

CRISIS IN BRITAIN

Miners' Chiefs Maneuver with Pay Board, Impose Timid Strike Policies

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LONDON, February 21—During the last two weeks the reformist leadership of the British working class has succeeded in temporarily dampening the wave of industrial unrest in Britain. With Prime Minister Heath's call for new elections, the trade-union leadership tagged obediently behind its parliamentary counterparts, toning down the miners' strike in order not to embarrass the Labour Party and damage its electoral chances. And in the wake of the trade-union tops followed the ostensibly revolutionary left.

Since the election campaign began, several key unions have agreed not to press pay claims that would exceed the Tory government's wage guidelines. Foremost among them is the powerful Associated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW), whose president, Hugh Scanlon, is a well-known "left" bureau-

crat. The National Union of Teachers settled for under 7 percent. Of even greater significance was the decision, immediately after Heath's election announcement, of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) to end its job actions. Ray Buckton, general secretary of ASLEF, motivated his decision by saying that it was "in the interests of the Labour Party." The strikes and slowdowns of railwaymen and miners have been the heart of the labor offensive over the past weeks. These workers, along with the dockers, have traditionally been regarded as the most militant and best organized sections of the British working class.

The miners' strike is continuing, but at somewhat reduced effectiveness. The NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) executive adopted rules that limited the number of pickets at any one entrance to no more than six

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Mineworkers president Joe Gormley (left) confronting Tory Prime Minister Heath

Tories Run Union-Busting Election Campaign

FEBRUARY 23—Next week's parliamentary elections in Britain were called for the purpose of drumming up the necessary political support to enable Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath to smash the coal miners' strike, the first serious challenge to the government's "Phase Three" state wage controls. This struggle between the miners and the Tory government is today the single most important event in determining whether or not the burden of worldwide capitalist inflation will be borne by the working masses. Thus the February 28 balloting will have the most direct bearing on the class struggle of any British election since 1945.

The Conservative Party is making no attempt to mute or prettify the union-busting purpose of its campaign. The Tory election manifesto, "Firm Action for a Fair Britain," states:

"The action taken by the National Union of Mineworkers has already caused great damage and threatens even greater damage in the future. . . . [Settling on the miners' terms] would mean accepting the abuse of industrial power to gain a privileged position. It would undermine the position of moderate trade union leaders. It would make certain that similar strikes occurred at frequent intervals in the future."

—Manchester Guardian Weekly, 16 February

The Two Faces of the Labour Party

While Heath is centering his campaign on breaking the miners' strike, the British Labour Party (BLP) leadership under Harold Wilson and James

Callaghan is attempting the difficult maneuver of trying to evade the strike issue, indicating "sympathy" for the miners but never openly endorsing their action and demands. The BLP election manifesto, whose central slogan is "Let us work together," makes the incredible, even absurd, statement that "this Election is not about the miners" ("The Labour Party Manifesto 1974")!

Wilson is not living in a dream world, as such a know-nothing remark would indicate, but rather is doing everything to ensure that Labour is not brought to power under pressure to support the workers in a sharp class battle against the state. Though the BLP is based on the organized workers movement, its recent campaigns have stressed not that Labour will satisfy the workers' demands, but instead that Labour can manage British capitalism better than outmoded Tories.

The desire of the Labour tops to take over managing the capitalist economy in conditions of class peace is in no sense limited to the BLP election manifesto. It is well known that Wilson/Callaghan were distressed when the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) turned down Heath's appeal to suspend the strike during the election campaign. However, it is less well known that it was a personal appeal by Wilson which impelled the railway engineers, the only other union conducting job actions against the wage controls, to return to a normal work schedule for the duration of the election period.

Faced with increasing radicalization in the working class and as a result of widespread dissatisfaction among un-



Labour Party leader Harold Wilson

ionists with Wilson's previous government record, the BLP adopted a program last fall that for the first time in years pretends to a certain leftish tinge. According to the Labour manifesto:

"we shall substantially extend public enterprise by taking mineral rights. We shall also take shipbuilding, ship-repairing and marine engineering, ports, the manufacture of airframes and aeroengines into public ownership and control. But we shall not confine the extension of the public sector to loss making and subsidised industries. We shall also take over profitable sections or individual firms in those in-

dustries where a public holding is essential to enable the Government to control prices, stimulate investment, encourage exports, create employment, protect workers and consumers from the activities of irresponsible multinational companies, and to plan the national economy in the national interest. We shall therefore include in this operation, sections of pharmaceuticals, road haulage, construction, machine tools, in addition to our proposals for North Sea and Celtic Sea oil and gas "

Although by no means as radical as the bourgeois press makes it out to be, Labour's election platform is the most left-wing in a generation. It comes out against legally enforced wage controls (which Wilson imposed his last term in office!), calls for a plebiscite on Britain's membership in the Common Market (which would certainly turn it down), and, as seen above, pledges significant nationalizations, though far less than the proposal adopted by the BLP executive last spring.

The relatively leftish character of the Labour election manifesto is partly a reflection of genuine working-class radicalization over the past five years. However, it also constitutes a deliberately cynical attempt by the BLP leadership to deflect working-class militancy from industrial action into false parliamentary hopes by promising far more than a Labour government at this time would have any intention of carrying out.

As Lenin explained in *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, the job of communists is to intersect the real movement of the working class and

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Why We Call for a General Strike in Britain Now

A revolutionary policy for the current British crisis faces the following fundamental contradiction: since World War II, the ruling class has systematically pressed down the workers' living standards to the point that they are now the lowest in industrial West Europe. The Heath government has intensified this oppression with a direct attack on the most basic power of the trade unions, the right to bargain for wages, with a hard state wage control policy ("Phase Three"). The Tories have meted out enormous suffering to the entire working class through a national lockout (imposing a mandatory three-day workweek) because a section of the class, the miners, is trying to break through the state wage limits. There is an overwhelming objective and felt need to mobilize all the strength of the well-organized and combative British labor movement to defend its interests against a brutal, reactionary government. This means a general strike.

However, a general strike poses the question of state power and can easily lead to a revolutionary situation. Marxists do not play at revolution. Today the leadership of the British labor movement is consciously anti-revolutionary and will betray a general strike if it seriously challenges capitalist state power. This is clearly demonstrated by the recent action of Britain's foremost "left," "militant" union leader, Mick McGahey, the Communist Party (CP) vice president of the National

force them (e.g., the Tory lockout). However, the ruling class can force the issue of state power by using the armed forces to break a general strike for limited objectives. Therefore, there are no demands, no tactics and no strategy that can *guarantee* the victory of a general strike in Britain today. Its leadership will liquidate it if it attains insurrectionary potential and may well sell out even before that point is reached. However, it would be the worst kind of scholastic passivity to argue that the workers must accept, without struggle, whatever the Tories do to them because their leaders might betray a general strike that could win. And it is the worst kind of social-democratic parliamentary cretinism to channel the workers' struggle against Heath mainly into electoral forms, as Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) is now doing.

A Revolutionary Minority in a General Strike

The task of revolutionaries in Britain today is to maximize the possibility of winning a general strike (and thereby defeating the bosses' attempts to load the costs of massive inflation onto the workers) under conditions where a successful insurrection is impossible given the strength of the reformist leadership of the mass workers organizations. This means trying to prevent the ruling class from uniting against the labor

movement, neutralizing the middle classes so they do not act as strike-breakers and, most important, organizing the strike so that the rank and file can check and move to counter the class collaborationism of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and so that revolutionaries, however few in number, can maximize their influence on the course of events.

The British ruling class is by no means solidly supporting Heath's hard line against the miners, which reflects as much (if not more) the immediate needs of his regime as the long-term interests of British capitalism. This was clearly indicated when a group of financiers and industrialists publicly broke with the government in offering to pay the miners out-of-pocket until they reached a settlement! Another indication of the views of leading business interests was given recently by *The Times* [London]:

"The difference between what the miners were prepared to accept and what the government was prepared to offer was probably no more than 70 million pounds [\$160 million] over a year. The annual profits before tax of the leading British industrial companies are of the order of 7000 million pounds. For a sum equal to one per cent of the pre-tax profit of British industry we are now committed to a general election."

—quoted in *Village Voice*, 21 February

The Liberal Party is not supporting Heath's actions, and grumbling has been heard among numerous Tory backbenchers as well. Given the divisions within the ruling class, a demonstration of determination and unity by the labor movement might well isolate Heath and force the government to capitulate.

The British middle class does not, in general, support the labor movement. This is indicated by the solid electoral base of the Tories and Liberals. General strike strategy should be geared to neutralize the middle class, preventing it from actively supporting the government. The strike should concentrate on shutting down industrial production and should avoid unnecessarily discomfiting and, therefore, antagonizing the middle classes. This means that essential public services (e.g., urban transport, hospitals) should be maintained, along with the distribution of consumer goods, for essentially political reasons—and a general strike is essentially political. (In this respect, somewhat different conditions apply than to a purely contractual dispute, where the emphasis must be to shut down as much as possible of the revenue-producing units corresponding to the immediate enemy. But at some point even in a limited, defensive general strike it may be necessary to call a total work stoppage, for instance as a show of force against government use of troops.)

A general strike cannot at this point be organized in opposition to or over the heads of the TUC, the established union leadership. On the other hand it would be criminal for a revolutionary organization to accept, unchallenged, the leadership of the TUC—of proven, professional class collaborators—during a general strike. It is necessary to organize directing bodies for the general strike that would allow the masses to check and frustrate the policies of the TUC, that would go toward becoming a kind of dual power within the general strike movement.

A number of British left-wing organizations, notably the International Marxist Group (IMG), are calling for local councils of action that would presumably play that kind of role in a general strike. Unfortunately, councils of action, although they have appeared in past general strikes, at this time have no immediate prior existence, much less authority, in the British workers movement. A general strike cannot be based on organizations newly set up for that purpose by a handful of revolutionaries. (Unless, that is, you believe like the IMG that there is a shortcut to leadership as a result of the existence of a magical "new mass vanguard" which has already escaped the control of the established reformist leaders and only requires an appropriate organizational form to crystallize it. And from there it is only a short step to believing that West Europe as a whole is in a pre-revolutionary situation and that a general strike in Britain would become an insurrection!)

There do exist organizations within the British labor movement which are qualitatively more democratic and militant than the TUC and on which a general strike could be based. These are the shop stewards committees. In addition to demanding that the TUC should call a general strike, revolutionaries should agitate for a national conference of shop stewards committees in order to organize a general strike. Should a general strike occur, revolutionaries should seek to shift its central organizational base from the TUC to a national shop stewards organization, as well as calling for the formation of local shop stewards' committees to integrate the mass of the workers into the struggle.



Union of Mineworkers (NUM). McGahey grovellingly repudiated his own suggestion, that troops shouldn't break the miners' strike, after Heath denounced him for advocating mutiny and red revolution. There is no way an insurrection could be victorious under the leadership of the current British labor tops, even (and this will not happen) if the Stalinists came to the fore during a general strike.

Therefore we have a contradiction: the situation poses the need for a general strike, for mobilizing the entire organized working class to answer Heath's attacks; a general strike poses the question of power and can easily lead to a revolutionary situation; and the present sellout union and Labour Party/Communist Party leaders will betray a general strike if it challenges capitalist state power. What to do?

Taking account of the objective need for a general strike and the treacherous present leadership of the class, we have called for a general strike for *limited, defensive* aims centering on breaking the state wage controls and reversing the measures decreed to en-

Top: Striking tramwaymen march in Manchester during 1926 British general strike. Right: the First Brigade of Guards march through London financial district after collapse of the general strike. Tory government used 20 armored cars, two fully armed Guards battalions to break strikers' blockade of London docks.



RUPERT HART-DAVIS LONDON

No less important than the fundamentally more democratic character of the shop stewards committees (as against the TUC) is that they are accessible to the cadre of a small revolutionary organization, whereas the TUC leadership is essentially selected from among demonstrated class traitors.

Valuable lessons, although mainly negative, about how a revolutionary minority should act in a general strike can be gleaned from the experience of the Communist Party in the 1926 British general strike. It should be emphasized that the CP in that strike was capable of making a qualitatively greater challenge to the union bureaucracy than any ostensibly revolutionary organization could in Britain today. While organizing a strong oppositional current (the National Minority Movement) prior to the general strike, during the strike itself the CP passively supported the left wing of the TUC leadership and never challenged the TUC organizational hegemony over the strike. This false policy partly reflected Stalinism in Russia, which wanted to trade class peace in the capitalist countries for diplomatic advantage to the Soviet Union, since a section of the British labor bureaucracy was then flirting with Stalin and Bukharin. J.T. Murphy, head of the CP's industrial department, summed up party policy on the eve of the strike:

"Our party does not hold the leading positions in the trade unions. It can only advise and place its press and its forces at the service of the workers—led by others."

—Workers Weekly, 30 April 1926

On the other hand, the local and regional councils of action, which organized the strike at the base, showed an organic tendency to escape from the discipline of the TUC and to come under far more radical, particularly Communist, leadership. For example, CP leader R. Page Arnot played an outstanding and dynamic role in the Durham area councils of action, but he did not try to break these groups from adhering to TUC discipline, as they might well have done. A left-Labour historian of the 1926 strike makes the following assessment:

"It is also probable that, if the strike had been prolonged, regional groupings of councils of action would have operated with an increasing indifference to the T.U.C. and they may well have evolved into embryo Soviets."

—Christopher Farman, *The General Strike, May 1926*

British revolutionaries cannot now play the same leadership role that the CP could, but did not, play in 1926. However, by combining the principles of the class struggle with tactical intelligence during a general strike, a revolutionary propaganda group can transform itself into a genuine workers party.

Insurrection and Leadership

In analyzing the British crisis in previous issues of *WV* we noted that the miniscule *Chartist* group is agitating for an insurrectionary general strike under the illusion that the existing leadership of the British labor movement could be pressured into leading it. The February *Chartist* contains a polemic against our article, "For a General Strike Against Tory Lockout!" (*WV* No. 36, 18 January), in which they assert that a general strike is inherently revolutionary and that our concept of a limited, defensive general strike is simultaneously reformist and adventurist. To prove their case, the *Chartist* quotes Trotsky in an attack on the French CP from *Whither France?* Trotsky writes:

"The entire history of the working class movement proves that every general strike, whatever may be the slogans under which it occurs, has an internal tendency to transform itself into an open revolutionary class, into a direct struggle for power... Might not Thorez [head of the CP] perhaps retort that he had in mind not a real general strike, but a little strike, quite peaceful, just exactly suited to the personal requirements of the editors of *L'Humanité*?... The leaders of the proletariat must understand this internal logic of the general strike.... Politically this implies that from now

on the leaders will continue to pose before the proletariat the task of the revolutionary conquest of power. If not they must not venture to speak of the general strike."

From this passage *Chartist* concludes that a call for a general strike is tantamount to a call for insurrection.

This passage is a polemic against the ostensibly revolutionary leader of a mass workers party. It is indeed criminal for the leadership of a mass party to call a general strike while ruling out the possibility of revolution, since the government may force the question of state power on the strikers. It would likewise be criminal for a small revolutionary propaganda group to call for a general strike initiated by the reformist labor bureaucracy if the strike were intended to be insurrectionary, or if no organizational measures were advocated to enable rank-and-file opposition to the TUC to check and move to counter the inevitable attempts to sell out the strike by the reformist misleaders. We call on the TUC to launch the general strike be-

(After all, the present crisis, arising from the confrontation between Heath and the miners, cannot last forever.) Not so, says the February *Chartist*; they are calling on the workers movement to "prepare" for a general strike with an open-ended timetable. They insist:

"Our organization has refused to name a date for a General Strike. We have refused to demand that the TUC call such a strike 'now.' We have always insisted that the immediate task is to take the preparatory steps—an appeal to the troops, organization of picket-line defence, establishment of committees of action etc. We have always insisted that if we are not prepared for an armed insurrection, then we are not prepared for a General Strike...." [emphasis in original]

When *Chartist* concretizes the preparatory steps for a general strike, they turn out to be essentially technical. Only "an appeal to the troops" even implies an insurrectionary perspective. (And the *Chartist* bases such an appeal on advocating trade-union economic benefits for a volunteer, imperialist

demand that the Government recognises their authority...."

