me of "factionalism by failing to raise your criticisms to collective discussion within the party." Please refer to my letter of the 8th of June 1981. It was only after you failed to communicate with me that I took my protest to the streets and to the press.

Your 5th charge that I have "failed to respond positively to constructive criticisms of Iowa comrades concerning your style of work" is without merit and unworthy of comment.

As I have indicated to you, it will not be necessary for the trial committee of the Joe North Club, of which I am not a member, to vote to expel me; I resign my membership in the Communist Party USA.

Michael L. Messina

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Only Spartacists Warned Against Support to Butcher Khomeini

Iranian Leftists Join iSt

Dear Comrades,

This letter is an application for membership in the international Spartacist tendency [iSt].

My very first experience of politics was at the age of 14. I was quite influenced by my grandmother, who had emigrated from the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution. Some classmates in school—I later found out they were members of the guerrilla movement—made contact with me and gave me some books by a militant writer. After the end of the school term, these two classmates mysteriously disappeared. Later on I read in a paper that they were both executed by the SAVAK. This naturally had an effect on me.

I was married at the age of 18 and moved to Europe shortly afterward. As in traditional marriages, it was not only unsuccessful, but also ridiculous, empty and full of daily contradictions and bitter experiences of a degraded slave life. From the very beginning I wanted to escape from that devilish circle. However, I was afraid the authorities would expel me from the country, so I capitulated to the situation until I had a daughter in 1977. My "husband" prohibited me from having any kind of social political activity and tried to prevent me from going to university.

The situation lasted until my daughter was almost a year old. At that point getting involved with political activity was an inevitable and unavoidable matter. I began my political life in a Maoist organization which sympathized with the Mujahedeen (Marxists), corresponding to Peykar today. Being a member of this organization, and taking on some responsibilities as one of the few Iranian women in a male-dominated Maoist student organization gave me some self-confidence and emancipation from domestic life.

I remember it as a terrible period. It was always dark and cold, I felt a sense of sadness, pressure, humiliation and personal and social worthlessness all day long. But my social activity strongly reinforced the logical and rational analysis and conclusions of the current situation. The more responsibility I took on outside the nuclear family the more interesting I found political life and the more determined I became to put a stop to that type of degraded slave life for ever.

So I made up my mind and changed my life. But I lost my child. Both the highly "progressive" laws of Europe, the supposed defenders of equal rights for women in society, and the backward feudal "Islamic" laws of the "Islamic Republic of Iran" upheld the reactionary act of depriving a divorced (and "adulterous") mother of the right of maintaining close relations with her daughter by refusing to condemn the act of kidnapping a one-year-old child. It was an impossible situation. But I had made my choice and there remained no other possibility—except an act of madness, namely moving back to the other side of the barricades and offering myself up to Khomeini's bloodsuckers, the mullahs.

At the time of the "Iranian Revolution" in the fall of 1978, I and comrade Hosein quit the organization that is now Peykar because of its support to Khomeini as the "symbol of democracy." One thing we knew was that we could not give any kind of support to the mullahs, who took power in the name of god and the act of sucking the blood of the Iranian proletariat and forcing women to capitulate to the dark veil.

Opportunist left joined crowds cheering Khomeini in '79; today the Islamic dictator shoots them down.



At that time I did not have any conception of Stalinism at all. But we began studying the teachings of Mao Tse-tung critically so that we could dispose of his ridiculous nonsense once and for all. And we did it. Gradually we came to the conclusion that we knew nothing either about Marxism or revolution, so we started to study the French, German and Russian Revolutions.

The traditions of the left in Iran are those of Stalinism and Maoism. There are reasons for this. After the 1905 struggles for the constitution, Iranian revolutionaries were under the influence of what was happening in Russia. But at the same time religious leaders played an important role. During the years after the Russian Revolution of 1917, Iranian revolutionaries were in contact with Bolshevism. And if the left in Iran never accused the Tudeh party of being Stalinist, it is because they believe Stalinism to be the continuation of Bolshevism.

The spectacular thing about the left's response to the Iranian "revolution" was the support they all gave to the reactionary Islamic mass movement and its leadership, i.e., the mullahs. I studied Peykar's and the Fedayeen's position on the "Iranian Revolution" and had discussions with them. But I just couldn't agree with them on their concept of two-stage revolution, their belief that the Iranian proletariat was unable to carry out the tasks of a socialist revolution. As a result of this stagist conception, the left not only trusted the bourgeoisie to carry out democratic tasks, but also capitulated to Islamic reaction. So I was not surprised when the Fedayeen supported Bazargan's regime on the grounds that defending the Bazargan regime meant defending the democratic gains of the "revolution." It is impossible to just keep quiet and not take a position when hundreds of Fedayeen and Peykar militants and other leftists were massacred by the very regime they supported.

From studying the Russian Revolution I learned that even with a small working class in Russia, the Bolsheviks with their program carried out a socialist revolution, and that with such a party and program we would be able to carry out the tasks of the socialist revolution in Iran as well. I also learned that we had to be internationalists, in the sense that a workers' revolution in Iran cannot survive without a workers' revolution in the Middle East.

With this new revolutionary understanding, the HKS¹ seemed to have a good program. I was recruited to the local section of the United Secretariat, on the question of Iran. But I was always

very critical of the HKS paper, because I had a feeling that although they claimed to have a revolutionary program, things were not expressed clearly in their paper. Unlike all the confusion of the HKS, what I read in the Spartacist press expressed a clear position in just one slogan: "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs."

When I was recruited to the USec, I applied first for a study circle. I got an historic answer: since one of the comrades in the Central Committee knows this comrade, she does not have any need to go through a study circle. Her membership is confirmed by the CC. So they counted me as a member. When I was in the USec, their paper called for the defense of the "Iranian Revolution" and its "gains" week after week—which actually meant a line of betraying the Iranian proletariat and all the national minorities. When in October of 1979 the HKS² called for participation in the "Mullahs' Constitution," it became clear to me that they were nothing but reformists. So what I said to them was that there is no difference between this organization and other reformists—except that you are fake Trotskyists and they are Stalinists.

At that time I met the Spartacist comrades and bought their press. By discussing with the comrades of the Spartacist tendency the Russian question became clear. You don't need to be so wise to be able to understand that an organization that calls for defending the "Iranian Revolution," that is, for defending the reactionary mullahs, cannot take a side for the Red Army in Afghanistan, but would call for the national rights of the reactionary Islamic rebels against "Soviet expansionism," as the USec does.

This is why I want to join the iSt.

Elahe

Dear Comrades,

I would like to apply for membership in the iSt with this letter.

At school, I got to know some people who later became the martyrs of the Fedayeen. At the age of 19 I moved to Teheran. There I participated for the first time in a demonstration—in favor of the bus strike in 1969, which was touched off by a sudden rise in fares. Due to its slogans, the demonstration developed into an anti-shah demonstration. Before the demonstration I had heard from some friends that we should urge the people to express solidarity with the workers by not taking busses. So for some weeks, everything was different from the past.

When I was 21, I graduated from high school and went abroad for further studies. In 1974 I tried to organize Iranian students and some months later I was elected one of the three chairmen of the Confederation of Iranian Students National Union (CISNU) [in the country where I was studying]. The opposition in CISNU in all other European countries had already split or was splitting, but I fought to keep the organization together and the split took longer [there]. After the split I moved to the south, where I organized another Iranian Student Organization supporting CISNU, while at the same time making contact with other organizations and trying to build a new leadership and to fight the opportunism of the traditional leadership. At first I supported the Fedayeen because they said they were Marxists and the Mujahedeen as militant fighters. Later I supported Mujahedeen (Marxists), which later became Peykar, because of their self-criticism on guerrillaism. But when major leading comrades came I fought against their bureaucratic leadership and succeeded in isolating them politically.

In the 1978 period, when the entire left was excited about the Iranian revolution, I also started to wonder why none of the Iranian left ever talked about the influence of religion in Iran and about religious leaders' activities in Iran. They were always mentioned as if they were a part of the Iranian anti-imperialist movement. When people were in the streets and workers on strike in 1978, the left were bowing down to Khomeini and his adherents instead of fighting against Islamic reaction. Instead of saying what was going to replace the shah's reaction, they were glorifying Islamic reaction in line with their anti-Marxist theses of two-stage revolution. Instead of carrying out the task of organizing the workers against the shah and Khomeini and their independence from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces, the left was urging workers to support their butcher of tomorrow. They were justifying this new ruling caste as a democratic power in Iran. Their thrust was that Khomeini was leading an anti-imperialist mass movement in Iran and that anyone who was against him was a shah supporter, member of SAVAK and CIA agent.

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¹Then the Iranian sympathizing group of Ernest Mandel's fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec).

²Iranian Mandelites, resulting from the split-up of the HKS (dominated by followers of the American SWP).

How Many Pickled Peppers Did Peter Piper Pick?

Centrists in Quicksand

Recently, two local ostensibly Trotskyist groupies, the Ann Arbor-based Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) of Peter Sollenberger and Steve Bryant's Bay Area Socialist-League Democratic-Centralist (SL-DC) decided to fuse into a new anti-Spartacist league. Or rather, as the July issue of the RWL's paper puts it, they "voted 'firmly and definitively to achieve fusion' in the near future." The fiancées are being chaperoned by Alan Thornett's British Workers Socialist League (WSL), which through another fusion is in the process of dissolving into the Labour Party. This engagement is as much *non-principled* as it is *unprincipled*. The RWL and SL-DC don't have a positive common program: they even admit it, putting off actual fusion until they agree on a "tasks and perspectives" document. What "unites" them is aversion for Bolshevik hardness and a penchant for violating the most fundamental principles of the workers movement. For here is a "socialist" tendency whose components are best known for their defense of scabbing and calls to organize the cops!

The appearance of a centrist organization on the American terrain for the first time in several years intersects a new wave of left-wing political activity. Sollenberger hopes to break out of his Ann Arbor isolation to occupy a position somewhere in the vast gulf between the rotten reformist CP/SWP and the revolutionary Trotskyism of the Spartacist League (SL). The culture medium for centrist growth is richer in Europe. There, relatively large centrist organizations of Ernest Mandel's fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) have moved sharply to the right toward social democracy (tailing Eurocommunism, now Mitterrand's election, and Tony Benn's bid for power in the Labour Party). Following the 1979 USec split, Thornett set up a "Trotskyist International Liaison Committee" (TILC) as a holding pen for homeless centrists. But like the WSL, TILC has been going nowhere. Will the RWL give Thornett a shot in the arm? It depends largely on the effectiveness of the SL in exposing this new pseudo-Trotskyist fraud.

This union could only take place under the sponsorship of the WSL. The betrothed are not exactly compatible: the RWL tails every form of lifestylism (feminist, gay, student) while the SL-DC feels more at home with the values of the Moral Majority. But Sollenberger wants international connections, and the hapless Bryant can't say no when the WSL turns the screws. Thornett, on the other hand, is desperate to grab anything he can use as a club against the international Spartacist tendency (iSt). Demolishing Thornett's image as a militant workers' leader (he scabbed on a national engineering strike), the Spartacist League/Britain also won successive splits from the WSL, reducing the number of his followers to rough parity with the SL/B. The WSL's fusion with Sean Matgamna's International-Communist League (I-CL), announced in late July, at least staves off collapse, but its *Socialist Organiser* "entrist" project could well mean that the Thornettites follow in the footsteps of Ted Grant in dissolving into the chummy "left" Labour milieu.

