

4 SPARTACIST

CANADA NOV.-DEC. 1975 No.2 \$.20

FOR STRIKES AGAINST THE WAGE CONTROLS!

Smash the Anti-Labor Offensive!!

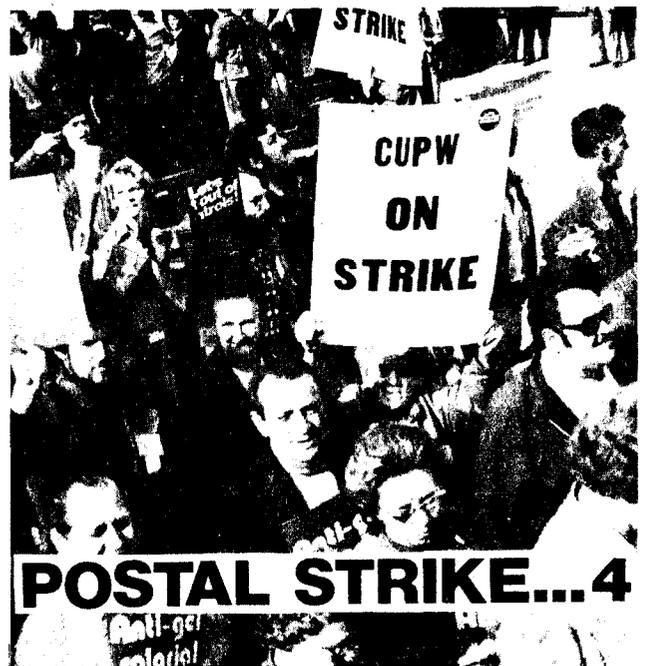
NOVEMBER 1--Prime Minister Trudeau has been touring the country to drum up support for his proposed wage-control legislation and to show a tough face to trade unionists who might seek to defy it. In Winnipeg on 21 October Trudeau warned workers against fighting for pay increases in excess of the guidelines, threatening to levy some unspecified "tax" on the extra earnings. Some days later cabinet sources revealed a government contingency plan, to be effected if union opposition becomes too strong, which would place a total freeze on all incomes and prices for an unspecified time period.

If the top leadership of the Canadian trade-union movement is to be believed, however, such extreme measures may well prove unnecessary. After an initial show of bluster, the major union leaders have made it clear that they are not prepared to lead any sort of fight to defend organized labor against the government's attack.

Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) president Joe Morris announced on 24 October that the two-million-strong federation would neither mobilize its ranks nor recommend defiance of the wage restraints. Presently, Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) leaders are preparing to abandon their national strike rather than spearhead a struggle of all postal workers to smash the mandatory guidelines (see article, this issue). In Toronto, Grace Hartman, newly elected president of the powerful 210,000-member Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) warned angry delegates to the union's biennial convention who were pushing for strike action against the controls "not to go off half-cocked" to protest the legislation.

As the militant mood of the CUPE convention attested, rank-and-file sentiment for decisive action against the wage controls has been strong. When a sweating Labor Minister Munro addressed the convention with a plea for support to the government's actions, he was greeted by a round of boos and protests. Ontario New Democratic Party Leader Stephen Lewis had to warn delegates to "avoid a

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FREE PHILIP ALLEN!

Philip Allen, a 20-year-old black Los Angeles college student, was convicted in September of voluntary manslaughter in the death of an L. A. County deputy last New Year's Eve. He is appealing the conviction. This vicious, racist frame-up must be fought. Allen, 5'3" tall and weighing 135 pounds, was alleged by police at the trial to have come out on top in an unprovoked altercation with several burly cops. It was charged that he then disarmed one of them, killing another and wounding two others. It is clear that Allen is being scapegoated for the bungling of brutal racists in uniform.

Allen has been given the maximum sentence for voluntary manslaughter--five years to life in the state prison! In an act which clearly exposes the racist, undemocratic, anti-working-class nature of the bourgeois courts, the judge on Allen's case revoked his bail after he spoke at a rally in his own defense on the Los Angeles City College campus October 1.

The Allen case, like the Joanne Little case, dramatically illustrates the vicious oppression carried out by the American state against blacks while the butcher of Attica Nelson Rockefeller becomes Vice President and the notorious criminal Richard Nixon receives yearly a \$60,000 "pension" and \$96,000 for "office expenses" from the U. S. government.

Let there be no illusions in the court system, which is part of the state apparatus, and is used by the ruling capitalists to crush workers, racial minorities and other oppressed layers whenever it

serves bourgeois interests. While it is necessary to carry out a carefully planned legal defense, it must be realized that broad mobilizations of the left and workers movement in demonstrations and other protest activities will be the key to freeing Philip Allen. This is the policy being followed by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), which has taken a leading role in building the Allen defense. The PDC is an anti-sectarian legal defense organization whose working-class defense policies are in accordance with the views of the Spartacist League/ U. S. (section of the international Spartacist tendency).

The PDC's efforts in the case have resulted in support from a number of black, Chicano and student groups. The American Civil Liberties Union entered the case in Allen's defense against the violation of his constitutional right to free speech in the revocation of his bail. In addition, a motion in support of the Allen defense put forward by the PDC was passed by the second national conference of the National Student Coalition Against Racism, an organization dominated by the Socialist Workers Party.

The Trotskyist League of Canada has sent a letter of solidarity and a financial contribution to the Allen defense committee and urges other organizations and individuals to do the same. Messages and donations should be mailed to: Philip L. Allen Defense Committee of the First Unitarian Church, 2936 West 8th Street, Los Angeles, California 90005.■

SPARTACIST Canada to be monthly

Spartacist Canada will begin regular monthly publication with its third issue, to appear in January 1976. In our last issue, SC No. 1, we wrote that we "project the regularization of our press frequency in the near future." We have been able to go to a monthly schedule this quickly for several reasons. SC has been well received in Canada, reflected in good sales on the first issue. The work of the Trotskyist League has been going forward in a number of areas, demanding a regular monthly press to service its interventions and recruitment. And finally, the preparations made for SC No. 1 insured a smooth production process and created a good foundation from which to go forward.

We had initially projected a monthly eight-page paper, but the needs of our work and the paper's reception have already led us to extend that to sixteen pages and we project stabilizing the paper as a monthly sixteen-pager. With the first monthly SC, the price of a single issue will be \$.25 and subscriptions will be available at \$2/year.■

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RMG Refuses to Debate TL on Portugal

THE OSTRICH SCHOOL OF POLITICS

We reprint below a letter sent by the Trotskyist League to the Revolutionary Marxist Group, challenging the latter to a debate on Portugal. In rejecting the TL's debate challenge, RMG spokesman Bob Woodworth gave the following reasons to a TL spokesman: the TL does not do "joint work" with the RMG on Portugal, the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) does not have a group in Portugal, and finally--the real reason--"why should we drag our periphery out and give you an audience?"

The fact is that the RMG is experiencing internal turmoil and questions from its periphery which it is unable to answer over the capitulation to popular frontism of the Internationalist Communist League (LCI), its fraternal group in Portugal. The RMG is afraid to face the TL in debate, because it has no response to the proletarian-revolutionary criticisms of the TL.

As for the RMG's other reasons: it is true that the TL refused to enter the 18 October rotten propaganda block of the RMG, Independent Socialists and Socialist League--which attempted to cover for the

class-collaborationist policies of the RMG's and IS' fraternal groups in Portugal. The central focus of the RMG-IS rally, which was also sponsored by the ultra-reformist Socialist League of Ross Dowson, was the foggy, confusionist slogan, "Solidarity with the Portuguese Revolution"--a slogan which all the groups in Portugal to the left of Caetano and the Popular Democrats claim to support, most notably the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement, the organization of erstwhile "revolutionary" army officers.

