

## Down with Khomeini! For Workers Revolution!

# Mullahs Win

FEBRUARY 12—Khomeini and the mullahs are victorious in Iran. The political revolution though unconsolidated has won. Thousands of armed civilians are riding through the streets of Teheran in open trucks, shoulder to shoulder with newly converted soldiers shooting bullets into the air to glorify the "Islamic republic." The world media echoes the chants of these people it calls the ayatollah's "revolutionaries" with cautious expectation. (We read of the "Revolutionary Provisional Government" and "Council of the Islamic Revolution," and Radio Iran has become "Voice of the Revolution.") The *New York Times* went so far as to call the shah's short-lived stand-in Bakhtiar "the Kerensky of his country."

After two days of flaming barricades and pitched battles on the streets, after the military defeat of the shah's loyal goose-stepping "Immortals" and the dramatic declaration by the armed forces chief that the army would remain "neutral" and respect "the will of the people," after the sacking of Bakhtiar's palace and offices and the arrest of the shah-loyal military and SAVAK officers—after it was all over, the *Washington Post* proclaimed: "Today, Iran belonged to the revolution." This is the revolution that the reformist left in and out of Iran have been organizing for. Now they have it.

The working masses of Iran who took to the streets against the hated shah must not be fooled. This is not a victory for the working masses. Today, Iran belongs to middle-class Islamic reaction in a bloody alliance with a section of the same officer corps which has dealt out decades of death and oppression on behalf of the Pahlavis. They are prepared to do the same now.

Khomeini pulled the masses of Iran behind his drive for power, but his victory was assured by the capitulation of elements of the higher levels of the military. It is this army and police that the "revolutionary Islamic republic" will unleash against the workers, peasants and minorities whose demands for democratic rights, land reform and national equality will not be met by the cabal of clerical reactionaries and bonapartist generals now in power.

While the reformist left in and outside Iran touted Khomeini as the "intransigent" opponent of the shah and his uniformed butchers, *WV* maintained that Khomeini and the mullahs would

seek to incorporate a section of the old military. While the ayatollah was still in Parisian exile we wrote:

"Both reactionary forces squaring off for state power need the army to rule. And neither wants a prolonged civil war which could allow openings for the left to gain mass influence, particularly with a powerful proletariat in the wings. Khomeini's intended Islamic 'republic' rests not on mass support but on the sword of the military..."

—"Iran Showdown," *WV* No. 224, 2 February

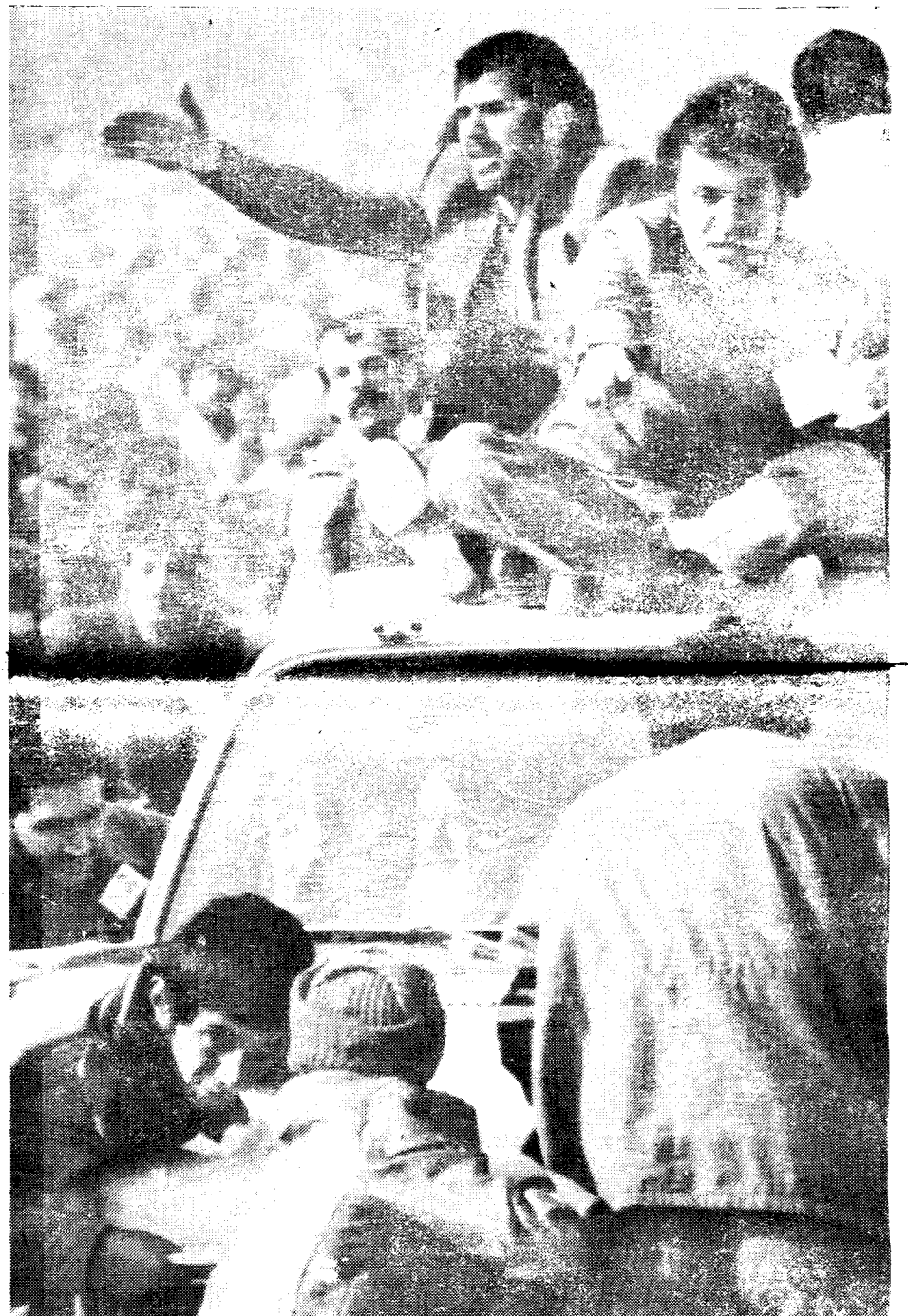
### Holy War, Civil War and Class War

Khomeini's surprisingly easy victory was accomplished because the overwhelming majority of the shah's personally selected generals did not think they could rely on their army in a full-scale civil war against the bulk of the population. In a speech to his commanders given before he fled the country, he had ordered them to do just that. Most voice identification experts confirmed as authentic the tape recording of the shah calling on the officers "to create a prolonged civil war" to restore him to power, to "clean the army of dissatisfied elements" and to give the troops "complete freedom to shoot and kill the people" (*New York Times*, 1 February).

The Imperial Guard was ready and willing to carry out His Majesty's kill-crazy orders. Had such a confrontation erupted into civil war, Marxists would have militarily supported the popular forces rallied by the mullahs against an intact officer caste, even as our intransigent *political* opposition to the reactionary-led movement sought to polarize the masses along class lines and rally the workers and lower strata of the petty-bourgeois masses around the proletarian pole.

Victory came easily to the mullahs largely because their political revolution did not challenge the class basis of Iranian society. The isolated shah spoke for no significant section of the ruling class. And he had no point of support other than a military apparatus hung in mid-air and his family (which numbers in the thousands). Thus it was only the "Immortals" that would go down fighting. And when they did, the officer corps cracked.

The loyalty of many armed forces commanders was not to the shah



Rebbot/Newsweek

On the way to power: the ayatollah Khomeini arrives in Teheran, February 1.

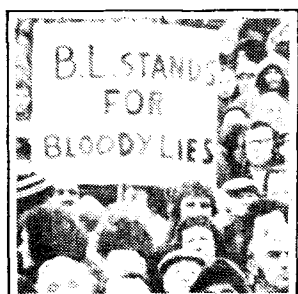
personally but to the military machine built for the shah by the U.S. government. And armed forces chief Garabaghi and his fellow generals were not prepared to risk disintegration of the military by ordering conscript troops sympathetic to Khomeini to crush the Islamic uprising. In the key battle this was precisely the choice posed to the generals.

The shooting began at midnight on

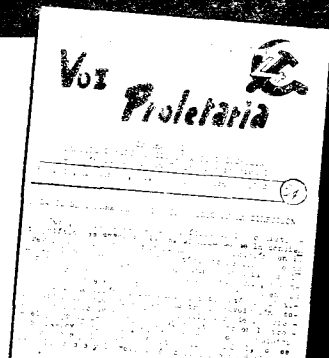
February 9 when the Imperial Guardsmen marched on the Doshan Tapeh air base in East Teheran to suppress a pro-Khomeini demonstration staged by rebellious air force technicians and cadets. The outgunned air force men defended themselves ably and were quickly reinforced by thousands of civilians armed with hoarded rifles, molotov cocktails and weapons distrib-

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Leftists Break From Social Democracy

## CIA Connection Uncovered in Trial

# Jail All the Murderers of Orlando Letelier!

The trial currently under way in Washington, D.C., of three Cuban exile terrorists charged in connection with the 1976 bombing assassination of Orlando Letelier and his American aide, Ronni Moffitt, is no ordinary courtroom joust. The Letelier murder is, or should be, a major political scandal capable of bringing down governments. As everyone knows, the trail of evidence leads directly from the three small-time gusano gangsters now in the dock to the highest reaches of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. But the main concern of the "prosecution" is to continue the cover-up of U.S. complicity in this murderous crime. And the government's star "witness" is a professional political assassin, plying his trade on three continents, who will be back on the streets again by November 1981!

The dramatic events behind the trial were glimpsed January 17 when Mrs. Isabel Letelier took the stand. She vividly described the Antarctic conditions in Chile's Dawson Island concentration camp where her husband was imprisoned following the bloody 1973 military coup which overthrew the Unidad Popular (UP) government of Salvador Allende. "What happened to my husband is what happened to thousands of Chileans," she said (*Washington Star*, 18 January). But Letelier's "bearded, baby-faced killer," Michael Townley, responded coldly that he had "no regrets." He was just doing his job for one of the most hated military dictatorships in the Western Hemisphere.

The first bombshell in the proceedings came when a CIA affidavit submitted to the trial contained the statement that "an arm of the agency once sought to use Townley in an operational capacity" (*Washington Post*, 19 January). Delivered in response to a request by U.S. District Court Judge Barrington D. Parker, the statement alleged the CIA could find no further records proving whether Townley ever actually did jobs for the agency or not. No doubt the records have been shredded as part of "routine housekeeping," just like various other explosive CIA/FBI documents in the past. But the fact that Townley has in the past worked for the CIA has been extensively documented.

The prosecution has sought to demonstrate why the Chilean government was interested in bumping off Letelier—in particular detailing how he had been instrumental in stopping a Dutch industrial group from making a major \$62.5 million investment in Chile. Calling Senator George McGovern to testify, they also showed how Allende's former ambassador to Washington used his influential connections on Capitol

Hill to get legislation passed prohibiting all U.S. military sales to Chile.

But even though these facts were known from the very beginning, even though the finger of guilt immediately pointed to Pinochet and his notorious secret police (DINA), the U.S. Department of Justice took nearly two years before finally submitting a 15-page indictment charging leading DINA officials in connection with the crime. Those accused included the DINA's chief, General Juan Manuel Contreras, its operations chief Lt. Colonel Pedro Espinoza Bravo, Captain Armando Fernández Larios and the American citizen Michael V. Townley, who had been working as an agent of Pinochet's torture and murder agency. In addition, five Cuban Bay of Pigs veterans, members of a CIA-trained terror squad called the Cuban National Movement, were charged in the crime.

It is only the Cubans who are presently on trial. Meanwhile the U.S. is playing an elaborate extradition game with the Pinochet government, and Townley, although an admitted murderer and the key operative in the crime, is handed the role of state's evidence. Thanks to the government's deliberate 15-month delay in following up the case, at least one of the Cubans got away—the "button man," José Dionisio Suárez, said to have triggered the remote-controlled bomb.

So far in the trial Townley has admitted obtaining the aid of the Cuban bombers, organizing the details of the plot, preparing the explosives and even personally attaching the "artifact" to the underside of Letelier's car. This "star witness" has also admitted lying freely about various aspects of the case in earlier interrogations. By his own admission he has already committed acts which would put someone away for life on charges of murder, conspiracy, assassination of foreign officials, perjury, firearms and explosives violations, etc. But instead, under the terms of a deal with the U.S. government, he will be tried on a single count of murder with the promise of parole after three years and four months!

The son of a U.S. business executive, Townley spent his adolescence in Chile. He told the court how he had picked up his electronics skills while working as an auto mechanic in Miami's Little Havana and how he met with the CIA before returning to Chile following the 1970 election of Allende. Returning at a time when other right-wingers were leaving the country, Townley immediately hooked up with the CIA-financed fascist Patria y Libertad organization.

In 1972 he participated in a right-wing anti-government commando raid in which a night watchman was murdered. That same year, *Washington Post* investigators report, Townley operated a clandestine radio for the truck-owners "strike" which was a key part of the CIA's "destabilization" plan. Ironically, Allende had asked military intelligence to track down the broadcasting station and it was the same Lt. Colonel Pedro Espinoza who was sent on the job. Not surprisingly, he never found it. Townley was also reportedly running a secret communications network for the military out of a Santiago safehouse in the months immediately preceding the Pinochet coup.

