

SPARTACIST

CANADA SEPTEMBER 1981 No. 50 25¢

Defend Vietnam and the Soviet Union!

U.S./China Anti-Soviet War Axis

General Haig's announcement at the end of his June China trip that the U.S. will arm Peking with "lethal weapons" is the most dangerous provocation against the USSR since this most provocative Reagan regime took office. It is not merely another finesse of "China card" diplomacy. The deepening U.S./China alliance has now become an openly declared anti-Soviet military axis—a deal for action against the Soviets and to "increase the political, economic, and, yes, military pressures on Vietnam" (New York Times, 18 June). Like the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, now recognized as the very first shots of World War II, the U.S./China arms deal may well be the direct prelude to WW III.

Joint American/Chinese military support to anti-Russian Afghans and anti-Vietnamese Cambodians is envisioned. The Chinese bless the Americans to deepen their military commitment in El Salvador and against Nicaragua and Cuba. Now South Africa has invaded Angola. A military "roll-back" in Angola and Namibia, to be fronted by South Africa, is surely foreseen.

But the one-family-run Saudi Arabia and the hated Zia of Pakistan are less than slender reeds. And as for Begin's Israel: whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. Reagan's junior imperialist partners in Ottawa gave their stamp of approval to the U.S./China arms deal when in a recent junket



Haig and Deng seal anti-Soviet military alliance in big step toward World War III.

to China, Canadian External Affairs Minister Mark MacGuigan announced Canada's readiness to supply "strategic goods" to China (see page 12). MacGuigan stated: "It's the kind of change which is being made by members of the Western alliance in general with regard to China" (Globe and Mail, 21 August). But the consummation of an effective Chinese/American bloc will require considerable arm-twisting of West European allies and increasingly of an uneasy

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China...

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Japan—at a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars from an economically weakened United States. And for what? It's a lot easier to hunt down and forcibly abort black welfare mothers ("Right to Life" notwithstanding) than to try the same on the Red Army.

Now Haig shouts in the face of the Soviets that two years ago—when Washington lost its "listening stations" in Iran with the mullah victory over the U.S.-backed shah—the U.S. built a super spy station embedded in the Sinkiang mountains near the Soviet border. The Chinese spy station is the one place where U.S. imperialism can monitor Soviet missile tests from launch through flight over Siberia to dispersion of warheads. Together the Chinese Stalinists and their CIA "advisers" gather the most sensitive military intelligence to use against the Russians: missile range, accuracy, payload, communications guidance.

The shift to an announced military alliance opens the way for Peking to modernize its arsenal with U.S. guidance systems for strategic weapons, anti-tank missiles, fighter planes, a delivery system for its primitive nuclear weapons and every kind of combat hardware. Just how much of this war machinery the Chinese military can absorb and pay for in the immediate future is not now known. But their generals will be taking the short march to the Pentagon with a considerable shopping list.

Even Cyrus Vance, Carter's hapless Secretary of State, called the deal "needlessly provocative and smack[ing] of bear-baiting" (New York Times, 24 June). But the baited Russian bear responded with deliberately measured language in a Pravda article under official signature, calling the arms agreement "highly dangerous," and "an escalation of reckless policy" (New York Times, 28 June). The Russians have warned many times of the consequences of the U.S. arming China with strategic weapons. This time Russia warned simply and without bluster that "nobody should doubt that the Soviet people, who have good nerves and powerful means of curbing aggression, will not yield to provocations and will be able to stand up for themselves, to defend the interests of their friends and allies."

The Russian perception of the U.S./China axis is well known. Few things this side of an actual U.S. military adventure against the Soviet Union, Cuba or the Eastern bloc could be as provocative as the arming of China. The view from the Kremlin is that China is even more likely than the U.S. to squeeze the nuclear trigger in a bout of fanatical anti-Soviet

frenzy and miscalculated geo-political strategy. And the Soviets may well be right. It is more than their traditional fear of encirclement by hostile powers that accounts for their obsession with China. Mao and his heirs have seemed quite crazed in their view of nuclear war. A Pravda article, for instance, noted that "Peking has its own interests to pursue, namely to set the United States and the Soviet Union against each other so as to be able to dominate the world after a nuclear conflict." And this view of China is not new. Khrushchev recalled a conversation with Mao Tse-tung as they sunbathed at poolside in Peking in 1954:

"Mao replied by trying to assure me that the Atomic bomb was a paper tiger! 'Listen Comrade Khrushchev,' he said. 'All you have to do is provoke the Americans into military action and I'll give you as many military divisions as you need to crush them—a hundred, two hundred, one thousand divisions.' I tried to explain to him that one or two missiles could turn all the divisions in China to dust. But he wouldn't even listen. And obviously regarded me as a coward."

—Khrushchev Remembers, 1970

The U.S./China war axis is certainly a sinister and strangely complementary affair. Reagan and Haig dream of being the victorious survivors of a nuclear war against Russia due to high-tech "Star Wars" weapons superiority, while their Russian-hating allies in Peking nurture survival fantasies based on technological underdevelopment—sheer numbers.

It was Carter and Brzezinski who launched the present thrust toward war with the Soviets, and Reagan has escalated it dangerously. There are some things the Russians cannot abide, and Reagan knows it. When Harold Brown, Carter's defense secretary, went to China to point the way toward overt military collaboration, we wrote:

"It is simply too dangerous for the Russians if the U.S. doomsday machinery is placed in the hands of the Chinese. For the Russians playing the China card is no diplomatic game; it is a matter of life and death."

—"Russians Fed Up," Workers Vanguard No. 249, 8 February 1980

For the Russians, taking out the Chinese strategic weapons is not at all unthinkable. Last January, Leonid Brezhnev pounded a desk in Paris and laid out the Chinese tripwire for World War III. He was quoted by the president of the French national assembly as saying:

"Believe me, after the destruction of Chinese nuclear sites by our missiles, there won't be much time for the Americans to choose between the defense of their Chinese allies and peaceful co-existence with us."

—New York Times, 30 January 1980

Vietnam, Poland... the World

When China gets the guns, China intends to use them. As Haig and the Peking leaders exchanged

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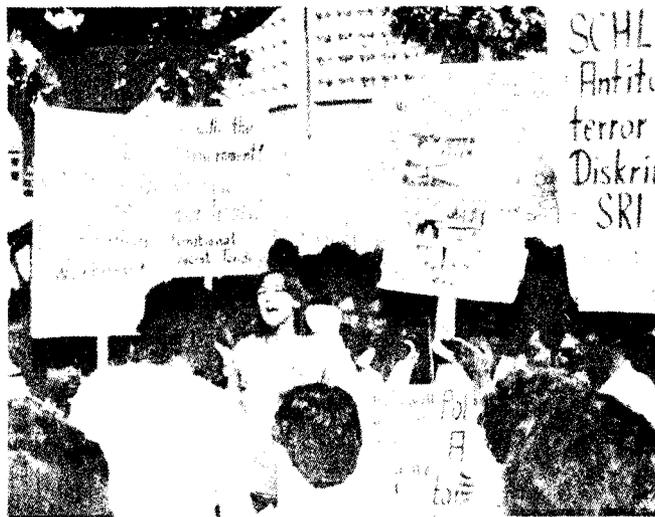
Hundreds Join TLD Protest

Asylum for Tamils in West Berlin!

