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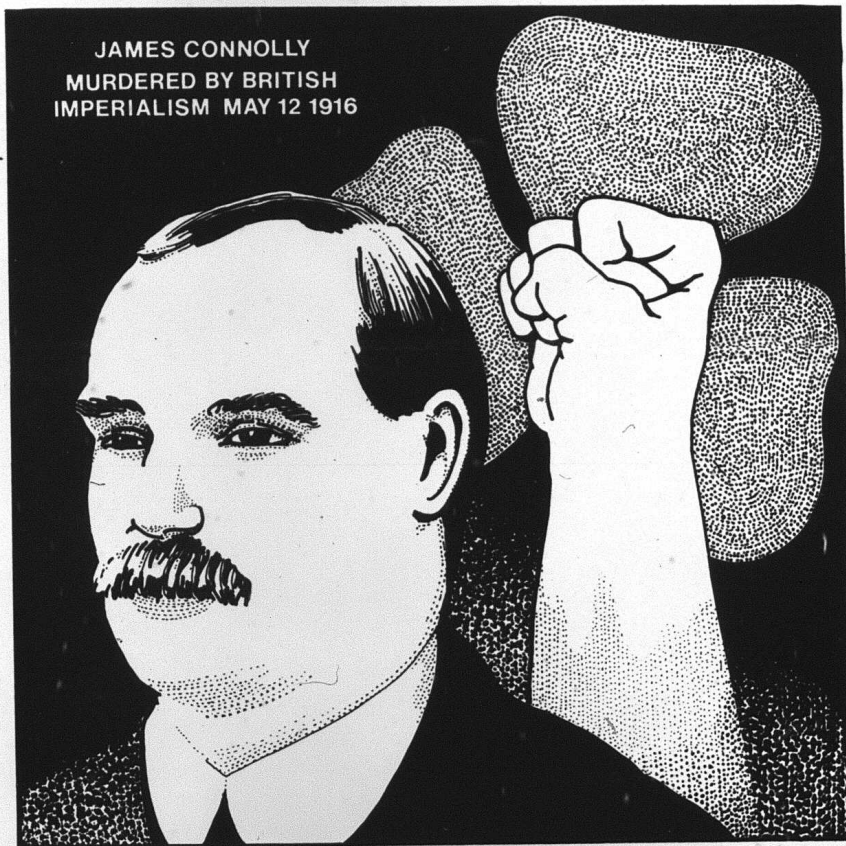
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20¢ East Coast 15¢ West

May 1969

The New Irish Revolt



*SDS National Council
Women's Liberation
Wildcats: Buffalo, Sterling
France, Czechoslovakia*

feed back

THE PFP

Joe Weiner's letter in the previous issue of I.S. did little more than make the point that the radical movement should turn towards the working class - hardly a new idea for socialists. Unfortunately, he failed to suggest any means by which this can be done at the present time.

Although Weiner dismisses the Peace and Freedom Party as irrelevant and reflecting only anti-war concerns (he sees no value in a radical political party at this time), many of us in the ISC feel that the Peace and Freedom Party, as the nucleus of an independent radical party, offers significant opportunities for the radical movement to approach the working class on a political basis. In the past few months, in fact, the major efforts of the New York State Peace and Freedom Party have been just that - a number of programs and actions have been developed which have the clear goal of relating radical politics to working class concerns. It is unfortunate that Joe Weiner was not aware of this.

Opportunities for socialists to engage directly in shop organizing are unfortunately very limited in this period, although we should continue to do so wherever possible. Similarly, the opportunities for 'worker-student alliances' such as have been developed in San Francisco and Buffalo, are also limited, although growing. Furthermore, as Weiner himself states, most of the issues affecting workers at this time cannot be solved through traditional unions, but require a political approach - issues such as inflation, the war, taxation, housing, and government intervention in strikes, for example. The tremendous response of workers to the Wallace campaign, as well as the significant movement of working people in New York City away from the Democratic Party towards the Conservative Party, are clear indications that workers are beginning to recognize that the two-party system does not meet their needs, and are searching for a political alternative. At the moment, their only alternative is the parties of the right; the need for a radical political alternative is obvious.

The Peace and Freedom Party in New York State, although not large, has been active in a number of campaigns in recent months which have attempted to carry out a working class perspective. The party campaigned throughout the state against an increase in the sales tax which was recently passed by the state legislature, calling for an end to taxation of working people and increased taxation of corporate interests, progressive income taxes, etc., and demanding an end to military spending. In Buffalo, PFP members leafleted at factories during the 1968 campaigns, have actively supported a number of strikes and union organizing attempts, conduct classes on labor history and Marxism, and have recruited a few workers to the PFP. In other cities, similar activities are carried out on a lesser scale, in an effort to relate the radical movement to community struggles.

In New York City, the major campaign of the PFP this year is on housing; it clearly attacks private real estate interests and government policies, and demands massive construction of new housing to be financed by taxes on profit, extensive reductions in rent, and government intervention in all areas of housing to ensure maintenance of housing.

We do not expect the PFP campaigns to result in the instantaneous development of a working-class party, of course, but we feel that these programs can begin to provide a radical political alternative to workers, and begin to make the radical movement relevant to them.

In addition, the PFP can have an important effect on the radical movement; as radicals develop an understanding of the need to turn toward the working class, the existence of groups like the Peace and Freedom Party provides them with

an opportunity to engage in the concrete work of developing transitional political programs with a working-class perspective.

Because the PFP provides a bridge between the student movement and the community, the PFP has already had a significant impact on the movement in upstate New York; in a number of cities the PFP has already become the center of the organized movement.

Although the Peace and Freedom Party clearly did not fulfill our original hopes of developing into a mass-based party in 1968, we feel that the New York PFP, at least, still provides us with a meaningful opportunity to work towards the development of such a future party. By adopting a working class perspective and attempting to develop transitional programs in a serious way, the PFP has moved far beyond its original concerns, and provides us with a chance to engage in actions which can have a political impact on the working class.

We do not advocate Independent political action as a substitute for other actions which relate to the working class, but we do feel that where a vehicle exists which is attempting to develop political programs with a working class perspective, it is important for socialists to encourage that development and actively participate in it. Ilene Winkler
New York

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The INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM Group and the Editorial Board of Socialist Worker send fraternal greetings and best wishes to the ISC for May Day. We wish you every success in the difficult task of building a revolutionary movement in the United States.



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by Richard Lyons

The New Irish Revolution

- Tom Condit -

To many Americans, the current "troubles" in northern Ireland appear as a strange ghost on a medieval rampart. Armed conflict between Catholics and Protestants, the storming of walled cities, and the apocalyptic ravings of the Rev. Ian Paisley seem like remnants of the Thirty Years War, almost unintelligible in modern terms.

Yet the participants in this struggle are not feudal lords, kings and cardinals, but trade unionists, factory owners, tenant farmers and radical students.

The "Church Militant" is conspicuously missing from the leadership of the "Catholic" side, and its place is filled by socialist revolutionaries, left wing labor leaders, and "new left" students (many of them Protestants or atheists). The "Protestants" are represented by the Ulster Unionist Party, a coalition of big businessmen and landlords, albeit with a lunatic fringe of Bible-pounding fundamentalists right out of the deep South.

The crisis in Ulster (Northern Ireland) is an integral part of the crisis of world capitalism, and its resolution will have effects that reach far beyond the boundaries of the tiny "statelet" of Northern Ireland. In order to understand the nature and implications of the present struggle, we need a brief look at the history of the "Six Counties" that make up Ulster, and the nature of their present government.

The Protestant population of Ulster is descended from two great "plantations" of the 17th century, during which Scots and English settlers took the confiscated lands of Irish "rebels" (some real, some convicted in kangaroo courts for the sole purpose of stealing their property). The bulk of the Ulster settlers were Presbyterian "dissenters," whose numbers were swelled by further migration to escape Anglican persecution, particularly in Scotland.

Subjected to a lesser oppression than Catholics, they were nonetheless strongly discriminated against in civic matters and forced to pay tithes to the Church of England. They could see little real difference between Anglicanism and Catholicism, and a bitter Ulster "nationalism" arose among them, compounded of fear and hatred of their Catholic neighbors and mistrust of the London government.

By the 1790's, the grievances of the Protestant Ulster peasantry had sufficiently allayed their anti-Catholic feelings to allow them to join en masse the revolutionary United Irishmen. (The British army confiscated 50,000 muskets and 70,000 pikes, mainly from Presbyterians, during an expedition into Ulster in 1797. The disarming of Ulster was a major factor in the defeat of the Irish rising of 1798.)

From that time on, the situation deteriorated. Provocateurs fomented riots between Catholic and Protestant tenant farmers; the Presbyterian clergy were bought off with state subsidies in 1801 (as the Catholic prelates had been two years earlier); and the landlords and manufacturers of Belfast developed a policy of "divide and rule" -- deliberately playing up fear of Protestant tenants that Catholics would pay higher rents for their farms, reserving skilled jobs in industry for Protestants only, and encouraging Protestant tenants and workers (most of them of Scots ancestry) to think of themselves as "English," racially superior to the lowly, benighted, Catholic "Irish".

THE ORANGE ORDER

Around the beginning of the 19th century, the northern rulers founded the "Orange Order" (named after William of Orange, who decisively defeated the Catholic army of James II at the Battle of the Boyne, in 1690), to combat the growth of unity among the "common people".

As well as fomenting conflict between Catholics and Protestants, the "Orangemen" launched campaigns first against the restoration of civil rights to Catholics in both England and Ireland, then against Home Rule or any vestige of autonomy in Ireland (other than the autonomy of the local landlord or employer in his cozy alliance with colonial officials). The Unionist Party was formed as the political arm of the Orange Order, to fight for total union with England.

On the eve of World War I, it became clear that the English Liberals intended to grant home rule to Ireland. Sir Edward Carson founded the Ulster Volunteers, a Unionist militia organized around a nucleus of armed gangs of professional strikebreakers under the slogan of "Ulster is right, and Ulster will fight!" In the South, the Irish Republican Brotherhood was organizing its own Irish Volunteers to fight for home rule, and the trade unions were organizing the Irish

Citizens Army to defend strikers from police attacks and to fight for an independent, socialist Ireland -- the "Workers' Republic".

The British officer corps was divided between supporters and opponents of Home Rule, both of whom seemed bitter enough to mutiny on the question. Labor unrest was rising in both England and Ireland, with a general strike threatened. The British Isles were on the verge of civil war when World War I broke out.

When the war began, both Unionist and "Home Rule" politicians rushed to the colours, seeking to outdo each other in protestations of loyalty to the Crown and to continued English suppression of Africans, Indians and Malays. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, pledged Ireland's support in the House of Commons, and 200,000 Irishmen volunteered for the British army.

Among those who remained behind were 12,000 Irish Volunteers and nearly the whole of the Irish Citizen Army. The Irish Transport and General Workers Union hung a banner on its headquarters: "WE SERVE NEITHER KING NOR KAISER, BUT IRELAND". The English never dared try to extend conscription to Ireland.

In 1916, the famous Easter rising broke out in Dublin and was suppressed after a week's heavy fighting. In the aftermath, 16 of the leaders were shot, including the revolutionary socialist James Connolly. Popular reaction was sharp. In 1918, the Sinn Fein ("Ourselves Alone") Party routed the Home Rulers, electing 73 of Ireland's 105 members of the British Parliament on a platform of immediate and total independence. Rather than going to Westminster to take their seats, the Sinn Feiners remained in Ireland as the national assembly of an independent Irish Republic.

After 3 years of guerrilla warfare, the British recognized the "Irish Free State", but separated the six counties of Ulster from the rest of Ireland, granting them both representation at Stormont and a parliament of their own. Despite themselves, the Unionists got Home Rule, but separated from the Catholic majority.

Sporadic border raids and outbursts of nationalist feeling have protested "the border" since 1921. But as Southern politicians moved toward accommodation with Britain (and hence her northern satellite), and the ruling classes of North and South entered into collusion with one another, there has been an increasing softpedalling of the issue of partition.

A divided Ireland means conservatism in both parts, with Unionism entrenched in the North and clerical reaction safely ensconced in the South.

Once unwillingly in power, the Unionists set about ensuring their permanent domination of Ulster. First,

As this issue of the INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST goes to press, 6000 British troops have moved into Ulster (Northern Ireland) to guard waterlines, power-houses and other public utilities, leaving the Royal Ulster Constabulary and its auxiliary storm troopers free to "quell civil disturbance". The troop move is the latest development in several months of protests and demonstrations which have shaken the authoritarian rule of the Unionist Party in Ulster.

The Ulster government in Stormont has finally announced its willingness to grant universal suffrage in local elections, in an attempt to defuse the growing resistance to its arbitrary power. This reform, which might have greatly strengthened the government had it been given willingly a year ago, is a grudging sop -- too little and too late to stem the mass movement which forced it upon the Unionist Party and the semi-secret Orange Order which controls the government.

The people of Ulster have won in the street what years of lobbying and petitions failed to gain. The ritualistic mumbling of the traditional Nationalist opposition and the supine begging of the Liberals and their Communist friends has been replaced by a socialist movement with a secular, popular base.

In a little over a year, the Ulster civil rights movement has put a socialist into a parliamentary seat held by the Unionist party since the 19th century, thrown the government party into confusion, sent the "official" opposition party of over 50 years standing into its death throes, begun to replace the historic religious politics of Ulster with a modern class politics, and greatly undermined the already shaky governments of both Britain and Eire. Now it has won the first step in the electoral reforms necessary to secure popular control of the two western counties and of the city of Derry.

The "moderates" in the civil rights movement (including the Communist Party of Northern Ireland) are now arguing for a moratorium on demonstrations, in order to strengthen the hand of Prime Minister James Chichester-Clark's Unionist leadership (who are somewhat to the right of the Republicans here) against the proto-fascist "Protestant Unionists" of Rev. Ian Paisley.

The militants and the rank-and-file of the movement have rejected this ultimate in lesser-evilism, and have held new mass demonstrations in Derry ("London-derry" to the Unionists -- named for the bankers in London who own it) and Strabane. Fighting has once more broken out in the streets of Derry.

We cannot say at this juncture what the immediate outcome in Ulster will be. Chichester-Clark and his government are under immense pressure from the civil rights movement and from the British government (which wants peace at any price) to grant further concessions on the one hand, and from their lunatic fringe to resist even to the point of proclaiming martial law and declaring Ulster's independence on the other.

Every middle-class and moderate element in the movement is fighting for a return to the good old days of safe, Liberal demands, while the traditionalist and clerical wing longs for a return to clear-cut religious strife. Against this is posed the consciousness of a mass movement of Catholics and Protestants united, who see clearly the secular and economic origins of Ulster's oppression, but who have not yet developed any firm organization or clearcut leadership of their own to counter the middle-class manipulators.

Whatever happens tomorrow, the politics of Ulster will never be the same again. Ulster right now is the weakest point of European capitalism, and support of the civil rights movement there is the clearest duty of every internationalist. The left must unite everywhere possible on the demand for removal of British troops and an end to repression in Ulster.

They set a property qualification (the possession of a home of one's own) for voting in local elections. By this means, they disenfranchised the younger (mainly Catholic) workers who are forced to live with their parents, plus all lodgers and boarders.

Secondly, both local and provincial electoral districts were ruthlessly gerrymandered to ensure Unionist domination. And finally, fear of Catholic domination was whipped up to new heights among the Protestant workers (a fear reinforced by the supine attitude of Southern politicians to the Church), and police terror was used to keep dissidents in line.

To add a small insult to injury, businessmen were given extra votes in proportion to their property.

To sharpen the effect of the "householder" qualifica-



The Burntoltet Bridge ambush: Paisleyites hurl stones. A few more yards and there was a mass of men with clubs in amongst us'

tion for voting, local governments have restricted access to public housing in order to preserve it for loyal Protestant voters, and housing has been segregated to ensure safe electoral majorities within districts.

23% of the adult citizens of Belfast cannot vote in local elections because they aren't "householders", and some have been on the waiting list for homes as long as 20 years. In the city of Derry, only 500 new housing units have been built since 1919 -- almost all reserved for Unionist voters.

The gerrymandering has reached a level which would shame even American legislatures. In Derry, the Unionists hold 12 out of 20 council seats with only 1/3 of the vote. In Lurgan, 40% of the population are Catholic, but no Catholic has ever been elected to the city council. Throughout Northern Ireland, the patterns of discrimination and disenfranchisement are similar.

