

Socialist Party Fronts for CIA, Vatican, NATO

Smash Rightist Threat in Portugal!

For United Front Defense Guards, Workers Militias, Factory Committees!

JULY 26—Today Portugal stands at the focal point of the global class struggle. The last two weeks have seen an ominous mustering of anti-communist forces which could well be a dress rehearsal for a rightist, pro-NATO coup to put an end to the pre-revolutionary situation which has existed since the overthrow of the reactionary Salazar-Caetano regime in April 1974. In the name of "democracy" and "freedom," reactionaries have beaten up Communist Party militants, burned down CP offices and flocked to demonstrations organized by the Catholic hierarchy. Particularly dangerous has been the role of the Portuguese Socialist Party, which has sought to give a "left" cover to the actions of openly counterrevolutionary elements. With CIA agents at work and the "Portuguese Liberation Army" poised across the border in Spain, genuinely revolutionary forces must redouble their efforts to create organs of workers power, the only means to decisively crush bourgeois reaction.

Simply to report the chronology of the last 14 days' events makes clear the counterrevolutionary nature of the recent campaign:

• **July 14:** A reactionary mob wrecks local Communist Party headquarters in Rio Maior and beats up five

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Portuguese Socialist Party demonstration in Lisbon, June 23.

Informations Ouvrières

For a City-Wide General Strike!

Big MAC Moves to Break NYC Unions

JULY 27—The last two weeks of New York City's seemingly endless fiscal crisis have made clear to everyone what we have stressed for months: behind Mayor Beame's budgetary shenanigans and the usurious demands of Wall Street is the determination of a united capitalist class to break the backs of the unions. The labor leaders' policy of appeasement, although not yet successful in producing the deep demoralization which comes from a stinging defeat, has only emboldened the avaricious financiers and their puppet in Gracie Mansion.

At press time city unions were fast approaching the deadline by which they were told to accept a 10 percent wage cut—an almost unheard-of event since the Great Depression—or face the consequences. Ever hopeful of taking off the pressure by giving up yet another hard-won union gain, municipal labor chiefs asked Beame if he would guarantee no further layoffs in exchange for sacrificing the 6 percent wage increase due this

month. The mayor reportedly answered: "I don't know. I have to do what they tell me" (*New York Times*, 26 July).

While bourgeois politicians ultimately receive their marching orders from the needs of the capitalist system, Beame currently gets his from "Big MAC"—the "Municipal Assistance Corporation," a state-appointed board of financiers and corporate officials with authority to issue special bonds. Its real purpose is to tightly orchestrate the campaign to crush the unions with a ruthlessness which cannot be expected from elected officials. In the words of newly appointed Big MAC chairman William Ellinghaus, the president of New York Telephone, voluntary compliance by labor would be preferable, but "if we have to move beyond that, you bet your life we will" (*New York Times*, 24 July 1975).

While the media have talked freely of calling up the National Guard to stop any strike action, the union brass has been

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Police attempt to break up militant hospital workers demonstration in New York, July 24.

WV Photo

Forward to the International Trotskyist League!

The political and organizational consolidation of the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) was highlighted by the iSt's recent European summer camp. Over fifty comrades from seven countries gathered to discuss the tasks and perspectives of the iSt, in particular its European sections, based on the advances of our tendency since last year's European camp. From the supporters who subscribed to the "Declaration for the Organizing of an International Trotskyist Tendency" in July 1974, the iSt has made a qualitative leap in Europe to functioning sections and sympathizing groups in Austria, Germany, France and, most recently, Italy.

The 1974 "Declaration" had been written necessarily in the light of a historical background originating in the United States. The Spartacist tendency has been struggling to transform its living internationalist commitment into a truly international organization. The recent summer camp demonstrated that the national sections of the iSt, strengthened by principled regroupments with cadres who have broken away from the declining centrist conglomerations of fake-Trotskyists, are forging authoritative national leaderships as part of a disciplined international collective. Comrades being won in a series of countries are emerging as leaders of the iSt and are a living promise for the International Executive Committee of the future Trotskyist International.

The breakthroughs and consolidation achieved by the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD—Trotskyist League of Germany) were codified by its acceptance as a full section of the iSt. Through its active intervention against the left-Pabloist Spartacusbund (SB), the TLD was

able to win the supporters of the Trotskyist Faction (expelled from the SB in February 1975) to its political positions. This regroupment helped drive a further wedge into the disintegrating SB, as the internal campaign of slander waged against the iSt by the SB leadership was unable to prevent serious militants of the SB from dealing with the politics of the TLD.

This accretion of forces to the TLD facilitated the geographical expansion of the TLD through the establishment of an Organizing Committee in Cologne in April of this year. The TLD has for some time stabilized its press, *Kommunistische Korrespondenz*, as a regular bi-monthly.

The generally rightward motion of the United Secretariat (USec) over the past few years is expressed especially by its capitulation to the popular fronts in France and Chile and to the "revolutionary" Portuguese officers and by the USec Majority's overtures to the French PSU and to Lotta Continua in Italy. This will no doubt exacerbate the factional divisions between the still centrist international Majority and the overtly reformist Minority led by the American SWP. In Germany, the "Kompass" tendency within the USec's Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM) will no doubt become increasingly demoralized by its failure to capture a majority of the GIM and by the disruption of its international connections (France, Italy), and should provide a fertile ground for the tactic of revolutionary regroupment through polarization, splits and fusions.

In addition, China's recent open support for strengthening NATO is creating unrest in the German Maoist groupings. We can look toward the possibility of left splits occurring in some of these groups over the questions of support for a stronger NATO (in Germany!) and of China's espousal of a "democratic stage" in Portugal. Such developments would pose the possibility for regroupments of subjectively revolutionary elements breaking from Maoism toward the authentic Trotskyist program.

Ligue Trotskyste de France Formed

In France the iSt supporters have fused with the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction (B-LF) which had been expelled from the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the showpiece section of the Majority faction of the USec. The B-LF was expelled from the LCR for its position that the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded under the leadership of Leon Trotsky in 1938, no longer existed and must be re-forged in the struggle against Pabloist revisionism. The emergence of the B-LF was the result of a protracted struggle for programmatic clarity within oppositional groupings of the LCR over the past year or more. Comrade Lafitte, the leading figure in the B-LF, thus joins Comrade Lesueur as the second

member of the Central Committee of the French USec section to join the Spartacist tendency.

The fusion of the B-LF with the iSt was the basis for an important step forward for our tendency, the formation of the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF—Trotskyist League of France). Its foundation was proclaimed at the summer camp and it was recognized as a disciplined sympathizing section of the iSt.

The formation of the LTF comes at a time when the other organizations claiming to be Trotskyist in France have been moving rapidly to the right. As the founding proclamation of the LTF states:

"The main accusation the LTF makes against the pseudo-Trotskyists is their inability to draw the class line against the popular-front Union de la Gauche, both in their general intervention as well as in their trade-union work.

"The strategic axis around which Trotskyists must intervene is the independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, an independence which is erased when the workers parties and the unions enter into the popular front. The central axis of any trade-union work by consistent revolutionists must aim at the question of the popular front and the need for the unions to break from the popular front."

In Italy, a small group of comrades emerged in opposition to the combinationist rotten bloc method which had characterized the Italian USec "Third Tendency," the Frazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria (FMR—Revolutionary Marxist Faction). These oppositional comrades had previously broken with the classical Bordigist organization in Italy toward what they thought was Trotskyism—the USec. Their recognition of the primacy of program enabled them to break rapidly and clearly from the USec and to assimilate the positions of the Spartacist tendency.

These comrades came into contact with the Spartacist tendency only after the expulsion of the FMR from the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR—Revolutionary Communist Groups), the Italian section of the USec, headed by Livio Maitan. The oppositional comrades recognized that the FMR leadership was building another rotten international bloc, not a principled formation. In their application for membership in the iSt, they point out that although a cornerstone of the international "Third Tendency" is its characterization of European social-democratic parties as bourgeois parties, the leader of its Italian grouping, the FMR, "even recently stated that he had not read the Kompass analysis concerning the nature of social-democratic parties." The comrades also saw that whereas the FMR put forward no consistent analysis of the history of the Fourth International and its revisionist degeneration, the Spartacist document "Genesis of Pabloism" provided a coherent explanation and a political alternative to the FMR document "Le origini storiche del centrismo sui

generis" ("The Historical Origins of Centrism Sui Generis").

From this point, intensive discussions between these Italian comrades and the iSt rapidly demonstrated decisive programmatic agreement. The iSt at the summer camp accepted the application of the Nucleo Spartacista d'Italia (NSI—Spartacist Nucleus of Italy) for membership as a sympathizing section of the iSt.

The Österreichische Bolschewiki-Leninisten (ÖBL—Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists) held its national conference at the summer camp as well. The conference drew the balance sheet of development of the organization in the past year and projected the tasks of its continued organizational and political consolidation. Particular attention was paid to the increased opportunities for coordination of the work of the ÖBL with the augmented forces of the TLD in Germany.

In addition to the national gatherings, the camp had two central foci. The first was programmatic discussions necessary to further the political work of the iSt as a whole through the development of its national sections. The occasion of the coming elections in Austria was the basis of a lively discussion of the conditions under which critical support to reformist workers parties (in this case the Socialist Party of Austria) may not be appropriate, even though there exists no formally constituted popular front. Similarly, the discussion of the tactical problems involved in working in Stalinist-dominated trade unions in France (where industrial unionism does not exist as it does in Germany or North America, for example) illustrated again the development of the revolutionary Marxist program through a sharpening and testing process as the national sections become more deeply involved in class struggles.

The second main concern of the summer camp was the struggle to consolidate national leaderships as part of the selection of a representative and authoritative international collective, as the highest body of our organization. The assimilation of the valuable political experience of the leading comrades of the iSt is crucial to the continuing transformation of the iSt into a disciplined, politically cohesive international organization functioning according to the norms of international democratic centralism. The fulfillment of that transformation will constitute a qualitative step forward on the path to the rebirth of the Fourth International through the earliest formation of the International Trotskyist League.

FORWARD TO THE
INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST
LEAGUE!

FOR THE REBIRTH OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

Interim Secretariat of the iSt
23 July 1975

European Meeting Registers Gains for Spartacist Tendency

Stalinists Slander NMU Militants

JULY 24—The current federal grand jury investigation of corruption in the National Maritime Union is sending shock waves through the New York executive offices of the NMU and right down to Boca Raton (Rat's Mouth), Florida, where former union president Joe Curran is living out his days on a lavish pension raked off union members' dues.

A front-page *New York Times* story on 9 July reported that charges are being considered by a grand jury in Newark against NMU President Shannon Wall, Secretary-Treasurer Mel Barisic, Curran,

his long-time assistant William Perry as well as the union's lawyers. Allegations include kickbacks on personal injury suits, kickbacks on pension investments, shipping company bribery, construction company graft, and employment of union equipment and members for personal use of the officials. Thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars are allegedly involved in the various payoffs.

Shannon Wall, seeking to once again underline his subservience to shipping companies and the government, responded with a press release whining

about the *Times'* "irresponsible" sensationalism:

"...the *Times* virtually ignored the fact that the NMU recently led the maritime industry in completion of highly-successful negotiations for a new contract.... It was achieved without a threat of strike well before the contract deadline."

In other words, we sold our members down the river for you and look how you treat us! The new contract ramrodded through last month doesn't even mention job security for seamen at a time when maritime jobs are being whittled away by increased automation and foreign-flag "runaways."

In contrast, the NMU Militant-Solidarity Caucus, a class-struggle grouping with a seven-year history of consistent opposition to the Curran-Wall gang (and the only element in the union which ever talks about fighting the companies), immediately issued a leaflet headlined: "Government Out of Our Union! Full Investigation and Disclosure by an Elected Committee of Seamen." The Caucus warned against the government's phony posturing as concerned protector of helpless seamen:

"An anti-labor attack is being launched against our union by the government and the press of big business! The enemies of labor are using the corruption of the union officials as a crow-bar to pry into the internal affairs of our union. What looks like concerned aid to seamen today, is actually a set-up to lay the groundwork to undermine and weaken strong, independent, militant unionism in the future! Brothers and sisters, on guard! *Keep the government of big business out of our union—We, the working seamen must deal with the swindling company stooge, con-artists who run our union!*"

In recent years a number of slick, up-and-coming union bureaucrats (typified by Ed Sadlowski in the Steelworkers) have run to the Labor Department and courts in order to get the government to order election reruns or "clean up" union corruption. Not surprisingly, various reformist socialists trail along behind these fakers right into the arms of the class enemy. NMU members are getting a taste of this treacherous class collaboration: as soon after the announcement of the grand jury investigation of the NMU the Communist Party published articles wholeheartedly greeting this attack on the labor movement. Seeking to make hay with its traditional methods of lies and

betrayals, the 17 July *Daily World* published a red-baiting article attacking "Trotskyites in the Militant Solidarity Caucus" for opposing intervention by the capitalist government. The article then recites a lengthy litany of 1940's slanders about the "Trotskyite menace on the waterfront."