Chanting "Political asylum for the Tamil refugees!" and "Stop the deportation of Tamils!" about 350 people rallied in West Berlin on July 24 to protest the government's deportation of Tamil refugees who had fled from Sri Lanka to West Berlin. The overwhelming majority of those attending the united-front demonstration called by the *Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands* (TLD—German section of the international Spartacist tendency) were themselves Tamils facing the threat of deportation. In the last few months thousands of Tamils from Sri Lanka have arrived in West Berlin seeking political asylum in "democratic" West Germany. They were among the fortunate few who could escape the anti-Tamil state repression in Sri Lanka by getting out on Soviet Aeroflot jetliners bound for East Germany and then crossing over to West Germany. Even well-to-do Tamils have been victimized in the recent wave of repression by Sri Lankan president J.R. Jayewardene's regime aimed at crushing agitation for an independent Tamil state (Tamil Eelam) on the island. A state of emergency was declared in the northern Tamil region of Jaffna, Tamil militants have been abducted and murdered by the police and military, Hindu temples and offices of Tamil organizations have been burned down. (See "Down with Anti-Tamil Terror in Sri Lanka," *Spartacist Canada* No. 49, July/August).

But the West Berlin Senate, dominated by Jayewardene's brothers under the skin, the Christian Democrats, flatly refused the Tamil refugees' appeals for political asylum. The refugees were forced to camp for nearly a week in West Berlin's main railway station, while friends, civil libertarian organizations and the like tried to find them shelter in transient hotels, camps, school gyms. One refugee was arrested in front of the railway station July 6 and was to be deported on July 24. Another 140 Tamils were arrested by the cops and held pending deportation as illegal immigrants, on the technicality that they failed to have their papers stamped by the West German embassy in Colombo. According to newspaper reports, the police seized many of them as they were standing in line waiting to apply for political asylum!

Meanwhile, the government and bourgeois press launched a smear campaign trying to deny that the Tamils were political refugees from pogromist terror. (West Germany of course is up to its neck in investments in Sri Lanka's neo-colonialist "Free Trade Zones.") West Berlin's minister of the interior Lummer branded the Tamils as "fake refugees,"



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West Berlin, July 24: German Trotskyists initiate protest against expulsion of Tamils.

lured to West Germany in hopes of the good life and high wages. Social affairs minister Fink went so far as to suggest that it all was a Communist plot: "Aeroflot is responsible for the flood of refugees." Some of the more reactionary bourgeois politicians are so worked up over the influx of Tamils that they must be thinking of setting up their own Berlin Wall at Friedrichstrasse to keep out dark-skinned immigrants.

The government gave the Tamil refugees a brutal ultimatum: leave now at our expense, or wait to get deported at your own expense. Faced with this choice, 125 Tamils agreed to "voluntary" deportation on July 21, flying back to Sri Lanka (on a plane chartered from Air Berlin USA) together with some West German journalists. Fifty-six of the Tamils were arrested at the Colombo airport; the first 60 escaped arrest only because the plane landed an hour ahead of schedule. The West German journalists were forbidden to have any contact with spokesmen of the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front, the bourgeois parliamentary voice of the Tamil minority) or other Tamil organizations. The West German ambassador arrived at a scheduled press conference with the journalists only to find that it had been canceled by the government. Reporters trying to file stories had their overseas phone calls simply cut off. Despite this repression and censorship giving the lie to the West Berlin

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Postal Workers Sold Out

The six-week strike of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) ended August 10 with the overwhelming acceptance of a contract drafted after days of closed-door mediation wheeling and dealing in Ottawa. CUPW national president Jean-Claude Parrot said it was a contract he could "live with"—he doesn't have to. But the 23,000 members of his union will have plenty of trouble "living" with this two-year deal that gives them a 70 cent an hour wage increase in both years and a cost-of-living allowance that doesn't trigger until postal workers have lost six percent of their purchasing power.



SC Photo

Vancouver CUPW strikers.

This strike was not the dramatic labor showdown of 1978 when the Trudeau government unleashed a barrage of strikebreaking laws backed up by the cops and the RCMP to trample the militant postal workers' strike. Parrot was jailed in the aftermath of that strike for his initial defiance of the bosses' anti-labor laws. In this contract battle Parrot stuck to the letter of the law playing by all the bosses' rules. The union's original 80 demands were junked in favor of the recommendations of a "neutral" conciliator. But the government wasn't buying no matter how "reasonable" the CUPW tops were. It was hoping to starve out and demoralize CUPW to drive home its union-busting message to all of labor.

The ranks didn't crack and for 42 days they stayed out solid facing down a vicious anti-union campaign by the government and the bosses' press.

But Parrot & Co. certainly aren't worthy of the workers they presume to lead. The CUPW leadership has attempted to assure the government of two years of "labor peace" in the post office with a sell-out deal that gives postal workers little or no protection against double-digit inflation, job loss and speed-up.

Parrot sold this deal to the ranks with the promise that "real" gains would be won after the post office is converted into a Crown Corporation in September. The CUPW leader has staked his career on the demand for a Crown Corporation even having buttons distributed reading "A Crown Corporation Will Deliver." You can bet it will—but it is the CUPW membership that will be on the receiving end. Crown Corporation boss Michael Warren, soon to assume his post, has already given a glimpse of what lies ahead with his threat to drop parcel post delivery altogether at the cost of thousands of jobs.

For One Union of All Postal Workers

In an interview after the contract had been ratified Parrot commented that the CUPW strike had demonstrated the need for one union of all postal workers. This from the man who railroaded through a two-year contract, undercutting the possibility for one strike of all postal workers that would forge—through struggle—one strong merged union in the post office. Moreover, Parrot's call for merger came right after he led a six-week strike for a contract that was only a slightly sweetened version of the rotten deal bought by the leadership of the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC)—without a strike. If Parrot were serious he would have called on the LCUC to come out together with CUPW for a decent contract.

Parrot's counterparts in the LCUC bureaucracy thumbed their noses at the call for merger. Ever the responsible labor statesman LCUC national president Robert McGarry replied, "Our position is our union will maintain its own identity. That's what our constitution says and as far as merger goes, it's out of the question" (Toronto Star, 11 August).

McGarry has made more than his contribution to keeping postal workers divided along craft lines with a history of mutual scabbing deals with CUPW, rotten contracts that have been used by the government as a club against CUPW and promoting collaboration with the bosses as the "other way" for the postal unions. In this strike he once again lived up to his own miserable record. In exchange for unemployment insurance benefits McGarry all but sold his union to the government. No statements of solidarity, no financial contributions but above all no active solidarity with the CUPW strikers. Union militants were warned to stay away

from the picket lines with the threat that unemployment benefits would be cut off not just for themselves but for every member of their local. Thus the letter carriers' union leaders actively carried out the government's "divide and rule" strategy, betraying CUPW and setting up militants in their own union. As an extra measure of his subservience McGarry agreed to a scabbing deal for his union to deliver government checks during the strike.

