

the TORCH 4

15¢

Newspaper of the
**Revolutionary
Socialist League**

Reconstruct the Fourth International!

VOL 1

August 1974

No. 13

ARGENTINA IN CRISIS

PERONISM WITHOUT PERÓN



Isabel Peron with Jose Lopez Rega. Isabel is figure-head president of Argentina, Rega is her Rasputin.



Funeral march for three PST militants brutally slain by Peronist thugs.

BY SHELLEY KRAMER

Juan Perón, the demagogic "El Líder" of Argentina, is dead. His monarchical rule ended with a funeral procession fit for a king. While cannons blasted endless salutes, millions lined the streets to grieve Perón's death. The hysterical mourning of the crowds expressed the dissolution of their hopes for a better future, hopes which were embodied in Juan Perón.

Even this highly emotional moment, however, could not unite the warring wings of the Peronist movement. On the second night of mourning, street violence erupted between left-wing youth and police. Immediately following the funeral the Montoneros, the combined Peronist guerrilla forces, issued a proclamation threatening to take up

arms once again if the "power vacuum" left by Perón is not filled by an acceptable left-wing disciple.

ISABEL

The Montoneros, and the left wing of the Peronist movement in general, is not at all satisfied with Perón's hand-picked successors. First there is Isabel Perón, Perón's third wife and vice-president, now the president of Argentina.

Perón picked Isabel up in a cabaret in Panama City where she was a featured dancer, made her into his personal secretary, his wife, and finally his vice-president. She was added to the presidential ticket to enhance Perón's personalistic appeal while guarding the vice-presidential slot from political competitors. Isabel is not taken seriously by any wing of the Peronist

movement despite public avowals to support her presidency.

...AND RASPUTIN

Holding up Isabel is José López Rega, Perón's closest aide, an ex-police corporal and fervent astrologer. López Rega was the most servile of Perón's entourage and therefore its most powerful figure. His influence over the Peróns, particularly over Isabel, was similar to the influence Rasputin, the power-hungry religious fanatic, exerted over Czarina Alexandra and through her Czar Nicholas in the months preceding the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. His fascist sympathies have singled López Rega out as the number one enemy of the left Peronists.

The Peronist movement has been deeply divided for years between the right-wing labor bureaucrats and their followers and the left-wing youth and rank-and-file unionists. Only the myth of Perón held this volatile mass together. His death blows the lid off this boiling cauldron and forces the class against class confrontation to the surface.

Perón was able to unite the hostile class forces which

compose "Peronismo" for years on the basis of his personal charisma and legendary reputation as a nationalist hero and champion of the working class. This image was carefully cultivated by Perón and his second wife Evita during his earlier regimes in the post-World War II period.

They built a mass base amongst the unorganized "descamisados" (shirtless laborers) and used it as a battering ram against the traditional ruling cliques to secure power for themselves. They organized the descamisados into Peronist unions, granted substantial social and economic reforms, and nationalized key foreign owned industries (with full compensation).

These measures kept the working class enthusiastically behind Perón. The less conspicuous side of his regime—the laws tying the unions directly to the state, the thoroughgoing purge of all opposition on the left and in the labor movement, the limitation of strikes—kept sections of the national bourgeoisie satisfied.

While thriving on lavish gestures to the working class, Perón reminded business of his real loyalties: "We are not

Cont'd. p. 6

INSIDE UAW Convention p. 3
Maoism in Action p. 2
RSL Midwest Educational p. 2

The weekend of June 15 and 16 represented a step forward in the Revolutionary Socialist League's struggle to build a Marxist leadership of the American working class. Comrades and close friends of the League from various Midwest states met in Detroit for the League's Midwest Educational Conference.