The second important new admission came after Townley testified that he

received some \$980 expense money for the Letelier murder. In addition to this implausibly low sum, Townley said he got another \$25,000 for an unsuccessful 1975 assassination attempt on the lives of two other left-wing opponents of the junta, Socialist Party leader Carlos Altamirano and Communist Party senator Volodia Teitelboim. Altamirano and Teitelboim had luckily left Mexico City the day before Townley arrived.

Moreover, in late January, Swedish newspapers reported that Townley was given orders to assassinate Olof Palme, then prime minister, while he was

ras wrote to his counterpart in the Brazilian National Information Service (SNI), General João Baptista Figueiredo (now head of the ruling junta), thanking the SNI for its support and expressing concern about the activity of various Brazilian and Chilean oppositionists:

"We also are aware of the reiterated support of the Democrats to [former Brazilian president Juscelino] Kubitschek and Letelier, which could in the future seriously influence the stability of the Southern cone of our Hemisphere."

The letter ends:

"The plan proposed by you to coordinate our action against certain



Junta seizes Letelier, 1973. "What happened to my husband is what happened to thousands of Chileans."—Isabel Letelier

attending a Social Democratic congress in Madrid in May of 1976 (*New York Times*, 1 February). The Swedish government had earned the particular animosity of Pinochet by its acceptance of thousands of Chilean refugees and its refusal to recognize the military government. However, the judge refused to allow further interrogation on Townley's other terrorist activities, in accordance with another clause in the deal to obtain Townley's testimony under which he would not be questioned about any other assassination attempts!

And there were plenty of others. Not only was he the key operative in Letelier's murder, not only did he barely miss killing Altamirano and Teitelboim, but investigators have now definitely established that this fascist "electronics expert" participated in the 1974 Buenos Aires car bombing that killed the exiled Chilean general Carlos Prats and his wife. (Prats had been one of the very few members of Chile's "constitutionalist" officer corps who refused to go over to Pinochet.) Townley has also been traced to Rome in 1975 at the time that exiled Christian Democratic leader Bernardo Leighton and his wife were gunned down in a pistol attack. Leighton has since recovered from the wounds, but his wife remains partially paralyzed.

Furthermore, last summer a letter was revealed which foreshadowed the Chilean military government's worldwide murder conspiracy. In this letter, revealed by the Brazilian opposition paper *Movimiento*, the DINA's Contre-

ecclesiastical authorities and well-known social-democratic and Christian Democratic politicians in Latin America and Europe has our wholehearted support."

—quoted in *Triunfo*, [Madrid], 23 September 1978

The letter was dated 28 August 1975. Five weeks later Bernardo Leighton was shot in the head. And shortly after Letelier was assassinated, Kubitschek died in an "unexplained" auto accident. In each case we glimpse the sinister figure of Michael Townley. The DINA's multiple murderer with all of his CIA connections and gusano accomplices is a menace to the citizenry. Instead of releasing him so he can kill again, Townley ought to be locked up and the key thrown away!

The strategy of the defense in the trial is to accuse Townley of carrying out Letelier's murder at the request, not of the DINA, but the CIA. It is unlikely that the U.S. spy agency would have wanted to assassinate Letelier on the streets of the American capital, particularly in the aftermath of the revelations of CIA involvement in the Watergate affair. But as we have repeatedly stressed, the Letelier affair reveals that the tentacles of the U.S.' own Murder Inc.—the CIA, the FBI and assorted other intelligence agencies—spread a net so dense that it could not help stumbling across the plot before it came to its deadly conclusion. In earlier articles we documented how police

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Michael Townley

Der Spiegel

## Workers Must Go Beyond Militant Trade Unionism

# Mass Strikes Sweep Britain

LONDON, February 11—Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan's Phase Four 5 percent wage limit is dead, killed by the most serious strike wave to sweep Britain at least since the miners' confrontation which brought down the Heath government in the winter of 1973-74. Callaghan himself admitted as much when he told a local Labour Party conference in Newcastle February 3-4 that he hoped the 1,500,000 local government manual workers now staging selected strikes would settle for less than 10 percent.

But even that seems like wishful thinking. Callaghan, who must face the Tories in a general election some time this year, is desperate to reestablish control over the hundreds of thousands of striking unionists, epitomized by the government workers who greeted him in Newcastle with taunts of "scab, scab!"

Hard on the heels of the tanker drivers who won a 15 percent wage increase at the start of January, striking lorry [truck] drivers came within a single pound of winning outright their demand for a £65 guaranteed wage (a 22 percent increase) late last month. And now water workers have been offered 16 percent—a figure the government is terrified will become the minimum standard for other public sector workers.

With the strategically important and traditionally militant coal miners, power workers, steel workers, building workers and railwaymen yet to settle, not to mention the teachers and civil servants, 19,000 car workers at the British Leyland factory at Longbridge, Birmingham last Tuesday launched indefinite strike action in support of a claim for productivity bonuses withheld by the company.

The industrial action of local government workers, notably hospital workers and dustmen [garbage collectors], has provoked particular frenzy in the bourgeois press, as the Tories and their Fleet Street mouthpieces wail about industrial chaos and "anarchy." When lorry drivers tied up industry throughout the country with militant secondary pickets, the press filled with tearful tales of pigs starving on West County farms. Now they have turned to denouncing "callous" ambulance drivers and evoking lurid images of festering rubbish with hordes of giant rats supposedly emerging from the London sewers to feast on the filth.

The irony is that the union's claim is for a mere £60 a week [about \$120], only two-thirds of the national average for manual workers. If Britain today seems anarchic and ungovernable, if the cities seem headed toward becoming giant slums, the responsibility lies squarely with the capitalist class, whose social system is patently unable to provide the daily necessities of life for the working people, and the class-collaborationist Labour "leaders" who counsel patience and sacrifice in the name of a fictitious "national interest."

### Phase Four to Concordat

With a mammoth industrial upsurge on their hands, the union bureaucrats are doing their best to dampen militancy in the interests of saving the governmental portfolios of their friends in the Labour cabinet. Local government workers' union leaders are halfheartedly pursuing the union's claim, calling only selected strikes. In every sector the bureaucrats are seeking to keep workers isolated along sectional, union and geographical lines. What is



Car workers at British Leyland's huge Longbridge plant: industrial workers throw their weight into British strike wave.

giving them the worst nightmares is the fear that the pent-up anger of the working class will escape their control and erupt in a concerted general strike.

Meanwhile the Trades Union Congress chiefs have closeted themselves with the cabinet to negotiate a new "social contract"—the "Concordat." Hoping to bring wage rises down to 5 percent per year by 1982, the deal would give up the right to strike in certain sectors in return for assurances that wages will rise automatically by agreed amounts, and to adopt a code of picketing for future "good conduct" strikes.

The Concordat says nothing about the current strike wave. The bureaucrats know there is no way they can force a 5 percent limit on the ranks right now. The Concordat is a rearguard action aimed at somehow saving Labour's electoral skin.

A characteristic tactic of the trade-union/Labour Party bureaucracy is the carefully cultivated distinction between "economic" issues for the unions and "politics" for the party. This is a con. The union bureaucrats try to hold back economic struggles against the employer to keep Labour in power. Thus, during 1975-77 less than one fifth of the strikes received official union backing compared to more than 50 percent during the years of Heath's Tory government.

### Crisis of Leadership

Formerly the greatest imperial power in the world, Britain today experiences the contradictions of decadent capitalism more severely than its major international competitors. The labor fakers' fond hopes for "social peace" cannot be implemented as the well-organized and traditionally militant proletariat groans under the yoke of an ailing economy which has driven the living standards of the working class to below those of Spain, while under four years of Labour rule unemployment has soared from 600,000 to over 1,500,000. But with its chronically low productivity and its low level of domestic capital investments, Britain's bourgeoisie must drive down living standards even further, make dole queues [unemployment lines] even longer and massively jack up the rate of exploitation. Otherwise, as the *Guardian* recently quipped, Britain may yet prove to be the first country to pass back into the "Third World."

From the 1966 seamen's strike through the miners' 1974 offensive, right up to the current pay explosion, the

picture remains the same—a faltering capitalist class trying to curb a strong proletariat which has shown its unwillingness to tolerate the endless sacrifices asked of it but which lacks the leadership to bring it to decisive victory. The working class' own established leaders, from the union bureaucrats to the Wilson and Callaghan cabinets, have taken primary responsibility for policing the class. They are unconditionally committed to labour peace but they cannot deliver it.

In its wretched economic state, British capitalism cannot grant a large increase in real wages to most workers. Money wage gains won in this strike wave will in short order lead to sharp price hikes. And then Thatcher's Tories will come in and try to discipline the working class through even greater unemployment by tight credit and cutbacks in government spending. The working class must break out of the endless cycle of defensive economic struggles against the ravages of inflation, currency depreciation, stagnant industrial investment and deteriorating social services.

The typical shop steward believes in fighting the class struggle but not in finally winning it. This hoary trade-unionist attitude is increasingly dangerous. Fascistic organisations thrive in periods of economic decline when the labour movement disrupts the normal functioning of capitalist society but is unable to overthrow it. This is increasingly the situation in Britain, where the middle class sees in trade-union militancy the economic ruination of the country.

The growth of a fascist movement in Britain over the past decade is not just a racialist reaction to a few million coloured immigrants. It reflects the pauperisation of the petty bourgeoisie, the worsening unemployment and inflation, the frustration of extended periods of unresolved social chaos. Significantly, the National Front recently volunteered to act as strikebreakers against the lorry driver pickets. The Front appeals to the widespread sense that something very radical must be done to save Britain, that things cannot go on as they are.

And something very radical is needed to save Britain. What this country needs is a couple of ambitious socialist five-year plans to rebuild its industrial plant, sharply increase labour productivity and overcome the decades-long capitalist rot. A rational reordering of society through proletarian conquest of state

power and the institution of a socialist planned economy is the only real alternative to deepening capitalist crisis and the threat of the installation of a fascist regime.

### For a General Strike

British workers urgently need a new revolutionary leadership to show the way forward from endemic crisis and decay. Today the key task is to generalise and centralise the massive industrial upsurge through bringing out the entire union movement on a general strike. Minimal protest actions—a one-day strike here, a go-slow there—are the bureaucrats' strategy for whittling away the workers' combativeness and dissipating their energy. The TUC [Trades Union Congress] must be reconvened in an emergency national conference to launch a general strike and elect a national strike committee to run it. The demands must be national in scope, beginning with putting an end for good to Phase Four and all wage controls.

On a local level, councils of action based initially on stewards' combines and other such bodies, responsible to and recallable by regular mass meetings, must control the running of the strike. If fascists or other strikebreaking thugs threaten to intervene, they must be met by workers defence squads.

We can already hear the bureaucrats and their left hangers-on worrying that a general strike could bring down Labour and let the Tories in. But the working class has no interest in sacrificing its living standards to save a wage-cutting Labour government whose only concern is proving it can check the unions better than the Tories. Far better that Labour loses office as the result of a successful working-class offensive than that Thatcher rides in on the backs of a defeated and demoralised working class. What is needed is not a government of Callaghan, or Tony Benn, in Westminster, but a workers government based on mass extraparliamentary organs of workers democracy.

Five years after the demise of Heath, the situation is again ripe for general strike action, this time directed at a traitorous Labour government. Bring out the miners, power workers and all the rest—For a general strike to bury wage controls! No to the new "social contract"—Oust the Labour and trade-union bureaucrats—Forge a new revolutionary leadership of the workers movement! Forward toward a workers government and a planned socialist economy! ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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Published biweekly, skipping an issue in August and a week in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 260 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013. Telephone: 966-6841 (Editorial), 925-5365 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, NY 10001. Domestic subscriptions: \$3.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

No. 225 16 February 1979



# SWP: Witness for the Prosecution

## In Defense of the Cuban Trotskyists

[The following article should be read in conjunction with the two-part series, "For Workers Political Revolution in Cuba!" published in WV Nos. 223 and 224, 19 January and 2 February 1979.]

Recently, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leader Jack Barnes took the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the overthrow of Cuban dictator Batista to deliver paeans of praise to the Castro leadership, described as "superior to the Bolsheviks" except for a few individuals like Lenin and Trotsky. But for the Cuban Trotskyists, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR), Barnes had nothing but condemnation:

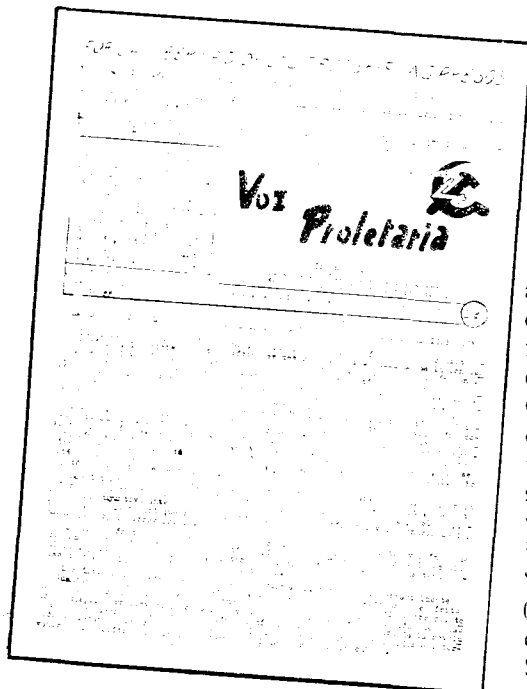
"Unfortunately, in Cuba Trotskyism was misrepresented by a group that followed a cult leader named Juan Posadas. Their specialty was passing out leaflets demanding a march on the Guantánamo naval base, while the Cubans were trying to consolidate the revolution. They denounced the leaders of the revolution for not being socialists....  
"...the Fourth International lost an opportunity to influence the Cuban leadership as much as it could have because of the character of the Cuban organization that called itself Trotskyist. This resulted, in part, from an unnecessarily long and brutal split in the Fourth International. This split...blocked the international leadership from using its full strength to influence the Cuban Trotskyists."