SPECIAL POWERS

To keep the lid on this blatant dictatorship, the bosses must rely on physical force. Under the Special Powers (Northern Ireland) Act, the Royal Ulster Constabulary possesses powers undreamt of by most police forces.

Not only do they have the power to search and imprison people without warrant or trial, to deny the right of habeus corpus, prohibit meetings and parades, jail people for refusing to answer incriminating questions, hold prisoners incognito, suppress newspapers and movies, deny jury trials and whip prisoners, but they can even prevent the holding of an inquest after a prisoner's death (a license to murder which has been used more than once) and arrest anyone who does "anything calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of peace or the maintenance of order...and not specifically provided for in these regulations."

It's no wonder that Prime Minister Vorster is on record as saying that he would rather have Northern Ireland's Special Powers Act than all of South Africa's repressive legislation.

Enforcing this act are 3500 members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and 10,000 "B-Specials", armed Unionist storm troopers enlisted as "police reserves". Should these prove inadequate, Stormont can call the fundamentalist followers of the Rev. Ian Paisley into the streets -- while the British army avoids dirtying its hands with direct thuggery, and merely "maintains order", guards "public utilities", etc.

With its unique autonomy, Stormont sits in the United Kingdom like a little Mississippi, its petty rulers using British social welfare benefits as a sop to the workers and low wages as a lure for investors. While Ulster continues to be a source of cheap labor and low-priced farm products, no Westminster government -- "Labour" or Tory -- will intervene any more than absolutely necessary.

The Unionist Party is securely in control of Ulster, the Orange Order is securely in control of the party, and the northern Irish section of the British ruling class is securely in control of the Order. It is a situation, as Derry labour leader Eamonn McCann put it, "as near to fascism as makes no difference".

GREEN TORIES

The "official opposition" in the Stormont parliament is the Nationalists, who are not so much a party as a sentiment. For 50 years, the "green Tories", lineal descendants of the "Home Rule" Irish Parliamentary Party, have sat waiting for some Moses to deliver them from bondage. They run only in safe Catholic seats, and a vote for them has been an expression of historical discontent, and nothing more.

In Derry there was literally no contest for 50 years -- the Unionists ran candidates for their 12 safe (gerrymandered) seats and the Nationalists for their 8. In the last provincial election, there were contests between Nationalist and Unionist candidates in only 3 of 52 constituencies -- and 2 of those were on the initiative of the Unionists.

The Nationalists have never fought for reforms, on the fatalistic grounds that they'll lose anyway, but they aren't for revolution either. They normally have no election program except history (preferably ancient) and until recently hadn't even a formal party organization.

In contrast to this slumbering dinosaur is the traditional "physical force party of the Irish Republican Army. Like the Nationalists, the I.R.A. has also drawn the conclusion that no reforms can be achieved while the border is intact -- and therefore that elimination of the border is the only meaningful solution to the oppression of the Nationalist minority in Ulster.

That being the case, they opted for a military solution: eliminate the border by force. Terrorism, night raids and general harassment of Stormont became the

I.R.A.'s substitute for a political program. Through out its up/down cycles of recruitment and activity, switches from "left" to "right" to "left" wing leadership, the I.R.A. has grown smaller with each resurgence, as its futility and isolation from the masses became increasingly apparent. Its attempts to found "legal" fronts have foundered on the lack of a program.

The primitive strain of militant Republicanism remains a potent force in both North and South, however, and the I.R.A. probably has more mass sympathy than its small numbers and impotent posturing would appear to indicate.

The Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) was at one time a potent force in Ulster politics, where there is a fine tradition of militant trade unionism. The border question, however, added an insoluble contradiction to the usual vagaries of social-democratic politics.

For years, the N.I.L.P. straddled the issue, trying to contain Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists in the same class party, leaving the border as a "matter of individual conscience". Finally, the leadership took its hint from the new rapprochement between northern and southern politicians and came out in support of partition. The result was an electoral debacle from which the party has never recovered, though younger members have begun to spur a leftwing renewal which must eventually clash with the present leadership.

Finally, there is the Republican Labour Party, founded after insurgent anti-partitionists split from the N.I.L.P. in 1945. Republican Labour currently holds 2 seats in the Stormont parliament and 1 in Westminster. Very little information on the party and its program is available here, but it appears that Republican Labour is more in the position of having "followers" than "members".

Gerry Fitt, M.P., has done yeoman work in exposing conditions in Ulster, but otherwise has apparently functioned as an ordinary Labour "back bencher", supporting the traitorous Wilson government on most issues.

LIVING FOSSIL

It is amazing that a regime like Ulster's could have survived into the second half of the 20th century, and a tribute to capitalism's ability to maintain barbarism in the face of great difficulties. That it was able to do so was a function of the continued strength and favor of British imperialism, the existence of an opposition so wrapped in history and sentimentality that it merely reinforced the government, and a minimal maintenance of religious fears as a basis of Irish political behavior. In the 1960's, the sands began running out in all of Ulster's hour-glasses.

In many ways the crisis in Ulster is an outgrowth of the continuing crisis of British capitalism. The health of Ulster has always been closely related to the health of its parent body, the United Kingdom -- whose health has been none too good of late.

The loss of most of her colonial empire, the inability of outmoded British industry to meet American and continental competition, and the consequent instability of Britain's financial structure have together made every weakness of world capitalism an insoluble problem for the British ruling class and their "Labour" tools.

The liquidity crisis hits the pound hardest. Minor shifts in the business cycle become disasters. And pressure mounts to trim the "frills" -- like wages, medical care, public transport, and the overhead costs of keeping Ulster Unionism in power. When your share of world trade declines from 26% to 15% in less than 20 years, a \$240 million yearly supplement to an embarrassment is worth reconsidering.

TEN YEAR DECLINE

The decline of British economic power could not fail to have disastrous effects on a marginal area like Ulster. As the British economy stagnated, its outlying parts began to contract. Investment in Ulster, always confined for the most part to the industrial belt around Belfast, came to a standstill, and manufacturing employment began a 10-year decline which still continues.

As unemployment began a new rise, Wilson's "austerity" program slashed the social welfare benefits which had become a major Stormont argument for continued union with England (although Unionists' M.P.s had opposed all of them). Branch railway lines (including the one to Derry, Ulster's second largest city) were closed to be replaced by new highways -- and then the roadbuilding budget was cut.

Paisley

-Tom Condit-

The aspect of the Ulster crisis most loved by the capitalist press is the flamboyant fundamentalist preacher Ian Paisley, and his "Protestant Unionist" supporters. Paisley's hate-filled ravings are depicted as a typical expression of proletarian working-class prejudices.

Paisley himself holds a divinity degree from South Carolina's Bob Jones University, a "non-denominational" center of raving lunacy and racism. His "Free Presbyterian" church has been denounced by the official Presbyterians as heretical.

The rank-and-file Paisleyites are the stuff of which similar movements all over the world are made: screaming, angry shop keepers; rural elements who don't understand why the world is changing; small farmers in the western counties; well-off farmers and their laborers in the east; members of the militant senility league; and the assortment of clerks, sored "intellectuals" and other lumpen elements from whom clerical fascists, Nazis and Kiansmen are drawn.

Thus far, Paisley has neither won significant financial support from the big bourgeoisie (who are counting on Chichester-Clark to pull them through), or any mass base in the Protestant working class, most of whom are wavering to the left.

Times, of course, may change. The bosses may decide they need Paisley in an emergency (as they decided for Hitler). The springs of religious sectarianism in the working class may well up again, with encouragement from "physical force" nationalists.

For now, however, Paisleyism remains an interesting marginal aspect of Unionism. Paisley serves as a bugaboo, which perennial supporters of lesser evils can use to point to as a greater one. The struggle for Ulster will be decided in the cities, and that is not Mr. Paisley's best fighting ground.

At this same time, a new opposition began to develop. Students at Queen's University Belfast, always the most integrated of Irish educational institutions, began to develop both a consciousness of the injustice of the Unionist regime and a strong socialist movement.

The Queen's University Labour Group (affiliated to the NILP) began organizing working-class Young Socialist branches, and agitating for unity between the NILP, the Irish Labour Party and Republican-Labour -- as well as fighting to build a leftwing in the NILP.

Also, the growth and increasing militancy of the Irish Labour Party in the Republic greatly bolstered the morale of Ulster leftists.

In 1967, the tide began to turn. Students (most of them Protestants) demonstrated against the banning of the left-nationalist Republican Clubs as fronts for the Sinn Fein and the I.R.A. Others joined Young Socialists as workers in a whirlwind NILP municipal election campaign in Derry. The secularization of modern intellectual life had begun to erode the ideological base of Catholic-Protestant hostility among students.

The Derry campaign was particularly important. Ulster's second largest city concentrates the vicious results of all the Unionist policies. A minority permanently controls the city council through gerrymandering. 9,000 of her citizens are disenfranchised as a result of the property qualification. The effective electoral truce between Unionists and Nationalists had meant that Derry had no real municipal election for 50 years.

4,000 families are on the waiting list for housing and one house in seven is officially classified as "uninhabitable" -- but only 15 units of new housing have been built in the past 3 years. Unemployment, always hovering around 20% as a result of government policies favoring the Belfast area, climbed with Wilson's "austerity" and the closure of the railway line.

In 1967, the Northern Ireland Labour Party broke out of the mold. Utilizing young socialists from other areas as campaign workers, the NILP conducted a lightning campaign, raising class issues in both Catholic and Protestant wards, and garnered an across-the-boards 30 to 35% vote.

HOUSING AND POLITICS

A possibility of breaking out of Ulster's electoral deadlock was opened up and the results stimulated the left throughout Ireland. Derry became the new storm center, and the next round was fought on the housing question.

Housing is a perennial issue in Ulster, as it is throughout Ireland. 40% of the houses are over 80 years old, 49% have no bath, 23% have no toilet, and 20% don't even have an indoor water supply. Over 10% of the units are officially classified as "overcrowded" -- a percentage probably well below the real figure. When this lack of housing is tied to political allocation of the small number of available units, the situation becomes explosive.

In February 1968, the Derry Housing Action Committee (DHAC) was formed, and it began a direct action campaign of rent strikes and disruption of local council meetings. The demands of the campaign were a nonpolitical "points system" for the allocation of housing, improvements in existing housing, no rent raises, and a crash program to build new housing. This last proposal brought them into sharp conflict with the financial rulers of both Ulster and Britain.

The Ulster Housing Trust, a public corporation,



October 5 in Derry, when the Royal Ulster Constabulary baptised the civil rights movement -- advancing with flailing batons into a defenceless crowd.

is the major source of funds for new housing in Ulster. Like capitalist governmental bodies everywhere, it prefers borrowing money from banks to asking for tax revenue, and by 1967 its total indebtedness to the central banks was \$44 million.

Since the interest payments of over \$6 million a year exceeded the income from rents, the easiest way to secure capital for new housing starts would be to cancel the payments to the banks. This very logical and economical proposal somehow failed to meet the approval of major financial interests, even when advanced as the demand of a mass movement.

The DHAC united Republicans, leftwing members of the NILP, and independents in a continuing series of actions which shook the Derry establishment. In June, a main bus route was blocked for 48 hours. Really, the DHAC newspaper, consistently made "illegal" exposures on the activities of slumlord and the inactivity of Nationalist politicians. The illegal Derry Republican Club publicly carried its banners at demonstrations. A genuine, if amorphous, leftwing unity was being built around the activities and needs of the working class.

Meanwhile, developments in other parts of Ulster added fuel to the fire. Since 1964, the liberal Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland had been lobbying the Westminster parliament, the UN and the European Court of Human Rights with information on the repression of the Catholic minority in Ulster. (The most dramatic of their facts was proof that for 50 years, 48% of the primary school children in Ulster have been Catholic, yet less than 1/3 of the voting age adults are Catholics -- the rest have been forced to emigrate by job and housing discrimination.)

In 1967, a second liberal group -- the Civil Rights Association -- was formed to continue this lobbying and petitioning in Ulster itself. Last July, the CRA yielded to the pressure of events, and despite the bitter opposition of its chairwoman (Betty Sinclair, a veteran trade-unionist and secretary of the Communist Party of Northern Ireland), decided to begin a campaign of demonstrations.

An August march to Dungannon, near the site of a housing protest in June, was halted by a police barricade. 2,000 people sat down to hear speeches by Republican-Labour MP Gerry Fitt and local Stormont MP Austin Currie, a strong advocate of civil disobedience who is rumoured to be the only actually living member of the Nationalist Party, then went home feeling good.

The second CRA march went to Derry on October 5. Hundreds of people turned out, 3 British Labour MP's marched along, and television crews came to cover the festivities. The Royal Ulster Constabulary savagely attacked the march and dispersed it. Police boxed in a thousand demonstrators and began to systematically beat them. Reporters were knocked down despite attempts to show their press credentials, all the MP's were arrested, and thousands of TV viewers saw and heard Gerry Fitt, his head streaming blood, denounce the R.U.C. goons. Marchers and local supporters were chased into the local Catholic ghetto by the cops. Barricades were thrown up, and casualty centers were established as people began to defend themselves with bricks, bottles and clubs. Not for 3 days, until they brought in armored cars to smash the barricades, were the police able to break the lines.

Most important, every attempt to turn the struggle into a religious one failed. The Protestant working class for the most part remained passive, and movement stewards firmly stopped "get-Protestant" street gang elements. On October 9, the Derry Citizens Action Committee was formed -- a broad-based civil rights organization which quickly fell under the influence of middle-class moderates.

On the same day, 3,000 Queens University students held a 3 hour sit-in in Belfast. That night, dissatisfied with their moderate leadership, 800 of them met to found a new organization, called People's Democracy. Like the early Vietnam Day Committee in Berkeley, all decisions in PD are made -- and frequently immediately reversed -- in open mass meetings, and functional committees are elected on a temporary basis only. Although PD thus has no "leadership", its program and strategy are most clearly influenced by the Queens University Young Socialists (NILP) and various "Trotskyist" currents.

In Derry, the Citizens Action Committee has an elected steering committee plus weekly meetings of 400 to 500 stewards -- volunteer activists who mobilize demonstrations, keep communications open between the DCAC and the people in all parts of the city, organize movement defenses, and deal with provocateurs. The leadership of DCAC has been under continued leftward pressure from the ranks, much of it organized by the Housing Action Committee and Derry Labour.

The Unionists declared that the walled area of Derry, which had been successfully defended from Catholic occupation by its apprentice boys in 1688, was in a measure "sacred Protestant ground", and that any demonstration within it would be taken as a provocation and lead to rioting, etc. They therefore banned any DCAC demonstrations within the walls. The movement was forced to take up this challenge.

On October 19, DCAC led 2,000 people in a sit-in outside the Gate of Derry, and prepared for a later mass demonstration. Meanwhile, Housing Action seized the council chambers in a new protest, and PD sat in at the Stormont parliament building.

On November 16, 20,000 civil rights demonstrators marched on the Gate of Derry. As the leading ranks reached the police line, with its vehicles and barbed wire barricades, they began to sit down. Meanwhile, marchers began discovering gaps in the police line, and despite the urgings of leaders to keep the protest symbolic, they began to pour through and over the walls to assemble in the center of the old city. 13,000 gathered for a mass rally. The announced "riot", however, failed to take place.

The next day, 300 women garment workers staged a token strike, and marched into the walled city. They were joined by 700 longshoremen who also struck and marched through "on their way to the union hall". The next day the dockers again entered

the city, and fought with helmeted police, stoning a water cannon. The mood in Derry was one of euphoric combativeness.

On November 22, O'Neill announced a 5 point reform program. A government commission was to take over Derry and reorganize its city government (not much has been heard since, about that), the special "company vote" for businessmen (amounting to an infinitesimal percentage of the total electorate) would be abolished, a points system would be introduced for housing (but no new building program), the Special Powers Act would be allowed to fall into disuse* (but not repealed), and -- an Ombudsman would be appointed! Mild as these reforms were, they were too much for the rightwing Home Affairs Minister, Craig, who resigned from the cabinet in protest.

The moderates in the civil rights movement immediately cried "PAXI", and pushed for a moratorium on demonstrations to avoid undercutting their "liberal" friend O'Neill in his struggle with the Bad Guys. DCAC, pushed by its middle-class elements, announced a one month "cooling-off" period. People's Democracy cancelled two planned marches. The honeymoon was soon over, however, and on January 1, PD began a march from Belfast to Derry.

Along the route of the 4 day march, they were continually assailed by Paisleyite thugs, acting in collusion with the RUC and "B-Special". As they entered Derry on January 4, they were attacked by a crowd of hundreds throwing stones and bottles, but ran the gauntlet to Guildhall Square, where DCAC members met them for a mass rally.