The underlying theme of the Conference was the danger to the struggle for socialism represented by forms of bourgeois ideology that are dressed in "proletarian," "Marxist" forms.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Jack Gregory, the labor editor of *The Torch*, opened the conference with a talk which utilized a discussion of the history of the American labor movement since the 1930's to demonstrate the particular role of the labor bureaucrats as agents of the bourgeoisie. By accepting the limits of capitalism and imposing their pro-capitalist ideology on the ranks, the labor hacks blunt the workers' consciousness and bind them to capitalism.

The growth of the state in the epoch of capitalist decay and the increasing power of the working class has meant the increasing bureaucratization and statification of the unions. The latest stage of this process can be seen in the recently negotiated ENA agreement signed by the Steelworkers.

In concluding, Gregory warned that the most dangerous form of the bureaucrats' class collaborationist role is through the Popular Front, which in the United States will most likely take the form of a new "independent," radical bourgeois party, much like the so-called Progressive Party of the late 1940's and early 1950's.

THE POPULAR FRONT

In the second talk of the Conference, Shelley Kramer, Organizational Secretary of the League, broadened the

R.S.L. Holds Midwest Educational



Natl. Org. Sec. Shelley Kramer

theme developed by Gregory. In discussing the Popular Front and the Leninist strategy to defeat it, Kramer emphasized the Popular Front as the key means the bourgeoisie employs to prepare the working class for Bonapartism and fascism.

Using the threat of fascism as a club, the Popular Front subordinates the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. It thus obscures the class line, blunts the workers' consciousness, prevents the independent mobilization of the proletariat under its own banner, and guarantees the disunity of the masses in the face of fascism.

Kramer described how the Leninist united-front strategy can break the class collaborationist alliance "between victims and executioners." This re-establishes the leading role of the proletariat in the

struggle of all the oppressed masses against fascism and leads toward the socialist revolution, the only fundamental strategy to defeat fascism.

INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Sy Landy, the League's International Secretary, spoke of the dangers of the emerging power blocs internationally. Although representing parts of international capital, the Russian and Chinese bourgeoisies dress themselves in proletarian garb to better deceive their respective working classes and the international working class generally.

While both fall all over themselves trying to establish amicable relations with US imperialism, the US feels confident that it can maintain its world domination through diplomatic maneuvers. The result has been the "detente."

What appears to be an international alliance to "preserve the peace" is in fact a compact to mislead the working class. However, underneath this "detente," the fundamental contradictions of competing imperialist economies—for markets, raw materials, investment opportunities, and for world domination—remain, ready to explode the myth of "peace in our time" and to drive the world towards imperialist war.

MARXISM VS. CENTRISM

Bruce Landau, editor of *The*

Torch, described the basic method of centrism, bourgeois ideology that appears as revolutionary. Using the pre-World War I Second International and particularly the writings of Karl Kautsky, the International's theoretician, as an example, Landau dissected the roots of centrism



RSL Natl. Secretary Ron Taber

method.

By reducing Marxism to a series of disjointed intellectual propositions concerning "economics," "sociology," "philosophy," etc., Kautsky obscured the basic unity of Marxism. Instead of a theoretical-practical outlook and method of the international proletariat, Marxism, for Kautsky, became a sterile orthodoxy separated from the struggle for a socialist revolution. This was expressed most vividly in Kautsky's tract of 1909, *The Road to Power*, in which he posited that if the proletariat remained steadfast in the face of the decay of capitalism around it, it would automatically inherit state power.

This conception completely eliminates the proletariat as an active agent of history. Today's centrists, including

the "anti-Pabloite" Pabloites of the so-called International Committee, carry over this same method, although this time disguised as Trotskyism. The idea that capitalism can be overthrown and workers' states established without the self-conscious intervention of

of the working class led by Leninist parties, as these centrists claim occurred in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, etc., is precisely the same approach Kautsky outlined in *The Road to Power*.

STATE-CAPITALISM

The concluding talk of the Conference, by Ron Taber, the League's National Secretary, focused on the material and ideological origins of the state-capitalist bourgeoisie. Tracing the historical precursors of the new middle-classes, Taber showed how this layer is increasingly differentiated from the petty-bourgeoisie as a whole as capitalism enters into the epoch of its decay and how it develops tremendous influence as the capitalist state mushrooms.