In other words, too bad they couldn't shut up the POR! But Castro beat them to it, closing down the Trotskyist press and eventually jailing its leaders. Barnes said not a word about this Stalinist repression in his speech.

Even as the POR militants were being slandered, censored, harassed and imprisoned in the early 1960's, the SWP turned its back on them as a proof of its "sincerity" in abandoning Trotskyism to embrace the Castro regime. It was left to the Spartacist tendency, itself just expelled from the SWP after characterizing Cuba as a bureaucratically deformed workers state, to champion the defense of these courageous fighters against Stalinist domination of the Cuban Revolution (see "Freedom for Cuban Trotskyists!" *Spartacist* No. 3, January-February 1965).

Our vigorous publicity about the plight of the victimized Cuban Trotskyists caused the SWP no little embarrassment. SWP theoretician Joseph Hansen, "replying" to the anti-Trotskyist diatribes of veteran Cuban Stalinist Blas

Roca, complained that "There were few campuses where the violation of the democratic rights of the Posadas group was not thrown at defenders of the Cuban Revolution" (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1966). But Hansen was not the only one to take the Spartacist League to task for defending the POR. In a smear pamphlet entitled *What Is Spartacist?* (1971), Tim Wohl-



POR newspaper, 1964. "Liberty to the Trotskyist Prisoners."

forth, then a hatchet man for Gerry Healy's "International Committee," accused the SL of making an unprincipled bloc with Posadas. The proof? In the above-mentioned *Spartacist* article the Cuban Posadistas were "referred to over and over again as 'Trotskyists'"; the article did not attack them politically; and in a subsequent issue we printed a letter from the British Posadas group "warmly" thanking us for our principled defense of their imprisoned Cuban comrades.

So who were these much-maligned militants, whom Blas Roca labeled "agents of imperialism." Che Guevara denounced as "working against the revolution," Hansen called "ultra-leftists" and Wohlforth/Healy termed "extreme revisionists"? We can begin with Barnes' charge that their "specialty" was calling for a march on the Guantánamo base. This accusation origi-

nates with Guevara, who in a September 1961 interview with U.S. academic Maurice Zeitlin claimed that the POR "agitated there for the Cuban people to march on the base something that cannot be permitted." Interestingly, this slander was refuted by none other than Barnes' mentor, Joseph Hansen! While criticizing the POR as "overly critical" of Castro, he wrote:

"We have not seen any material printed by the Cuban Trotskyists calling for a 'march' on Guantánamo. At a youth conference in Havana in the summer of 1960, where this charge was first made to my knowledge, a leaflet was cited. The leaflet in question, however, contained nothing on this point but a repetition of the demand that the U.S. should withdraw from Guantánamo."  
*Militant*, 9 April 1962

The POR, which was formed shortly after the fall of the Batista dictatorship, claims that "...we were the first ones, from 1959 on, to struggle for the establishment of the proletarian state in Cuba, nationalizing all the enterprises of foreign imperialism and of the national bourgeoisie and allying ourselves with the socialist camp, at a time when the Stalinist PSP [Partido Socialista Popular] was calling this proposal a 'provocation by imperialist agents'" (*Voz Proletaria*, August 1963). This was confirmed by Blas Roca, replying to a Spartacist supporter on a student tour of Cuba in the summer of 1964: "In 1959 they were calling for soviets in Cuba. This would have provided imperialism with the excuse to attack our revolution as 'Communist'." As we remarked in *Spartacist* No. 3, "Strange excuse from a presumably Communist state leader!"

In the Zeitlin interview, Guevara accused the POR of calling on the Cuban workers to "exert pressure on the government, and even to carry out another revolution in which the proletariat would come to power." While, in the articles of their newspaper available to us, the Cuban Trotskyists did not definitely label the Castro regime a deformed workers state, they did point to its bonapartist character and called for measures which amounted to a political revolution to establish soviet democracy. Moreover, they did so in a manner which sought to take into account the initial absence of a hardened bureaucratic caste, which was only then being formed. Thus following the late 1960 nationalizations which ex-

propriated the Cuban bourgeoisie the POR proposed:

"...we ought to fight day by day for immediate measures of revolutionary democracy, such as:  
"Organization of administrative councils in the cooperatives, formed by the peasants themselves.  
"Formation and putting into action the Technical Advisory Councils in factories and industries, set up by the revolutionary government, as an immediate step toward administration by workers councils....  
"Restructuring the workers' militia through the unions and workplaces."

The POR also called for a national congress of democratically elected delegates of the central union federation, and freedom to organize for all tendencies defending the revolutionary conquests.

However, despite the assurances of Castro apologists like Hansen that the Cuban government "has guaranteed freedom of expression to all groupings that support the revolution" ("The Character of the New Cuban Government" [July 1960], reprinted in Hansen's *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*), tolerance of Trotskyist criticism did not last long. The government soon began to adopt the visceral anti-Trotskyism of the pro-Moscow PSP, whose services they sorely needed to consolidate the new state apparatus. As a result the POR press was closed down and publication of Trotsky's writings brutally halted by physically smashing the printing plates.

This did not silence these valiant militants, despite their tiny number and the threat of even more drastic repression. Thus a year later, they boldly intervened at the August 1962 congress of sugar cooperatives with a manifesto endorsing the government's plans to transform the cooperatives into state farms but also demanding:

"...to assure the democratic, proletarian and revolutionary functioning of our workers state it is necessary to organize councils of workers and peasants, elected by the masses in their centers of work, to be directing bodies which name all of the functionaries of the workers state, and through which the masses make their voice heard, discuss, approve, reject and decide all the problems of the state."  
quoted in Robert Alexander,  
*Trotskyism in Latin America*  
(1973)

In response to such heresy, the government arrested two POR members for

New York City  
10 February 1979

Dear WT:

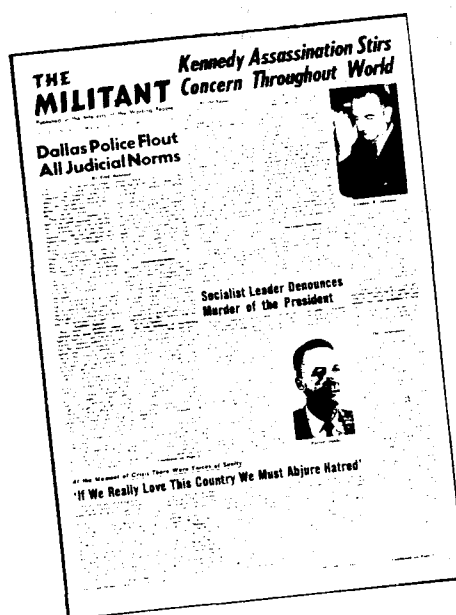
The recent in-depth analysis of the SWP's revisionism on the Cuban Revolution ("For Workers Political Revolution in Cuba!" *WV* Nos. 223 and 224, 19 January and 2 February 1979) exposes the SWP's fraudulent claim that it defended the Cuban Revolution while the Revolutionary Tendency (RT, forerunner of the Spartacist League) did not. I would like to comment further on this question.

You note that the SWP's support to Castroism represented not so much a softness toward Third World Stalinism à la the Marcyites as an adaptation to the American radical/liberal milieu. In considering the SWP's Cuba line in the early 1960's, it must be remembered that many idealistic young liberals were repelled by Washington's crude attempts to overthrow Castro in order to

once again make Havana safe for ITT and the Mafia. Prominent radical figures like the late C. Wright Mills, Norman Mailer and Susan Brownmiller publicly sympathized with Castro's Cuba and condemned the policy of the Kennedy administration. The political current to which the SWP oriented was represented in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, whose very name bespeaks its liberal ideological character.

Despite the SWP's rah-rah attitude toward Fidel and Che, in those instances when real imperialist pressure was brought to bear on Cuba, the SWP collapsed into a liberal-pacifist posture to the right of the Castro regime. One can say that the SWP defended the Cuban Revolution *except* when it needed defending. The SWP was the summer fellow-traveler of Castroism, ready to celebrate the 26th of July as long as it entailed no risk.

The CIA-organized Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 revealed the



2 December 1963 Militant quotes supreme court justice Earl Warren as "voice of sanity."

liberal-pacifist nature of the SWP's opposition to American imperialism. A front-page editorial in the *Militant* (24 April 1961) called on the U.S. to "End the aggression against Cuba at once!" but did *not* call for military support to the Cuban army fighting the counterrevolutionary invaders. This was the same line for which the SWP later became notorious in the Vietnam antiwar movement. As in the Vietnam War, the SWP motivated its opposition to the Bay of Pigs invasion *not* as support to the anti-capitalist social revolution occurring in Cuba, but in the name of the democratic right of national self-determination:

"We firmly believe in the right of every people to choose whatever kind of government they want, free from any foreign interference. We believe the Cubans are entitled to exercise this basic democratic right."

The reaction of the Revolutionary Tendency to the Bay of Pigs invasion

# ILWU Militant Elected Delegate

FEBRUARY 11—In an important victory, Stan Gow, co-editor of the *Longshore Militant*, was elected Bay Area Local 10 delegate to the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) international convention and longshore caucus, to be held this April in San Diego. Gow received 315 votes, just under 20 percent of the ballots cast in run-off elections concluded last Friday. Howard Keylor, who also ran on the Longshore Militant slate, came just one vote short of victory, winding up with 258 votes. Depending on constitutional technicalities he may still be designated a delegate.

Gow and Keylor's campaign focused on the need to win jobs for all longshoremen through a shorter work-shift with no loss in pay (30 for 40), as well as a fight to unchain the full strength of the longshore division to defend other sections of the union facing key tests with the bosses this year. With important contract battles coming up in Canadian longshore, Hawaiian sugar, and Northern California warehouse, International president Jimmy Herman has already signaled his willingness to make further concessions to the employers.

The Canadian longshoremen, who are divided from their U.S. brothers by the bureaucracy's refusal to demand a common contract expiration date, have already rejected a proposed

agreement that would strengthen provisions of the "regular workforce" system. While further undermining the union hiring hall, the proposed additions would establish an "apprenticeship" category for skills training, paying only 70-90 percent of full wages. Meanwhile, in warehouse Local 6, the ILWU chiefs and their local lackeys have in the past two months alone surrendered to the imposition of production quotas, harsh contractual penalties for absenteeism and the steering of jobs from longstanding Local 6 jurisdiction.

Recalling the key role of the longshore division in the dramatic successes of the ILWU in the late thirties, Gow and Keylor posed a militant alternative:

"What this entire International union needs and what we will fight for at the Convention and Caucus is a strategy of using the coastwide longshore power as part of a successful offensive to defend all sections of the union and for a new "march inland" to organize warehouse and C.F.S. workers. Such an offensive could lay the basis for ripping up the present rotten longshore contract and increasing our bargaining power with a common ILWU/IWA contract expiration in 1980 for a joint fight for jobs."

—*Longshore Militant*,  
30 January

Gow and Keylor also supported the candidacy of Robert Golden, a leader



Stan Gow, second from left, and Howard Keylor, right, campaign outside Local 10 hiring hall.

of a grouping of predominantly younger longshoremen who successfully fought to be upgraded to full union status. Running for Grievance Committee, Golden called for the unrestricted right to strike, a new leadership in the union, a break with the Democrats and Republicans and a fight for a workers party and a workers government. In his first bid for office, he carried 141 votes.

The victory of Gow, combined with

Keylor's strong showing and the emergence of younger militants like Golden, demonstrates the possibility of consolidating a substantial pole of opposition to the sellout policies of Herman and his flunkies in the Local 10 leadership. What is necessary is to link such militants through a class-struggle caucus capable of winning the membership to the fight to oust the bureaucrats and take the offensive against the shipping bosses. ■

distributing the leaflet. Two days later a POR meeting in Guantánamo called to commemorate Trotsky's assassination was banned. Subsequently police raided POR headquarters and arrested the group's general secretary, Idalberto Ferrera, and another comrade, who were released several days later.

Still the Cuban Trotskyists stood their ground. When a delegation of North American students arrived in the summer of 1963, the POR walked up to the hotel where they were staying and distributed a leaflet saluting their "revolutionary initiative in traveling to socialist Cuba and defending our revolution against all the imperialist slanderers," while also calling upon the students to "...tell the whole truth about our situation: that socialist democracy must go forward, allowing all revolutionary tendencies, including the Trotskyists to function with full democratic rights..." (*Voz Proletaria* No. 32). When the student delegation met with Guevara, he justified suppression of the

Trotskyists' freedom of expression: "They are more revolutionary than anyone, but they do nothing and criticize everything. We do not allow public criticism by those who are not connected to the Revolution..." (AFP dispatch, quoted in *Frente Obrero* [Montevideo], 23 August 1963).