As the rally broke up, the police rioted and attacked the crowd. In a repeat of October, demonstrators fell back on barricades in the Catholic ghetto of Bogside. This time they held "Free Derry" for 6 days. A "People's Force" (mainly the DCAC stewards) kept order, distribution of food and fuel was cooperatively organized, and a "Radio Free Derry" went on the air. The barricades were taken down and the "militia" disbanded only by decision of the DCAC. The police never got past them.

Desperate, O'Neill dissolved the Stormont Parliament and called a snap election, certain of a victory he could tout as a "vote of confidence" from the people. In so doing, he made a major tactical error: he gave the left the opportunity to clarify their differences with the Nationalists and the civil rights "moderates", and to go out to the people with a clear program of demands.

With only 10 days in which to select candidates and constituencies, scrape up the bread for election deposits, and file, the militants met the challenge. People's Democracy fielded 7 candidates, and 2 candidates of the NILP and 2 independents announced their support of the PD election manifesto.

People's Democracy deliberately chose to contest "safe" Unionist and Nationalist seats, demonstrating that they had a program for Catholics and Protestants alike. From Prime Minister O'Neill to the mossbacked leadership of the Nationalist Party, Ulster politicians found themselves faced with an unprecedented challenge.

The PD candidates polled over 20,000 votes, and the independent and NILP candidates who supported their election manifesto polled another 13,000. Paddy O'Hanlon, running as an independent nationalist in South Armagh, permanently retired Nationalist leader Eddie Richardson from Stormont. Fergus Woods came within 220 votes of doing the same to Keogh in South Down.

In Derry, socialist Eamonn McCann was nominated by the NILP to oppose Nationalist Eddie McAteer in the working class Foyle constituency. Fearful that an NILP victory in Foyle would permanently destroy their influence in the Derry movement, the "moderates" put up DCAC leader John Hume as an independent candidate for the same seat, and launched a successful "unite behind the broadest candidate" campaign. Hume was swept in with 9,000 votes to McAteer's 5,000 and McCann's 2,000, while his fellow "moderate" Ivan Cooper successfully knocked out another Nationalist in a nearby seat.

The greatest triumph of the campaign, however, was probably 22-year old Bernadette Devlin's 6,000 votes in what was previously considered a "safe" Unionist seat. A month later she improved on the feat as PD's candidate in the Mid-Ulster bye-election to the Westminster parliament. The press made a good deal of the fact that she is now the youngest British MP since 1781. It's far more relevant, however, that she's the first MP ever elected on a platform calling for a unified, socialist Ireland with workers' control of industry.

The significance of a handful of "protest candidates" running in an explosive situation may not seem clear until we examine their program. PD's platform, like their choice of seats to contest, was drafted to emphasize the economic and political aspects of oppression in Ulster, and to directly refute the Irish tradition of parochial and sectarian politics.

While there have always been Catholic Unionists and Protestant Nationalists, all the tactics of the two parties have tended to make their main base of support denominational -- by mutual consent. PD, for the first time since the split in Labour, put forward a program of political and class demands to which all Ulstermen could relate. Only by reaching out to Protestants on issues directly affecting them did PD members feel that it would be possible to build Protestant working class support for the rights of Catholics.

After attacking the gerrymandering and deprivation of voting rights, the PD manifesto demanded the repeal of the Special Powers Act and disbanding of the "B-Specials". Beyond that, however, they put forward an economic program to meet Ulster's immediate needs.

On housing, PD demanded not only allocation of houses on the basis of need only, but also democratic control of public housing by tenants' councils, a crash program to build new housing, and the cancellation of all Housing Trust debts to the central banks.

To meet the continuing crisis of Ulster industry, the manifesto called for an end to the policy of tax rebates and other "incentives" for industrialists, and the use instead of massive government financing to

Police terror in Bogside

Eamonn McCann and Sean Reed

Derry -- The moderate leadership of the Civil Rights movement was swamped last weekend as the people of Bogside fought to defend their area against the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Appeals to "go home in peace" from John Hume, MP for Foyle, and members of the Citizens Action Committee were howled down as the residents fought off the riot police with sticks, stones and petrol bombs.

The attack developed after the government banned a march from Burntollet Bridge, scene of last January's ambush of the People's Democracy march by B-Specials in civies. Ulster's new Police Minister, Porter, visited Derry on Friday and was told by the local Tories that they would use firearms to stop the march. Porter then banned the march.

To protest this partisan order, young civil rights supporters held a spontaneous sit-down in Guildhall Square.

An ugly police riot ensued when the RUC moved in with baton charges, water cannons and armoured cars. At 3 a.m. on Sunday morning an armoured car entered Hamilton Street; it was set on fire. A RUC sergeant jumped out and fired five or six shots at random.

The resistance of the people was so great that the cops got out of control; the police rank-and-file were unwilling to go into the Bogside and their officers were virtually beating them with batons to force them in.

After several hours' fighting the riot squad took the Bogside.

When the police batoned their way into the area serious outrages occurred. In one house the door had been left open. Children running to escape the police charges ran through the house and out of the back door.

The police entered and brutally batoned the innocent people in the front room. The father, the father's friend, and the father's 15 year old daughter -- who was just out of the hospital -- all had their heads split open and were taken to hospital. The younger children were covered in blood but unhurt because the adults had lain over them.

On Sunday morning, the Bogside was evacuated and men, women and children moved to the Creggan heights. Reinforced by over 10,000 people from the Creggan Estate, a mass meeting was held and the RUC were given two hours to leave the Bogside.

With only 15 minutes to go the cops withdrew after a hastily negotiated agreement to take out the riot squad in return for an assurance that the barricades would not be re-erected.

This laid the foundations for the present brittle peace which could be shattered at any moment by the simmering rage of the general populace. The street defence committees set up in the wake of the PD march last January have been reactivated.

Defence plans are being laid and any further police attack will be met with organised and disciplined resistance. The fact that the police used guns on Sunday morning has led to discussion of the formation of a citizens' army -- a demand put forward by the new MP for Mid-Ulster, Bernadette Devlin.

Meanwhile Wilson has agreed to send in troops "to guard key installations".

In the long term, it is an assertion of the fact that British capitalism will intervene more and more directly if O'Neill fails to maintain "law and order".

This is certainly on the cards. As O'Neill's position grows less credible every hour, as the antiquated brand of effete liberal-toryism neither adequately serves the needs of the system nor satisfies the aspirations of the people, he will go very soon.

After him we will get a "strong man" with the slogan "Here's your one man, one vote -- and the next Popehead who opens his mouth in public will be up and against the wall".

British socialists must organise to struggle for the withdrawal of British troops, who are being used to release RUC and B-Specials to suppress Derry. Only a major and immediate mobilisation to this end can have any real meaning.

Socialist and civil rights supporters in the Six Counties must mount a campaign to lift the pressure on Derry by drawing off as many police as possible.

Comrades in the South should raise the demand that the Green Tory government arm Derry. Their refusal to do so can be used to expose their complicity in the oppression and their role as commission agents of British imperialism.

If it comes to civil war, then only the united action of all the Irish working people and their allies can provide the material base to resist Orange reaction and their Westminster supporters.

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build new industry and put old factories in operation. In order to eliminate both oppressive bureaucracy and the possibility of political manipulation of jobs they demanded workers' control in all state-owned factories and its immediate extension to private industry.

In the countryside, they fought for an end to an agricultural policy explicitly aimed at driving small farmers off the land. Over 1/3 of Ulster's small farmers have been forced to sell out and move to the cities in search of work in the past 10 years alone. PD demanded the transformation of large estates into cooperative farms for the small farmers.

Most important, the PD candidates fought openly for an end to the present segregation of Catholic and Protestant children into parochial and public schools, and for the secularization of a centralized, democratic and representative government. This demand attacked head-on the division of the Catholic and Protestant workers into separate communities, and the Protestant fear of "Rome-rule-in-the-schools," as well as Catholic fear that public schools would mean Protestant indoctrination of their children.

It is this concern for universality, for transcending the religious and caste barriers which have divided the Irish working class, which determined PD's rejection of the "border question" as irrelevant to their campaign. While the question of the reunification of Ireland is abstractly a purely political one, it has become in practice a confessional issue. While PD members reject the liberal (and official NILP) view of Ulster's present constitution as fixed and unalterable, they see the problem as one of unifying the working class rather than "abolishing the border."

When Ireland's workers, North and South, Protestant and Catholic, are united, then Ireland can be united, but not before. There can no more be unity of the Irish people under the present capitalist government in Dublin than there could be under either British colonial rule or the boot of the Tory racists in Stormont.

With 20,000 young people over 21 disenfranchised by use of the old electoral rolls, the large vote cast in a few constituencies for a program which attacked bigotry, clericalism of both Catholic and Protestant varieties, the sacred principle of repaying debts, private ownership of land, and bureaucracy was a notable achievement. It is to the credit of People's Democracy that they have been attacked as the voice of Rome by Protestant extremists, and as anti-Catholic by clerical reactionaries.

In the wake of the elections, the right wing of the civil rights movement began a power play, designed to force the rank and file to choose between "responsible" and "irresponsible" leadership. Communist leader Betty Sinclair and three of her associates resigned as officers of the Civil Rights Association, charging a PD takeover. Miss Sinclair in particular was angry that the IRA planned a march on Stormont to protest against the Public Order Act, rather than sending a delegation to talk to the new "liberal" Minister of Home Affairs. She admitted that

the act did have clauses in it (here and there) which would appear to be bringing more repression rather than more democracy."

At the same time, Stormont MP's John Hume and Ivan Cooper resigned as chairman and vice-chairman of the DCAC, using as their graceful excuse the need to avoid confusion between their political roles and the aims of the civil rights movement. Many members of the DCAC are rumoured to believe that this would, indeed, be an unfortunate confusion. Since a membership petition to recall Hume for opposing Eamonn McCann in the election was being circulated, his resignation was a step forward for the movement.

At the beginning of April, People's Democracy members marched from Belfast to Dublin, distributing leaflets along the way attacking the southern Tories for their deficiencies in providing housing and employment, and for their anti-union legislation. Chanting "Tories out, North and South", the PD marchers joined with farm protesters from Western Eire and Dublin socialists in a 5,000 strong rally against the employers and their political front men. Press attempts to smear the march as "anti-Catholic" and accuse them of demanding solely free distribution of contraceptives and legalized divorce (demands which were made, but not as priorities), backfired to the extent that many Irish socialists feel that no smear campaign of this type can be successful in Ireland again.

In the wake of this march and the obviously growing strength of the opposition, the Unionists played their trump card. After the bombing of Belfast's Castlereagh power station (probably by a provocateur), O'Neill called up the "B-Specials" -- the special organization of Unionist thugs attached to the police. A whole series of bombings of public utilities followed -- carried out supposedly by Republican extremists, but more probably by Paisleyites or by the police themselves -- and each was used as an excuse to intensify the repression, to mobilize more B-Specials, and finally to call in British troops.

As the situation heated up, the moderates began looking for an out, hysterically calling for a new moratorium on demonstrations, seeking new compromises with the bosses. The rank-and-file of the movement responded with new mass demonstrations, battling the police in the streets of Derry. O'Neill, unable to maintain order, was forced to resign as Prime Minister, but British pressure prevented the right-wing Unionist leader, Faulkner, from succeeding him.

With James Chichester-Clark's accession to the premiership, the right wing of the movement is stepping up its demands for conciliation. The new "soft line" Unionist government "needs a chance," they argue -- let's accept a compromise and get the masses off the streets before they spoil things. They now agitate for acceptance of the government's deal: one man, one vote -- but no elections till 1971. As always, the "liberals" fight to give a reeling, punch-drunk ruling class the breathing space it needs to reconsolidate and maintain its power.

The successful organization of resistance in the

North has greatly strengthened the left in the Republic of Ireland. The southern government, in a display of stupidity worthy of the Unionists, attempted to under cut discontent with its own repressive policies last year by abolishing proportional representation in the Dail Eirann (a move calculated to cut Labour Party down to 1/3 or less of its present seats). The left of all sentiments united in a campaign which dealt them a stinging defeat in 23 out of the 26 counties.

With a declining farm population, heavy unemployment and emigration, and an immense housing shortage, the South is also being dragged down in Britain's fall. The crisis of Ulster, dredging up the old ghosts of its accommodation with the Unionists and with British imperialism, may be more than the government can take. The Irish Labour Party, resurgent, with a new leftwing program and aggressive leadership, is a strong threat.

What the militants of People's Democracy and the leftwing of the NILP have demonstrated to all Irish radicals is that a revolutionary program can be secular, can appeal to the needs of people in the here and now, rather than asking them to vote for ghosts and the blood of the dead, and can be all-Irish without meaningless haggling over the capitalist border issue.

By posing transitional demands which people can immediately relate to, but which at the same time pose a threat to the very bases of bourgeois society, they have shown the relevancy of socialism to the Irish people.

The history of sellouts, evasions and capitulations by the leaders of the Irish labour movement, points out a serious deficiency in working class organization. There is probably no country in Europe where greater sentiment exists for a socialist revolution, or greater sympathy for revolutionary groups and politics.

At the same time, the Irish left has been perennially disorganized, fragmented and betrayed by indecisive leaders. From the nucleus of People's Democracy in the North and the leftwing of the Labor Party in the South, from small organizations like the Irish Workers Group and unaffiliated individuals, the work which must now be begun is the construction of an Irish revolutionary party, one capable of controlling its leaders while maintaining both unity and democracy in its own ranks.

There is no longer a question of organization in Ulster or organization in the South, of Catholics or Protestants, or being for or against the border. The question now for all of Ireland is workers' power, the socialist revolution. It is clear that Ireland under capitalism will never be united, and that socialism cannot be other than united. The question of the Workers' Republic is not one of an abstract slogan, something one demands or doesn't, but a question of the logical direction in which events are moving.

James Connolly and the Irish Revolution

- Gerry Lawless -

JAMES CONNOLLY, who was born 100 years ago this month, is recognised as one of Ireland's great revolutionaries and as one of the few great Marxists to emerge in these islands. One of the leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916, he succeeded in transforming the Irish left from an impotent sect, into a significant force within the Irish revolutionary movement. With Big Jim Larkin, he helped to bring back to Ireland what Irish emigrants had created abroad -- the industrial union -- the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. 1913 found Connolly acting as lieutenant to Larkin in the General Strike (and lock-out) which raised the poorest of Dublin's poor from their knees, and transformed them into dignified, class-conscious workers. This struggle gave birth to the Irish Citizens' Army -- 'the first Red Army in modern Europe' as Lenin called it.

With the other European revolutionary movements, the Irish left suffered a setback in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War when the majority of the working class rallied to the bourgeois governments and deserted internationalism. However, unlike the social democratic leaders in other countries, the leaders of Irish labour met the challenge posed by the war, openly denounced it as an imperialist war and fought against recruitment policies. In December 1914, Larkin's 'Irish Worker' was banned, just after he had left for the USA. Connolly took over the leadership of the movement. While never neglecting the struggle between the IGTWU and the Dublin Employers' Federation, Connolly set about the task of training the Citizen Army. Liberty Hall, the facade flaunting the slogan 'We serve neither King nor Kaiser', became the focus of resistance to the British government and its Irish adherents -- the master clan and their subservient press. In May 1915, Connolly founded a new paper, 'The Workers' Republic'. While the labour leaders of Europe abandoned the policy of class struggle to support the war, this paper steadily reminded the working class of the need to struggle for their own emancipation. 'In the long run,' wrote Connolly, 'the freedom of a nation is measured by the freedom of its lowest class.'

Trish left used every industrial dispute to increase the strength of Dub-

stand, or even sit upright, was shot strapped in a chair. The executions then stopped.

For all this, it is the Connolly of 1916 that is remembered today. The Easter Rising of 1916, was like the Cuban Revolution today. It was a real and heroic revolutionary drama, in which Connolly played a leading role. Yet, the military failure of the insurrection was a signal not for acts of solidarity with the insurgents, but for attacks on Connolly for his part in it.

The conference of the British Independent Labour Party at Newcastle-upon-Tyne that year, recorded its condemnation of militarism, but included among the 'Militarists' -- Connolly and the Irish Red Army.