Where decisive class battles have defeated both proletariat and bourgeois elements based in corporate shareholding, this group can cohere itself around the state apparatus and organize production on a nationalized capitalist basis. The political groupings representing this tendency in the workers' movement are mortal threats to the socialist revolution, since their method and politics appear to be Marxist.

For Marxists, theory is a guide to action. Once identified, the carriers of bourgeois ideology discussed at the Conference must be combated and politically smashed if the proletariat is to build a revolutionary leadership. As this combat proceeds, the theory and analysis is refined and sharpened. The Conference, by defining this enemy, describing his main contours, and arming the League's cadre, represents a crucial aspect of this struggle.

Maoism in Action at Sloane Rubber

OCTOBER LEAGUE BETRAYS STRIKE

by Susan Kiener

The sixteen month strike against the R & G Sloane Company in Sun Valley, California is in mortal danger. Although the workers have fought with courage and determination against the attempts of the company to break United Rubber Workers Local 621, the continued failure of the URW leadership to provide a winning strategy now fatally threatens the strike.

For nearly a year the International ignored the strike completely, allowing the company to continue operations with scab labor despite militant picketing. When the largely Mexican work force became even more militant, and the strike attracted the support of Chicano activists and several socialist groups, the International was forced to act. In December, International President Peter

Bomarrito promised the workers that a consumer boycott was the answer. (See "Revolutionary Routs Top Hack, *Torch* No. 5.)

Eighty per cent of Sloane's products consists of industrial pipe and fittings. A completely successful consumer boycott would only cut into 20 per cent of Sloane's production. Supporters of the Revolutionary Socialist League constantly pointed this out in leaflets

and at union meetings.

Although they supported the boycott, RSL supporters argued that by itself this particular boycott would never win a year-old strike. They proposed that the central focus of the strike be an effort by Sloane workers to win the support of other URW members to force the International to fight. "A United Front of Rubber Workers to Defend the Sloane Strike and

Re-open the Rubber Contracts" was their call.

Naturally, the International opposed such a strategy, since Bomarrito himself was responsible for the rotten rubber contracts. Likewise, Local 621 President Hiram Rivera opposed the idea, since he wanted to maintain his cozy relationship with Bomarrito. And finally, the ostensibly revolutionary October League

Cont'd. p. 8

BU
U.A.

by T
and J

The nation
the United
journal on
no discussi
unemploym
falling real
tensified sp
overtime pla
ers. Instea
was a sparr
bureaucrats
bureaucrats
out positio
Every del
vention kne
widespread
UAW rank
rotten contr
ion's failure
wages, and
tions. But n
what form
would take.
was caution,
potentially
were kept
convention f

The fear of
the membe
grounded. F
years the A
class has bee
massive strik
71 broken by
on strikes
Nixon's wage
August, 197
the controls
the number
risen sharp
bureaucrats k
may be at
understand
mean an expl
will not be a

BUREAUCRACY

In this cor
leadership m
rarily set asi
the executive
ly tighten its
evident right
when UAW pr
Woodcock an
question of wl
ate with the
not be broug
because of a
Internation
Board.

For months
posed merger
Meany's labo
the magic c
UAW's woes.
time he ment
tion, however,
opposition fr
treasurer En
powerhouse in
three decades.
Woodcock's

Bureaucrats Clamp Lid on U.A.W. Convention

"Pabloite" Pabloites called International, carry over this method, although this is used as Trotskyism. That capitalism can crown and workers' abolished without theious intervention of

working class led by parties, as these claim occurred in Europe, China, Cuba, precisely the same Kautsky outlined in to Power.