The crisis of American centrism has been that it doesn't exist. A series of initials briefly appear on the scene—VNL, CSL, TOC, CRSP—but unable to answer the SL's Marxist polemics and revolutionary action, they have disappeared after a few months. Thor-

nett, Sollenberger and Bryant all pose as "anti-revisionist" Trotskyists. Yet they have the same Janus-faced contradictions as centrists everywhere (except for the SL-DC, which hardly pretends). The RWL, in particular, displays a near-total divorce between sometimes very "orthodox" verbiage and the most blatant reformist "coalition-building" in practice. Operating through a maze of front groups and propaganda blocs, the Sollenbergerites' opposition to a Leninist vanguard party leads them to the worst forms of class collaboration. And no outfit that talks of Marxism and working-class independence while join-

know, for the various embodiments of Peter Sollenberger's ego had no press until late 1980 and rarely took stands on fundamental world issues. More recently, they have tried to present themselves as a "soft" version of the Spartacist League, quite literally formulating positions by first copying programmatic positions out of *Workers Vanguard*, then stripping away the cutting edge which alienates the liberals and reformists. In *The Third International After Lenin*, Trotsky wrote:

"The revolutionary party of the proletariat can base itself only upon an international program corresponding

naught, Sollenberger turned to the other flora and fauna of the local milieu. The RWL's idea of revolutionary politics is to be the left wing of whatever's popular. So in Ann Arbor it does as the A's do. For the last couple of years it has tailed the various forms of petty-bourgeois lifestylism. It wants to be the best builders of feminist "Take Back the Night" marches, in reality calls for vigilantism and more cops on the streets, and builds sectoralist groups like the Lesbian/Gay Male Community Services. A recent RWL paper on black liberation, its first words on this key question for the American revolution,



Thorup

Brooks/Detroit News

SL-DC wants to organize cops. RWL crosses picket lines. They should have tried it at River Rouge 1941 (right).

ing popular fronts and crossing picket lines is about to succeed where predecessors with at least a minimal sense of shame failed.

Bryant Family Joins Sollenberger Cult

According to the RWL's account it was "forged over eleven years" by "combining experiments in direct revolutionary work" in the unions with "systematic Marxist study" (*Revolutionary Worker*, July 1981). This would place their origins roughly at the point where Peter Sollenberger fled into the Harvard cloisters after briefly flirting with the SL, preferring academic diletantism to Bolshevik discipline. This must have been the period of "systematic Marxist study," for nothing was heard from the fountainhead of the future RWL until 1976. Rejecting the Spartacist League as "petty-bourgeois," he eventually headed West with fellow ex-Harvard student Leland Sanderson and set himself up as a campus guru in the college town of Ann Arbor. Here he gathered a cult circle around him which has gone through several incarnations, from BLT to BLG to RWG to RWL. But for several years the Sollenberger cult/sect seldom saw the light of day. Instead it operated through a string of front groups, known by another set of initials (CDU, OCC, MDU, DMGEO, CLSG), all manipulated behind the scenes by Peter and Leland.

What did the BLT/BLG/RWG/RWL stand for? What was their policy on the Vietnam "antiwar movement," the Allende regime in Chile, the revolutionary ferment in Portugal? We don't

to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and collapse of capitalism."

This was a polemic against the narrow nationalism of the Stalinist bureaucracy. What would Trotsky have said of a tendency that for years only took positions on local campus workers strikes? This "learning by doing" is a lot closer to the Montessori method than to Marxism.

Sollenberger's most notorious "experiment" in the unions was a clerical workers group at the University of Michigan. Combining secret manipulation with a minimalist program, he managed to get a UAW local decertified. Then his little union lost two subsequent certification elections (see *Young Spartacus* No. 80, March 1980). If this wasn't bad enough, Sollenberger instructed his followers in the CDU clericals group to cross picket lines in the bitter 1977 AFSCME Local 1583 campus workers strike. And when the Spartacus Youth League (SYL), which had built student support during the strike, condemned this betrayal, the BLT fired back a 59-page single-spaced document to justify its treachery. They returned to the subject in the first issue of *Fighting Worker* (known to *WV* readers as the *Flinching Scab*) with a 3,000-word apologia for picket-line crossing (see "RWG: A Cult for Scabbing," *WV* No. 269, 28 November 1980). In fact, the Sollenbergerites have written more in defense of scabbing than on any other subject! And they keep on doing it: last April RWL supporters scabbed on a nurses strike at the U of M hospital.

His clerical organizing come to

calls for a "class-struggle caucus" in the National Black Political Party, a motley collection of black Democrats and nationalists. Where Leninists seek to unite struggles against the common class enemy under proletarian leadership, petty-bourgeois sectoralists set one group of the oppressed against others in competition for the crumbs of capitalism.

If the Sollenbergerites try to present a version of SL politics with the edges rounded off, the Bryants are leftovers from the Healyite Workers League (WL) in the days of Tim Wohlforth. Fighting on the program of the WL before it left the workers movement to become messengers for Qaddafi, the SL-DC's idea of a labor party is one led by the likes of California AFL-CIO secretary John Henning. The Bryant bunch supported the 1977 BART cops strike in the Bay Area and a year later hailed a Memphis police walkout. As for special oppression of women, Tim Wohlforth, from whom Bryant never broke politically, said in 1971: "The working class hates faggots, women's libbers and hippies, and so do we." Such expressions of hard-hat bigotry, like the SL-DC's call for bringing the racist armed thugs of the bourgeois state into the labor movement, express a yearning to become the left wing of George Meanyite business unionism.

Now these mismatched "comrades" are supposed to sit next to each other in the same organization, and apparently they're none too comfortable about it. To read the RWL's account, Bryant had to eat crow at the fusion conference. In the "resolution" of four disputed ques-

Hundreds Join TLD Protest

Asylum for Tamils in West Berlin!

Chanting "Political asylum for the Tamil refugees!" and "Stop the deportation of Tamils!" about 350 people rallied in West Berlin on July 24 to protest the government's deportation of Tamil refugees who had fled from Sri Lanka to West Berlin. The overwhelming majority of those attending the united-front demonstration called by the Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD—German section of the international Spartacist tendency) were themselves Tamils facing the threat of deportation. In the last few months thousands of Tamils from Sri Lanka have arrived in West Berlin seeking political asylum in "democratic" West Germany. They were among the fortunate few who could escape the anti-Tamil state repression in Sri Lanka by getting out on Soviet Aeroflot jetliners bound for East Germany and then crossing over to West Germany. Even well-to-do Tamils have been victimized in the recent wave of repression by Sri Lankan president J.R. Jayewardene's regime aimed at crushing agitation for an independent Tamil state (Tamil Eelam) on the island. A state of emergency was declared in the northern Tamil region of Jaffna, Tamil militants have been abducted and murdered by the police and military, Hindu temples and offices of Tamil organizations have been burned down. (See *WV* No. 285, 17 July).

But the West Berlin Senate, dominated by Jayewardene's brothers under the skin, the Christian Democrats, flatly refused the Tamil refugees' appeals for political asylum. The refugees were forced to camp for nearly a week in West Berlin's main railway station, while friends, civil libertarian organizations and the like tried to find them shelter in transient hotels, camps, school gyms. One refugee was arrested in front of the railway station July 6 and was to be deported on July 24. Another 140 Tamils were arrested by the cops and held pending deportation as illegal immigrants, on the technicality that they failed to have their papers stamped by the West German embassy in



West Berlin, July 24: German Trotskyists initiate protest against expulsion of Tamils.

Colombo. According to newspaper reports, the police seized many of them as they were standing in line waiting to apply for political asylum!

Meanwhile, the government and bourgeois press launched a smear campaign trying to deny that the Tamils were political refugees from pogromist terror. (West Germany of course is up to its neck in investments in Sri Lanka's neo-colonialist "Free Trade Zones.") West Berlin's minister of the interior Lummer branded the Tamils as "fake refugees," lured to West Germany in hopes of the good life and high wages. Social affairs minister Fink went so far as to suggest that it all was a Communist plot: "Aeroflot is responsible for the flood of refugees." Some of the more reactionary bourgeois politicians are so worked up over the influx of Tamils that they must be thinking of setting up their own Berlin Wall at Friedrichstrasse to keep out dark-skinned immigrants.

The government gave the Tamil

refugees a brutal ultimatum: leave now at our expense, or wait to get deported at your own expense. Faced with this choice, 125 Tamils agreed to "voluntary" deportation on July 21, flying back to Sri Lanka (on a plane chartered from Air Berlin USA) together with some West German journalists. Fifty-six of the Tamils were arrested at the Colombo airport; the first 60 escaped arrest only because the plane landed an hour ahead of schedule. The West German journalists were forbidden to have any contact with spokesmen of the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front, the bourgeois parliamentary voice of the Tamil minority) or other Tamil organizations. The West German ambassador arrived at a scheduled press conference with the journalists only to find that it had been canceled by the government. Reporters trying to file stories had their overseas phone calls simply cut off. Despite this repression and censorship giving the lie to the West Berlin

government's claims about "fake refugees," deportation awaits the rest of the Tamils in West Berlin.

Recognizing the urgent need for protest action to stop the deportations, the TLD called for the July 24 West Berlin demonstration as a united-front protest around the slogans "Political Asylum for the Tamil Refugees!" "Stop the Deportations of Tamils!" and "Down with the Anti-Tamil Terror and Discrimination in Sri Lanka!" The demonstration was endorsed and addressed by a spokesman of the local TULF as well as by the civil-libertarian Society for Endangered Peoples. Endorsements for the united-front rally were also received from the Third World Group of the petty-bourgeois Alternative Liste, the League for Human Rights, the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (German Mandelites), the (ex-)Maoist Kommunistische Bund Westdeutschlands, the Sozialistische Linke and West Berlin member of parliament Rita Kantemir.

A spokesman for the TLD addressed the rally: "We fight for full citizenship rights for foreign workers. The Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands and the international Spartacist tendency stand for the right of the Tamils to achieve national self-determination. The iSt has already held solidarity demonstrations in New York and London. In Colombo, comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka played a leading role in the battle against the discrimination against Tamil students at the university.

"A determined struggle must be carried out against the attempts of American imperialism to establish military bases on Sri Lanka, to be used in the framework of the Cold War hysteria against the Soviet Union. What is absolutely necessary is a Trotskyist party which unites Sinhalese and Tamil militants on an anti-chauvinist program, and leads the masses of plantation workers, the women and all the oppressed in the struggle for a workers and peasants government in Sri Lanka, as part of a socialist federation of South Asia." ■

tions, the SL-DC backed down on its support to the butcher Khomeini in the reactionary Iran-Iraq war, and now busing is in. But the resolution on cop strikes weasles—formally opposing them but leaving the door open to "tactical" waffling. They report "specific rank-and-file RWL demands" and "impassioned statements by RWL comrades denouncing anti-busing positions" of their fusion partners. The Sollenbergerites really stick it to the SL-DC, emphasizing the "strong political support from the WSL" which forced it to capitulate. And they rubbed in their hegemony claiming a "politically more consolidated and homogeneous character" and "substantially larger size" of the tiny RWL compared to the minuscule SL-DC. No doubt Bryant is now a squeezed lemon, but the militant sectoralists of the RWL have a surprise coming. While they brag that they won on "special oppression issues," the real axis of this fusion is Thornettite labor reformism. A conference resolution argues that a labor party must be built through a "united front" with "sections of the union bureaucracy," and praises the SL-DC's Bay Area campaign for a Meanyite labor party.

We have emphasized that the Sollenberger operation is a cult—which doesn't mean that it doesn't have politics, only that they are subject to abrupt changes depending on the Messiah's revelations. American Trot-

skyist leader James P. Cannon wrote that he had lived 60 years before he discovered the phenomenon of political cults, in the form of the Johnson group in the SWP. Cannon noted: "A megalomaniacal cult leader is liable to jump in any direction at any time, and all the cultists automatically follow as sheep follow the bellwether, even into the slaughter house" ("Factional Struggle and Party Leadership" [November 1953] in *Speeches to the Party*). So now Sollenberger's bevy of counter-cultural lifestylists will be transformed into dyed-in-the-double-knit labor reformists.