Militants in LCUC Local 1 in Toronto fought against this betrayal, putting forward motions to get their union to build joint picket lines with CUPW to shut down the government's Priority Post service that was kept running through the strike and to boycott the delivery of the government checks. Despite their leaderships, solidarity between the ranks of the two unions has been seen time and again in recent years, shutting down postal service by respecting each other's picket lines. On the CUPW picket lines sentiment for one union was almost unanimous. But the postal union tops have stood in the way of translating this sentiment into action—a united contract fight by all postal workers that would lay the basis for one industrial union.

The Trotskyist League (TL) intervened into CUPW ratification meetings in Toronto and Vancouver with a leaflet calling on the postal workers to vote down this stinking deal and fight to win. The leaflet stressed the necessity of shutting down Priority Post, organizing the courier services that keep mail running for big business and above all bringing the LCUC out on strike with powerful strike demands addressing the needs of all postal workers. Key to this strategy for victory was electing a new strike leadership that would lead such a fight. Parrot & Co. had "won" what they asked for and that was basically nothing! The wage demands were never in dispute. The much talked-about 17-week paid maternity leave which was finally all but conceded will cost the government pennies per postal worker.

The rest of the left, however, claimed a "victory" for the postal workers—it had to be, the strike was led by their favorite "militant" Jean-Claude Parrot. Some of those in a position to do so, such as the ever-dwindling number of support-

ers of the Canadian Party of Labour in Toronto, argued and voted for acceptance.

In Vancouver where even the local leadership had recommended rejection of the contract (it was accepted by a narrow 52 percent majority), it was left to supporters of the fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) to alibi Parrot's sellout. At the August 9 Vancouver Strike Committee meeting RWL supporters took great pains to point to the "positive aspects" of the contract and called it a "victory." As for In Struggle!, which has in the past defended Parrot against the revolutionary criticism of the TL, they could only see the contract as representing "significant gains for posties." The Workers Communist Party (WCP) didn't have the guts to call for a "no" vote. In a special leaflet issued in Vancouver the WCP simply mimicked the CUPW bureaucracy's slogan, calling to "Continue the Struggle." But when the contract was accepted the WCP's paper the Forge headlined "Ottawa loses the round."

The CUPW strikers were in a unique position to spearhead a labor counteroffensive against their employer—the strikebreaking, union-busting capitalist government. As the TL leaflet pointed out:

"The press screams for the Trudeau government to 'Live like Reagan'—slash budgets, smash strikes and get tough with labor. But across the country workers have shown that they are willing to take on the capitalist offensive. It is the labor bureaucrats who have caved in at every major confrontation. We need a new leadership of the labor movement that will fight the bosses, not bow before them. Postal workers battle an employer—the capitalist government—which literally makes his own laws, appoints judges and commands his own armed strikebreakers. The working class needs its own government. Such a government will never be won by the social-democratic strikebreakers of the NDP. For a workers party that fights for a workers government!" ■

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Canadian Controllers Back PATCO

Reagan's War on U.S. Labor

In firing the striking air traffic controllers, Ronald Reagan has declared war against the U.S. workers movement. He has also dropped a political bomb that could explode in his face. He is out to utterly destroy the controllers union and cripple the U.S. labor movement, particularly government workers, and incidentally maybe kill the public in plane crashes. The right-wing fanatic in the White



UPI Photo

U.S. air traffic controller led from court in shackles.

House who has been victimizing black welfare mothers and the elderly poor has decided to go after labor, which has the muscle to fight back if only it will use it!

What Reagan has done hasn't happened since the rise of the CIO. Never has the entire membership of a national union been fired. Reagan says this is an illegal strike. Air controllers union chief Robert Poli answered this well: "The only illegal strike is a strike that fails."

Reagan intends to crush the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) with such force that the impact will be felt by all government workers. Thus the strike quickly transcended the immediate interests of the air controllers,

posing the issues of the right to strike and simply the right to organize for the entire working class.

The Wall Street Journal (5 August) saw even larger reasons to editorialize for "No Compromise" with the controllers. Behind Reagan's jaw-jutting was the authority of the imperial presidency itself, including "a whole range of issues with global implications. They include, for example, commitments to rebuild military strength...to resist Soviet imperialism." Indeed, part of the Reagan administration's shoot-em-up-tough-guy stance is doubtless meant for consumption by foreigners: Kremlin bureaucrats, European leaderships and Third World caudillos are supposed to understand that a man who is cheerfully prepared to make war on 12,000 American workers is hardly going to be soft on foreigners. The same week that the administration fired the controllers it leaked the news that it was building neutron bombs despite European objections. And Polish Solidarity should take note: this is what happens to "free" trade unions which strike against the state in the capitalist West.

It is ironic that PATCO, a small union on the margins of the union movement, is on the front line of Reagan's assault on U.S. labor. The air controllers are a highly paid group who view themselves as middle-class professionals. Socially conservative, they have been particularly susceptible to the growing anti-Soviet political climate. New York controllers "boycotted" an Aeroflot jet carrying Russian ambassador Dobrynin after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. And PATCO was one of the few unions that supported Reagan for president. Their "professionalist" attitude has led the controllers to look more to pressure from the airlines than to labor solidarity for help in their fight against Reagan's union busting. There needs to be one single union of airline workers embracing pilots, controllers, mechanics, baggage handlers, etc.

Reagan is gambling that he can completely destroy a trade union and the cowardly American labor bureaucracy will just whine and eat it. And so far they have. Not a single union leader has called for labor action in solidarity with the controllers. Reagan has issued a challenge to the entire American labor movement. And if American labor does not act in solidarity with the controllers this will encourage the ruling class in further union busting.

On the other hand, if Reagan gets beat, and particularly if he gets beat because the American labor movement exerts its muscle against him, it will be a significant victory, the first in a long time. And

Defend USSR/Cuba!

July 19. About 80 people joined Trotskyist League-initiated Anti-Imperialist Contingents in Ottawa (right) and Vancouver (below) to demonstrate for military victory to Salvadoran leftists and defense of the USSR/Cuba.

300 rallied in Vancouver to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador. In Ottawa a TL banner "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Defense of Cuba, USSR Begins in El Salvador!" stood out in the crowd of 5,000 marching to protest the imperialist summit.



SC Photos



one that could significantly increase the combativity of the working class in resisting a full-fledged war on labor.

For Labor Solidarity! Shut Down the Airports!

If Reagan thinks he can count on the wretchedness of the American union bureaucracy, the workers movement in other countries is something else again. Reagan with his right-wing tough-guy image is very unpopular in Europe, where he is generally seen as a trigger-happy warmonger who will blow us all to kingdom come. Now is a perfect chance for European workers to hit back at the reactionary American monarch. Air travel is an international industry par excellence. An international labor boycott of American air space and airlines could be decisive in winning the strike and would be a hard blow against Reagan.