E-CAPITALISM

including talk of the e, by Ron Taber, the National Secretary, n the material and origins of the state-bourgeoisie. Tracing ical precursors of the idle-classes, Taber ow this layer is gly differentiated petty-bourgeoisie as is capitalism enters ooch of its decay and evelops tremendous as the capitalist hrooms.

decisive class battles ated both proletariat eois elements based e shareholding, this cohere itself around apparatus and or-duction on a nation-pitalist basis. The groupings represent-endency in the movement are mortal the socialist revolu-e their method and ppear to be Marxist. arxists, theory is a action. Once identi-carriers of bourgeois discussed at the e must be combat-olitically smashed if ariat is to build a ary leadership. As bat proceeds, the d analysis is refined ened. The Confer-efining this enemy, y his main contours, ing the League's presents a crucial this struggle.

RIKE

the Rubber Con-as their call. lly, the International uch a strategy, since o himself was respon-the rotten rubber Likewise, Local 621 Hiram Rivera op-ne idea, since he o maintain his cozy nship with Bomarrito. ally, the ostensibly ary October League

by Terry Shephard and Jack Gregory

The national convention of the United Auto Workers adjourned on June 8 with nearly no discussion of the massive unemployment, the steadily falling real wages, and the intensified speed-up and forced overtime plaguing auto workers. Instead, the convention was a sparring match where bureaucrats and would-be bureaucrats cautiously staked out positions for the future.

Every delegate at the convention knew that there was widespread discontent in the UAW ranks over last fall's rotten contracts and the union's failure to secure jobs, wages, and working conditions. But no one could predict what form this dissension would take. So the watchword was caution, making sure that potentially explosive issues were kept safely off the convention floor.

The fear of an upsurge from the membership was well grounded. For the past three years the American working class has been quiet, with the massive strike wave of 1969-71 broken by the 90-day freeze on strikes that kicked off Nixon's wage-price controls in August, 1971. But now that the controls have been lifted the number of walkouts has risen sharply. The UAW bureaucrats know that the lull may be at an end, and understand that this could mean an explosion which they will not be able to control.

BUREAUCRATIC UNITY

In this context, the UAW leadership moved to temporarily set aside divisions on the executive board and quietly tighten its hold. This was evident right from the outset, when UAW president Leonard Woodcock announced that the question of whether to reaffiliate with the AFL-CIO would not be brought to the floor because of a split on the International Executive Board.

For months, Woodcock had posed merger with George Meany's labor federation as the magic cure-all for the UAW's woes. From the first time he mentioned reaffiliation, however, he had met stiff opposition from secretary-treasurer Emil Mazey, a powerhouse in the UAW for three decades. Woodcock's call for labor

unity is hollow rhetoric. As we analyzed in Torch No. 10 ("Layoffs Jar UAW"), he guts the concept of all content by failing to put forward the class struggle program needed for the labor movement to fight the bosses' offensive. Nor does Mazey propose a real alternative. Their rift is over how best to keep the ranks in check, but as such it demonstrates the deep-seated fear the auto union bureaucrats have of a mass opposition movement emerging in the coming period.

But Woodcock and Mazey were even more fearful of an open fight at the convention that could break the meeting wide open. As we predicted in Torch No. 10:

"This schism, if it breaks out at the convention, can shatter the tight bureaucratic lid and open all the explosive issues simmering below the surface to the ranks. Precisely the fear of this will most likely force Woodcock and Mazey to strike a unity pose at the convention."

This is just what happened. Woodcock and Mazey agreed to bury the hatchet for convention week, to jointly work to strengthen the executive board's hand, and then to fight it out behind closed doors.

The Torch was the only newspaper to point to the significance of the Woodcock-Mazey feud in advance of the convention. Now even Business Week (June 15, 1974) has devoted a full article to the bureaucrats' fight and points to the disaffection in the ranks that has provoked the split.

THREE-YEAR TERMS

But even with Woodcock and Mazey presenting a unified image, and despite all their caution, the leadership still nearly lost control of the convention. When the bureaucracy moved to extend the terms of international officers from two to three years, all hell broke loose.