Words and Deeds

As long as they were an underground one-campus operation, the Sollenbergerites could try to hide from political combat. But now that they're coming out of the closet they run the danger of falling into the chasm between their often-left talk and their very opportunist action. This is a general characteristic of centrists through history. Trotsky wrote of centrism in the 1930s that:

"...its main arguments against the rights it borrows from the Marxists, that is first of all from the Bolshevik-Leninists, dulling however, the sharp edge of criticism, avoiding practical conclusions, thereby rendering their criticism meaningless....
"The struggle with hidden or masked opportunists must therefore be trans-

ferred chiefly to the sphere of *practical conclusions from revolutionary requisites*." [emphasis in original]

—"Centrism and the Fourth International" (March 1934), reprinted in *Spartacist* No. 9, January-February 1967

The refusal to draw "practical conclusions from revolutionary requisites" is particularly glaring in the case of the RWL, which as an academic dilettante sect sees no need for any correspondence between words and deeds.

This dramatic contradiction can be seen in virtually every sphere of its activity. Take the fight to smash fascist terror. In a speech to an anti-Klan teach-in in Ann Arbor, an RWL supporter called for "workers' defense guards as part of our labor/black mobilization," criticized calls on the capitalist government to "ban the Klan" and counterposed "the independent struggle of black and working people against both fascist and so-called 'democratic' capitalists" (*Fighting Worker*, May 1981). As anyone familiar with the American left will recognize, these demands are taken word for word from the Spartacist League, which has fought for years for labor/black defense of minorities while reformists appealed to the racist capitalist state.

This fight is not just on paper but in the streets and the plants. What do the Sollenbergerites do then? We have previously reported how they denounced the only mass anti-KKK

demonstration in a northern city following the November 1979 Greensboro massacre—the Detroit Kennedy Square rally which drew 500 participants, mostly black and including many industrial workers—as a "fraud" because it was built by the SL ("Ann Arbor Cult/Sect Slanders Anti-Klan Demo," *Young Spartacus* No. 80, March 1980). But it isn't just sour grapes and organizational sectarianism that motivates the Sollenbergerites. In April 1980 a 1,200-strong labor-centered rally stopped Nazis from marching in San Francisco. The SL-initiated ANCAN demo drew support from several dozen unions and several times as many participants as a CWP-inspired liberal/reformist demo which begged a union-busting mayor to ban the Nazis. Nevertheless, and even though both RWL and SL-DC were given speakers at ANCAN, their joint leaflet denounced the labor rally as "sectarian" while they were in the mini-popular front of Democrats and rag-tag Maoists which sought to avoid a "confrontation" with the Nazis.

On paper the RWL is for labor/black defense; in practice they consistently act as the loyal left wing of class-collaborationist coalitions aimed at pressuring capitalist politicians. Sollenberger & Co. have pushed this contradiction between abstract leftism and concrete opportunism to the limit over El Salvador. As on most subjects, they

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Tens of thousands march through Lodz protesting food shortages. A column of 200 buses and trucks occupies central Warsaw for three days, its organizers demanding that the government reverse a cut of 20 percent in the meat ration. Yet even Solidarity spokesmen admit the ration cut is necessitated by actual shortages. There is no meat, or soap, or cigarettes. And now the government plans price increases of 100-300 percent on basic consumer goods. How long can things go on like this?

Since last summer's general strike gave rise to a powerful new union movement, *Solidarność*, Poland has been in a state of cold dual power. As Solidarity and the weakened regime have gone from confrontation to confrontation, pulling back at the last minute, the country has descended into economic chaos. Partly, people have stopped working since the zlotys they earn no longer buy anything. But at bottom the general collapse of work discipline is political. The official "Communist" system (actually Stalinist bureaucratic rule) is hopelessly discredited. No one believes it is possible to turn the calendar back before August 1980. At the same time, no one knows what will happen tomorrow—there is no longer any positive goal to work for.

No significant force in Poland is fighting for a socialist solution to the crisis. Rather, the prolonged social crisis has generated a deeply anarchic spirit fueled by nationalistic resentment. The "hunger marchers" have lost all sense that to have even chicken in the shops, someone must raise them, butcher them, pluck them and transport them. In order to eat, one must work! Instead they seem to believe that by demonstrating vociferously, cursing the bureaucracy, bemoaning the historic plight of the Polish nation, denouncing Maria Theresa, lamenting the First, Second and Third Partitions and blaming Russia for the Katyn forest massacre, meat will somehow appear in the shops. Perhaps they think that if they make enough trouble, the Russians to pacify them will once more come through with shipments of poultry from their own collective farms, where feed grain is spread by elderly widows of Red Army soldiers killed while liberating Poland from Nazi Germany.

The regime, possibly stiffened by the inclusion of two more generals, has warned that the self-styled "hunger marches" (no one is starving) could lead to "an explosion of national conflict." And they could indeed. In Warsaw on August 3 for the first time police blocked a Solidarity demonstration, preventing it from marching past Communist Party headquarters. And looming over the crisis since the beginning is the possibility of Soviet military intervention, a course evidently viewed by the Kremlin with great reluctance. But regardless of the subjective intentions of the Kremlin, the Warsaw Stalinists and the Solidarity leadership, economic chaos is driving Poland back to the brink. As we wrote in "Whose Poland?" (*WV* No. 279, 24 April):

"The massive strike wave in the Baltic ports last August brought Polish workers before a historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would be either the path of bloody counterrevolution in league with Western imperialism, or the path of proletarian political revolution."

Roots of Poland's Great Depression

Poland is experiencing an economic collapse in its own way comparable to the capitalist world's Great Depression of the 1930s. The official forecast is that national output will fall 15 percent this year on top of a 4 percent drop in 1980 and a 2.5 percent decline the year before. How can this happen in a planned socialized economy?

The direct origins of the economic crisis lie in the attempt of the bureaucracy under Edward Gierek to buy off the

combative working class in the wake of the violent 1970 Baltic Coast uprising. Promising unparalleled prosperity, Gierek went on an unparalleled importing binge. Entire factories and sophisticated capital equipment were purchased from the West on a massive scale, as were finished consumer goods. The Gierek regime expected, or at any rate hoped, to pay for all this by producing a flood of cheap manufactured exports. These hopes were, to put it mildly, unfulfilled. Between 1971 and 1975 the import bill was *double* export earnings and by 1976 Stalinist Poland was into the bankers of Frankfurt and Wall Street for over \$10 billion.

The Gierek regime mortgaged the Polish economy not only to Western finance capital but also to its own rural petty capitalists. While freezing food prices for urban consumers, the government raised procurement prices paid to the landowning peasants. As a result the food subsidy increased *twenty times* in the 1970s and now accounts for 70

percent of the price paid to farmers. Private peasants receive 14 zlotys for a liter of milk, which is sold to consumers in the shops for 2.90 zlotys. Despite the additional incentives Poland's aging, inefficient smallholders cannot produce nearly enough to meet the increased consumer demand. And despite the Stalinists' conciliatory policies the rural petty bourgeoisie remains deeply anti-communist and under the sway of clerical reaction. Its basic social attitude was recently summed up by British journalist Tim Garton Ash: "It is the conservative Catholic peasants of South-Eastern Poland who would overthrow communism at the drop of a Cardinal's hat" (*Spectator*, 14 February 1981).

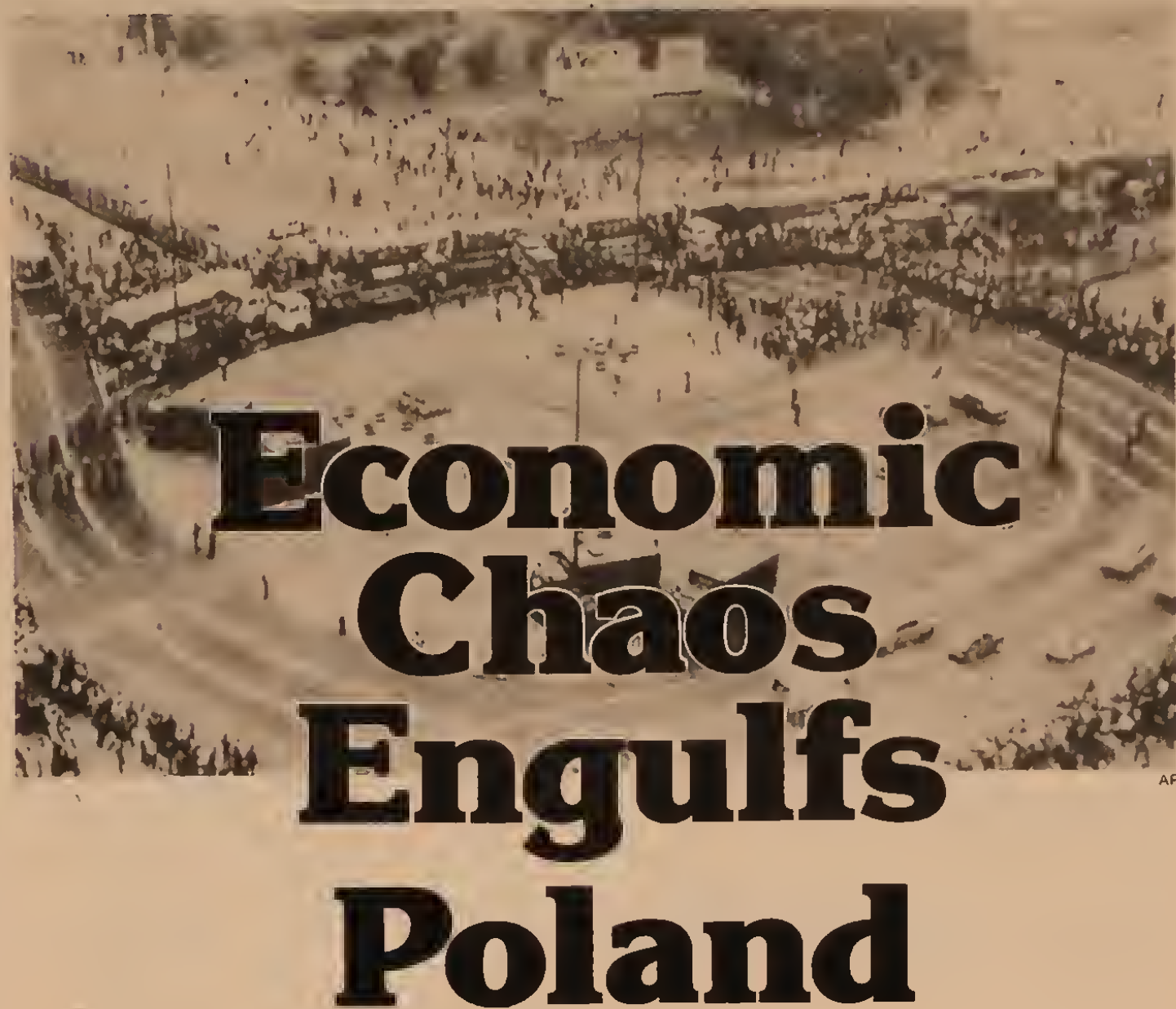
In June 1976 the Gierek regime made an effort to get out of the economic hole it had dug for itself. To free up agricultural produce for export, it announced a food price increase averaging 60 percent. The workers responded with violent strikes and demonstrations

and within 24 hours the price increases were rescinded. Instead, to save scarce foreign exchange, the government cut back imports of raw materials and intermediate goods, while maintaining a high level of imports of meat, other foodstuffs and finished consumer goods (including Sony TV sets)! In the late 1970s Poland consumed annually 70 kilos of meat per capita, more than Italy or Spain. At the same time, many factories couldn't fulfill their plan due to shortages of necessary foreign-produced inputs.