Heavily chauvinist, then as now, the party of British 'socialism' was unable to make a Marxist estimate of Easter Week. But even some spokesmen of the Zimmerwald Left took the position that the insurrection was a 'putsch'. 'The term "putsch",' Lenin wrote, 'in the scientific sense of the word may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators, or stupid maniacs and when it has roused no sympathy among the masses. . . . A blow delivered against the British imperialist bourgeoisie in Ireland has a hundred times more political significance than a blow of equal weight would have in Asia or Africa. . . . The dialectics of history are such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the fermenters, one of the bacilli, which facilitate the entry into the arena of the real power against imperialism, namely the socialist proletariat. . . .'

That was Connolly's perspective too. At the start of the war he had written, 'Starting thus, Ireland may yet light a fire which will not burn out 'til the last capitalist bond and debenture will burn to ashes on the grave of the last war-lord.'

In 1916 the Ultra-Left typified by the Socialist Labour Party in the US and the ILP in England, regarded Connolly as a deserter from socialism to petty bourgeois nationalism. Today the same tendencies are typified by the Com-

munist Party, and the Socialist Labour League who attack as dissenters those who defend Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions with anything more than a revolutionary rhetoric.

There is, and was a sharp contradiction between the revolutionary socialism of Connolly, and those who subscribe to that Ultra-Left view of society which reduces everything to the worker-versus-boss conflict for higher wages, who in fact portray workers as mere animals. But there were no contradictions between the revolutionary marxist tradition and Connolly's actions in 1916. Both treat the national struggle of subject nations as an element leading up to and fusing with the workers revolution.

To defend Connolly is not to overlook his mistakes or the weakness of some of his positions. In his polemic against Bebel on the question of women, he was wrong. A study of the role of the Citizen Army in the Rising reveals a number of mistakes: The failure to seize the printing presses, particularly the 'Irish Independent' of W M Murphy (Ireland's Axel Springer) and to use these for the printing of mass propaganda. The absence of mass meetings in Republican-held areas. The failure to seize the Bank of Ireland and Trinity College. The rebels also failed to seize and ration foodstuffs and clothing in republican-held areas.

Above all Connolly failed to understand the concept of the combat party acting as a 'general staff' for the working class (Connolly was in good company in this error--Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Leon Trotsky, likewise failed to understand this question at that time.) This meant that on his death the middle-class were able to ride the waves of the national struggle, seize the leadership, behead and betray the revolution, and in place of Connolly's Workers' Republic establish instead the present semi-democratic state.

Connolly's writings have been the subject of a great revival of interest in Ireland recently. His works are being recalled for the prophecy they contain: that unless the social system is changed, little will change. Gerry Lawless is a leader of the Irish Workers' Group.

SDS At A Crossroads

— Jack Weinberg and Kit Lyons —

Austin, Texas, site of the recent SDS National Council meeting (March 27-30), is at least 1500 miles just about anywhere, or so it seems from the vantage point of most radical centers. Despite the distance, however, despite a last minute cancellation and then reconfirmation of the Austin site, despite the fact that no one seemed to know in advance what was to be discussed, 1200 SDS members showed up.

It was clear even before the start of the meeting that the SDS leadership had decided that their task at the convention was to smash Progressive Labor. As delegates converged on the YMCA, registration headquarters, a nervous count was maintained -- how strong was PL? Would they have a majority? Rumors flew.

This was the biggest NC (National Council meeting) in SDS history. 300 to 400 of those present were affiliated with the Worker-Student Alliance caucus (WSA), a grouping within SDS which is politically close to PL and effectively under their control. The WSA wore big red buttons saying "Smash Racism" -- build a worker-student alliance." They sat together, and seemed to function as a block on even the most trivial of questions.

What bound the WSA so tightly together -- a rigid, mechanical discipline, or the virulent hostility directed toward them by almost everyone else at the meeting? It was hard to tell. In any case, the smash PL perspective of the SDS leadership was soon accepted by almost all of the remaining 800 or so in attendance.

Some had come to Austin to continue fights with the WSA begun at earlier NC's, picked up by following New Left Notes (the SDS journal), or carried over from disputes on their respective campuses. Some were personally repelled after arriving in Austin, by the sectarian, mechanistic, aggressively defensive image projected by the WSA. Many were caught up in the "get PL" hysteria which was generated during the NC.

Hostility to PL was the driving force of the entire meeting: it united the convention in a bloc around the leadership, it defined the issues of the convention, and, more fundamentally, it defined the context in which those issues were debated.

CHANGING CONSCIOUSNESS

While the motor force was hostility to PL, the theme of the meeting was "revolutionary communism." Everyone at the convention was a "revolutionary," a Marxist, a "communist," or at least wasn't about to deny it. This tone was very easily established at the first session. Many arrived with this self-conception, and the rest leapt to it eagerly, with great excitement.

What the NC reflected, in a highly intensified form, was the dramatic changes taking place in the character and consciousness of the radical student movement.

Today, the conscious rejection of bourgeois values and norms has become an increasingly easy step for many students, particularly those in and around centers of radical activity. The transition from a liberal self-conception to the self-image of a revolutionist occurs, these days, with relative ease and speed -- and is, in many respects, frequently a rather shallow metamorphosis.

This development is a product of the crisis in American society and the consequent desanctification of the ideologies which have legitimized the status quo. Students, floating between the class position they have inherited from their parents and a future social role not yet precisely defined, are most acutely sensitive to the crisis. In a society which is decaying, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to find meaning in the roles that society prescribes.

ALIENATION AND ISOLATION

The mercurial, essentially "outside-of-society" character of the student movement forces it to seek out other, more solid social forces with which to identify.

However, the accelerating alienation of large numbers of students is occurring at a time in which the American working class as a whole is still relatively docile. Outside of the student movement, the most intense social struggle in the United States is the national struggle of black and other third world peoples -- and while white students can support these struggles, they cannot enter them.

This isolation of the radical student movement from any militant mass movement in the society at large has generated a hot-house atmosphere within it. Fantasy and romanticism run wild.

Very often, romantic revolutionism resonates with the liberalism it only yesterday replaced. "Revolutionary values" are often merely liberal values reversed or stood on their head -- with pluses and minuses interchanged but the underlying methodology intact. Alternatively, the rejection of liberal methodology can lead to the rejection of all methodology,

to the rejection of any attempt at systematic, coherent thought and analysis.

Nevertheless, for the first time in many years, there exists in the United States a sizable audience for revolutionary ideas -- indeed, there is a hunger for revolutionary ideas. A new revolutionary movement is coming into existence. It lacks roots, it lacks traditions, it lacks stability -- but it is growing.

The SDS today is the national organizational manifestation of the new stage of development of the student movement. It suffers from all the diseases of

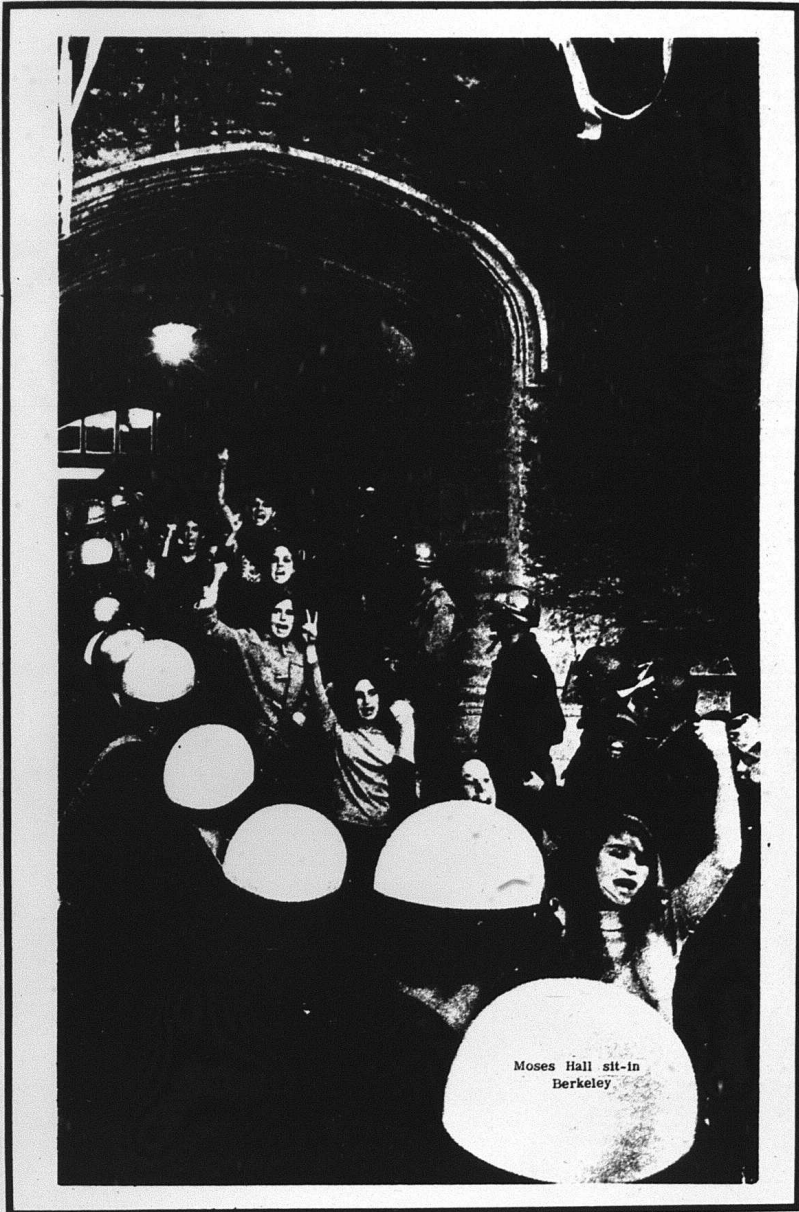
the general student left, and suffers them at a higher temperature. It is increasingly sectarian and isolated from the majority of students. But unless and until it becomes so superheated it explodes, SDS will be the cauldron in which America's new revolutionary cadres will be developed.

At the present time, in the throes of working out a revolutionary perspective, the movement has turned inward upon itself. As it clarifies its ideas and gains self-confidence, it can open up the possibility of turning outward once again -- to build toward a mass revolutionary movement that can transform the whole society.

The intensive factional struggle at the NC in Austin was a step toward the process of ideological self-definition that must be carried on if the SDS is to put itself together on a new basis.

The National Collective is a semi-caucus of the SDS national leadership, held together both by its role as leader of the opposition to PL and by its organizational control of SDS. Much of its politics have developed out of expediency in its struggle with PL, according to the cardinal rule: "Whatever PL says, either adopt it or move to the left of it."

At the NC, the National Collective chose the ground



Moses Hall sit-in
Berkeley

from which PL was to be attacked. The issue was black nationalism (one of PL's favorites); the vantage point was, again, "from the left."

It was in the context of trying to establish itself on the left that the National Collective set out, not only to out-Mao PL, but to out-Stalin II. To be left is to be bad -- to slap the face of bourgeois values. What could be better, more exciting, more radical, than being a Stalinist?

Joe Stalin was the most quoted man at the convention. Supporters of the National Collective went so far as to accuse PL of not having read their Stalin carefully -- of being (God forbid) Trotskyites, and not good Stalinists at all.

For many of those in Austin, of course, their Stalinism was only skin deep. It was so much fun watching PL be ridiculed and get smashed that there was quite a temptation to ignore the content of the things that were being said. For many, the convention became a form of participatory theatre, in which the content of what was going on was less important than the action.

However, it would be a mistake to try to reduce the resurrection of Joe Stalin to an adolescent vein to be shocking, or to a misplaced eagerness to beat PL at its own game. It is a logical outgrowth of the Maoism, the Ho Chi Minh cult, and, to a lesser extent, the Castroism, that pervade almost the entire left.

The roots of Stalin's reemergence must be traced to the tragic isolation of radical students in US society. Totally alienated from the established social order, in search of a revolutionary perspective and yet cut off from any on-going mass opposition, it has been only too easy for the US Left to cast longing glances elsewhere for its own salvation.

The problem is that US revolutionaries, familiar only with one of the most politically backward working classes in the world, have tended -- despite all the recent talk about an orientation toward the working class -- to lost sight of any perspective focused on an internal transformation of the society by its own rank-and-file.

The revolutionary socialist strategy worked out by Marx and Engels was based upon the conception of the working class as a social group of a new type: that is, the first mass social force that could take conscious control of society in its own name.

For Marx, socialism was democratic collectivism, established by a revolutionary transformation of society by the people from below: the conquest of political power by the workers as an organized, conscious class; the conversion of their organs of struggle into democratic, proletarian forms of social control; the socialization of the means of production and the reorganization of the economy in terms of usefulness, not profit-making; the implementation of direct, popular control over the institutions of society which impinge upon their lives; the evolution toward a classless society in which all forms of violence and coercion can be abolished.

But the rejection of bourgeois norms and values does not automatically lead to adoption of a socialist perspective. Intellectuals have a choice of roles to play in the social struggle, and there is today an alternative resolution of the crisis of capitalism which can have a tremendous appeal -- a bureaucratic version of collectivism, precisely the antithesis of what Marx had in mind.

In every country in the world, virtually all political and social power is concentrated in institutions dominated by a relatively small group of people: a capitalist class, which owns and controls corporate private property; or a collectivist bureaucracy, which controls the state which owns the means of production.

It is easy enough for intellectuals who have rejected bourgeois society to identify with its competitor, a bureaucratic ruling class which "serves the people." Acceptance of the methodology, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" (patriotism in reverse), allows US imperialism to define (negatively) the models toward which revolutionaries should aspire.

A real pull is exerted by the image of the benevolent, sophisticated, beloved ruler, who knows the interests of the people even better than they do themselves; who often has to protect the people from their own ignorance and defend their true interests from mistakes they might make; who feels obliged to abolish the "forms" of democracy -- like the right to strike, and the right to organize against his benevolent policies, the policies of the party that rules for the people; but who provides instead the "substance" of democracy -- anticipatory democracy, the democracy of rulers who make the decisions which the people would have made if only they were smart enough.

"The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves" -- this was the lead sentence in the rules Marx wrote for the First International, and it was the first principle of his work -- as it was of the work of Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Debs and others. It is diametrically opposed to the elitist machinations of the latter-day, comic-opera Stalinists that have surfaced in recent months.

The Maoism-Stalinism rampant in the new left is the other side of the coin of a fundamental lack of confidence in the revolutionary potential of the working class.

This critical weakness was clearly illustrated by the debates about black nationalism that dominated the SDS National Council.

At the previous NC, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, a WSA-PL sponsored resolution entitled "Fight Racism; Build a Worker-Student Alliance; Smash Imperialism" was adopted by a narrow margin. Put forward as the political program responsible for the San Francisco State strike (no non-WSA SF State SDS'ers were at Ann Arbor to contradict the story), it argued, "Defeat Nationalism!"

"Nationalism has replaced pacifism as the main ideological weapon of the ruling class within the Black Liberation Movement. Nationalism is used to divert Third World people from struggle on a class basis and from making alliances with white workers and students."



The Ann Arbor resolution added, however, "Because of the special superexploitation of Black People, their struggle is now national in form and working class in content. Thus, at SF State there was a separate TWLF (Third World Liberation Front)."

Between the Ann Arbor and the Austin meetings, the PL line had hardened. Following out the logic of their anti-nationalism, PL repudiated several of the 15 demands of the SF State TWLF, now seen as national in content as well as form. According to the WSA resolution presented at Austin:

"The revisionist approach is to raise demands that are themselves an attack on Black workers, such as Black Studies Departments under student 'control', Black administrators, Black students' judicials, etc. These demands, while they may allow us to challenge racist ideas (so does the demand for Black cops), and carry a facade of militancy, are in essence nothing but anti-working class, nationalist student power demands. . . . Black Studies Depart-

ments are designed to propagate nationalism not only among Black students, but among Black workers as well."

This forthright opposition to black nationalism is consistent with PL's overall approach to racism. Racism for PL is imposed upon society through the propagation of myths and prejudices. The ruling class does this for two reasons: (1) in order to steal an extra \$22 billion in surplus profits from black workers; and (2) in order to divide the working class to prevent it from uniting against the bosses.

The droll caricature of Marxist economics which has been included in the PL perspective (Seven-plus million black workers earn an average of \$3,000 per year less than white workers; therefore, if racism didn't exist the ruling class would have to pay out about \$22 billion more in wages) should not be allowed to divert attention from the more substantial flaws in their position.

PL argues that since working class unity is in the interest of the entire working class, the struggle against racism (purged of the evil nationalist influences propagated by the ruling class) is in fact nothing other than a class struggle. As a result, they imply that racism can be destroyed merely by informing the white working class that the struggle against racism is objectively in their interests.