The Canadian air traffic controllers staged the most dramatic and effective action of labor solidarity so far in the strike with their 26-hour boy-

cott of U.S. air traffic. In the week after the U.S. controllers went out, on August 3, members of the Canadian Air Traffic Controllers Association (CATCA) in Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and other centers were sent home for refusing to handle U.S. flights. Six days later on August 9, defying the government's threats of fines and jailing, CATCA announced that its members would no longer process flights to or from the United States. The boycott completely shut down the trans-Atlantic corridor from Gander, disrupting air travel world wide.

The boycott was called off by the CATCA leadership when they reached an agreement with the government to let joint union/management "fact-finding teams" investigate safety problems for 90 days. "Investigate" safety!—American air space is now about as safe as a grenade range. At a press conference on August 27, CATCA president Bill Robertson said investigation into 61 alleged incidents had uncovered 48 substantial errors by U.S. controllers!

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Proletarian Political Revolution Will Put People to Work



UPI Photo

Tens of thousands march through Lodz protesting food shortages. A column of 200 buses and trucks occupies central Warsaw for three days, its organizers demanding that the government reverse a cut of 20 percent in the meat ration. Yet even Solidarity spokesmen admit the ration cut is necessitated by actual shortages. There is no meat, or soap, or cigarettes. And now the government plans price increases of 100-300 percent on basic consumer goods. How long can things go on like this?

Since last summer's general strike gave rise to a powerful new union movement, *Solidarność*, Poland has been in a state of cold dual power. As Solidarity and the weakened regime have gone from confrontation to confrontation, pulling back at the last minute, the country has descended into economic chaos. Partly, people have stopped working since the zlotys they earn no longer buy anything. But at bottom the general collapse of work discipline is political. The official "Communist" system (actually Stalinist bureaucratic rule) is hopelessly discredited. No one believes it is possible to turn the calendar back before August 1980. At the same time, no one knows what will happen tomorrow—there is no longer any positive goal to work for.

No significant force in Poland is fighting for a socialist solution to the crisis. Rather, the prolonged social crisis has generated a deeply anarchic spirit fueled by nationalistic resentment. The "hunger marchers" have lost all sense that to have even chicken in the shops, someone must raise them, butcher them, pluck them and transport them. In order to eat, one must work! Instead they seem

to believe that by demonstrating vociferously, cursing the bureaucracy, bemoaning the historic plight of the Polish nation, denouncing Maria Theresa, lamenting the First, Second and Third Partitions and blaming Russia for the Katyn forest massacre, meat will somehow appear in the shops. Perhaps they think that if they make enough trouble, the Russians to pacify them will once more come through with shipments of poultry from their own collective farms, where feed grain is spread by elderly widows of Red Army soldiers killed while liberating Poland from Nazi Germany.

The regime, possibly stiffened by the inclusion of two more generals, has warned that the self-styled "hunger marches" (no one is starving) could lead to "an explosion of national conflict." And they could indeed. In Warsaw on August 3 for the first time police blocked a Solidarity demonstration, preventing it from marching past Communist Party headquarters. And looming over the crisis since the beginning is the possibility of Soviet military intervention, a course evidently viewed by the Kremlin with great reluctance. But regardless of the subjective intentions of the Kremlin, the Warsaw Stalinists and the Solidarity leadership, economic chaos is driving Poland back to the brink. As we wrote in "Whose Poland?" (*Spartacist Canada* No. 48, May/June):

"The massive strike wave in the Baltic ports last August brought Polish workers before a historic choice: with the bankruptcy of Stalinist rule dramatically demonstrated, it would be either the path of bloody counterrevolution in

league with Western imperialism, or the path of proletarian political revolution."

Poland is experiencing an economic collapse in its own way comparable to the capitalist world's Great Depression of the 1930s. The official forecast is that the national output will fall 15 percent this year on top of a 4 percent drop in 1980 and a 2.5 percent decline the year before. How can this happen in a planned socialized economy?

The direct origins of the economic crisis lie in the attempt of the bureaucracy under Edward Gierek to buy off the combative working class in the wake of the violent 1970 Baltic Coast uprising. Promising unparalleled prosperity, Gierek went on an unparalleled importing binge. Entire factories and sophisticated capital equipment were purchased from the West on a massive scale, as were finished consumer goods. The Gierek regime expected, or at any rate hoped, to pay for all this by producing a flood of cheap manufactured exports. These hopes were, to put it mildly, unfulfilled. Between 1971 and 1975 the import bill was double export earnings and by 1976 Stalinist Poland was into the bankers of Frankfurt and Wall Street for over \$10 billion.

The Gierek regime mortgaged the Polish economy not only to Western finance capital but also to its own rural petty capitalists. While freezing food prices for urban consumers, the government raised procurement prices paid to the landowning peasants. As a result the food subsidy increased twenty times in the 1970s and now accounts for 70 percent of the price paid to farmers. Private peasants receive 14 zlotys for a liter of milk, which is sold to consumers in the shops for 2.90 zlotys. Despite the additional incentives Poland's aging, inefficient smallholders cannot produce nearly enough to meet the increased consumer demand. And despite the Stalinists' conciliatory policies the rural petty bourgeoisie remains deeply anti-communist and under the sway of clerical reaction. Its basic social attitude was recently summed up by British journalist Tim Garton Ash: "It is the conservative Catholic peasants of South-Eastern Poland who would overthrow communism at the drop of a Cardinal's hat" (Spectator, 14 February 1981).

In June 1976 the Gierek regime made an effort to get out of the economic hole it had dug for itself. To free up agricultural produce for export, it announced a food price increase averaging 60 percent. The workers responded with violent strikes and demonstrations and within 24 hours the price increases were rescinded. Instead, to save scarce foreign exchange, the government cut back imports of raw materials and intermediate goods, while maintaining a high level of imports of meat, other foodstuffs and finished consumer goods (including Sony TV sets)! In the late 1970s Poland consumed annually 70 kilos of meat per capita, more than Italy or Spain. At the same time, many factories couldn't fulfill their plan due to shortages of necessary foreign-produced inputs.

Contributing to the growing crisis was a disintegration of labor discipline, a reaction to Gierek's spectacular loss of credibility over the June '76 events. When the government told workers to tighten their belts, they responded by voting with their productivity and vote was no confidence. An American diplomat in Poland in the late 1970s recalls: "A plant manager once told me it was difficult for him to tell whether it was simply a normal workday in the factory or whether the workers were engaged in a slow-down or working to rule" (R.T. Davis, "Political-Economic Dynamics in Eastern Europe: The Polish Case" in U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, East European Economic Assessment [1981]).