The reformist Stalinist fakers sow the worst illusions about the government, encouraging seamen and all workers to believe the fairy tale that the bosses' state will root out corruption and restore democracy in the union. Nothing could be further from the truth. They cite the case of Tony Boyle in the UMW, but fail to mention that his Labor Department-backed successor, Arnold Miller, once in office immediately began smashing wildcats, enforcing the Boyle contracts, suppressing democratic rights at the union convention, and shoving a rotten contract down the throats of militant miners. James Morrissey, a Miller-type oppositionist in the NMU, was in fact a part of Curran's machine during the height of the post-war red purge until Curran dumped him. Morrissey has said nothing about the contract or corruption issues, and hasn't been active in the NMU since he won a court decision in April for \$335,000 (\$100,000 of which was supposed to come from the union treasury), or, for that matter, since the 1973 elections. But the CP backed both Morrissey and Miller in union elections and endorsed the Miller contract.

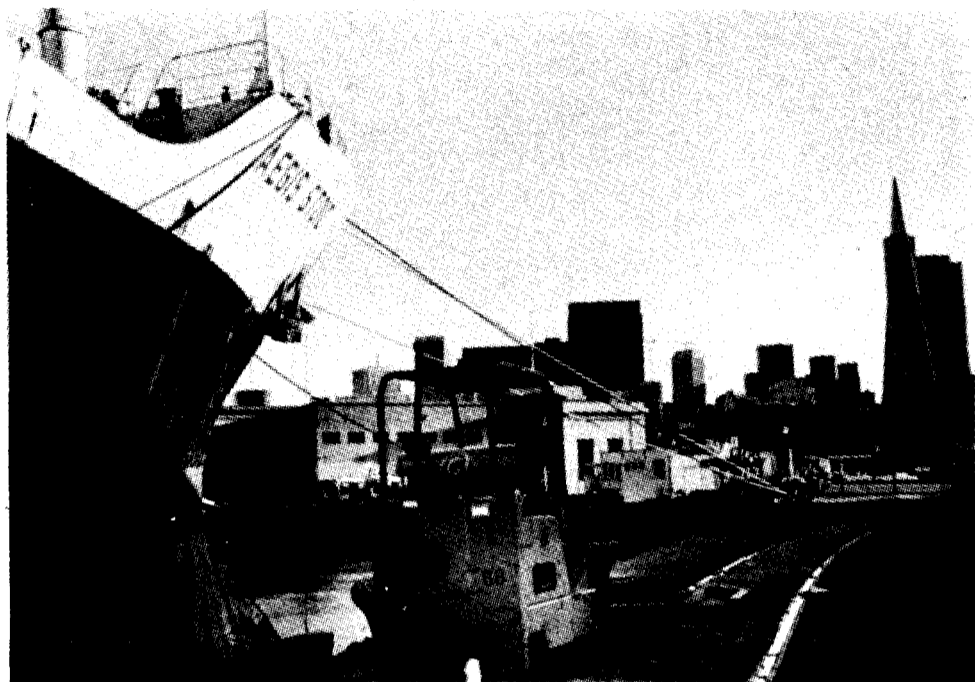
The *Daily World* article froths that seamen will never forget

"the role of the Trotskyites, who were Curran's allies in expelling the left from the unions; for it was the Trotskyites, sent into the NMU in large numbers from all over the country who were able and willing to supply the left-sounding ideology when Curran started his putsch."

The CP resorts to such slanders in order to cover its own betrayals during the 1940's. It was the Stalinists who were the strikebreakers, not only in maritime but in other unions as well. CP leader William Z. Foster travelled through Pennsylvania recruiting scabs to break the 1943 coal strike. In the 1944 Montgomery Ward strike, CP supporter Harry Bridges ordered ILWU warehousemen to scab on workers who were fighting to preserve their union from destruction. And in late 1945 Stalinist leaders of the United

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Bridges Finally Gets His Contract



Port of San Francisco

Luis Carballar

SAN FRANCISCO, July 26—After repeatedly blocking Harry Bridges' attempts to saddle them with a sellout contract, dock workers of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union finally knuckled under and approved a pact which could mean disaster for the union. Twice—in February and March—Bridges failed to win the necessary two-thirds majority in coast-wide votes, and pressure from the ranks stymied his attempt to ram it through a delegated Coast Caucus in April. However, in voting this week the contract was ratified by wide margins in the two main centers of opposition, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Bridges' delaying tactics finally wore down resistance as West Coast longshoremen have been forced to work on a day-to-day basis with no contract and no assurance of the weekly pay guarantee since July 1. Even the official ILWU *Dispatcher* (11 July) was forced to admit that the "new" proposal is "essentially the same" as the earlier package, except for "the addition of a third year." The Pay Guarantee Plan (PGP) benefits can still be cancelled by a dictatorial "area arbitrator" and the threat to the union hiring hall from "steady men" remains. (The fraudulent "equalization of work opportunity" clause still guarantees minimum hours for steadies while work available through the hall continues to decline.) Adding insult to injury, the bosses are now given another year to erode jobs and union benefits.

The ranks know full well that the contract is a catastrophe and many realize that a coast-wide strike is necessary to answer the employer offensive. But the membership hesitates before this task. They bitterly recall how Bridges undercut the long 1971-72 strike by allowing cargo to be diverted through Canadian and Mexican ILWU ports, forcing strikers to handle perishable goods and military shipments. What is needed above all is a militant class-struggle leadership.

The supporters of *Longshore Militant*,

an opposition newsletter in Local 10 (San Francisco) published by long-time ILWU militants Stan Gow and Howard Keylor, were the only opponents of the pact to put forward a program for victory during the contract fight. The *LM* called for an entirely new set of bargaining demands to guarantee jobs and vital union benefits: six hours' work for eight hours' pay; full union control of hiring, no steadymen; full A status for B-men; one-year contract and common expiration dates; no arbitration and full right to strike.

Longshore Militant called for a "no" vote and an immediate coast-wide strike vote coupled with election of a strike committee, a program for mobilizing the ranks as the only way to counter the treachery of the International leadership. For this they were viciously attacked by the "progressive" Bridges, who railed in the *Dispatcher* against "some so-called 'revolutionaries' who... have no answers on how to get all the goodies they yak about." Nevertheless, as voting approached, 59 militants joined Gow and Keylor in signing a united-front "vote no" leaflet which denounced the contract for allowing cancellation of the PGP by arbitration, not stopping layoffs and not providing for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay.

All other ostensible oppositionists bowed to Bridges' intimidation tactics. Local 10 President Larry Wing recommended a "no" vote, but only because a two-year contract might be possible. Rudy Rubio of Local 13 (Los Angeles) supported the contract. Finally, supporters of the West Coast Communist Party newspaper *People's World*, such as Archie Brown, dropped all talk of a strike and begged for a two-year contract on the grounds that "anybody knows two bad contract years beats three bad contract years coming and going." Brown could only get 37 others to sign his weak-kneed "opposition" leaflet. Meanwhile the 19 July *People's World* uncritically reprinted Bridges' report on his recent tour of the Soviet Union. ■



National Maritime Union

Curran's goons broke up union meeting at New York's St. Nicholas Arena in 1949 as part of drive to smash all opposition and drive "reds" from NMU.

Support the Partisan Defense Committee

We reprint below a recently released statement by the Partisan Defense Committee, legal defense arm of the Spartacist League, which outlines the principles upon which the legal defense work of this organization is based. Readers of Workers Vanguard wishing more information may contact the PDC at the address listed below.

The Partisan Defense Committee, in accordance with the political aims of the Spartacist League, stands in defense of the whole of the working people, without sectarian or factional regard. We take as our heritage the working-class defense policies of the International Labor Defense under its founder and first Secretary, James P. Cannon (1925-28). We embrace as our own the 11-year record of principled defense work conducted by the Spartacist League.

The PDC is partisan: it stands unconditionally on the side of working people and their allies in their struggle against their exploiters and oppressors. We place all our faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the "justice" of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings for the cases we support, we recognize that the courts, prisons and police exist to maintain through organized violence and terror, the rule of one class over others. State troopers who perpetrated mass murder at Attica go free while the unarmed Attica inmates are charged with "crimes" for their heroic rebellion. Joan Little is threatened with the death penalty for an elementary act of self-defense against a rapist-jailer.

In New York City municipal workers are fined, imprisoned and fired if they strike to protect their jobs and living standards. But the Mayor who breaks contracts in defiance of the law to slash jobs, wages and services goes free. The PDC opposes all anti-labor legislation and all government and court intervention into the left and labor movements, not least when such interventions falsely claim to be in the interest of the oppressed.

In its partisanship, the PDC is also *non-sectarian*. We champion *all causes and defend all cases* whose victorious outcome is in the interest of working people, irrespective of particular political views. The SL and PDC have contributed to the defense of Angela Davis of the Communist Party, the Maoist Venceremos group, the Socialist Workers Party Political Rights Defense Committee, the Weathermen, the Nazi-catching Jewish Documentation Center, the Black Panther Party, the Chilean MIR, the Black Liberation Army, Drs. Edelin and Morgentaler who were persecuted for performing abortions, Puerto Rican nationalist Carlos Feliciano. We do not defend groups like the SLA which engage in indiscriminate terror and whose random victims are not enemies of the oppressed. Unlike some civil libertarian groups we do not defend democratic rights for fascistic *action* groups like the Klan, Nazi Party, White Citizens' Council, whose sole purpose is the destruction of democratic rights, working-class organizations, and the genocide of racial, national and religious minorities. On the contrary, democratic rights and working-class organizations can only be defended through the mobilization of the masses against such groups.

We are for the solidarity of all workers and their allies around defense issues. Therefore we are unconditionally opposed to violence within the left and labor movements which poisons the possibility for common action, weakens our forces and opens us up for government attack.

In the spirit of proletarian internationalism the PDC is in the forefront of the struggle against the deportation of foreign workers and gives wholehearted support to the victims of reactionary terror in other countries. We recently participated in the Ad Hoc Committee to Smash the Attacks on Foreign Workers and contributed to the defense of 1,500 Haitians and black militant Rosie Douglas threatened with deportation from Canada. We actively campaigned on behalf of the imprisoned and tortured leaders of the Chilean MIR and for the persecuted Indian Trotskyist agricultural organizer Jagadish Jha.

—15 July 1975

I would like more information on the legal defense work of the Partisan Defense Committee:

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Box 633 Canal Street Station
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Big MAC...

(continued from page 1)

more than accommodating. Yet for every single concession the city's demands have only escalated. In the spring Beame threw out a proposal for freezing the scheduled 6 percent wage increase, then immediately withdrew it; now he is talking about a deep wage cut on salaries over \$10,000 or \$15,000 (it hasn't been decided yet) and a wage freeze. The July 1 layoffs of 19,000 workers were supposed to preserve the remaining jobs; now Big MAC claims the city will collapse unless another 27,000 are axed, the subway fare is raised to 45 or 50 cents, massive cuts are made in the city university system and welfare payments are reduced.

Despite several militant demonstrations by hospital workers last week, as well as continuing job actions and picketing by sanitationmen, union policy is still made behind closed doors at City Hall. So far the only "concession" obtained in these sessions was the arbitration panel's decision to reinstate shorter summer hours (which are expected to be given up at the bargaining table imminently). Meanwhile Victor Gotbaum, head of AFSCME District 37 and spokesman for the Municipal Labor Council, has announced that use of the strike weapon is a sign of weakness!