The demonstration, held in Toronto, included three other demands emphasizing opposition to imperialist intervention in Portugal--and ignoring the key question of revolutionary leadership, i. e., the construction of a revolutionary Trotskyist party. The list ended with the seemingly militant demand, "Solidarity with the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors"; however, the "Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors" is the name of a series of front groups dominated by the Proletarian Revolutionary Party (PRP), the IS' favorite group in Portugal. The national congress of

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Toronto Spain Demo: "Solidarity" with the Politics of Betrayal

With a new wave of mass unrest on the agenda in Spain, the Canadian left is already demonstrating its readiness to tail reformist and popular-frontist recipes for betrayal of the Spanish proletariat. While the social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) and the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Canada (CPC) have been unable to agree on Portugal where their fraternal groups have at times been on opposite sides of the barricades, such is not the case currently in Spain where their fraternal parties are not now in direct competition for political power within the government of a capitalist state.

While the pro-Moscow Stalinists and the social democrats may find themselves in direct confrontation in Spain in the future, in the meantime each has been busy putting together its own popular-front accord (the "Junta Democrática" and the "Platform of Convergence," respectively), pledging to move toward unity in a bigger and better popular front (see "Basque Strikes Rock Franco Regime," Workers Vanguard, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U. S., 10 October).

Thus the NDP and CPC held a demonstration in Toronto on 27 September to protest the execution in Spain of members of the Basque-nationalist ETA and the Maoist PRAP. The main slogan of the rally was "Support the Democratic Aspirations of the

Peoples of Spain." A second major theme, voiced by many speakers on the platform, was that Canada should sever its relations with Spain and end its support of Franco through NATO.

The meaning of the main slogan is support for the aspirations of the social-democratic and Stalinist

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SECTION OF TL CONTINGENT AT 18 OCTOBER TORONTO DEMO ON PORTUGAL.

CUPW Tops Prepare to Scuttle Strike

WORKERS MUST FIGHT FOR POSTAL STRIKE VICTORY

NOVEMBER 7--When the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) struck post offices across the country on 21 October, the union set the stage for the first major labor-government confrontation over Prime Minister Trudeau's new wage-control program. Despite CUPW national president Joe Davidson's warning to Postmaster-General Bryce Mackasey of the union's readiness for a harsh struggle, negotiations since then have resembled less a battle than a sliding scale of demands and acquiescence. Each time Mackasey has made demands, the CUPW tops have acquiesced.

While it was announced on 6 November that the talks were deadlocked over the issue of wages, it appears that the bureaucrats are preparing to settle soon. From all reports, the terms of settlement will represent a major defeat for both postal workers and the rest of organized labor. Davidson and his cronies have reportedly junked every vital union demand in their effort to prevent the postal strike from spearheading a struggle by the entire workers movement against Trudeau's anti-labor attacks.

SELL-OUT BUREAUCRATS GIVE FAIR WARNING

The union tops' original contract demands included a 71 percent wage increase with full cost-of-living escalator, a one-year contract, 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay and the right to negotiate over technological change (denied under the terms of the reactionary Public Service Staff Relations Act). While this program falls far short of serving postal workers' interests, it nevertheless gave the leadership a "radical" veneer sharply at variance with its demonstrated inability to defend the union ranks.

However, even last May, long before the union was in a position to officially strike for its demands, the leadership dismissed them as essentially window-dressing. Toronto Local president Lou Murphy shrugged off the "30-for-40" demand in particular as "negotiable... we don't expect it" (Globe and Mail, 16 May).

Today the demand for a 30-hour workweek has crept back up toward 40, while the 71 percent wage increase has gone by the board. Most significant is the negotiating committee's expressed satisfaction with the Moisan conciliation report's "solution" to the problems of automation in the Post Office. Postal workers face massive dislocation, increased surveillance and layoffs under a new automation plan, known as MAPP, which the government is set to implement. Moisan's "solution" to the MAPP question is simply to shunt any disputed issues off to binding arbitration. Thus postal workers are

guaranteed that technological change in the Post Office will not be to their benefit, but will instead lead to worsening job conditions and a cut in the workforce. The automation issue must be linked to the demand for a shorter workweek and a sliding scale of wages and hours.

The key issue of casual, non-union (i. e., scab) labor has also reportedly been sold out by the bureaucrats, who initially claimed to stand for elimination of all casual labor. It has recently been reported that "both parties already have agreed in principle that casual labor is a necessity in the Post Office at certain times, but how to use them and under what conditions are the points on which they are stuck" (Globe and Mail, 4 November). And the bureaucrats have long refused to include as a strike demand the rehiring of Montreal militants fired and suspended last spring for protesting the use of casual labor. Instead of bowing to the boss's "necessities," the union must fight for a closed union shop and a union hiring hall, and the reinstatement with full back pay of the Montreal workers.

A government victory in the postal strike will have great significance as a precedent in Prime Minister Trudeau's battle to implement the new wage-control legislation. The bureaucrats have already dropped their demand for a 71 percent wage increase over one year to 51 percent and reports indicate that they are willing to go much lower--as close to Mackasey's 38 percent over two-and-a-half years (i. e., 15 percent annually) as possible. In fact, it appears that they are willing to settle for 38 percent if certain fringe benefits can be increased and certain other concessions made (e. g., the granting of the same wage rates now enjoyed by full-time workers to part-time workers with comparable time of service).

Mackasey's offer, based on the terms of Moisan's report, is identical to the sell-out settlement between the Post Office and drivers and carriers in the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC) last May. Because of an escape clause providing for wage parity in cases of closely related groups of workers (such as CUPW and LCUC members) a settlement under Moisan's grossly inadequate terms would fall within the guidelines of the federal wage-control scheme.

CUPW is the union best placed to lead a counter-offensive against Trudeau's austerity program. By calling on the LCUC leadership and other unions in the Post Office to launch an immediate strike in support of the CUPW inside workers and against the controls, CUPW could have spearheaded a major national struggle against the anti-labor wage

"guidelines." In addition, a national strike of all postal workers could have laid the basis for a democratic merger of all postal unions, by reopening their contracts and fighting for one joint settlement.

However, Davidson and his fellow bureaucrats at no time sought to implement such a clear, class-struggle policy. Instead they have sabotaged their own strike through repeated capitulations to Mac-kasey and strengthened the government's hand through a sell-out deal with the LCUC tops to force outside postal workers to cross picket lines and report to work. This mutual scabbing deal is complemented by the fact that neither union has a strike fund (locked-out LCUCers are expected to live on their meager unemployment insurance). Thus when the Post Office locked out LCUC workers--workers who had been crossing picket lines in accordance with union regulations--several days after the strike began, the stage was set for divisiveness between inside and outside workers rather than united strike action buoyed up by a solid strike fund.

**BREAK THE WAGE CONTROLS! FOR A
NATIONAL STRIKE OF ALL POSTAL UNIONS!**

Postal workers need a new, class-struggle leadership if they are to protect their unions against further government attack and show the way forward for the entire working class. While the Davidson bureaucracy has demonstrated its inability to provide the leadership postal workers require, the same is true for the various "militant" oppositionists--from the Canadian Party of Labour-supported Postal Action Committee, whose leading member scabbed on the March Public Service Alliance of Canada postal mechanics' strike, to the supporters of the fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Marxist Group, who refused to call for a national strike of all postal workers in March and are repeating this performance now in regard to the CUPW walkout.

A class-struggle leadership would raise the demand "Break the Wage Controls!/Down with All Anti-Labor Legislation!" and would seek to mobilize the labor movement behind it on this demand. In particular it would agitate for all postal workers to unite in immediate national strike action and raise the issue of a democratic merger of all postal unions. Militants must begin to construct caucuses in the unions that will fight for strikes like the CUPW strike to be extended and politicized. Such caucuses, based on the Trotskyist Transitional Program, would stand for the expropriation of all capitalist industry without compensation, for workers control, and for a workers party that will fight for a genuine workers government. ■

WOMEN AND REVOLUTION

No. 10, Fall 1975

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Hands Off Rosie Douglas!!