In November 1963 the Castro regime finally moved in to crush the pesky POR. Five leading comrades were arrested, held *incomunicado* for months and then sentenced in secret trials to two-to-nine years imprisonment for the "crimes" of distributing an illegal paper, advocating the overthrow of the Cuban government, and being critical of Fidel Castro. Were they indeed "unconnected to the Revolution," as Guevara charged? The first to be arrested was Andrés Alfonso, a revolutionary unionist since before 1959 who fought in the underground against Batista, a member of the militia and the Committees to Defend the Revolution (CDR). Also arrested was his companion, Florida

Fraga, also a member of the militia and an activist in the Cuban Federation of Women, whose father died a revolutionary martyr in the anti-Batista struggle. When Ricardo Ferrera went to inquire about Florida, he was himself arrested. Ricardo had fought with the Rebel Army since age 16 and was a militia officer, a CDR member and "Vanguard Worker." The revolutionary credentials of the Cuban Trotskyists speak for themselves.

In response to this vicious repression, the SWP maintained a criminal silence. Even the POR's international mentors advocated softening their revolutionary intransigence: Posadas wrote them that "you must intervene more flexibly and didactically in the internal and external problems of the Cuban socialist revolution" (from *Voz Obrera* [Mexico], January 1964). But in the face of intense pressure from all sides to capitulate, the Cuban comrades stood firm even in jail, conducting classes in Marxism for the

other prisoners. Their resolute spirit can be seen in a letter by Andrés Alfonso:

"The struggle against imperialism is completely clear and well-defined, but the struggle against the bureaucracy is harder and more arduous, because this bureaucracy is bathed in the garden of the revolution and covers itself with the protective mantle of Marxism-Leninism; it is the hidden enemy of the revolution with a near-Marxist phraseology, socialist in words and chauvinist in deeds, as Lenin always put it so well."

—from *Voz Obrera* [Lima],  
August 1964

The campaign to free the jailed Cuban Trotskyists received support from a number of trade unions, including Bolivian miners and Argentine sugar workers, as well as various left and student groups. In the U.S. the Spartacist group took the lead, while the SWP, during the entire time of their incarceration, maintained absolute silence in their press. During a 1964 student tour of Cuba, a Spartacist supporter again challenged Guevara over the suppression

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## Letter

was of a very different temper. On 18 April RT leader James Robertson wrote to the *Young Socialist* editorial board on how to cover the invasion:

"So let's have a bold, bloody over-the-masthead headline about Yankee Imperialist Rape or Solidarity With Every Soviet-supplied Bullet Entering the Bodies of CIAists, or similar... Exposure of Soviet diplomatic temporizing, calls for military aid, calls for Concentration Camps in Cuba under workers control, etc."

—Appendix B to Tim Wohlforth,  
"What the Discussion on Cuba  
Is Really About," *SWP  
Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 22,  
No. 16, June 1961

Part II of the *WV* article treats the SWP's capitulation to the Kennedy-Khrushchev deal which ended the October 1962 Cuban missile crisis. The *Militant* refused to criticize either Castro or Khrushchev. But at this time even Castro himself was opposed to the deal, made without his knowledge. And

he repudiated outright Khrushchev's pledge that foreign observers could inspect the dismantling of the missile bases! It was also widely reported that the Cuban masses were incensed over the Kremlin's decision to remove the missiles.

But the SWP's most repulsive collapse before imperialist public opinion took place over the Kennedy assassination in November 1963. The alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was publicly identified as a pro-Castro radical, a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and (to the horror of the SWP leadership) a *Militant* subscriber. The assassination of the president of the United States, allegedly by a Castroite radical, momentarily threatened a widespread witchhunt against the American left and adventurist reprisals against Cuba.

The SWP leadership reacted by throwing itself on the mercy of the American ruling class. Farrell Dobbs

sent a letter of condolence to the widow of the mortal enemy of the Cuban revolution:

"The SWP condemns the brutal assassination of President Kennedy as an inhuman, anti-social and criminal act. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Kennedy and the children in their personal grief."

—*Militant*, 2 December 1963

The SWP leadership not only kissed the hem of Jacqueline Kennedy's mourning dress, but tried to hide under the black robes of Chief Justice Earl Warren. Under the kicker, "At the Moment of Crisis There Were Voices of Sanity," the *Militant* ran as a front-page headline Warren's hand-ringing statement: "If We Really Love This Country We Must Abjure Hatred."

Castro, directly under the U.S. guns, reacted to Kennedy's assassination with far greater courage and dignity than did the SWP leadership. He did not send condolences to the widow Kennedy, but

rather reminded the world that the U.S. president had acted in "a spirit of aggression and hostility" to Cuba. He stated simply that Marxists rejected individual assassination and that the Cuban government had never even heard of Oswald. Castro's only concession to the worldwide sanctimonious mourning over Kennedy was a general expression of moral repugnance at murder: "This kind of act affects the sensibility of every man." (*New York Times*, 25 November 1963).

The SWP's spinelessness degraded the defense of the Cuban revolution. The SWP's great crime against Trotskyism in this period was not only its support to Stalinist rule in Cuba, but that its liberal-pacifist stance and cowardly legalism made Castroism and Maoism look good by comparison to a new generation of radical youth.

Comradely,  
JS

# Leftists Break from

*Out of the Swamp—No to the SWP*

## How SP's Debs Caucus Was Won to Trotskyism

BY BRUCE RICHARD  
AND TOM SPIRO

*WV is pleased to publish this article by two leaders of the former Debs Caucus of the Socialist Party, USA (SP). The Debs Caucus was a heterogeneous left-critical/activist bulge which coalesced in the midwestern region of the ossified anti-communist SP (from which it split three months ago).*

*The Caucus stirred considerable attention on the left when leading elements proclaimed themselves pro-Leninist, receiving in particular the attentions of the soft-Maoist Guardian and the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The latter, on the lookout for Stalinophobic aspiring reformists to "regroup," expected to easily win these disgruntled leftist social democrats. But the serious elements, examining the theories of Lenin and Trotsky as a guide to revolutionary action, quickly recognized that the SWP's politics were as alien to authentic revolutionary Marxism as was the social-democratic cesspool they had fought their way out of.*

*Bruce Richard, the main author of this article, joined the SP in 1976 and was its Michigan state secretary. Tom Spiro joined the SP in 1976 and became National Secretary in 1977 when he responded to an ad in the SP's Socialist Tribune (!) offering the position to anyone with a "basic understanding of democratic socialism, member of the Party in good standing for one year, touch typist, 30 wpm or better." He was purged from this post at the 1978 SP convention because of his leading role in the Debs Caucus.*

The Socialist Party, USA (SP) is an unlikely place for the development of a communist opposition.

The SP is the direct descendant of the old Socialist Party of America (SPA), long the hard right wing of anti-communist "State Department socialism." It took its present organizational form after 1972, when the SPA majority "Realignment Caucus" changed the party name to "Social Democrats, USA" to facilitate work within the George Meany/Scoop Jackson wing of the Democratic Party (with the minority "Coalition Caucus" led by Michael Harrington splitting to form the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, oriented toward more liberal Democrats). The present SP was the third fragment, centered on the Milwaukee "sewer socialist" apparatus of former mayor Frank Zeidler.

The "reconstituted" SP was nearly as reactionary as its predecessor, using its rhetoric about a "non-sectarian multi-tendency party" to conceal its notorious anti-communism. The SP's decentralized structure resulted in locals (and even individual members) putting forward their particular political opinions in the name of the SP without reference to the "official" positions (circulated



WV Photo

**Bruce Richard, of former Debs Caucus, at Spartacist forum "From Social Democracy to Trotskyism."**

only, for financial reasons, to a "Key List" of about one-sixth of the membership). The SP press, *Socialist Tribune*, was published infrequently and irregularly and its political content was determined for the most part by a volunteer "collective."

The SP membership was characterized by almost total inactivity. Nearly half the nominal membership of 633 had not paid their \$4-a-year dues by September 1978. Although a quarter of them had had some experience in trade unions, the SP had not a single union fraction.

Internal education was virtually nonexistent. Attempts to provide some were viewed with suspicion. Thus when the Milwaukee local set up an internal education program which included the "Introduction to Socialism" by Stalinoid academics Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman [associated with *Monthly Review*], right-wingers on the National Action Committee attempted to get the book banned! Efforts to centralize the party's chaotic functioning were immediately denounced as "totalitarian Bolshevism."

Yet this unpromising relic of cold war "socialism" attracted a number of politically inexperienced youth ignorant of the historic debates which defined the tendencies of the workers movement. The SP's "non-sectarian" rhetoric appealed to New Leftists who thought a "broad" movement could bypass the divisions of the "old left."

The SP's inactivity and conservatism soon convinced a nucleus of these activist elements—recruited mostly from the decomposing New Left milieu of Milwaukee and Ann Arbor—that a concerted effort would have to be made if the SP were ever to show signs of life. The specific impetus for organizing a left opposition was the May 1978 Wisconsin SP convention, where a group of Milwaukee activists made an aggressive but unsuccessful challenge to some of the right wing's more extreme positions (such as pacifist support for

gun control and opposition to gay rights and abortion) and were met with charges of being "terrorists" "in league with the Trotskyists" (i.e., the Socialist Workers Party [SWP]). Shortly before the September 1978 National Convention, this opposition coalesced as the Debs Caucus.

### Kautskism Rediscovered

The name "Debs Caucus" was not an accident. In addition to laying claim to a share of the SP's oppositional tradition (the anti-Vietnam War minority of the old SPA had also called itself the Debs Caucus), the name reflected a desire to

hark back to the time of Eugene V. Debs, before World War I, when revolutionaries such as Big Bill Haywood, James P. Cannon and Debs himself coexisted with reformists such as Victor Berger and Morris Hillquit. The Debs Caucus looked toward the reconstruction of a party of all working-class tendencies such as existed in the pre-1914 Second International under the political leadership of such figures as Kautsky. Thus, the main Debs Caucus programmatic statement to the SP convention—a draft "General Principles"—stated that "we prefer to emphasize the commonality among socialists rather than the differences" (Phil Carroll, "General Principles of the Socialist Party, USA," SP internal discussion bulletin No. 19, Summer 1978).

The Debs Caucus thus had to be deliberately ambiguous about most questions facing the workers movement. (For example, the draft "Principles" took no position on the class nature of the Soviet Russian state, attempting to conciliate both "third campists" and defensists.) Given this programmatic vacuum, the Debs Caucus as a whole stood for little more than opposition to the SP right wing and for the extension of the SP's family-of-the-left approach to include "Leninists."

The Debs Caucus' "multi-tendency" concept of the party reflected its own political heterogeneity: the Caucus included self-proclaimed syndicalists, "non-Leninist Marxists," Maoists and "Trotskyists." Only the hostility of the

*continued on page 8*

## SWP on the Soviet Union: Social

Between December 1977 and April 1978 the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) sent the leadership of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) three formal letters, along with apparently all the internal bulletins of the SWP. We reprint here some excerpts from a January 1978 letter to the SLP by Syd Stapleton, a leading SWP spokesman.

As *WV* had previously reported (see "SWP Invites DeLeonists to Build Party of the Whole Swamp," *WV* No. 192, 10 February 1978), the efforts of the sectarian-reformist SLP to move away from its decades-long principle of irrelevance through a more "activist" posture stirred the interest of the reformist SWP, which is seeking to become the all-inclusive party of American social democracy. A major impediment to this perspective is the SWP's much abused but never explicitly abandoned formal adherence to Trotskyism. A party which seeks to influence sections of the American bourgeoisie cannot really afford a formally Trotskyist position on the nature of the

Stalinist-ruled, deformed workers states (the "Russian question"). A party which wants to reach out to the anti-Communist social-democratic milieu must bury or distort the Trotskyist principle of unconditional defense of the deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution. So the SWP has been busily sloughing off piecemeal elements of its formal line, coming out for instance against Soviet nuclear weapons and engaging in blanket apologetics for pro-imperialist Soviet "dissidents."

The SWP's de facto abandonment of Soviet defensism played a real role in its much vaunted fusion with the state-capitalist Revolutionary Marxist Committee a couple of years ago (see "RMC: State Department Socialists? An Exchange," *WV* No. 186, 23 December 1977). The correspondence to the SLP—which in thirty pages carefully never mentions the SWP's formal line of defense of the Soviet Union—shows the SWP again trying to play the anti-Soviet card. In this case, it met with rather less



# Social Democracy

Weekly People Staff Writer Joins SL

## Why I Rejected SLP, SWP

We reprint below the resignation of Steven Miles from the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) declaring his decision to join the Spartacist League/U.S. Prior to resigning, Miles had been a full-time paid staff writer for the SLP's newspaper, the Weekly People. He also wrote some time ago a letter to Workers Vanguard polemicizing against Leninism on the subject of workers control ("Dictatorship of the Proletariat: Leninism vs. DeLeonism," WV No. 165, 8 July 1977). This exchange was reprinted in the SLP's internal newsletter as one of the few attempts at a critique of Trotskyism by the DeLeonists.

