

On the Labor Front

Make Unions 'Schools of Communism'

(With this article we begin a series on the question of trade unions and their role in the fight for socialism. We will analyze the role of Communists in the unions; unions under the dictatorship of the proletariat; and the difference (between) Communists and lackeys of the ruling class, among them anarchosyndicalists and reformists).

REVOLUTIONARIES LOOK AT unions as "schools of communism." This line is diagonally opposed to what unions are now in the U.S., under the leadership of George Meany, Woodcock, Jerry Wurf, Cesar Chavez and other ruling class servants.

The great Russian revolutionary, V. I. Lenin, had this to say about unions:

"The trade unions were a tremendous progressive step for the working class at the beginning of the development of capitalism, inasmuch as they represented a transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the rudiments of class organization. When the highest form of proletarian class organization began to arise, viz., the revolutionary party of the proletariat (which will not deserve the name until it learns to bind the leaders with the class and the masses into one single indissoluble whole), the trade unions inevitably began to reveal certain reactionary features, a certain craft narrowness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. But the development of

the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through their interaction with the party of the working class. The conquest of political power by the proletariat is a gigantic forward step for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever, and not merely in the old way but in a new way, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time not forgetting that they are and will long remain an indispensable "school of Communism" and a preparatory school for training the proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organization of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working class (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the toilers."

(Lenin, *Leftwing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*)

But Lenin did not consider all unions to be schools of Communism all the time. He referred to unions that wage class struggle against the capitalists and against the State, under the leadership of a communist party.

That means that trade unions by themselves only produce "trade union consciousness," (the fight merely for reforms). Only Communists can give trade unions a revolutionary outlook. That is why Communists build fractions on the job or inside a union; to win workers to fight for revolutionary

politics. In addition, it prepares us for the fight to get rid of union sellouts and build a revolutionary leadership in the unions, such as what has happened with the Texas Farmworkers Union. If this doesn't happen, sellouts can turn the unions into a weapon of the ruling class (as George Meany has done with the AFL-CIO). Marx pointed out last century that a union that doesn't fight against the bourgeoisie as a class becomes a tool of the ruling class against the workers. So to turn unions into "schools of Communism" we must make them allies of the communist party. Our reform struggles must be changed into class struggles (struggles of workers as a class against the capitalists as the enemy class). The political struggle must be primary over the reform struggle. Then we will be able to win real victories for the working class and lead the struggle for socialism. In this way strikes won't end in defeat, like the auto "strikes" of last year, using the concept stated by Lenin: "Strikes can only be successful where workers are sufficiently class-conscious, where they know how to put forward their demands, where they have connections with socialists and are able to procure leaflets and pamphlets through them. Only a socialist workers party can carry out the struggles by spreading among the workers a true conception of the government and the working class!" (Lenin, *On Strikes*). (To be continued).

RED-BITS

EMPEROR OF HUNGER—Jean Bokass, president for life of the Central African Republic decided that this title was not good enough and proclaimed himself Emperor, changing the name of the country to the Central African Empire. He got himself a crown full of diamonds and other precious stones. The people of this country are among the poorest in all of Africa, suffering from starvation.

RACISM HURTS EVERYONE—When PLP raised that idea a few years back, many people disagreed with us, but capitalism has proven us right. New York Governor Carey's budget proposal for the next fiscal year not only calls for reductions in welfare benefits, and the dropping of thousands of welfare recipients, but also for cutbacks in aid to education in the suburbs, affecting mostly white children. Now more than ever we must defeat racism, the bosses' tool, and fight for a united working class to fight the capitalist class.

HOW LOW CAN A SYSTEM GO—The latest thing in the porno market in the U.S. is the use of children (some as young as 8 years old) to star in sex movies. The degradation of human beings in this sick society has reached such a low level that nothing can satisfy the perverted minds of the bosses and mafiosi that control the porno markets. These mentally deranged profitmongers will be crushed.