The federal government is threatening to deport Rosie Douglas in the middle of December. If deported, Douglas, a black militant from Dominica, faces possible arrest, torture or even execution by the hangmen of the Dominica government--which in November 1974 passed legislation legalizing the murder of anyone "found...inside a dwelling house" if the victim is a member of an "illegal" organization. The Canadian government has defined Douglas as a "national security risk," which prevents him from appealing the deportation on "humanitarian" grounds.

The attempt to deport Douglas must be seen as an attack on all immigrants, on the left, and on the working class as a whole. It is part and parcel of the Green Paper policy which seeks a partial solution to the capitalists' current economic ills through the deportation of immigrant workers and stiffened immigration quotas. In this period of galloping inflation, high unemployment and mandatory wage controls (the fruits of the anarchic capitalist mode of production), the government wants to kill two birds with one stone.

It hopes to turn the hatred of Canadian workers away from the capitalists who are their exploiters, toward the immigrant workers--who are their class brothers. Thus the government seeks to solve unemployment at the expense of immigrant workers, at the same time frightening the immigrant population and other layers of the oppressed from participating in the class struggle--for fear of deportation or other severe government reprisals.

The Trotskyist League has sharp differences with the political views of Rosie Douglas, taking issue with his reformism and "third-worldist" vanguardism--which places the struggle against racial oppression apart from and as a priority before the class struggle. Racial oppression must be fought within the context of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the capitalists; this is necessary for the strategic aim of uniting the working class across racial and national lines, and for achieving the liberation of all the oppressed--which cannot occur except under socialism.

Despite the TL's political differences with Douglas, it stands in resolute solidarity with him against any attempt by the bourgeois state to deport him. This is the elementary duty of all organizations in the workers movement. At the same time, it is necessary that all united-front actions protesting the threatened deportation be broad and democratic--allowing all participating organizations which want to fight the deportation to express fully their political views.

The TL encourages participation of all organizations and individuals in actions protesting the threatened deportation. Contributions for Douglas' legal defense should be mailed to: The Committee in Defence of Rosie Douglas, P.O. Box 194, Station P, Toronto, Ontario. ■

wage controls...

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confrontation" because "the law, however questionable, is the law." And when Trudeau himself arrived in town on 24 October to speak to local Rotarians about the austerity program, he was met by over 1,000 angry CUPE demonstrators, who were joined by striking postal workers and members of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers Union (CBRT).

Canadian workers need a militant, class-struggle strategy and program if they are to successfully defeat the government's anti-labor offensive. Rhetoric is cheap--even the CLC bureaucrats have issued demagogic statements opposing the controls. However, the union tops have shown that they will not take on the government in the necessary labor counter-offensive. Instead Morris and company seek a solution in pressuring the government through the NDP and negotiating more "equitable" means of reducing labor strife with government and management representatives on the class-collaborationist Labor Relations Council.

But the capitalists and their government agents are the workers' class enemy; only intransigent class struggle can beat their attacks. To smash the wage controls Canadian workers do not need pious union resolutions, but defiant strike action.

CAPITALISTS WEIGH THE OPTIONS

Trudeau's decision to impose the austerity program did not come overnight. Ever since the effects of the international economic crisis began to seriously hit Canadian capitalism some 18 months ago, the bourgeoisie has been weighing its options. In the June 1974 federal elections Robert Stanfield's Progressive Conservatives spoke for those capitalist interests which sought to restore the country's failing balance-of-trade figures and place the burden of inflation's effects on the working class through instituting an immediate mandatory wage freeze. The Liberals, fearing the political unpopularity of wage controls, preferred to try riding out the recession, and won the election.

Trudeau felt compelled to make his move only after all other government "anti-inflation" programs had failed, and after the working class had entered into a major round of industrial militancy in defense of its falling living standards. By limiting maximum allowable wage increases to 10 percent for the next year (and 8 and 6 percent in subsequent years), and threatening violators with fines of up to \$10,000 or more and five-year jail sentences, the government is seeking to cut off a wage spiral in which Canadian workers had been winning pay increases of almost 19 percent annually in major union contracts signed in the second quarter of 1975.

The Prime Minister's hard-line policy also contains an element of psychological warfare aimed at reducing the country's strike total (which last year exceeded, on a per capita basis, that of every advanced capitalist country save Italy), by convincing unions to lower their wage demands in order to "fight inflation."

Still, it took Trudeau much longer to impose the controls than many senior capitalist spokesmen had hoped--among them almost every daily newspaper,

a significant number of economists and the Prime Minister's own former Finance Minister, John Turner, who resigned his portfolio in early September when the cabinet rejected a mandatory control program.

Trudeau also lagged behind most of the leading spokesmen for the social-democratic NDP. Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney, Manitoba Premier Ed Schreyer and federal party Leader Ed Broadbent all came out at one time or another for a pay-increase ceiling. In fact, just weeks before the program was introduced both Blakeney and Schreyer were out at the conventions of their respective provincial labor federations attempting unsuccessfully to convince the assembled labor leaders that wage controls were a necessity.

BARRETT STRIKES THE FIRST BLOW

Fittingly enough, it was another NDP provincial premier, British Columbia's Dave Barrett, who provided the strongest encouragement for the federal Liberals' new anti-union program. Less than a week before Trudeau made his move, Barrett decisively crushed the longest continuing strike wave North America has seen since the onset of the economic downturn, by legislating back to work over 60,000 striking forest workers, supermarket employees, railworkers and propane truck drivers. The union tops mumbled their opposition to the strikebreaking Bill 146 and gave in without a fight (see article, this issue).

Coupled with the success of Robert Bourassa's provincial Liberal Party government in taming Quebec's volatile construction unions and smashing a September Montreal transit strike, Barrett's action demonstrated to the federal government that the two main hotbeds of labor militancy were being skilfully cooled. When Trudeau moved to impose his wage restraints program, the union tops in both provinces meekly acquiesced.

In B. C. on 21 October the Vancouver and District Labor Council (a number of whose members are sympathetic to the views of the reformist Communist Party) overwhelmingly rejected a mild proposal to oppose wage controls which had been presented by Steve Penner, a supporter of the centrist Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). Penner's motion proposed that the Council pledge to support any unions which might decide to fight the controls; to call on the CLC to organize a national trade-union conference; and to organize a demonstration against wage controls in Vancouver.

This toothless proposal was rejected by the assembled bureaucrats on the grounds that their members would not support any action against the controls. Instead they passed a motion which simply put the Council formally on record in opposition to the Trudeau program.

RMG'S CENTRIST "STRATEGIZING"

In speaking against Penner's motion one bureaucrat was quoted as saying, "If anyone thinks a rally is going to change the minds of people in Ottawa, then they're whistling Dixie" (Vancouver Sun, 22 October). This cynical bureaucrat managed to put his finger on exactly the problem with the RMG's program for fighting the wage controls.

Penner's motion and the RMG's "Action Program for B. C. Workers" (printed in B. C. Militant, November) both failed to call for the only effective means to defeat the viciously anti-labor attacks of the Trudeau government--massive strike action. At a forum held in Vancouver on 24 October the RMG "explained" that it refused to call for strikes against the controls because such a call would not be "realistic" as the precise date of such strikes could not be immediately specified!

Instead the RMG proposes that workers should demand "that the CLC call an emergency delegated conference to plan a national campaign against the legislation and present working-class solutions to the current economic crisis." Thus the "realists" of the RMG, who are so unwilling to call on the workers to smash the wage controls, have no qualms about calling on Joe Morris and the rest of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy to "present working-class solutions" to the economic crisis!

The RMG even has an explanation for how the miraculous transfiguration of Morris and company is to occur:

"As a labor center the CLC is weak... In the past the CLC has even said it would support wage controls, were they tied to a few reforms.

"But even the CLC can be pushed [!]. If it does respond, even in a limited way, an escalation of conflict and politicization could follow."