Contributing to the growing crisis was a disintegration of labor discipline, a reaction to Gierek's spectacular loss of credibility over the June '76 events. When the government told workers to tighten their belts, they responded by voting with their productivity and the vote was no confidence. An American diplomat in Poland in the late 1970s recalls: "A plant manager once told me it was difficult for him to tell whether it was simply a normal work-day in the factory or whether the workers were engaged in a slow-down or working to rule" (R.T. Davis, "Political-Economic Dynamics in Eastern Europe: The Polish Case" in U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *East European Economic Assessment* [1981]).

The foreign exchange shortage did not spare agriculture as the government cut back pesticide imports and couldn't supply spare parts for Western-made farm machinery. The peasants too sensed the post-'76 weakness of the Gierek regime and agitated for higher procurement prices, cheaper inputs and other benefits. In 1979, priest-led peasant strikes combined with bad weather to reduce the grain crop below its 1976 level. With a time lag the feed grain shortfall has ravaged the livestock herds. In the past half year the number of cattle has reportedly decreased 7 percent and the number of pigs 13 percent (*Economist*, 1 August).

Proletarian Political Revolution Will Put People to Work



Economic Chaos Engulfs Poland

Former Polish leader Edward Gierek (left) mortgaged economy to Helmut Schmidt's West Germany, attempting to buy off combative working class.



Der Spiegel

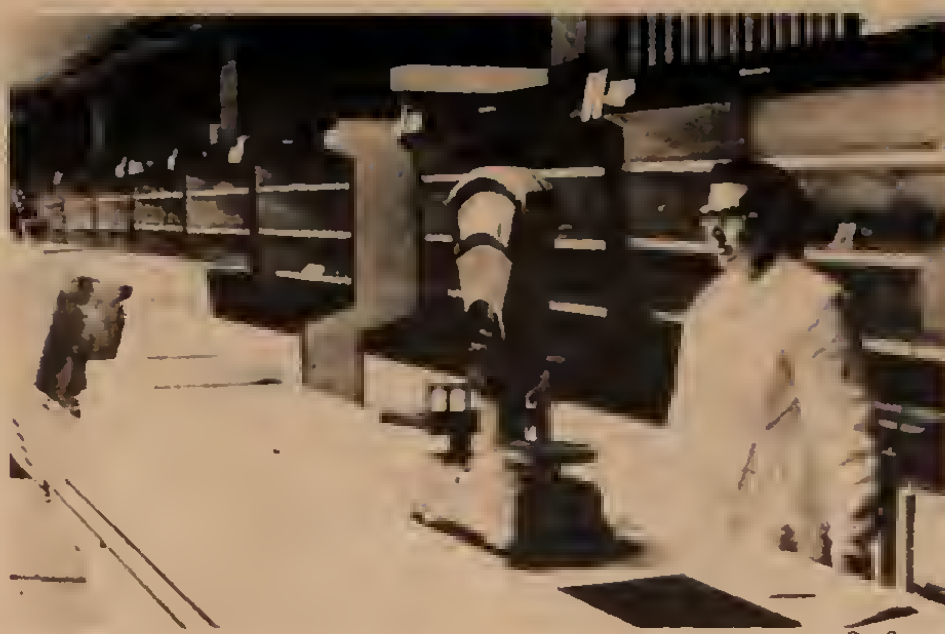
To maintain social peace in its important military ally, the Soviet Union has continually paid off Poland's Western creditors. Despite this the Polish economy was sinking under the weight of massive foreign debt and increasing internal unrest.

Solidarity and Cold Dual Power

Last summer the Gierek regime made yet another desperate attempt to get Poland to live within its means. For the third time in a decade the bureaucracy tried to raise food prices. The result is a crisis that could alter the postwar world.

A series of localized wage strikes culminated in a well-organized political general strike which shut down the Baltic Coast for two weeks. To prevent the strike from spreading throughout Poland, the regime recognized the right to independent trade unions, the first time this has ever happened in a Stalinist-ruled state. Within months of the August 31 Gdansk agreement the new union movement embraced practically the entire Polish working class, including one million members of the Communist party. The depth of the social transformation is indicated by Polish sociologist Stefan Nowak: "The speed with which 10 million Poles assembled in the Solidarity movement testifies to the strength of the needs the movement serves" ("Values and Attitudes of the Polish People," *Scientific American*, July 1981). Nowak observes that "skilled workers are now the main social force in Poland."

Yet while having a committed mass proletarian base, the new union movement has from its inception been led by pro-clerical/nationalist forces hostile to the Soviet Union and sympathetic to the capitalist "free world." Lech Walesa and his colleagues see themselves leading the entire Polish nation against "Russian-imposed Communism." This is most graphically expressed by their fulsome support to the peasant smallholders organization, Rural Solidarity. Thus, the danger is real that the Polish crisis could enormously strengthen capitalist-



Shopping in Poland: No meat, no soap, no cigarettes. In order to eat one must work.

restorationist forces. And with the political strength of the Catholic church, now headed by a Polish pope, the danger of counterrevolution is not at all abstract.

Since the Gdansk agreement we have maintained that the central task of a revolutionary (Trotskyist) vanguard in Poland would be to *polarize* the new union movement, winning the majority of workers away from the anti-Soviet nationalistic leadership around Walesa. Trotskyists would fight within Solidarity for a program centering on the strict separation of church and state, unconditional military defense of the Soviet bloc against capitalism-imperialism, a political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and establishment of a government based on democratically elected workers councils (soviets), to carry out socialist economic planning (including the collectivization of agriculture). This program offers a socialist way out of the desperate and seemingly endless crises wracking Poland.

The Stalinist bureaucracy is not a class but a caste which rules through the monopolization of political organiza-

tion. Whatever the pious statements of the beleaguered Warsaw regime, it cannot coexist with an independent union movement, much less one with the elemental social force of Solidarity. Kania, Rakowski & Co. have just bought some time for themselves at the price of economic chaos.

Under pressure from Solidarity, the government has raised wages over 20 percent while production has dropped through the floor, in good part due to the introduction of the five-day work-week in January. The output of coal, the main export commodity, has fallen 20 percent in the last year and barely meets domestic requirements. The agricultural situation is, if anything, worse. Meat supplies are down 20 percent. The 1980 potato harvest was cut in half, sugar beet production by one quarter. To adjust demand to supply the regime has announced it is increasing the price of food and other necessities on average by 110 percent (!) while freezing wages. Poland is an extreme case of suppressed inflation about to become an extreme case of unsuppressed inflation.

The drastic cut in production and

consumption has not eased the balance-of-payments deficits. On the contrary, since the Gdansk agreement Poland's hard-currency debt has jumped from \$21 to \$27 billion. The Polish Stalinists have responded to the crisis by becoming yet more dependent on Western finance capital. Meanwhile, they have relied on the Kremlin to bail them out—to the tune of \$4.5 billion in bilateral and hard currency credits since last summer's strikes.

They are also moving toward greater dependence on their own petty capitalists. The new five-year plan (in itself a truly pollyannaish act of optimism) calls for increasing the share of agriculture in investment from 15 to 25 percent of which three-fourths will go to private farms (*Economist*, 11 July). In other words, almost 20 percent of all state investment funds are to be placed in the hands of the landowning peasantry, considerably strengthening the social basis for counterrevolution. But one needn't give this particular bureaucratic five-year plan much credence. The showdown in Poland is coming long before then and will be decided by very different forces.

A Workers Poland, Yes!

The deepening anarchy in Poland and the imminence of violent clashes between Solidarity and the regime could bring Russian soldiers into the streets of Lodz and Warsaw to restore bureaucratic order. No doubt the Stalinists' justification would be the need to "combat counterrevolution." Certainly there are sizable forces for the restoration of capitalism, from the landowning peasantry to the Catholic church. Yet it is the main counterrevolutionary force in the world, U.S. imperialism, that is trying to *provoke* the Kremlin over Poland. Reagan/Haig want to see Polish workers throwing Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks in order to fuel their anti-Soviet war drive.

At best, Soviet military intervention would freeze the political differentiation

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Solidarity Leaders Against Planned Economy “Market Socialism” Is Anti-Socialist

While Solidarity leader Lech Walesa's favorite posture is that of a simple trade unionist, bread-and-butter trade unionism is impossible in Poland today. There is no bread and butter. At the time of the Gdansk agreement last summer we wrote: "The present large wage increases now being granted will lead either to wild inflation or even longer waiting lines" ("Polish Workers Move," *WV* No. 263, 5 September 1980). By now practically every member of Solidarity must know that demanding and getting higher money wages and shorter hours only makes the economic condition worse. The *Solidarność* leadership is under pressure from their most responsible members, as well as sympathetic intellectuals and bureaucrats, to come up with some positive program to get out of the economic crisis.

Solidarity's numerous leftist-lawyers in the West, like Ernest Mandel's fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat, keep arguing that its leaders have never actually called for the restoration of capitalism, though they almost never say anything good about a socialized economy. In point of fact, Walesa has praised American economic imperialism and called for its greater penetration into Poland. When asked by the liberal West German *Der Spiegel* (15 June) where would the investment funds come from to restructure the Polish economy, the Solidarity chief replied: "... perhaps from the West in the form of joint companies. I have seen for myself on my Japanese trip how strongly American capital has contributed to Japan's

enormous economic ascent."

Solidarity's most comprehensive and authoritative statement of economic program to date is a document, "The Course of Union Action in the Country's Present Situation," published in the 17 April *Solidarity Weekly* (translated in *Intercontinental Press*, 22 and 29 June). This document advocates an extreme version of "the Yugoslav model," calling for autonomous enterprises based on workers self-management:

"...they [the self-management bodies] should have the right to exercise control over the assets of the concern, to decide on the aims of production and sales, the choice of production methods, and investment goals. They should also decide on the distribution of the profits of the enterprise."

The document further specifies that "concerns should be self-financing, that is, they should be able to cover their costs out of their own earnings."

One doesn't know whether the Solidarity leadership is seriously committed to the Yugoslav model or is simply setting on paper the conventional formulae for liberal economic reform in East Europe. What is clear, however, is that if realized, the Solidarity program would be an even greater catastrophe for the Polish working class than that brought about by the Stalinists' incredible mismanagement and ever greater concessions to bourgeois forces.

With the Polish economy on the downhill side of a roller coaster ride, free-market competition and self-financing would immediately bankrupt

hundreds of enterprises throwing hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of workers into the streets. Significantly, the only group of Polish workers which actually seems to be pushing for self-management are the employees of the national airline, LOT, a state monopoly. The authors of the Solidarity program are realistic enough to know that theirs is a recipe for instant mass layoffs:

"The union recognizes that the enterprises will have the right to make changes in their employment levels as they need to. But the government authorities will still be responsible for carrying out a full employment policy.... The self-financing of enterprises may also result in some having to cut back or close down."

So the self-managers are to be free to lay off workers at will and somehow the government has to find ways to reemploy them all! Just like it is supposed to find food when there isn't any. Here Solidarity's scheme is far worse—more ruthlessly capitalistic—than Yugoslav practice. In Yugoslavia enterprises are prohibited from dismissing a worker for economic reasons without securing "equivalent substitute employment" for him. But under Solidarity's plan the majority of "self-managers" can get rid of the workers in an unprofitable or marginal department in order to bolster their own income. Solidarity indeed!

Inequality and Unemployment

Socialism means a democratically administered, planned, egalitarian and internationally organized economy.

Before the rise of Stalinism practically no one who considered himself a socialist disputed these basic principles. The program of "market socialism" has nothing in common with socialism. It is basically a product of liberal Stalinism.