"I once read an interview with Mao or Chou and he said 'before we had the bomb we had to talk like we did, but now that we have it, we don't need to talk that way.' When a union has power it doesn't have to be militant. In my opinion, it's the weakest locals, the librarians, the welfare case workers who talk about striking."

—New York Times, 21 July

Actually, Gotbaum et al. are "bargaining" not from strength but from fear. On one side they are faced with the banks, corporations, federal, state and local governments who have been thirsting for a confrontation for months. On the other side are the union ranks, increasingly fed up with union inaction and capitulation to the worst anti-labor offensive in decades. So far the only major skirmish, a two-day garbage strike, actually heartened city workers, although the labor bureaucrats quickly squelched it.

Meanwhile the hypocrisy of the bankers is positively breathtaking. According to Big MAC, *this* crisis (as opposed to the

"budget crisis" a few weeks ago, or the "cash-flow crunch" before that) stems from the hesitancy of folks around the country to buy New York bonds because they think the Big Apple is soft on labor and welfare chiselers. "No one knows who buys these bonds," they say, conjuring up images of small investors in Toledo, Ohio, who are outraged at the thought of "free college." But just turn the page and you will find that 80 percent of MAC bonds have been bought by the banking conglomerates (Morgan Guarantee Trust, Chase Manhattan, First National City, Chemical), insurance companies and other financial institutions.

This is not surprising, considering that the Rockefeller and Morgan banks created the fiscal crisis in the first place by refusing to routinely rewrite city loans in June, then got the legislature to set up the "assistance" corporation on whose board they are represented, then underwrote the new loans at an astronomical 9.5 percent interest rate. (Last year these bloodsuckers raked in a cool \$1.6 billion on debt service from NYC bonds alone.) Moreover, to eliminate any possible risk Big MAC now directly controls more than \$1 billion annually in revenues from city taxes, recalling the early years of this century when the First National City Bank literally took over the customs house of the Dominican Republic.

As the latest of innumerable "final deadlines" approaches, both the "moderate" Gotbaum and slightly more "militant"-talking union leaders such as the UFT's Albert Shanker are calling on the city to default on debt payments. In the absence of a powerful working-class movement prepared to undertake a *citywide general strike against the layoffs, wage freezes and cuts*, defaulting simply means placing the city in receivership to far bigger MAC's, namely the courts which are no less instruments of the capitalists than the cabal of plutocrats and corporation moguls that are currently programming Beame's Charlie McCarthy act.

The inability of the labor brass to do anything but passively retreat under each blow is the result of their commitment to stay within the limits of the capitalist system. To defend the interests of New York city workers and the entire working and poor population it is necessary to directly challenge bourgeois property rights. Rather than "sharing the burden," the perennial whine from impotent lapdogs of Gotbaum's ilk, it is necessary to make the exploiters pay for the crisis of the capitalist boom-bust system. Labor militants must demand that the *debt be cancelled* and the *banks be expropriated without compensation*.

Moreover, as long as the unions are tied to the bourgeois parties, simple bread-and-butter militancy cannot answer the across-the-board political attack being waged by the capitalists. It is necessary to awaken the class consciousness of the American workers and mobilize this through a struggle to break with the Democrats and build a workers party, based on the unions, to fight for a workers government. ■

— FORUM —

MAOIST FOREIGN POLICY— United Front with World Imperialism

Speaker: Martha Phillips

Date: Saturday, 2 August
at 8 p.m.

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Italian Elections: A Step Toward the Popular Front

On the night of June 16 thousands of supporters of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) gathered in front of its Rome headquarters to celebrate their party's victory in nationwide regional elections. During two days of voting the PCI tallied over 10 million votes, one third of the total. This was a scant 2 percent behind the Christian Democrats (DC) who have headed Italian governments continuously since 1947. Down the street at Christian Democratic headquarters the doors were locked and lights out.

The "administrative" elections in June were for regional assemblies, provincial and municipal councils. As a result of the general leftward shift—the PCI increased its share of the popular vote by 5.1 percent over the legislative elections of 1972, while the DC slipped by 3.1 percent—the combined Communist and Socialist total rose to 45.4 percent, the first time since the late 1940's that it has exceeded 40 percent. This electoral advance resulted in the extension of the "Red Belt" of PCI-PSI local coalition governments from three of Italy's 20 regions (Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna) to include Liguria and possibly the Piedmont.

In local voting a PCI mayor was installed by the city council of Turin, which at 1.2 million inhabitants is now the largest city in West Europe with a Stalinist mayor. Additionally, the PCI, PSI and Proletarian Unity Party (PDUP) together hold half the seats in the Milan city council; there is a Communist-Socialist majority in Venice; and in numerous other central and north Italian cities (Bologna, Ferrara, Florence, Modena, Perugia and Pisa) no municipal government is possible which excludes the PCI. Altogether, the elections brought the number of cities and towns in which a PCI-PSI coalition is necessary for a majority to a total of 2,495 (*L'Espresso*, 20 July).

Yet however much the Stalinists boast of "clean hands" (their main slogan this year), the elections were not centered on a choice between efficient "sewer socialism" and bumbling corruption. The regions and municipalities have limited powers, and more than a month after the vote most "giunte" (local coalitions) are yet to be formed. The significance of the elections is rather as an indicator of the national balance of political forces. In particular, they signalled the end of more than a quarter century of unchallenged Christian Democratic dominance, spotlighting the possibility of a coalition government including both of the traditional mass reformist workers parties (PCI and PSI) and the DC.

The Stalinists' unexpectedly large vote gains were the subject of anxious editorials in the bourgeois press, which since the overthrow of rightist dictatorships in Greece and Portugal last year has worried greatly about a "Communist threat" in the "southern tier of Europe." The PCI, of course, pledges to maintain capitalism and keep Italy in NATO. Nonetheless, imperialist circles fear that a popular-front regime including the Communist Party would weaken the anti-Soviet military alliance and threaten its most

important south European bases (at Naples, Gaeta and La Spezia).

Italy, with a combative working class and the largest Stalinist party in the advanced capitalist countries, could be the linchpin to proletarian revolution in southern Europe. But the Stalinists are not about to pull off a "Prague coup" setting up an East European-style deformed workers state. On the contrary, PCI leaders are concerned above all to stem the tide of working-class militancy and restrain it with the strait jacket of class-collaborationist coalitionism.

Christian Democracy Disintegrating

The June elections both reflect and contribute to the disintegration of the Christian Democracy, traditional party of the Italian bourgeoisie following World War II and close ally of the powerful Catholic Church hierarchy. Its electoral losses and increasing lack of confidence, combined with internecine factional warfare, can dramatically change the political situation. Despite the "chaos" of 37 governments in the post-war period, the Christian Democracy has in fact continuously stood at the head of the Italian state apparatus, with social-democratic, republican and liberal barnacle parties serving only to provide a necessary parliamentary majority for the same anti-communist, clerical, Mafia-infested and boundlessly corrupt DC regime.

In recent years the ability of Christian Democratic-led governments to rule has been placed in question. For the capitalists, ruling Italy is not merely a cumbersome bureaucracy selling its ubiquitous stamps but a matter of containing the volatile working class suffering under a burden of 20 percent annual inflation and 1.5 million (8 percent) unemployment. Although the economy has partially recovered from last year's mammoth balance of payments crisis, no one imagines that the erstwhile terminally "sick man of Europe" has been miraculously cured.

During the "hot autumn" of 1969 a massive wave of strikes and factory occupations sharply raised the question of state power in Italy. Only the absence of revolutionary leadership and the reformist PCI's stranglehold on key sections of the organized workers movement kept the struggle within the bounds of capitalism. Today, in the context of recent student and worker struggles, it is once again the treacherous role of the Stalinists—in the form of support for or direct participation in a popular-front coalition—that is the main guarantor of bourgeois rule.

The capitalist class is not always of one mind in political questions. There are powerful opponents of the popular front in the Italian bourgeoisie. Thus Fiat boss Giovanni Agnelli said last year that a coalition with the PCI would lead to a "rapid withdrawal of our country from the Western world" (*New York Times*, 9 September 1974). Chief among the bitter-end opponents of any form of cooperation with the Communist Party is former premier Amintore Fanfani, long-time



Demonstration against fascists in Milan in April.

Informations Ouvrières

leader of the Christian Democratic Party.

But, as the PCI has been at pains to point out, Fanfani is not the DC. In Venice late in 1974 Christian Democratic mayor Giuseppe Longo agreed to consult PCI members of the city council in return for support of municipal government efforts to restore the decaying "pearl of the Adriatic." After much talk in the press of a "Venice model," national DC leaders vetoed the "corridor coalition" approach of de facto cooperation with the PCI.

The depth of factional hostility and internal disintegration in the Christian Democracy was further revealed by an incident in March when Fanfani was waylaid by youthful DCers seeking a more flexible policy on coalition with the Communist Party. Carloads of police had to be rushed to DC headquarters in order to rescue the party leader from his own members! This unrest turned into open rebellion following the election debacle and culminated in the ouster of Fanfani July 23 from his leadership position by a large majority of the party's national council.

PCI: Compromising with History

The PCI attributes its election landslide to the youth vote, neutralizing the Catholic Church, winning over the middle class, and most of all to popular sentiment for its strategy of the "historic



Veziro Sabatini

Amintore Fanfani, recently deposed leader of Italian Christian Democratic Party.

compromise." No doubt the Communist Party did benefit from the extension of the franchise to youthful voters between 18 and 21 years of age, although many were unable to find their way through the bureaucratic labyrinth in order to register by election day. Another big boost came from exposures of Christian Democratic corruption (in February Italy's biggest-ever graft trial found 103 defendants guilty).

The shift of the Church hierarchy a few degrees away from its usual total backing of DC candidates was widely noted. Commenting on the Italian elections, the U.S. Communist Party gave great importance to "the Vatican decision not to advise voters this time to vote for the

Christian Democrats but rather to vote the way their consciences told them" (*Daily World*, 18 June). What the Stalinists failed to report was the price of St. Peter's ostensible neutrality: PCI capitulation on the key secular-democratic issues of abortion and divorce.

But for the bureaucrats at PCI headquarters in the Via delle Botteghe Oscure, the crowning success of the election was neither the youth vote, the anti-corruption vote, the "neutralization" of the Church or even the opposition vote. Speaking to the election night rally, party leader Enrico Berlinguer concluded that "the election outcome was a clear national defeat for those who want to keep the Communists from having a voice in the government" (*New York Times*, 17 June). A "voice in the government" is one of the many translations of the "historic compromise," the constant theme of PCI propaganda during the last year and a half. What is proposed is long-term collaboration between the Communist Party and the Christian Democracy in a parliamentary government coalition.

Incredibly, the slogan of a historic compromise was the PCI's summing up of the lessons of the Chilean debacle. Allende went too far, the Unidad Popular was too narrow, the Christian Democrats should have been drawn in at all costs, they reason. But the exact opposite is true! It was by tying the workers to a coalition with bourgeois parties on a program for the "reform" (i.e., continuation) of capitalism that Allende prepared the way for the bloody coup of September 1973. Berlinguer aims to repeat this tragic experience in Italy.

The proposed popular front offers little, even from the opportunist angle. Unlike the government of "national union" put together at Yalta (in which the PCI and DC governed from 1944 to 1947), there can be no pretense today of leading the country from fascism to democracy. The "historic compromise" is a pipe dream of harmonious stability, clean government and never-ending reform. Everyone from Berlinguer to *Time* magazine points to PCI-run Bologna as the harbinger of things to come.

Underlining the theme of moderation, the new Communist mayor of Turin, Diego Novelli, declares, "we're not out to Bolshevize Turin" (*Time*, 28 July). But it is a utopian illusion to imagine that the conditions of Bologna, a regional market town with well-maintained medieval architecture and free mass transit during rush hours, can be duplicated in the sprawling slums surrounding the factories of "Fiat city." Even more dangerous is the notion that such a program for gradualist reforms is the road to socialism. As Chile proved once again, it is the road to bitter defeat for the workers.