--B. C. Militant, November

Toronto Forum

For Strikes Against the Wage Controls!

SPEAKER: Murray Smith, Trotskyist
League Central Committee

SAT., 15 NOVEMBER

TIME: 8 p.m.

LOCATION: Hart House, U of T
Music Room

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Instead of proposing to the advanced workers that they fight for the only policy which can defeat Trudeau's attacks, the centrist "realists" of the RMG propose to... pressure the bureaucracy to take up the fight! Somehow, according to the RMG's schematic economism, this is supposed to lead to the "politicization" of the workers. Unlike the RMG, communists understand that reliance on the trade-union bureaucracy, the arm of the capitalist class within the labor movement, can only lead the working class to defeat.

FOR STRIKES TO SMASH THE WAGE CONTROLS!

In sharp contrast to the RMG's pathetic tailist strategy, the Trotskyist League has put forward a perspective of smashing the wage controls through defiant strike action. In a leaflet issued on 24 October and distributed widely in both Toronto and Vancouver, the TL pointed to the postal strike in particular as a potential springboard for the labor movement's necessary counter-offensive.

The leaflet called upon the outside postal workers in the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC) to launch an immediate national strike in support of the CUPW inside workers and against the wage controls. While the RMG was advising the workers to wait for Joe Morris' "working-class solutions," the TL warned against the CLC's sell-out strategy, and called for preparations for strike action by other unions, "should the government move to smash the CUPW or any other major strike, or to begin prosecutions for defiance of the wage guidelines." The leaflet pointed out that such strikes must "demand an end to unemployment through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay--the workers must not suffer the effects of the capitalists' economic crises!"

While with one hand the government smashes strikes and passes anti-labor legislation, with the other it seeks to tie the labor movement to capitalist rule by integrating the union bureaucracy into government boards. Although Trudeau has only unearthed one ex-CLC Vice President to sit on the new Anti-Inflation Board, which will be policing the labor movement under the terms of the wage control legislation, Morris and the other top CLC incumbents continue to sit on the tripartite Labor Relations Council, "reasonably" discussing alternative "solutions" to the problems of inflation and unemployment with the class enemy. Workers must demand: Labor off all government boards! Down with all anti-labor legislation! Strike against the wage controls!

The attacks of the capitalist class on Canadian workers can only be successfully defeated by a massive, determined labor mobilization. These attacks point to the necessity for revolutionaries to construct a class-struggle alternative leadership, based on the Trotskyist Transitional Program, within the trade unions to defeat the pro-capitalist bureaucrats, break the NDP's reformist stranglehold, and fight for the expropriation of industry, workers control and the replacement of the capitalist government with a genuine workers government.

Unemployment and inflation are rooted in capitalist society. Only the construction of a revolutionary Leninist party can lead the working class to root out these ills through the overthrow of the society that has bred them. ■

QUEBEC

The Language Controversy and the National Question

The longstanding Quebec language controversy erupted once again with the opening of schools this fall. Anglophones, Francophones and immigrants find themselves in the midst of a renewed conflagration of chauvinist hysteria and working-class division around the issue of language rights. In the past, the language controversy centered on Québécois nationalist protests demanding the institutionalization of a French "unilingual" school system, the abolition of the separate English-speaking system, and the conversion of McGill University into a French-speaking institution.

With the Quebec National Assembly's adoption last year of Bill 22 (legislation channeling all children without a demonstrated English-language capacity into the French school system), discontent over the language question has found a new locus among Montreal's English-speaking and immigrant populations.

The main force behind this "pro-English" and explicitly chauvinist campaign against Bill 22 has come from the English-speaking media in Montreal, particularly the local radio station CFCF and the Montreal Star, dragging in their tow support from several large Anglo-Canadian companies, petty-bourgeois and working-class Anglophones, and a large segment of Montreal's immigrant population.

The impetus in fact to this English-chauvinist campaign was provided by the protests of Italian immigrant families in the St. Léonard suburb of Montreal, in schools of the Jérôme Le Royer Commission. The immigrants were protesting the fact that some 182 immigrant children, who had demonstrated an English-language capacity, were nevertheless being arbitrarily denied the right to enter the English-language school system.

The issue has already caused a number of rifts in the ranks of the ruling Liberal Party with Liberal Member of the National Assembly George Springate at one pole leading the "pro-English" campaign and Liberal education minister Jérôme Choquette at the other resigning from his cabinet post and the Liberal Party in protest over the insufficiency of Bill 22's pro-French bias.

The chauvinism and hypocrisy of the anti-Bill 22 campaign is revealed by the petition being circulated favoring its repeal. By equating the abolition of Bill 22 with a restoration of "our inalienable rights as Canadians to work and educate our children in the language of our choice" the campaign denies the existence of anti-French discrimination in Quebec and thus implicitly condones this oppression. While Bill 22 is itself discriminatory, chauvinist and unworthy of any kind of support, a return to the former system would represent a continuation of the longstanding anti-French discrimination.

OPPRESSION OF THE QUEBEC NATION

Comprising 80 percent of the population of Quebec, the French-speaking Québécois majority constitute an oppressed nation within the Canadian capitalist state. Possessing a common territory, history, language and cultural heritage, as well as a potentially separate political economy, Quebec has for centuries been under the successive political and economic subjugation of British, Anglo-Canadian and American imperialism.

At the same time, Quebec is an advanced capitalist society with a high degree of bourgeois democracy, clearly distinguishing it from a colonial country. Its status as an oppressed nation can only be understood as a function of the extreme historical weakness of its indigenous bourgeoisie, a situation whose roots lay in Britain's victory over France in French North America in the 18th century.

The inability of the Quebec nation to develop a dynamic indigenous bourgeoisie under conditions of British colonial domination and Anglo-Canadian political supremacy resulted in a retarded economic development relative to the dynamic expansion of North American capitalism in its heyday, with the result that Quebec remained a relatively depressed and backward component of the North American economy until well into the 20th century.

The corollary to this belated industrialization was the comparatively late appearance of a strong industrial proletariat. Thus the Quebec working class, by virtue of its "newness" and the weakness of the Quebec economy relative to the rest of North America, suffers more acutely from the characteristic problems of decaying capitalism. Unemployment is much higher and the standard of living much lower for Quebec workers than their American and Canadian counterparts.

The status of Quebec as an oppressed nation within Canada has had repercussions among other layers of Quebec society as well. While the French Canadian bourgeoisie is exclusively dependent on Anglo-Canadian and American imperialism and incapable of any kind of serious struggle against the existing relationships, the Quebec petty bourgeoisie--administrative civil servants, professors, students, technicians and managers--have exhibited an independent capacity to generate a strong nationalist movement in recent years, especially since the early 1960s. Although Quebec nationalism is obviously a very socially-heterogeneous phenomenon, its consistent programmatic expression in the demand for the secession of Quebec from English-speaking Canada ("indépendantisme") reflects an objective appetite on the part of sectors of the petty bourgeoisie to transform themselves into the ruling class of Quebec society.

THE REACTIONARY NATURE OF NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY

Since the late 1960s, the rallying cry of the "indépendentiste" forces has been for an exclusively French Quebec. By attacking the privileged position of English as the language of the politically and economically dominant capitalists, these forces have been able to intersect the real and felt grievances of broad layers of Québécois workers and students who see in the nationalist program a way of fighting their oppression. English is the language of opportunity. Without it, job promotion and upward social mobility are extremely difficult.

The petty-bourgeois nationalists pander to the

working class. Such a stance demands opposition to privileges for either the English or French language in Quebec and for a resolution of the language controversy on the basis of democratic and non-discriminatory principles. Only on this basis can working-class unity be forged among English-speaking, immigrant and Québécois workers.