The impetus for "market socialism" in East Europe does not come from the workers, but rather from a technocratic wing of the bureaucracy seeking in this way to overcome the rigidities and wastefulness of traditional Stalinist planning. When implemented, however, inter-enterprise competition, allowing enterprises to trade on the world market, etc., produces strong capitalistic tendencies. The leading advocates of "market socialism," like the Czech Ota Sik and the Pole Wlodzimierz Brus, are invariably on the far right of the Stalinist bureaucracies. The immediate effects of inter-enterprise competition, increased unemployment and greater wage differentials, are always resented by the workers as in Hungary and also in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

We can judge the effects of "market socialism" from life itself. Autonomous enterprises under workers self-management were introduced to the world by Tito's Yugoslavia shortly after the break with Stalin in 1948. Workers councils elect the management and control after-tax revenues. Enterprises are, however, subject to certain decisive restrictions which still define them as state, not group, property. Enterprises cannot liquidate themselves or sell off their physical plant without government

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"Market Socialism" ...

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approval. Workers have a share in enterprise profits only so long as they are employed there; they have no property rights *per se*. (For a perceptive, though now somewhat dated, analysis of the Yugoslav model and its contradictions, see Theo Schulze, "Yugoslavia's Way: the Workers' Council System," *International Socialist Review*, Summer 1962.)

Certain New Left Stalinist confusionists like Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim have praised workers self-management à la Yugoslavia, while deploring market competition between enterprises. In the real world such a separation is not possible. If workers are to be fully master in their own factory, they cannot lay claim to the state budget for additional wage or investment funds. Expenditure by a given enterprise for wages, bonuses, new facilities, etc. can be limited by the revenue from the sale of its product or limited by the decision of a centralized economic administration. But expenditures must be limited somehow. Socialist revolution does not abolish the economic home truth that there is no such thing as a free lunch.

"Market socialism" by its very nature generates increased income inequalities and unemployment. Moreover, the profitability or unprofitability of a concern is usually only marginally affected by the diligence of its workforce. In general the most important factor determining the difference between selling price and cost is the relative age of the plant. Under "market socialism" workers unfortunately stuck in older enterprises are penalized with lower incomes than their fellow workers employed in new or newly retooled plants. The second major factor governing enterprise profitability is supply and demand conditions on the domestic and/or world market, again something the workers have no control over. Under Solidarity's scheme Polish coal miners, for example, would benefit when OPEC pushed up the price of oil, thereby increasing demand for coal, and suffer when the world oil market was in glut (as at present). "Market socialism" violates the elementary principle, shared by trade unionists as well as socialists, of equal pay for equal work.

The Yugoslav Experience

In Yugoslavia we can see the full flowering to date of "market socialism." After three decades of workers self-management Yugoslavia suffers the highest rate of inflation in Europe, East or West, a 14 percent unemployment rate and gross inequalities throughout economic life. The unemployment rate would be far higher still except that the authorities routinely bail out enterprises in financial trouble at the cost of feeding an inflation rate which is now running 50 percent a year (*Economist*, 1 August)! And meanwhile they send their "surplus" sons and daughters to work in capitalist West Europe: remittances from Yugoslavs abroad amount to over half the total value of goods exported.

Inter-enterprise competition combined with federalism has in fact widened regional differences, thereby aggravating national conflicts which could rip the country apart. Yugoslavia's most advanced republic, Slovenia, enjoys economic conditions comparable to neighboring Austria's, while Albanian-populated Kosovo more closely resembles Turkey. Moreover, the gap between the richest and poorest regions has increased under "market socialism." In 1952 per capita income in Kosovo was 23 percent of that in Slovenia; by 1977 it was only 15 percent (Laura D'Andrea Tyson and Gabriel Eichler, "Continuity and Change in the Yugoslav Economy in the 1970's and

1980's," in *East European Economic Assessment*). The social surplus produced in Slovenia is largely reinvested in Slovenia. This is clearly seen in the unemployment picture. In 1977 for every vacancy in the socialized sector in Slovenia there were only 1.5 job seekers; in Kosovo there were 35 job seekers for every vacancy! Inequalities of this magnitude can easily fuel reactionary nationalistic movements and provide exploitable material for imperialist intrigues.

While the Soviet Union is far from free of national conflicts and Great Russian chauvinism, centralized planning has enabled it to appreciably narrow the once vast gulf between the wretchedly backward peoples of Central Asia and those of European Russia. The liberal British economist Alec Nove, no admirer of the Soviet economic system, acknowledges: "The wage rates in Central Asia are similar to those in Central Russia, the prices of cotton, citrus fruits, grapes, tobacco, have been relatively favourable, the social services

resources, especially in the consumer goods sector. It produces frequently shoddy goods. Unwanted items pile up in warehouses, while other commodities are chronically in short supply. All this is true and comes as no news whatsoever to Trotskyists.

Even before Stalin drove down the living standards with his first five-year plan, the Left Opposition denounced bureaucratic arbitrariness in economic administration and indifference to consumer well-being. The 1927 Platform of the Joint Opposition called for "the lowering of prices [which] affects above all the objects of mass consumption among the workers and peasants." It further specifies a "price-lowering policy, more adapted to the conditions of the market, more individualized—that is, taking into greater consideration the market position of each kind of goods."

In 1932, at the height of Stalin's economic adventurism, Trotsky wrote: "The participation of workers themselves in the leadership of the nation, of



Wałęsa (center) in solidarity with reactionary Polish Catholic church.

provided in Central Asia have been on the standard 'Soviet' scale, and budget statistics show that additional sums are earmarked for the budgets of backward republics" (*The Soviet Economic System* [1977]). To be sure, a workers government in the Soviet Union would overcome the still great inequalities fostered by the parasitic Kremlin bureaucracy, for example, by encouraging migration from the over-populated Central Asian republics to the labor-short regions of Russia and Siberia.

The Trotskyist Answer to Bureaucratic Centralism

Solidarity's advocacy of enterprise self-management expresses the influence of liberal Stalinist and social-democratic intellectuals on the one hand and possibly primitive syndicalist impulses on the other. It also reflects nationalistic rejection of "Russian Communism." In the Yugoslav and Hungarian deformed workers states the tendency of enterprise autonomy to regenerate capitalistic economic relations is circumscribed and checked by a still strong governmental apparatus. But in the anarchic conditions of Poland, self-managed enterprises could free themselves from all but nominal state control.

If carried out, Solidarity's program would add mass unemployment to the miseries afflicting the Polish workers, would facilitate imperialist economic penetration and would strengthen the forces pushing for capitalist restoration. Capitalist restoration would mean bloody counterrevolution, not a peaceful, gradual, purely economic process. But any market-oriented "reforms," further atomizing the Polish economy, can only increase the counterrevolutionary danger.

The advocates of "market socialism" like Brus and Sik argue that traditional Soviet-type planning wastes enormous

its policies and economy; an actual control over the bureaucracy; and the growth in the feeling of responsibility of those in charge to those under them—all these would doubtless react favorably on production itself: the friction would be reduced, the costly economic zigzags would likewise be reduced to a minimum, a healthier distribution of forces and equipment would be assured, and ultimately the coefficients of growth would be raised. Soviet democracy is first of all the vital need of national economy itself."

—What Next? *Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*

Obviously a workers government should produce the types of consumer goods people want with the most efficient use of resources. But this has nothing to do with atomized competition between enterprises. The central economic administration in close consultation with consumer cooperatives should continually adjust the output of different goods to satisfy market demand. Clearly it makes no sense—except to some deluded Gosplan apparatchik—to apply long-term targets to the number of shoes delivered to various department stores or wrenches supplied to various garages. The objects of the long-term plan are the construction of new factories, mines, railroads, airports, etc., major retooling operations, urban renewal and the like.

As Trotsky wrote a long time ago, only the interaction of workers democracy, the plan and the market can guide the economy through the transitional epoch from capitalism to communism. This is the goal of Trotskyists' call for proletarian political revolution in the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states: not backward to the anarchy of the market with its inflation and unemployment, its national chauvinism and imperialist war, but forward to socialism through an international planned economy based on soviet democracy. ■

Chaos Engulfs Poland ...

(continued from page 7)

within the working class necessary for the only progressive solution of the Polish crisis: proletarian political revolution. At a minimum it would postpone the decisive confrontation between the workers and their Stalinist rulers. But it could do far worse. It could spark violent resistance by the Poles, leading to a bloodbath that would crush the working class into the ground politically and produce an explosion of anti-Russian nationalism that would take years, perhaps decades to overcome. This would be not merely a defeat for the socialist movement but a historic catastrophe.

Solidarity's opposition to a centrally planned economy (expressed in calls for "self-managed enterprises"—see accompanying article) and its "hunger marches" both express the anarchy which has engulfed the country. Poland does not need anarchy—it needs a socialist order. If ever there was a crying need for socialist economic planning, it is Poland today. But socialist economic planning is possible only under the leadership of an authentically revolutionary workers party. And this requires the ouster of the Stalinist bureaucracy which undermines socialized property. Polish workers and the international proletariat must defend the revolutionary conquests that made it possible for Poland to build out of the rural backwardness of the East European plains the tenth largest industrial country in the world!

There can be no thought of a working-class solution to the economic crisis without the collectivization of agriculture and the cancellation of the imperialist debt. Yet both these programs are directly counter to the clerical-nationalism of the Solidarity leadership. Solidarity's solidarity of the Polish nation causes it to champion the organized peasant smallholders, even as they drive up food prices while reducing supplies. The cancellation of the capitalist debt would be met with reprisals, economic and political. A revolutionary workers government would counter such imperialist retaliation by appealing to the West European working class to become comrades in a new venture, the Socialist United States of Europe. Such an appeal is not merely inconceivable to Wałęsa and his colleagues, it goes against their entire political outlook.

The notion of "socialism in one country"—with or without workers self-management—is a Stalinist ideological fantasy. Certainly there can be no "independent, socialist Poland" somehow unaffected by the drive of capitalism-imperialism to destroy the Soviet Union. A socialist future for Poland depends on the revolutionary unity of Polish and Russian workers, a unity directed against the Stalinist bureaucracy whose decades-long capitulation to bourgeois forces is responsible for the present disastrous situation. Poland urgently requires an ambitious economic plan to restructure industry and bring about a technological revolution in agriculture, based on the collectivized economy of proletarian state power. A workers political revolution throughout Stalinist-ruled East Europe, led by Trotskyist parties, would inspire the enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and work discipline to put Poland back to work—and open the road to socialism. ■

NOTICE

The next issue of Workers Vanguard will be dated September 11.

Centrists...

(continued from page 5)

were silent for months even though it was dominating left politics in the U.S. Eventually a two-part article presented a historical summary concluding with calls for a workers militia, red army, workers councils and a workers and peasants government. But it fudges every current disputed issue. It recognizes there are "bourgeois elements" in the FDR opposition coalition, but doesn't mention the word popular front or call for workers to break from it. It calls for a "workers party," not even referring to Trotskyism or the program of permanent revolution (*Fighting Worker*, July 1981).

For the May 3 marches in Washington and SF, the RWL and SL-DC were even more verbally radical. A joint leaflet called for "military victory of the workers and small farmers," "break with the capitalists," "defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack" and for labor political strikes against imperialist intervention—all demands which have been raised virtually alone by the Spartacist League. At the marches, the SL/SYL organized an Anti-Imperialist Contingent around demands for leftist military victory and defense of Cuba/USSR begins in El Salvador. This was the class-struggle answer to the popular-front Peoples Antiwar Mobilization (PAM) which called only for "self-determination," and whose Pentagon rally featured Democrat Bella Abzug and FDR leader Ramos, both calling for a "political solution" with sections of the killer junta. Where did the RWL and SL-DC stand when the line between revolution and counterrevolution was drawn?