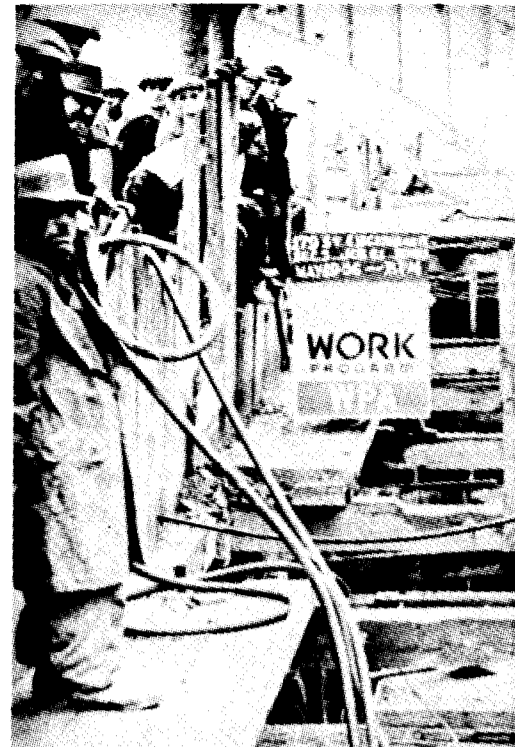
Livio Maitan: Compromising with the Compromisers

For Livio Maitan, the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat's verbose adviser to the Italian "far left," the PCI's "historic compromise" looks pretty good. Rather

continued on page 10

Organizing the Unemployed in the Great Depression

By Len Meyers and Chris Knox



Library of Congress

In the fight to organize the great mass of jobless during the 1930's depression, two key conceptions guided the work of the Trotskyists: the united front and unity of the employed and unemployed. During the early years of the decade the united front was the focus of struggle, as a Stalinized Communist Party refused to cooperate with other left-wing forces (whom it termed "social-fascists") and left the AFL unions in pursuit of its sectarian "Third Period" policies. Then, from 1934 onwards a wave of militant strikes and the organization of mass industrial unions sharply posed the possibility of uniting the unemployed with the employed in a powerful working-class assault on capitalism. However, this opportunity was sacrificed by the Stalinists in the name of their new Messiah: the popular front.

As predicted by Trotsky, U.S. capitalism did not continue to fall steadily deeper into an apocalyptic "final crisis," instead experiencing a limited upturn in 1933 and a general rise in production during 1935-37. Combined with passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA), the upswing emboldened the masses and led to a flood of unorganized workers into the conservative AFL. But the recovery was hollow and short-lived. With the introduction of labor-saving machinery in industry, unemployment never dropped below 8 million during the "boom" and was probably closer to 11 or 12 million.

Hardly a "return to prosperity" for the masses, the Roosevelt New Deal was a series of conservative, even reactionary, reforms designed to cushion economic crisis and head off labor militancy. Under the wage and price codes of the NRA strikes were broken, incomes fixed and inflation allowed to run rampant. Relief

Part 2/Mobilizing Union Power

was degrading and difficult to obtain. In addition, local relief budgets were accompanied by sales taxes and other measures designed to throw the burden of the crisis onto the backs of workers and the poor. In some regions there were starvation conditions, as in the South where, according to one CP estimate, relief officials expected a family to survive on as little as \$7.09 a month (*Communist*, June 1935).

Accepted at the depth of the crisis as a necessary evil, the NRA was overturned by the Supreme Court in 1935 because its regulatory codes were considered a drag on free enterprise. In the same year, Roosevelt announced the end of all federal aid to relief, although official estimates showed only half the eligible unemployed were on the dole in the first place. Responsibility for maintaining the jobless was dumped back on the virtually bankrupt states and localities (as under Hoover), producing a new round of demonstrations in state capitals protesting the relief cuts.

"Scab or Starve!"

Roosevelt's next move was the establishment of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was supposed to compensate for the ending of federal aid by putting the unemployed to work. The WPA never took in more than one quarter of the jobless and consisted largely of useless "make-work" projects. Most important, it was a concerted attack on the living standards of the unemployed (its rates often being below those of local

relief) and on union wage scales. WPA projects paid as low as \$19 a month in the South and \$40 in the North. One federal administrator, challenged by objections to the WPA wage rates, shot back: "Scab or starve!"

The shift in New Deal policies in 1935 was a deliberate attack on the working class, aimed at crippling the mushrooming unemployed organizations and undermining union organization. However, employed and unemployed fought back in massive protests that wrenched important concessions from Roosevelt. Many building trades locals of the AFL struck WPA projects to defend the wage scales of their unemployed members. "Flying squads" were used in New Jersey to shut down WPA sites, and 50,000 WPA jobs went begging in New York City due to an organized boycott. "Progressive" Mayor LaGuardia responded: "Take WPA jobs or go to jail" (*Workers Alliance*, 1 September 1935). Mass marches were called around the country by the Socialist Party-led Workers Alliance demanding \$30 minimum for a 30-hour week, and by mid-1936 the administration was forced to grant, on paper at least, the possibility of increased wages according to local standards and the right of union organization on WPA projects.

The fate of the unemployed movement was directly affected by changes in global politics. With the victory of Hitler in 1933, Stalin took fright and ordered foreign Communist Parties to execute an about-face, forming "anti-fascist" alliances with "democratic" capitalist politicians in order to defend the Soviet Union. In the U.S., where the Stalinists and social democrats never came close to the strength they had in Europe, the CP had to be content with one-sidedly supporting Roosevelt, who hardly even bothered to throw it a few crumbs. By 1936 the Communist Party was giving tacit electoral support to the Democrats and leadership of militant unemployed actions fell increasingly to the left wing of the Socialist Party (SP) and the Trotskyists.

Trotskyists Unite Employed and Unemployed

Following fusion with the Musteites and the formation of the Workers Party (WP) at the end of 1934, the Trotskyists led the National Unemployed League which was particularly strong in the coal-mining regions of the Northeast: 130,000 in Ohio, 25,000 in Pennsylvania and a strong base in West Virginia. The Unemployed Leagues organized relief office take-overs to protest cuts, fought

evictions with militant tactics and organized workers on federal projects. A strike of government construction sites in Ohio during 1935 saw UL and WP members lead flying squads: "The pickets defied police interference and removed shovels from the hands of reluctant scabs," wrote the *New Militant* (20 April 1935).

The Trotskyists constantly fought for militant unity of the employed and unemployed. When Pennsylvania cut its relief program, a united-front Joint Action Committee composed of the WP-led Pennsylvania Unemployed League, the SP-led Pennsylvania Security League and the AFL Central Trades and Labor Council organized a strike by 7,000 WPA workers throughout the state. The CP's Unemployed Council, which had initiated the Committee, dropped out after the latter adopted the Trotskyists' program for direct action and rejected a Stalinist plan to lobby the state legislature. The strike was victorious and Pennsylvania became the first state forced to grant a WPA wage increase and recognize a bargaining agent (the AFL Council) on the projects (*New Militant*, 12 October 1935).

In Minneapolis the Trotskyists set an example of working-class unity which even the Stalinists found impossible to ignore. Even before the three strikes in 1934 which established the General Drivers Local 574, under Trotskyist leadership, and transformed Minneapolis into a union town, the militant Teamsters sought to organize the unemployed. During the strikes this paid off as many of the 4,000 unemployed workers of the Minneapolis Central Council of Workers (MCCW) militantly defended the truck drivers' picket lines.

The lull in the class struggle following the 1934 strikes brought a sharp downturn in MCCW membership, the kind of fluctuations which plagued all unemployed organizations. Nevertheless, the Trotskyists went ahead with aggressive organizing of the jobless. AFL unions initially refused to cooperate, so Local 574 set up a "Federal Workers Section" (FWS), subordinate to the Drivers Local, but with an autonomous structure and open to all the unemployed in the city. With the power of the solidly unionized truck drivers behind them, the FWS launched a series of struggles which resulted in Minneapolis having one of the highest city relief budgets in the country. FWS organized workers on WPA, and when the project wage of \$60.50 per month was found to be less than the dole, it forced the city to pay supplemental wages to bring up the WPA scale to the



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Federal work project during Roosevelt's "New Deal."



Workers battle police during 1934 Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters' strike. Many of the 4,000 unemployed workers organized in the MCCW militantly defended strikers' picket lines.

higher level.

As many as 10,000 workers and unemployed were organized by the FWS in this period, through strikes and demonstrations over relief budgets, with the Communist Party for the most part being forced to tail along. The Section's membership expanded with each victory. The FWS also mobilized to support strikes of other unions, so that by 1936 opposition to the Trotskyist-led organizations had largely evaporated in AFL local unions. (Meanwhile the Drivers Local was reinstated into the Teamsters as Local 544.) These new allies proved useful in defeating a city attempt to drive "chiselers" off relief rolls, and the FWS became probably the most stable and well-organized unemployed organization of the decade.

The Workers Alliance of America

Despite the history of sectarian division and continued sabotage by the die-hard reactionary AFL leadership, a united national unemployed organization was finally founded in April 1936, under the name of "Workers Alliance of America." The Communist Party was now interested in reconciliation with the Socialist Party; and the SP, reflecting the radicalizing influence of the 1934 strike wave, was impelled to the left. The Trotskyists had fought from the beginning for a united unemployed organization embracing all political tendencies, and despite criticisms of the policies of the Stalinists and social democrats, Max Shachtman wrote in the *New Militant* (18 April 1936) that, "There can be no two opinions about the progressive nature of the merger."

The nearly 700 delegates meeting in Washington, D.C., represented all the major unemployed organizations in the country, including many fresh from WPA picket lines and relief battles. Even the AFL couldn't afford to overlook the unity convention and William Green sent greetings and an official representative. The National Unemployed Leagues, most of which had already merged into the WAA prior to the conference, were represented by 100 delegates. Militant struggles continued following the convention, as Roosevelt had just announced a mammoth cut of 700,000 from WPA projects. The occupation of New Jersey's legislature in Trenton captured nation-

wide headlines for days and WPA strikes soon gave the WAA bargaining status on New York, New Jersey and Detroit projects.

However, the newly united organization soon came under Stalinist domination and degenerated into a bureaucratic machine to promote the New Deal. Blocking with right-wing Socialists, the CP managed to freeze out left-wingers and Trotskyists. The Unemployed Leagues came away with only three seats out of 25 on the national executive board. A left-SP resolution "not to support the capitalist government of the U.S. in any war it may undertake, regardless of who its allies might be" was defeated. And when a representative of Roosevelt's relief administration addressed the conference, informing the delegates that he "could do nothing for their hungry stomachs," he was politely applauded (*New Militant*, 2 May 1936)!

A year later, at the 1937 convention of the WAA, Stalinist control became total. Full support was voted for the CP's popular-front strategy ("a united front of progress to oppose a united front of reaction"), and the convention even went so far as to remove a clause calling for the "abolition of the profit system" from its founding declaration. Meanwhile uncritical support was given to Labor's Non-Partisan League, the American Labor Party in New York, and other "independent" political formations which helped corral working-class votes for Roosevelt at the polls.

By 1939, CP unemployed organizer and national WAA leader Herbert Benjamin was hailing the estimate that "from 80 to 90 percent of the unemployed favor the New Deal and stand behind President Roosevelt." The Roosevelt "hunger program" (*Communist*, June 1935) was miraculously transformed into "the liberal social measures that have been fostered under the New Deal in the effort to afford some relief to the victims of the capitalist crisis" (*Communist*, August 1939).

From "New Deal" to "War Deal"

Communist Party support to Roosevelt in 1936-39 included uncritical support of U.S. war preparations. As it became increasingly clear to all that only a new inter-imperialist slaughter to redivide world markets could "solve" the

means of including our organization within its folds."