As his own views evolved toward Trotskyism, Miles recognized various inaccuracies and misinterpretations in his earlier polemic. In a second contribution, entitled "In Defense of Trotskyism," he attacked the manner in which the SLP presents Stalinism as the culmination of Leninism rather than its antithesis:

"In this way Trotsky's struggle against Stalin is reduced to the level of bureaucratic infighting. However, the record is clear that Trotsky fought for policies directly counterposed to the needs of any bureaucracy: for the reinstatement of soviet democracy, for tendencies and factions inside the Communist Party, for international revolution and against the doctrine of socialism in one country. The party did not 'become' the bureaucracy; rather the bureaucracy developed in a life and death struggle against the best elements in the party, and in particular Trotsky's Left Opposition. The liquidation of the old Bolshevik cadre by Stalin is the clearest proof of this fact."

After pointing to the electoralist, social-democratic origins of the SLP's hostility to Leninism, Miles rejects the Socialist Workers Party's opportunist maneuverings as anti-Trotskyist:

"Anyone who is familiar with the

practice of the SWP knows what its concept of 'leadership' is—it consists in getting elected or appointed to an official post in some 'movement' organization. Politically, the SWP tails the existing level of consciousness, sometimes even seeking to limit it in order to build a bigger 'movement' and so acquire a bigger recruitment pool.

"The SWP approach to the SLP was a graphic example of such opportunism. Rather than debating fundamental programmatic differences, the SWP blurred and confused such differences in order to declare, 'Our party is your party.' It was not the SWP but the Spartacist League, in the pages of Workers Vanguard and through intervention at SLP events around the country, which has engaged the SLP in a principled debate over programmatic fundamentals, and which criticized the SLP from a Trotskyist point of view."

Despite the SLP's claim to oppose Bolshevism from the standpoint of workers democracy, and despite Miles' statement that he would continue to function as a disciplined party member, SLP leader Nathan Karp refused to publish this document in the organization's internal Newsletter.

January 12, 1979

Garrett Timmermans  
Organizer, Section SF Bay Area

Dear Comrade Timmermans:

I hereby resign from the Socialist Labor Party.

Resigning from this organization is complicated by its family complex. As anyone who has been to an SLP function can verify, the SLP has much more the character of a family than a revolutionary party. The members of families share a commitment to each other based solely on the fact that they find themselves in the same group. In the SLP politics is subordinated to the

need to maintain the organization, the SLP "family." The only political principle that really unites the SLP is anti-Leninism. Behind the ineffectual Sunday afternoon socialism lies a conscious pursuit of counterrevolutionary (anti-Leninist) policies.

Over the past few years, as part of its effort to regenerate itself after decades of sterile Petersenite irrelevance, the SLP has been forced to give its anti-Leninism a more conscious and political character. The SLP has of late rediscovered an old right-wing social democratic objection to Leninism: the Leninists, says the SLP, substitute the party for the class. The SLP claims to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat, but denies the necessary leading role of the vanguard revolutionary party, without which the proletariat—which is composed of people with vast differences in experience and political training—could not exercise its dictatorship. The vanguard party leads the masses of workers, not by lining them up behind it by political maneuvers (another favorite anticommunist charge), but by honestly advancing a program which speaks to their felt needs and is at once both objectively possible and necessary. Such a program naturally points to the need for a workers' government—it is transitional in nature due to the outmodedness of capitalism as a social system. The SLP's maximalist posturing serves simply to mask its reformist confusion and its increasingly swamp-like character. Every hare-brained scheme (e.g., an Industrial Union conference with the Peace and Freedom Party) is countenanced in the SLP, not because the organization is so democratic but because it has no coherent politics. The only thing that will not be tolerated in the SLP is Leninism, i.e., Trotskyism.

The SWP's approach to the SLP has forced the SLP to harden up its anti-Leninism in order to justify a separate organizational existence. The SWP leadership last year correctly observed a "growing programmatic convergence" between the two parties and proposed formal unification. This convergence is based on the fact that the SWP, which still adheres formally to Leninism, in fact liquidates the independent program and role of the communist vanguard and instead tails after various labor fakers (such as the reformist/economist Teamsters for a Democratic Union) and sectoralist "movement" politicians—exactly as the SLP does, with the exception that the SLP's maximalist heritage compels it to observe rather more frequently that, "ultimately," socialism will be necessary.

Of course, there are real differences between the SLP's socialist industrial unionism and genuine revolutionary Trotskyism, which is represented not by the SWP but by the Spartacist League. The SWP lied about and denied these differences precisely because it is not the continuator of Trotskyism. The SLP's "SIU [Socialist Industrial Union] program" is, at best, a syndicalist deviation from Marxism. There is a big difference between a labor union organized on the basis of commitment to socialism (DeLeon's conception of the SIU), and a soviet, which aims to embrace all

workers regardless of their political views. The SWP did not clarify this distinction because it is not interested in breaking potential revolutionaries from social democracy but instead wants to invite them into its own social democratic swamp.

Another disgusting aspect of the SWP's approach to the SLP was its conciliation to the SLP's national-centeredness, a trait which it in fact shares. Like the bourgeoisie, social democrats see things in essentially national terms. The SLP long maintained that the "SIU program" was uniquely applicable to the U.S. (though more recently this has extended to other "developed" countries), and still distributes literature which states that, thanks to Article V of the U.S. Constitution, the American socialist revolution can be achieved peacefully! It is no wonder the SLP supported Stalin during the 1930's; "socialism in one country" is the SLP's own program. As for the SWP, its conciliation to the American bourgeoisie is revealed by, among other things, its defense of a federated Fourth International, its groveling before the Voorhis Act, and its refusal to call unequivocally for victory to the Vietnamese revolution in the anti-war movement.

Communists, on the other hand, understand that socialism can only be a world system, that no country has to "wait" for socialist revolution until it has developed a high level of productivity on a national basis, and that consequently both the program and the party of communism must begin from world perspectives. It was on the basis of such a perspective (i.e., socialist revolution in Germany) that Lenin led the Bolsheviks to power in Russia. The international Spartacist tendency has set itself the task of reforging a democratic-centralist Fourth International, and bases the work of each of its national sections on international perspectives.

With such a wretched record, how is it that the SLP is able to hold on to a few potentially valuable revolutionaries? It is possible only due to the anticommunism of the American milieu, an anticommunism which weighs down heavily even on those who claim to be revolutionaries. The SLP capitulates completely to this anticommunism. Its unabashed anti-Leninism is only the most vulgar expression of this capitulation. The Russian question is another crucial example. Genuine revolutionary Trotskyists are the most implacable opponents of the Stalinist bureaucracy. We call for political revolution to oust the bureaucrats and institute soviet democracy. But at the same time we recognize that capitalist restoration in any of the degenerated or deformed workers states would be a devastating setback for the world proletariat and so we unconditionally defend (and would militarily bloc with) these states against imperialism. The SLP would maintain a pious neutrality in a contest between the U.S. and the USSR on the grounds that to call the USSR a "workers state" is to "sully" a fine socialist "precept"!

The distance between social democracy and Leninism is great, but

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## Political Revolution - Who Cares?

success and the overtures were rebuffed.

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Excerpts from 19 January 1978 letter from Syd Stapleton (SWP) to Nathan Karp (SLP), reprinted from the proceedings of SLP National Convention, 26-31 May 1978 (appendix):

"...We share some other important ideas on the nature of the party and the needs of our class. Unlike both the Stalinists and Social Democrats, we do not believe the interests of the working class should be subordinated to the needs of any bureaucracy, whether in the AFL-CIO, the Soviet Union, or China....

"We agree in large measure on another issue with implications for our view of the party—the tasks of revolutionaries in the Soviet Union and similar countries. We both advocate the revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucracies and the reorganization of the Stalinized countries under democratic organs of workers' power.

"We may disagree on whether the Soviet bureaucracy is a 'caste' or a

'class,' and thus on whether the revolution will be 'political' or 'social.' We may also disagree on the extent of bureaucratization in Cuba. But these disagreements exist within our parties as well as between them. They do not, in our opinion, exclude the possibility of reaching agreement on the kind of party American workers need to establish socialism....

"Of course, there is the question of whether or not the actions of the Bolshevik party after 1917 laid the ground for Stalinism. We do not think so. But there is no SWP requirement that members agree with all the actions of the Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1923. Much debate on this question can be left to historians of the workers' movement....

"...divisions over the precise nature of the revolutionary party's role after the revolution seem, to us, a little premature. This seems especially true when we already hold in common an abiding abhorrence for the Stalinist caricature of workers' rule...."

# Debs Caucus...

(continued from page 7)

SP right wing lent the Caucus a measure of "unity." Ultimately, this left bloc was as unstable as its attempt to reconstitute a Kautskyian "party of the whole class" by turning its back on history was utopian. There can be no return to the inclusive "revolutionary social democracy" of pre-war days; in the crucial struggles from which the Third International emerged, social democracy defined itself as class-collaborationist, anti-internationalist and anti-communist.

## Cold Warriors Go to War

If the Debs Caucus hoped to conciliate the SP right wing, it was soon to be disappointed. The key political fight at the September 1978 National Convention was a lengthy and heated debate on the "Russian question." Three lines were presented: a right-winger argued for the "bureaucratic collectivist" characterization of the USSR; Debs Caucus member Carroll presented his agnostic line; and Bruce Richard motivated his document, "Outline for a Party Program" (internal discussion bulletin No. 19), in favor of a democratic-centralist Leninist party and the Trotskyist analysis of the Russian question.

The right-wingers refused to respond to the Caucus' political challenge with anything but the crudest anti-communist slander (such as NC [National Committee] member Ed Ice's statement that "Lenin was a murderer"), relying on bureaucratic maneuvers to derail the opposition. Thus the right-wing majority at the National Convention simply canceled elections for NC since proportional representation would have guaranteed the presence of several Debs Caucus supporters. *Socialist Tribune* was moved from Milwaukee to Florida, where the right wing had tight control. Immediately following the Convention, the NC moved to fire National Secretary Tom Spiro for having "aligned himself with a militant group and...[leading] this faction in Convention disputes." And at the November NC meeting at which the Debs Caucus split from the SP, the right-wing majority suspended or revoked the charters of left-wing-controlled locals in Milwaukee, Racine (Wisconsin), Michigan and New York City.

Under the impact of the right wing's bureaucratism and anti-communism, the Debs Caucus began to question its "family of the left" stance on the party question. Thus one Caucus member wrote after the September National Convention:

"We must remember that real revolutionaries will have no friends anywhere except those they make through their leadership of working class struggles, and that not only bourgeois liberals but also Stalinist and social-democratic misleaders will hate us for exposing them.... We should have as our final goal not some kind of grand reconciliation of left tendencies in one big swamp but rather the winning away of workers from their objectively counter-revolutionary leadership. In doing so we cannot remain friends with the rest of the 'left'."

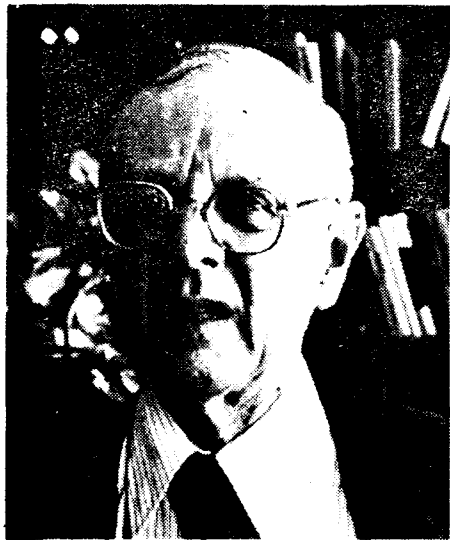
—Bruce Richard, "Toward a Revolutionary Party: Strategic Perspectives for the Socialist Party (Debs Caucus)," October 1978

The Debs Caucus began to examine other left groups and to intensively study the basic writings of Lenin and Trotsky on the vanguard party. Rejecting out of hand the bureaucratic, class-collaborationist Stalinist and social-democratic organizations, the Caucus focused its attention on the two major ostensibly Trotskyist organizations in

the U.S.—the SWP and the Spartacist League (SL).

## Whatever Happened to the SWP?

In their study of the basic works of Trotskyism, such as *In Defense of Marxism* and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, Debs Caucus members could not fail to be impressed by the revolutionary SWP of Trotsky and Cannon. But in their dealings with the SWP of today, they could only ask, "Whatever happened to the SWP?" Instead of seeking to lead the struggles of workers and the oppressed on a



Frank Zeidler

Mary Locke

communist program, the modern SWP uncritically tailed any "mass movement" while kowtowing to bourgeois liberal opinion. The SWP upholds the classic social-democratic attitude toward the capitalist state, seeing it as a "neutral" mediator between classes.

Thus, the SWP looks to the bourgeois state as a key force in the struggle for black liberation. Similarly, it supports attacks on the workers movement by the state in the name of "democratizing" the unions. Debs Caucus members contrasted the SWP's abandonment of Leninism with the principled politics of the Spartacist League, which looks to the strength of the organized working class to defend the workers and the specially oppressed. Where the SWP calls on the armed forces of the bourgeois state to defeat racist attacks (as over Boston busing in 1974), the SL calls for labor/black defense of busing. Where the SWP looks to government intervention in the labor movement to provide "affirmative action" for blacks at the expense of union-won seniority, the SL puts forward a class-struggle program to fight racial oppression: union-run minority recruitment and training, jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, etc. The SWP's legalistic appeals to the bourgeois state for token reforms are qualitatively no different from the politics of the SP, which also looks to the bourgeois state to do the work of the workers movement; the SL's program for black freedom is a class-struggle alternative to reformist defeat.