What PL fails to understand is the fact that racism is less a plot than a system -- an integrated complex of institutions that permeates the whole society,

Black people as a section of the working class are indeed superexploited; but black people as a national minority are also specially oppressed. And white workers, as a part of white society, participate in that oppression.

It must be recognized that racist attitudes among white workers can be reinforced by material threats and privileges at the shop floor level -- so long as no militant class movement is fighting for the needs of workers as a group. Worker-Student Alliance supporters at Austin consistently tried to deny that white workers participate in the oppression of black workers, just as they tried to deny that individual members of the working class can ever have short-term needs which run counter to the interests of the class as a whole.

It is on the basis of a nationalist consciousness that the current struggle against the special oppression of blacks is being waged. Even within the shops, the struggle against the special oppression and exploita-

Black Labor Conference

- Mike Parker -

The fact that the Black movement continues to change and develop at a rapid rate was underscored on April 26th by a meeting in Oakland, California.

The meeting was called as a revolutionary labor conference to explore the possibilities of an alliance between the Black Panther Party and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which has organized large sections of the Black working class in Detroit. While concrete organizational relationships were not discussed, the politics presented by the speakers from the two groups seemed to indicate that they are moving in a similar direction.

John Watson, a member of the Central Staff of the LRBW and editor of the *South End*-- and an extremely controversial figure in Detroit--

gave a brilliant presentation which touched on and tied together the contradictions of the American economy, the history of rank-and-file struggle against the labor bureaucracy, and the history of blacks in the labor movement.

Watson put forward the perspective of organizing Black workers into their own organizations, in recognition of the fact that "Black workers face a special form of oppression." It must be understood, he argued, that capitalism uses racism to divide the working class, and that "many white workers have come to feel that they want to maintain their privileged position."

At the same time, Watson opposed any impulse to write off white workers. The League, he said, has encouraged white workers to form their own organizations, which can struggle in their own behalf and which in the long run could join in a coalition with the revolutionary Black workers groups.

He pointed out that although Black revolutionaries can not at this time really work with most white workers, because of their racism, white radicals could. Watson criticized a group of white radicals in one plant because their only action was to respond to and support the Black workers, rather than organizing whites into a group that could ultimately work in coalition with the Blacks in opposition to capitalism.

Watson's orientation toward whites was especially significant since it contrasted with the pub-

lications and literature of the League, which sometimes include anti-white and racist anti-Polish statements.

The Black Panther presentations by Bobby Seale, David Hilliard and Masai (introduced as the Political Theorist of the BPP) were indications of the great changes the Panther point of view has been undergoing in the past few months. In contrast to the slogans of national liberation, the use of the colonial analogy, and terms like white mother country-- all of which were popularized by Eldridge Cleaver-- the themes of all three speakers were "the correct Marxist-Leninist ideology," proletarian internationalism, and the class struggle.

"We have to fight racism, not with more racism, but with solidarity," said Seale. "We have to fight capitalism, not with Black capitalism, but with socialism." Seale said the Black Panther Party had already begun putting forward socialist programs in the Breakfast for Children program the Panthers are sponsoring in a number of cities, the community control of police campaigns, and the establishment of liberation schools.

Taken as a whole, the conference presentations reflect important changes in the direction of the Black movement.

In the next issue of the IS, we will try to analyze in detail the background and implications of these developments.

tion of black workers is organized on the basis of a nationalist consciousness.

PL's opposition to nationalism, and the theoretical mish-mash they were forced to come up with in order to justify their stance, is capable of generating nothing but confusion, particularly among PL's own members and friends.

Blind to the real live working class (to its potential for independent struggle as well as to its deep-rooted racism), PL has been swept up in its own myth. Its belief, that racism can be ended simply by PL's preaching to the workers against it, is cut from the same mold as the liberal appeal to the "conscience of the nation" put forward by the old civil rights movement. This kind of top-down, bureaucratic approach is of a piece with PL's whole politics.

PL's rejection of nationalism finds its antithesis in the politics of the National Collective. For them, the national struggle is everything. References to the working class, though scattered throughout their documents, politically amount to little more than window dressing.

The terms "class struggle," "class content," etc., either are used simply as expressions of political approval or refer to national struggles. The fight for black liberation at home, and wars of national liberation abroad, are viewed as identical phenomena, and as essentially the only struggles in the world.

According to the National Collective resolution, "The Black Panther Party: Toward the Liberation of the Colony," "The sharpest struggles in the world today are those of the oppressed nations against imperialism and for national liberation. Within this country, the sharpest struggle is that of the black colony for liberation; it is a struggle which by its very nature is anti-imperialist and increasingly anti-capitalist. The demand for self-determination for the black colony -- a demand which arises from the most oppressed elements within the black community -- is anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist insofar as it challenges the power of the ruling class. Furthermore the black liberation movement consciously identifies with and expresses solidarity with the liberation struggles of other oppressed peoples."

As the National Collective sees it, "The black is the true anti-capitalist leadership, is the struggle to which all working people must be won if the oppressor is to be defeated."

As is often the case, the underlying politics of their point of view stood out most clearly, not in their resolutions, but in the debate and discussions on the floor. In the words of one of the theoreticians of the National Collective, "Revolutionary nationalism equals proletarian internationalism equals Marxism-Leninism."

A less sophisticated defender of the National Collective told the whole story in the course of a discussion on how white workers should relate to militant blacks in the shops. "You are a white American chauvinist, not an internationalist," he said to an opponent of the National Collective. "You must look to the world proletariat. The American working class is bourgeoisified, it is no longer relevant."

The SDS national leadership -- which made the reputation of the PL's resolution on nationalism the main battle at Austin -- has gone straight away to the exact opposite extreme. Where PL condemns nationalism and refuses to recognize the special oppression of black people, the National Collective reduces the revolution to national liberation and uses the special oppression of black people and the racist consciousness of white workers as a pretext for essentially writing off the white working class.

Even when supporters of the National Collective address themselves specifically to the problem of organizing white workers, they turn it into another kind of support action for the black liberation struggle. A National Collective resolution on working class organizing in Detroit was set in the following context:

"Unless we recognize the urgency of fighting white supremacy by building the material strength of the white movement to be a conscious, organized, mobilized fighting force capable of giving real support to the black liberation struggle, we will be deserting the most advanced leadership of that struggle to the free hand of the ruling class."

"Thus, the urgency of broadening the movement to more proletarian sections of white industrial workers and youth is not because in some way concern with the white working class is an alternative political direction from support for the black struggle. Rather, it is a necessary extension of the support."

The politics of the National Collective must be seen as the politics of alienated intellectuals with no real hope for a workers' revolution. It is a

politics of desperation. It sees the overwhelming bulk of white America as hopeless, and therefore turns to others to bring the system down.

Not surprisingly, the belief that the American revolution will be brought about by national liberation struggles abroad, in conjunction with the black movement at home (and with a little help from their friends), leads to a romanticization of the black struggle, with very unfortunate consequences.

Not only supporters of the National Collective, but many independent SDS'ers argued that the national struggles of blacks were only to be supported if those struggles were led by conscious revolutionaries.

On the contrary, whenever an oppressed people express their opposition to their oppressors through a politically independent struggle, it is the obligation of revolutionaries to support them -- without first deciding whether or not their consciousness is high enough to meet a predetermined set of standards.

The question that should be asked is whether or not what is presented as a politically independent expression of resistance to oppression is in fact that and not a cover for something else. We refuse, for example, to support black democrats because, while they claim to speak for their own communities, they front for the ruling class at the same time through its institution, the Democratic Party.

Moreover, our obligation to support national struggles does not predetermine the form our support will take. We not only have a right, we have an obligation to make constructive criticisms and suggestions when we believe errors are being made -- so long as we make it clear that we are not bidding for leadership in their movement.

But white revolutionaries and radicals do not have the right to demand revolutionary consciousness as a prerequisite for granting support to the legitimate struggles of blacks and other third world peoples who are standing up to their oppressors.

Nor should white revolutionaries who are supporting a legitimate third world struggle feel obliged to project (in their minds) a revolutionary consciousness into the leadership of the struggle if none exists.

During the Berkeley TWLF strike, for instance, the radical movement talked itself into believing that the TWLF had a consistent revolutionary consciousness. As a result, the white support groups tended not only to be uncritical of TWLF errors, they even attempted to pass them off as the fruit of a new level of revolutionary behavior. When it became clear that the strike had been undermined in part by political errors of judgement made by the TWLF leadership on the basis of liberal illusions, many white radical supporters felt bitter and betrayed.

Romanticization of blacks is in many ways the flip side on the coin of racism. And in listening to many of the former romantics at Berkeley express their feelings of betrayal, one could almost hear the coin flipping back. The belief that blacks are going to make the revolution for us has led to the very ugly notion that all blacks who are not fully conscious revolutionaries are traitors, to be despised.

The opposite but parallel methodologies of PL and the National Collective each in their own way represents a de facto capitulation to the status quo, and a guarantor of continued racism.

What both PL and the SDS national leadership fail to understand is that working-class anti-racism is not learned by being convinced in the abstract that racism is bad, but as a byproduct of whites working together with blacks in a struggle for goals meaningful to both in a material sense. It is a middle class myth to believe that anti-racism education can by itself solve the problem of racism.

A major buttress of racism has been the failure of white workers to fight for their own demands; workers who are not struggling actively in their own self-interest as workers become cynical and conservative. The job that must be done is to help break the white labor movement out of the trough of bureaucratism and apathy that it has been mired in.

Anti-racism has never been, and cannot be, the motor force of white organizing. It can, however, be a result. If whites begin fighting militantly for their own demands, they will need allies, and the only mass ally available is the black community. If the black community has, in the meantime, organized itself independently -- set an example of militancy and determination -- then all the racist prejudices in the world are unlikely to forestall an alliance.

But PL and the National Collective seem incapable of coming to grips with the kind of stormy con-

The following item, reprinted in its entirety, is from PG&E PROGRESS, March, 1969

Groove With Pacific Gas and Electric

THESE DAYS if you should call PG&E to come and do its thing, you might possibly get--instead of a serviceman in a tan uniform--these five young men playing "Cry, Cry, Cry" or some other number. For Pacific Gas and Electric is no longer merely the nation's largest gas and electric utility--it is also the name of a new Los Angeles-based blues group. PG&E is already drawing critical acclaim in discotheques and ballrooms across the country--them, that is, not us. And how can they miss? Those who don't groove to that kind of music can at least dig the name.



dition from below that must be built if we are to take advantage of the potential -- and avoid the threat -- of our times. Alliances in action between self-activated, self-conscious groups are totally foreign to the kind of manipulative, authoritarian politics that the "new left Stalinists" have been steeped in.

There were barely a handful at the convention who vocally protested the rehabilitation of Joe Stalin. Barely a murmur was heard of the concept of participatory democracy which once dominated SDS.

As SDS members are radicalized, they see the world of revolutionaries as divided into two camps, the WSA and the National Collective, and they are told they must choose between them.

Nevertheless, the political basis for a non-Stalinist genuinely revolutionary tendency does exist with SDS. There were many who were uncomfortable at the swing to a new brand of conservatism, radical only in the sense of being opposed to American imperialism, but reactionary from the point of view of the international working class.

Toward the close of the Austin meeting, during the discussion of a rather vacuous and self-contradictory resolution, "The Schools Must Serve the People," many delegates rebelled against the railroad of the meeting by the National Collective. Although the motion eventually carried, by three votes, representatives of at least a dozen chapters announced they were going to work out their own documents before the next NC.

Austin may well prove to be the last SDS NC in which the struggle between the National Collective and PL defines all politics. There was a widespread feeling that currents distinct from both PL and the National Collective must be built. Although everyone is rightly leery of building another bloc simply on the basis of opposition to existing blocs, there is every reason to hope that healthy revolutionary groupings may begin to crystallize in the coming months.

We welcome this shifting out within the movement. All the bad tendencies inherent in movement Maoism are working themselves out in an increasingly explicit form. As the underlying elitist politics of PL and the National Collective come to the surface, they can be more easily exposed -- and the giant work of building a revolutionary-democratic, working-class socialist movement in this country can proceed.

As the swamp dries up, it can be safely crossed over and left behind.

Cynical words -- of a piece with the infamous police epithet, "shot while attempting to escape."

This is not the first time that PL has instigated or defended similar actions. In 1967, and again in 1969, members of the Young Socialist Alliance were attacked by PL members for handing out YSA leaflets at meetings organized by PL.

PL has introduced into the New Left tactics pioneered by the Stalinists in the twenties and thirties, when revolutionary socialist opponents were beaten and even murdered by CP thugs.

We are not so naive as to believe that the recent incidents are mere "mistakes" or "excesses". Such actions flow organically from PL's Stalinist-Maoist politics -- politics which make them not a part of the left, not a part of the revolutionary socialist movement, but representatives of a reactionary and totalitarian approach to the crisis of world society--anti-capitalist, to be sure, but at the same time, hostile to proletarian democracy and socialism itself.

Genuine supporters of proletarian democracy, all those working for the rebirth of a revolutionary socialist movement in the United States, must together put PL on notice. Each day brings another attack upon the left by the power structure; repression from "within," by ostensible supporters of the movement, cannot be tolerated.

Political Gangsterism

- Arthur Lipow -

On the night of October 19, 1968, around 12:30 am, three heavy-set, well-dressed men broke into the apartment of David Kennitzer, a Berkeley SDS activist, pulled a gun, dragged him out of bed, and proceeded to kick, beat, pistol-whip and stomp him until he passed out.

Kennitzer required seven stitches and suffered a severe concussion and a minor skull fracture. The doctor told him he was likely to be alive.

Who were these thugs? Off-duty cops on a midnight spree? Fascist or right-wing opponents of the movement? No -- they were self-styled left-winners, friends or members of Progressive Labor (PL).

What was Kennitzer's crime? Had he de-

nounced PL to the FBI? Had he scabbed during a strike? No -- his "crime" was to write, and distribute at an SDS meeting, leaflets lambasting PL -- leaflets signed with PL's name, but clearly satirical.

As the thugs entered Kennitzer's apartment, one of them warned him: "Our friends in PL don't like your leaflets you've been writing. If you write another one, we'll kill you." Then they nearly did just that.

Is it possible that these gangsters were only claiming to act for PL, that they were actually provocateurs, trying to stir up trouble? Such possibilities were soon put to rest when, the very next day, PL members, rather than denouncing this gangsterism, openly justified and applauded it.

The PL newspaper, Challenge, went one step further in December, when it took political responsibility for the attack by publishing a threatening article entitled "A Word to the Wise." "But just to show that God is just," it gloated, "one of the ring-leaders of this group (of anti-PL SDS members, i.e., Kennitzer and his friends) suffered a serious accident after the second leaflet appeared. It seems he fell out of bed in the middle of the night and injured his head in several places. While he was falling, it seems he had a bad dream and imagined some people calling themselves 'friends of PL' had come to visit him and suggest the leaflets be halted."

You've Come a

Katherine Gerchow and Beth Greenstein - New York

... to get
where you've
got to, today



Forty-nine years after the granting of female suffrage, the position of women has improved very little. Legal equality has scarcely disturbed the institutionalized subordination of women to men in all of the crucial areas of social and economic life.

As workers, women are super-exploited. In their roles as mothers, and as sexual beings, women are oppressed. Their psychological oppression cuts across class lines to encompass all women in the largest oppressed "minority" in the country.

Women workers are concentrated in menial jobs and unorganized industries (In 1962, three-fifths of working women had clerical, service or operative jobs). Their median income is only 50%-60% that of men within the same occupations.

Only 25 states have equal-pay-for-equal-work laws, and these are not enforced. Part-time work, which many mothers prefer, carries no job benefits. Women are everywhere forbidden to work under certain shop conditions and during certain hours. They constitute a reserve army of labor that can be called upon to fill jobs vacated by men during war, or used against organized workers because their condition forces them to accept lower pay.

Employers justify their policies by pointing to female unreliability on the job. In fact, a Public Health Service study in 1963-64 showed the absentee rate for women to be slightly LOWER than that for men. The job status of black women, who are multiply oppressed as blacks, as women, and as workers, is lowest of all. The high school tracking system, with its attendant drop-out rate as high as 60% in some Harlem schools, trains black girls for domestic, hospital and dietary work, for factory jobs and service occupations ("beauty" culture, etc.).

As mothers, women are oppressed by their prescribed function as unpaid laborers in the home. Before marriage, they are conditioned by the universal expectation that, whether they work or not, they must first and foremost be adept and enthusiastic homemakers. Women's work outside the home is persistently viewed as a hobby or luxury, although Department of Labor statistics show that most women who work do so from economic necessity.