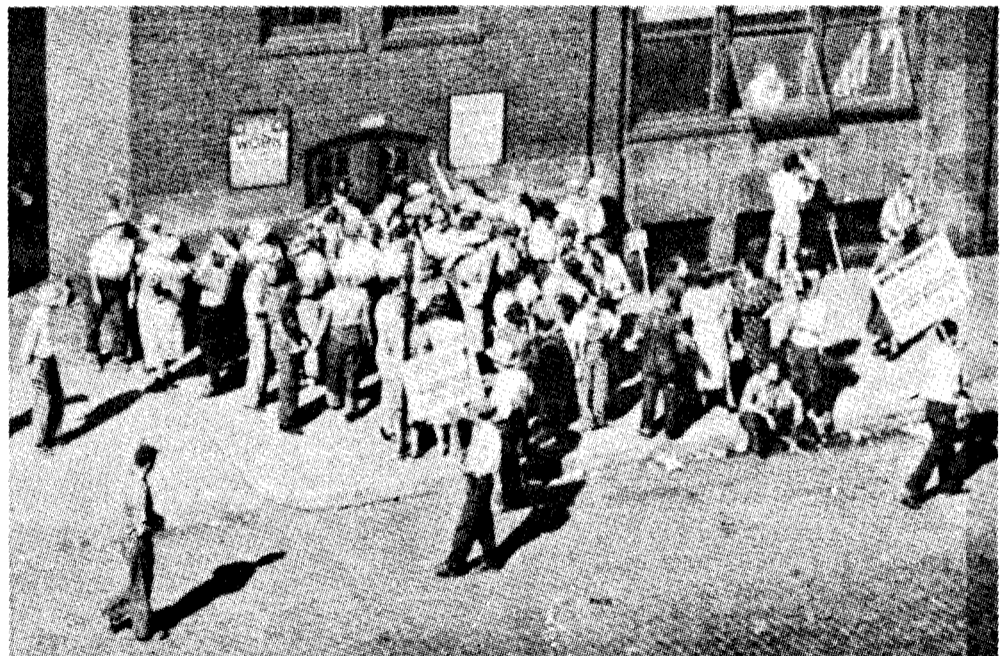
Communist, August 1937

The miserable record of the Stalinized Workers Alliance was summed up by the Trotskyists as "company unionism," in which WAA leaders spent their time "fawning before government officials" (*Socialist Appeal*, 24 December 1938). But it was not necessary to rely on Trotskyists for this testimony. Following the Hitler-Stalin pact, when the CP temporarily zigzagged away from the bloc with Roosevelt and called for opposition to imperialist war, none other than Benjamin himself came to the same conclusions.

Admitting that the WAA "has during recent years been without a fundamental program of its own," and that it had drastically lost membership because of the "impression" that it was exclusively a union for the rapidly dwindling number of WPA workers, Benjamin states:

"The unemployed movement found itself part of this ["progressive people's"] coalition together with the entire progressive labor movement and the Roosevelt Administration. Its relationship to the Administration changed from one of outspoken opposition to that of a critical ally...."

"Clumsy application and distorted interpretation of the policy of cooperation in making the Works Program creditable and successful even led in some instances to the impression that the movement was sort of a 'company union' for the Administration. In any case these circumstances led to an identification of the unemployed movement with the Administration program. The unemployed organization was therefore considered by



Militant

Picketing in Minneapolis after bloody police riot during 1939 WPA strike.

international capitalist crisis, the "New Deal" rapidly gave way to the "War Deal." Military budgets were drastically increased each year and, despite rising unemployment (approaching 15 million during the precipitous "Roosevelt Depression" in 1937), the administration repeatedly attempted to cut back on "New Deal" measures such as WPA. Thus in the last years of the 1930's, unemployed struggles were directly connected to the war question and the popular front.

The Communist Party's deeply class-collaborationist policies turned the Workers Alliance into an instrument for subordinating the struggles of the unemployed to the interests of the capitalist state. Virtually ignoring those unemployed not on federal projects, the WAA degenerated into a pressure group "defending" the WPA against "reactionary attacks on the New Deal." It also served to isolate the unemployed from employed workers in the new CIO unions in order to hold back the stormy development of the class struggle. This was done with the flimsiest of excuses. The national leadership's report to the 1937 WAA convention declared:

"Preoccupied as they are in other fields, the leaders of the CIO have had no opportunity to give thought to the best

some unemployed to be partly responsible for the deficiencies of this program."
—*Communist*, March 1940

While studiously avoiding taking responsibility for this wretched state of affairs, and defending the bloc with Roosevelt as necessary for the period, the head of CP unemployed work here confirmed the Trotskyists' criticisms and described the pitiful results of class collaborationism.

For a Class-Struggle Program

Not long after the Workers Alliance convention of 1936, the Workers Party was dissolved as the Trotskyists entered the Socialist Party in order to reach a new wave of workers repelled by Stalinism who had been attracted by the leftist posturing of the SP. The socialists had shorn themselves of the right-wing "Old Guard," and produced such anomalies as Norman Thomas (whom Trotsky labelled a socialist due to a misunderstanding) attacking the CP's Earl Browder from the left in a debate before a mass audience in Madison Square Garden.

During the year and a half of entry work, the Trotskyists more than doubled their forces, ripping away the left wing of the SP and thereby removing an important stumbling block for the development

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CLP Embraces Détente

The Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union has recently issued yet one more classless appeal to the freedom-loving bourgeoisies of "all Nations, Parliaments and Governments" to work for "peace." This appeal was given prominent coverage in one particular English-language publication, which reprinted it in full on its front page under the headline "Support Soviet Peace Proposal" and editorially expressed support for "this important peace appeal from the first land of socialism."

Was this merely a mouthpiece for the class-collaborationist Russian bureaucracy, like *Moscow News* or the *Daily World*? No, the publication is the *People's Tribune* (1 July 1975), organ of the "Marxist-Leninist" Communist Labor Party (CLP), whose founders were the first to split from the arch-reformist, pro-Moscow U.S. Communist Party (CP) during the 1950's in solidarity with the Chinese and Albanian "anti-revisionist" Stalinists. (For the history of the CLP see "What is the Communist Labor Party?," *WV* No. 56, 8 November 1974.) Furthermore, the CLP is now raising as its central agitational "mass line" slogan "Jobs With Peace," which politically bears an uncanny similarity to the CP's "Détente Means Jobs," and recently the CLP has obsequiously attempted to lure the CP into united-front actions (*People's Tribune*, 1 July).

Unlike the Revolutionary Union and October League, whose followers were recruited from various petty-bourgeois radical protest movements to a seemingly militant, ascetic and egalitarian "Third World" Maoism, Nelson Peery and other CLP leaders were old veterans of the CP. Their support for the Chinese Stalinists was based on Mao and Co.'s defense of Stalin against Khrushchev's criticisms. Nelson Peery's parting with CP-style revisionism by no means constituted a break with the essentials of the CP's reformist program. All it involved was shifting primary allegiance from the Russian bureaucracy to its Chinese twin and rival.

The Sino-Soviet split was precipitated not by ideological differences but by the conflicting nationalist self-interests of the respective Russian and Chinese bureaucracies, each committed to "building socialism" in one—its own—country. CLP politics have always turned on the anti-revolutionary perspective of "socialism in one country," and now that axis has gyrated from "people's war" back to "détente."

The Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, which in competition with the USSR treacherously pursues its own "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, "ideologically" seeks to justify ever more criminal anti-Soviet and pro-imperialist diplomatic maneuvers by the ludicrous charge that "The Soviet Union today is under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the German fascist type, a dictatorship of the Hitler type" (*People's Daily* [Peking], 9 May 1975). While never willing to equate the USSR with Nazi Germany, the Communist League (CL, predecessor of the CLP) had no compunction in the past about labelling the bureaucratically degenerated Russian workers state "capitalist." Not only Nixon but also Brezhnev were denounced by the CL as "representatives of international finance capital... trying to redivide the world 'peacefully'" (*People's Tribune*, July 1972). The sellout American CP, then labelled the "lapdogs of counterrevolution," was flayed (quite appropriately) for "channeling the cries of indignation against the war expressed by the

working class into abstract cries of peace" (*People's Tribune*, April 1973).

Following Mao, the CL located the Soviet Union's fall from grace in Khrushchev's speech criticizing Stalin in 1956 and his subsequent decree that the USSR had become a "state of the whole people." The class-collaborationist foreign policy and betrayals of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev gangs were attributed to this fatal error, despite the incontrovertible fact that "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism was a policy initiated by Stalin, the great gravedigger of socialist revolutions and executioner of communists.

In point of fact, on the basis of Stalin's pronouncement that socialism had been inaugurated in the USSR in 1936 (in the so-called Stalin Constitution, actually written by the "spies and traitors" Bukharin and Radek), Khrushchev could deduce with unassailable Stalinist logic that the USSR was a "state of the whole people." For Marxists, socialism—a society which has transcended class-based divisions and antagonisms through unleashing the productive forces fettered by private ownership and national boundaries—cannot be achieved in isolation, but only through the extension of the revolution by the proletariat taking power in the advanced countries. The "theory of socialism in one country" leads directly to the counterrevolutionary strategy of détente, since the only threat to the consolidation of "socialism" would be war and imperialist intervention, as Bukharin and Stalin explained in 1928.

A year ago the CL shifted its position on the character of the USSR, criticizing the equation of the U.S. and USSR as "superpowers." Never explicitly attacking the Chinese Stalinists or its own previous line, the CL pointed out with opportunist understatement that such bourgeois terminology "tends to shield the class character of the most ruthless imperialism [i.e., U.S. imperialism] the world has ever known" (*People's Tribune*, May 1974). The CLP has never clearly analyzed what *is* the class character of the USSR. While attacking mainstream Maoists for the "simplistic" position that "state capitalism" is fully triumphant in the Soviet Union, the CLP maintained that "bourgeois imperialist elements" had wielded state power since 1969:

"Is there capitalism in the USSR? Yes, there is and plenty of it. *The Soviet State is an imperialist state.* The imperialists hold state power and are rapidly and aggressively attacking the socialist relations of production."

—*People's Tribune*, June 1974

For Marxists the state is precisely a coercive organ for the maintenance of the relations of production uniquely corresponding to the rule of a particular class. So long as the proletarian property forms that still constitute the economic foundations of the Sino-Soviet states are not liquidated by violent bourgeois counterrevolution, these states in their class character remain workers states, albeit qualitatively deformed by bureaucratic rule.

As has become increasingly obvious, U.S. imperialism looks on the USSR not as a partner in imperialist aggression but as its most formidable enemy. With the victory of the pro-Moscow DRV/NLF, in South Vietnam and the seeming Stalinist advances in Portugal and Italy, it should not be surprising that it was against the USSR, not China, that U.S. "Defense" Secretary Schlesinger directed his threats of a nuclear first strike. While the CLP defended the Chinese betrayals in Ceylon, Bangladesh and the Sudan, these inveterate Stalinists apparently are

now feeling some qualms about Mao's call for more capitalist nuclear missiles aimed at the USSR.

According to the CLP the USSR now again stands with China, together forming "two historic blocks to the continued expansion of USNA [United States of North America] imperialism" (*People's Tribune*, 15 April 1975). Clearly lining up with the Kremlin, the CLP points to the "growing and fundamental danger of war with the Soviet Union," not because of the Maoists' "simple 'twin imperialisms' foolishness" that the U.S. and USSR are rival imperialisms in "collision and collusion," but because of the "capitalists' absolute need to roll communism back from the gates of France and Italy." The material basis of revisionism—"the fear of the invincibility of imperialist military power"—has supposedly been eliminated by the victories in Indochina.

But in their reactionary search for accommodation with and appeasement of imperialism, the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy is today prepared to subvert revolution in Italy and Portugal, just as Stalin strangled the Spanish revolution and betrayed partisan insurgents from France to Greece following World War II. The treacherous Stalinist bureaucracies that rule over the laboring masses in the degenerated and deformed workers states must be ousted by a workers political revolution. At the same time, Trotskyists unswervingly struggle for unconditional defense of the revolutionary gains of the working class embodied in these states against counterrevolutionary imperialist assault.

The CLP is edging closer to the line of the CP on domestic issues as well. All the recent rhetoric and militant posturing by the CLP to "Stop the Klan" are window-dressing for its more "serious" tactic of petitioning city councils and state legislatures to do the job. Like the CP, the CLP disorients the working class in the struggle against fascism by fostering illusions in the "democratic" bourgeoisie: *People's Tribune* (1 July 1975) advises "every worker [to] write, demonstrate and demand that Congress defeat" Senate Bill 1 (the so-called Criminal Justice Reform Bill). Like the CP, the CLP uncritically endorses the impotent "strategy" of the bourgeois NAACP to implement busing. And CLP-supported unemployment committees mobilize the jobless and destitute not to fight for full employment at the direct expense of the bosses but merely to pressure the bourgeois government to carry out various inadequate public works programs.