A three-year term meant carrying the officers until 1977, or past the next bargaining round that opens in 1976. Through this maneuver, the executive board hoped to avoid open criticism of their treacherous policies that have lead to disaster for the rank and file.

Although most of the delegates were in some way tied to

the executive board, many did not relish the prospect of going home and explaining to the workers who elected them that they were giving the international leadership free rein in the '76 negotiations.

When the hand vote on the proposal was taken, the chairman's attempt to rule immediately in favor of the leadership provoked an outburst that forced the chair to accept a motion for a standing division of the house.

WALK-OUT

Although the leadership appeared to be defeated, the chairman, Pat Greathouse,

again ruled in favor of the proposal. When Greathouse ruled a motion for a roll call vote defeated, many delegates walked out in protest. Greathouse used this as an excuse to end the session and clear the hall before the fraud was exposed any further.

Even so minor a step as extending office terms had nearly thrown the convention into chaos, and so the executive board was even more cautious from this point on. There was only one other session of real significance—procedures for ratifying and rejecting contracts, held the last day.

SKILLED TRADES

An amendment out of Ford's Detroit Local 600, backed by the opportunist United National Caucus, was placed on the floor calling for

the body to reaffirm the right of skilled trades to have veto power on contract ratification. According to the UAW constitution, skilled tradesmen have the right to reject contracts, but when the skilled trades voted down last fall's Ford contract Woodcock declared the pact valid nevertheless.

The bureaucracy counterposed an ambiguously worded amendment, motivated by vice-president Doug Fraser. When asked to clarify his motion, Fraser said that of course both skilled trades and production workers have the right to reject contracts, but that the leadership must be allowed to interpret the decision "flexibly." In other words, the ranks have no real control over their contracts. Fraser's amendment carried.

All in all, it was a successful convention for the bureau-

Cont'd. p. 8



UAW's Woodcock displays solidarity with GM's Morris at start of last fall's contract negotiations.



Jordan Sims of the United National Caucus. UNC hails memory of Reuther.



Lasker Smith, chairman of the Auto Workers Action Caucus. Despite "criticisms", AWAC supports Woodcock.

Editorial

Watergate and the Class Struggle

The office of president of the United States has become a political graveyard. The history of the past decade graphically demonstrates that the bourgeoisie has yet to find a leader capable of ruling effectively in the face of this nation's mounting economic, political, and social crises.

Lyndon Johnson, master politician, was re-elected in a landslide in 1964, but when his term ended in 1968 he was one of the most unpopular presidents ever. His prestige was shattered by inability to end the war in Vietnam and failure to meet the basic demands of the black masses.

NIXON ON THE SPOT

Today Richard Nixon sits on the hot seat. Nixon received an overwhelming electoral mandate less than two years ago. Now he is near impeachment.

Like Johnson, Nixon has proved absolutely incapable of solving the mass of problems facing this country.

This is not a quirk of history. It is not because somehow or other two corrupt incompetents managed to stumble into office. Nixon and Johnson were the overwhelming choices of the ruling class to run the U.S. The fact that they could not is only a reflection of the fact that American capitalists still have no effective strategy for dealing with a rapidly-changing reality.

Nixon's real crime, to the capitalist class, was his failure to cope with the massive social crisis that is engulfing this country. Nixon couldn't even stem inflation, and constantly vacillated on what course to pursue to right the economy. When he was caught red-handed at Watergate, it meant that he would be still less able to pursue a steady course while maintaining popularity.

This is because the kind of consistent policy the bourgeoisie needs must begin with severe attacks against American workers. No president as compromised as Nixon could possibly carry this off with pleas about "sacrifices for the national interest." A self-confessed liar and crook cannot very well preach morality.

So today the ruling class wants Nixon out. He has become an embarrassment and, worse, an obstacle to them. But the entire history of Johnson, Nixon, and the Democratic Congress proves that workers cannot look to a new capitalist administration, Democratic or Republican, as being "better" or a "lesser evil" than Nixon. It proves the bankruptcy of capitalist rule and the burning need for a workers' government.