In every aspect of its work, the SWP revealed its social-democratic appetites. The campaign held up by the SWP to the Debs Caucus as the best example of their "leadership" was their antiwar work—organizing massive, passive peace crawls under the class-neutral slogan "Out Now" and refusing to call for military victory to the NLF.

In its dealings with the Debs Caucus, the SWP displayed a mixture of cynicism and political cowardice. Expecting the Debs Caucus to drop into their hands like ripe fruit, the SWP—in line with its orientation toward regrouping sections of the social democracy (such as its fusion with the state-capitalist Revolutionary Marxist Committee [RMC] and the more recent attention to the Socialist Labor Party [see accompanying article])—presented itself as a bigger and more dynamic version of what the heterogeneous Debs

Caucus wanted the SP to be, a party of the whole swamp. In an article obviously directed at the Debs Caucus, the SWP praised the SP of Debs' time for being "able to play the role of a broad movement of social protest against the brutalities of expanding capitalism" (*Militant*, 3 November 1978), soft-pedaling Cannon's harsh criticism of Debs' centrist role in the SP. (The SL, in contrast, stressed this criticism of Debs for failing to lead the revolutionary wing of the old SP [see "Debs and Lenin," *WJ* No. 216, 6 October 1978].) Stressing agnosticism on the Russian question, the SWP put forward as an example of "principled fusion" its merger with the Shachtmanite RMC.

While cynically downplaying the revolutionary Trotskyist heritage, the SWP also showed its political cowardice by consistently refusing to confront the SL politically before the Debs Caucus. The SWP not only refused a Debs Caucus request for an SWP-SL debate (a challenge the SL readily accepted) but even refused to allow Debs Caucus members to meet with SWP leader Fred Halstead except on condition that SLers were excluded from the meeting!

The best example of the SWP's craven refusal to confront the politics of the SL was provided at a forum on the Russian question given in Milwaukee on October 28 by SL spokesman Joseph Seymour. Virtually the entire Debs Caucus attended. In response to sharp blasts by Seymour and other SLers in the audience against the SWP's refusal in practice to defend the gains of the October Revolution (as exemplified by their tailism of Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade and their support for the anti-nuclear weapons movement), an SWP member simply stated the SWPers were "not authorized" to speak at the forum!

A subsequent letter from this SWP'er to a Debs Caucus member made even clearer the political cowardice underlying the SWP's refusal to take on the SL:

"A debate was impossible at that time...[because] as I noted at the forum, members of the SWP at that event were not authorized to engage in a public debate with the SL. The SWP places groups like the SL and the Workers League [WL] in a separate category from other tendencies on the left. Groups such as the SL and WL have a publicly declared goal, which they regularly repeat in their press, of *destroying* the SWP.... We, of course, are not particularly keen on doing anything that might aid these groups in accomplishing their goal."

—Bill Breihan to Bruce Richard, 6 November 1978

The implication is plain: clarifying political debate could lead to the political destruction of the SWP! The Debs Caucus drew the appropriate conclusions. (Moreover, the comparison of the SL with the sectarian gangsters of the Workers League did not sit well with Debs Caucus members, who had already seen too much slander inside the SP.)

## "Bolshevism with a Human Face"?

On their way to revolutionary Trotskyism, the Debs Caucus comrades encountered some minor political obstacles to the building of a vanguard party. One of these was the so-called "Bolshevik Leninist Group" (BLG), a tiny clot based in Ann Arbor. The BLG is a semi-clandestine organization with no public spokesmen and no press. Its one attempt at intervention in the class struggle has been a drive to organize clerical workers on the University of Michigan campus into an "independent" craft union, which has already lost two certification elections. Though the BLG claims to be Trotskyist, it works through a number of liquidationist caucuses and committees which issue only the most low-level economist propaganda for better wages and working conditions and union democracy. The BLG's ultra-parochial orientation was revealed most clearly in a bitter

1977 strike by AFSCME University staff workers, when BLG supporters crossed picket lines daily for weeks, cynically claiming they had to keep their jobs so they could continue providing revolutionary leadership to the Ann Arbor working class.

That serious consideration could be given even briefly to this bankrupt clique, whose one major programmatic statement is a 60-page defense of the scabbing, shows the political naiveté of the Debs Caucus. The BLG appeared to embody a semblance of Bolshevik politics without the abrasive "style" which revolutionary Trotskyism presents to petty-bourgeois sensibilities. It soon became apparent that "style" was not the question. "Bolshevism with a human face" is simply liberal moralism in disguise. In breaking with the BLG, the Debs Caucus moved significantly closer to the authentic revolutionary Trotskyism of the SL.

## The Split from the SP

Events in the SP rapidly drew to a climax after the September 1978 National Convention. Further Polarization in the already deeply divided SP followed the entry of the Communist Cadre-Marxist (CTCM) into the New York SP local in early September 1978. The CTCM was a tiny group which had its origins in a 1972 split from the Workers World Party of Sam Marcy. It held positions similar to its Marcyite parent, including support for the Stalinist suppression of the 1956 Hungarian workers uprising. The group's checkered past includes a previous rotten entry into the psychotherapy cultist International Workers Party.

The New York SP local, under CTCM control, called for the expulsion of SP chairman Frank Zeidler for having a few months before crossed a picket line of his own local (Milwaukee) to speak on a platform with notorious anti-abortion congressman Henry Hyde. This move threw the already polarized SP into a frenzy as the right wing labeled the CTCM and later the Debs Caucus (which supported the demand for expulsion on the grounds that Zeidler had helped try to break the 1955 Kohler strike) as "infiltrators" and "agents." Amidst the total breakdown of rational discussion and threats to reorganize or expel left-wing branches, the Debs Caucus resigned from the SP at the November 11 NC meeting.

As the Debs Caucus struggled for clarity on the crucial questions facing the workers movement—particularly the party question—it had lost those members unable to make the political turn from social democracy to Trotskyism. These members, unwilling to wage a struggle for a different program, simply dropped out of the Caucus (and usually out of politics). Although about 40 people left the SP at the time of the split, less than half were willing to sign the Debs Caucus statement of resignation:

"The struggle waged over the past six months has once again demonstrated that any attempt to raise revolutionary, class-struggle, Marxist-Leninist politics will provoke a fierce reaction from the overwhelming majority of the SP leadership.

"Furthermore, the SP's politically bankrupt social-democratic program can be defended against political challenge...only by the most bureaucratic organizational maneuvers....

"The comrades of the Socialist Party (Debs Caucus), as revolutionary communists, have been driven by the NC majority to the realization that to remain in an organization so fundamentally opposed to basic principles of revolutionary socialism any longer would be both politically unprincipled and organizationally futile. Accordingly, the Socialist Party (Debs Caucus) has no choice but to leave the SP."

—Statement of Resignation of the SP (Debs Caucus), 11 November 1978

The signers of this statement constituted  
*continued on page 11*



# Iran...

(continued from page 1)

uted by the cadets themselves. In the hours that followed, thousands more of Khomeini's followers took to the streets in defiance of the curfew. Trenches were dug and barricades erected at key intersections.

The crack "Immortals" Brigade, fanatically devoted to the shah and armed with heavy Chieftain tanks and artillery, was fought to a standstill by cadets with rifles and teenagers often armed with nothing more than reckless courage and bottles of gasoline. Then on Sunday afternoon the Supreme Military Command under Garabaghi (subsequently removed by Khomeini) declared it had "unanimously decided to announce its neutrality in the current political dispute in order to prevent further turmoil and bloodshed and to order all military units to return to their barracks." "The Iranian army," said the generals, "has always supported the noble Iranian nation and supports with all its strength Iranian national demands." Fighting with the die-hard "Immortals" continued but political power had clearly been delivered to the Muslim mullahs.

Bakhtiar, whose house and office were ransacked and burned after army sentries were withdrawn, was taken into protective custody by Khomeini partisans, together with the former military governor of Teheran and the chief of the SAVAK secret police. Both houses of parliament, the state radio and TV stations, military bases and all major official buildings in Teheran were quickly captured or turned over to the insurgents without a fight. Eleven thousand prisoners, political and criminal, were released from the unguarded prison in what is being described as the largest jailbreak in history. Mehdi Bazargan, Khomeini's appointed prime minister, appeared on television to announce that he would assume office Monday and that General Garabaghi had pledged the military's full support to the new government.

The fall of the shah was conditioned by the belief of the U.S. government and CIA that the shah's loyalists could not win. The deluded shah may well believe he still retains some measure of popular support and no doubt feels betrayed by his imperialist sponsors. But what is of paramount strategic importance for Carter and Brzezinski is not the fate of the Pahlavi dynasty but the preservation of a powerful Iranian buffer against the Soviet Union based on the armed forces elite they trained.

Despite official support for Bakhtiar, the U.S. government had already moved to open a back door for collaboration with a Khomeini government. The *Wall Street Journal* had begun writing about a "bloodless compromise" and "links" to the Khomeini provisional cabinet. The *Washington Post* last week quoted a diplomat's statement that "The U.S. can live with Bazargan." But not unexpectedly, the loudest signal was heard from Andrew Young, the "progressive" black front man for the State Department whose supposedly "irresponsible" statements often serve to introduce policies shared by less flamboyant officials like Cyrus Vance. Young remarked that "Khomeini will be somewhat of a saint when we get over the panic" (*New York Times*, 8 February). While the street battles raged in Teheran, Young was meeting in New York with two representatives of the ayatollah, who assured him that the "human rights of all Iranians would be protected." Khomeini may be canonized by the imperialists because he has saved an otherwise lost cause, managing to supplant the shah's despised regime with a more popular government based on the military, the regime which will be if possible even more anti-communist than its predecessor.

Khomeini may want to protect his relations with U.S. imperialism, but the

sentiment to "cut off the hands of foreigners" is practically a tradition in Iran. And guerrillas in the streets have the sword of Islam out for U.S. and other Western imperialists. The ferocious anti-U.S. hostility is not mere xenophobia or typical "Third World" apologia for the Stalinist notion that the national-bourgeois revolution can free the nation from the yoke of imperialism. The shah was not just a U.S. puppet, but a sub-imperialist in his own right. But the U.S. had linked itself to the shah's



The face of defeat: shah loyalist, Lieut. Gen. Rabii.

rule when it engineered the CIA overthrow of the Mossadeq regime in 1953. And it has trained the Iranian military ever since.

## Mopping Up

The problem now facing Khomeini's mullahs is the consolidation of their rule. On the one hand there are the shah's forces to be purged of hard-line shah loyalists while holding on to as many reliable officers and police torturers as can be protected from the anger of the masses. On the other hand are the mopping-up actions against runaway insurgency. More than anything at this moment, Khomeini needs to demonstrate that his Muslim marshals together with the revamped military can reimpose social control.

After having neutralized the overwhelming mass of the army, the new regime moved to secure its hold over the military by a purge of the shah's top commanders. According to the *New York Times* (13 February):

"Mr. Bazargan moved to check the widespread anarchy by naming a new military chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Wali Qaraneh, a little-known officer said to have been an opponent of the Shah at one time, as successor to Gen. Garabaghi, who was appointed by the Shah."

The Imperial Guard's deputy commander was gunned down in his home, while the military governor of the southern province of Khuzistan was shot down and killed while flying over Ahwaz in a helicopter. Bakhtiar's war minister, the head of the air force Amir Hussein Rabii and air cavalry commander Manouchehr Khosrowdad were all arrested. Former prime minister Hoveida and Nematollah Nassiri, ex-head of SAVAK, both previously arrested by Bakhtiar, were exhibited to newsmen at Khomeini's headquarters together with Rabii and the detained military governors of Isfahan and Teheran. Dozens of arrested SAVAK agents have also been concentrated there.

Meanwhile, a monopoly of armed might must be secured for the regular army. In a televised address Khomeini demanded:

"All weapons must be surrendered to the mosques. The selling of arms is heresy. Don't let those weapons fall into the hands of the enemies of Islam. Islamic soldiers must be armed. But others must not be armed.... The state must be preserved. The disorder must end."

—UPI dispatch, 13 February

Khomeini knows, however, that many of the rifles, mortars, grenades and machine guns circulating in Teheran are now in the possession of such radical and "Marxist" guerrilla outfits as the Mujaheddin e Khalq (People's Strugglers) and Cherikhaye Fedayee

Khulu (People's Sacrifice Guerrillas), and are not going to be peacefully handed over to the nearest mullah. So behind the appeal to Islamic duty is the open threat to unleash the army against unreliable armed civilians. Bazargan has ordered all deserters to report for duty and newly appointed deputy prime minister Amir Entezam told a BBC interviewer that the troops would be used to crush the urban guerrillas if necessary. In a habitual turn of phrase the ayatollah himself warned he would "cut off the hands of traitors at work, of those who want to terrorize, massacre and destroy" (UPI dispatch, 13 February).