LSO-GMR CAPITULATION TO NATIONALISM

Both the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière and the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire have responded to the Quebec language controversy by enthusiastically cheering every step of the petty-bourgeois nationalists. The LSO and GMR are the sister parties in Quebec of the League for Socialist Action and the Revolutionary Marxist Group, respectively, in English-speaking Canada. Not only does the so-called "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" have two sections in Canada which openly oppose each other's politics, but the United Secretariat majority's section in Quebec, the GMR, is a separate party from the RMG--in counterposition both to the principle of international democratic centralism and the Leninist position of one state, one party. This fact is consistent with the capitulation to reactionary nationalist ideology that runs through the entire LSO-GMR-LSA-RMG complex.

Tied to the political coattails of the Quebec petty-bourgeoisie through their advocacy of an independent Quebec, both the LSO and GMR have given wholehearted support to the program of French unilingualism. The LSO's work in this regard has been particularly outstanding for its political treachery.

The LSO's primary activity for the last four years has been an attempt to build a class-collaborationist campaign for a French unilingual school system. The LSO's short-lived "United Front for the Defence of the French Language" with the right-wing nationalist Knights of Independence was mounted during an ebb in the nationalist furor over the language question in 1971-72. This campaign was a clear rear-guard attempt on the part of the LSO to "keep nationalism alive" within the Quebec student movement precisely at a time when this movement was beginning to outgrow its nationalism in favor of a pro-working-class perspective.

The LSO greeted Bill 22 as a concession to the nationalist movement, but criticized it from the "consistently nationalist" viewpoint that only French unilingualism will bring a just solution to the language question. This position was recently articulated in the LSA's paper, Labor Challenge (6 October):

"What is required is a simple policy which applies to all residents of Quebec. French schools for all. That is, the application of the power of the state to defend the language of the majority... In reply to those who claim this policy, often called unilingualism, would violate the democratic rights of the English, socialists reply that it is the rights of the French which are under attack and need defending. What is being challenged is the privileged position of the English, and the separate English school system which helps maintain those privileges."

Thus the LSO "defends" the language rights of the
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naive notion that an independent Quebec could change that. In this way Québécois nationalism has retarded the development of political class consciousness within the most militant segment of the North American working class. The nationalists' success in enlisting the support of the Quebec labor movement has meant the blocking of independent working-class political action in favor of reliance on the bourgeois Parti Québécois and dividing the Quebec working class along linguistic lines.

FOR QUEBEC'S RIGHT TO NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

Quebec nationalism, then, despite the fact that it reflects Quebec's real status as an oppressed nation, is a reactionary bourgeois ideology that fosters class collaboration and working-class division. Revolutionary communists are faced in Quebec with what Lenin called "a two-sided task: to combat nationalism of every kind... [and] to recognize... the right of nations, to self-determination, to secession" (The Right of Nations to Self-Determination).

Concretely this means that revolutionaries must argue against nationalism and its program of secession within the Quebec working class while fighting for the recognition of the right of Quebec to self-determination by the English-speaking Canadian

language...

(continued from page 9)

French by attacking those of the English, immigrants and even Québécois who wish to educate their children in English, i. e., by calling for a reversal of the terms of oppression.

For its part the GMR identifies the struggle for French unilingualism as "one of the aspects of the anti-imperialist struggle" (translated from Taupe Rouge, September 1975). This methodology is of a piece with the old United Secretariat line that Castro and Guevara of the Cuban revolutionary period were "unconscious Trotskyists." In fact the opposite is the case, namely, that the logic of French unilingualism is the desire to turn the tables on non-French speakers in a reactionary bourgeois "solution" to the language and national question.

Resistance to national oppression must be transformed into a struggle against capitalist imperialism; by itself it has no such "anti-imperialist" thrust. This transformation can take place only through the intervention of communists who place the struggle for democratic rights in a correct class context.

It must further be pointed out that even, or especially, in the GMR's "workers republic of Quebec" (a highly unlikely historical development, to say the least) communists would oppose French unilingualism no less than Lenin and Trotsky struggled against Stalin's Great-Russian-chauvinist policies toward national minorities in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s.

LENIN ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The views of the LSO and GMR stand completely opposed to what Lenin, in Critical Remarks on the National Question, called the "national program of working class democracy":

"... [there must be] absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language.... Working class democracy counterposes to the nationalist wrangling of the various bourgeois parties over questions of language etc., the demand for the unconditional unity and complete amalgamation of workers of all nationalities in all working class organizations."

The proletarian-democratic solution to the Quebec schools/language controversy is a unitary, state educational system under teacher-student-worker control with bilingual instruction. Such a system would defend the language rights of French-speaking Québécois while facilitating the "amalgamation of workers of all nationalities":

"The proletariat cannot support any consecration of nationalism; on the contrary, it supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinctions and remove national barriers; it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations. To act differently means siding with reactionary philistinism."

The only qualification Lenin adds is that such assimilation of nations must not be "founded on force or privilege...."

This principle applies to all areas of social life. The recognition of both French and English as co-

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equal languages at the workplace and at school, with provision to service immigrants who speak neither French nor English, must be struggled for under capitalism and ultimately realized under a workers government.

The LSO and GMR are incapable of seeing the reactionary implications of the unilingual program. French unilingualism means transforming Quebec into a French-speaking enclave in a predominantly English-speaking North America, inhibiting the ability of the Québécois to leave their province in order to find a livelihood elsewhere. It means dividing the French-speaking, English-speaking and immigrant workers on an issue that can be democratically resolved only by a workers government and in this way blocking the realization of such a government. Moreover it ignores and implicitly betrays the language rights of French speakers outside of Quebec by establishing an ideological rationale for the already present coercion of the French-speaking minorities in New Brunswick, Manitoba and Ontario by the English majority.

The LSO and GMR, locked into a petty-bourgeois program, not only fail to raise the class question as primary, but on the simple democratic question come out on the side of the suppression of democratic rights--of the rights of all language groups in Canada, including the Francophones.

DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS AND PROLETARIAN INTERESTS

The Trotskyist League views the question of democratic rights from the following standpoint: What serves the interests of the working class? What advances the cause of socialist revolution? It never views "democracy" in the abstract nor takes the petty-bourgeois view that merely reversing the terms of national or racial oppression is in any sense "progressive" for the masses.

Communists fight against the suppression of democratic rights, with the understanding that class demands take precedence over "democratic" demands, should these come into opposition. At the same time, it must be clearly understood that the question of national oppression cannot be resolved within the context of capitalism. The first responsibility of the vanguard is to consistently advance a program that prefigures the dictatorship of the proletariat, and which paves the way toward a socialist revolution of the entire, united Canadian working class. ■

Spain...

(continued from page 3)

parties to re-establish bourgeois democracy in Spain through building popular fronts that will block working-class revolution. In demanding Canada break with Spain, the NDP and CPC no doubt hope to push the Canadian imperialists to be as "progressive" as their European brothers. The NDP and CPC give support to the continued existence of NATO by demanding that Canada use its position in NATO to oppose Franco, i. e., to support bourgeois anti-Francoist forces in Spain.

These positions of the NDP and CPC are not at all surprising: the program of political support to bourgeois-democratic imperialist regimes as against the right-wing form of bourgeois-imperialist dictatorship has been the program of the social democrats since 1914 and of the CPs since 1935 (with the exception of the two-year Stalin-Hitler pact).

What some may find a bit more shocking is that the League for Socialist Action, the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the Independent Socialists all sponsored the demonstration and its central demand --as well as giving approving coverage in their press to the position that Canada should sever its relations with Spain, a position revealing the most monstrous illusions in the bourgeois-imperialist state.

The reason for their stance is clear. These opportunists seek at any cost to liquidate into common action with the more influential CPC and, especially, with the NDP, the mass reformist party of the Canadian working class. With the NDP and CPC unable to agree on Portugal, the RMG and IS were forced into a smaller, more leftist propaganda bloc (see "RMG Refuses to Debate TL on Portugal," this issue). But with the large reformist parties uniting over the ultra-reformist, ultra-rotten slogan, "Support the Democratic Aspirations of the Peoples of Spain," one finds the opportunists in the RMG and IS falling over each other in enthusiasm for such common action.