The fact is that no sector of the bourgeoisie knows how to reverse the economic downslide. The only thing that they are all agreed upon is that whatever the solution, it must come at the expense of the working class.

THE BUREAUCRATS' "SAVIORS"

So while the labor bureaucrats insist upon hailing the Democratic Party capitalist politicians as the saviors of the working class, the Democrats continue to look out for the interests of the bourgeoisie. Leading Democrats are making loud noises about the need to impose wage-price controls again as the means to stem inflation.

It was a Democratic Congress that voted Nixon unrestricted power to impose wage-price controls in 1971, over his own initial objections. The purpose of that program was to cut real wages and to end an upsurge of strikes by labor that had increased steadily since 1965.

Both goals were achieved. Real wages fell and the strikes were ended by the controls and a 90-day ban on strikes that accomplished Phase I. Since that time "labor peace" has reigned, with the mass of workers demoralized and cynical.

LULL ENDING

But now, at last, this lull in the class struggle is breaking down. As we go to press, nearly 250,000

workers are on strike in nearly 600 different job actions.

The present upsurge can have limitless potential if it is deepened on a class struggle basis. With the bourgeoisie divided and uncertain as it searches for a successor to Nixon, the labor movement is in position to deliver a powerful blow to the capitalists.

But for this to happen, the groundswell of militancy must aim at the heart of the problem—capitalism itself. The capitalists are already laying their plans to nip the strike wave in the bud.

AUSTERITY

While the Democrats call for new wage controls, the Republicans have their own plans. Alan Greenspan, the newly appointed head of Nixon's Council of Economic Advisers openly blames increased wages for inflation and demands an "austerity" program to throttle inflation by slashing real wages and increasing unemployment. Paul McCracken, a former top Nixon economic adviser, agrees.

Unless the labor movement formulates a sharp response, these schemes will succeed. At this point, the strikes have not pulled in the bulk of workers in the key industrial unions. The Wall Street Journal reports that most of the struck firms have fewer than 200 employees.

As long as the strikes are confined to relatively small plants, they can be isolated and picked off one by one. And the labor bureaucrats will be all too willing accomplices of the corporations and the state in this task, just as they were in 1971.

DEEPEN THE STRIKE WAVE

Revolutionaries must turn their every effort to arming the strike wave with a class struggle program to sustain it and deepen it. The first step is to begin now to stress the need for a Congress of Labor and oppressed minorities.

The Congress of Labor would fill two major needs. First, it would provide revolutionaries with the chance to organize and unify the actions of the overwhelming majority of working people, to gather the collective strength of the American working class and focus it in unison against the capitalists.

On the agenda would be organizing national campaigns for wage reopeners, demanding full cost of living protection for all working people. To fight unemployment, the Congress would take up the slogan of the sliding scale of hours, beginning now with 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to insure full employment.

Second, we would propose that the Congress combine the economic demands with a political struggle. This would involve organizing mass actions leading to a general strike against both inflation and the bankrupt Nixon regime. And it would mean not settling for Ford and a Democrat as the next presidents. We would propose that the Congress demand new elections right now so that working people could finally rid themselves of capitalist chains and place in power a workers' government.

LABOR PARTY

The political vehicle for doing this is a revolutionary labor party, which counterposes itself to both capitalist parties and champions the interests of the working class. This would finally break the "lesser evil" stranglehold the Democrats maintain on the labor movement.

This will not happen overnight. There is still no revolutionary leadership alternative to the labor bureaucracy, leaving the official union leadership plenty of maneuvering room to confine the struggle within capitalist limits.

But the strike wave represents the elemental anger and militancy of the rank and file against the wage-gouging, speed-up, and unemployment of the past period. It provides revolutionaries with the opportunity to forge a new leadership in struggle, to prove that their policies are the only ones that can lead to a real breakthrough.