The foreign exchange shortage did not spare agriculture as the government cut back pesticide imports and couldn't supply spare parts for Western-made farm machinery. The peasants too sensed the '76 weakness of the Gierek regime and agitated for higher procurement prices, cheaper inputs and other benefits. In 1979, priest-led peasant strikes



Gamma

Walesa (center) in solidarity with reactionary Polish Catholic church.

combined with bad weather to reduce the grain crop below its 1976 level. With a time lag the feed grain shortfall has ravaged the livestock herds. In the past half year the number of cattle has reportedly decreased 7 percent and the number of pigs 13 percent (Economist, 1 August).

To maintain social peace in its important military ally, the Soviet Union has continually paid off Poland's Western creditors. Despite this the Polish economy was sinking under the weight of massive foreign debt and increasing internal unrest.

Solidarity and Cold Dual Power

Last summer the Gierek regime made yet another desperate attempt to get Poland to live within its means. For the third time in a decade the bureaucracy tried to raise food prices. The result is a crisis that could alter the postwar world.

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Poland ...

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A series of localized wage strikes culminated in a well-organized political general strike which shut down the Baltic Coast for two weeks. To prevent the strike from spreading throughout Poland, the regime recognized the right to independent trade unions, the first time this has ever happened in a Stalinist-ruled state. Within months of the August 31 Gdansk agreement the new union movement embraced practically the entire Polish working class, including one million members of the Communist party. The depth of the social transformation is indicated by Polish sociologist Stefan Nowak: "The speed with which 10 million Poles assembled in the Solidarity movement testifies to the strength of the needs the movement serves" ("Values and Attitudes of the Polish People," *Scientific American*, July 1981). Nowak observes that "skilled workers are now the main social force in Poland."

Yet while having a committed mass proletarian base, the new union movement has from its inception been led by pro-clerical/nationalist forces hostile to the Soviet Union and sympathetic to the capitalist "free world." Lech Walesa and his colleagues see themselves leading the entire Polish nation against "Russian-imposed Communism." This is most graphically expressed by their fulsome support to the peasant smallholders organization, Rural Solidarity. Thus, the danger is real that the Polish crisis could enormously strengthen capitalist-restorationist forces. And with the political strength of the Catholic church, now headed by a Polish pope, the danger of counterrevolution is not at all abstract.

Since the Gdansk agreement we have maintained that the central task of a revolutionary (Trotskyist) vanguard in Poland would be to polarize the new union movement, winning the majority of workers away from the anti-Soviet nationalistic leadership around Walesa. Trotskyists would fight within Solidarity for a program centering on the strict separation of church and state, unconditional military defense of the Soviet bloc against capitalism-imperialism, a political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy and establishment of a government based on democratically elected workers councils (soviets), to carry out socialist economic planning (including the collectivization of agriculture). This program offers a socialist way out of the desperate and seemingly endless crises wracking Poland.

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The Stalinist bureaucracy is not a class but a caste which rules through the monopolization of political organization. Whatever the pious statements of the beleaguered Warsaw regime, it cannot coexist with an independent union movement, much less one with the elemental social force of Solidarity. Kania, Rakowski & Co. have just bought some time for themselves at the price of economic chaos.

Under pressure from Solidarity, the government has raised wages over 20 percent while production has dropped through the floor, in good part due to the introduction of the five-day workweek in January. The output of coal, the main export commodity, has fallen 20 percent in the last year and barely meets domestic requirements. The agricultural situation is, if anything, worse. Meat supplies are down 20 percent. The 1980 potato harvest was cut in half, sugar beet production by one quarter. To adjust demand to supply the regime has announced it is increasing the price of food and other necessities on average by 110 percent (!) while freezing wages. Poland is an extreme case of suppressed inflation about to become an extreme case of unsuppressed inflation.

The drastic cut in production and consumption has not eased the balance-of-payments deficits. On the contrary, since the Gdansk agreement Poland's hard-currency debt has jumped from \$21 to \$27 billion. The Polish Stalinists have responded to the crisis by becoming yet more dependent on Western finance capital. Meanwhile, they have relied on the Kremlin to bail them out—to the tune of \$4.5 billion in bilateral and hard-currency credits since last summer's strikes.

They are also moving toward greater dependence on their own petty capitalists. The new five-year plan (in itself a truly pollyannaish act of optimism) calls for increasing the share of agriculture in investment from 15 to 25 percent of which three-fourths will go to private farms (*Economist*, 11 July). In other words, almost 20 percent of all state investment funds are to be placed in the hands of the landowning peasantry, considerably strengthening the social basis for counterrevolution. But one needn't give this particular bureaucratic five-year plan much credence. The showdown in Poland is coming long before then and will be decided by very different forces.

A Workers Poland, Yes!

The deepening anarchy in Poland and the imminence of violent clashes between Solidarity and the regime could bring Russian soldiers into the streets of Lodz and Warsaw to restore bureaucratic order. No doubt the Stalinists' justification would be the need to "combat counterrevolution." Certainly there are sizable forces for the restoration of capitalism, from the landowning peasantry to the Catholic church. Yet it is the main counter-revolutionary force in the world, U.S. imperialism, that is trying to provoke the Kremlin over Poland. Reagan/Haig want to see Polish workers throwing Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks in order to fuel

their anti-Soviet war drive.

At best, Soviet military intervention would freeze the political differentiation within the working class necessary for the only progressive solution of the Polish crisis: proletarian political revolution. At a minimum it would postpone the decisive confrontation between the workers and their Stalinist rulers. But it could do far worse. It could spark violent resistance by the Poles, leading to a bloodbath that would crush the working class into the ground politically and produce an explosion of anti-Russian nationalism that would take years, perhaps decades to overcome. This would be not merely a defeat for the socialist movement but a historic catastrophe.

Solidarity's opposition to a centrally planned economy (expressed in calls for "self-managed enterprises"—see "'Market Socialism' is Anti-Socialist," Workers Vanguard No. 287, 14 August) and its "hunger marches" both express the anarchy which has engulfed the country. Poland does not need anarchy—it needs a socialist order. If ever there was a crying need for socialist economic planning, it is Poland today. But socialist economic planning is possible only under the leadership of an authentically revolutionary workers party. And this requires the ouster of the Stalinist bureaucracy which undermines socialized property. Polish workers and the international proletariat must defend the revolutionary conquests that made it possible for Poland to build out of the rural backwardness of the East European plains the tenth largest industrial country in the world!

There can be no thought of a working-class solution to the economic crisis without the collectivization of agriculture and the cancellation of the imperialist debt. Yet both these programs are

directly counter to the clerical-nationalism of the Solidarity leadership. Solidarity's solidarity of the Polish nation causes it to champion the organized peasant smallholders, even as they drive up food prices while reducing supplies. The cancellation of the capitalist debt would be met with reprisals, economic and political. A revolutionary workers government would counter such imperialist retaliation by appealing to the West European working class to become comrades in a new venture, the Socialist United States of Europe. Such an appeal is not merely inconceivable to Walesa and his colleagues, it goes against their entire political outlook.