The Sollenbergerites knew which side they were on—they stood with the bourgeoisie and the reformists. On paper they say break with the Democrats; in the streets they're arm-in-arm with Bella. In their leaflet they say break with bourgeois elements of the FDR; at the Pentagon they're there with the CP/SWP/WWP all cheering for Ramos. Their paper call for military victory is sheer treachery when they loyally troop along for PAM, which calls for sellout negotiations. Nowhere has the RWL published a single criticism of PAM. And when Sam Marcy's goons drew the class line by blocking demonstrators from reaching the anti-imperialist rally, Sollenberger's "socialist scabs" felt right at home marching along with Marcy. Now the RWL is up to its armpits in PAM, both in Ann Arbor and the Bay Area—while "bringing to it the idea of breaking with the Democrats," of course—and has explicitly excused the Marcyites' anti-communist exclusion.

Party and Class

"A centrist swears readily by the policy of the united front, emptying it of its revolutionary content and transforming it from a tactical method into a supreme principle" (Trotsky, "Centrism and the Fourth International"). This is certainly the case with Sollenberger. The RWL's panacea for fighting fascists is "nonsectarian struggle to unite the left." An RWL polemic ("Marxism vs. Spartacism," *Fighting Worker*, February 1981) praises itself for supposedly "consistently nonsectarian struggle to unite the left" and recalls a 1977 BLT proposal for a "united front of the left to continue organizing for a broader united front" to shut down a Nazi bookstore in Detroit. In contrast to this liquidationist, social-democratic conception of concentric circles of "united fronts," Leninists recognize that the division of the working class into separate political organizations is inevitable in this epoch. For the SL and Trotsky the united front is a tactic to unite the working class and its allies in struggle and to win the masses to the leadership of the proletarian vanguard—not the RWL's rotten propa-

SL Protests Deukmejian Set-Up

August 1, 1981

Last week the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League, Marxist political organizations, served legal papers on California Attorney General George Deukmejian, suing him for wrongfully including us in his 1979 "Report on Organized Crime" which characterized us as a species of outlaws, terrorists and criminals. That we do not appear in the just released 1980 report is a shamefaced admission by Deukmejian that we are not "terrorists" or "criminals."

A spokesman for the Attorney General's office said it stands by its 1979 report and claims our exclusion from this year's report is based on "less activity" in 1980. In fact we were very active in our typical way. For example, in 1980 we initiated the April 19 Committee Against Nazis, which successfully prevented the Nazis from "celebrating Hitler's birthday" in the San Francisco Civic Center by a mass mobilization of labor unions and community organizations. Last November, we ran Diana Coleman, whose slogan was "Enough! It's time for a Workers Party!" as a candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Coleman received over 7,000 votes.

Our inclusion in Deukmejian's 1979 report is a murderous effort to set the Spartacist League up for government and right-wing harassment and violence. The fact that we do not appear in the current report still leaves our organizations in grave jeopardy.

ganda blocs which water down the revolutionary program.

Sollenberger liquidates struggle to build a Leninist vanguard party into fluctuating amalgams of the radically discontented. This can also be seen in the RWL/SL-DC's policies on the labor party. The Bryant outfit has a long-standing policy of calling for a reformist labor party as a necessary stage (the first and only, of course, as with stagist theories generally). The RWL, as usual, had no established position. However, in the extremely left-talking May 3 leaflet referred to above, the RWL/SL-DC again borrow demands from the Spartacist League, calling for "Dump the pro-capitalist, back-stabbing bureaucrats! Break with the Democrats and Republicans! Build an independent workers' party based on the unions!" This position is in flat contradiction to the fusion conference resolution calling for a "labor party" based on a "united front" with sections of the bureaucracy. For Trotskyists, the demand for a workers party is a tactic in the struggle to replace the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy with a class-struggle leadership.

Clearly Thornett's Labourite policies are already having an impact. The RWL/SL-DC fusion agreement talks of the "transitional approach or method" as distinct from Trotsky's Transitional Program for socialist revolution. What this centrist "method" means in practice can be seen in the RWL's "experiments" in the trade unions. Their polemic on the united front accuses the SL of "refus[ing] to join, participate in, or build united-front caucuses." The latter are the old "center-left coalitions" of William Z. Foster, the mainstay of CP reformism in the unions. In contrast the SL fights for caucuses based decisively on a class-struggle program, as opposed to the RWL's cascading "united fronts" with out-of-office bureaucrats.

At the giant Ford River Rouge Local 600, the Spartacist League politically supports the Rouge Militant Caucus which recently ran candidates for local president and vice president. The Sollenbergerites back a caucus, the CMDUAW, which in turn is allied with

State terrorism report

SACRAMENTO (AP) — The Ku Klux Klan expanded rapidly last year, and more of the same is coming, a report by the California attorney general's office says.

The annual report on terrorism, released yesterday, also said there was a surge of terrorism by groups identified with foreign political movements — at least 12 bomb and assassination incidents were blamed on them during 1980 after minimal violence in 1979.

And California's youth gangs also grew during the year, it said.

But the report, by Attorney General George Deukmejian, didn't mention the small Marxist group called the Spartacist League, which last year's version of the report called a "dangerous faction."

The Spartacist League filed suit last week demanding that a retraction be circulated as widely as the original report. Deukmejian's office said the Spartacists were left out of the new report for lack of action.

The new report said the Ku Klux Klan was active in 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980.

California."

Other domestic extremist groups included in the report are the International Committee Against Racism and the Progressive Labor Party, which advocates violence to bring about a long-standing feud with the

INCAR was involved in a Sacramento, Fontana, Rialto, O during 1980, the report said.

The only other domestic groups were the Communist Workers Party, whose bombings are attributed, and the report said had little success in year.

The report described these groups:

• Taiwanese Extremists, also c

San Francisco Examiner

30 July 1981

We are not terrorists, but Marxist revolutionists, Trotskyists, who oppose terrorism as a futile, despairing strategy that turns away from the working class struggle to abolish capitalism. We demand that our names be removed from the 1979 report and that the retraction be circulated as widely as the report.

The efforts of the Spartacist League in California and elsewhere are to organize a workers party to struggle for the immediate and ultimate interests of the working class. The working class and its party have the right to organize. But Deukmejian willfully confuses Marxist education with

terrorism. Socialists who believe that the Soviet Union is right in Afghanistan, who are for the victory of leftist insurgents in El Salvador, have the right to say so in the labor movement without being labeled as terrorists.

George Deukmejian is a conservative law-and-order politician and promotes that image to further his political career. But we will not allow him to brand us as terrorists and criminals. The people of California should beware of this new Joe McCarthy.

Al Nelson
Spartacist League

a radical-reformist skilled trades group (the *Local 600 Organizer*), and dissident bureaucrats in a United Front Slate. In the middle of the campaign, the UFS presidential candidate deserted, complaining that he had been "used," and endorsed the incumbent bureaucracy. The RWL goes through some ritual criticism of the Slate program, whose main point is that the platform says nothing about defending planned economy in Russia and Poland. And this is no accident, for it turns out that the *Local 600 Organizer* leader agrees with the pro-CIA Solidarity House line for "free and democratic trade unions in Poland like UAW president Doug Fraser" calls for!

Scab International?

Noting the RWL's growing collaboration with the British WSL, we wrote last fall that its programmatic basis was more than suspect: "...this must be the first time someone has actually thought to build an International of strikebreakers" (*WV* No. 269, 28 November 1980). Now it is a fact, for the real significance of the RWL/SL-DC fusion is Sollenberger joining up with Thornett. The RWL's account of the conference is sprinkled with references to the "inspiration" by the "WSL's revolutionary work in the British trade unions." They both cross picket lines, don't they? They also bragged that two public RWL/SL-DC forums in late May featuring a WSL speaker were the "best possible public expression of the ongoing fusion process." In a sense, they're right. They were held under the Third Campist title, "The Struggle Against Imperialism and Stalinism," implicitly equating the two, and in both cases they failed to answer any of the political attacks on RWL/SL-DC and WSL opportunism by Spartacist comrades in attendance.

Meanwhile, Thornett's fusion with Sean Matgamna's I-CL will mean the disappearance of the WSL as a public force. The WSL paper *Socialist Press* has published its last issue, and it will now be absorbed by Matgamna's Labour Party "entrust" newspaper, *Socialist Organiser*. WSL members will be part of the *Socialist Organiser*

Alliance, where Thornett no doubt hopes he can hide from the Spartacists. Once again it's fuse first, discuss later: there are differences over Pabloism, Afghanistan, the Common Market and the general strike...at least. A fusion report in *Socialist Organiser* (30 July) says that "Afghanistan came up for discussion more than once" in the negotiations, as one might expect, since the I-CL calls for withdrawal of Soviet troops and WSL opposes it (although "condemning" the Red Army intervention against CIA-backed reactionaries). But such differences (over a key issue in the anti-Soviet Cold War II) didn't stop Thornett from any of his other maneuvers (TILC, RWL/SL-DC fusion).

This is the shining "international" which the RWL has just joined. And with it they acquire some political baggage which they will finally have to defend. The mammoth 1977 document ("Trotskyism vs. Sectarianism") in defense of scabbing distributed by Sollenberger's BLT contains the following prophetic statement:

"The SYL seems to hold the view that if one crosses the SYL's invisible picket line today, he will vote for the popular front tomorrow."

To set matters straight, those picket lines were very real, so much so that CDUers covered their faces with their coats as they walked across. And now the RWL is in the camp of those who vote for the "workers parties of the popular front." Today the WSL votes for the pro-NATO popular front of Mitterrand in France. That is qualitatively the same (although Mitterrand is more rightist) as voting for Allende's Unidad Popular in 1970, which set the stage for the bloody Santiago coup three years later. And in the U.S., Sollenberger is already in bed with NYC loud-mouth Democrat Abzug in PAM, a reincarnation of the NPAC popular front from the days of the Vietnam War.

Yes indeed, those who cross picket lines today will join the popular front tomorrow...at the very least. In fact, "socialist" scabs are capable of far worse. Is this just another way station for the BLT/BLG/RWG/RWL? Where will Pied Piper Peter go from here? ■

Airports...

(continued from page 1)

walked out of the union after the strike vote was taken! This "professionalist" attitude leads them to look more to pressure from the airlines than to appeal for solidarity from the labor movement. There needs to be *one single union* of airline workers embracing pilots, controllers, mechanics, baggage handlers, etc.

A socially conservative group, the controllers are particularly susceptible to the growing anti-Soviet political climate. In the hysteria following Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, New York controllers "boycotted" an Aeroflot jet carrying Russian ambassador Dobrynin, threatening a possible crash. PATCO was one of the few unions which supported Reagan for president, not just because they figured he would win anyway and wanted a friend in the White House, but because the controllers believed the right-wing Republican represented their kind of people. Poli says Reagan's savage attack on his union took him quite by surprise.

Surprised or not, PATCO is right up against the capitalist state machinery as Reagan tries to grind down all workers' resistance to exploitation. And what happens now will greatly influence whether or not Reagan can continue to pound the labor movement. The *New York Times* (8 August) in a front page article put it bluntly in the negative:

"Yet it seems clear that if the Reagan Administration is successful in dealing with the 12,000 air traffic controllers, forcing them out of their jobs and decertifying the union, the American labor movement may have suffered a significant defeat."

On the other hand, if Reagan gets beat, and particularly if he gets beat because the American labor movement exerts its muscle against him, it will be a significant victory, the first in a long time. And one that could significantly increase combativity of the working class in resisting a full-fledged war on labor.

For Labor Solidarity! Shut Down the Airports!

If Reagan is gambling with the lives of air travelers, he is also engaged in another, very different kind of gamble. He is gambling that he can completely destroy a trade union, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, and the cowardly American labor bureaucracy will just whine and eat it. Attorney General William Smith expects no labor support since "American unions have always been essentially law-abiding" (*New York Times*, 11 August). What about the sit-down strikes of the 1930s, which built these unions? For years the labor movement has been so docile, its leaders so obviously willing to give in rather than fight that a section of the ruling class thinks they can carry out old-fashioned, no-holds-barred union busting and make it stick. And so far they have.