Military News

Win Soldiers to the Revolution

The following is an excerpt from the new PLP pamphlet, *Turn the Guns Around*. It discusses among other things, the case of the black Marines who are on trial for fighting the KKK at Camp Pendleton, Cal.

The armed forces is the key element in the organization of the State. Upon its stability and its general condition depends the stability of the state as a whole. The proletariat's (workers') chance of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and smashing the bourgeois state in the event of an immediate revolutionary situation, depends in great measure upon the degree of dissatisfaction within the bosses' armed forces.

That is why the case at Camp Pendleton is such a touchy issue of the U.S. ruling class. The whole of the armed forces is just now trying to "recover" from the wide-spread rebellion and disaffection with this system that permeated it during the Vietnam era. The bosses' scheme for a "volunteer" army was part of their plan to rekindle "morale." It hasn't been all smooth sailing for the bosses. First, minority youth, the most rebellious section of the population, have flooded the recruitment offices because of unbearable racist oppression in the form of 55 per cent unemployment among minority youth. Second, this militant section of the

population has, because of the unusual degree of integration in the armed forces (for this society), been able to affect white soldiers with a healthy disrespect for the system that screws us all.

The bosses are particularly sensitive about the marines. The marines are the shock troops of the U.S. imperialists. They are under the direct control of the President, and therefore need no Congressional approval for their use. Whenever U.S. imperialism was threatened, the cry used to be "Send the Marines!" Without these reliable shock troops, the bosses can't protect their racist friends in South Africa from the just rebellion that awaits them from the black workers there.

That is why the bosses are making a special effort to re-establish the marines as an elite fighting force with a Ku Klux Klan mentality. Immediately after Vietnam, when the army, navy and air force were talking about beer in the barracks, in their desperate attempt to recruit, the marines were advertising for "a few good men." Clearly, the bosses want "quality." Or to put it more succinctly, racist killers.

The marine brass tolerates and even encourages the KKK because it is that type of jingoistic, nationalistic, racist ideology that they must inoculate into their

troops if they are to put together the fighting force necessary to defend U.S. interest in, for instance, South Africa. It is the courageous acts of these 14 black marines that threw a monkey wrench into all their plans. That is why the brass reacts so violently. Millionaire C. L. Sulzberger, foreign affairs analyst for the *New York Times* thinks the situation is so "bad" that "... The point may some day be reached when there will be no use in having ... weapons because there won't be enough people left who might be willing to employ them in self defense." (By "self-defense," he means defense of the capitalists' investments).

We in Progressive Labor Party don't want the bosses' armed forces to "recover" from its troubles. It is in the interest of workers in this country and around the world, and of their sons and daughters in the armed forces themselves that **the bosses' armed forces be smashed**. That is why we raise the slogan "TURN THE GUNS AROUND!" at your real enemies, the U.S. imperialist ruling class and their lackey brass.

The U.S. bosses are trying to rebuild their armed forces to enable them to fight an imperialist war necessary to hold back possible "encroachment" by foreign imperialists, mainly the

Soviet imperialists, and to suppress rebellions of workers like those in South Africa. Workers, whether in the armed forces or not, have no interest in defending U.S. imperialism. Their wars only mean the spilling of workers' blood and the enrichment of one boss or another.

In the event of an imperialist war, our class must **TURN THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR!** We can gain nothing by fighting other workers, and everything by beating the capitalists.

We can not seriously talk of **TURNING THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR** unless a large section of the armed forces comes over to the workers' side; in short, until masses of soldiers are won to revolution. Lenin, the great leader of the first successful communist revolution in 1917, said, "unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle." The revolutionary work done in the armed forces today will lay the basis for a socialist tomorrow, free of imperialist war, racism, exploitation and fascism. **Joining and building the revolutionary communist party, Progressive Labor Party, is a crucial step toward revolution for each soldier and workers.**