The United States is the only industrialized nation in the world that does not provide public day-care services. This means that many women are prevented from working at all-- and that those who do must devote much of their income to babysitting fees. Job or no job, the socially valuable work of child care and upbringing devolves almost exclusively upon the mother.

Women as sexual beings are subject to intolerable harassment. State control over the sexual and reproductive roles of women is one of the most oppressive aspects of their unique oppression.

For example, in spite of the public-relations buildup of the Pill as an emancipator of women, the fact is that education for birth control, and the facilities for providing it, are largely non-existent out-

side of the private doctor's office. Young unmarried girls have no legal access to birth control devices whatsoever.

The result is hundreds of thousands of unwanted and often tragic pregnancies (pregnant high school girls-- married or not-- are thrown out of school, while their male partners continue to attend; for that matter, pregnant teachers are out of a job after the first few months).

Repressive abortion laws canonize the subjugation of women (one suspects that an underlying motive of the Catholic clergy in opposing abortion is their belief in the primacy of the "rights" of a possibly male embryo over the rights of a grown woman).

Many middle-class women become aware of their oppression for the first time when they experience the humiliation and agony of an illegal abortion-- of which over a million are performed in this country every year.

Statistics on the comparative death rates from illegal abortion underline the graduated nature of women's oppression. The death rate in New York of Puerto Rican women is 4.7 times that of white women; that of black women is eight times as high. Any fatalities at all-- let alone this harvest of death-- are nothing short of murder: abortion under clinical conditions is safer than tonsillectomy. Almost all legal abortions are performed in private hospitals for affluent white women.

Female nature is defined in accordance with women's socially prescribed dependent role. Sexual definitions are codified in terms of "complimentary" qualities-- a division of emotional labor, so to speak, between men and women. Where men are aggressive, women are passive, where men are rational, women are emotional, and so on through a long list of such oppositions: analytic/intuitive; direct/vicarious; initiating/responding; sexual subjects/sexual objects, etc.

In the enforcement of these psychological norms, the skills, physical capacities and intellectual development of female children are arbitrarily limited. (As a current screen heroine wryly remarks, the only muscle that's well developed in girls is the thigh muscle they exert to keep their legs obediently pressed together.) Boys are encouraged to be interested in everything, but girls are expected to be mainly interested in boys.

Many artifacts of this conditioning are as absurd as they are arrogant; "Toyota doesn't believe that a woman's legs were made to struggle with a clutch or her arms to struggle with a stick shift..." is a current TV ad.

Black women are at the bottom of the psychological ladder, too. Male chauvinist attitudes are pro-

bably even more endemic among black liberation groups than they are in the movement at large (symbolic is the fact that the Black Panthers have named Kathleen Cleaver Secretary, not Minister, of Communications).

The existence of all these forms of oppression is hardly news-- at least to many women. What has been news in the last several months is the rapid growth of a women's liberation movement.

FEMININE MYSTIQUE

The first shot was fired by Betty Freidan in *The Feminine Mystique*. In 1966, Freidan and others founded the National Organization for Women, a well-organized group of business and professional women.

NOW picked up where the women's suffrage movement left off, hoping to extend the reforms achieved early in this century to such areas as abortion law repeal, equal pay for equal work, and an end to job discrimination. They envision those reforms as taking place within the context of the present social system. Their emphasis is less on direct action than on lobbying.

Publicity given to the activities of NOW helped raise the question of women's liberation in the minds of radical women. Bringing to bear a consciousness formed in the course of civil rights, anti-war and student struggles, they made a connection between the demands of women and the need for revolutionary social change. It was radical women who first drew (and sometimes overdraw) an analogy between race and sex oppression, who distinguished between male chauvinism (attitudinal) and male supremacy (instrumental), who focused attention on women's covert co-operation in their own oppression.

Women radicals soon began to form caucuses to agitate for equality within the movement. Tired of always being the typist, the sign-painter, the provostioner of food or sex-- never the theorist or writer or leader-- they saw that male chauvinism had permeated the movement, and that even movement women had internalized belief in their dependent role. The "movement chick" was a Betsy Ross, with an occasional chance to be a Molly Pitcher.

THREE SCHOOLS

There are roughly three main schools of thought within the women's liberation movement: the consciousness raisers, the separatists, and the SDS tendency.

The consciousness-raising approach began as a kind of group therapy. It feeds off the understandable excitement of women at being able to talk about themselves at last, after years of agitating in "other people's causes." Solitariness arises out of an intricate procedure of group criticism, challenge, and testimony. Relating to the rest of the society is largely a matter of "zap actions" and media assaults. Such activities are valuable primarily to those individuals engaged in them.

The separatist tendency has received a lot of publicity in the East. While accepting the need for a revolutionary transformation of society (at least rhetorically), the separatists divide themselves out from the movement by dividing all women from men. They fall back on small closed groups and alternative institutions for themselves, within the framework of the present society.

The SDS tendency is the most political of the three. The introduction to the resolution on women passed at the last national council meeting notes the fact that in the absence of a conscious struggle for women's liberation, a socialist revolution could take place which maintained the secondary status of women.

The SDS action programs are largely oriented toward women workers: a campaign to bring the wages of female university employees up to the level of men's; a struggle for women's equality in educational institutions where working class women are trained; a fight against juvenile court, girls' homes, women's detention centers and prisons, family court, welfare injustices, Levi-Strauss, etc.; and a demand for the teaching of the history of women's struggles and an end to the counselling practice of steering women into ancillary occupations.

No group has yet directed enough attention to the dynamics of household oppression and the wastage of women tied down in small family units. Work should begin on a program to end the unnecessary drudgery entailed by the isolated household, to demand an equitable distribution of basic household labor among household members, to offer socialized housework and child care. A crucial demand should be for public day-care centers, and trade union day-care centers established at workplaces.

The oppression of women is very deeply rooted in the present structure of U.S. society; it will take more than sentiment to bring it to an end. Every movement for a general social transformation, and the revolutionary socialist movement in particular, must be prepared to take up the demand for women's liberation. At the same time, the independent struggle for women's liberation must of necessity open up new cracks in the foundations of the status quo.

Long Way, Baby

Leslye Russell - Berkeley

Whistling girls and crowing hens, never come to any good ends," my grandmother told me after I had practiced for two weeks. David, next door, could whistle, but crowing hens end up in the soup, and my grandmother was probably right about whistling girls too.

She was telling me that there is a "place" for girls, and whistling is a sign that you're not in it. Nowadays, we would probably say that there was something wrong with its hormones if a hen were found to be crowing. I kept on whistling, but I've noticed guiltily that not many girls do--and I'm damn mad that I can't whistle in public without worrying about my hormones.

Penis envy-- that's what they told me when I was a little older. If there ever was slavery in a slogan, that's it. Penis envy is the notion whereby girls who do unfeminine things, like think, read, or agitate, are suspect. Later in life there is this business about ambivalence towards one's own sex, or rejecting the woman's role-- all that is supposed to explain a lot about rebellious women.

It's not that men don't have their problems too. They are not only expected to carry the burdens of the world at large, they are expected to carry the burden of the dependent female as well. They must be rational, logical, stoical, intelligent and hard-working. Stumble once, and their very manhood is questioned. If I were a man I would welcome a little help from an intelligent, rational and logical woman. Clearly, the liberation of women from the debilitating myths about their nature is at the same time the liberation of men from the terrible burdens of being "super-men."

EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION

Why, then, is a separate women's liberation movement necessary? Why is this an immediate political question rather than a matter of the condition of mankind which can only be changed under socialism? It seems to me that there are two aspects to the problem.

In the first place, economically, women as workers are super-exploited; they get less pay for the same work, they are excluded from certain jobs, and they do more of the shit work of the society (and of the Movement, for that matter).

In the second place, women as women are oppressed. Their potentialities and abilities as human individuals are systematically stunted and distorted. Sexual subordination creates conditions which are directly oppressive to women-- the abortion laws, prostitution, maternal burdens, etc. Moreover, women have not struggled on their own behalf because they have largely internalized the sexual mores and myths of their society.

Women are becoming a larger and larger section of the working class, while more and more of the women in the population work. In 1965, 35% of the working class in this country were women, and 37% of the female population worked. (From this you can see that there are more women than men-- about four million more in 1965.) The percentage of men in the working class has now stabilized, and is expected to decrease in 1970. Thus, the organization of working women must be central to any consideration of a socialist, or even a militant trade unionist, perspective.

For any given occupation, women make only 40 to 60% of what men make. And not only do women earn less than men do for the same jobs at the present time, the gap between them is constantly widening. In 1956, the median income for full-time women workers was \$2,719, while that for men was \$4,252. In 1964, the ratio was \$3,690 to \$6,195. The rise in women's income was 60% of the rise in men's.

Many women workers (35% in fact) have to support children and pay for child care out of this pittance. Many women work part-time, because of their children, and they therefore accumulate no vacation or sick leave in most instances. Where I work for example, one woman worked for four years, supporting three kids, and did not accumulate one day of sick-leave or vacation pay. When one of her kids got sick she had to work week-ends and nights over-time to make up the time she lost at work.

WOMEN AND THE UNIONS

Women make up the rank-and-file majority in many unions which are uniformly led by men. Just as we are oriented to rank-and-file revolts against the bureaucratic leadership in industrial unions, we must be on the side of the female membership in such unions as those of public employees, retail clerks, office workers, nurses and clothing workers.

If the labor movement as a whole is going to take a decent stand on such questions as the war, the economy, racism and the right wing threat, the consciousness of the rank and file becomes crucial. How many union fat-cats use as their excuse the conservatism of the membership? It is obvious how crucial the race question will be in the coming period. The liberation of women will also be critical to the politics of the 70's.

Women must be able to escape the sex-object role in dealing with their bosses, and they must be able

to escape it in struggling against the male leadership in their own unions. In union locals led by women there is a continuous problem of their not being taken seriously by the state and national male leadership.

In convention after convention, male leadership cavalierly ignores the positions of women delegates. They are attended to only as possible bed partners for the evening. It isn't so surprising that many women in the labor movement have consciously become "unsexy" in an effort to be listened to rather than looked at.

The problem of "sexiness" illustrates the oppression of women that goes far beyond the superexploitation of women as workers. There are two kinds of sexiness-- good and bad.

The good kind is a celebration of one's essence as a woman-- the joy of sex, bearing children, and the freedom to display what one is. The bad kind is the underarm deodorant, false eyelashes, mindless movie star, staple-in-the-navel play-girl, eternal youth-bitch-goddess syndrome. The second is a source of sexual and psychological oppression.

Office secretaries who are making \$2.50 an hour are expected to dress like millionairesses. They have been told, and they believe, that their worth is all on the outside. No matter if you have teat beans for a week, you still don't come to work with a run in your nylons.

If you slip to "get ahead," the facade mustn't part for a minute. You were hired in the first place for your looks, not your abilities. If for once you come to work without the make-up, the clothes, the nylons, you have given the whole show away. You'll never make it to private secretary, or the nirvana of a non-service job.

"You've come a long way, baby," says the ad. They hope they're selling cigarettes, but what they're really talking about is sex. They're alluding to the great sexual revolution. Madison Avenue knows a good thing when they see it. Buy all this stuff like Vagina Slims, and you can be a part of the swinging generation too.

Such an obvious target for the left, and yet the New Left groups, and especially the underground press, have embraced the "sexual revolution" as if it were the answer to a maiden's prayers. The Berkeley Barb is just a funky version of Playboy.

The Old Left had a relatively good position on the woman question. Women were often in the leadership, and women comrades were encouraged to speak and to write on political matters. (Even so, much of the routine, tedious and dull work was done by women; Jimmy Higgins was a chick.)

The New Left, however, has been a virtual hell-hole of sexual exploitation. The sexual revolution does not equal women's liberation. In fact, the shuck of sexual liberation has been used to keep women in the Movement in their place. (Norman Maller, a hero of the New Left, exemplifies this approach.) The line goes something like this: 1) ball me, or you ain't liberated; 2) birth control is a drag because it inhibits my sperm; 3) kids are your problem; and 4) don't bug me because I'm a revolutionary. (Some blacks have a notion that birth control is a genocidal plot -- or at least some black men do.)

As a natural consequence of the treatment they have received in the New Left, many radical women began to express their anger and frustration to each other. Not surprisingly, women's liberation groups started organizing.

The response has been enormous. Several hundred women in less than two years have participated in various meetings and actions in the Bay Area alone. It used to be chic to say, "I can't stand women," or "none of my friends are women," but that's as dated now as red lipstick.

During the recent Third World Strike at Berkeley, I participated as a member of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees local on the campus. Most of our members are women. Much of our esprit during the strike derived from the realization that we were in fact perfectly capable of carrying on the struggle.

The myths about the inability of women to work together fell apart. Far from indulging in cat-fights and bitchiness, we worked together during the crisis more effectively than did many of our male colleagues in other organizations.

Much has been made of the frivolousness of talking about women's liberation in an exploitative society where all are oppressed. "Of course private life degenerates and personal relationships become impossible in a society built on racism, imperialism and exploitation," some say. Many have criticized the new "psychologizing" or encounter group approach that has been used inside the women's liberation movement as being counterposed to "serious" political activity.

But for many women, that experience is a necessary precondition to political work. A women's liberation movement can and must address itself to the consciousness of women as women. Only by building their own movement and taking responsibility for raising the level of consciousness of all women, can women break out of the vicious circle of their passivity and oppression.

(There are those who claim that women are so damaged by their up-bringing that they can never escape their bondage. This is like the Elkins thesis vis-a-vis the blacks-- that slavery has so damaged their psyches by creating dependent relations between master and servant that the "Sambo" personality emerges which has become almost a permanent feature of the black race. Crap, I say. If Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver are Little Black Sambo, then I am Little Bo Peep.) Men and women are still in large part bound up in the "romantic" world-view of private relationships. Even those with otherwise sensible views of the social world are often victims of the American notions of "love" and "happiness." "Happiness," as the establishment defines it, is a warm puppy-- it is the substitution of private fulfillment for social justice. Happiness is the ultimate cheat of the American dream-- the white slavery of American woman.

When people believe that they should be privately happy in a sea of disaster, they express their rage, not at the sea, but at each other-- for failing to live up to their programmed dreams. The Womens Liberation Movement must address itself to this "cruel myth," and fight it.

It may well be that the roots of the oppression of women run so deep that they cannot be eradicated within the context of the present structure of society. But to oppose the struggle for women's liberation on the grounds that it cannot be achieved under capitalism would simply be to argue for capitulation to the status quo.



Buffalo: Strike Against Steel

- Gay Semel -

Bethlehem Steel is the 17th largest corporation in the United States. Its earnings for 1968 were \$160,528,000 -- a 23% increase over 1967. It ranks 52nd among the top 100 military contractors in the U.S. So long as the war in Vietnam continues, Bethlehem's profits will continue to grow.

The Bethlehem Steel plant in the South Buffalo area spans three communities: South Buffalo, Lackawanna, and Hamburg. It is the main polluter of Lake Erie -- which is no longer usable for swimming or recreation, and grows worse each year.

The air in the South Buffalo area is dense with the soot and smoke continually belching forth from the huge furnaces at the plant. Everything is brown: the sky, the streets, the houses. Coated by the incessant dirt filtering down and covering the city, things quickly lose their color.

Bethlehem Steel employs 20,000 steel workers and almost 1,000 railway workers. The men work a 40-hour week, with only 20-minute breaks for lunch. There are no facilities for hot lunches, and those facilities that do exist are generally unclean and unsanitary.

Hazardous working conditions make accidents common, and the incidence of maiming and other permanent injury is one of the highest in the country.

Racism is rampant. Blacks are given the lowest-ranking jobs, with few avenues for advancement. They are perpetually held back, while whites with less seniority are promoted. Under pressure from the State Division of Human Rights, Bethlehem claims to have increased the percentage of black workers at the plant to a "big" 2.5%.

While Bethlehem profits soar, wages have never gotten off the ground. The steel workers received only a 6% wage increase in 1968 -- hardly enough to keep up with the almost 5% cost of living increase and the 10% income tax surcharge. In 1969 and 1970, their wages will rise by only 3%. The railway workers have gotten nothing at all.

On Thursday, March 27, the workers of the South Buffalo Railway, a Bethlehem subsidiary, were locked out.

The railway workers have been without a contract for over eight months, and the company has made little effort to "bargain in good faith." Bad feeling has been accumulating for an even longer period of time; according to many workers, feelings have been bad for as long as they've been on the job.