Auto Workers' head Doug Fraser actually denounced the controllers for going on strike. It "could cause massive damage to the labor movement," he whimpered. AFL-CIO head Lane Kirkland gave half-hearted verbal support to the controllers, admitting that Reagan was "union busting," and even briefly picketed as a gesture. But when a *WV* reporter asked whether he would support solidarity strikes, he replied, "I do not call for strikes." And Kirkland reaffirmed that union-buster Reagan would be duly invited to the AFL-CIO convention this fall. A few bureaucrats actually managed to get angry at Reagan. New York City AFL-CIO boss Harry Van Arsdale compared him to Adolf Hitler who "crushed the whole labor movement." But, as the saying goes, talk is cheap. Not a single union leader has called for labor action.

Here the Machinists union (IAM) is key. IAM president William Winpisinger, self-styled radical "troublemaker" on the AFL-CIO executive board and vice-chairman of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, could win this strike quickly. Yet this most prominent social-democratic union leader has *done nothing* to stop Reagan's strikebreaking in his own turf. He has left it up to individual IAM members to honor the PATCO picket lines. But IAM mechanics are still servicing planes guided by scab controllers. And that must end! Machinists: strike the airports!

If Reagan thinks he can count on the wretchedness of the American union bureaucracy, the workers movement in other countries is something else again. Reagan with his right-wing tough-guy image is very unpopular in Europe, where he is generally seen as a trigger-happy warmonger who will blow us all to kingdom come. Now is a perfect chance for European workers to hit back at the reactionary American monarch. Air travel is an international industry *par excellence*. An international labor boycott of American air space and airlines could be decisive in winning the strike and would be a hard blow against Reagan.

With growing momentum we've seen foreign controllers taking action on behalf of their American counterparts. French controllers (no doubt remembering their own strike) have been delaying flights to the U.S. More importantly, the Canadian controllers, who cover the north Atlantic, have defied their own government and refused to handle flights to and from the U.S. The Portuguese controllers, who cover the south Atlantic, have announced they may do the same. This could shut down all air travel between the U.S. and Europe.

"Nearly all the scattered support that the nation's striking air traffic controllers have received so far has come from foreign workers, not from American workers or American unions," observes the *New York Times* (11 August). But Reagan's basic intent is to challenge the American labor movement. And if



WV Photo

"London, Belfast, Liverpool—Smash Bloody Thatcher's Rule"

BOSTON—Some 160 people, shouting, blowing whistles and banging garbage can lids demonstrated here July 16, protesting British occupation of Northern Ireland. The protest was called outside Symphony Hall, where the "Daughters of the British Empire" were attending the performance as a group. Margaret Thatcher's effigy was strung from the nearest lamppost and her picture graced the "Wanted for Murder" posters which many of the demonstrators carried.

The protest was called by Irish

Northern Aid, Irish Prisoners of War and other local Irish groups. Supporters of the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL) comprised the only left-wing contingent present, carrying signs reading "Thatcher Out of Ireland, Reagan Out of El Salvador!" and "Not Green Against Orange but Class Against Class!" A Spartacist chant calling for internationalist opposition to British imperialism—"London, Belfast, Liverpool—Smash Bloody Thatcher's Rule"—was picked up by a number of marchers.

American labor does not act in solidarity with the controllers, this will encourage the ruling class in further union-busting attacks. American labor must follow the lead of the Canadian and European controllers!

The Capitalist State vs. Workers Power

Reagan says that in striking the controllers have violated their oath and broken the law. There used to be a saying, you can't strike against the government. Well, that notion was exploded in 1970 when 200,000 postal workers wildcatted nationwide. Nixon called in the army, but quickly learned you can't sort mail with bayonets. After that the postal unions gained significant concessions.

Union bureaucrats *hide behind* reactionary no-strike laws, like New York's Taylor Law or the Taft-Hartley Act prohibiting secondary labor strikes, to avoid struggle. Ultimately, of course, when it is in capitalism's interest, *all* hard-fought strikes quickly become "illegal," as the miners found out in 1978 when Carter invoked Taft-Hartley to try to smash their struggle. But laws are only paper reflections of the real relations of class forces. The miners, conscious of their power and solidarity, put the Taft-Hartley injunctions to the bonfire, reducing them to the worthless scraps of paper they were. At bottom it is not a question of legal rights, but of class power. And at moments like the present one, this basic Marxist premise is starkly revealed.

The union bureaucrats fear any struggle which would pit them square up

against the capitalist state. There is no middle way. As Trotsky said, the unions in this epoch of imperialist decay can serve either as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism or instruments of the revolutionary movement of the working class. Indeed, part of the reason for Reagan's hardline crusade to break the controllers' union is the bonapartist appetite of the bourgeois state for the statification of the public workers' unions. This was clear from a report, "The Airlines: Air Traffic Controllers Strike" by the prestigious Wall Street investment house, Salomon Brothers. Dated August 6, the report spelled out clearly just what the bankers and ruling class hope to get out of the strike:

"The Administration has announced that it is bringing military personnel in to staff the air traffic control system. In our opinion, the Administration has embarked on a program that could turn the major airport facilities over to the military services. Thus, for all practical purposes, U.S. air traffic control would come under military jurisdiction. Any air traffic controllers who choose to return to their jobs would become civilian employees of the Defense Department."

Plans for the militarization of airport labor are part and parcel of Reagan's drive to put this country on war footing. War budget, war inflation, moves for labor discipline are all of a piece as the U.S. gears up for imperialist war against the Soviet Union.

The confrontation between labor and Reagan is on. And labor had better win it, for the alternative is massive defeat. For labor solidarity to defend the air controllers strike! Smash the no-strike laws! Smash Reagan's union-busting drive! Bust the union-busters! ■

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Iranians...

(continued from page 3)

By the time of the mass insurgencies in Iran it seemed to me that all organizations including Mujahedeen-Marxist (Peykar) were confused. Their line was tailism of the petty bourgeoisie, so in my heart I could not join any of them. Perhaps it is necessary to recall their slogans and what they were saying at the time, when Khomeini was clearly stating his reactionary program for Iran's workers, women, national and religious minorities.

The Fedayeen were saying: we have to support Khomeini as an anti-imperialist leader. After the shah's overthrow they said: our policy is to reinforce Bazar-gan's provisional government. They voted for the "red" mullah Taleghani for the Constituent Assembly, and for the leader of the Islamic Mujahedeen in the first presidential elections. They tailed the petty-bourgeois Mujahedeen based on the Koran. They supported the mullahs' Constitutional Assembly.

As for Peykar, after being very militant, they became afraid after executing some religious leaders of the Mujahedeen, and supported Khomeini. Their reasoning was simple: following the Stalinist/Menshevik theory of "two-stage revolution," they claimed that this was the bourgeois-democratic stage, that the petty bourgeoisie is revolutionary and therefore we support its leader Khomeini. To top it all off, they proclaimed Khomeini "the symbol of revolutionary democracy."

One of the "interesting" analyses belongs to the Communist Unity Group.¹ They said in so many words that Khomeini was always very progressive, that he had been fighting the shah for a long time, that he was against communists now just because he was angry about the execution of religious leaders by Peykar. That was their analysis of the class character of Khomeini and his supporters.

The Iranian revolution led me to study more and to examine the dominant ideology of the so-called Marxist-Leninist organizations in Iran. They all try to give support to petty-bourgeois or bourgeois leaders due to their "democratic character" and their "hostility" to imperialism, saying that we must do that first, and then make a socialist revolution. This is the anti-Marxist theory of the two-stage revolution—or the democratic revolution, the popular front or the democratic front. But it all means the same thing. Their policy toward the events which resulted in the tremendous mass support to Khomeini is not something particular to Iran. By supporting the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders as the "first stage," the left has caused the deaths of tens of thousands of people, in Iran, but also in other countries such as Indonesia.

Then I started to think about Trotskyism, so I contacted and discussed with the HKS in Iran. I soon found them just some opportunists who

are searching for some sort of career in Iran. To this end, they just followed Khomeini and hailed all the massacres in Iran. They are so in love with the "anti-imperialist" mullahs that they changed all Marxist terms to Islamic terms. So they don't call for workers councils or soviets but for Islamic *shoras*, which means the destruction of working-class organizations in the factories. This is not just a change in terms, but an acceptance of an "Islamic way" of fighting against imperialism.

After some contacts and discussions with some members of different organizations, I could not be satisfied with swimming with the stream. I had no interest in the previous type of activities among Iranian students, but I was also searching for an organization having an international program, not a national one. I got into contact not with the HKE/HKS, but with its fraternal USec organization. It did not last too long before I began to fight internally. Together with comrade E, I wrote a letter to the leadership criticizing their collaboration with Khomeini.

I made a review of the recent political positions of different organizations and contacted Spartacist because I was very curious about their slogan "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs," which I had simply ignored at the time of Khomeini's rise in Iran. At the time, the entire left was claiming that the Spartacists were just ultra-leftists, and I accepted that and was not interested in what they meant by these slogans. But it was not just a question of Khomeini but also of Afghanistan. Almost the entire left had the same impulse as in Iran, that is, for a victory for the mullahs in Afghanistan. But in fact, the Red Army in Afghanistan was fighting against the reactionary mullahs, which should be a decisive question for any communist. And the Spartacists said, "Hail Red Army" in Afghanistan. With the cold war of imperialism, it was also a question of defending the conquests of 1917 in the Soviet Union. But most of the Iranian left just took the same line as Khomeini, U.S. imperialism and China.

But I was still very suspicious about everything, so I kept on studying. I received *Workers Vanguard* and read it. And the Spartacist comrades kept in contact with us, so that by the time of the Poland crisis, I had almost the same view as Spartacist. This was confirmed by their Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism on both sides in the Iran-Iraq war.

Today most of the Iranian left are saying that Khomeini and his followers have betrayed their promises and therefore the left withdraws its support for the Islamic regime—except the Tudeh party, the Fedayeen Majority and the Iranian fake-Trotskyists who still support Khomeini. But the left has not given up hoping in the democratic bourgeoisie and the two-stage revolution. In the case of the rise of another Khomeini, or another petty-bourgeois or bourgeois movement, they will again betray the proletariat, for example as with their shameful support to Bani Sadr.

The bitter truth is that Khomeini is doing what he promised to do. When, in line with the anti-Marxist theory of two-stage revolution, the left supported Islamic reaction, the Spartacist tendency was saying that there isn't any anti-imperialist bourgeoisie and so there is no anti-imperialist bourgeois-democratic revolution. In the century of imperialism, the historic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, as well as national emancipation, cannot be carried out except through a proletarian socialist revolution. This is what the Spartacist tendency stands for. All their positions made me come to the conclusion of giving my possibilities and force to this revolutionary organization.

Hoseini

¹Now the Organization of Communist Unity, which split from the Fedayeen.



WV Photo

Capitalism scraps Detroit's Dodge Main and Chrysler workers.

Detroit...

(continued from page 12)

defend Detroit would be felt from here to Washington. And you can bet there won't be any more Klansmen burning crosses in our backyards.

The defense of Detroit can't stop at the city limits. Sitdowns against layoffs and strikes against pay cuts could spark a nationwide union offensive to dump the sellout Frasers and get the labor movement off its knees.

Saving Detroit?

From the Ren Cen come proclamations of a "New Detroit." The same bankers, auto barons and their Democratic errand boys who have looted this city now cynically offer plans to "save" it. Mayor Young talks about a Detroit "renaissance" with the same purpose that Ronald Reagan talks about the "reindustrialization" of America. Who believes it? When these guys start producing "survival plans," watch out.