The notion of "socialism in one country"—with or without workers self-management—is a Stalinist ideological fantasy. Certainly there can be no "independent, socialist Poland" somehow unaffected by the drive of capitalism-imperialism to destroy the Soviet Union. A socialist future for Poland depends on the revolutionary unity of Polish and Russian workers, a unity directed against the Stalinist bureaucracy whose decades-long capitulation to bourgeois forces is responsible for the present disastrous situation. Poland urgently requires an ambitious economic plan to restructure industry and bring about a technological revolution in agriculture, based on the collectivized economy of proletarian state power. A workers political revolution throughout Stalinist-ruled East Europe, led by Trotskyist parties, would inspire the enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and work discipline to put Poland back to work—and open the road to socialism. ■

—Reprinted from Workers Vanguard
No. 287, 14 August 1981

Tamils ...

(continued from page 3)

government's claims about "fake refugees," deportation awaits the rest of the Tamils in West Berlin.

Recognizing the urgent need for protest action to stop the deportations, the TLD called for the July 24 West Berlin demonstration as a united-front protest around the slogans "Political Asylum for the Tamil Refugees!" "Stop the Deportations of Tamils!" and "Down with the Anti-Tamil Terror and Discrimination in Sri Lanka!" The demonstration was endorsed and addressed by a spokesman of the local TULF as well as by the civil-libertarian Society for Endangered Peoples. Endorsements for the united-front rally were also received from the Third World Group of the petty-bourgeois Alternative Liste, the League for Human Rights, the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (German Mandelites), the (ex-)Maoist Kommunistische Bund Westdeutschlands, the Sozialistische Linke and West Berlin member of parliament Rita Kantemir.

A spokesman for the TLD addressed the rally: "We fight for full citizenship rights for foreign workers. The Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands and the international Spartacist tendency stand for the right of

the Tamils to achieve national self-determination. The iSt has already held solidarity demonstrations in New York and London. In Colombo, comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka played a leading role in the battle against the discrimination against Tamil students at the university.

"A determined struggle must be carried out against the attempts of American imperialism to establish military bases on Sri Lanka, to be used in the framework of the Cold War hysteria against the Soviet Union. What is absolutely necessary is a Trotskyist party which unites Sinhalese and Tamil militants on an anti-chauvinist program, and leads the masses of plantation workers, the women and all the oppressed in the struggle for a workers and peasants government in Sri Lanka, as part of a socialist federation of South Asia." ■

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China ...

(continued from page 2)

smiles, toasts and condemnations of the "main enemy," Soviet "expansionism," they also agreed on the regional "danger." Russia's ally Vietnam is the more immediate target in the global war against "Soviet hegemonism." The U.S. imperialists long to punish Vietnam not only because of the Vietnamese military victory—historic evidence of U.S. decline—but also because an attack on Vietnam fits into Reagan's overall anti-Soviet containment strategy. Reagan/Haig are looking to demonstrate American military power. The targets are Afghanistan, Vietnam, El Salvador, and Angola/Namibia.

So when Haig went from Peking to a meeting of ASEAN in Manila it was Vietnam in his gunsights. A State Department official said the U.S. "will seek, if we can, to find ways to increase the political, economic, and yes, military pressure on Vietnam" (New York Times, 18 June). Given the recent rise of attacks against the Vietnamese on their borders, the U.S./China war axis may be planning another attempt at a "bloody lesson."

The 1979 invasion of Vietnam by China should have been a watershed for Maoists who had been born into political life as supporters of the Viet Cong against U.S. imperialism. But those pseudo-leftists who didn't back China outright wailed over the spectacle of two "socialist countries" at war with each other. At the time the international Spartacist tendency emphasized that China was

acting de facto with U.S. complicity, demanding "China Don't Be Cat's Paw for U.S. Imperialism," and calling on the Soviet Union to honor its treaty with Vietnam. Now the overt U.S./China alliance has confirmed that analysis. Thus a future attempt to "teach Vietnam a bloody lesson" will more likely be a combined imperialist and Chinese attack on a deformed workers state, part of a wider U.S. military thrust against the Soviet Union.

If Vietnam is the immediate target, it is Poland which casts the darkest shadow over the China arms deal. The precise military results for China cannot be known until the weapons are actually in Peking's hands. Thus more than one commentator has treated the announcement as a mystery while some speculate that it might be a mistake which could get Haig into trouble with the White House. But the announcement was intended as a political provocation precisely calculated and of global proportion.

Consider the timing and effect of the announcement. Since April when Caspar Weinberger spoke about the "linkage" between China arms sales and a possible Russian invasion of Poland, U.S. liberals have talked about holding up arms to China as a "deterrent" and "bargaining chip" with the Soviets. That is why Vance is screaming about the China arms deal as playing all the U.S.' China high cards in "no trump." He means that now the U.S. has nothing more to offer the Soviets in the way of a deal.

Canada Endorses U.S./China Arms Deal

No sooner had Canadian External Affairs Minister Mark MacGuigan's plane landed in China, than it seemed that he was overtaken by the spirit of his American imperialist big brother, General Alexander Haig (a man MacGuigan much admires). In his first press conference MacGuigan announced Canada's decision to sell "strategic goods" to China, which apparently could mean anything from trucks to high technology intelligence-gathering equipment.

The nature of the "goods" may have been unspecified, but the political message couldn't have been clearer. Certainly the bourgeois press played it for what it's worth; headlines designed to catch the public eye like "Our Arms to China" drove home the point that "loyal" Canada stands ready to enlist its feeble military establishment in the service of the U.S./China anti-Soviet war axis.

The Canadian bourgeoisie has occasionally adopted a posture of disdain toward the trigger-happy cowboy president, superficially paralleling West European bourgeois opinion. But where the West Europeans—most importantly the ruling West German Social Democrats—nervously flinch at the prospect of a nuclear war fought on Euro-

pean soil, the small-minded Canadian imperialists squabble with their Southern neighbor over things like the "sovereignty" of Canadian fishing waters and acid rain.

During the Vietnam war the Canadian government pretended to keep its hands clean, all the while seeking to profit from this dirty war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam, without the expense and mass domestic disaffection of direct military intervention. The pro-Moscow Stalinists of the CP have peddled this hypocrisy as a favorite theme in their never-ending "peace offensives," campaigning for "our" government to "dissociate" from the "regressive" policies of its senior partner. But if the American bourgeoisie thinks it can nuke the Russians and survive, Canada's jackal imperialists hope to get "their" share when the radioactive dust settles.

The U.S. arming of China—the most dangerous provocation against the USSR since Reagan took office—may well be the prelude to World War III. As communists we understand that defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and opposition to imperialist war begins with class struggle at home. Toward the North American Socialist Revolution! Defend the Soviet Union!

But he mistakes the Reagan purpose completely, which is not to deter the Russians, but to provoke them. The announcement was thus finely tuned and calculated to urge the Russians toward an invasion of Poland. Reagan and Haig want nothing more than to see Russian tanks roll into Warsaw and Gdansk. They want to see the Russians dragged into a massive bloodbath in Poland while their troops are tied down at the Chinese border. So go ahead, says Reagan. There is no SALT. No bargains over Chinese guns. Nothing.