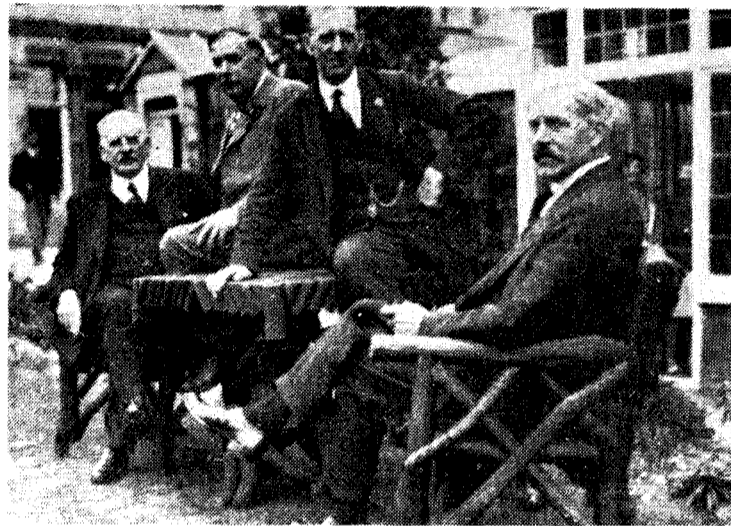
Does the IMG really believe Wilson will allow this to happen and that he has no weapons at his disposal? And does the IMG believe that the Labour bureaucracy which had just regained government office would lead such mass factory seizures, or that this would happen spontaneously?

Come December the IMG shifted its emphasis to organizing councils of action to launch a general strike independently of the support of the established union leadership:

"Whether the TUC fights or not, the greatest possible organization of united struggle at local level will be needed in the days ahead... The important thing at present is not how Councils of Action come into existence but that they are actually set up."

—Red Weekly, 21 December 1973

If the IMG were a mass party or if the British working class had no historically evolved organizational affiliations, setting up councils of action to launch a general strike would be cor-



Miners' Federation secretary (center) meets with Labour Party chief Ramsey MacDonald (right) before the 1926 strike.



Herbert Smith, president of the Miners' Federation, leaving union headquarters during the general strike.

cause we do not see this measure as a propaganda demand in the distant future but as the necessary tactic at this moment; today only the TUC could launch a general strike. And we call for a limited, defensive general strike, to be organized through shop stewards committees, in order not to guarantee in advance that the strike will be sold out by the treacherous TUC leaders. We obviously cannot guarantee that such a strike will be successful, only that it has a good chance of success.

Trotsky's most definitive analysis of the general strike is in his 1935 article "The ILP and the Fourth International." Here he deals with the general strike question from the standpoint of a revolutionary propaganda organization when the masses are firmly under reformist leadership, the situation of the French Trotskyists at that time. The views Trotsky presented here are quite different from the ones *Chartist* attributes to him:

"The working class masses want to struggle. But the leadership applies the brakes, hoodwinks and demoralizes the workers. A general strike can flare up just as the movements flared up in Toulon and Brest. Under these conditions, independently of its immediate result, a general strike will not of course be a 'putsch' but a necessary stage in the mass struggle, the necessary means for casting off the treachery of the leadership and for creating within the working class itself the preliminary conditions for a victorious uprising. In this sense the policy of the French Bolshevik-Leninists is entirely correct, who have advanced the slogan of general strike, and who explain the conditions for its victory." [our emphasis]

It is evident that Trotsky maintained the possibility of partially successful general strikes and the impossibility of a successful insurrection under reformist leadership.

Despite all that the *Chartist* has written about the general strike recently, its position is far from clear. Most people reading the call in the January *Chartist* for a joint command of revolutionary forces would think that they are calling for an insurrectionary general strike within the next few months.

army! This is tantamount to a slogan of, "More Pay to Kill the IRA!")

The preparation for an insurrection is not primarily technical; it is above all political. If *Chartist* really means what they have written, then they must oppose calling out the workers for a general strike until the majority have clearly committed themselves to the armed overthrow of the capitalist state. Moreover, such a commitment is not disembodied, but must be reflected in the organized leadership of the class. Either the *Chartist* group believes that it will become the leadership of the British labor movement in the next few months; or that the Wilson-Jones-Murray leadership of the Labour Party/TUC can be pressured into overthrowing the capitalist state; or that the "preparatory steps" will take not weeks but years (that is, *Chartist* is not talking about a general strike in the winter/spring of 1974, but in the rather more distant future). In short, *Chartist* is either guilty of sectarian illusions and adventurism, or of reformist illusions and liquidationism, or (more likely) of a mixture of all of them.

Centrism and Confusion

The most serious agitation for a general strike in the British left has come from the International Marxist Group, British section of the centrist United Secretariat of Mandel & Co. However, the IMG's line in the past few months has been incredibly confusing, probably reflecting actual changes in the position of its leadership.

The IMG's first agitational call for a general strike in the *Red Weekly* of 30 November of last year projects a revolutionary general strike which does not appear to confront armed state power:

"Should workers just stroll back into the factories after smashing the Tories on the streets and at the polls and wait for a Labour Government to introduce socialism? Or should they seize the factories and demand that they are nationalized, elect committees to determine working conditions and oversee the management's business dealings and

rect. Since neither condition is met in reality, the tactic is fantastical. There is certainly a need for a rank-and-file organizational structure that could check the class collaborationism of the TUC leadership during a general strike. We believe that the shop stewards committees, which have authority within the existing workers movement, could play such a role. Should a general strike actually occur, the organization and authority of councils of action would certainly be posed, though perhaps not in the manner the IMG expects. The 1926 councils of action were set up by the TUC leadership in order to draw the mass of the workers into the struggle. Such councils will not arise out of thin air at the call of revolutionaries, as the IMG appears to believe. In their initiation a key role will be played by elements of the traditional leadership, such as the shop stewards councils. In any case, it is nonsensical to talk about organizing councils of action in order to launch a general strike.

By January, the IMG recognized that it really would be hard to organize a general strike without TUC support. The front page headline of the 11 January *Red Weekly* is "TUC MUST ACT—GENERAL STRIKE." But now, with the election pending, the IMG has reverted to its notion of a general strike to force Wilson to introduce socialism:

"If a Labour Government is returned it will try to take over the reins of capitalist rule from the Tories. But only socialist measures can protect working class interests from the crisis of British capitalism. A general strike will be necessary to implement such measures... against the opposition of the ruling class, and to back up the demand that the Labour Government adds its seal of approval to such measures."

—Red Weekly, 15 February 1974

A successful general strike (smashing state wage controls) associated with a Labour electoral victory would produce a pre-revolutionary situation but would not lead directly and smoothly to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The workers, in general, would respect the authority of the newly elected Labour

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...General Strike

government for a period, and would not take concerted industrial action against it. At the same time, there would undoubtedly be a wave of wage strikes, factory seizures, etc. (not a general strike) leading to great internal conflict in the Labour Party and unions. The intersection between these industrial struggles and the internal conflict within the labor movement would determine the maturation of a revolutionary crisis and development of a vanguard party capable of leading the class to victory.

In any case, despite its relatively left line in the current crisis, the IMG is suspect because only last fall, taking account of the growing, very widespread unpopularity of the Heath government, it was campaigning for a classical popular front consciously modeled on the French Union of the Left. The *Red Weekly*, 31 August 1973, issued the following major proposal:

"We propose the formation in every area of a united body of *all* socialists, trade union and political organizations, open to *all* those who are prepared to struggle against the Tory government and its policies." [our emphasis]

Under existing British conditions, such a formation would include the Liberals and the no less bourgeois Scottish and Welsh nationalists.

The IMG has dropped this demand at present. Moreover, at least some of its leaders are conscious of the change in line since the *Red Weekly* (11 January) now calls for "Councils of Action representative of the whole labour movement." The IMG has not in princi-

ple repudiated class collaborationism; it has simply dropped it as an active demand because it is not presently opportune. It is a telling indication of the wretched state of the British left that this confused, classically centrist group has made the most serious attempt to put forth a revolutionary policy in the present crisis.

For a General Strike Against the Tories!

A general strike in Britain today should have the limited, defensive aims of reversing the policies of the Tory government and bringing it down. Should such a strike be victorious, even under reformist leaders and despite their inevitable attempts to sabotage the struggle, it would then open up a pre-revolutionary situation.

The Trades Union Congress must call an immediate congress of labor to prepare a general strike organized through shop stewards committees for the following demands:

—Victory for the Miners—Smash Government Wage Control!

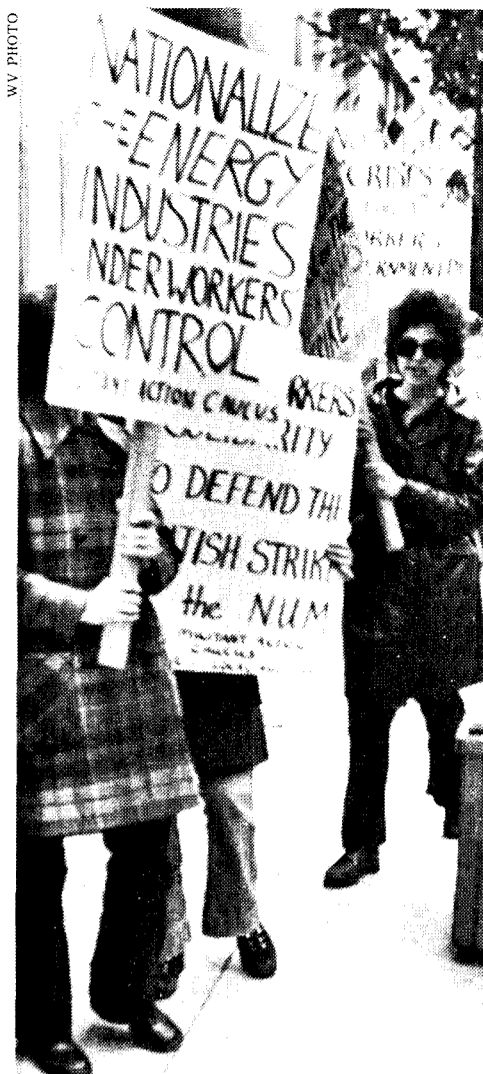
—For a Major, Across-the-Board Wage Increase with Full Cost-of-Living Adjustment!

—Smash the Lockout—Restore the Five-Day Workweek and Rescind the Budget Cuts!

—Abolish the Industrial Relations Act! Repeal the Emergency Measures Act!

—Britain Out of the Common Market!

—Oust the Tory Government! For a Labour Party/TUC Government Pledged to a Socialist Program of Expropriating the Capitalist Class! ■



Caucus of the N.M.U.

While a number of organizations, when approached by telephone, had agreed that the demonstration was politically supportable and indicated that numbers of their supporters would participate, only the International Socialists and the Class Struggle League actually arrived at the demonstration, and each with but a single token supporter. This was a damning example of the widespread organizational sectarianism of so many ostensibly revolutionary groups.

Within the unions and on the campuses, organizations such as the Socialist Workers Party, Revolutionary Union, October League and Progressive Labor talk of participating in the struggles of the working masses. But when workers are forced into a life-and-death confrontation with the capitalist class, as are the British mine workers at present, these fake-left groups are unwilling to participate in even the most basic act of solidarity.

The tokenism of the IS was exposed by the fact that a week earlier it had mobilized a dozen people to a forum on the miners' strike. In the course of this forum a British ISer made clear the IS' position on the current crisis. The British Labour Party is, he asserted, irrelevant, and the struggle lies not in breaking the working class from its reformist leadership but in building rank-and-file committees and lining them up in a national rank-and-file organization.

At the forum the IS made clear its opposition to the SL's call for a general strike, saying that if a general

strike became imminent, it would call for one, but since there was now no movement for a general strike it was utopian to raise such a call. The SL's critical electoral support to the British Labour Party was denounced (without explanation) as a right-wing adaptation to the Labour Party. But the IS, though for years unable to make up its mind whether the BLP was a bourgeois or a workers party, now calls for votes for Labour!

What the IS fails to understand is that critical support is a tactic for engaging the bureaucracy in a struggle for leadership of the working class. Thus we call on Labour to carry out a program in the interests of the workers, abolishing the Industrial Relations Act and Emergency Measures Act, expropriating the capitalists as a class. The reformist leaders of the BLP, of course, have no intention of doing this. Therefore we warn the workers in advance that their leaders will betray, calling for struggle against the sellout, red-baiting, pro-capitalist reformist Wilson-Callaghan leadership of the BLP. But to refuse to call for critical electoral support to the Labour Party in the present elections would be to renounce a crucial opportunity for educating the British workers in practice as to the true nature of the social-democratic Labour and TUC leadership, as well as to ignore in practice the class struggle which is taking place through the elections.

BOSTON

BOSTON, February 23—A spirited group of militants today picketed the British consulate here as part of a national campaign, initiated by the Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth, to support the British miners' strike. Endorsing the demonstration in Boston, in addition to the SL/RCY, were the Ad-Hoc Stewards' Committee of the Massachusetts Social Workers' Guild, Local 509; Local 616, Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen of North America; John Craig, president of Local 575 of the Meatcutters; David Deitch, a journalist in Boston; Boston University professor Howard Zinn; and the Indochina Peace Campaign.

The united-front demonstration in Boston, organized around the central common slogan of "Victory to the British Miners," drew at least fifty participants, mostly unaffiliated individuals and supporters of the SL/RCY. Individual members of Students for a Democratic Society, Youth Against War and Fascism, Young Socialist Alliance, Young Workers Liberation League, Indochina Peace Campaign, Eritreans for Liberation in North America and other groups showed up to sell their literature and/or join the lines, but not a single one of these groups sent more than a token person. With the exception of the Boston Indochina Peace Campaign, they all refused to endorse the demonstration called by the Miners Solidarity Action Committee in order to cut through the bourgeoisie's propaganda against the miners' strike and to provide a concrete expression of international working-class solidarity.

Taking up slogans initiated by SL/RCY members, the picketers chanted "Labour In, Wilson Out!" "Victory to the Miners! Workers of the World Unite!" "Down With the Bosses' Wage Controls, For a General Strike in Britain!" and "Same Enemy, Same Fight! British and Irish Workers Unite!"

The demonstration was addressed by a spokesman for the Spartacist League and by Jack Heyman of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the National Maritime Union, one of several oppositional trade-union caucuses that have supported the campaign. The brother from the Militant-Solidarity Caucus spoke about his group's fight for class-struggle leadership in the N.M.U. and its understanding of the need for a program that points out an alternative to racism, national chauvinism and all the other brands of poisonous capitalist

U. S. Solidarity Demos Support British Miners

CHICAGO

CHICAGO, February 19—The Chicago Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth initiated action in support of British miners with a solidarity demonstration at the British consulate on January 16. The picket drew approximately 30 participants on the basis of a call including the demands "support British coal miners and railway workers" and "smash Phase 3—smash all government wage controls." Of several left organizations contacted, the Revolutionary Socialist League and Socialist Workers Party sent token representatives who stayed only for a short while (30 seconds for the SWP). The tiny syndicalist Revolutionary Workers Group sent two supporters for the duration of the demonstration.

Subsequently a local television station, WSLD-TV, broadcast an appeal for solidarity with the miners by an SL spokesman.

In a related development, Local 6 of the United Auto Workers, at the Melrose Park International Harvester works, passed a resolution expressing solidarity with British mine workers at its February 10 meeting. The resolution, introduced from the floor and passed unanimously, called for concrete steps to aid the strike—in contrast with the purely verbal solidarity expressed by UAW president Leonard Woodcock. The text of the resolution reads:

"Be it resolved that:

"We send a letter of solidarity in support of the striking British Coal Miners.

"We urge our international union to give whatever financial support possible to the striking miners.

"We urge the Longshoremen's Union to 'hot cargo' any shipment of goods detrimental to the miners' strike."

BAY AREA

SAN FRANCISCO, February 20—A united-front demonstration organized by the Bay Area Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth, was held today in front of the British consulate-general around the central slogan of support to the striking British mine workers. About 35 people participated, including a number of trade-union militants who responded to the SL/RCY's leafletting of workplaces and union meetings. Militants from the postal workers, Amalgamated Transit, Locals 6 and 10 of the ILWU and from the UAW took part in the demonstration, as well as several members of the Militant Action Caucus of the CWA and a member of the Militant-Solidarity



ideology that divide the international working class.

He stressed the need for a political break with the bosses' parties, the construction of a labor party and international labor solidarity. While the NMU calls for more American-flag ships, the M-SC calls instead for international trade unions and a fight to get a union contract on every ship, no matter what flag it flies. Characterizing the British miners' strike as "the most crucial class battle since the French general strike of 1968," Heyman criticized the purely rhetorical support given by labor bureaucrats and called for real international support to the miners in the form of boycotts, hot-cargoing coal shipments to Britain and substantial financial support to the strikers.

The M-SC has called on the NMU leadership to send \$10,000 a week to the National Union of Mineworkers as long as the strike continues. He also emphasized the nearly universal support for the strike among the rank and file of the British labor movement and the critical need for a general strike in defense of the miners' struggle, to prevent a sellout similar to the Trades Union Congress' refusal to back the dockers with a general strike in 1971.