RMG "TRICKS" NDP INTO SUPPORTING THE NDP'S PROGRAM

This dynamic is explicitly and shamelessly acknowledged in the 23 October Old Mole, newspaper of the RMG, in an article with the giveaway title, "Solidarity in Canada: A Real Possibility":

"... the complexity of the Portuguese situation and the divisions in the working class have meant that few can understand or agree upon developments there. This has produced a situation where there can be no mass support for the Portuguese revolution in Canada until the class polarization in Portugal itself becomes more clear....

"Spain is a completely different question. The impact of the executions, the growing crisis in Spain and the imminent fall of the last fascist dictatorship in Europe has affected masses of Canadians.... The issues in Spain are simpler and more clear cut [!] than in Portugal. The barbarity of the dictatorship makes the necessity of solidarity easier to grasp and more power-

ful. The international labour movement has taken a strong stand... against the fascist regime [yes, the social democrats are moving to support "liberal" bourgeois forces in Spain--SC]. For these reasons NDP activists and trade union militants will be much more likely to take part in mobilizations defending the Spanish working class [even if the slogan contains the usual class-collaborationist formula, the "people," without specifying which class of "people"--SC]....

"The NDP, trade unions and the Communist party can be put under far greater pressure to participate in such a movement than they are presently around Portugal."

--emphasis in original

The rationale for supporting bourgeois democracy against Francoism (the essence of the 27 September rally) could not have been stated with a more openly opportunist methodology.

The RMG has craftily "pressured" the NDP and CPC into supporting... their own program! And why shouldn't they?--especially when the RMG is ready to do the donkey work in building the NDP's and CPC's authority. One can assume from this that in the future the RMG will limit its criticisms of the NDP and CPC to the number of people the latter are able to mobilize around their own program.

In contrast to this abject capitulation to reformism, the Trotskyist League intervened in the demonstration with placards reading "No Popular-Front Illusions! For Workers Power in Spain and Portugal!", "No Trust in the 'Junta Democratica'! Break with the Bourgeoisie!", "Down with Franco! Workers to Power!", "Free the Spanish Class-War Prisoners!" Only a clear understanding of class lines and a revolutionary-proletarian program can prevent a repetition of the tragic betrayal of the Spanish proletariat in 1936-39. ■

correction

In "Letter Carriers Convention Usurped by Bureaucrats and Boss" (SC, October), we stated that the views of LCUC delegate Brian Duhig "are supported by the League for Socialist Action." We have since been informed by the LSA that this had ceased to be the case as of several months prior to the LCUC Convention. It must be pointed out, however, that the LSA had supported the views of Duhig in the LCUC for a couple of years during which he carried out policies consistent with the applause he gave boss Mackasey at the August LCUC Convention.

Furthermore, Duhig ran for political office on the LSA ticket over a year ago, at a time when he was also an active LCUC member. The program he ran on was every bit as rotten as the LSA's reformist maximum-minimum program put forward by its candidate in the recent Ontario election (see "NDP Must Break with Bourgeois Coalitionism!" SC, October). ■

debate...

(continued from page 3)

these councils held in August was boycotted by virtually all other left organizations. Instead of calling for and working toward the creation of a broad, working-class soviet formation, the PRP has seen fit to stand its "soviet" in sectarian competition with the various "soviets" dominated by other left organizations (see "Soviets and the Struggle for Workers Power in Portugal," Workers Vanguard, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., 24 October).

The Trotskyist League intervened in the 18 October demonstration with a contingent which outnumbered both the IS and the Socialist League, with banners calling for "Workers Revolution in Portugal," "Break with the MIA," "No Popular-Front Illusions," "Arm the Workers," "Split the Army" and "For a Soviet Federation of Iberia." If the RMG had any confidence in the correctness of the 18 October bloc, it would be anxious to debate the TL and expose its "sectarianism."

"We have, after all, been an F.I. group for less than two months, and these things take some time normalizing."

"A small revolutionary group never quite catches up with its organizational needs--especially one as new as the RMG."

--excerpted from letter from the Revolutionary Marxist Group to the Spartacist League/U.S., 5 April 1974, explaining the RMG's withdrawal from a previous agreement to debate the SL/U.S.

"Why should we drag our periphery out and give you an audience?"

--RMG spokesman in reply to Trotskyist League debate challenge, 1 October 1975

The explanation for refusing the debate because the IS has no group in Portugal is indeed humorous. Judging from the propaganda of the competing factions of the United Secretariat (the international rotten bloc to which the RMG belongs), the USec appears to have two groups in Portugal: the LCI and the Socialist Party--which have at times been on opposite sides of the barricades!

The logic of the RMG's phony petty-bourgeois moralism (i.e., practice permits propaganda) is the boycotting of discussions on the Russian question (no RMG fraternal group there...) and a whole series of issues around which Marxist clarity must be achieved in order to construct a world Leninist party and carry out revolutionary practice.

The RMG's "moralism" is a pitiful and unsuccessful attempt to mask its cowardice. Since the expulsion of the RMG's Bolshevik-Leninist Tendency, which went on to fuse with the Canadian Committee of the international Spartacist tendency laying the basis for founding the Trotskyist League (see Spartacist Canada No. 1, October 1975), there has been a trail of resignations from the RMG of comrades influenced by the B-LT fight.

To date, in addition to the many ex-RMGers at the Founding TL Conference, two former RMGers

have joined the TL and two others are currently close supporters--all four were founding members of the RMG. Most recently, RMG founding member Gary S. resigned from the RMG primarily over the question of Portugal and has indicated his interest in the politics of the TL.

So the RMG is worried and with good reason. Over a year ago it withdrew from an agreed-on debate with the Spartacist League/U.S. with excuses centering on the youth of its tendency. Today it appears to be claiming some kind of premature senility in its defense. But its policy has in fact remained the same, namely, a cowardly strategy of hiding its head in the sand rather than arguing its politics in organization-to-organization debate.

Trotskyist League
Toronto, Ontario
1 October 1975

Political Committee
Revolutionary Marxist Group
Toronto, Ontario

Comrades:

Events of critical importance to the international proletariat are taking place in Portugal today and there is a pressing need to politically clarify the meaning of these events if the world party of socialist revolution is to be built. In view of this and in accordance with the long Leninist tradition of political debate in the working-class movement, we are challenging you to a debate on the situation in Portugal. We would like to make brief mention of the issues at stake.

Certainly, your organization is aware of the danger of bloody defeat which faces the working class and poor peasants in Portugal. The rightward turn of the Armed Forces Movement (MIA) has been clearly manifest in recent events. The last government set up included the Popular Democrats, the party which organized the reactionary mobilization under the slogan "death to the Communists" and which joined in the suppression of left-wing soldiers. Most recently, the attempted government takeover of the media and the military alerts called in the face of anti-Franco demonstrations exposes the ominous and rapid rightward motion of the military regime.

In this situation major culpability falls on the shoulders of the Socialist Party, which has provided a left cover for the right-wing forces, as well as on the Communist Party for its strategy of popular fronts with "progressive" bourgeois powers... from Spinola in the not-too-distant past, to Melo Antunes today. But it has been the role of various charlatans of the Portuguese "far left" to condemn the traditional leadership of the working class only in an attempt to cover their own betrayal.

The bourgeois workers parties in Portugal are simply carrying out their usual policy of collaboration with the class enemy. It is not Portugal, 1975, that marks their crossing of the Rubicon to class betrayal. The death knell for the social democrats rang in August, 1914, and for the Stalinists after Hitler took power in Germany. The question posed in Portugal today is not whether the bourgeois workers parties can lead a socialist revolution, but whether a revolutionary Trotskyist party will

emerge that can win the working-class base of these reformist organizations away from their betraying leadership to a program for proletarian victory.