The men have been continually pushed to speed up work and violate prescribed safety procedures. Things finally came to a head when a general yard master provoked an engineer and then took him out of service. When the afternoon shift of 148 men began to protest, the entire shift was pulled off the job.

A picket line was thrown up outside Gate 4 of the Bethlehem plant, where the railway workers report. When the night shift and the morning shift stayed out to protest the afternoon lockout, the company called it a "wildcat strike" -- and was immediately given an injunction (barring the railway workers from picketing, striking or any other work slowdown for thirty days).

The railway workers international union, the United Transportation Union, refused to back the 800 men of the two locals, T758 and P688 (the engineers and trainmen have separate locals).

At this point, one of the locked-out workers called the University of Buffalo and asked to speak to a student leader. Word got to members of the Peace and Freedom Party/SDS labor committee, and several students went to the union meeting that evening.

After a good deal of haggling between the local bureaucrats and the rank and file over tactics, students volunteered to man picket lines for the workers since the injunction did not apply to them. This suggestion was met with thunderous applause.

More than 100 students picketed outside the gates of Bethlehem Steel during the three shift changes from March 28 to April 3 -- when an amendment was added to the original injunction, which, in effect, bars anyone from doing anything that in any way interferes with the interests of Bethlehem Steel.

After the student lines were formed, shifts of the storage beds department went out on a sympathy strike, and many steel workers began a slowdown inside the plant, with numerous others calling in sick.

The expansion of the injunction to include the students was the first shot fired in a general offensive against the strike launched by the local union bureaucrats, the international union, the federal government and the Buffalo power structure.

At a meeting on April 3, in response to the injunction, the men reiterated a list of demands originally drawn up on March 30. The list included full amnesty for all workers, the right to draw up complaints against the company and final say in the adoption of any new job practices. In addition, the local leadership was instructed that the demand for amnesty was non-negotiable.

The sentiment of the meeting was that when picketing and demonstrations were resumed, workers and students would act together, and committees were formed to begin organizing for a mass rally of students, workers and supporters from the South Buffalo community. However, the union leadership adjourned the meeting with no concrete plan of action worked out.

On April 4, a federal mediator who had been brought in to settle the dispute (and was known to be a friend of the judge who had issued the injunction for the company) offered the men a package deal: if everyone would return to work, no one would be fired right away -- but two of the men would have to face disciplinary hearings.

If the package was accepted, he assured them, he could promise immediate mediation of the contract dispute which had dragged on for so many months; if they rejected it, he threatened, the men would be out of jobs.

Militants among the railway workers organized against the package -- which in no way addressed itself to the strike demands. But the nominal leadership of the local pushed for acceptance. The U.S. Department of Labor conducted a vote by secret ballot on the proposal (which, in effect, isolates each man as he votes from the militancy of the group, leaving him alone with his fears of the com-

pany).

The offer was still rejected, but only by the slimmest of margins: 11 votes (255 against, 244 for). The appearance of such deep divisions aggravated the already growing demoralization among the men.

The following day, the courts continued the offensive against the strike. Nineteen men had earlier been cited for contempt of court for violations of the injunction. Their trial had been postponed by the judge on several occasions, held in reserve as a lever to get the men back on the job. On April 5 after the rejection of the package, the entire second shift -- as well as militants from the other shifts -- were cited, bringing the total to 150. Then the trial was postponed again until Thursday, April 9.

The union's lawyer, Collins, is the brother of the president of the United Transportation Union. He had agreed to handle the case without a retainer from the local, and was probably retained directly by the international. Given the fact that the international had not supported the strike, it became clear that Collins had been instructed by his brother to squelch the growing disaffection of the local from the international.

Far from assisting the men in their struggle against the strike-breaking efforts of the court, Collins did what he could to further demoralize them. He advised them to proceed cautiously or they might all be cited for contempt. He argued that Judge Henderson had been "liberal" so far, and cautioned against doing anything that would "force" him to move to a harsher position.

On the grounds that anything they did would reflect on the workers, Collins encouraged breaking ties with the students. The planned solidarity march in South Buffalo was canceled because the workers became afraid of its possible effects on the judge.

Faced with a united front of the establishment and their own leadership, the railway workers could stay out only so long, and the strike was soon ended. No long-term gains were won. But the terms of the return to work agreement were significantly superior to those presented by the federal mediator -- no one was fired, and no one will face discipline; the engineer whose dispute with a yard master triggered the lockout in the first place is back on the job.

The end of the strike on the basis of a status quo agreement has merely set the stage for the next confrontation between Bethlehem and the railway workers. Working conditions will not improve, wages will not rise, the hundreds of other grievances that brought the men out will not be ameliorated -- the accumulated bad feelings will remain.

The lessons the men have learned in the course of the strike will stand them in good stead when the inevitable next round begins. In the first place, it is clear to everyone that the coalition between workers and students was one key to the success of the strike until the injunction was expanded. The local leadership made every effort to turn the ranks against the students, but relations between the two groups were excellent.

While the students were manning the picket lines, the railway workers massed across the street to cheer them on.

In between shift changes, many workers and students got together over coffee or beer, and their conversations were often highly political. Discussions began around the effectiveness of the student lines led to consideration of the injunction, the court system, and the court's complicity with Bethlehem Steel.

In one instance, a worker who has been with the South Buffalo Railway for fifteen years observed that most family men have to work two jobs to support their families -- and then can be fired for moonlighting. He himself -- with four dependents to support -- earns only \$131.00 per week, and, after taxes and forced payment into the railroad retirement fund, nets \$91.00.

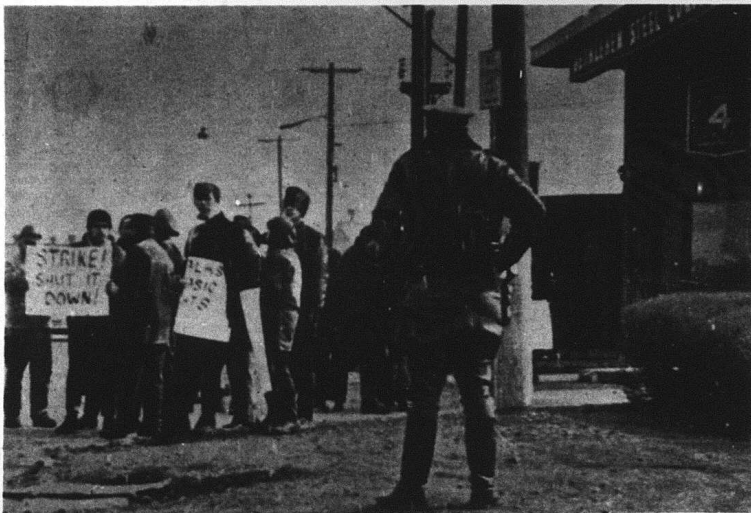
His remarks led to talk about the pension plans, the inequities of the tax structure, and eventually the profits Bethlehem makes off the war in Vietnam.

The relationships developed between students and workers in the course of the strike constitute a valuable precedent which must be preserved and extended. The students went a long way toward sloughing off myths about the bourgeoisification of the working class. The railway workers in turn have begun to rethink their attitudes toward student struggles.

Since the strike, the contacts between workers and students have not been broken. Attempts are now being made to broaden them by linking up the railway workers and the students with militants inside the Chevrolet plant in the area.

In the second place, the need for a rank-and-file caucus is obvious. Unless the militants are organized, they will forever be unable to counter the efforts of the bureaucracy to dampen the militancy of the ranks.

A rejuvenation of the union is the first step toward a long-range solution to the problems confronting the men of South Buffalo; given the combined forces of the union bureaucrats, the company, the cops and the courts, the second must be an independent political opposition to take them on outside the plant and the union as well as in.



Photographs: Jim West

The Sterling Wildcat

- Bruce Levine -

In the past few years, the student movement has learned a great deal about itself and the society it has set out to change. As late as the fall of 1964, the SDS election slogan was "Part of the way with LBJ"; most still talked about a minor redirection of an otherwise healthy society-- a minor redirection which students had the capacity to effect by themselves.

Since that time, the evergrowing, unprecedented turmoil in American society has raised people's sights and changed their perspectives. The New Left today struggles for a revolutionary transformation-- and is engaged in an energetic search for allies in that struggle.

Recent months have seen increasing attention directed toward the working class as a possible ally. Spreading rank-and-file insurgency in the U.S. labor movement-- not to mention the May Days in France-- has helped dispel the myth of working class affluence and "bourgeoisification"-- even as intensifying repression on the campus has helped destroy whatever illusions may have remained about the independent power of students vis-a-vis the state.

Neither the campus nor, for that matter, the ghetto, has the power as an institution to bring capitalism as a social system to its knees. The pivotal institution of industrial capitalism (and its Achilles heel, in a real sense) is the factory-- which is one of the reasons why socialists have traditionally looked to the working class to overthrow capitalism.

In general, the escalation of rhetoric about an orientation toward the working class and worker-student alliances has far outpaced the growth of actual student understanding of, and participation in, working-class struggles. However, there have been several notable examples of coalitions worked out between militant workers and radical students engaged in a critical struggle.

Together these have gone a long way toward raising the consciousness of American students about working-class life and working-class movements.

The wildcat strike in Michigan last month is a case in point.

The Chrysler Stamping Plant in Sterling Heights employs 3500 men. Several weeks ago, fifty workers were ordered by their foremen to remove scraps of metal from a halted conveyor belt. The metal was jagged and sharp, and the ten-foot-deep pit into which the workers were told to drag the metal had walls slippery with oil.

Citing the obvious safety hazard, the workers refused to carry out the order. They were fired. When the officers of the union local at the plant protested, they too were fired. The entire work force went out on strike.

Chrysler used the strike as an excuse to lay off 35,000 employees at other plants without pay-- thereby bringing outside pressure to bear on the men, reducing overstocked inventories and saving millions of dollars at the same time.

The union International, the United Auto Workers, called the strike a wildcat (that is, not authorized by the International) and ordered the men back to work. When they refused, the International placed the local under a receivership-- seizing the local's treasury and putting its affairs directly in the hands of the UAW representative.

At this point, students from Ann Arbor and Detroit joined the workers on the picket lines. The next day (Tuesday, April 8), only seven of the plant's employees crossed the picket lines for the morning shift.

On Thursday, the men returned to work; the International representative forced through a vote to go back with a combination of intimidation and manipulation, plus a promise that another, "authorized" strike vote would be held on the following Monday.

In terms of the stereotyped images of the American working class and American industry, what went on that week in Sterling Heights makes very little sense. In the first place, why did the UAW work to crush the strike? The answer to this question lies in the character of union bureaucracy as an institution, in the nature of the values and aspirations of those who staff the bureaucracies.

Most members of the entrenched and ossified union establishments have been professional bureaucrats for years-- and long ago forgotten what it means, say, to work in an auto plant. In effect, they have "dropped out" of the working class. Their approach to unionism is shaped, not by the needs of the men in the shop, but by the demands of their lofty positions and the requirements of the international union structure.

For the bureaucrat, a healthy union is one which 1) maintains a large treasury in reserve at all times; 2) can effectively and firmly ("efficiently") be run by the officers at the top of the bureaucratic pyramid; and 3) receives sufficient "respect" from industry's executives to allow the union's officials to associate "as equals" with those executives.

Any wildcat strike strikes fear into the heart of self-respecting piecarks, since by definition such a strike is a repudiation of the local's responsibility to "clear" the strike with the union hierarchy. A wildcat strike over working conditions-- like the Sterling strike-- threatens every bureaucratic value.

As will be seen, a strike fought over working conditions meets much stronger managerial opposition than strikes fought for simple wage increases. For this reason, such strikes may well drag out much longer, and thus cut more deeply into the union's treasury.

Bureaucrats also fear such confrontations because the increased management hostility engendered is likely to carry over into greater future tension between the heads of the industrial and the union establishments-- thereby depriving the latter of its much-sought after "respectability" in management's eyes.

Most importantly, battles waged over working conditions (involving, as they must, grievances over the specific conditions of many and differing plants) require a much greater decentralization of leadership and decision-making within the union than do those involving monolithic, industry-wide wage demands.

Only constant vigilance on the part of the men on the shop floor themselves can forestall the ever-present efforts of management to worsen working conditions and speed-up work; and this kind of active, day-to-day involvement of the rank-and-file in their own affairs constitutes a very unhealthy precedent from the point of view of the union bureaucracy.

The second question raised by the Sterling wildcat is the other side of the coin of the first: that is, why did the workers stay out at all in the face of such overwhelming opposition-- especially after losing what little financial relief they had when the International seized the local's treasury?

The fact of the matter is that rank-and-file tenacity is characteristic of fights waged over working conditions. Union militants, especially in the UAW, have long ago learned that the union establishment will avoid whenever possible going to bat for its members over working conditions-- that at best the ranks will have to go it alone, that at worst they will have to fight their union "leadership" as well as the company.

What was at stake at Sterling was, of course, the dangerous conditions under which the men were being forced to work. But the dispute about the jagged metal and the oily pit was a response both to an immediate, concrete problem and to more general, long-term grievances smoldering beneath the surface.

Some of the hidden parts of the story can be glimpsed in the words of a worker from the Hamtramck Plant, who marched in sympathy with the Sterling pickets:

"An honest day's work for an honest day's pay it makes, I guess-- but not all the money in the world makes it any easier to stand a day in these plants. It ruins you; you get home wasted. You've got no time for the family and just enough energy to watch some TV before going to bed."

The eruption at Sterling was in part symbolic of the workers' pent-up frustration about their inability to make their work-lives any more bearable or mean-

ingful to themselves-- with or without a wage increase or a new car.

In the factory, the worker is literally out of his own control. For eight hours, he sells his body to Chrysler, and at the end of the shift, finds himself drained-- all in the interests of efficient profit-making and the greater glory of Chrysler Corporation.

It is this broader aspect of the problem of working conditions which offers a key to the third question posed by the Sterling strike. Given the possibility of eventual major financial losses (due to interstate idling of other Chrysler plants dependent upon parts produced at Sterling), why was management so adamant about what must have seemed to them a trivial matter of a scrap-pit?

A study of a similar situation made some years ago by sociologist Alvin Gouldner (entitled, aptly enough, Wildcat Strike), dealt with precisely this problem. The management in that instance was well aware of the kind of grievances expressed by the worker from Hamtramck. And if the rank-and-file had not yet fully realized the larger implications of their own desires, the management had.

"Management also tended," wrote Gouldner, "to conceive of the strike as a struggle for control of the plant. It was not quite a pure struggle for power, not entirely a power conflict, but it is rather close to it and may become even more clearly so in the future, their conception suggested. 'The workers don't look at the strike in the light that 'we've got the strength,' mused a main office executive. 'Yet they have a strong desire to run the plants.'"

"A strong desire to run the plants": the ultimate threat to the status quo of capitalism, an attack on its primordial principle of private ownership and control of property-- and not conjured up by the agitation of a university radical (who could be isolated and neutralized) but spawned by the very nature of the work process itself.

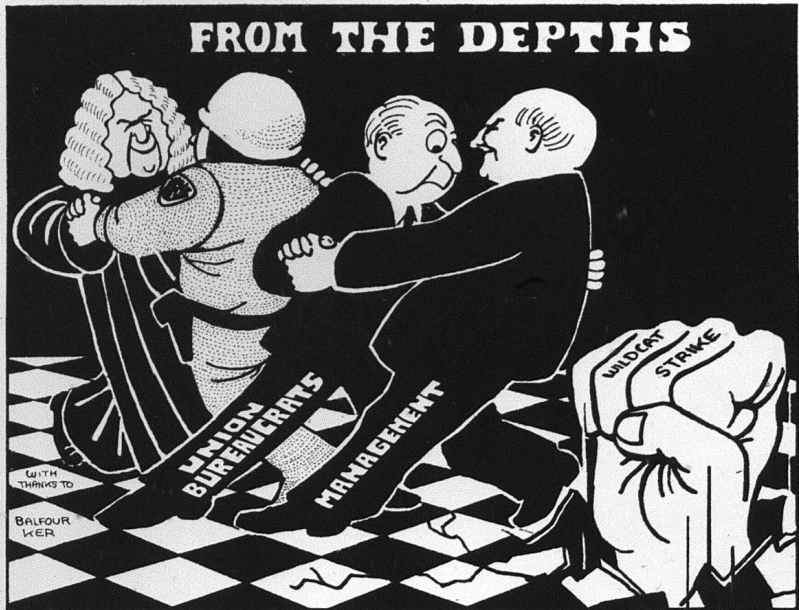
No matter that filling in the pit was the cheapest way out. Chrysler had a more important consideration: to reassert in the strongest possible terms its hegemony over control of the work process, to reaffirm its exclusive power of decision-making in the plant, to prove to its employees that on such matters the company would not be moved.