The spokesman for the Spartacist League drew comparisons between the response of the Labour Party, TUC and Communist Party to the miners' struggle and the betrayal of the 1926 British general strike, which grew out of a miners' strike. The cowardly capitulation of the Labour Party parliamentarians, who will not even support the strike, and the reformist betrayals of the CP and other union hacks, who refuse to take the struggle out of the narrow limits of a contractual dispute within a single union, underscore the need for a revolutionary leadership in the labor movement.

Citing the "epochal nature of this struggle," he demanded to know why ostensibly revolutionary organizations like the CP, SWP, SDS, etc., refused to take part in common actions based on the most elemental level of labor solidarity. "This poses the question," he said, "of who the real sectarians are." He went on to attack the productivity drive and "buy American" campaigns of the labor bureaucrats who, under the pressure of imminent worldwide recession, pit American against foreign workers and reject any possibility of proletarian internationalism. "Such class traitors," he said, "must be replaced by a revolutionary leadership as a key step in the construction of an international vanguard party."

A meeting of the Ad-Hoc Stewards' Committee of the Massachusetts Social Workers' Guild, Local 509, that took place simultaneously with the demonstration, sent the following statement of support which was received with cheers and loud applause by the picketers:

"We endorse your call for victory to the English miners. As social workers who deal every day with the consequences of government-engineered attacks on the standards of American workers, we understand the need to support our English brothers and sisters who face the same situation, and as workers currently involved in the fight for a decent contract, we recognize the urgent need for unity among all workers everywhere. We will all go forward together or not at all."

DETROIT

DETROIT, February 20—The "automobile capital of America" today witnessed a small but militant demonstration of proletarian internationalism as some 30 socialists and union militants picketed the British consulate in solidarity with the striking British miners. Passers-by heard loud chants of "No to Wilson, No to Woodcock, Forward to a Workers Government," "Dump the Israeli Bonds, Send the Money to the Miners," "Smash Wage Controls in Britain and the U.S.," and "Britain Out of Ireland, Bosses Out of the Mines—For a Workers Government." The Sparta-



cist League raised another chant as well: "No to Harold Wilson, No to Arnold Miller—No Collaboration with the Bourgeois State."

The demonstration had been called by the SL as part of a nationwide campaign to mobilize support for the British mine workers. The Detroit SL issued an appeal to over a dozen ostensibly socialist groups as well as to some 50 trade-union locals in the area to join in a united-front action based on the slogans "Victory to the British Coal Miners" and "For International Working-Class Solidarity." However, only the Revolutionary Socialist League, Youth Against War and Fascism, and Spark (a small semi-syndicalist grouping based in Detroit) deigned to send any representatives at all—and only one or two each at that. Apparently these leaders and aspiring leaders of the working class cannot see far enough beyond their sectarian noses to recognize the crucial need for a united demonstration of labor solidarity with the struggling miners.

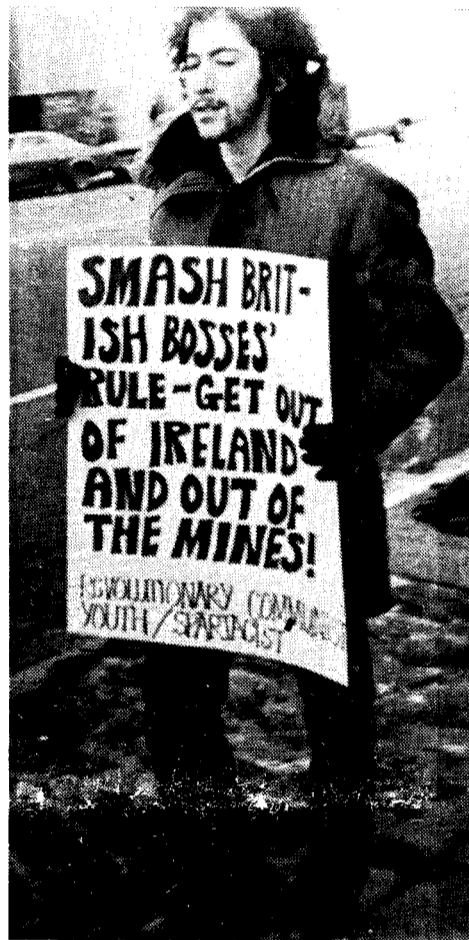
After picketing for an hour the demonstrators marched to nearby Kennedy Square under the banners "Victory to the British Miners, For International Working-Class Solidarity" and "Towards the Rebirth of the Fourth International." There they held a rally which was addressed by speakers from the Spartacist League and Revolutionary Socialist League.

The RSL speaker attacked the SL for calling on the Trades Union Congress (Britain's national labor federation) to lead a general strike, since it has betrayed the workers at every point. The RSL seeks instead to bypass the existing trade-union leadership by calling for the creation of now non-existent "councils of action."

The Spartacist speaker declared, "our internationalism is concrete: we called demonstrations nationwide. In Detroit we have a special job—to capitalize on and expose Woodcock's hollow support for the miners and his traitorous economic nationalism, in particular his purchase of Israel bonds and his calls for protectionist import restrictions."

He went on to point out that the comrades of the RSL correctly see the repeated treachery of the labor bureaucracy as an immediate problem, but "they call for councils of action in order to sidestep the shop stewards' committees, the concrete manifestations of ground-level leadership in the working class." "It's not surprising," he said, "that the RSL tails lesser-evil bureaucrats such as Miller of the UMW in times of relative class peace, and flip-flops to spontaneist avoidance of dealing with the leadership of the shop stewards' committees once the class struggle sharpens."

Among the groups which evaded the essential socialist duty of international labor solidarity by boycotting the demonstration, the SWP distinguished itself by cynically declaring the action to be "insignificant," counterposing its non-existent trade-union work as a more effective avenue of support! The International Socialists, which proudly play up the role of their British cohorts, offered vague promises of international class solidarity and "militant action,"



but refused to mobilize any supporters for the united-front action.

The left-Maoists of the Communist League abstained as well. The CL's programmatic bankruptcy was revealed by its call to British workers to "give up their dwindling privileges" in relation to the Irish workers! This moralistic slogan, reminiscent of the New Left's call for workers to abandon their "white-skin privilege," is hardly designed to mobilize British labor in view of its already abysmally low wage scales.

LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES—On February 16 upwards of 40 persons participated in a united-front picket of the British consulate in support of the striking British miners. Of course, such a demonstration, especially given the sectarianism and indifference of



most of the left, is in no way a substitute for militant action by the working class such as the hot-cargoing of American coal being shipped to Britain in order to break the miners' strike. The demonstration was, nevertheless, an important expression of international working-class solidarity.

While a number of independent radicals responded to the Spartacist League's call for the united-front action, the response of the organized left was typically pitiful. Although a letter had been sent a week in advance to 40 organizations and despite the fact that each group would be free to advance its own slogans and distribute its own literature, almost all of the fake lefts chose to ignore the proposal either out of sectarian hostility to joint action with Trotskyists or due to simple indifference to the political crisis in Britain.

Only the International Socialists, which had refused to participate in a similar demonstration in Detroit, made even a token response, and that to cover a guilty conscience. The IS sent three supporters to the demonstration, explaining that the rest of the Los Angeles IS was attending a Farmworkers' picket. Probably more important than support to the UFW was the fact that the IS was planning its own miners' support demonstration for the following Saturday. According to the IS, however, there was no time to organize a united front for its action.

The RSL sent one person to sell papers and another who didn't arrive until the demonstration was over! The CP and SWP both expressed enthusiasm when initially contacted only to back off later as the date of the picket actually approached.

Militant-Solidarity Caucus Telegram to NUM

To: National Union of Mineworkers, London, England

The Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the National Maritime Union of America (a group within the NMU opposed to our current sellout union leadership) stands in solidarity with striking British miners. We are urging all U.S. unions to send substantial funds to you and to refuse to load or ship any materials, particularly coal, to Britain which may be used to break your strike. Your battle is in the forefront of the struggle between the capitalists and the international working class. We urge a general strike in Britain to smash the wage controls, anti-labor laws and the Tory government. For a Labour government pledged to expropriation of the capitalists. Victory to the British miners! Workers of the world unite!

—sent 16 February 1974

Argentina—A Warning:

Peron Prepares to Crush Left

PART 2 OF 2

For almost 30 years Peronism has been the dominant political current among Argentine workers. Last March half the voters cast their ballots for Héctor Cámpora, candidate of the Justicialista Liberation Front (FREJULI—the Peronist party); in the September plebiscite/election some 65 percent voted for Perón. They had voted, they thought, for an end to military dictatorship, for large wage increases and expanded social services, for strong trade unions. What they got is quite the reverse—a government of reaction down the line.

General Perón himself made no secret of his intentions. In a "Message to the Argentine People" in November 1973 he praised the bourgeois parties with which he had been negotiating the terms of a future Justicialista government, saying that they "have assumed before history the responsibility of establishing the bases of pacification and reconstruction of the country." At the same time he made clear that this "labor of pacification" included reconciliation with the military which had ousted his government in 1955. Upon his return in June Perón's first speech concentrated on the slogans "now is not the time for loafers" and "from home to work and from work to home"—a traditional Peronist theme, calling on the workers to stay out of politics.

However, virtually the entire Argentine "Marxist" left either shared or capitulated to the masses' illusions in Perón, apparently expecting a rerun of his earlier government, which had (in 1948) raised the workers' incomes to roughly 50 percent of the national income (they have subsequently fallen to constitute around 30 percent today). While those parties claiming to represent Trotskyism correctly defined Peronism as a bourgeois political movement (see "Argentina: The Struggle Against Peronism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 24, 6 July 1973, for a discussion of this point), they all found some way of muting their opposition to it in order to assume a posture of de facto "critical support."

The PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party—until recently allied with the European majority of the so-called "United Secretariat of the Fourth International") along with its military arm, the ERP, frequently referred to in the bourgeois press as "Trotskyist guerrillas," announced in May that "the Cámpora government represents the popular will...our organization will not attack the new government as long as it does not attack the people or the guerrilla movement" (*Intercontinental Press*, 28 May 1973). The social-democratic PST (Socialist Workers Party—alleged with the American SWP and the reformist minority of the USec) offered in the fall of 1972 to vote for Justicialista candidates if their ticket were made up of at least 80 percent workers, instead of the slate's actual 25 percent (*Avanzada Socialista*, 22 November 1972). Then, following the inauguration of the FREJULI regime last May, the PST called for support to all government acts which are in the interests of the workers, announcing: "Without confusing the banners, Dr. Cámpora can count on our proletarian solidarity" (*Avanzada Socialista*, 30 May-6 June 1973).

For its part, the *Política Obrera* group (allied with the French OCI—Organisation Communiste Internationaliste) declared the Peronist election victory in March "an unquestionable triumph of the working class against

the military gorilla clique" (*Política Obrera*, 19 March 1973). And the POR(t)—Revolutionary Workers Party (Trotskyist)—Argentine section of Juan Posadas' "International Secretariat of the Fourth International," took the position that "the triumph of the Peronist movement means the triumph of anti-imperialist positions, of the progress of the unions, of the affirmation of the vanguard which led the rest of the country: the proletariat" (J. Posadas, "Los sindicatos, las masas peronistas y la nueva etapa de la lucha por el socialismo en Argentina," 18 March 1973). Yet Perón's first order to Cámpora was "get the Trotskyists" (*Le Monde*, 6 June 1973)!

What the Peronist regime would actually mean was predicted early last summer by the Spartacist League:

"Only those who willfully blind themselves to reality can claim, as do the supposedly 'Trotskyist' groups in Argentina, that the Cámpora regime is a 'victory for the working class,' that there is any fundamental distinction between the 'progressive' government and police on the one hand and the reactionary armed forces on the other, or that a working-class program can be forced onto the new government, since the workers voted it into office. "The Perón government of the 1940's and 1950's did carry out certain measures (wage increases, unionization, social security, nationalizations) which benefitted the working class, while at the same time outlawing the Communist Party and smashing every attempt at independent activity by the workers, even simple economic strikes. But the current Peronist regime will be a gov-



Perón (left) and Cámpora, July 1973.

UPI



Thousands demonstrate in front of presidential palace during Cámpora inauguration, May 1973.

SIPAHIOGLU

ernment of reaction—an instrument to carry out the job the military has been unable to do, namely to put an end to the workers' militancy which has been raging through the country since 1969. The regime will employ any means necessary to firmly establish bourgeois 'law and order' even if this means outlawing all 'communist' organizations, government 'intervention' into militant unions and massacres of striking students and workers. To call for critical support, tolerance, negotiations for a workers program or any policy other than intransigent opposition to the Cámpora government is to abandon the path of proletarian revolution and prepare the way for the massacres."

—WV No. 24, 6 July 1973

"Bonapartism sui generis"

This prediction, fully confirmed by the experience of the last eight months, was not the result of crystal-ball gazing, any more than the accommodation of the Argentine "Trotskyists" to Peronism was the result of a secret death-

wish on their part. Rather, it was based on the Marxist understanding of the nature of bonapartist regimes. It is true (as Trotsky pointed out in speaking of Cárdenas' nationalization of British oil holdings in Mexico during the 1930's) that in the backward countries such regimes may undertake limited measures to improve their position vis-à-vis the dominant imperialist powers. Some ostensible Trotskyists seek to generalize from this fact to conclude that, as Posadas puts it, "the Peronist movement is an anti-imperialist nationalist movement" ("Los sindicatos, las masas peronistas y la nueva etapa de la lucha por el socialismo en Argentina"). But in speaking of bonapartism *sui generis* (of a special character), Trotsky never implied that there was any such creature as an "anti-imperialist," "populist" or otherwise "progressive" bonapartism in the economically backward countries. Such a view is as sharply counterposed to the theory of permanent revolution as is the traditional Stalin-

ist conception of an "anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie," if not more so.

Bonapartism (even in leftist garb) is an attempt to raise the regime above the influence and control of the competing class forces, to turn it into an arbitrator, a dictator. *How* this is accomplished depends on the level of the class struggle, not on an inherent program of any movement. As in the case of Perón, the same individual and movement can appear in sharply different roles, now "progressive," now arch-reactionary, without changing their basic function: to safeguard the interests of a weak bourgeoisie by substituting naked dictatorial rule for the uncertainties of bourgeois democracy. Trotsky understood this in remarking that such a bonapartism *sui generis* "can govern *either* by making itself the instrument of foreign capitalism and holding the proletariat in the chains of a police dictatorship, or by maneuvering with the proletariat and even going so far as to make concessions to it..."

("Nationalized Industry and Workers Management," 1938). He referred to the "present policy" of the Mexican government as being in the "second stage" (our emphasis), clearly implying that there were other policies and other stages.

The same point has been demonstrated by recent Latin American history itself. Thus the early Vargas regime in Brazil was decidedly more "populist" than the later period, when it had to contend with large and relatively powerful unions. Likewise for the "nationalist" MNR government in Bolivia, or the succeeding PRI administrations in Mexico (whose policies have included everything from extensive land reform and nationalizations to mass murder of workers and peasants). Given the pre-revolutionary situation which has existed in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay since 1969-70, the new Peronist regime could only be one of consistent reaction. In this sense it was a *different instrument* to achieve the same goal as the Chilean popular front—to deflect the workers from the path of class struggle. However the difference is not unimportant. While the popular front had to be replaced by brutal military dictatorship once it was no longer able to pacify the workers by granting piecemeal reforms, "populist" bonapartist regimes of the Perón/Vargas type can themselves be the instruments to destroy all independent organizations of the workers.

"Stalinists of the Pampas"

By far the largest force on the non-Peronist left in Argentina is the pro-Moscow Communist Party, whose approximately 110,000 members make it the largest CP in South America and whose reformist policies are no less perfidious than those of its Chilean counterpart, which endlessly called on the masses to have confidence in the "democratic" armed forces. For decades the CP has denounced the Justicialista movement as "Peronazi," refusing to give it any electoral support. Instead it attempted to build a two-bit popular front entitled the National Meeting of the Argentines, boasting that it had support not only from sections of the petty bourgeoisie, but also from groups of "democratic" landowners. In the March elections last year it supported a slate of two left-wing Radicals.

But with its opportunist instincts far from dormant, when faced with a massive Peronist vote the CP decided to switch horses and gave "critical support" to the erstwhile No. 1 "Peronazi" in the September plebiscite. The "Political Resolution of the 14th National Congress" of the Stalinists justified this stand on the grounds that the Justicialista regime was "a bourgeois reformist government" in which "the national bourgeoisie has greater weight in public administration."