You are most certainly aware of the fact that your fraternal organization in Portugal, the International Communist League (LCI), signed a document on 25 August which can only be characterized as a popular-front pact. The question disturbing many militants in your own group is how an organization which claims to stand for the building of a revolutionary Trotskyist party finds itself swimming in the swamp of class collaboration. We think that these comrades deserve a clear answer.

It is easy for the League for Socialist Action and the Socialist Workers Party of the U. S., for factional reasons, to pretend orthodoxy and characterize this document in the following way: "...in any case, the program contains nothing in contradiction to the CP popular front orientation..." (Labor Challenge, 22 September). This is, of course, no more than cheap words from the mouths of reformists who have been shamelessly tailing the Portuguese SP. Nevertheless, the question of the LCI's involvement in popular-front politics cannot be avoided by simply pointing a finger at the LSA and SWP.

While the LSA and SWP raise the question of popular frontism because of opportunist factional reasons and their desire to front for counterrevolutionary scoundrels like Mario Soares, the Trotskyist League of Canada stands on the reputation of the international Spartacist tendency, well-known for its intransigent proletarian-revolutionary opposition to popular frontism, from the SWP's National Peace Action Coalition to Allende's Unidad Popular and Mitterand's Union de la Gauche.

As Lenin pointed out at the time of the counter-revolutionary Kornilov uprising, only the petty-bourgeois moralist will refuse to participate in a military bloc with other workers organizations and even with sections of the military officers against the counterrevolutionary mobilization. However, the pact signed by the LCI, together with other far-left groups like the Proletarian Revolutionary Party (currently being touted by the Independent Socialists), is not a military bloc, but a political one for support to the Gonçaves regime. Yes, support for the same Bonapartist regime that arrested trade-union militants and the Maoists of the MRPP and which laid the basis for the present government.

How is one to understand the political behavior of the LCI, which signed the 25 August statement and four days later published a criticism of it because it calls for "integration of the MFA in a front of the organs of workers and people's power" (Diario de Noticias, 26 August)? Can it be that four days after the LCI signed the document it suddenly understood the nature of it? But if this were the case then the LCI should have taken the only principled course, that is, to break from the agreement. Since the LCI did not take this step, there is only one way to interpret its "criticism"--as a cynical and unsuccessful attempt to mask its ugly and naked class collaboration.

Such political behavior is characteristic of the organizations of the "United" Secretariat. Let us remind you that the LCR in France supported the candidacy of Mitterand and denied that the Union de la Gauche was a popular front. You will attempt, of

course, to have honest militants believe that the LCI fell into an unfortunate mistake as an inexperienced revolutionary group. However, a systematic "mistake" is not a mistake, but a policy. Let us remind you that the LCI is repeating the same kind of "mistake" as the POR [of Moscoso] in Bolivia, 1971, when it participated in the "Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Front" which gave political support to General Torres.

Can someone believe that the 2 September declaration of the United Secretariat, published in the 11 September Inprecor, is a Marxist self-criticism of the LCI? Only a fool would believe it! Although this statement acknowledges that the pact places a "stamp of approval on the CP's project of creating a 'democratic and socialist popular front'," and that it is aimed at tying the workers organizations to the army and thus to the bourgeois state, it leaves totally unexplained the fact that the LCI was among its signers. Nowhere is there any evidence that the LCI was or will be instructed to break from the agreement.

When in the Spanish Civil War the POUM engaged in the same political behavior as the LCI is doing today in Portugal, Trotsky did not try to conceal the truth of what had occurred. He denounced the POUM's class betrayal and characterized the party as an obstacle to the victory of the proletariat.

We would like to elaborate on these and related points in a debate between our two organizations. We propose that the terms of the debate--chairman, speakers, discussion and so on--be negotiated in a meeting between delegations from the Trotskyist League and the Revolutionary Marxist Group to take place within the next week or at your earliest convenience.

Fraternally,

Political Bureau
Trotskyist League

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B.C. NDP..

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any union which defied the bill--but they soon turned around and urged all unions affected by it to return to work. They then announced a new "strategy" of supporting the nomination for election of oppositional NDP candidates in riding associations where the incumbent supported Bill 146. This sellout policy was designed to camouflage their unwillingness to mobilize labor against Bill 146.

But the BCFL bureaucrats quickly retreated from even this milk-toast "oppositional" policy. They failed to mobilize for a meeting in support of the first so-called "opposition" candidate, Ron Johnson, who in any case proclaimed loudly his NDP loyalty while opposing Bill 146. A group called the "NDP Committee to Oppose Bill 146" attracted 100 people in a 17 October meeting--primarily the same listless crew of perennial "left" social democrats, college professors and supporters of the pseudo-Trotskyist, reformist League for Socialist Action who had turned out for the Johnson meeting. Once again, the BCFL failed to mobilize any of its ranks for this meeting. At a forum held by the centrist Revolutionary Marxist Group a week later, an LSA spokesman absurdly claimed that the 17 October meeting of petty-bourgeois NDP "lefts" signalled the beginning of the "rehabilitation" of the B. C. NDP!

The retreat of the NDP "lefts" from even this rotten electoral policy was culminated on 4 November. Just six hours after Dave Barrett announced the holding of elections on 11 December, the NDP "lefts" formally dropped the entire electoral "strategy," opting to continue their "opposition" to Bill 146 with an educational campaign. Only 15 people were in attendance at the meeting where this announcement was made.

OPPORTUNISTS CONCILIATE NDP

The LSA's "strategy" to defeat Bill 146 was presented in the 20 October issue of Labor Challenge. The LSA proposes that the treacherous BCFL bureaucracy should "chart a change of course. It must take up responsibility for leading opposition to Barrett within the NDP"! However, just to make it clear that they are not really serious about opposing NDP strikebreaking, the LSA is already loudly proclaiming its intention to support Barrett in the upcoming election.

With this tailist position the third-campists of the Independent Socialists heartily concur. In the 15 October issue of Workers Action, the IS proclaims that "a vote for the NDP is essential." Why? Because, according to the IS, an NDP government, despite all its inadequacies, represents a step forward for the working class.

For example, claims the IS, "to strikers, a bureaucratic Labor Relations Board [the class-collaborationist government board with token union representation set up by the Barrett government to police the labor movement and control strikes] is preferable to the fines, imprisonment and lawsuits they would face under the Socreds." That the LRB is every bit as empowered to impose fines (up to \$1,000 a day for unions; up to \$10,000 for union

members) and other penalties as the courts were under the Socreds apparently makes no difference to the IS! Workers, you see, can "organize and fight more effectively under an NDP government...."

Communists do not seek to give advice to the working class on its choice of poisons. The less bitter-tasting pill, i. e., the LRB instead of the Socreds, can be the more lethal in the long run precisely because of its more deceptive coating. It is necessary to demand "Labor Off the LRB!" and to vigorously oppose all other attempts to cut against the independence of the unions from the bourgeois state.

DOWSONITES DENOUNCE

"SECTARIAN" BUREAUCRATS

But the most shameless apologist for the strike-breaking NDP is undoubtedly Ross Dowson's Socialist League, a reformist, Canadian-nationalist outfit which split from the LSA over a year ago. Dowson's group, liquidated eye-deep in the NDP, is characterized primarily by its screams of "left-sectarianism!" directed against any left organization which might happen to criticize the NDP.

In the case of Bill 146, the "sectarian" epithet apparently applies not only to the various ostensible Trotskyists and the pro-Moscow Communist Party, but to the BCFL tops as well. The Socialist League denounces from the right the BCFL tops' early blustering calls for defiance of the legislation as "opportunist cheap shots at the expense of the political development of the labor movement." The labor statesmen apparently failed to recognize what only the Socialist League has been able to see, that "the legislation cannot simply be characterized as pro-management" because "the main provisions of Bill 146... are not directed primarily against the unions" (Forward, October)!