Stalinism, as Trotsky stressed, is the syphilis of the workers movement. By their fundamental strategy of collaborating with the irreconcilable class enemy, the Stalinists monstrously imperil the revolutionary gains of the international proletariat. Time and time again they have betrayed the revolutionary workers and given the bourgeoisie a new lease on life. Those like the CLP who base their policies on the dubious prestige of Stalinism in power are condemned to zigzag between the competing Stalinist bureaucracies as each pursues its own variant of "peaceful coexistence." The only constant, beneath the more or less "militant" rhetoric, is class collaboration.

It is not the "democratic" bourgeoisie and its "Parliaments and Governments" that can "ensure lasting and permanent peace," but red revolution led by a party which, in the words of Lenin, "tells the people that, in order to obtain a democratic and just peace, the bourgeois governments of all the belligerent countries must be overthrown!" ■

TELEGRAM

PDC Protest U.S. Bars Cuban Official

Invited to deliver the keynote address at an annual July 26 New York celebration of the Cuban Revolution, Cuban official Dr. Melba Hernandez has been denied entry into the U.S. by the State Department under the political exclusion provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act. Under this Act, aliens who advocate, teach, hold present or past membership in organizations which advocate or teach, opposition to all organized government or the overthrow by force, violence or other unconstitutional means the U.S. government; or who advocate the economic, international and governmental doctrines of world communism; or who write, print, circulate or display literature reflecting these views, etc., etc., are prohibited from entering the U.S. unless a special waiver is granted by both the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. We reprint below the text of a telegram sent by the Partisan Defense Committee, legal defense arm of the Spartacist League, to protest Dr. Hernandez' exclusion.

July 22, 1975

Attorney General Edward Levi
10 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Henry Kissinger
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

We denounce the U.S. Department of State's decision to deny Cuba's Dr. Melba Hernandez the right to speak in the U.S. We further denounce the exclusion provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act as not only viciously anti-communist legislation but also as unconstitutional under the first and fifth amendments. Strike down the exclusion sections of this repressive law! For freedom of entry for representatives and supporters of the international working-class movement!

PARTISAN DEFENSE
COMMITTEE

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No. 9, Summer 1975

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NOTICE

The next issue of *Workers Vanguard* will be dated 29 August 1975.

Organizing the Unemployed...

(continued from page 7)

of the revolutionary party. Unfortunately, however, the period of entry reduced the effectiveness of Trotskyist work in mass arenas such as the unemployed movement. Even with the necessary limitations imposed by SP discipline and the absorbing factional struggle, Trotskyist leader James Cannon pointed out that "we neglected to do as much mass work as we might have done." In particular opportunities were missed during the early months of the CIO. But the entry also strengthened the Trotskyists' position to undertake mass work in the future by providing them with new openings in the trade unions.

After their expulsion from the SP in late 1937, the Trotskyists founded the Socialist Workers Party in 1938. The new party determined to continue and intensify its work in the Workers Alliance despite the fact that the latter had become Stalinized and in effect "an adjunct of the Roosevelt Administration." Resolving to "press for relief committees in the unions and work for unification of trade union and WAA committees," the SWP made collaboration of the unemployed movement with the new CIO unions a central goal.

The Trotskyists also recognized that the organization of mass industrial unions "has suddenly replaced trade union problems with political problems in the theater of the class struggle..." The new party declared that "organizations without an adequate program will be useless," and called for idle factories to be nationalized and operated under workers control. They also demanded that all war

funds "be turned over to the unemployed."

Stalinists Sabotage WPA Strikes

While still in the SP, the Trotskyists initiated the organization of progressive caucuses within the Workers Alliance. These groups immediately came under bureaucratic attack by the Stalinists, who were intent on making the WAA utterly loyal to Roosevelt. Seventeen locals which quit or were expelled from the New York Workers Alliance went on to form the Unemployed and Project Workers Union, with 5,500 members. The Stalinists admonished the WAA ranks to "ignore this corrupt group of Trotskyites," and "remain faithful to the Alliance which is recognized and respected by our President and our Mayor" (quoted in *Socialist Appeal*, 8 October 1938). "Our Mayor" happened to be the same LaGuardia who earlier said "take WPA jobs or go to jail!"

As for the "respectful" president, following 1938 congressional elections he ordered *one and a half million* workers dropped from WPA rolls. The Stalinists continued to whine that the new downturn was all the fault of "Wall Street" trying to make "progressive government" and the New Deal look bad. In the midst of mounting protests against Roosevelt's massive WPA cuts, the CP sponsored a National Right to Work Congress featuring Eleanor Roosevelt, who declared that WPA workers were government employees and therefore could not be permitted to strike against the government. The next month (July 1939), however, there was a nationwide WPA strike against the cuts.

Protest actions against Roosevelt's post-election cuts in late 1938 included some in which the unemployed successfully linked up with the new industrial unions despite Stalinist sabotage. The Roosevelt depression had thrown many newly organized young workers in CIO unions onto the unemployed heap, and they were anxious to continue the struggle for industrial unionism. Wherever possible, the SWP pushed for organization of the unemployed directly within the new unions. In Detroit, the WPA division of the United Auto Workers soon gained a membership of 15,000. In December 1938, this UAW-WPA section threatened a city-wide general WPA strike in order to win reinstatement of fired stewards.

In reaction to mounting protests against WPA cuts in the spring of 1939, the Roosevelt regime shifted gears and attempted to achieve the desired effect by abolishing prevailing wage rates and specifically requiring skilled workers to put in as much as 130 hours in order to earn what they would have previously in 75. Known as the "Woodrum Bill" after its Democrat sponsor, this measure understandably angered building trades workers and sparked a largely spontaneous nationwide WPA strike in July. The strike was strongest in Minneapolis, where the Federal Workers Section continued its class-struggle leadership of the unemployed, and in other centers of organized militancy, but embraced hundreds of thousands across the country. The Workers Alliance played a strike-breaking role, deliberately setting a delayed date for the action *after it had already begun*, and defending Roosevelt's injunction against striking against the government. The strike was defeated because of the absence of a national class-struggle leadership.

The 1939 WPA strike was the closing action in a decade of unemployed struggles in which many of the most basic lessons of the class struggle were sharply drawn. The unemployed had to learn that their destitution was not a personal failing of their own or a temporary condition, as claimed by the ruling class, but a permanent feature of capitalism which could only be eradicated with the overthrow of capitalism itself. Unemployed organizers had to learn that by themselves the unemployed are difficult to organize into a stable formation and

are prey to right-wing ideologies and tempted to scab on employed workers. Leadership in the unemployed struggle must ultimately fall to the employed workers, who can utilize the economic power and organization derived from their position in capitalist production.

The commanding role of politics in the class struggle was clearly demonstrated by the disastrous effect produced by the Stalinists with their early sectarian and later popular-frontist betrayals, as well as by the positive effects of leftward motion in the Musteites and the Socialist Party during the middle 1930's, and by the Trotskyists' exemplary leadership of the Minneapolis Teamsters and of the National Unemployed Leagues. Militant class-struggle policies clearly had the greatest impact on organizing the unemployed when they emanated from within the trade unions, as in Minneapolis.

The conditions of the 1970's are by no means identical to those of the Great Depression. The leadership of the industrial unions has long since become an entrenched, ossified bureaucracy, utterly incapable of unleashing militant strike action to fight mass layoffs. Socialist forces, in turn, are far weaker numerically. But as cyclical downturns produce millions of jobless, taxing the meager reforms of the 1930's to the breaking point, revolutionists, through militant and effective organizing of the unemployed, can win supporters for the struggle against capitalism. In doing so, they would do well to study the class-struggle record of the Trotskyists in this earlier period, with their untiring struggle for the united front and employed-unemployed unity combined with thorough-going programmatic clarity. ■

Stalinists Slander NMU Militants...

(continued from page 3)

Electrical Workers sabotaged a UAW strike against General Motors by signing a pact for lower wages with GM's electrical division.

In maritime the Stalinists have a record not to be outdone. In 1936 the CP, in the midst of a government program to control the unions by issuing "fink books" (discharge records which easily fingered militants), said "Take the Fink Book and burn it on the Capitol steps on May Day." This was their answer to militant seamen who tied up ports on both coasts protesting the fink books and the government's moves to control hiring, training and the right to work!

After Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, Stalinist NMU officials dropped their short-lived opposition to imperialist war and went even further, pledging all-out support for World War II, speed-up and full cooperation with the War Shipping Administration. Union leaders enforced discipline and helped eliminate "disloyal elements" by turning in seamen to the draft boards if they stayed ashore too long. While seamen's bonuses were cut and conditions deteriorated, the 10 December 1941 NMU *Pilot* called for "a program that will bar strikes and lockouts and speed up industrial output to meet the tremendous war needs of the U.S. and its allies."

Following the end of the war, the U.S. government began whipping up anti-communist hysteria in preparation for the cold war. Meanwhile, a large section of the membership was dissatisfied with the Stalinists' strikebreaking, collaboration with the government and conscious sacrifice of many gains won through militant struggle when the union was founded. Joe Curran, who had worked with the CP continuously from 1937 to 1946, saw which way the wind was blowing. Suddenly spouting militant rhetoric, he jumped into the leadership of opposition to the CP machine. Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)

blocked with Curran in this initial period (in the Rank and File Caucus), while publicly putting forward their differences and fighting for their own program.

Both during the war years and after, the Trotskyists called for complete independence of the unions from government intervention, for the right to strike, no compulsory arbitration, nationalization of the merchant marine under workers control, and for an independent labor party (see Art Preis, "Stalinists on the Waterfront," April 1947). Moreover, when following the defeat of the Stalinists in the 1948 elections Curran began to expel CP supporters from the union, the SWP's *Militant* (6 September 1948) warned: "the most conscious members are apprehensive of any move, even though directed against the hated CP hacks, that smacks of minority persecution." And, in fact, supporters of the SWP were purged along with the Stalinists. Curran had learned well from the CP how to cooperate with the government in ridding the union of dissidents.

Today the CP once again sides with the capitalist government against the union, slandering militants who have for years waged a consistent struggle against the corruption of the NMU officials and who offer a real class-struggle alternative to the Currans and Walls. Instead, the Stalinists purr: "We support the rank and file leaders who have emerged, while retaining our right to criticize them in a brotherly, seamanlike manner." What this amounts to is a blanket endorsement of every rag-tag opportunist who comes down the road such as Morrissey—or even worse.

At the end of the *Daily World* article we find a pious wish that this investigation must be expanded to "involve the membership and see that the rank and file get a chance to express themselves." In contrast to this meaningless gobbledygook, the Militant-Solidarity Caucus leaflet ended with a very specific program:

"For a Special Membership Meeting: To Demand a Full National Office Report to the Membership and Open Floor Discussion!!..."

"No Government Intervention in Internal Labor Affairs!"

"Oust the Curran/Wall Regime—For a Militant NMU!"

We repeat our past warnings: the bosses' government has no interest in building strong, militant unions. This phony grand jury investigation must be opposed by all class-conscious seamen. Those who, like the reformist Communist Party, support the government attack are objectively aiding the class enemy! ■

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Italy Elections...

(continued from page 5)

than consistent, sharp Marxist warnings on the dangers of popular-frontist class collaboration this pseudo-revolutionary *poseur* dishes out favorable remarks about the possibilities of "economic reconversion" to solve the Italian crisis. Of course, this "reformist" project cannot be undertaken with complacency! Maitan writes (*Inprecor*, 28 November 1974):

"Insofar as the Historic Compromise were not just an ephemeral operation or a continuation of the old routine under a new label, insofar as it should begin to take the radical measures necessary for the reconversion we have described, and insofar as the masses should begin to demand something concrete, tensions would not only rise again very rapidly, they would also become even more acute. From this standpoint, it is not at all arbitrary to recall the situation in Chile during the Allende period."