If advanced workers argue consistently for the kind of program put forward in The Torch, the upsurge can be transformed into an invincible weapon that will put an end to the two-party shell game and finally lead the workers to victory. The opportunity is present—the bourgeoisie is divided and vacillating, the class struggle is on the rise.

It is up to revolutionaries to intervene in the crisis rooted in the capitalist economic system and fueled by Watergate to build the revolutionary leadership necessary to sweep past the Democrats, the Republicans, and the labor bureaucrats and establish a firmly based movement to tear down the bourgeois system and replace it with the rule of the workers, revolutionary socialism.

LEAGUE DIRECTORY

NATIONAL OFFICE:

R.S.L.
13755 Woodward Ave., Rm. 200
Highland Park, MI 48203

CHICAGO:

R.S.L.
160 No. Halsted
Chicago, ILL 60606

CLEVELAND:

R.S.L.
P.O. Box 5162
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

DETROIT:

R.S.L.
13755 Woodward Ave., Rm. 200
Highland Park, MI 48203

LOS ANGELES:

R.S.L.
1910 S. Vermont
Los Angeles, CA 90007

NEW YORK:

R.S.L.
41 Union Square W. Rm. 925
New York, N.Y. 10003

MADISON:

(c/o Milwaukee address.)

MILWAUKEE:

R.S.L.
P.O. Box 90929
Milwaukee, WISC 53202

©1974 by the Revolutionary Socialist League Publishing Company

Editor — Bruce Landau
Labor Editor — Jack Gregory
Managing Editor — Derek Hirst

Published bi-weekly at 13755 Woodward Ave., Highland Park, Michigan 48203. Subscriptions: (including Mexico and Canada) 26 issues at \$3.00; supporting, \$5.00; institutional, \$5.00; foreign seammal, \$4.50; foreign air mail (unsealed), \$14.00.

Domestic introductory subs — 6 issues for \$1.50, 12 issues for \$1.00.

Bundles of 10 copies or more — \$1.00 per copy.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of The Torch or of the Revolutionary Socialist League.

Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Detroit, Michigan.

Printed by union labor.
Other labor donated.

LE
Send M

H

The

The Editorial of ("No Popular Front") contains correct perceptions of the "Popular Front" policy. The conclusion the Editor draws is false. Certainly, the argument for a vote candidate in the final election is the policy of "criticizing ourselves with the dictionary workers' incorrect, and, we come of the argument the statement:

"The present tactic agitate for a 'No'

Rep

The question raised the most crucial issue for socialists today—wage control? Revolutionary Socialism is a form of political struggle extended to candid running in a front.

The letter asserting that Mitterrand would "help" their reformist illusions side those workers' Mitterrand, while at the pointing out the "Popular Front" policy.

Unfortunately, to accomplish these two Extending support candidates in these sorts of illusions of

On what basis could the Popular Front? what basis could Mitterrand if his running independent parties, in reality in Radicals?

We cannot suppose basis of its program reformist—i.e., fourty years ago in Social Democracy, their program also judged capitalist program then is certainly ev

It is not their program extend support where ly of the bourgeois their independence workers' parties run capitalist parties. It worker-based organ ates them fundame geois parties.

When the SP or C we can point to it workers' organization for the working class:

LETTERS

Send letters to The Torch, Room 200
13755 Woodward Ave.
Highland Park, Michigan 48203

The French Elections

The Editorial on the French elections ("No Popular Front!" *The Torch* #9) contains correct perceptions about the treacherous nature of the Union of the Left's "Popular Front" politics. Unfortunately, the conclusion the Editorial draws from these perceptions is false.

Certainly, the Editorial is correct to argue for a vote for the *Lutte Ouvriere* candidate in the first ballot. We agree with the policy of "critical support" to "solidarize ourselves with the aspirations of the revolutionary workers of France." What is incorrect, and, we think, an illogical outcome of the arguments in the Editorial, is the statement:

"The present task of revolutionaries is to agitate for a 'No' vote against both Mit-

terrand and Giscard d'Estaing."