Despite the difficulties inherent in trying to order the same troops who only a few days before had passed out their weapons to the population to collect them again by force, Khomeini's government will likely succeed in suppressing "leftist" opposition to the new order. In Teheran, Muslim "shock brigades" have already carried out savage attacks on student leftists. The "Marxist-Leninist" guerrillas are well supplied with military hardware but their support to Khomeini over the last year has so completely politically disarmed them that they will not be able to mount an effective opposition to Khomeini in power. They have chanted "Allahu Akhbar" ("god is great") and "Khuda, Koran, Khomeini" ("god, the Koran, Khomeini") for too long to sing a different tune now and expect the masses to follow.

## For Workers Revolution in Iran!

Victory will certainly usher in a process of political fissioning among the forces following Khomeini. The ayatollah's religious support ranges from pious technocrats like Bazargan to rich merchants of the bazaar to fanatical theology students to "Islamic-socialist" demagogues. Moreover, his climb to power owed much to the social power of striking oil workers and the heroism of air force technicians, both educated and Westernized groups whose support does not stem from Muslim devotion.

Iran's mullahs need the iron fist of a military trained and equipped by imperialism to enforce "justice" according to the Koran. The police stations burned down during the street fighting will be rebuilt. The shah's gendarmerie (which has now sworn allegiance to Khomeini) will reoccupy them and a regenerated and renamed SAVAK will again be unleashed against those dubbed "traitors" by the new regime. To restore the flow of oil abroad and refill the state's coffers, the government must restore labor discipline among the militant oil workers; a Khomeini representative has already condemned "leftist and non-Islamic elements" among them.

The Iranian workers have proved their willingness to lay down their lives to topple an oppressive dictatorship. If they are not to be put under the yoke of an equally reactionary "Islamic republic," the three million strong proletariat must begin now, before the stabilization of a new dictatorship, to prepare a struggle for power. Only the revolutionary leadership necessary for the independent mobilization of the working class is missing.

## Iran's Phony February

There were incidents in the last few days that looked like the February Revolution in Russia in 1917—when the ranks of the Iranian army, after more

than a year of bloody confrontation with demonstrating masses, went over to what they thought was the side of "the people." Upon such emotion-packed moments hinge insurrections. But despite the mood, Iran's February has little in common with Russia's February. One incident serves to draw the distinction when the prisons of Moscow were opened, the Bolshevik Dzerzhinsky, who was at hard labor, rushed out to address the workers soviets still clad in his prison clothes. In Teheran the released prisoners rush to the mosques to thank Allah. There are no mass democratic institutions of incipient dual power and no revolutionaries to fight for a proletarian policy within them.

Iran's February and October 1917 are still to come. Perhaps the leading cadre of that future revolution will learn its crucial lessons from the explosion of the broad masses' illusions in Khomeini in the aftermath of 1978-1979. The reactionary character of Khomeini's theocracy—based on military rule draped with the "democratic" camouflage of referendums and constitutions—will emerge fully under the pressures of continued instability and tumult. A revolutionary cadre must be forged in political struggle against the mullahs.

It is the crisis of proletarian leadership which has delivered the Iranian workers and peasants into the hands of the mullahs. The powerful Iranian proletariat can be the vanguard of socialist revolution throughout the entire Middle East, sweeping aside all the shahs, sheiks and colonels who enforce imperialism's rule of oppression and exploitation. But this historic task can be fulfilled only under the leadership of an authentic Trotskyist party, built through unrelenting political struggle against absolutism, Islamic reaction and Persian chauvinism.

A genuine Trotskyist vanguard would fight for a sovereign, *secular* constituent assembly, championing the democratic aspirations of the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie to win them to the side of the proletariat in the struggle for a *workers and peasants republic*. Only the seizure of power by the working class and the smashing of the capitalist state apparatus can guarantee democratic rights, land to the tiller, equality for women, the rights of the national and religious minorities and the struggle against imperialist domination.

Today in Iran the objective ripeness for social revolution can be seen everywhere: in the brittle arrogance of the former autocracy with its sophisticated Phantom jets which it could not put into the sky, in the mass hatred of monarchist rule and the willingness of virtually a whole people to fight to bring it down. But there will be no social revolution in Iran until the powerful proletariat takes the offensive away from the mullahs and *bazaaris*—until it is the proletariat and its vanguard which runs the general strikes, sets up the barricades along class lines, broadcasts as the "voice of the revolution." When it is the workers' armed militias and not the fanatic mullah marshals who take over public buildings; when there is popular justice against both the SAVAK torturers and their clerical replacements; when the army is split along class lines and the masses of soldiers come over to the workers' cause against their ex-monarchist and new Islamic officer corps—then Iran will have its decisive social revolution. ■

## Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

### Bay Area

Friday: 3:00-6:00p.m.  
Saturday: 3:00-6:00p.m.  
1634 Telegraph  
3rd Floor  
(near 17th Street)  
Oakland, California  
Phone: (415) 835-1535

### Chicago

Tuesday: 5:30-9:00p.m.  
Saturday: 2:00-5:30p.m.  
523 S. Plymouth Court  
3rd Floor  
Chicago, Illinois  
Phone: (312) 427-0003

### New York

Monday through  
Friday: 6:30-9:00p.m.  
Saturday: 1:00-4:00p.m.  
260 West Broadway  
Room 522  
New York, New York  
Phone: (212) 925-5665

# Farmworkers Strike...

(continued from page 12)

all-out grower/cop/court/Klan offensive against the union.

Indeed, the "Imperial Valley" is aptly named. Never having accustomed themselves to the presence of the union, the growers see the valley as their own private fiefdom and moved instantly against the picketers with an army of gun-toting foremen and hired thugs. In addition, a special 50-man Imperial Valley deputy sheriffs' "strike force," backed up by police reinforcements from Brawley, El Centro and Calexico, has been mobilized to support the growers' massive scab-herding operation. Growers' ads in the local press blatantly solicit scabs from among Imperial Valley High School students as well as through Spanish-language leaflets distributed over the border. And UFW spokesmen say Ku Klux Klan goons are already in the fields.

The attack on Contreras came on February 10 at the huge Saikhon field where the foremen were running in a batch of so-called "replacement workers," many of them teenagers recruited for weekend work in the fields. According to the UFW, the foremen not only opened fire when union members crossed the field to talk to the scabs but kept up the barrage of bullets for a full 45 minutes, preventing the strikers from rescuing their fallen comrade.

In the face of the growers' all-out war and despite official UFW leaflets urging non-violent resistance, the strikers' combativity has continued to mount daily. A *Workers Vanguard* press team found picketers at the Maggio cooler yelling at scabs. "¡Esquirols vendidos, esos que tienen sangre de la compañía—sabemos donde viven esos!" (Sold-out scabs with company blood in their veins—we know where they live!) And when 50 American flag-draped buses and trucks loaded with scabs and scab produce tried to rush the picket lines at the Vessey farm on January 29, windows were smashed and one truck overturned. One worker was hit by a helicopter-landing ski, another was brutally beaten and a third, rammed by a foreman-driven pickup, may never walk again; but strikers say the sheriff's deputies and hired goons fared far worse. One militant told *WI* about the sight of 2,000 workers converging on 150 scabs: "Estuvo muy bonito, es un día muy bonito." (That was a beautiful sight, it is a day to remember.)

## Huelga... At Last

The bitter strike in the Imperial Valley is a far cry from the pacifist tactics traditionally espoused by the UFW bureaucrats. Chavez, with his Gandhi-style turn-the-other-cheek rhetoric, hunger strikes and well-publicized but ineffective consumer boycotts

championed by the Catholic Church and Democratic Party bigwigs like the Kennedys, has long been the darling of the liberals and the reformist left. In reality, however, such pacifist liberalism has time and again crippled the UFW. In 1973 Chavez warned striking grape and lettuce workers to limit themselves to peaceful appeals to scabs, and then later totally capitulated to grower and Teamster violence, calling off the strike and replacing it with a useless boycott. This betrayal led to the virtual extinction of the UFW, and is responsible for the fact that today the majority of California agriculture remains either nonunion or "organized" by the Teamsters. Then in 1974 the union devoted all its resources to lobbying Democratic Party politicians to establish the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB), which Chavez claimed would protect the collective bargaining rights of farmworkers. In fact, in the current strike the ALRB has handed down numerous rulings limiting picketing size and location at the growers' request.

But the battle of Imperial Valley proves again that it is only through the pursuit of militant, class-struggle policies that the gains of the UFW can be preserved and extended. The effectiveness of the strike so far has largely been due to the heroic determination of the strikers to maintain their picket lines in the face of violence by the sheriffs, cops and the growers' thugs. As for Chavez himself, he has largely remained on the sidelines during the strike, ostensibly "raising money" in the cities. And on one of his brief forays into the fields, even Chavez could not get away with only his usual sermon about a "national lettuce boycott." He did not dare to tell farmworkers to dismantle their pickets, instead giving lip-service to the popular chant of the pickets, "Huelga, huelga, huelga."

But the UFW ranks must understand that Chavez has in no sense abandoned his backstabbing, class-collaborationist policies. Thus, the murder of Rufino Contreras should have been the signal to call out the entire Imperial Valley on strike, dumping the piecemeal strategy under which only one-third of the lettuce crop is being struck and even the majority of UFW-organized farms continue to work. But for Chavez the grower violence was simply an excuse to cool out farmworker militancy. "The growers asked me to call off the picketing yesterday and we're accommodating them in that," he told a strikers' rally. While Chavez requested the growers to return the favor by keeping the scabs out of the fields, the result was immediate and devastating: *that very day* the two largest growers, Maggio and Saikhon, were already moving the struck produce out of the fields!

Scab produce must not reach the markets! Although the Teamsters Joint Council 42 felt sufficiently pressured to belatedly issue a strike sanction and

although many Teamster drivers have been honoring farmworkers' lines since the strike's inception, a Joint Council 42 spokesman warned *WI* that UFW picketers "better not come up here"; that is, to the L.A. produce markets where lettuce is handled and hauled by the Teamsters to the supermarkets.

Victory in this strike will be won through labor solidarity, which alone can insure the defense of the picket lines and the extension of the strike throughout the Imperial Valley and to the important San Joaquin and Salinas Valley fields. Instead of relying on impotent consumer boycotts, farmworkers should appeal to the Teamsters to insure that the struck produce does not move by taking up the fight to hot-cargo all scab produce from the fields to the coolers to the supermarkets. Teamsters and railway workers who bring the lettuce crop back East must also refuse to handle scab produce. Such a strategy would quickly bring the growers to their knees. Victory to the UFW strike! ■

## Letelier...

(continued from page 2)

routinely tailing the Cuban hit-men tripped upon their initial meeting with Captain Fernández and Townley at the English Lobster Club in Coral Gables, Florida; and how in June of 1976 the FBI turned up in the same Santo Domingo hotel where the Letelier assassination plans were being discussed along with plans to blow up a Cuban airliner (which later took 73 lives). And there is the evidence of Townley's CIA ties.

It is these connections that the prosecution is trying to cover up. And it tells a lot about the real nature of the trial that the only side showing any interest in getting at the evidence of CIA links is the lawyers for the Cuban counterrevolutionary killers and not the U.S. "Justice" Department. Thus only when the defense demanded that the prosecution give it a copy, was it learned that a secret agreement was signed on 7 April 1978 between Chile and the U.S. stipulating that Townley could be questioned only on the Letelier affair and that certain still-undisclosed information would be confined to the courts and "not spread to the press" (*New York Times*, 24 January).

The workers movement is interested in seeing that all of these secret deals and as yet undisclosed plots be exposed. For one thing, the U.S. last summer handed over hundreds of pages of documents to the Chilean government laying the basis for its demand to extradite General Contreras, but refused to show their contents to the press. We demand that all of the suppressed evidence and the secret deals be brought to the light of day.

The fact that Letelier's murderers have come to trial at all stems from a decision by Carter early last year to bolster the U.S.' sagging "human rights" image by distancing itself from the most hated of the more than 20 dictatorships propped up by the U.S. in Latin America. But in view of the massive U.S. encouragement of the bloody '73 Chilean coup, it is above all necessary that the "investigation" not dig very deep. And while the gusanos take the rap, the big-time terrorists are slapped on the hand or get off scot-free.

The present trial proves the absurdity of relying on U.S. "justice" to get to the bottom of the Letelier case, or similarly calling on imperialist commander Jimmy Carter to wage a struggle against dictatorship in Latin America. Immediately following the September 1976 bombing of Letelier's car we pointed out that his DINA killers could not have acted in the American capital without the knowledge of the FBI/CIA. Now, despite the best efforts of the "impartial" judge and "prosecution," this is being shown in court. We demand an end to

the cover-up of the U.S. connection in the murder of Orlando Letelier. Cancel the deals—publish the documents! Put away Townley and all the murderers of Orlando Letelier! ■

## Cuban Trotskyists...

(continued from page 5)

sion of the POR. "Che" could only reply with the hackneyed slanders. In contrast to the SI's principled stand, when challenged in a public meeting, SWP leader Barry Shepard remarked cynically, "There are Trotskyists and there are Trotskyists. But if I were in Cuba, I wouldn't be arrested." Only three months after the POR militants were released in April 1965 did the SWP press even mention the arrests, and even then it attributed their freeing to "the struggle...by the Fidelista leadership against bureaucratism" (*World Outlook*, 25 June 1965).