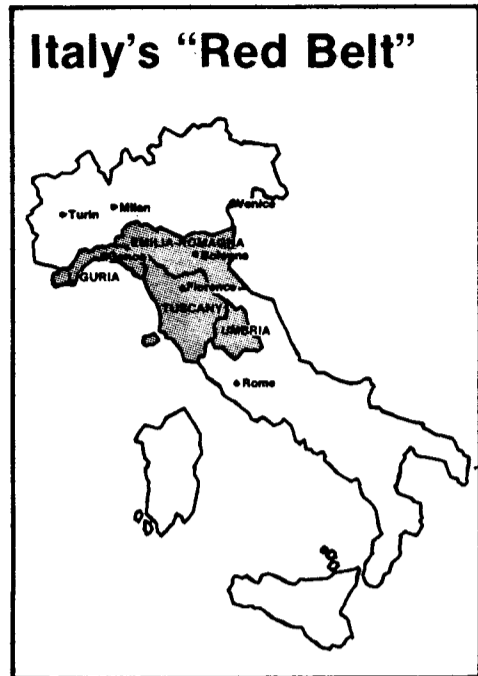
Indeed, recalling the Allende government in Chile is not at all arbitrary. At that time, also, the majority leadership of the United Secretariat (USec) refused to recognize the existence of a classical popular front, making all sorts of excuses for the Unidad Popular, giving it critical support because the Communist Party was supposedly "hegemonic" in the coalition. It should not be surprising, then, that commenting on the June 15 elections the same Maitan should claim that:

"...the massive vote for the PCI has a more precise class significance....
"The emergence of a spectacular change in the relationship of forces between the classes and of the political maturation of very broad proletarian masses will in turn constitute a very strong stimulus in two directions, both of them positive. The working class will acquire even greater confidence in its own strength.... At the same time...all problems will tend to be reflected in general political terms...."
Inprecor, 3 July 1975

Clearly Maitan is preparing the justifica-

tions for giving "critical" support to the historic compromise.

But until this "reformist" project marches onto the stage of history, the USec's Italian section, the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR), has another preoccupation: chasing after the variously named "broad/new/mass vanguard" of centrist syndicalists and Maoists. According to GCR leader Edgardo Pellegrini, this "vanguard" includes Lotta Continua (Continuing Struggle) and the



PDUP, whom Maitan and his acolytes are "trying to push...toward correct axes of struggle" around the purely economist program of "the sliding scale of wages and the reduction of the workweek" (*Intercontinental Press*, 10 March). About the PDUP and Lotta Continua policy of capitulation to the PCI, not a word. (In the elections, the GCR called for votes to the PCI, PDUP and Lotta Continua.)

No Vote for the PCI!

It is important for revolutionaries to have considered utilizing the Leninist tactic of critical support to PCI candidates in the June elections. Clearly millions of Italian workers continue to harbor illusions in the Communist Party. Could Trotskyists aid the struggle to cut through these illusions by calling on the workers to vote PCI—as a class vote against the capitalist parties—while simultaneously warning against the Stalinists' treachery and demanding that they raise a program corresponding to the revolutionary interests of the proletariat? In the past our tendency has called for critical support to candidates of the British and Australian labor parties.

Certainly, when revolutionaries constitute a small force compared to the mass reformist workers parties, we must desire to reach the latter's supporters in a manner such that organizational barriers do not prevent our work of exposing the ruinous consequences of the Stalinists' and social democrats' policies. While at all times fighting to create an independent Leninist vanguard party, revolutionaries cannot renounce maneuvers, including the tactic of critical support. What we

must demand is that these tactics be consistent with our strategy and principles; and the most fundamental principle of Marxist politics is the independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie. It is this which the class-collaborationist popular front *negates*.

No matter how much it might aid the task of approaching the Stalinist and social-democratic workers, to give electoral support to candidates of a popular front (even if only to those of the workers parties which are in the coalition) means to support a *bourgeois* political formation. The PCI and PSI are inherently contradictory formations, what Lenin referred to as "bourgeois workers parties." Because they are part of the workers movement, they may be forced, as Trotsky wrote, to "go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie" (Transitional Program). The tactic of critical support seeks to exploit this contradiction. But a popular front is different: it *cannot* break with the class enemy, which is included as one of its constituent parts.

Toward the workers parties of a popular front we adopt a policy of conditional electoral opposition: no vote for their candidates unless they break from the coalition. Of course, we must distinguish having a popular-front perspective from actual participation in a class-collaborationist bloc: the wish is not identical to the fact. While the PCI has consistently put forward a class-collaborationist policy its real possibilities of achieving a deal with the Christian Democrats have until recently been virtually nil. Thus revolutionaries could use the tactic of critical support to Communist candidates while warning against the PCI's ultra-reformist program.

However, the fact that a mass reformist (or even centrist) party is not formally part of a popular-front coalition by no means makes it obligatory to call for electoral support. It may actually be part of an undeclared "corridor coalition," as was the case with the Canadian New Democratic Party (NDP) which prior to the 1974 parliamentary elections kept a minority Liberal government in power by voting for it at critical points. Since NDP leaders openly proclaimed their intention to repeat this policy, the Spartacist tendency refused to call for votes to the NDP.

Even when there is neither a formal nor informal coalition, we must still ask if a tactic of critical support is not only principled but also wise and effective in breaking workers' illusions in the reformists. In the case of the June 15 Italian elections, the entire thrust of the PCI campaign was to build support for the "historic compromise." There was (and remains) a real possibility of a popular-front coalition's coming about as a result of the political realignment signalled by this vote. Moreover, while the immediate result of the elections has been an extension of Communist-Socialist local coalitions, the PCI Central Committee issued a call for "open coalitions of democratic entente," i.e., for joint governments with the Christian Democrats on the local, provincial and regional level (*Le Monde*, 9 July). PCI leader Armando Cossutta made clear that this offer held good even where the Communists hold an absolute majority, as in Bologna (*L'Espresso*, 20 July).

In sum, the vote for the PCI cannot today be considered a class vote. Lenin pointed out that the purpose of the tactic of critical support was to "support" the reformists "as the rope supports a hanged man." Unfortunately, in the recent Italian elections the PCI's popular-frontist campaign did not provide the rope with which to hang it.

—No to the "Historic Compromise"! No Vote to the PCI!

—For a PCI-PSI-Trade Union Government on a Program of Expropriating the Bourgeoisie!

—For the Crystallization of a Trotskyist Party in Italy—Toward the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

Perón Regime Collapses...

(continued from page 12)

exclusively of his cronies. After the unions and armed forces delivered virtual ultimatums to Mrs. Perón, López Rega finally moved out of the presidential residence and flew off to Madrid.

Bourgeois Populism

The ouster of Mrs. Perón's Rasputin-like adviser was widely considered a victory for Argentine workers. Far more significant, however, was the breach that had been opened between the labor movement and top leaders of the Peronist government. Many bourgeois commentators have wrongly equated Peronism with the British Labour Party. Thus the arch-conservative *Economist* (12 July) writes: "Mr. Wilson take note.... Argentina provides a cautionary tale of what happens when a government rides to power on the coat tails of a country's trade union movement and then loses control of the coat's wearer."

This comparison obscures the crucial difference: Peronism is a *bourgeois* political formation, quite capable of *smashing* the unions, while the Labour Party is part of the workers movement. Under present conditions in Argentina, with the unions tied to a capitalist party, a key task of revolutionaries is precisely to struggle for a break with Peronism and the formation of a workers party based on the unions, to fight for a workers government.

The government-union confrontation during the last month provided an unprecedented opportunity to fight to politically break the mass workers' organizations from the bourgeoisie, as part of the struggle to oust the treacherous pro-capitalist Peronist bureaucrats responsible for placing in power the present murderous anti-labor regime. Worried about pressure from the seething ranks, the CGT tops are seeking to appear as militant protectors of the members' standard of living.

The key to Juan Perón's original success in consolidating support among Argentine workers in the 1940's was the creation of a massive union bureaucracy and his provision of some modest wage gains and social welfare measures. In return, he served the ruling class well, zealously smashing all independent labor organizations. But this was based on Argentina's accumulation of foreign exchange during World War II. Already by the early 1950's the funds had run out and the "Benefactor" was smashing strikes by CGT unions. And when he returned in 1973 it was with a program of reaction down the line. His task: to smash the working-class militancy which the army had been unable to contain after the Córdoba uprising of 1969.

Strike Wave

So far, this decisive defeat has not been inflicted on the combative workers. An indication of the mood during the current wave of wildcat strikes was given by the *New York Times* (25 July) describing negotiations between workers and an unnamed general manager of an auto parts plant:

"Tension was so high he [the manager] had hired armed bodyguards. On the final day of negotiations, he heard gunfire outside the building and jumped up from the bargaining table.
"Boss, we just machine-gunned your car," the union representative told him. "Now, why don't you sign?"
"I signed everything they put in front of me," the businessman recalled."

Given the sentiments of their ranks it is easy to see why even the most conservative CGT leaders see a need for militant posturing. But it remains mere posturing, and before calling the July 7 general strike union tops made a point of asking workers "to remain calm and avoid alliances with militant leftists" (*New York*

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Times, 1 July). A leader of the country's most powerful union, the Metal Workers (UOM), commented: "These workers can still be turned around, but we have to show them that their leaders will fight to protect their income."

During the last two years, in order to support the Peronist regime, these same leaders remained totally passive in wage struggles, often sabotaging strikes and supporting government intervention of the local unions. A classic case was the recent two-month strike by 6,000 steel workers at Villa Constitución, the center of Argentina's heavy metallurgical industry. In November 1974 a slate of dissidents was finally elected in the Villa local after a four-year struggle to end bureaucratic intervention by national UOM leaders. So when Villa Constitución union militants were jailed (200 of them) by Perón in March, UOM tops didn't lift a finger to defend them. Nevertheless, the steel workers responded with a 100 percent effective wildcat strike.

While there are any number of militant local unionists in Argentina, the key task is to break with the bureaucracy not only at the level of wage militancy, but also politically, by fighting for working-class independence from the anti-labor Peronist movement. With Peronism in power, this struggle is an elementary part of any labor action, for the ranks must be prepared to fight inevitable repression by "their" government. But ostensible socialists in Argentina have by-and-large failed in this respect, restricting their propaganda to the level of simple trade unionism, because "that's where the workers are at."

Fake Trotskyists

In the Villa Constitución strike, one such tendency, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party), was in an excellent position to influence this militant and widely popular struggle, having two members on the elected strike committee. But although the PST claims to be Trotskyist it failed to provide anything resembling political leadership to the strike. An article drawing a balance sheet of the action (which ended in a bitter defeat on May 19, with more than 500 strikers fired and many still in jail), the PST's only criticisms of the strike leaders were that they had not overcome the isolation of Villa from other centers of labor militancy, and that they were not hard enough on the guerrillas (*Intercontinental Press*, 9 June)!

(During the strike an executive of one of the plants was assassinated by leftist guerrillas; also two police stations were attacked and an armored relief column ambushed. This stupid action only served to give credence to the government's "justification" for the arrest of the local union leaders: the supposed existence of a "terrorist plot of vast proportions" in the industrial belt north of Buenos Aires. But while Marxists criticize petty-bourgeois guerrillaists from a revolutionary perspective, the PST did so from a purely pacifist point of view. In spite of the military and police occupation of the zone, and the need for defense of the occupied factories, it did not call for the formation of workers defense guards.)

This "omission" of any calls for a political break of the organized workers movement from Peronism in the context of the strike was no accident. The PST and its predecessors have repeatedly capitulated to Peronism in every conceivable manner. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, Nahuel Moreno, the PST's "theoretician," was publishing a magazine "under the direction of General Perón and the Peronist Supreme Command." In 1972 the PST offered to vote for the Peronist FREJULI if 80 percent of its candidates were workers. Last year, these reformist social democrats masquerading as Trotskyists went even further, pledging to support "in all instances" the "institutional process" in a joint declaration with bourgeois parties, and later vowing to "fight for the continuity of this government..." (see "Death Squadrons Murder Argentine

Leftists," *WV* No. 57, 22 November 1974).

The PST studiously avoids calling on the unions to break with bourgeois populism and form a workers party. In the past the Moreno group has occasionally talked about a workers party tied to the unions—but only when the Peronists were currently sporting a laborite mask. In a review of its history (Ernesto Gonzalez, "Qué es y qué fué el peronismo," *Revista de América*, May-June 1971), they write of the Partido Laborista (Labor Party) in 1945 as "the best possibility which the workers had to organize themselves independently." And commenting on CGT leader Vandor's Partido Obrero (Workers Party) of 1966, Gonzalez says: "What we did was support his break from the bourgeois leadership with the perspective of repeating the laborite experience." Elsewhere, writing of the PSRN (Socialist Party of the National Revolution), a pro-Peronist party created in 1954 by dissident social democrats and whose Buenos Aires section was controlled by Moreno, they comment that in joining it their aim was the construction of a "legal centrist political organization of the left" which would be "the opposite of a proletarian Bolshevik organization" (Nahuel Moreno, "1954, año clave del peronismo").