In Gouldner's terms: "Management could not merely evaluate and choose its problem solutions in terms of their ability to realize the formal ends of increasing production and lowering unit costs; they also required solutions which would be compatible with their status interests. They were, therefore, disposed to resist any solution which threatened their prerogatives and diminished their control over the situation, however much it might improve efficiency."

The social dynamic illustrated by the wildcat strike in Sterling Heights points toward a way out of its present impasse for the New Left. The "strong desire to run the plants" Gouldner referred to is one source from which a conscious desire to run the whole society can spring.

The new revolutionary student movement that is struggling now to define itself can, if it so chooses, take a real step toward encouraging such a development.

The example set by the students from Ann Arbor and Detroit was a good one. It recalls in a very limited way the role of the students in France last spring.



Dubcek: The End Of The Velvet Glove

- Chris Harman -

With the removal of Dubcek, the imposition of virtually complete censorship and the carrying out of mass arrests, the Czech ruling group is attempting to resolve the crisis that has been developing since last summer.

When the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia, Dubcek remained in power because of two factors. The mass of Czech people were overwhelmingly behind him, and he persuaded the Russians to trust him to dampen down the discussion over political and social issues threatening to go beyond the Czech borders. Other politicians, who had seemed more willing to cooperate with the Russians, lost all prestige and were removed from positions of power.

At the same time, critical articles about the Russians stopped appearing in newspapers and periodicals, vigorous debate was no longer a feature of radio and TV.

Dubcek, balancing between the Russians and the mass of Czech people, seemed to be raised higher than either. Western journalists referred to an amazing triumph of "dignified non-violence".

In this period, too, those aspects of Dubcek's pol-

icy that might separate him off from the mass of Czech workers were cloaked by the Russian presence. If he was basically a product of the Stalinist bureaucracy and had survived for many years within it without too many problems, and if his economic policies implied wage cuts, increased differentials and large scale "redeployment", the Russian presence could divert attention from these attributes.

But over the months, it became clear that there were huge differences between the demands of the Russians and those of the mass of Czechs, that even Dubcek could not resolve. The more that Dubcek and the section of the bureaucracy behind him were bound to try to implement policies demanded by the Russians, the more the Czechoslovak population began to organise to take action independently of the Communist Party.

When the students occupied the universities at the end of last year, they found they had immense support from workers in the factories. The trade unions, in which government-appointed officials had been replaced by workers' councils elected from the shop floor.

POPULAR RESISTANCE

Above all, there was the growth of intense hostility to the Russian occupation at the base of society. This found its fullest and most clear-cut expression in the half a million strong demonstrations that followed the recent defeat of the Russians in an ice hockey match.

In every town people poured on to the streets. Every wall in Prague had the score scrawled on it.

The Russians had invaded Czechoslovakia in order to curtail free debate. Yet that debate was now involving more people than ever before. One Russian newspaper complained that the situation was even worse than before the invasion.

As the two planks upon which it was resting moved further and further apart, the "progressive" section of the bureaucracy around Dubcek became more and more unsure of itself.

It had to "keep order" for the Russians, but the moment it tried to do this seriously, it would lose its popularity with the Czechs. Meanwhile, the forces of the state -- particularly the army -- were becoming more and more demoralised.

At the top, a few generals were threatening a coup against the government. At the bottom, the rank and file shared the sentiments of the masses. For instance, when the soldiers were sent out to patrol the streets with the police, few seemed to take the task seriously.

The very basis of the independent existence of the Czech ruling bureaucracy was being undermined. In the factories, the mass meetings of workers were a growing power.

The trade unions increasingly operated like an oppositional political party. Ministers and party officials began to speak about the dangers of anarchy. What they really feared was that their own power was being undermined.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

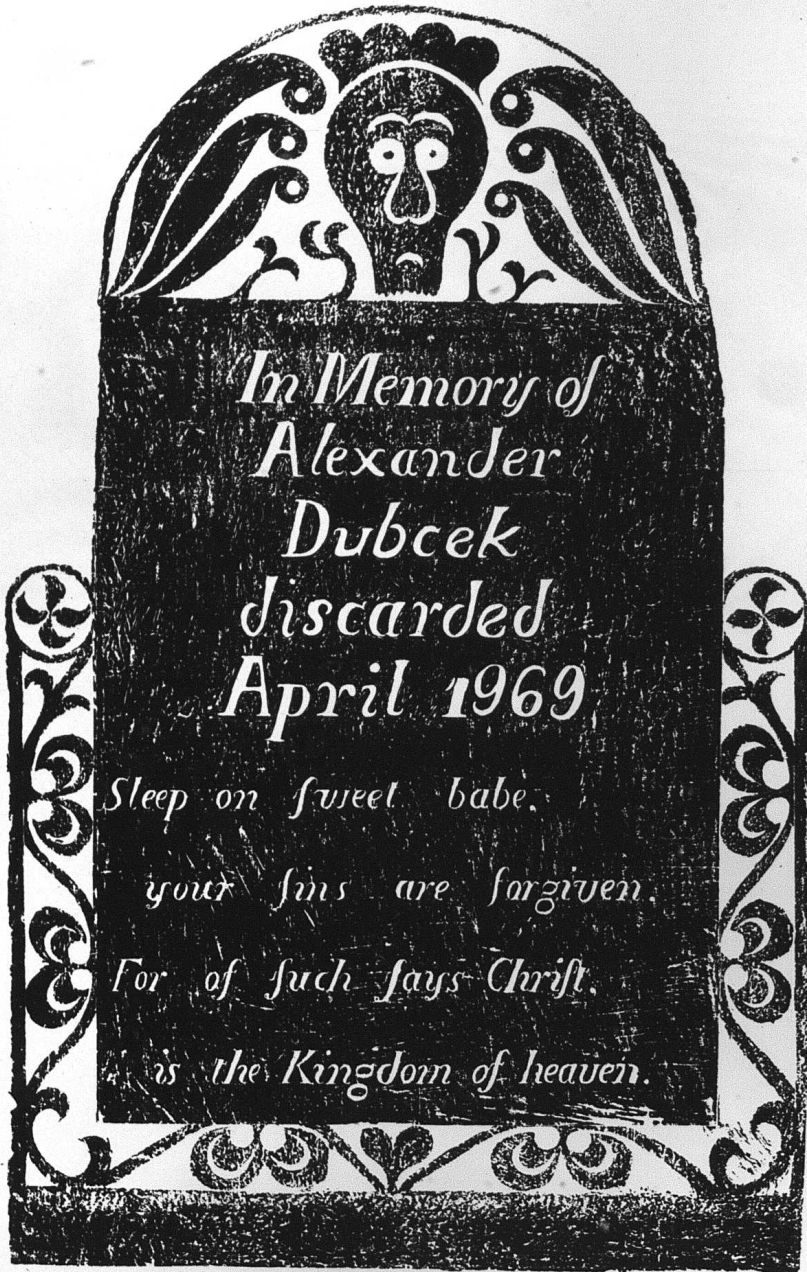
And the economic situation of the country was growing worse. What caused the "progressives" around Dubcek to break with the old regime of Novotny was the growing difficulty the Czech bureaucracy was having in selling the goods produced by the industry it controlled on the world market.

But developments since the Russian invasion have made economic conditions still worse. The existence of the trade unions has forced wages up. But the knowledge they still have that industry is controlled and operated in someone else's interests has kept the mass of workers from putting the initiative and effort into their labour that would raise the standard and level of production. The result has been rising inflation and continued difficulties in selling Czech goods abroad.

All this has forced the Czech ruling group to make a decisive break with the fundamental aspirations of the Czech people. In order to safeguard its integrity and its control, the bureaucracy will increasingly side with the Russians and try to eliminate the areas of mass democracy.

The removal of Dubcek symbolizes its determination to follow such a course-- even though Dubcek himself did not seem unwilling to follow it.

This means that increasingly the lines of opposition to the Russians will coincide with the class divisions in the country. The ruling class, the bureaucracy both "progressive" and "conservative", will be on one side, the workers' and students' organizations on the other.



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26 April 1969



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Independent Socialist Clubs of America Program in Brief

We stand for socialism: the collective ownership and democratic control of the economy, established by a revolutionary transformation from below and aimed toward the building of a new society.

We stand for a socialist policy which is completely independent of and opposed to both of the reactionary systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and bureaucratic Communism.

Capitalism is an outlived system of private profit and corporate oppression, even where represented as the "welfare state", and administered by liberals or social democrats. At home, in the midst of a false prosperity based on a Permanent War Economy, it perpetuates unemployment, poverty, and racism, while witch-hunting radical social dissent in the name of "anti-Communism". Abroad, struggling to contain or absorb the colonial revolution, its imperialism spreads reaction and prolongs underdevelopment, in the name of democracy but in the interests of its own hegemony.

The self-styled Communist regimes—Russian, Maoist or independent—are systems of totalitarian collectivism that are similarly counterposed to so-

cialism. Ruled from above by bureaucracies that control the state that owns the means of production, they regiment at home in the name of industrialization, while choking or perverting revolution abroad—through the various Communist parties, which are political agents of the ruling bureaucracies, not of the working class.

Our orientation is toward socialism from below, not dispensation from above; toward a socialist strategy which has nothing in common with the various attempts at permeating or reforming the ruling classes of the world.

The Independent Socialist Clubs of America are educational and activist organizations which seek to contribute to the training of a new generation of socialists, and the rebirth of a mass socialist movement in the U.S. Based on the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, we look to the working class, black and white, blue collar and white collar, as the basic progressive force in society. We work toward the development of a genuine political alternative to the capitalist power structure and its parties, toward a new mass party of the working class, the

black community, and the anti-war movement.

We stand for full support to the struggle for black liberation, for self-defense against racist terror and police brutality, and for the independent self-organization of the ghetto. We look forward to a future coalition of black and white workers, but blacks cannot allow their struggle today to be subordinated to the present conservative consciousness of American workers.

We applaud the new currents of militancy spreading through the labor movement and manifested in the growing wave of strikes. We call for an uncompromising fight by rank-and-file caucuses against racism and bureaucraticism in the trade union movement, against the subordination of the interests of labor to the demands of imperialism and corporate profit.

Within the anti-war movement, we are for a militant fight for a democratic, anti-imperialist foreign policy, for the withdrawal of American troops from all foreign lands, and unilateral disarmament. We are for strengthening all tendencies toward a Third Camp of those who reject both war blocs and their military preparations.

In Vietnam, we favor not only popular revolution against American domination, but also the rejection by the masses involved in that revolution of the Communist leadership of the NLF. A new revolutionary leadership must be created if the popular struggle against U.S. imperialism is not to be betrayed by the rise of a new bureaucratic ruling class, as in China and North Vietnam. As a precondition for an independent Vietnam, we demand immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. If withdrawal means a major defeat for Washington, it is of its own making. More importantly, if this defeat is incurred or quickened by the demands of an indignant American people, then Washington's defeat would be the American people's victory.

Our view of socialism is both revolutionary and democratic, both humanist and working class: an international, revolutionary-democratic movement of opposition that presents a third choice for the world, for a new world of peace and freedom, a new society of abundance that will give men the power to create and control their own lives.

Dites-lui Oui... Dites-lui Non... Dites-lui Merde



On April 27, French voters went to the polls in the referendum promised by DeGaulle as he rode the crest of reaction last June. Even before the defeat of the proposals and DeGaulle's instant resignation became a probability, the referendum aroused no small debate on the Left. The questions of strategy once again set the official left (the French Communist Party and the so-called Federation of the Left represented by Mitterand, Guy Mollet et. al) in opposition to the "gauchistes," the revolutionary left.

The "gauchistes" argued that DeGaulle had made every effort to pose the referendum in terms which would work to his advantage. The battle was being fought on strictly Gaullist terrain. Two different propositions were on the ballot; each by itself represented a complex problem, but to compound the confusion, both had to be approved or rejected together, with a single "Yes" or "No" vote.

At stake were (1) a reform of the Senate, and (2) a program of "regionalization," whereby the government -- in keeping with DeGaulle's solemn promises of "participation" made last June on the brink of the abyss -- would decentralize power to the governors in the now-impotent provinces (the governors, of course, are appointed by the President of the Republic).

The February 19 issue of Lutte Ouvriere -- weekly newspaper of the Voix Ouvriere group, which was among the eleven left-wing organizations banned by DeGaulle in the June reaction -- described the situation in these terms:

"No one wants to defend the Senate. No one is against regionalization. A clever politician has mixed the two questions, and the Left looks foolish explaining that it is necessary to vote "No" because, after all, even though the Left supports certain aspects of the proposed reform, that is not the real question, etc. An explanation so unrelated to the conclusion it draws (vote "No") has only further confused the original situation..."

The government printed the full text of the referendum's 68 articles, which the revolutionary Left characterized as "titious reading for long winter nights -- if it were still winter," adding that French voters should save themselves the trouble of voting.

DeGaulle himself placed the referendum in its proper perspective by tying it to a plea for a massive vote of confidence. From the standpoint of the revolutionary left -- and eventually everyone else as well -- this issue completely transcended any careful weighing of the various positive and negative aspects of the proposed reforms.

As the "gauchistes" saw the situation, even an overwhelming "No" vote at the polls would still lend legitimacy to the Gaullist notion of "participation." Only a mass boycott, they believed, could work to undermine the plebiscitary props of the French status quo, could count as a real vote against DeGaulle.

The headline which accompanies this article, taken from Lutte Ouvriere, is a concise summary of their point of view.

As the U.S. goes to press, it is still too early for any authoritative statements about the long-range impact of the defeat of the referendum and the passing of DeGaulle.

Preliminary studies of vote distribution seem to indicate that the working class did tend to stay home. It appears that it was middle-class dissatisfaction and uneasiness which was responsible for DeGaulle's fall. The very foundations of his victory last June took his threat to resign as a promise and cheerfully voted "No."

Georges Pompidou, who has been waiting breathlessly in the wings for some time now, hopes to turn DeGaulle's defeat into a victory of Gaullism (not to mention Georges Pompidou) by stepping boldly into the vacuum as the new, improved representative of the popular will. Whether or not he can pull this off, only time will tell.

Meanwhile, financial prophets are keeping anxious tabs on the franc. If the franc is devalued, the repercussions could set off another world monetary crisis. The whole international monetary system hangs by a thread, and if that thread breaks, the fragile prosperity in the United States will be hard pressed to survive.

Adapted by Loren Goldner from material in Lutte Ouvriere.

In last month's "TV Guide," I wrote that, "Of all prime-time network television, there are only two shows that could be called 'left.' These are the Smothers Brothers (anti-war and anti-plg) and, to a lesser extent, Glen Campbell (anti-war). Glen Campbell's show has deteriorated recently, but the Smothers Brothers show has remained strong."

Since then, the following happened: 1) Glen Campbell's show has become totally devoid of political content. It is no longer anti-war and, interestingly enough, the music isn't nearly as good as it was last summer. It is now standard "variety show" music with country overtones. The Glen Campbell show has moved squarely into the "neutral" category. It is clear that producer Tom Smothers was responsible for Campbell's earlier strength.

2) CBS has fired the Smothers Brothers. The firing came after a long fight over censorship -- not so much over the principle, as over who should censor. Tom Smothers apparently felt that the network censors were even worse than those hired by local stations. When he threatened to take the fight into the open, the show

was axed. The immediate issue was what sort of things Joan Baez, a guest on the show, could say about her husband David Harris, a prisoner of the state.

In order to cover their tracks, CBS scheduled Leslie Uggams to replace the Smothers Brothers. Leslie Uggams first gained fame as the Negro member of "Sing Along With Mitch," the show with the bouncing ball. Good white people said, "I like that Negro girl on 'Sing Along With Mitch'! Someday maybe she'll have her own show." And indeed, now she does.

The revised score for prime-time TV reads 35 "neutral" shows, 26 imperialist police state shows, 0 "left" shows. I should add that with the departure of the Smothers Brothers goes the only warm, creative and imaginative show on network television.

A note for Southern California fans: Chief Reddin of the L.A.P.D. (mentioned last month in connection with "Adam-12" and "Dragnet") has since resigned from the Pig Department. He resigned to start his own TV show, as a newscaster. He knows what's happening.

**TV
GUIDE
SUPPLEMENT**

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