Anxious not to become the object of Perón's disfavor, the CP decided against supporting a widely publicized proposal to run a labor candidate against Perón, even though the proposed candidate was Agustín Tosco (of the Córdoba light and power workers), who

is closely linked to the Stalinists. The CP student group joined the Peronists' domestic "peace corps," the Argentine Political Youth. But the results of this flagrant opportunism have been meagre and even counterproductive. A significant sign was the student election at the University of Buenos Aires last fall. Formerly the dominant force with roughly half the votes, the CP group (appropriately entitled the "Reformist Orientation Movement") fell to third place with only 20 percent of the ballots in the face of the Peronist onslaught (*Política Obrera*, 1 December 1973).

Stalinism and the perspective of a "two-stage" revolution in alliance with the "progressive sectors" of the bourgeoisie are not the monopoly of groups owing allegiance to Moscow. Mao, Castro, Enver Hoxha and Kim Il Sung push a verbally more militant version of the same line. The actual results are no different. It was significant that not only Brezhnev but also Fidel Castro enthusiastically hailed the new Peronist regime last spring. The most important group in Argentina which supports a Maoist-Castroist variant of Stalinism is the PRT/ERP guerrilla operation. After years of toying with Trotskyism, claiming to uphold a socialist perspective for the party while in practice including Christian Democrats in its "armed forces" and trying to form a political bloc with the Peronist guerrillas, the PRT/ERP finally broke with its admirers in the "United Secretariat" last summer and is now calling for a "popular front" in classic Stalinist fashion. In an article written by PRT leader Mario Santucho last summer it stated:

"From here the popular forces can then adopt a policy of a broader popular front intended to neutralize and later win sectors of the middle or national bourgeoisie, uniting them with the people under the firm anti-imperialist and revolutionary leadership of the proletariat."

—"La política del peronismo y las tareas de los revolucionarios," August 1973

Though somewhat hindered by a few lingering scruples about class collaboration (the PRT could not bring itself to call for votes for the Peronists in last year's elections), these Castroists/

Nahuel Moreno, a leading Argentine "Trotskyist" since the 1940's. The Moreno group is distinguished by having submerged itself at one time or another into virtually every available leftist current in Argentina. After more than a decade of "deep entry" into the Peronist movement, it emerged in the early 1960's as the spokesman of "consistent Castroism." Having dabbled in verbal



Juan Carlos Coral

guerrillaism as long as it was respectable to do so, it is now trying to build a mass electoral social-democratic party.

The PST is not insensitive to the growing apprehensions among left Peronists, and after having made a number of grossly opportunist approaches to the FREJULI and Cámpora before last summer, it at least formally opposed Perón by running PST leader Juan Carlos Coral against him in the September election. Prior to running its own candidate, the PST (which, due to anti-communist election laws and Moreno's 1972 fusion with a wing of the social democracy, was the only workers party allowed on the ballot) called on the well-known "Marxist" left bureaucrat Agustín Tosco to run against Perón. (The proposal was eventually turned down by Tosco because of the Communist Party's decision to support Perón.)



José Rucci

Maoists have been no more successful in consummating their desired popular front than the pro-Moscow Stalinists. During the last nine months the PRT/ERP has sought to implement its absurd policy of distinguishing between the reactionary military and the government (which allegedly represents the popular will) by concentrating its guerrilla activities on raids on military camps and kidnapping foreign business executives for suitable ransoms. It has so far been able to avoid a major disaster, probably because the government wishes to pick off the guerrilla groups one by one, beginning with the Peronist guerrillas. But Perón has made it clear that he is not interested in a non-aggression pact. When the ERP attempted to deny press reports that it was responsible for the assassination of top Peronist labor leader José Rucci last fall, the government ordered the news media not to carry the denial.

"A Workers' and People's Government"

The social-democratic PST is the current embodiment of the group around

a bogus "voluntary" wage-control program) as well as a number of the PST's own characteristically reformist slogans (culminating in its utterly un-Marxist demand for a "workers' and people's government"). While the thrust of the PST campaign was apparently directed against the Justicialista government's attacks on the workers, crucial in this period when the regime is gearing up for a major crackdown on the left, this was largely because Perón gave it no alternative and certainly stands in contradiction to its own past program of constant capitulation to Peronism.

That the PST is clearly disoriented by the pressure of events is indicated by the lack of focus of its press, which in recent issues has concentrated on coverage of numerous isolated strikes. Reading *Avanzada Socialista* one would get the impression that Argentine workers are faced with the need for militant action to achieve large wage gains during a potentially favorable round of bargaining, rather than being threatened by the imminent destruction of every



EL PUEBLO (ECUADOR)

Argentine CP leader Vitorio Codovilla

independent working-class organization. Individual strikes for higher wages in Argentina today are of tertiary importance. The crucial issue is the burning need for a united front to defend the left against the Peronist government's current and planned attacks on labor and socialist organizations.

There is a potential for successful resistance to these murderous plans, resting primarily in the existence of a broad layer of revolutionary syndicalists concentrated in the interior industrial center of Córdoba. Having supported non-Peronist left bureaucrats and, for a period, several independent "class-struggle" unions against constant attack by the labor bureaucracy, such forces would not simply cave in because of a directive from the *jefe máximo*. A successful resistance to the government's attempts to freeze wages, fire militant workers in state enterprises and eliminate militant union officials by whatever means necessary could spark off a vast uprising by the heretofore pro-Peronist workers, who have seen their aspirations cruelly repudiated by their idol's consistently reactionary direction in recent months.

In the 22-29 November edition of *Avanzada Socialista*, the PST proposed a united front to the ranks of the Communist Party, calling for opposition to the "Social Pact," to the "Law of Professional Associations" and other laws aimed at sacking union militants, instead proposing formation of "united class-struggle lists" to fight for a new "anti-bureaucratic" leadership of the unions. Along with a call for expropriation of imperialism and "the oligarchy" and the left Peronists' slogan of "for a socialist Argentina," these demands were intended to expose the CP's class-collaborationist popular-front policies while posing a united front which every CP militant can see is objectively necessary to avoid a disaster of the

continued on page 10



Agustín Tosco

AVANZADA SOCIALISTA

The Hearst Kidnapping: Idiot Terrorism

The kidnapping of 19-year-old Patricia Hearst, daughter of the wealthy Randolph A. Hearst, editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, by a group of self-styled revolutionaries calling themselves the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) represents one of the more bizarre terrorist acts to have occurred in recent years. The circumstances of the kidnapping, the huge ransom demands and the extravagant stories about the SLA and its members have made good copy for the bourgeois press. Indeed it is ironic that the kidnapping, which could well be the basis for a cheap Hollywood sensation, should involve Hearst himself, whose journalistic stock-in-trade is precisely such stories. And while it is possible to dismiss the act as an indefensible and pathetic example of apolitical terrorism, the events surrounding the kidnapping are not without their lessons for the Marxist movement.

The Symbionese Liberation Army

The origins of the SLA are very obscure. Practically no one had ever heard of the group until the kidnapping. And even then, such noted experts as Nixon's attorney general, William Saxbe, whose business it is to keep up with such matters, lamented:

"They call themselves the Symbionese Liberation Army, but one of the baffling things about them is that we don't know what it is that they want to liberate."

—*New York Times*, 10 February

The *New York Times* (23 February) reports the group to have its origins in an intersection of some convict members of a self-help Black Culture Association at Vacaville State Prison (California) with some young white activists of vaguely "Maoist" leanings. The group apparently crystallized following the escape of two of the convicts from prison during March and August of last year. After forming, the SLA has, besides managing to kidnap Patricia Hearst, claimed credit for the gunning down last November of the black superintendent of Oakland's public schools, Marcus A. Foster. Foster had been trying to bring more police guards into the schools to "reduce" truancy and vandalism, and his scheme had been bitterly opposed by a number of Oakland parents.

Insofar as the SLA has any program it seems to be a mélange of terrorism, megalomaniacal New Left rhetoric and outright religious mysticism. The emblem of the SLA is a seven-headed cobra, which according to them is a 170,000-year-old symbol of God and life standing for "self-determination, cooperative production, creativity, unity, faith, purpose, and collective responsibility" (*Newsweek*, 18 February). The goal of the SLA is "to destroy 'all forms of racism, sexism, ageism, capitalism, fascism, individualism, possessiveness, and competitiveness'" (*New York Times*, 23 February).

The Kidnapping

To accomplish this goal the SLA decided to abduct Patricia Hearst, a student at the University of California at Berkeley who happened to have the misfortune of being the daughter of Randolph A. Hearst and of probably drawing the attention of the SLA to herself by being quoted in a recent interview as telling her father that his newspaper, the *San Francisco Examiner*, was irrelevant.

Declaring Hearst's daughter "a prisoner of war" the SLA demanded, as a demonstration of good faith in prelude to ransom negotiations, that Randolph Hearst, heir to the Hearst fortune, donate \$280 million of free food over a one-month period to every Californian on welfare, social security or food stamps; to every

convict on parole or probation; and to every disabled veteran. Claiming poverty, Hearst has finally offered \$4 million, most of it to come from the Hearst Foundation and Hearst Corporation and all of it tax-deductible.

The free food is to be distributed by a coalition of six groups including the Glide Memorial Church, the American Indian Movement, the Black Teachers' Caucus, Nairobi College, the United Prisoners' Union and the National Welfare Rights Organization. And while all of the coalition members rush to wash their hands of the SLA and its "methods," there is nonetheless a certain parallel between these organizations and the SLA. The SLA imagines that it can solve the problem of poverty under capitalism through terrorism, forcing the bourgeoisie to feed the poor, the victims of the capitalist system, by ransoming one teenage girl. The coalition members, on the other hand, hope to achieve the same ends through more prosaic reformist protest and pressure tactics. The SLA has simply carried the free breakfast program of the Black Panthers to a terrorist conclusion.

It would be a mistake to draw too close a parallel between the SLA and earlier formations such as the Weathermen. Aside from the fact that the Weathermen had a history in the left, evolving toward terrorism out of their experiences in SDS, it was also possible to distinguish a coherent political kernel that lay at the center of the Weathermen activity. That is to say that the Weathermen saw themselves as auxiliaries of the NLF and Maoists "behind enemy lines." They simply carried Lin Piao's idea of "the countryside surrounding the cities" to its logical (and absurd) conclusion, then proceeding to act on that conclusion. By way of contrast, the political nature of the SLA, if indeed it has one, remains completely obscure. While the rhetoric of the SLA "communiqués" suggests a political profile somewhere between Robin Hood or the left wing of the Salvation Army and Black September, it is noteworthy that none of the alleged leaders has any history in the left.

Their only parallel is the so-called revolutionary armed force of the ex-convict Stanley Bond, a motley alliance of criminal elements, provocateurs and starry-eyed guilt-ridden New Leftists who several years ago robbed a Boston bank, killing a policeman in the process. The question of who was using whom in that case was never clear, nor could one say that a coherent group with definable politics was involved. It is important to note this ambiguity, for the degeneration of terrorist or guerrillaist organizations often leads to a shading over into simple apolitical

banditry. Similarly the current vogue of kidnappings, hijackings, bombings, etc. by ostensible radicals inevitably leads to imitation by simple criminal, mentally unstable and marginally political elements.

The Response

Naturally the bourgeoisie is upset about the Hearst kidnapping, especially since shortly afterwards a group of self-proclaimed rightists kidnapped the editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*. The bourgeois press has used the occasion to lecture on law and order, denouncing terrorism in particular and the left in general. But beyond this ritual exercise lies an element of genuine bourgeois concern. Over the past five years there has been a very real increase in terrorist activity, particularly as an outgrowth of the conflicts in Ulster and Palestine but also in Latin America, and to a much lesser extent in Europe and North America themselves. As a response the bourgeoisie has beefed up its repressive apparatus, particularly on the international level.

On the U.S. left there has been almost uniform denunciation of the SLA for its acts. (So far the only notable defenders of the SLA are ex-Yippie Jerry Rubin and Bernadine Dohrn, who once hailed the ultra-violence cult of Charles Manson.) In particular, both the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party have rushed to point out the futility of such terrorism, how it brings repression down on the heads of the left, how it is necessary to mobilize the masses rather than resort to grandstand stunts, etc. (One additional drawback to terrorist actions is the opportunity they give the bourgeois media to build public sympathy for the victims. In this case there has been an avalanche of "human interest" stories on the agony of Randolph Hearst, one of the most vicious reactionary press magnates in the country. So far this has led to an outpouring of sympathy letters, including more than \$1 million in donations by gullible well-wishers to the millionaire publisher whose personal net worth is estimated at somewhere over \$100 million!) Both CP and SWP are suspicious of the SLA (rightly so), the SWP speculating that maybe police agents or rightists are involved, and the CP saying that the SLA's actions have a CIA/*Mission Impossible* flavor.

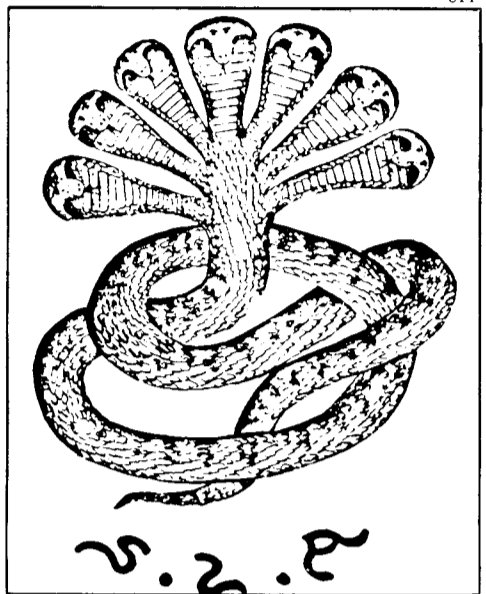
Aside from the speculation and innuendo this all sounds quite correct (excepting of course the CP's "alternative" of simple reform struggles). Militants should realize, however, that this display of orthodoxy is more for purposes of maintaining the CP's and SWP's respectable reformist reputations. When these groups were faced with the Weathermen, who were genuinely, although in a misguided way, committed to "anti-imperialist" politics and who directed their bombings at symbols of capitalism, they fell all over themselves in denouncing terrorism and raised not one finger to defend these militants against the bourgeois state.

Terror and Revolution

Leninists oppose individual terrorism because it is a futile protest gesture, incapable of bringing about a fundamental social overturn, which can only be the result of the revolutionary mobilization of the workers and other exploited layers, and because even if successful, it can only lead the masses into passivity, into hoping to be relieved of their sufferings by a heroic liberator. In the classic case of "successful" terrorism—the bombing of the Sofia, Bulgaria Cathedral on 16 April 1925—the Bulgarian Communist Party succeeded in killing 14 generals, 3 deputies, as well as the mayor and police

chief of Sofia, but changed nothing.

Acts of terrorism must be considered concretely. Even though it only involves one person, the kidnapping of Patricia Hearst, who, unlike her father, is guilty of no known crime against the working people and whose only recorded political comment is that her father's newspaper was irrelevant, has more in common with the completely indefensible hijacking of airplanes or kidnap-



Symbionese Liberation Army symbol

ping of Israeli athletes than it does with, say, a bomb attempt by populist terrorists against one of the Russian tsars in the late 19th century which, however misguided, was at least an attack on an important class enemy.

Leninists certainly do not reject the use of terror as an auxiliary tactic during a civil war, when for example it may be necessary to take hostages. Nor do we simply repudiate misguided militants or tendencies who attempt to strike heroic blows at some representative or symbol of the reactionary bourgeois order. Rather we defend such comrades against the class enemy, the bourgeois state, while nonetheless explaining the futility and utopianism of terrorist acts.

But we do not defend indiscriminately all terrorist acts. Actions such as the mass murder at Lod airport, the Munich killings or the recent shooting of airline passengers in Athens can in no way be justified as a blow against the bourgeois order, but represent the most reactionary sort of nationalist atrocity, the perpetrators of which the proletariat, were it able to, would deal with summarily.

Also not defensible is the SLA, with its obscure origins and its even more obscure politics, including a significant dose of mysticism and irrationality. Simply because a group utters a few quasi-Marxist phrases does not necessarily imply that it is even a political phenomenon. Yet the antics of the SLA which caricature the most negative features of the New Left, radical-liberal, black-nationalist, community-control swamp serve to point out the idiocy and logical absurdities of the politics of some of the more degenerate sections of the U.S. petty bourgeoisie. ■

RCY FORUM

The Symbionese Liberation Army—A Communist View

Los Angeles City College

Friday, March 1-11 a.m.

LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED
FOR INFORMATION: 485-1838

Britain's Winter of Class War

Speaker: JOSEPH SEYMOUR

Friday March 1, 8:00 p.m.
1914 Lounge, Thwing Hall
Case Western Reserve Univ.