For Trotskyists the call for a workers party based on the unions is not the call for a centrist or reformist party; we constantly struggle for the revolutionary program which any workers party must raise if it is to defend the interests of the proletariat. As to the Partido Laboral, we have pointed out (in "Argentina: The Struggle Against Peronism," *WV* No. 23, 6 July 1973) that it "was simply an electoral vehicle for Perón" which quickly disappeared into the Peronist Party. Finally, Vandor's Partido Obrero was not a break with the bourgeoisie but a vehicle for supporting the Onganía military coup of that year.

While the forms vary, what is constant in the policies of these fake Trotskyists is their capitulation before existing misleaders. It is true, as they assert, that militant wage struggles can drive a wedge between the ranks and the union tops; they can also drive the bureaucrats to the left, toward a conflict with their capitalist masters. The recent strife between the CGT and Mrs. Peron vividly demonstrates this. But most importantly it proves that without a constant struggle for a political break with bourgeois populism, this split can be papered over and the tremendous opportunity to destroy the Peronist movement lost. If today the CGT leaders are able to swear loyalty to Peronist legislators and still remain at the helm of the unions, a good part of the responsibility lies with those like Moreno & Co. who failed to fight this policy of class collaboration in the past. ■

Portugal...

(continued from page 1)

CP militants. In Aveiro, 10,000 Catholics rally to greet the local bishop upon his return from the Vatican and to protest the takeover of a church radio station by leftists.

• **July 15:** About 15,000 demonstrators gather outside Socialist headquarters. SP leader Mario Soares announces: "The country is mobilized from North to South." The crowd demands the ouster of Premier Vasco Gonçalves, considered to be close to the CP.

• **July 17:** In Porto, the country's second largest city, the bourgeois Popular Democratic Party (PPD) draws 20,000. Demonstrators chant, "A Free Press, A Free Portugal! Down with Communism!"

• **July 18:** Some 70,000 attend an SP rally in Porto. CP offices are destroyed in Lourinha and Cadaval; at Batalha a Communist meeting is broken up by rightists.

• **July 19:** "Socialists in Lisbon Stage

Big Anti-Communist Rally" says a *New York Times* headline; about 60,000 participate. In Aveiro CP members are besieged in their office. Police report attacks on leftists in at least ten towns.

• **July 21:** Several thousand demonstrate in Leiria against alleged plans to install a "people's republic." A CP office is firebombed at Val de Cambra, another sacked at Estarreja; Communist Party militants fight off reactionary attackers in Mortagua and Moimenta da Beira.

• **July 22:** Several hundred demonstrators attack local CP headquarters.

Socialists Front for Reaction

Under current conditions in Portugal there is considerable deception on all sides. Leftist officers of the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement (MFA) claim to be defending union democracy while locking up elected Maoist labor leaders. The Popular Monarchist Party calls for socialism ("Swedish-style") and the head of the bourgeois PPD terms himself a "Leninist social democrat"! The Socialist Party has repeatedly chanted "socialist yes, dictatorship no." Upon inquiry, however, it turns out that what the SP favors is "Western-style" democracy, i.e., capitalism. But because of its opposition to sellout CP bureaucrats in the unions, the SP has managed to attract a considerable working-class vote.

But last week it was not the workers who turned out for Socialist demonstrations. In general they were about half the size expected and numerous observers report the presence of elements hostile to any suggestion of socialism. At the July 15 demonstration Soares and other SP leaders were repeatedly hissed, while a speaker from Rio Maior was applauded because of the burning of CP offices there. Another popular theme was criticism of the quality of the reception accorded "compatriots repatriated from Angola." *Le Monde* (17 June) commented on the reactionary atmosphere:

"By taking the lead of the discontented, the party of Mr. Mario Soares risks becoming, to use the expression of a close collaborator of the prime minister, 'the Trojan Horse of reaction.' Such an evolution could rapidly provoke an upheaval within the party, which for the moment seems solidly behind its leadership. Several Socialist officials recognize the danger but, they say, 'we cannot renounce the struggle for democracy on the pretext that along the way one picks up cumbersome allies from the right.'"

As we have repeatedly pointed out, the struggle of the social democrats is not for workers democracy, or even for bourgeois democracy, but rather to maintain capitalist rule. The Portuguese SP has participated in governments which issued anti-democratic no-strike and press censorship laws, approved a law enforcing the bureaucratic stranglehold of the Intersindical federation on the labor movement, and demonstrated in favor of an MFA document pledging to maintain capitalism. Soares is quite conscious of who his allies are, and has repeatedly appealed to NATO governments to put pressure on leftist officers in Portugal.

One of the rallying cries of the rightists has been to "defend *República*," the paper whose SP editor was ousted by a Stalinist-led workers' commission (with subsequent approval by the MFA). We have warned that such censorship and violation of freedom of the press is a threat to the workers movement and must be opposed, while denouncing the SP's campaign for "democracy" as in fact aimed at combatting the MFA and Stalinists from the right.

The ultimate logic of the Portuguese SP's policy is support for a reactionary coup and the bloody suppression of the militant workers which that would inevitably bring. This was the program of Scheidemann and Noske, who presided over the strangling of the German Revolution in 1918-1919. These respectable "socialists" naturally clucked their tongues over the brutal murder of Communist Party leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht; yet it was their own police who did the dirty work. No doubt Soares, too, will deplore the

"excesses" of burning CP offices and beating Communist Party militants—but this will not change his treacherous course.

No Confidence in the MFA!

The Armed Forces Movement leaders have apparently weathered this crisis, but only for the moment. Already there have been two attempted rightist coups (September 28 and March 11), and in this last case there was no clear defeat of the rightists. Today, Soares and PPD leaders are bargaining with the new MFA triumvirate (Premier Gonçalves, President Costa Gomes, and security forces chief Carvalho) over the formation of a "government of national salvation" sympathetic to the "moderates." Yet tomorrow the SP leaders could prepare the way for a putsch led by Costa Gomes, Alves, Crespo and other elements in the MFA who are united primarily in their opposition to the CP.

That there is a substantial sector of the MFA and the general staff opposed to Gonçalves has been an open secret for months, although the CP and various Maoist and Castroist groups continue to chant "The people are with the MFA." While the CP has confidence in Gonçalves, and influence in the Fifth Regiment of the general staff, Carvalho has the support of more radical elements. Yet despite their socialist rhetoric and verbal tirades against capitalism, all wings of the MFA represent the officer corps of the bourgeois army. Their most fundamental commitment is to the maintenance of the armed forces, and thus of capitalist rule.

Both on September 28 and March 11, vigilance squads of the Communist Party played a major role in frustrating the rightist putschists' actions. Clearly any attempt by counterrevolutionary forces to put an end to the present pre-revolutionary situation in Portugal would once again count upon decisive support from within the armed forces. Thus it is vital that the working class place no confidence in the bourgeois MFA, and instead organize itself independently to prepare to defeat another rightist offensive. In particular this means the formation of united-front vigilance committees, workers militias and factory committees.

In some of the most advanced sections of the Portuguese proletariat the embryo of such organizations already exists. Lisnave workers have a factory committee of delegates elected on a democratic basis and recallable at any time. On several occasions it has shown its capacity to mobilize the entire workforce to demonstrate against anti-labor actions by the demagogic left-posturing military government. The urgent necessity is for the extension of these factory committees, and a struggle to break all illusions in and political support for the MFA and its Stalinist supporters. Only by fighting for a unitary council of workers' commissions, factory councils, workers militias and vigilance committees, and for such a soviet-type organization to take power from the bonapartist generals, can the danger of counterrevolutionary putsch be decisively crushed. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Danger of a Military Coup in Argentina

Perón Regime Collapses

Break with Peronism, For a Workers Party!

JULY 26—The mounting economic and political crisis in Argentina has proceeded at an accelerated pace during recent weeks, leaving the government in shambles and President Isabel Perón a mere figurehead on the brink of physical and mental collapse. If, as is widely rumored, a right-wing military coup is carried out in the coming days it will be a sharp blow to the workers movement internationally. Argentina, with the largest industrial proletariat of South America and large numbers of left-wing political refugees, is the last country on the continent south of Colombia not yet under military rule.

The frail widow of General Juan Domingo Perón has remained in power this long through no fault of her own. The Argentine economy is such a mess that even the generals and admirals have preferred to avoid taking the reins of power. An equally powerful deterrent is the militancy of the labor movement, which would have to be crushed by military plotters. Nevertheless, the international bourgeois press continues to cry out for the imposition of law and order and, as *Newsweek* (21 July) commented, "The smell of a dead government is already here."

Argentina may be already experiencing a coup in slow motion, and in any case, whether the executioner is a Peronist or a general, a tragedy of the magnitude of the bloody Chilean events of September 1973 is looming on the horizon. But Argentine leftists, including the ostensible "Trotskyists," have for years refused to take a revolutionary stance in the face of the popularity of Peronism among the working masses. They have conciliated this bourgeois populist current instead of focusing their efforts on breaking the working class from the political and ideological stranglehold of the "Supreme Benefactor of the Argentine Nation."

General Strike

On June 28 President Isabel Perón, draped in the mantle of succession of the "líder máximo," took action to exact from the Argentine workers the price of averting government financial bankruptcy. Denouncing Peronist labor leaders, she ordered the rescinding of wage increases negotiated in recent bargaining by the 3,000,000-strong CGT (General Confederation of Labor). The country's already raging inflation intensified to

epidemic proportions in a matter of days following announcement of a currency devaluation of 50 percent. Prices rose by 100 percent last year, and in the single month of June they shot up by 49.9 percent—meaning that wage increases of 80 to 130 percent will be gutted in a matter of weeks.

But that does not concern the government or its dwindling number of apologists, mainly supporters of rightist strongman José López Rega. Citing inflation, falling production, an uncontrolled black market and guerrilla activity as signs of crisis, Mrs. Perón banged her palm on her desk during an angry televised speech, reminding workers that they had promised her late husband to make sacrifices to help the nation. "The only possible solution is to maintain a fair and healthy austerity program and to produce as much as possible as if we were in a state of war" (*New York Times*, 29 June).

Needless to say, there already exists a state of war—against the working class. Her "fair and healthy austerity program" involves decontrolling prices, freezing wages, massive devaluations of the peso and tripling the price of fuel. Multi-national conglomerates, once the target of government criticism, have been praised by Mrs. Perón as a key to national economic recovery. There was also increasing talk of returning state industries to private hands.

Shortly after the president's speech, Labor Minister Ricardo Otero resigned and Peronist senators announced their support for the CGT's demands, which included the dismissal of López Rega (the minister of social welfare and Mrs. Perón's personal secretary and spiritual adviser of 10 years' standing). This practicing astrologer and head of a fascist wing of the Peronist movement was denounced in the press as responsible for the death squads of the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA) which have murdered hundreds of leftists, labor militants and political dissidents in the last year.

The Peronist legislators (joined by members of the main opposition parties) proceeded to elect Italo Luder, a moderate Peronist, to the vacant post of president of the Senate. This was a clear slap at Isabel Perón, as Luder's new post puts him first in line of succession should



Isabel Perón with López Rega and the generals.

Atlantida



Avanzada Socialista

Militant steelworkers protesting the arrest of union leaders during Villa Constitución strike.

the presidency become vacant. The military, also, chimed in to demand the ouster of the "power behind the throne," López Rega, in response to Perón's request that the generals enforce her orders.

Beginning on June 27, when the CGT called for a general strike against the wage rollback, manifestations of discontent snowballed in repeated wildcats and demonstrations. Among the most militant sectors have been metal, auto, construction and textile workers. Even as they announced the strike, conservative Peronist union leaders called a rally in Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo to support the president. But lukewarm cheers for

Isabel were drowned out by curses at López Rega. A former police corporal who claims to have co-authored a book with the Archangel Gabriel, he is so universally hated that spectators stopped a soccer game last month to chant, "López Rega, López Rega—witch, witch, son of a bitch!"

Despite the resignation en masse of the cabinet on July 7, the labor protest lasted 38 hours and was the most massive in years, halting public transportation, commercial activity and most public services. A new cabinet was announced two days later, but although López Rega was missing the line-up consisted almost

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