The plain truth is that Detroit can't be saved in capitalist America. It's capitalism that is killing us. This city and its working residents are the direct victims of the vampire capitalists who have bled Detroit for generations. This really is the motor city, and the auto bosses drove the industrial base to hell. The Fords' boom-bust cycle has finally busted our city.

And what is the capitalists' "solution" to economic agony and social decay? A fancy new building amid dilapidated housing. More racist, sadistic cops on the streets while they try to strip the working people of our right to armed self-defense. And a black mayor who is Henry Ford's yes-man. Young tells workers to "choose": layoffs, pay cuts, or tax hikes. Solidarity House, anxious to "save" Detroit for the bosses, has its own "solution": economic warfare against the auto workers of Japan, hoping the Japanese can be pressured

into developing a product as inefficient and expensive as an Imperial. And if economic warfare doesn't work, there are other kinds.

Of course the reformists who call themselves socialists have their "solution": guns vs. butter rhetoric and "tax the rich" schemes. Always the same plea for the capitalist state to reform itself and "shift its priorities." "People Before Profits," they say. But you don't have to be a socialist to know that the capitalists will never put anything before their profits. You just have to live in Detroit.

The fight to defend Detroit is part of the struggle for socialist revolution. This is not only the historical imperative; in Detroit it is obviously also the only solution that makes sense.

As the U.S. capitalists take America toward depression and world war, they try to set black and white workers at each other's throats. Racism and race war are their perspectives for Detroit's working people. This city, at the center of the black proletariat, can be the motor of revolutionary struggle in America or its counterrevolutionary model of racist destruction. Whether Detroit's working people fight each other or fight together against their common enemy—the racist, imperialist ruling class—depends on the struggle to forge a revolutionary leadership in Detroit and throughout the world.

Here in Detroit we see the crisis of the entire capitalist system most starkly revealed, most advanced in decay, most anarchic in irrationality, most painful in social consequences. Detroit's skilled proletariat would be the most valuable resource of a rational society—the class that can build a socialist America.

We know well that socialist revolution is not just around the corner. But neither is it some election pipe dream. It is the culmination of a *struggle for power*—working-class power—in Detroit and elsewhere. It is to that struggle, and to the construction of a mass workers party to lead it, that the Spartacist League is dedicated.

From this election platform we raise our revolutionary program: For a socialist fight to defend labor/black Detroit! ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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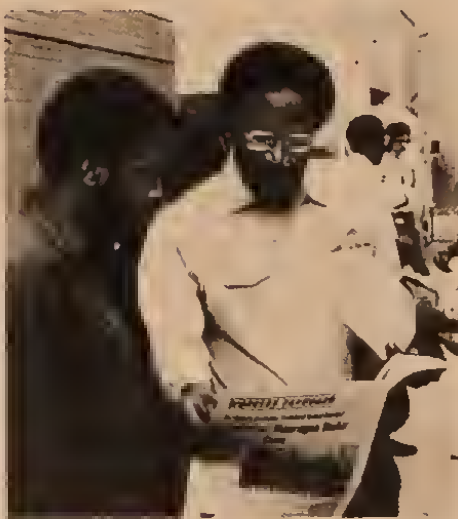
For a Socialist Fight to Defend Labor/Black Detroit!

When the wreckers' ball demolished Chrysler's Dodge Main, more than a building was destroyed. With it the livelihoods of thousands of Detroit auto workers were reduced to rubble. An entire workforce scrapped. And so it goes in this dying city: 30,000 jobs at Chrysler, wage-cut blackmail for city and county workers. Black and white working-class youth get up each morning with nothing productive to do. And now it's starting to look the same to their fathers. The *Free Press* runs feature stories on how families can learn to live on unemployment and welfare. No wonder Detroit workers search the "help wanted" section of the Houston dailies.

And now Reagan's Cold War budget grinds down the cities even more. On imperialism's way to World War III, Reagan and Haig want to stop the "Soviet menace" in El Salvador or maybe Angola. Reagan thinks he can pay for nuclear aircraft carriers by cutting back Aid to Dependent Children, food stamps; if that won't work, he's got plans for Social Security. To the poor and black, the president says: let them eat bullets. Schools, hospitals, libraries, CETA are down the tubes; Detroit cannot live by tank plants alone.

On the fringes of Reagan's Cold War drive, Klan/Nazi terrorists thrive: a black family burned out of its home in Romulus, Cynthia Steel firebombed on the far west side, Nazi provocations against Jews in Southfield.

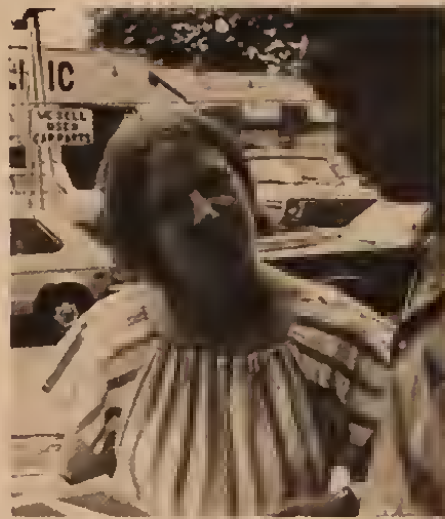
So what is to be done? First, working people have to stand up and fight. As the saying goes, in Detroit we do mind



Don Andrews, 31, has been a fighter for black rights for a dozen years. In 1972 he was a leader of the Riverside (California) Political Prisoners Defense Committee which defeated a police frame-up of three black men. A former phone worker and a member of AFSCME, Don fought for victory to city workers against Young's union-busting in the AFSCME strikes of 1978 and 1980 and against the recent wage-concessions. A member of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League, Don was the main Spartacist speaker at the 10 November 1979 rally against the Klan. More recently, he helped organize the May 3 Anti-Imperialist Contingent which marched for "Victory to the Left-Wing Insurgents in El Salvador" in Washington, D.C.

Ann Weekley, 26, is a Wayne State University activist and the wife of a laid-off Chrysler worker. A supporter of the Spartacist League / Spartacus Youth League, Ann was active in the Ad Hoc Committee to Oust South End Apologists for Klan/Nazi Murder, which mobilized more than 1,200 Wayne State students against a campus paper editorial that apologized for the Greensboro, North Carolina acquittal of the fascists who shot down five anti-racist demonstrators.

dying. And we don't mind fighting for our future. But the labor movement which has the power to fight and win is paralyzed by the union bureaucrats who are tied to Coleman Young and the bosses' Democratic Party. So UAW contracts are torn up before our eyes, the unions do nothing and the open traitor Doug Fraser sits on Chrysler's



Board of Directors.

Candidates for city council Don Andrews and Ann Weekley stand for an end to groveling class treason. They stand for the beginning of the defense of labor/black Detroit based on the power of the union movement. That's the fight that Detroit needs urgently, and the one the bosses fear.

From the lily-white suburbs of Michigan to the halls of Congress, the Reaganites and the Democrats want Detroit to die quietly, without making too much trouble about it. That is Coleman Young's job. That is the job of both capitalist parties, of all the Democratic city councilmen who want to fill Young's shoes. It is the job of the union bureaucrats and the so-called "leaders" of the black community.

But Andrews and Weekley say that taking it lying down is a crime against every worker and poor person in Detroit. To the capitalists who say Detroit doesn't matter because it's just blacks and auto workers, we say that is exactly why Detroit matters. And that is why Detroit can be a powerhouse when labor and black organizations mobilize to win.

Coleman Young says there is no money. He says Detroit must live on less and less. Well, that's his answer. The people of Detroit need to defend themselves with militant mass action. What we need is some old-fashioned class struggle, the kind that built the unions in this city. When the bosses hit us with mass layoffs, the powerful labor movement should hit back with sit-down strikes. When they try to blackmail us with plant closures, the workers should take the plants and hold them for ransom. Let them dare try to close an auto plant when tens of thousands of workers and blacks are massed outside. And the same kind of mass actions can defend our schools, welfare centers, hospitals. A working-class fight to

continued on page 11

Smash the Klan!

From Greensboro to Romulus, the KKK and Nazis have grown bolder, fueled by economic crisis and Carter/Reagan's anti-Communist war drive. If their rule over working people is threatened, the capitalists will turn to these fascist stormtroopers. Labor/black Detroit can defend itself from these union-busters and race-terrorists.

For Labor/Black Mobilizations to Smash Klan/Nazi Terror!

- For labor/black defense squads against right-wing attack!
- Disarm the cops!
- Abolish gun control!—For the right of armed self-defense!
- Jail the Greensboro KKK/Nazi murderers—Free the anti-Klan protesters!

Fight the Moral Majority!

The anti-busing racists, bible-thumping bigots and right-to-lifers are no longer the fringe. They are in the White House, the courts and both sides of the aisle in Congress. They want to take away black people's right to vote, black children's right to education, women's right to abortion.

For Working-Class Defense of Democratic Rights!

- End discrimination in schools, housing, jobs!

For a Socialist Fight to Defend Labor/Black Detroit!

- Free, quality higher education for all!—Open admissions and free tuition with stipend!
- Free abortion on demand!—Free quality health care! Pass the Equal Rights Amendment!
- Keep the state out of the bedroom!—Down with anti-gay laws and cop harassment! Abolish all laws against pornography, drug use, prostitution! Down with censorship!
- Stop the deportations!—Full citizenship rights for foreign workers!

Fight the Layoffs!

Militant labor struggles of the 1930s turned Detroit into a union town. Now tens of thousands of auto workers are thrown out on the streets with no jobs, no benefits, no hope. The bankers, auto barons and Democratic Party politicians are turning Detroit into a poverty town. What we need are the militant tactics of the 1930s, but this time with the leadership to fight all the way to socialist revolution!

For Sit-Down Strikes Against Mass Layoffs!

- Seize closed plants—take it, it's yours!

- For unlimited unemployment compensation at full union wages!
- No to chauvinist protectionism! No to bailouts!
- For federal programs to triple welfare! For massive public works under union control! For low-rent, integrated, quality public housing! Build mass transit!
- Organize the unorganized! Jobs for all: 30 hours work at 40 hours pay! Penny-for-penny COLA in every contract! Not union-busting "affirmative action" but special union programs for upgrading, recruiting, training of minorities and women!
- Strike to win!—For labor solidarity! Bust the union-busting president—defend air traffic controllers' strike! For the right to strike for all government workers! Picket lines mean don't cross! For mass pickets against scabbing! No pay cuts!—No givebacks!
- Oust the bureaucrats! Break with the Democrats!—For a workers party to fight for a workers government!

Fight the War Drive!

Reagan/Haig are hell-bent on provoking nuclear war with the Soviet Union. They are capable of blowing up the

world in order to undo the 1917 Russian Revolution when workers expropriated the capitalist class and formed their own government. As Trotskyists we defend the social gains everywhere capitalism has been overturned, from Cuba to Vietnam. Our movement has fought for more than 50 years against the Kremlin's usurpers, their counterrevolutionary policies and their suppression of workers democracy. Our call for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucrats through proletarian political revolution is part of our uncompromising opposition to imperialist appetites to restore capitalism.

Defense of USSR/Cuba Begins in El Salvador!

- No aid to the bloody junta!—U.S./OAS hands off!
- Liberals'/reformists' "political solution" means a bloodbath!
- Military victory to Salvadoran leftists!
- Stop the imperialist provocations over Poland!
- Down with Islamic reaction! No to the veil! Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! For workers revolution in Iran!
- Smash Zionist terror!—For Palestinian and Hebrew right to self-determination in a socialist Near East!
- Smash apartheid in South Africa! For international labor action in defense of black trade unions! Military victory to SWAPO—Independence for Namibia! For African self-destiny!