Reagan's goading of Russia over China is part of a strategy of global confrontation. He is now talking openly of the "end" of Communism, while pushing for nuclear end-game. Against the background of the China arms deal, multimillion-dollar weapons packages for Pakistan ("non-proliferation" be damned), the Rapid Deployment Force, the build-up of strategic and conventional forces in Europe and a projected trillion-dollar war budget, Reagan made the general case. "Communism," he said, is an "aberration. . . not a normal way of living for human beings." We are seeing "the beginning of the end" (Washington Post, 19 June).

While the talks were going on in China, Reagan spoke of Poland as the "first beginning cracks" in Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. The comment was supposed to be "off the cuff," but it was quite calculated. As bourgeois Russia-expert Hedrick Smith wrote in the New York Times (18 June): "That kind of remark from an American official is likely to harden the Kremlin's resolve to curb the movement for liberalization in Poland and possibly push ahead with military intervention despite the upheaval that is likely to ensue." When liberals like Cyrus Vance wail that Reagan has misplayed his foreign policy hand, that he has too early and too provocatively "played the China card," they assume that he is engaged in a game of diplomatic pressure tactics. In fact it is a big step toward war.

Defend the Soviet Union!

Where does the U.S. anti-Communist war strategy leave its "Chicom" ally? "You can't say that China will be Marxist forever," an American official recently told nervous Southeast Asian ministers at Manila. Indeed, any "security" China imagines it can purchase with a U.S. military alliance will backfire. American imperialism is hostile to the expropriation of capitalism everywhere. The Reagan government particularly is anxious to see the eventual restoration of capitalism in China. And their handling of the issue of Taiwan is the tip-off.

The "sellout of Taiwan" has long been a hot issue between U.S. bourgeois liberals and the far right. So far the Reagan administration, sensitive to the Taiwan issue with its natural constituency, and Deng & Co. who for internal political reasons cannot appear to be "soft on Taiwan" have submergged the issue of Taiwan to their overriding anti-Sovietism. Despite wrangling among U.S. liberals and conservatives, the anti-Soviet war

drive is a bipartisan consensus in the bourgeoisie. The U.S./China axis was developed steadily from Nixon/Kissinger through Carter/Brzezinski to Reagan/Haig.

This administration remembers the maps from the 1950s with rings of containment around the USSR and they are out to make it real. From Japan, through Asia and the Middle East and into Europe, Reagan is surrounding Russia with fire-power meant to contain, isolate and ultimately destroy the USSR. In this conflict there can be no neutrals. Trotskyists unconditionally defend against imperialism the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state and the remaining social/economic conquests of the October Revolution!

In 1969, the Spartacist League/U.S. noted the "objective possibility—given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union—of a U.S. deal with China" ("Development and Tactics of the Spartacist League"). All of the Stalinist bureaucracies, whether Russian, Chinese—Mao or Deng—or Vietnamese share the anti-international conception of "socialism in one country." In its name they stab one another in the back seeking deals with imperialism for illusory national "advantages." The Russian Stalinist bureaucracy is one of the most conciliatory outfits imaginable. But there are limits, as Hitler found out.

Socialist revolution in the capitalist West is indispensable in order to destroy imperialist militarism—and to sweep away the Haigs, Weinbergers and Reagans who would incinerate the world in their anti-Soviet crusade. And in the degenerated/deformed workers states not simply economic advancement but survival itself demands that the workers, led by a Trotskyist vanguard party, oust the Stalinist betrayers who bind them to the class enemy. As the U.S./China war axis threatens to turn the Cold War nuclear hot, one had better believe that the very existence of the planet depends on this. ■

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PATCO ...

(continued from page 7)

Earlier, Vancouver controllers said Seattle air control had twice instructed planes to descend below the elevation of Mount Baker.

Mimicking Reagan, the Canadian government went after CATCA with a vengeance for their sympathy actions with the U.S. controllers. Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin went running to the courts in a so-far unsuccessful attempt to get a judicial ruling enabling him to fine and jail CATCA members.

LCUC Motion: Defend PATCO/CATCA!

WHEREAS: U.S. president Reagan's firing of striking air traffic controllers is a declaration of war against the entire U.S. labor movement; and WHEREAS: the Trudeau government has stated its intention to discipline and fire Canadian air traffic controllers who, in a dramatic act of international working-class solidarity, boycotted U. S. air space and for over 24 hours shut down all North Atlantic flights; and

WHEREAS: CATCA has been working without a contract since December and no contract, no work is a basic trade-union principle; and

WHEREAS: CATCA is under a no-strike injunction which is part of a government campaign to take away not only CATCA's right to strike but that of postal workers and all public sector workers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that LCUC Local 1 stands in solidarity with PATCO (U.S. air traffic controllers) and demands that the National Office actively defend victimized CATCA members up to and including through strike action; and that we call on the CLC to organize such action by all of labor nationwide; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: that we urge CATCA to take further militant action in solidarity with the U.S. controllers and in defense of their own union and right to strike, and that we call on the National Office and the CLC to support CATCA in these actions including by strike action; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: that we send copies of this motion to PATCO, CATCA, the CLC and the press.

Suspensions without pay have already been handed out and the government has threatened further discipline for up to 150 controllers. All Canadian workers must come to the defense of the air traffic controllers and assure CATCA that further action in solidarity with their U.S. counterparts will have the backing of the whole labor movement.

A motion passed at the August 20 general meeting of the Letter Carriers Union of Canada Local 1 called for LCUC and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to back CATCA's actions in defense of the American controllers (see box). Other motions passed at the same meeting called to make the motion a resolution to the upcoming Ontario Federation of Labour convention and to donate \$100 to PATCO.

The Trudeau government is only too eager to enforce the dictum of their senior imperialist partners in the White House that you can't strike against the government. Now it is preparing to go to court in an attempt to take away the right to strike for all the 1,782 operational air controllers.

CATCA has been without a contract since December and working under a no-strike injunction since last October. Here's the opportunity to strike a blow against Reagan and against the Trudeau government's union-busting drive by striking now! Shut down the airports across North America!

The union bureaucrats fear any struggle which would pit them square up against the capitalist state. There is no middle way. As Trotsky said, the unions in this epoch of imperialist decay can serve either as secondary instruments of capitalism or instruments of the revolutionary movement of the working class. Indeed, part of the reason for Reagan's hardline crusade to break the controllers' union is the bonapartist appetite of the bourgeois state for the statification of the public workers' unions.

Plans for the militarization of airport labor are part and parcel of Reagan's drive to put the U.S. on war footing. War budget, war inflation, moves for labor discipline are all of a piece as the U.S. gears up for imperialist war against the Soviet Union.