The NDP government, explains the Dowsonites, was under attack from capitalist interests seeking to "bring the provincial economy to the brink of paralysis" and "cripple the labor government" through "intolerable pressure." Therefore, "in the face of these attacks, the government had to act. In this context, Bill 146 is directed more at the companies than the unions" (Forward, October)!!!

The Socialist League nowhere points to the fact that the NDP government is a government of the bourgeois state, committed above all to the maintenance of capitalist economic and political stability. The mere election of a right-wing social-democratic party cannot transform the class character of the state--this requires a social revolution led by a Trotskyist vanguard party!

The NDP's actions in bringing the labor movement to heel were directed above all at ending the cycle of industrial militancy by the province's trade unions, which had seen well over 600,000 man-days lost due to strikes and lock-outs in the first seven months of 1975 alone--before the forest strikes were even fully underway. That Barrett has now successfully straitjacketed the province's major trade unions should certainly please the Dowsonites, since it will undoubtedly contribute to the "stability" of the Premier's so-called "labor government." (Needless to add, Dowson will be calling for the government's re-election in the coming campaign.)

NO VOTE TO THE STRIKEBREAKING NDP!

Under certain circumstances, when they lack the social weight to directly counterpose themselves, Trotskyists can give critical support to a reformist social-democratic party running independently for office. We do not seek to place such parties in power because we have delusions that their government will represent a "step forward" for the working class, but in order to expose in practice the falsity of their pretensions to stand for the interests of their proletarian base.

A well-executed critical-support tactic toward the NDP in the 1972 B. C. elections, when the social democrats were running against W. A. C. Bennett's incumbent Socreds on a class-independent program centering on a pledge to repeal all anti-labor legislation could have enabled a revolutionary nucleus to significantly increase its influence after the elections when Barrett's sell-outs became ever clearer.

However, Trotskyists are by no means obligated to call for a vote to mass-based reformist workers parties in every election. The Spartacist tendency withheld critical support from the NDP in the 1974 federal elections because of its announced corridor-coalition policy with the bourgeois Liberal Party. The Trotskyist League also refused to give the NDP critical support in the recent Ontario elections: the NDP had not repudiated its recent popular-frontist federal policies, the election of right-wing NDPer Broadbent as national party Leader represented party affirmation of the 1974 coalition policy, and the Ontario NDP was entirely loyal to the federal NDP line. In both these elections the TL held a position of conditional opposition to the NDP, i. e., unless the NDP openly broke with bourgeois coalitionism, the TL would refuse to give it critical support. The TL's position was vindicated when the NDP promised to cooperate with the Conservatives (to "make the minority government work") after the election results were in.

The B. C. NDP should not be supported in the 11 December election. Workers, in their disgust with the NDP, must not seek, however, to make "protest" votes by casting ballots for the bourgeois parties--the Socreds, the Progressive Conservatives or the Liberals. These parties have long stood openly for anti-labor measures and warmly applauded the NDP's actions. They openly serve capitalist interests and should always be resolutely opposed.

Nor should workers have any illusions in Gabelmann, Steves and Brown, the three NDPers who voted against Bill 146. These NDP "lefts" are now demonstrating the hollowness of their previous "opposition" in their gushing support for strikebreaker Barrett and cohorts. Thus Rosemary Brown counselled the recent B. C. Federation of Labor convention to "support all of us and not just the terrible three." Later in her remarks she cooed, on the subject of her party, "There is a bond of love and respect that holds us together" (Vancouver Sun, 6 November).

Support to the NDP, however "critical," would generally be interpreted as support to the strike-breaking, overtly anti-union program and record on which the party will be running. Barrett's phony "price freeze" and his demagogic "opposition" to

certain aspects of the federal government's wage-control program are only fig leaves to cover the strikebreaking Bill 146, which even the union bureaucrats recognized as a "complete betrayal" of the working population of British Columbia.

To call on the tens of thousands of workers whose

VANCOUVER FORUM

Strikebreaker Barrett Calls Election

SPEAKER: Tom Riley, Trotskyist
League Central Committee

DATE: Sat., 6 Dec.

TIME: 7:30 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 299-5306

NO VOTE TO THE NDP!

strikes have been smashed by Barrett's NDP government to nevertheless turn around and re-elect the very same government, would be to engage in mindless tailism having nothing in common with the Marxist tactic of critical support. On the contrary, only a candidate standing on an intransigent program of opposition to the NDP and its governmental betrayals would deserve the support of the B. C. working class.■



trotskyist league

CLASS SERIES

TORONTO:

International Student Center, U. of T., 8 p.m.
For Further Information, Call: 366-4107

Nov. 12 COMMUNISM AND THE WOMAN
QUESTION

Nov. 26 CLASS STRUGGLE AND RACIAL
OPPRESSION

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Box 26, Stn. A. For Further Information,
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Nov. 16 PABLOISM AND THE
DEGENERATION OF THE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Nov. 30 TROTSKYIST WORK IN THE
TRADE UNIONS

Dec. 7 THE INTERNATIONAL
SPARTACIST TENDENCY

OPPORTUNISTS COVER FOR B.C. NDP...

STRIKEBREAKER BARRETT CALLS ELECTION

NO VOTE TO THE NDP!



Labor Challenge

DAVE BARRETT, NDP PREMIER OF B. C.

VANCOUVER, NOVEMBER 7 --On 24 October British Columbia Premier Dave Barrett announced a 68-day freeze on food, pharmaceutical, transportation and energy prices. He also announced increases in the provincial minimum wage and old-age subsidies, slightly tightened his rent-control program and promised increased provincial assistance with first mortgages for prospective home owners.

Barrett claims that his government enacted these measures in order to make the federal government's wage controls more "equitable." In fact his move is an undisguised maneuver to refurbish the New Democratic Party's severely tarnished image with the working population of B. C., in preparation for the provincial elections, which have been called for 11 December.

As the Vancouver Province correctly noted, Barrett's price freeze is "mainly window-dressing." The "freeze" on energy prices arrived just after the provincially owned B. C. Hydro Corporation raised its rates. The rent controls, increased old-age subsidies and minimum-wage provisions are all measures which have long been promised by the NDP government.

The duration of the price freeze--it is only to be in effect until 1 January--means that it will do virtually nothing to offset the falling living standards of B. C. wage earners. The major food and drug retailers have already openly announced that they intend to circumvent Barrett's freeze on their prices by refusing to restock their shelves until the freeze is lifted.

The NDP's fraudulent "price freeze" is simply an electoral gimmick designed to recoup votes from disillusioned NDP supporters, particularly trade unionists who were angered by Barrett's strike-breaking Bill 146, which forced 60,000 B. C. pulp workers, railworkers, supermarket employees and propane truck drivers back to work under the terms of their old contracts.

Bill 146 was passed in the provincial legislature on 7 October over only three dissenting votes from NDP backbenchers Colin Gabelmann, Harold Steves and Rosemary Brown, as all the right-wing opposition parties supported the government's move. Social Credit Party Opposition leader Bill Bennett spoke for many capitalist interests when he lauded the bill, declaring he was "proud" to vote for "one of the government's finest moves in showing leadership" (Vancouver Sun, 8 October).

The chairman of the Council of Forest Industries of B. C., Thomas Rust--particularly happy with the crushing of the two-and-a-half-month-old, 50,000-man forest strikes--praised Barrett for being "the first of our government leaders to lift his head out of the sand" (Vancouver Sun, 10 October).

LABOR TOPS' TOOTHLESS GRUMBLING

Response from provincial labor leaders to the most serious attack yet inflicted on the B. C. union movement by the social-democratic NDP was limited to a bit of toothless grumbling. Obviously unhappy with the government's outspoken anti-union stance (e. g., when announcing the bill, Labor Minister Bill King denounced the unions' "irresponsible" attitude), the leadership of the B. C. Federation of Labor (BCFL) condemned Bill 146 in an 8 October statement as "a complete betrayal of the working people who helped elect this government."

The BCFL tops promised to give "full support" to

(continued on page 14)