Saturday March 2, 8:00 p.m.
King-Bosworth Lounge
Wilder Hall, Oberlin

CLEVELAND

West Coast Auto Local Rejects Preferential Seniority

FREMONT, Calif., February 25—The worst layoffs to hit the auto industry since the depression of the 1930's (more than 100,000 United Auto Workers members currently on indefinite layoff), coupled with the unwillingness of the Woodcock bureaucracy to fight this attack on UAW members' livelihoods, has led to a flurry of reformist schemes on how to deal with unemployment in several locals across the country. The main thing that these non-solutions have in common is that they do not fight layoffs at all, but simply accept the growing unemployment without proposing a program which could get back the job of even a single laid-off worker, much less prevent further job losses.

One particularly dangerous, divisive and anti-union scheme, coming from Southgate (Southern California) UAW Local 216, calls on individual union members to take both General Motors and the UAW to court, suing for a modified seniority system in which women and minorities would be able to accrue "double seniority" until some sort of pre-determined racial and sexual balance is reached! In other words, the white male workers are to pay for the companies' racist and sexist hiring practices.

This not only ignores the potential strength of a united rank-and-file fight against all layoffs, it divides the membership into special interest groups pitted against each other in a desperate struggle for a declining number of jobs. It also throws the door wide open to a vicious company and government attack on the unions' hard-won seniority

system which, although it will certainly reflect historic discrimination against minorities and women in hiring and despite (in many instances) de facto discriminatory provisions, is the only form of job security workers now have. Union militants must fight *within* the unions to eliminate discriminatory practices, such as departmental hiring which is often used to lock minorities into the worst jobs, but must not appeal to the bosses' courts to destroy the seniority system and overturn contract benefits won by union struggle.

An important resolution which rejects such objectively pro-capitalist, divide-and-conquer tactics as the above, was approved yesterday (though by a narrow margin) at the February meeting of Fremont Local 1364 of the UAW. The resolution, which was printed in a leaflet distributed at the GM plant today, reads as follows:

"The government is a tool of big business. The use of government agencies and branches such as the NLRB, Department of Labor and the courts against the union in any form is an anti-labor act which can only weaken the union and open it to attack. To rely on the same government to settle internal union problems also fosters illusions in the government as a neutral force between workers and the companies. There is no substitute for the mobilization of the union membership to fight for our needs.

"Preferential layoffs,' 'inverted seniority layoffs' and other such schemes accept the companies' employment cycle and result in unfair treatment of one section of the work force. This pits worker against worker, instead of all workers against the company. Isolated

strikes and individual job actions cannot bring lasting benefits to the workers. Layoffs and speed-up must be fought with solid union action: An industry-wide strike, linked up internationally, for shorter hours with full cost-of-living paid, to make jobs for all! To begin organizing such solid union action, UAW Local 1364 should establish an official committee to contact all other UAW locals to communicate this proposal and begin preparing for such an industry-wide strike against layoffs."

According to union members interviewed after the meeting, the disorderly state of the meeting and the bureaucratic cutting-off of discussion after only one person had spoken (a committeeman who argued vigorously in favor of the motion) prevented a full discussion of the important principle and demands contained in the resolution. Despite the confusion, however, the line-up of votes was revealing. Elements in the right wing of the Brotherhood Caucus, an opportunist grouping (supported uncritically in the pages of the October League's *Call*) currently in power in the local, reportedly voted against the motion. These same people,

who claim to be against Woodcock and against all layoffs (though opposing strike action!), are calling in leaflets and in the meetings for such non-solutions as "inverse seniority" at a time when the SUB (supplemental unemployment benefits) fund is running out, and for various plans for preferential treatment of women workers (see the report in *WV* No. 38, 15 February).

Another grouping within the union, some of whom support the *Bay Area Worker*, apparently found themselves caught off-guard by this concrete expression of many of the ideas they give verbal support to. Reportedly, some voted for the resolution, others against and still others abstained. Their main contribution to the meeting was a motion calling for preferential hiring of laid-off UAW members into all companies which are UAW shops, a motion which in itself is supportable, though hardly relevant to a situation of mass layoffs and minimal hiring. Local bureaucrats such as Earlie Mays, shop chairman, and Vern Diaz, president, called for nationwide action, though not specifying what kind of action, but abstained on the motion for a nationwide strike against layoffs. ■

Continuing Stalinist Persecution Campaign:

U.S.S.R. Bureaucracy Deports Solzhenitsyn

In a move calculated to outflank cold-war liberal critics of the Nixon-Brezhnev détente, the Stalinist rulers of the USSR on February 13 stripped dissident novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn of his citizenship and deported him to the West. With the aid of pro-détente West German chancellor Willy Brandt, who had conveniently indicated to Russian authorities his willingness to receive Solzhenitsyn, Brezhnev appears to have pulled off a major coup—he has eliminated a very irritating thorn in the side of the bureaucracy, depriving Senator Jackson and Co. of one more argument to use against Nixon's efforts to step up trade with the USSR, with hardly a murmur of opposition from Western liberals.

to violate even Stalin's 1936 USSR Constitution, which nowhere provides for deportation of life-long Russian citizens.

We give no support to Solzhenitsyn's pro-Western views, which are used by the bureaucracy to slander its socialist opponents, and sharply distinguish our revolutionary protest from the anti-communist campaign by Western liberals and social democrats around the Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov cases. We point out that anti-democratic decrees are aimed above all at the left-wing opponents of Stalinism, not the handful of prominent friends of Senator Jackson.

It is no accident that the only other known case of deportation by the Russian bureaucracy was that of Leon Trotsky in 1929. Stalin could no longer tolerate Trotsky's presence on Russian soil because even in Central Asian exile he managed to consistently expose the threat to the Soviet Union posed by the bureaucracy's policy of "détente" with the imperialists. In contrast to the leader of the Russian Revolution, who was hounded from one country after another until he was finally murdered by a Stalinist assassin in Mexico in 1940, Solzhenitsyn has received an effusive welcome from the European bourgeoisie.

We uphold the democratic right of freedom of expression for Soviet dissidents, even for opponents of socialism, such as Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn. The bureaucracies of the deformed workers states must not be permitted to dispose of troublemakers by exiling them. The history of the workers movement is too replete with examples of militants ousted from their homes, condemned to exile—without jobs, without money, without social ties, forcibly broken from their roots in their class and with little possibility of influencing the course of social struggles in their new locales—for us to view with indifference the fate of even this liberal victim of Stalinist arbitrariness.

As for the supposed danger to socialism which the bureaucracy claims would result from the publication of Solzhenitsyn's works in the USSR, we can only wholeheartedly agree with the comment of Roy Medvedev in his intelligent essay on *The Gulag Archipelago* (*New York Times*, 7 February 1974) that "Marxism will only benefit from debate with such an opponent as Solzhenitsyn." ■



Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Now Brezhnev has announced willingness to permit the writer's family to join him in Norway, a further step designed to assuage Western public opinion. Even Solzhenitsyn himself, who had earlier refused to leave his native country, appears relieved at the prospect of exile in the West (with public acclaim, a higher standard of living and considerable accumulated royalties) rather than a return to prison camp.

As communists we resolutely condemn this cowardly, anti-democratic and anti-socialist act of the Russian bureaucracy. We demand the right to full freedom of political expression in the Soviet Union, the only position consistent with the democratic ideals of socialism. How little Brezhnev's repression of dissident intellectuals has to do with the "Soviet legality" he claims to uphold is shown by the fact that to get rid of Solzhenitsyn he had

Demonstrate Solidarity, Support—

VICTORY

TO THE BRITISH MINERS!

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

4:30-6:00 p. m.

BRITISH CONSULATE

845 3rd Avenue (Between 51st and 52nd Streets)

Called by
**THE MINERS
SOLIDARITY ACTION
COMMITTEE**

ENDORSERS:

Ad Hoc Committee for Defense of Haitian Refugees
*Black Panther Party
*Catholic Worker
*Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
*Communications Workers of America Local 1101
CWA Local 1103
CWA Local 1150
*CFC—A Collective of Liberation Centers
Bill Epton
*Fight Back
Friends of Haiti
*Burton Hall, labor lawyer
Harlem Tenants' Union
*Irish Republican Clubs
Liberation News Service
*Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the National Maritime Union

Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, District Council 8
OCAW Local 438
OCAW Local 8-149
OCAW Maritime Local 8-801
Paul O'Dwyer, President, N. Y. City Council
Rank and File Committee for a Democratic Union within the N. Y. C. T. A.
Revolutionary Communist League (Internationalist)
Alfred Russel
*Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth
*United Farm Workers
War Tax Resistance

*written endorsement received

Tory Election Campaign

struggle to lead it in the direction of class independence from the bourgeoisie. A key tactic for small revolutionary organizations faced with the reality of mass reformist workers parties is, therefore, to give critical support to the latter during parliamentary elections. Such critical support does not imply one ounce of approval of the sell-out policies of their reformist leaders. Rather, on the one hand, it draws a class line and indicates the enemy to be fought (and whom the reformists do not want to fight) while, on the other, it enables the revolutionaries to expose the pretensions of the sundry Stalinists, social democrats, Labourites, etc., to represent the interests of the workers. Such a tactic, of course, is doubly important when the party is putting on leftist airs, creating illusions about its real policies.

Expose the Fakers—Labour to Power!

We call on British workers to vote Labour against the Tories in the February 28 elections precisely in order to demonstrate that Wilson and Callaghan do not represent the interests of labor. In voting Labour the vast bulk of the workers will be voting for a victory to the striking miners, against state wage controls and the Emergency Measures Act, against the attacks on the right to strike, for substantial wage increases and for an offensive against the corporations who are responsible for the misery of the workers' lot. But what the Labour Party will do is quite different: its leaders refuse to support the miners' strike, they imposed state wage controls their last time in office (and are now pushing voluntary arbitration),

they promise nothing about the right to strike and have no intention of carrying out even the limited nationalizations listed in the manifesto (much less expropriating the capitalists as a class). That is why it is necessary to build a revolutionary, not a reformist party. Many will not believe our predictions at first. By voting Labour they can learn from their own experience the inadequacies of reformist social-democratic labourism.

The case for critical support to the Labour Party, which is, of course, not obligatory at all times, is particularly evident in this election. The key struggle at the present time remains the fight for a general strike to achieve victory for the miners, to smash the state wage controls and Industrial Relations Act, to force repeal of the Emergency Measures Act, to smash Heath's nationwide lockout (the three-day work-week). Only a hopeless parliamentary cretin could believe that these issues can be settled in the interests of labor by higgling in the Commons.

But a clear Tory election victory at this time would certainly dampen industrial militancy considerably. It would be regarded by the mass of the workers as a sign of popular opposition to strikes and would probably strengthen the right wing of the labor bureaucracy. Militant sections such as the miners would be under enormous pressure from the Trades Union Congress (TUC) bureaucracy to compromise, if not surrender outright. Conversely, a Labour victory would (as Heath well knows and Wilson fears) release the class-struggle impulses locked up in the Phase Three compression chamber resulting in a wave of strikes.

The underlying purpose of critical support is not to pressure the Labour tops but to produce the political conditions for splitting the mass reformist parties into their component parts, the petty-bourgeois pro-capitalist leadership and the labor aristocracy on the one hand, and a section of the base which wishes to pursue the class struggle on the other. That is why we call for a Labour/TUC government pledged to a socialist program of expropriating the bourgeoisie. We call on the present misleaders of labor, both trade-union and political, to take power in their own name and to enact policies in the interests of the workers they supposedly represent. Of course, the Labour and TUC tops will not do this, for that would require a break from capitalism, which

they support. Consequently, in struggling for a program representing the true interests of labor, revolutionaries can expose the nature of the reformists' policies and set the stage for a split in the existing dominant Labour social-democratic and Stalinist parties.

The "Trotskyist" Candidates

Of the smaller workers parties running in the election the most important is the Communist Party. However, the CP is only quantitatively to the left of the BLP, does not oppose Labour's reformist policies, is just as attached to the "national interest," is no more willing to wage a battle directly against state wage controls, does not call for a general strike. The CP is the reserve party of British reformism and is no more fundamentally different from the Labour Party than are the blatantly reformist Italian and French CPs. Revolutionaries advocate critical electoral support for the BLP in order to *destroy* the illusions that the mass of the British workers have in that party. To call for critical support to the CP would be to create illusions that it is somehow qualitatively to the left of Wilson & Co., which it is not, and to build its political authority which, fortunately, is quite small.

Throughout the fall, the International Marxist Group (IMG) campaigned for a classic popular front against the Tories, which would have included the Liberals, Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, all unambiguously bourgeois parties (see "A Left Face for Labourism," *WV* No. 33, 23 November 1973). Despite its left line in the present crisis and its call for votes to Labour, we do not give critical support to the IMG candidates unless it repudiates in principle its recent popular frontism.

The P.T. Barnum of British "Trotskyism," one Gerry Healy, is currently running a sideshow billing his Workers Revolutionary Party as a serious competitor to the Labour Party. The WRP is running nine candidates, the best-known being actress Vanessa Redgrave. Despite Healy's opposition to agitating for a general strike during the sharpest industrial/political class battle in Britain in years, the WRP program does go beyond the confines of improved management of the capitalist state (a program shared by the BLP and CP) and calls for repeal of anti-labor laws, expropriation without compensation of food, banking and fuel industries, abolishing the standing army, Britain out of the Common Market and NATO—a series of transitional demands which go beyond Labourite parliamentarianism and pose the need for overthrowing capitalism. Therefore, notwithstanding Healy's betrayal-stained record of political banditry and physical gangsterism against opponents on the left, despite pervasive opportunism, e.g., the WRP's support for the Arab bourgeoisies in last year's Near East war, its support for Ho Chi Minh and the Red Guards, its electoralist line during the 1971 dockers' strike and repeated other instances of political opportunism and unprincipled sectarianism, we urge our British supporters to vote for WRP candidates in the few districts where they are running. ■

Perón ...

magnitude of the Chilean coup. However, the PST neglected to mention one "minor" subject—namely, the attitude to be taken toward the government itself! And this at a time when the CP is supporting Perón and the *key, overriding necessity* is to explain clearly to the masses the reactionary character of the bourgeois Peronist government and to warn sharply against placing any confidence in it!

Struggle Against the Misleaders: Key to the United Front

Under the pressure of events the social-democratic PST has made a partial left turn. It was only last May that these reformists offered their "proletarian solidarity" to Cámpora, yet six months later the PST was telling the workers that Perón will not grant concessions to labor and that "we cannot place any confidence in the present government" (*Avanzada Socialista*, 8-15 November 1973)!

A similar turn has been made by *Política Obrera*, which greeted Cámpora's election last spring as a "triumph of the working class." PO now states that, "the counterrevolution is today grouped around the government and subordinated to its policies. Perón is the political center, the only real one on which the bourgeoisie can count today, against the workers" (*Política Obrera*, 1 December 1973). PO now appears to grasp the seriousness of the present situation and the enormity of the imminent crushing defeat facing the working class if it does not break from Peronism. Despite its belief in the possibility of an "anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie" in the backward countries and its standard slogan of an "anti-imperialist united front" (both of these being textbook examples of Stalinism), PO sharply criticizes the CP's policies of coalition with different sectors of the bourgeoisie. It has even made some sharp attacks on left bureaucrats like Tosco and Rene Salamanca (of the SMATA auto workers' union) for their capitulation to the Peronist bureaucracy.

Política Obrera has proposed the formation of united-front class-struggle opposition groups in the unions directed against the government attacks on the labor movement. A true united front of all militant oppositionists and even left bureaucrats against these attacks is crucial today. But this cannot eliminate the need for simultaneously building trade-union tendencies based on the Transitional Program, that is, on the essential points of the program of the revolutionary party, which must be the program for the unions if they are not to be instruments in the hands of capital for disciplining and crushing the working class.

More specifically, without the existence of such an organized revolutionary pole in the unions the workers will be left helpless before the next sellout by left bureaucrats, who will join a struggle today only to betray it tomorrow. ■

Corrections

The article "Heath Calls Elections to Defeat Miners" in *WV* No. 38, 15 February 1974, contained an important typographical error, calling for a "limited, offensive general strike" when it should have read "limited, defensive general strike." In the same issue the article "Reformists Duck Layoffs Fight at Fremont GM," referred to three one-week layoffs on the passenger car assembly line. To date there have been only two such temporary layoffs since last fall.