The confrontation between labor and Reagan is on. And labor had better win it, for the alternative is massive defeat. A defeat for U.S. labor would be felt in Canada and world wide. For labor solidarity to defend the U.S. controllers' strike! Smash no-strike laws! Defend CATCA! Bust the union-busters! ■

—Adapted from Workers Vanguard
No. 287, 14 August 1981

Steel ...

(continued from page 16)

court injunction at the strikers to keep the picket lines open to foremen, security guards and office personnel. When foremen first tried to get through the lines picketers chanted: "Nobody in! Nobody out!" The enforcement of the bosses' strikebreaking laws is only a question of the balance of class forces. Thousands of picketers at the Hilton Works gates would reduce any court injunction to the

worthless scrap of paper it is. Shut it down tight! Victory to the Stelco strike!

That the smaller Stelco locals have separate agreements is a powerful condemnation of the Canadian USWA tops who have done nothing to fight for, let alone win, one contract for steel workers—not just at Stelco but industry wide. While Stelco workers have been pounding the pavement, the rest of Canadian steel production is in full swing. The Stelco strike is a chance to ignite

a major labor battle, centering on Canada's largest steel producers, that would lay the basis for a long-overdue industrywide contract covering all steel workers.

The same night the Stelco workers walked off the job, 9,500 workers went out at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie and Wawa. Three days later they were back at work with the acceptance of a deal bought by their leadership. The contract was only cosmetically different from the offer they voted down by 88 percent. Only 58 percent of the Algoma workers voted for this sellout, testifying to widespread dissatisfaction in the ranks.

Why was there no appeal from Taylor and the Local 1005 tops for the Algoma workers to stay out with Stelco? Together they could win far more than the demands of the bureaucrats (one Local 1005 executive board member was forced to admit to an SC reporter that the local's demand of a \$3 an hour wage increase over two years would just barely keep pace with mortgage rates). What about calling out USWA members at Sydney Steel in Nova Scotia? 4,000 Nova Scotia coal miners have been on strike for over a month. Coal and steel are directly related industries and the need for solidarity is obvious. Now coal stockpiles are dwindling and Sydney Steel has started to lay off steel workers. Instead of taking the layoffs, this is the perfect opportunity to bring Sydney Steel workers out together with the coal miners and in a united offensive of all steel workers to win: a big wage increase; a full COLA; a shorter workweek at no loss in pay; a big boost in pensions; full medical, dental and life insurance benefits; the right to strike over unsafe working conditions; an end to discrimination and victimizations through union control of hiring and upgrading and promotions on a seniority basis.

Closer to home—literally right across the street from Stelco—is Canada's No. 2 steel producer, Dofasco, whose 11,500 workers are non-union! The existence of this non-union plant strikes right at the heart of the steel workers' union, as Local 1005 members know only too well. Taylor has promised to organize Dofasco workers after the strike, but if he had any real commitment to organizing them at all, he would bring them out side by side with the Stelco strikers and organize them now!

Cec Taylor is part of the self-proclaimed "maverick" camp in the USWA bureaucracy that postures as a "militant" alternative to the ossified and corrupt USWA tops. The leader of this camp

in Canada is Dave Patterson, president of Local 6500 (Inco miners), who recently landed himself the job of USWA District 6 Director representing Ontario's 100,000 USWA members. Patterson defeated incumbent Stewart Cooke by appealing to the anger and frustration in the union ranks toward the man who has stood behind every sellout contract and whose unwritten no-strike rule was defied by the militant Inco miners in 1978. But it was this strike that also gave the lie to Patterson's claim to be the militant voice of the rank and file.



Local 1005 president Cec Taylor: "Progressive" labor bureaucrat opens picket lines.

Like Taylor today, Patterson opened the Inco workers' picket lines first to security guards (on the grounds that these rented cops are "fellow unionists"!) and then to hundreds of supervisors and clerks. After being out for eight months angry miners drove Patterson into seclusion when he tried unsuccessfully to sell them a rotten offer. To railroad through the sellout that was finally accepted, he bureaucratically added the votes of the bargaining committee to those of the stewards' body which had rejected the deal.

Virtually the entire left, with the exception of the Trotskyist League, hailed Patterson's election as a victory for the rank and file. And within Local 1005, supporters of the Communist Party and the fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers League have uncritically supported the "militant" Taylor. That Patterson and Taylor have done nothing to mobilize the tremendous economic muscle of the USWA behind the Stelco strike and in a struggle for one contract for all steel workers is striking confirmation that their "militant" version of business unionism offers no alternative to the USWA tops.

It will take a class-struggle leadership to make the USWA a fighting union. A leadership that will lead the working class to victory over the bosses and their government. ■

MARXIST LITERATURE

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Strike at Stelco

Victory to the Steel Workers!



Dale Brazao/Toronto Star

Stelco workers hit the bricks.

August 28—In their first strike since 1969, 12,500 steel workers at Stelco's giant Hilton Works in Hamilton walked off the job at midnight July 31. They were joined on the picket lines by 5,000 steel workers at smaller Stelco operations across Ontario and Quebec. In twelve years without a strike Stelco workers have seen their wages eroded by a string of rotten contracts railroaded through by the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) tops. This time they declared "Enough is Enough!" While Stelco boasts record profits its offer was a miserly \$1.15 over a three-year contract. With steel production booming and stockpiles low, the strikers know they are in a good position to face the bosses down. "We've got 'em by the short hairs. Now we're going to squeeze and I mean really squeeze" one striker told a Spartacist Canada reporter, expressing the strikers' determination to force the Stelco bosses' backs to the wall.

Steel production at the Hilton Works has been completely shut down by the strikers of USWA Local 1005. Union militants have made successful attempts to stop steel produced before the strike from moving. Flying picket squads have been sent to the Samuel, Son & Co. warehouse in nearby Stoney Creek where Stelco steel was stored and to a leasing company that was renting trucks used for the transport of scab steel. An attempt to move steel by train was averted when a picket line was

thrown up at a rail siding. The train's air brakes malfunctioned and three cars carrying Stelco steel were derailed. And the union has made an appeal to seamen to refuse to handle shipments in and out of Stelco during the strike.

As we go to press, local steel union bureaucrats representing workers at Stelco's finishing plants in Ontario have rammed through contracts, splitting the ranks of the strike. Six of eight of the smaller Stelco locals have voted to return to work along with 3,000 workers at Stelco's Nanticoke steel-making works. But two Hamilton-area finishing plants told the bureaucrats what they could do with their yellow-dog contract and voted it down.

The company hopes that these settlements will be a demoralizing blow to the Local 1005 strikers. But Hilton Works is the powerhouse and the strikers know they have the muscle to shut Stelco down tight. Use it! Build mass pickets at Hilton Works! Send out flying picket squads to stop Stelco steel from moving from wherever it is stored! No worker should handle Stelco steel until the strike is won! Get the rest of the labor movement to back you up with concrete actions of labor solidarity. Rail and transport workers, seamen and longshoremen: Refuse to handle Stelco steel!

From the beginning of the strike, Local 1005 president Cec Taylor has waved the threat of a

(continued on page 14)