As for Juan Posadas, he was indeed a revisionist whose tailing after "militant" Stalinism reached increasingly bizarre and even comical proportions as the years wore on. Thus starting with the supposed imminence of a third world war as propounded by Michel Pablo, secretary of the Fourth International in the early 1950's, Posadas concluded that it was necessary to call for a Soviet nuclear first strike. Trying to relate this thesis to an architectural congress in Havana in early 1974, some Latin American Posadista delegates argued that it was useless to talk about building new structures that would all be destroyed inside of four to five years as a result of atomic devastation!

As we noted earlier, the Cuban Trotskyists had political weaknesses. Thus they did not have a fully elaborated analysis of the Castro regime as a deformed workers state, although their program called, in substance, for political revolution to replace the Stalinist bureaucracy with the proletarian democracy of soviets. The POR also reflected certain aspects of Posadas' revisionism, notably in its support to the Mao-Stalinist regime in China and the references to a "socialist camp" a form of apology for the ruling bureaucracies of the Sino-Soviet bloc.

In terms of specifically Cuban events, the POR's principal weakness was a softness on guerrillaism and initially toward Guevara. However, unlike the SWP, Posadas, Mandel and the other ex-Trotskyists who gave explicit political support to the Castro regime, the POR comrades had one cardinal virtue: courage of their convictions. Although they eventually signed a statement renouncing the Fourth International in order to obtain their release, the POR militants had fought a valiant battle against Stalinist domination of the Cuban Revolution, isolated from their comrades internationally and facing mounting bureaucratic repression.

The disgusting behavior of the SWP, acting as witness for the prosecution against the Cuban Trotskyists, recalls the treachery of that earlier renegade from Trotskyism, Michel Pablo, who in the early 1950's refused to defend the Chinese Trotskyists jailed and even murdered by Mao. They were, said the Pabloists, "refugees from a revolution" because they continued to fight for a Trotskyist leadership. More recently, the French Mandelites have made excuses for Ho Chi Minh's massacre of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. The repression of the POR marked a watershed: for the Cuban Fidelistas it accompanied the Stalinization of the regime as it fused with the pro-Moscow PSP; for the SWP it provided definitive proof of their complete degeneration into Pabloism, their willingness to sacrifice the most elementary principles of revolutionary morality in whitewashing the crimes of popular Stalinist heroes. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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# Newport News...

(continued from page 12)

ordered state police to ride shotgun on scab coal trucks during last winter's coal strike) dispatched 80 riot-equipped state police to enforce the state's "right-to-work" law. Dalton put the Virginia National Guard on alert, promising it could be on the scene in an hour if needed.

Tenneco gave its creature, the PSA, the run of the yard before the strike to distribute anti-Steelworkers propaganda. Just days before the strike, the PSA handed out a flyer baiting the Steelworkers as "too gutless to strike," and obliquely pledging to scab; as USWA chief organizer Jack Hower said, "That's the one promise they've kept in 40 years."

The company has cut off the strikers' medical and insurance benefits, while supervisors call the workers threatening to fire them if they don't return to work, and the local newspapers print nothing but company propaganda. Outside the gates, cops escort company cars full of scabs through the lines, while harassing the picketers, who have been attacked by guard dogs, arrested for dropping cigarette butts or merely pointing at a scab, and nearly killed by scab trucks. Police pushed aside pickets to let through a pickup truck which suddenly stopped, went into reverse, and backed right into the line—and police arrested John Baker, one of the picketers!

## "On Strike! 88! Close the Gate!"

The most popular chant on the line is "88! Close the Gate!" But this is just what the USWA bureaucrats are telling the pickets not to do, counseling respect for Virginia's "right-to-work" law, which forbids interfering with scabs. But it is "respect" for these notorious anti-union laws which has kept the AFL-CIO unions largely impotent in the South for decades. This country's unions were not built by "respecting" the rights of scabs, but just the opposite! Picket lines mean *nobody crosses*; many of the American labor movement's bloodiest battles have been to *enforce* picket lines against scabs, cops and troops.

But these decisive battles are only uncomfortable memories to today's ossified layer of bureaucrats sitting on

top of America's labor movement, who fear any militant action that would disrupt their comfortable collaboration with the bosses and politicians. USWA president Lloyd McBride brags that there has not been a strike in basic steel in 20 years, and defends the union leadership's throwing away the right to strike in favor of the binding arbitration imposed by the "Experimental Negotiating Agreement." Indeed, if McBride had his way, there would be



Picketers on the line at Newport News shipyard gates.

WV Photo

no strike at Newport News today. In a last-minute deal cooked up with Democratic "friend of labor" lieutenant governor Charles Robb, McBride agreed to call off the strike if the company reinstated 124 fired union members, stopped harassing union activists and accepted the next court ruling. But Local 8888's Negotiation Committee (as well as the company) turned it down, and the strike was on.

Now McBride tells the strikers to exercise restraint, while pleading with President Carter to "enforce our national labor laws" in the interests of "the national economy, your inflation-fighting effort, and our national defense." Carter has in the last year invoked strikebreaking injunctions against the coal miners, the railroad workers, and wildcatting postal workers—and if he does intervene, it will surely be *against* the Newport News strikers and probably in the

name of "national defense." After all, ten of the 13 ships currently in the shipyard are naval vessels, including two nuclear-powered submarines, one of Carter's pet projects.

This "strike strategy" of respecting the scabs' "right to work" can only undermine the strikers' enthusiasm and encourage wavering elements to return to work. Many workers now respecting the picket lines are waiting to see who has the most muscle: Tenneco and

the pickets be isolated. There are at least 10,000 strikers at Newport News, who can effectively seal off the shipyard—given militant strike leadership not afraid to go against the union's top bureaucrats.

Plants as large and well-guarded as Newport News have been shut down before. Autoworkers consolidated their power and broke the company at Toledo's Auto-Lite plant in 1934. When the company recruited 1,800 scabs, 10,000 pickets surrounded the plant, fighting hand-to-hand with company guards and cops for 15 hours until the National Guard arrived to rescue the scabs. In the next six days there was class warfare in the streets. Two strikers were killed and dozens of Guardsmen sent to the hospital—but when the gunsmoke had cleared, the strikers had won union recognition and a contract.

Workers striking at Ford Motor Company's giant River Rouge plant in 1941 were also faced with massive scabberding and the machine guns of Henry Ford's 3,000-strong private army. But the ingenious strikers closed the plant without facing machine-gun fire. Roads leading to plant entrances were jammed with strikers' cars, parked bumper to bumper and guarded by pickets. These "barricades" shut the plant down, and the UAW cracked the last bastion of the "open shop" in the auto industry.

It was bitter battles such as these—and not the "New Deal," NLRB elections or court orders—which established the right to organize for most workers in the U.S. Southern anti-union bosses have closely followed the J.P. Stevens battle. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers union won a representation election there in 1965, but has been bogged down in court squabbles ever since—and meanwhile the workers are still without a union contract!

The lessons of labor history are clear: no major strike, particularly against a bitterly anti-union company, has been won by letting scabs in! The Newport News strikers have the potential power to implement their picket line chant: "On Strike! 88! Close the Gate!" The future of labor organizing in the South for the next decade may well depend on it. Victory to the Steelworkers! Close the Gate—Shut Down the Tenneco Shipyard! ■

# Debs Caucus...

(continued from page 8)

tuted themselves as the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency (RMT). Reflecting the group's political evolution, the RMT founding document stated that "the purpose of the RMT is to study revolutionary politics, especially Trotskyism as espoused by the Spartacist League" (RMT motion, 12 November 1978).

The first question facing RMT members was the united front. In the SP, work with other groups had been mostly through "coalitions"—semi-liquidationist propaganda blocs in which all participants sink their political differences in a lowest-common-denominator "unity." Some Debs Caucus members still viewed such rotten blocs as the basic framework of political work (this was the "overriding" question for the only RMT member to go over to the SWP).

Through study of the united front, the RMT majority consolidated around the need for the independence of the communist program in principled united fronts:

"The United Front, for communists, is one tactic out of many for use in the struggle to win the leadership of the working class—an important one, but like all tactics used only to advance this struggle. Any subordination of this struggle for working-class leadership to a fictitious 'unity' with bourgeois and

reformist politics is a betrayal of the interests of the working class and of the historic tasks of the communists."

—"Theses on the United Front," 11 November 1978

For the members of the Debs Caucus/Revolutionary Marxist Tendency, the struggle to break out of social democracy—in its discredited SP incarnation and the updated version represented by the SWP—centered on embracing the Leninist theory of the vanguard party to lead the working class to power. The RMT looks forward to continuing the struggle to build that party through the revolutionary work of the Trotskyist comrades of the Spartacist League. ■

# SLP, SWP...

(continued from page 7)

the transition is not impossible. I joined the SLP in conscious (though ill-informed) opposition to Leninist "vanguardism." This was reflected most clearly in an article I wrote for the SLP Newsletter (July 1977), polemicizing against the Leninist ideas expressed by the Spartacist League. When I submitted a document for publication in the SLP Newsletter which corrected my earlier mistaken views and called on SLP members to study the politics of the Spartacist League before rejecting Trotskyism, I was informed by Nathan

Karp that I was a member "in a technical sense only" and that there could be no question of my continuing to serve on the *Weekly People* staff or in any other capacity—thus exposing the SLP's touted "self-criticism" and "principled debate" as a sham.

The SLP's prospects for revitalization are nil. But there is a strong tendency as an SLP member to excuse the organization and invent rationalizations for it—especially since it is so much like a

family. But this can only lead to cynicism and demoralization. Young revolutionaries who are considering joining the SLP would do best to stay out. Those currently in the organization would do best to get out soon and follow my example by joining the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the international Spartacist tendency.

Fraternally,  
Steve Miles

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Pickets Face Cops, Scabs

# Victory to the Newport News Shipbuilders Strike!

NEWPORT NEWS, VA.—State and city police in full riot gear. Police helicopters overhead, snarling attack dogs, barbed wire fences. Water cannons and armored cars. The National Guard on standby alert. This is Newport News, Virginia, 1979, where workers at Tenneco's giant shipyard—the largest in the U.S.—are on strike for union recognition in the most important challenge to the "open shop" South in decades.

The overwhelming majority of the 15,500 production and maintenance workers struck the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company on January 31, exactly one year after voting to oust the company-union Peninsula Shipbuilders Association (PSA) in favor of the United Steelworkers of America.

The strikers know this is a do or die battle: up and down the picket line they talk about how Newport News is the "gateway to the South." Despite subfreezing temperatures and police intimidation—over 40 picketers arrested so far—spirits are still high on the lines. No cranes are moving inside the yard and only a few welding torches can be seen, exposing the company's lies that 60 percent of the workforce is crossing the picket lines.

The issues are clear: union recognition for Steelworkers Local 8888 and a new contract. Contract demands include wage increases (workers make over \$2.00 an hour less than those in organized steel mills), cost-of-living clause, pension, and safe working conditions (although shipbuilding is one of the most hazardous industrial jobs, there has never been a safety clause in a Newport News



Picket line at Newport News shipyard: front line of the battle to organize the South.

contract) The strikers are also demanding an end to company discrimination against blacks and women, who are still concentrated in unskilled jobs, although blacks make up 50 percent of the workforce.

### Tenneco Defends "Union-Free" South

A victory for the Steelworkers at Newport News can be the first step in

a march to unionize the South. The gigantic Houston-based Tenneco conglomerate is determined to preserve a "union-free environment," backed up by Southern/Sunbelt employers and the police and National Guard of Virginia.

As the strike deadline approached, Tenneco issued its management personnel .38-caliber revolvers, and gave a special security guard brigade, called

the "SWAT" team, a crash course in karate and firearms. Barbed wire fences were built around the 475-acre plant and high-intensity searchlights set up at the gates. At Tenneco's request, local police agencies promptly suspended regulations against "moonlighting" to allow an additional 60 cops to join the company payroll, and Virginia governor Ray Dalton (who

*continued on page 11*

## Striker Killed by Growers' Thugs in California

# UFW Pickets: Hold the Line!

EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA, February 11—The blood line was drawn yesterday in the bitter 24-day-old United Farm Workers (UFW) strike against the country's largest lettuce growers association when a grower's thug shot striker Rufino Contreras with a .38 caliber bullet between his eyes. With Contreras' death the strike, which has turned the vast fields of the Imperial Valley along the Mexican border here into a giant battleground, has entered a critical new phase. While frenzied growers have demanded a call-up of the California National Guard, UFW president Caesar Chavez has bowed to the growers' demands for immediate labor peace by declaring a moratorium on all picketing until after Contreras' funeral, set for later in the week. It is urgent that farmworkers reject this blatant attempt to derail their strike and that they put aside the pacifist demagoguery and appeals

to bourgeois liberalism which have kept their union impotent for years. As has been shown in the last three weeks, the strike will stand or fall on the farmworkers' ability to defend their picket lines.

The strike, the longest continuous work stoppage in UFW history, began January 19, three weeks after the expiration of UFW contracts with the 28-member Imperial Valley Growers Association, producers of 90 percent of the country's winter iceberg lettuce as well as other winter vegetables. At stake is a UFW demand for a wage increase which has infuriated the growers by daring to exceed the 7 percent wage limit set by the Carter administration. With the seasonal, migrant UFW workforce now averaging only \$4 an hour, the White House-imposed ceiling was a slap in the union's face. But the growers instantly responded to the strike with an

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Farmworkers confront busload of scabs in Imperial Valley, California.

WV Photo