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Continued from page 1

Miners' Chiefs Maneuver . . .

and made it clear that non-NUM members were not welcome on picket lines. On February 16 Jack Dunn, general secretary of the Kent area miners and a Communist Party member, told a meeting of the London Action Committee (a group composed primarily of London-area trade unionists and students, formed to back the miners' strike) that the NUM national executive had decided to cancel the scheduled February 25 solidarity rally until after the elections, and was also postponing until that time any further meetings of the Action Committee. Dunn also announced that the Kent miners were cutting back the number of pickets standing duty at power stations in London.

Because the British government has built up large stocks of coal reserves, the key to a successful strike lies in preventing the coal from being utilized at its destinations—generally either coke works or power stations. This requires mass picket lines, generally with the assistance of non-miners. The decisive battle in the 1972 strike was the shutting down of the coke depot at Sattley, an effort in which miners were assisted by over 10,000 factory workers from the surrounding area. Although the strike has yet to be challenged in an assertive way by the Heath government, its effectiveness has certainly been dampened by the strategy of the NUM leadership. NUM pickets are allowing deliveries of fuel oil to steel, coke and power plants if they are "not in excess of normal quantities." By allowing these plants to remain open, NUM leaders are making it clear that they wish to avoid a real struggle against the government.

While the miners' rank and file are growing frustrated with passive strike tactics, their leadership is ensconced in "relativity" inquiry hearings before the Pay Board in London. The relativity set-up enables particular unions to make special arguments that justify a change in their relative wage position. This serves as a way of permitting wage increases that exceed the maximum, in particular cases, without appearing to set a precedent. Unwilling to directly challenge Heath's state wage controls, which could lead to a sharp class battle reaching far beyond the confines of a simple contract dispute, the reformist NUM leaders repeatedly asserted in testimony before the Pay Board that miners qualified for "special" increases. As Lawrence Daley, secretary general of the union, put it, "we do not seek to base our case for a substantial all-around pay increase on pay relativities alone. We have therefore given much attention to the nature of mining as a job, to the manpower aspects of recruitment and retention of coalminers, and to the context of energy requirements and fuel policy" (*The Times* [London], 19 February).

In effect, the NUM bureaucrats argued that the national interest required that the Coal Board pay sufficiently high wages in order to attract workers to what, with the oil shortage, is an expanding industry. By employing arguments that appeal to national chauvinism and the special interests of miners, the NUM leaders are deliberately obscuring the issue that confronts the entire British working class—state wage controls and a concerted attack on the trade-union movement through the Industrial Relations Act and anti-picketing laws. The only result can be increased competition between workmen of different industries for a slice of a diminishing pie.

Role of the Communist Party

A large section of the leadership of the Mineworkers are members of the British Communist Party, including NUM vice-president Michael McGahey.

While the CP union leaders cautiously avoid making statements that they accept the principle of the relativities inquiry, their strategy is to avoid a sharp break with the Labour Party leadership. The CP miners stand only quantitatively to the left of social-democratic president Gormley—hoping to reap the benefits of rank-and-file dissatisfaction without unnecessarily rocking the boat. This is the mentality of second-line bureaucrats, not genuine class warriors.

At no time, of course, did the *Morning Star* (organ of the CP) denounce the NUM participation in the Pay Board hearings (which were not even required): In fact, the real position of the CP is that of any labor bureaucrat. According to CP general secretary John Gollan: "The issue in the miners' strike is not only long overdue justice for the men in the pits. It is also to save this industry, which is vital for Britain's future, where workers are leaving at the rate of 700 a week because of impossible wages" (*Morning Star*, 18 February). And of course, being so concerned with the national interest, McGahey and the CP were quick to back down when attacked by the Tories and social patriots for advocating that British soldiers not shoot at their class brothers.

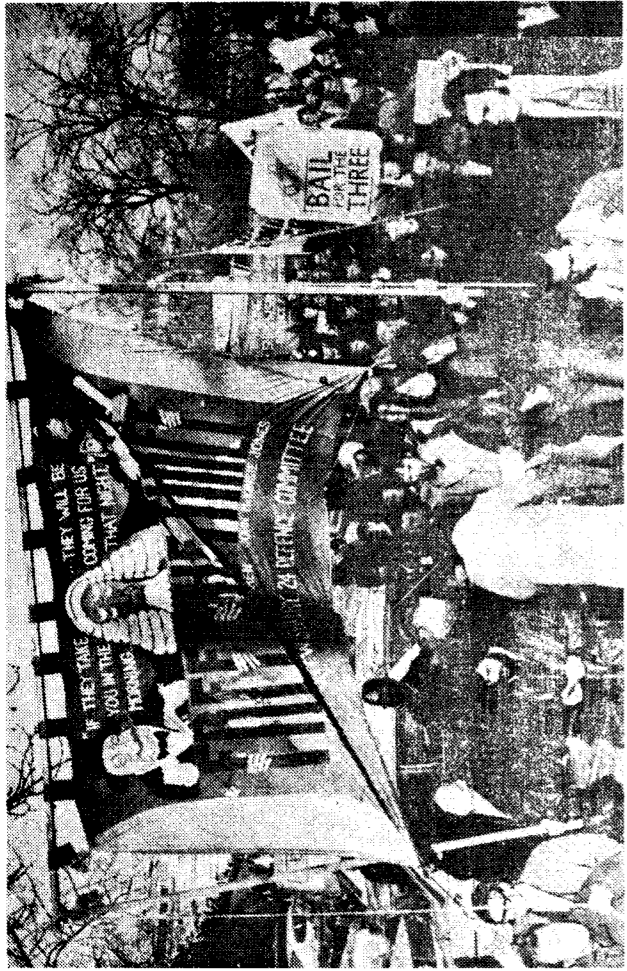
Jack Collins, a CP miner and member of the NUM national executive, asserted in an interview with *Workers Vanguard* earlier this week that he did not rule out mass picketing and even a call for a general strike if and when "the miners were smashed against the wall." But, at this time, Collins emphasized, he did not believe that such tactics were necessary—i.e., that the miners, because of their position in society, are



Hugh Scanlon

an exception to the laws of class struggle. As Collins put it: "I believe that if the miner was not to go on picket, the miner can win this struggle, because the nation has got to decide whether they want the mining industry, and if the answer is yes, they've got to decide where the men are coming from and they've got to pay the men."

In reality it is precisely because of the miners' strategic importance within the British economy that the bourgeoisie cannot permit them a decisive victory. While it may be forced to offer concessions under special circumstances ("the national interest"), this is but a tactical maneuver. Ultimately, the capitalists are quite prepared to use



London demonstrators support "Shrewsbury 24" defendants, arrested for picketing during 1972 construction strike.

armed force and vicious anti-labor laws in order to break the miners. The failure of the NUM leaders, including the CPers, to spearhead the resistance of the British labor movement through a general strike against the Industrial Relations Act and wage controls far from being "prudent," as they believe, in fact prepares the miners and British working class as a whole to go down in defeat before Heath's anti-union offensive.

Reformism and Strikebreaking

Not much better can be said for Collins' view of the capitalist state. In defending fellow CP member McGahey, whom Collins termed "a very moral character," he at first denied that the NUM vice-president had called on the soldiers not to fire on the British miners, later claiming he did not know what McGahey had said, that he had only heard the press reports, whose accuracy he could not attest to! Collins' version of McGahey's statement was that it was similar to what was done during the last coal strike in 1972: "He said to the police, for example, instead of harassing the miners, the pickets, you should be alongside the miners, alongside the pickets and defending the miners." To call on the police, the professional hired goons of the capitalist class, to defend picket lines can only serve to disorient the workers as to the true character of the bourgeois state (implying that the police are somehow neutral and could presumably support either side) and divert attention from the crucial task of urging the working class to organize armed defense of the picket lines.

In commenting on strikebreaking by the Polish Stalinist government, which had been exporting coal to Britain until it notified the NUM February 19 that no more Polish coal would be shipped during the strike, Collins said it had always been his position, as well as that of the British CP, that "coal should not come in from Poland." What this position meant in practice, however, had been clarified a few days earlier by CP industrial organizer Bert Ramelson. Commenting on the response of the Polish government to a British CP appeal to end coal shipments, Ramelson said: "We regret that so far our request hasn't been taken up. We recognize the contractual obligation of the government to deliver coal to its customers. Our appeal was to the Polish workers and not to the Polish state" (*Workers Press*, 15 February). Presumably the Polish CP (to whom the letter was addressed) will do one thing and the Polish state (under the CP's bureaucratic control) another.

Enter the Fake-Lefts

Despite the CP's clearly reformist policies in the unions, it has nevertheless won effusive praise from its supposed "left critics" in its role as "militant trade union leadership." In an article in the 8 February *Red Weekly*, organ of the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG), the following appears: "In many ways today's NUM left are in the same mould as Smith and Cook [miners' leaders in the

1926 strike]. They are not like the 'limp lefts' of yesterday or today—leaders who engage in very left-wing talk, take 'hard line' stands on paper, and are often willing to give rein to militants to carry on the struggle, but will not themselves give any kind of lead and run from any real fight. In this respect Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon seem like veritable reincarnations of their predecessors, Ernest Bevin, . . . and A.B. Swales. . . . The NUM lefts have, and will, lead real, hard-fought struggles."

And who exactly are the NUM lefts? One cited by the IMG is Emylyn Williams, president of the South Wales miners, who criticized the TUC for capitulating to Phase 3 and reportedly called for a general strike. But as the IMG was forced to admit, Williams later went along with the Pay Board reactivity hearings—which are part and parcel of Phase 3! Another NUM left cited is none other than the leading CP'er, Vice-President McGahey: The course of the miners' strike has shown, in fact, that McGahey and Williams are precisely the "limp lefts of yesterday and today"—just like the social democrats Jones and Scanlon today and Bevin in the '20's. Their militant trade unionism dissolves instantly in a political crisis—into supporting the Pay Board, apologizing to the bourgeoisie for raising the possibility of appealing to the class instincts of British soldiers and accepting token picket lines.

ASLEF is another example which provides a warning for centrist groupings like the IMG and the Chartists who support the left-wing bureaucrats over the right wing in the unions. The suspension of all industrial action by the rail engineers during the election period was preceded by the election of three "militants" onto the nine-man executive board of the union the month before. The elections gave the left wing a majority and were presumed to imply that more aggressive trade-union policies were to be pursued.

This was not to be the case. Hoping to avoid alienating London suburban voters (many of them commuters living in key swing districts) in the upcoming parliamentary elections, all but two of the left wingers voted to call off the ASLEF's one-day work stoppages.

As V.I. Lenin emphasized decades ago in *What is to Be Done?* there is a fundamental, qualitative distinction between trade-union consciousness and socialist consciousness. In a political crisis the "trade-union militants" capitulate to the parliamentary appetites of the reformist British Labour Party, the chief agency of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of the workers movement.

What is needed is to wage a political struggle within the unions against all aspects of reformism. A genuinely class-conscious miners' leadership would be in an excellent position to galvanize support within the TUC for a strike of all British workers against wage controls, the Industrial Relations Act and the Tory government. The IMG rejects such a strategy, saying: "Thus demands on the TUC must be coupled with practical proposals for action which can be undertaken by those who

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Miners' Chiefs Maneuver ...

are convinced by such demands. Militants must be urged to go beyond calls on the leadership and actually launch and organize the struggle themselves" (*Red Weekly*, 8 February).

In effect, the IMG calls on "militants" like McGahey & Co. to ignore the TUC leadership (with whom they are in cahoots) and wage isolated strikes. While this perspective is clearly absurd, the idea that the more militant and better-organized section of the workers can take things into its own hands, without preparing the masses of more backward workers for joint action on a class-struggle basis, is positively dangerous. Outbursts of spontaneous fury by rank-and-file miners and railwaymen at being sold out by their leaders are in fact a real possibility and one in which, unfortunately, they would be quickly isolated and smashed.

Another manifestation of the inability of the ostensibly revolutionary left in Britain to develop a political strategy is in the Shrewsbury defense case. In this trial, 24 construction workers are being tried for violating an 1875 law, on counts of conspiracy, unlawful assembly and affray, for their participation in flying picket squads used in a 1972 strike. This, along with a recent ruling by the House of Lords limiting the rights of picketers attempting to assuage lorry drivers from crossing picket lines, is part of the ruling-class assault on the independence of British trade unions. The February 2 Liverpool Conference on Shrewsbury could come up with nothing more than a "national day of action in March" in answer to these attacks on the right to strike.

This course of rallies called periodically every few months, regardless of the political situation, is favored by the CP. However, in an industry like construction in Britain, which is poorly organized, where there is no union hiring hall, where a vicious system of competitive self-employment called "lumping" is widespread, a call for a one-day strike has no impact whatever. At a recent rally in London, CP'er Lou Lewis (secretary of the London Shrewsbury

24 Committee) outlined this reformist strategy in detail, including "pressuring" Parliament to repeal the 1875 law. IS, which has members among the defendants, counterposed continuous strike action by building trades workers at the Liverpool Conference, but failed to raise the key demand of a strike by all British workers against the anti-union laws.

Labour and the Elections

It would perhaps be helpful to examine the program of the Labour Party to which the sundry left groups are capitulating. The "Labour Party Manifesto 1974" mentions as little of the class struggle as it can get away with. It does not even come out unequivocally in support of the wage demands of the miners! In fact, it calls for voluntary restraint on the part of unions along with price controls. It advocates replacing the Tories' Industrial Relations Act by an Employment Protection Act and an Industrial Democracy Act (with "independent" rather than government arbitration!), renegotiating terms of entry into the Common Market, phasing down defense spending while "maintaining support for NATO as an instrument of détente no less than of defense," etc. There is so little real opposition to the fundamentals of capitalist policy here that the Labour Party has managed to attract the support of right-wing Tory nationalist Enoch Powell on the basis of common "opposition" to the EEC!

The Communist Party program is only quantitatively to the left of that of the Labour Party. It, too, calls for strict price controls, along with other utopian reform gimmicks like "taxing the rich" and prohibiting investments abroad. The CP complained that its voice of reason had been ignored in 1967 when it pointed out that closing the coal pits and relying on oil "were a recipe for disaster." In a word, the CP writes, "the Tories care nothing for the national interest" ("Vote Communist," February 1974). The CP also calls for reforms like cutting the arms bill in half (!), dissolving NATO and the Warsaw Pact, a phased withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and the usual quantitative extension of nationalizations.

The IMG, which pays lip service to the general strike, is running three candidates in the election. One glaringly

unprincipled act is its offer to support the imprisoned Irish nationalist Dolours Price, if she stands for election in West Belfast as the (bourgeois) Republican candidate. Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party, in turn, sharply criticized the IMG some time ago for refusing to call for a general strike against the Industrial Relations Act when it was first made into law; however, the WRP now in its one election campaign refuses to call for a gen-

more closely to the parliamentarians.) Now, during the heat of an election period Workers Fight writes in its February 16-23 issue: "Also, we must see clearly that now, today, when we don't have a general strike, the immediate question of government is not general strike and a workers government based on workers councils, but Labour vs. Tories." Having warned of the dangers of parliamentarianism, Workers Fight then capitulates to it, adapting to the



MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

eral strike in response to Heath's attacks!

Perhaps the prime example of capitulation before parliamentarianism is offered by the tiny Workers Fight group, an ostensibly Trotskyist organization. A month ago Workers Fight was vigorously advancing the slogan of a general strike against the Industrial Relations Act. It was so opposed to parliamentarianism that it refused to draw the political conclusion and also call for the ouster of the Tories and their replacement by a Labour Party government—on the grounds that the Tories and labor traitors would attempt to use political slogans to derail industrial actions and channel them into electoral politics. (Of course, it is inevitable that reformists will act like reformists—but refusing to raise a political alternative to Tory rule only chains the masses

passivity of the more backward British workers. It is certainly self-defeating to abstain on principle from bourgeois parliamentary activity in the absence of a genuine revolutionary alternative. It is often necessary to call on the workers to vote for a rotten-reformist workers party against the bourgeois parties in order to draw, even in a primitive way, a class line. But Trotskyists call for critical support to Labour against the Tories not because they believe that a general strike and workers councils are now suddenly irrelevant, but to expose the pusillanimous back-stabbing Labour Party and Trade Union Congress leadership and precisely in order to dispel the illusion that the struggle can be confined to "Labour vs. Tories." In the last analysis, the class struggle will be resolved in the streets and factories. ■

International Women's Day

March 8

"... the 'woman' question in the workers' milieu develops in a completely different soil and bears quite a different character than it does among the bourgeoisie.... The conscious working woman sees that contemporary society is divided into classes. Each class has its special interests. The bourgeoisie one, the working class another. Their interests are opposed.... Solidarity between working men and working women, common activity, common goals, a common path to these goals—such is the solution to the 'woman' question among workers."

—Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Rabotnitsa* (The Working Woman), 23 February/8 March 1914

From Feminism to Trotskyism

Speaker: M. SALZBERG
former member, East Oakland Women

Wednesday, March 13

Wayne State University
Hilberry A
7:30 p.m.

DETROIT

Thursday, March 14

Michigan State University
Faculty Lounge
7:30 p.m.

ANN ARBOR

For information call: 921-4626



Women, Culture and Class Society

Speaker: HELEN CANTOR
Spartacist League
Central Committee
Editorial Board
Women and Revolution

Saturday, March 9

Centers for Change
314 West 91st Street
7:30 p.m.

NEW YORK

For information call: 925-5665

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SL Debates Trade-Union Tactics, Pabloism...

the unions and isolated from the bulk of the working class.

From "Deep Entrism" to "New Mass Vanguard"

The IMG error is symptomatic of the USec's centrism since the late 1960's. Without ever explicitly rejecting its Pabloite heritage of "deep entrism" (i.e., burying itself) in the mass reformist workers parties in the 1950's, the USec has since made an impressionistic turn to radicalizing layers of primarily student youth outside the mass parties and unions. While "deep entrism" entailed abandonment of a public Trotskyist presence in a period of stagnation (when it was most needed), as well as explicit rejection of struggle for the Trotskyist program within the reformist parties, the current tailing after the guerrillaist whimsies of radical youth substitutes a verbally super-revolutionary outside posturing in a period of ferment when the struggle to bring Trotskyism into the mass formations of the working class is paramount. Under such slogans as "red university" and "from the periphery to the center" it was asserted that students as such would play a leading role in sparking class struggle and that influence in marginal (peripheral) layers of the working class would somehow magically "grow over" into influence in the main sections of the working class.

The latest version of this substitutionism, the "new mass vanguard," is treated as a central tenet by the USec majority in its dispute with the SWP-led minority. It explicitly asserts that ever-larger layers—still mostly students, of course, but "growing over" into the working class—are increasingly engaging in anti-capitalist struggle, *acting independently of* (i.e., bypassing) the old reformist bureaucracies of the trade unions and bourgeois workers parties. To win hegemony over these layers, which are neither new, nor par-

ticularly massive today, nor a vanguard, is the central task of the period according to the USec majority.

(This development had its parallel in the origins of the RMG. The LSA's craven, "deep-entrist" capitulation to the reformism of the Waffle Caucus leadership in the NDP was based in part on the feeling that the rise of working-class militancy would of necessity have to pass through the NDP. Counterposing itself to the LSA's "deep-entrist" reformism, the RMG's main efforts since its foundation have centered on a largely futile search for a Canadian version of the elusive "new mass vanguard.")

Knox cited the Ligue Communiste's intervention into the Debré Law struggles in France last summer as an example of how the "new mass vanguard" orientation is not only an attempt to bypass struggle in the unions but is also a capitulation to petty-bourgeois layers. Introduction of the Debré Law, which would have ended army deferments for many students (but not for all: its overall effect was to increase class inequality in the draft), became the subject of mass student protests.

The USec majorityites cite the effect of the protests on the French Communist Party—forcing it into joint action which it had at first opposed—as proof of the increasing difficulty of the reformist bureaucracies in ignoring the "new mass vanguard." But the CP was just doing its job, using its domination of the main trade-union federation, the CGT, to help keep the struggle within reformist bounds.

The Ligue Communiste, moreover, capitulated to the spontaneous reformism of the moment by limiting its mass intervention to two slogans: "Down with the Debré Law" and "Re-establish and Extend Deferments to All Youth," refusing to struggle explicitly against the bourgeois army itself anywhere beyond the confines of the student strike committees. (It also tailed after the CP and social-democratic trade-union leaders in raising the ultra-reformist slogan: "For the Right to Choose the Age of Entry into the Army for All Youth.") "Gaining hegemony" over the "new mass vanguard" evidently means little more than adaptation to episodic motion within the petty bourgeoisie for the sake of bringing left-reformist pressure on the CP from *outside* the unions.

In contrast, the Spartacist League calls for the building of caucuses on the

basis of the Trotskyist Transitional Program in the unions as a central tactic in building proletarian leadership and a vanguard party. The speaker pointed to the need for clarity, since "caucus" usually refers to a temporary amalgam of would-be bureaucrats seeking union office. He cited articles in the RMG paper *Old Mole* on the recent Artistic Woodworkers' strike in Toronto as a bad example—caucuses are called for, but the programmatic basis is left completely unspecified. The article gives no sense at all of the need for a long-range program transcending the "normal" preoccupation with immediate trade-union issues.

United Front vs. Class-Struggle Caucus

Unlike a united front, which seeks to unite the mass of the workers around the most immediate slogans of struggle against the employers, a caucus, as an alternative *leadership* organization, should seek to recruit the most advanced workers to a program for transforming the unions into weapons of the class struggle, with an international, working-class political perspective. Like the TUEL, class-struggle caucuses of militant unionists should represent the political program of the vanguard party, as it applies to that particular union and industry. They are thus an integral part of the struggle to build a mass vanguard party, standing at the head of the working class and its mass organizations.

Knox devoted considerable time to specific questions facing the militants in the trade unions in the U.S. and the approach class-struggle caucuses must take. He discussed the increasing attempts by the government to exploit the struggle against racial and sexual discrimination by turning minorities and women against the unions; attempts by new bureaucratic layers—such as those represented by Arnold Miller of the United Mine Workers and James Morrissey of the National Maritime Union—to ride into power through the use of increasing government intervention in the unions. He also dealt with the conditions for giving critical support to candidates for union office and the need for internationalism and a socialist perspective in order to transcend the inability of narrow trade unionism to deal with the tasks facing the working class.

He cited as examples two caucuses supported by the Spartacist League—the Militant Action Caucus in the Communication Workers of America in California and the Militant-Solidarity Caucus in the National Maritime Union. These caucuses oppose the government's divisive "Affirmative Action" programs and preferential hiring plans, calling instead for uniting all workers in the struggle against discrimination and for creating full employment at the employers' expense, chiefly through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. They oppose all forms of government intervention in the labor movement, including taking the union to court to redress individual grievances—an anti-union practice to which, it seems, every two-bit opposition faker is now resorting. They call for international strike solidarity, oppose all forms of nationalism and protectionism and raise the demand for a workers party based on the trade unions to replace reformist dependence on capitalist politicians with struggle for a working-class political program and a workers government.

Unlike most of the U.S. left, the SL refused to give critical support to Miller or Morrissey in recent elections because neither made the slightest attempt to break with class collaboration. Wherever possible, class-struggle militants should seek to run for office on their own program, extending critical support to other candidates only when the office-seekers claim to be for major elements of a class-struggle program and it is necessary to expose their real opportunism to the workers. The speaker reported that in the last elections in the NMU, the Militant-Solidarity Caucus candidate for president, running on the basis of a full class-struggle program, got 358 votes.

The discussion very quickly revealed the vicarious nature of RMG politics. RMG speakers vigorously defended the IMG and Ligue Communiste against Spartacist League criticisms, but completely failed to take seriously the accusations of their own lack of program for the unions, which were spelled out by Spartacist speakers familiar with the Toronto left. They concentrated on taking random swipes at the SL perspective, consequently

continued on next page

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY RALLY

Sprout Plaza
University of California

Thursday, March 7

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WOMEN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Speaker: D. L. REISSNER
Editor, *Women and Revolution*

Friday, March 8

University of Buffalo
Norton 248
8 p.m.

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Sunday, March 10

University of Toronto
Hart House Debates Room
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TORONTO

Which Road for Women's Liberation: Feminism or the Class Struggle?

Speaker: NISSY GERARD
Spartacist League

Guest Speaker: WANDA RUTLAND
former feminist organizer,
member Militant Action Caucus, CWA Local 9415

Thursday, March 7

Western Addition, YWCA
1830 Sutter Street
(between Buchanan and Webster)
7:30 p.m.

SAN FRANCISCO

Friday, March 8

Stiles Hall
(Bancroft and Dana)
7:30 p.m.

BERKELEY

Toward A Revolutionary Women's Movement

Speaker: MARTY FARRELL
Revolutionary Communist Youth

Call 728-2151 for location, information.

March 12

CHICAGO

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SL Debates Trade-Union Tactics, Pabloism ...

revealing an unsystematic and contradictory approach on their own part.

The RMG's Self-Contradictions

Joe Flexer, an ex-CP member, Red Circle leader and the leading member of the RMG Political Committee, began by trying to discredit the presentation through a smokescreen of extraneous issues and glorification of the IMG. He denounced Knox for omitting mention of the IMG's full program without attempting to meet the speaker's arguments. Without providing a shred of evidence (there isn't any), he asserted that the RMG calls for "revolutionary" caucuses. Other speakers then contradicted this by criticizing the Militant-Solidarity Caucus for putting forward a "pure" program, essentially the program of a vanguard party, when it could have given critical support to some larger formation.

Another speaker then flatly asserted that the RMG has no intention of raising its full program in the unions, since that would be sectarian and out of place. This elicited a sharp response from Knox, who denounced the RMG for revealing its lack of even the slightest aspiration to raise a revolutionary program in the unions. He pointed out that revolutionists always seek to run in elections themselves, giving critical support to other candidates only when the relationship of forces requires this tactic.

Later, Flexer admitted that "perhaps the Militant-Solidarity Caucus isn't doing anything wrong in the NMU," but that "tactical flexibility" was required for different times and places. He failed to indicate, however, on what basis revolutionists should decide to

tail trade-union spontaneity in one instance (as the RMG did in the Artistic Woodworkers' strike) while choosing to struggle for their program in a principled fashion in others! Finally he excused the RMG's lack of a worked-out perspective by referring to its "youthful" character as a group. Revolutionists in the U.S. have had their fill of this dodge from the left-Shachtmanite Revolutionary Socialist League. A "revolutionary" group which lacks a program and perspective on major questions has no basis for existence in the first place.

Other RMG speakers for the most part concentrated on uncritical defense of their idols in Britain and France. A former leader of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency of the LSA defended the IMG's call for councils of action as the equivalent of a call for soviets—mass organizations of the working class, cutting across union lines, for the purpose of establishing and administering the workers state and the final abolition of capitalism. She went on to denounce the SL for capitulation to parliamentary reformism in its call for a general strike for limited aims, i.e., to bring down the Tory government and open the way for the struggle for a Labour Party/TUC government pledged to a socialist program.

SL spokesmen pointed out that the IMG's non-existent councils supposedly generated outside the control of the existing union leadership, will be unable to provide the mass organs for launching a general strike and will certainly not transform themselves magically into soviets, posing a situation of dual power and accomplishing the overthrow of the bourgeoisie: for that a mass revolutionary party, leading the proletariat, would be required. Without revolutionary leadership, a general strike at this time for unlimited aims would invite a crushing defeat at the hands of the predominant trade-union/Labour Party bureaucracy. A general strike even for limited aims would certainly pose the question of power directly and if successful create a pre-revolutionary situation.

As to the charge of capitulation to parliamentarianism, the SL responded in part by pointing to the unprincipled relationship between the RMG and the Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire, a Quebec splitoff from the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, French-speaking wing of the LSA. The November 1973 issue of *Old Mole* reprinted without criticism a statement of the GMR's position on the national elections which rejected intervention in the elections on principle and called for abstention. Furthermore, the unspecified "relationship" of the RMG, GMR and the USec majority reveals the fulsome rottenness of factional politics in the "United" Secretariat.

The GMR grew out of a tendency in the LSA/LSO which opposed the latter's complete subservience to bourgeois nationalism, but asserted at the same time the need for a *separate* party in Quebec, despite the unified state power in Canada which both French and English-speaking Canadian workers must unite to overthrow. In order to peacefully coexist with the GMR group in his faction, Ernest Mandel suddenly made the discovery that Lenin and Trotsky had indeed opposed all nationalism, while advocating the *right* of nations to self-determination. (In order to excuse the craven capitulation to nationalism of major USec sections such as the SWP, which Mandel can't claim to have discovered only yesterday, he made an "exception" for U.S. blacks and chicanos!) Furthermore, he "overlooked" the nationalist position of the GMR's founders in favor of a separate Quebec section. The RMG was unable to make any answer to Knox' adducing these damning examples of self-contradictory USec opportunism.

RMG Leadership Turns Tail

The discussion went on for two full rounds, with Flexer leading off on both. On the second round he attempted to defend the USec by inviting the SL to join it, presumably hoping to calm

the SL's criticisms of the rotten bloc with friendly overtures despite political differences, thereby demonstrating its truly rotten character! Immediately after his intervention on the second round and an SL speaker's response, however, Flexer walked out of the discussion, together with two other RMG leaders, leaving the rest of the RMG delegation to fend for itself. The impression of retreat under fire by the central core of RMG leadership was not lost on the remaining participants in the discussion!

It was after Flexer & Co.'s ignoble departure that an RMG speaker made a slightly more sophisticated, but no less rotten, attempt to defend the USec. "In a large international, there are many differences," she said, "there were differences in Lenin's party too: Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the insurrection of 1917!"

This met with a spirited response from the SL. An SL speaker began, "I just want to make twenty-one points," referring to the famous conditions of entry to the Communist International which were just one of the ways Lenin and Trotsky struggled to forge a politically consistent and homogeneous world party. Lenin, after all, had called for the expulsion of Zinoviev and Kamenev when the latter broke party discipline to denounce the planned insurrection! No such "draconian" measures could be expected from either wing of the USec—unless, of course, the victims belonged to the opposing faction, in which case they would be denied all rights: witness the Red Circle/Old

Mole/RCT's experience with the bureaucratic LSA!

The struggle to build revolutionary proletarian leadership on the basis of a consistent, principled program must be waged on the international plane as well as in the trade unions. This is the lesson the RMG has yet to learn. The errors of the RMG in tailing spontaneity in lieu of a program for the trade unions and of the Ligue Communiste in tailing youth vanguardism flow from the same failure to put politics first in all arenas as the only way to resolve the historic crisis of proletarian leadership. Reformist trade unionists and mythical "radicalized" layers will not magically "grow over" into a mass revolutionary party with the program of Lenin and Trotsky!

The RMG has a rather revealing self-definition: it seeks to be a "pole of attraction on the left." This expresses the RMG's self-conception as the most left-wing expression of whatever milieu or arena it happens to be in. What is missing is a conception of struggle between the revolutionists and the fake leftists: a hard line of *counter-position* of the revolutionary program *against* the predominant misconceptions of the given arena. Most of the leaders of the RMG are used to being the left wing of the organizations they have been in and are not accustomed to systematic criticism from the left. Their experience has distorted their perceptions; exposure to the genuine Trotskyism of the Spartacist League should help. ■

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REVOLUTIONARY
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RCY FORUM

American Workers and the Class Struggle

GUEST SPEAKER:
Gene Herson,
Militant-Solidarity Caucus
of the National Maritime Union

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CAFETERIA DINING ROOM A/B

Friday, March 8-1 p.m.

Class Struggle in the National Maritime Union

Guest Speaker: GENE HERSON, Militant-Solidarity Caucus, NMU

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7:00 p.m.
Oakland YWCA
1515 Webster

Oakland

Saturday March 2
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Buchanan YMCA
1530 Buchanan

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Women and Revolution

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Trotskyists Hold International Conference

An interim Conference, centered on the European work and perspectives of Revolutionary Marxists, took place this January in Germany. Comrades from or in seven countries participated.

The programmatic basis for the interim Conference was drawn from a political agreement on the basis for undertaking common work in Germany by the Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists and the Spartacist League/U.S. This document, setting forth eight specific points, is as follows:

"DECLARATION OF POLITICAL BASIS FOR COMMON WORK IN GERMANY"

"I. The Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists (ÖBL) will undertake political work in Germany in common with the Spartacist League/U.S. on the basis of programmatic agreement with the 1966 'Declaration of Principles' of the SL/U.S., subsequently adopted also by the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand. Fundamental to this Declaration of Principles are the decisions of the Communist International during the period of its first four Congresses and the 'Transitional Program,' adopted by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

"II. In particular the following points are singled out for special emphasis or amplification in connection with our common work:

1) Recognition of the necessity of the rebirth of the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloist revisionism. Rejection of the claims of all ostensibly Trotskyist international groupings to represent programmatically the continuity of, or to be, the Fourth International.

2) Unconditional defense of the degenerated or deformed workers states against capitalist imperialism must be coupled with recognition of the necessity for political revolution against the bureaucracies of all these states, from Moscow and East Berlin to Belgrade, Hanoi, Havana and Peking.

3) Rejection of the ultra-left position that the Social Democratic parties are bourgeois parties through and through. Recognition of the dual character of reformist workers parties, such as Social Democratic parties gen-

erally, as being simultaneously bourgeois and workers parties or, in Lenin's terms, 'bourgeois workers parties.'

4) Recognition that the Trotskyist tactic of entristm flows from the historic task of revolutionists facing massive Social Democratic, Labour or Stalinist parties is, under ripe conditions, to split such parties into their essentially bourgeois and proletarian elements. This task is vital to the creation of mass revolutionary proletarian parties and thereby to advancing on the road to the proletarian revolution itself.

5) Rejection of the longtime Pabloist conception of entristm ('sui generis') to pressure reformist, revisionist or nationalist bureaucracies so that a left section is supposed to be assisted in becoming the 'unconscious agent' of an allegedly automatic process of permanent revolution, i.e., the denial of the centrality of the proletariat and the substitution for its programmatically-based revolutionary party in the struggle for socialism. Rejection of the ultra-left, and often petty-bourgeois radical, Pabloist complement which rejects the tactic of entristm as such.

6) Recognition of the validity of the tactic of revolutionary regroupment. This is a tactic which is particularly applicable as a means for furthering political differentiation and clarification through a process of splits and fusions among ostensibly revolutionary groups when conditions have produced a turmoil on the left. 'To set the base against the top' is the essence of this tactic as it is for other Leninist-Trotskyist tactics as well, such as the united front and entristm.

7) Recognition of the need to struggle for a class opposition to all popular fronts, from Allende's *Unidad Popular* to the *Union de la Gauche* in France. No electoral support to any of the parties of popular fronts. Projection instead, where there is no mass revolutionary proletarian pole, of a policy of 'conditional opposition' to the reformist and revisionist parties in such a popular front, i.e., to raise the demand that such parties break from their coalition with bourgeois elements as a condition for critical support to them by class-conscious militants.

8) Acceptance of the Bolshevik-Leninist conception of democratic cen-

tralism: full freedom of internal discussion, full unity in action. Rejection of 'freedom of criticism' outside the party as a perversion of Leninist democratic centralism and a throwback to the pre-First World War Second International.

"III. Since the above points constitute a relatively advanced level of programmatic agreement, we recognize our responsibility to struggle actively for the constitution as soon as possible of a democratic-centralist international Spartacist tendency, based on an elaborated common programmatic outlook among several national sections. At present, this necessarily entails the fullest possible consultation regarding this development."

—Agreed to by the Political Bureau of the SL/U.S. on 10 September 1973; and ratified by the Plenum of the ÖBL on 8 December 1973. (Edited for publication by the International Department of the SL/U.S. on 14 February 1974.)

Following discussion this Declaration in draft form was endorsed by the interim Conference unanimously with one abstention.

A companion document was also endorsed (unanimously). Its political provisions note:

"[Our] aim... is the constitution of a fighting propaganda group resolutely based on 'the historic tasks which flow from [the objective] situation irrespective as to whether or not the workers are today ripe for this. Our tasks don't depend on the mentality of the workers. The task is to develop the mentality of the workers. Any programmatic adaptation or capitulation to the present consciousness of the masses in the name of 'tactics' must be rejected.

"The work of communists in trade unions must aim at the construction of a class-struggle group with a membership defined by participation in the group and by agreement with the program of the group; a program which is an application of the Transitional Program to the concrete trade-union situation and which aims at posing the class-struggle group as an alternative revolutionary leadership of the union.

"The goal of the united-front tactic

is to implant the revolutionary program in the masses. Hence the decisive element of the action of revolutionists within the united front is the struggle for the revolutionary program in opposition to that of reformists or centrists. Without the struggle for the revolutionary program, any reference to the united front as a means to achieve 'the broadest possible unity of the class' is simply an adaptation to pre-World War I Kautskyist revisionism."

Preparation for the interim Conference included the production of a substantial first issue of the German edition of *Spartacist*. It contains the following material:

"Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International" (1963 Tendency Resolution in the SWP);

"Contribution to the International Committee Conference" (1966 Spartacist Remarks in London);

Material on the German IKD and Spartacus-BL (1972 Spartacist Letter and 1973 Conference Greetings);

"To the International Organizing Committee supported by the French OCI" (1973 Spartacist Letter);

"Reformist Appetites versus Guerilla-Oriented Centrism" (reprint of 1973 leftist factional material on the struggle within the United Secretariat);

"Turns the Guns Around!" (ÖBL statement on the October 1973 war in the Near East).

The work of the interim Conference notably included endorsement of the publication, by Berlin supporters, of the periodical *Kommunistische Korrespondenz*, the first issue of which is in preparation.

The interim Conference concluded, upon a high note of determination for the furtherance of our common international work, with the singing of "The Internationale."

—statement by the International Department of the SL/U.S., 16 February 1974

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...Anti-Nazi Militants

quires its real significance as the last resort of a bankrupt social system.

We of course do not call for "free speech" for the Nazis, whose propaganda and recruitment must be nipped in the bud. But it is both ludicrous and dangerous to call on the bourgeois state to limit the democratic rights of even the fascists. The bourgeoisie has always shown leniency toward the fascists and used "anti-extremist" legislation against the left. Instead we call for mobilizing the labor movement to deal with the fascists, ultimately through the formation of workers militias. Although fascist organizations in the U.S. are relatively small at this point, militants should not delude themselves into thinking that the battle is simply between the left and a couple dozen deranged fascist scum. The bourgeois state has large organized police forces to bring to the defense of the Nazis as was demonstrated at the January 8 meeting.

At the February School Board meeting only supporters of the Spartacist League/Revolutionary Communist Youth raised the urgent need for a united

defense of both the arrested PL/WAM militants and Yvonne Golden, while linking Nazism to its fundamental cause, the capitalist system. At an "Yvonne Golden Defense Committee" meeting a week earlier, an SL spokesman had called for a united defense of all victimized militants, a demand which evoked considerable support from the audience. Despite the efforts of the chairman to weasel out of the situation by invoking "legal" reasons to justify the committee's failure to support the PL/WAM defendants, there were insistent demands for a vote on the question. Evidently worried that the meeting would overturn the committee's sectarian position, the leaders (prominent among them being supporters of the Communist Party) decided to rescue themselves from an embarrassing situation by adjourning the meeting! In an effort to curry favor with the Yvonne Golden forces (who want a separate defense) even the WAM victims present refused to speak for a united defense.

At the most recent Board of Education meeting, an SL spokesman pointed out that proletarian revolution is the only real solution to racial discrimination and Nazism. She warned against calling on the capitalist Board of Education to evict Nazis, citing as an example the fact that Allende's gun-control law in Chile, ostensibly aimed at rightists, was used by the police and military to disarm the workers prior to the September coup. A second SL speaker demanded that the School Board drop charges against Yvonne

Golden and the PL/WAM supporters.

Kathleen Burnham of the CWA Militant Action Caucus got the mike to announce that the MAC had collected 250 signatures from phone workers in defense of the victimized militants, but before she could finish her sentence the microphone was once again cut off. (It was at this point that the Nazis suddenly got up and left, with TV cameras whirring about them.) A speaker from the RCY protested the cutoff of the MAC speaker but to no avail. She went on to note how capitalism forces blacks into the lower rungs of society and that racism is ultimately an economic question. She called for worker-student-teacher control of the schools, open admissions with stipends, a link-up with trade-union struggles and non-discriminatory union hiring halls, as well as defense of the arrested militants. After a few more speakers from WAM and "SDS" were cut off at the mike, someone called for a walkout, at which point most groups (including the SL/RCY) left the hall.

PL's reformism unwittingly helps to pave the way for the fascists. Only the working class can provide a real solution to racism, by attacking the capitalist system itself. As opposed to PL's "program" of "fighting racist ideas" in alliance with liberals, Marxists put forward a class program which strikes at the social and economic roots of racism, while relentlessly fighting all forms of discrimination and calling on the workers, not the bosses, to organize to crush the fascist filth. ■

Spartacist Local Directory

BERKELEY-	
OAKLAND.....	(415) 653-4668
	Box 852, Main P.O.
	Berkeley, CA 94701
BOSTON.....	(617) 492-3928
	Box 188, M.I.T. Sta.
	Cambridge, MA 02139
BUFFALO.....	(716) 837-1854
	Box 412, Station C
	Buffalo, NY 14209
CHICAGO.....	(312) 728-2151
	Box 6471, Main P.O.
	Chicago, IL 60680
CLEVELAND.....	(216) 651-9147
	Box 6765
	Cleveland, OH 44101
DETROIT.....	(313) 921-4626
	Box 663A, General P.O.
	Detroit, MI 48232
LOS ANGELES.....	(213) 485-1838
	Box 38053, Wilcox Sta.
	Los Angeles, CA 90038
NEW HAVEN.....	(203) 624-7015
	c/o RCY
	Box 1363
	New Haven, CT 16505
NEW ORLEANS.....	(504) 866-8384
	Box 51634, Main P.O.
	New Orleans, LA 70151
NEW YORK.....	(212) 925-2426
	Box 1377, G.P.O.
	New York, NY 10001
SAN FRANCISCO.....	(415) 653-4668
	Box 1757
	San Francisco, CA 94101

WORKERS VANGUARD

SL Debates Trade-Union Tactics, Pabloism with RMG at Toronto Forum

The international faction fight, now in its last stages, in the so-called "United Secretariat" has resulted in several splits in national sections, which are not likely to be healed despite any compromises arrived at by the leaders of the international factions at the USec Congress being held in Europe. This nominally Trotskyist federated rotten bloc is being ground to pieces in struggle between a centrist tendency led by Mandel-Maitan-Frank and based on key European sections, and the out-and-out reformists of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and its supporters.

In English-speaking Canada, a split-off from the pro-SWP official section, the LSA (League for Socialist Action), joined a fusion of leftward-moving New Left groups to form the Revolutionary Marxist Group. The Revolutionary Communist Tendency of the LSA aligned itself with the international majority in the USec and attacked the leadership of the Canadian section for its subservience to nationalism, feminism and reformism. In the "Waffle Caucus" in the NDP, Canada's social-democratic labor party, the RCT found an ally, the Red Circle, which was also attracted to the European majority wing of the USec and sought admission to the LSA on those grounds. Rebuffed, Red Circle fused with a New Left student group, the Old Mole, which had also un-

successfully sought admission to the LSA on the basis of its orientation to the European USec, and formed the RMG. Without ever polemicizing in its press on its differences with the official Canadian USec section, the RMG proceeded to absorb the RCT, again without comment, after the latter's expulsion from the LSA and its youth group.

Linked to a similar split in French-speaking Quebec, the RMG sports a flashy, ostensibly revolutionary line, replete with idolatrous coverage in its press of larger USec sections abroad, and generally claims to be the most left of the ostensibly Trotskyist groups in English-speaking Canada. At a February 14 SL forum in Toronto on "Communist Work in the Trade Unions," a representative selection of key RMG leaders and members turned up to do political battle, thereby recognizing the growing difficulties of left-centrist circles in attempting to ignore the Spartacist League. The discussion, which took the form of a virtual debate between the Spartacist League and the RMG on a wide range of topics, proved to be such a painful experience to the RMG that three of its key leaders walked out under fire in the middle of the discussion, in the process leaving a number of their members stranded.

The Spartacist League speaker, Chris Knox, labor editor of *Workers Vanguard*, described the SL's policies

of supporting opposition caucuses in the trade unions on the basis of a full class-struggle transitional program. In the process he criticized some of the mistaken tactical conceptions currently espoused by the majority USec sections which the RMG worships. Unlike the Pabloists, who alternate tailing the existing reformist-bureaucratic leaders of the class with abstentionism from struggle within the mass organizations of the class, the SL seeks to intervene in the unions with a class-struggle program. As a historic example Knox cited the Trade Union Educational League, trade-union group of the early Communist Party in the U.S. In its best period in the early 1920's the TUEL was a membership organization which fought in the unions for the abolition of capitalism and for a workers' republic, rejection of class-collaborationism and for class-struggle policy, support for the Russian Revolution and industrial unionism, among other points.

Characteristic errors of would-be revolutionists in the unions tend to consist either of adapting to the reformist bureaucracy, or sectarian abstention and radical posturing outside these defensive organizations of the working class. The Communist parties generally provide the best example of undisguised adaptation to and tailing after layers of the mainstream trade-union

bureaucracy. The SWP, although it has done its best to keep its members out of the unions, is also noted for its adaptation to liberal bureaucrats in popular-front formations in the anti-war movement and for uncritical enthusing from the outside over the trade-union betrayals of bureaucrats such as Cesar Chavez of the Farmworkers.

On the other hand, the International Marxist Group (Britain) and Ligue Communiste (France), both of the USec majority, counterpose a more sophisticated, ostensibly revolutionary line to the outright reformism of the CP and SWP. However, their "alternative" consists in adaptation to radical petty-bourgeois layers outside the unions and an attempt to bypass the struggle to replace the bureaucracy from within. For instance, in the current crisis in Britain, the IMG calls for a general strike based on non-existent "councils of action," thereby seeking to ignore and/or bypass the TUC tops. The key to building the vanguard party in Britain lies precisely in exposing and defeating the reformist trade-union and Labour Party leaderships, a task which must be accomplished primarily through struggle in the unions. The IMG's imaginary councils of action can at this point, in the absence of a general strike, only mean grouping small circles of the most radical workers and students outside

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Fascists Continue Provocations in San Francisco-

For a United Defense of Anti-Nazi Militants!

SAN FRANCISCO—On February 5 for the second month in a row a uniformed contingent of Nazis attended a meeting of the San Francisco Board of Education. They were clearly seeking to secure more of the free publicity they obtained from their fist fight at the January meeting with a section of the audience which was justly outraged at the provocation of swastikas and brown-shirts' (symbols of genocide and the destruction of the trade unions) appearing at a public meeting held to discuss racial integration of the city's schools. This time the fascists numbered about two dozen, including their national "commander," flown in specially from Arlington, Virginia for the occasion.

In anticipation of the Nazi mobilization, several left organizations, as well as a large number of independent blacks, showed up at the meeting, swelling the normally small audience to over 500. Needless to say, the San Francisco police force went out of its way to provide a heavy escort and defense guard for the Nazi scum.

The largest organized presence was that of Progressive Labor/Workers Action Movement, which had clashed with the Nazis at the previous month's meeting and suffered several arrests as a result. A WAM banner across the rear of the hall read, "End Racist Tracking, Down with Nazism."

In general, PL/WAM tries to project a "hard communist" image based on simple militancy, while simultaneously capitulating to the liberals by raising only the most milksop reformist program. In this case, the WAM leaflet handed out at the meeting failed



Nazis and police escort at San Francisco Board of Education meeting.

to call for the defense of its own victimized supporters (it mentioned nothing at all about the recent arrests) and concentrated on improving school curriculum! PL spokesman Harry Dillon noted that "the number one question is the tracking system" and next comes "hiring minority teachers."

"Tracking" is a serious form of class and racial discrimination, preparing minority and working-class youth generally for their positions at the bottom of society. Socialists must vigorously oppose tracking and seek to root out the pervasive discrimination in hiring and advancement which is

used by the bourgeoisie to foster racial antagonisms in the working class. But to eliminate these evils it is necessary to eliminate the capitalist system which causes them. PL/WAM consistently refuses to make this necessary link-up, concentrating instead on one or another superficial reform issue. Last year it was "ban racist textbooks," now it is "hire minority teachers." But PL's call for "preferential hiring," which provides more jobs for blacks at the expense of white workers, is worse than reformist. By setting the interests of one group of workers against another in competition for scarce jobs, "prefer-

ential hiring" can only increase racial antagonisms. Instead, workers must fight for full employment for all through a sliding scale of wages and hours. Dillon made absolutely no mention of the need for united working-class action to overcome the problems of racial oppression.

Ellen Roth, speaking for WAM, also concentrated on the issue of "racism" abstracted from capitalism. In particular she called on the Board of Education, part and parcel of the bourgeois state apparatus, to evict the Nazis from the meeting and the schools. Throughout the meeting, Board Chairman Dr. Eugene Hopp gave an example of how vigorously the capitalist state will "fight" fascists by repeatedly cutting off the mike and harassing left-wing speakers. Hopp has also asked the Board to "investigate the possibility" of disciplining Yvonne Golden, a black teacher militant arrested for calling for the ouster of the Nazis at the January 8 meeting (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 January).

The discriminatory practices of the Boards of Education, which maintain the bourgeois monopoly of knowledge by channelling minority and working-class students into the lowest positions in U.S. society, are a characteristic aspect of the capitalist order and a key mechanism of class rule. In a period of severe social crisis the capitalists will drop their liberal caretakers of yesterday and turn to the blatantly racist fascists to completely crush the working class and its organizations. This odious ideology thus ac-

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