ISOLATES REVOLUTIONARIES

We feel that such a policy would only serve to isolate revolutionaries from the working class, and make impossible—or much more difficult—the correct tactic urged in the Editorial:

"If he is elected, the revolutionaries must then urge the workers who did vote for him to demand that Mitterrand immediately call parliamentary elections.... We will urge Mitterrand's working-class supporters to demand that he carry through on the promises of social reform he made to them...."

The purpose of this, the Editorial assures

Program for Mexico

To the Editor,

The growing militancy of the workers across the border, in Mexico, demonstrates the correctness of the RSL program both in its general principles, that is the call for revolutionary leadership, and its more specific points, that is the call for armed workers' defense guards.

I am referring to an incident that occurred during the strike of the textile workers. It happened in Nacaulpan, a suburb of Mexico City, in the Texturizados Lido Factory.

According to the newspaper dispatch, ninety persons were injured in a clash between a combined group of striking workers and students of the Colegio de Ciencias y Humanidades and "workers not

connected with the strike." The dispatch also says that bullets, stones, sticks and fists were used.

The authorities, represented by Marcelo Garza, the chief of police of Nacaulpan, tried to downplay the incident. He said, "There was a student demonstration and some small disorders but nothing more."

While this may be only one incident it is by no means the first one nor the only one. Because of the worldwide economic crisis the bourgeoisie is attacking the working class in Mexico as it is doing in Chile, Italy, Portugal, Argentina, Peru, etc.

Yours in struggle,
Alberto Garcia Reyes
Chicago, Illinois

us, is to "help the less advanced workers to overcome their own illusions in Mitterrand, their betrayer."

But who are these "less advanced" workers? As the Editorial states, "the vast majority of the workers" voted Mitterrand on the second ballot—all workers, in fact, except the most backward, reactionary elements (who voted for Giscard)—and this "vast majority" includes those who voted for Arlette Laguiller in the first ballot. Revolutionaries will be in a strong position to help workers to overcome their reformist illusions if, and only if, they have been seen fighting alongside those workers for the

return of Mitterrand, while at the same time ceaselessly pointing out the fraudulent nature of "Popular Front" politics.

Using this tactic would provide revolutionaries with the opportunity to build the leadership necessary to enable the French working class "to mobilize its own forces, in the shop and in the streets" against pro-capitalist regimes, whether openly bourgeois or hiding behind the facade of "Popular Front."

Comradely,
Robert Jones

Reply: "No" to Popular Front

The question raised in this letter is one of the most crucial issues facing revolutionary socialists today—what attitude towards the Popular Front? The position of the Revolutionary Socialist League is that no form of political support whatsoever can be extended to candidates of workers' parties running in a front with bourgeois parties.

The letter asserts that critical support to the Mitterrand-led Popular Front in France would "help workers to overcome their reformist illusions" by "fighting alongside those workers for the return of Mitterrand, while at the same time ceaselessly pointing out the fraudulent nature of 'Popular Front' politics."

Unfortunately, it is impossible to accomplish these two tasks simultaneously. Extending support to the Popular Front candidates in itself reinforces the worst sorts of illusions of the proletariat.

On what basis can support be extended to the Popular Front? Let's back up a step: on what basis could we extend support to Mitterrand if his Socialist Party were running independently of the bourgeois parties, in reality independently of the Left Radicals?

We cannot support the French SP on the basis of its program, because it has a reformist—i.e., bourgeois program. Trotsky forty years ago made the point that the Social Democracy, viewed on grounds of their program alone, would have to be judged capitalist parties. What was true then is certainly even more so today.

It is not their program that enables us to extend support when they run independently of the bourgeois parties. It is precisely their independence—the fact that they are workers' parties running counterposed to capitalist parties. It is the fact that they are worker-based organizations that differentiates them fundamentally from the bourgeois parties.

When the SP or CP runs independently, we can point to it and say: "Here is a workers' organization. A vote for it is a vote for the working class and against the bour-

geoisie. Even though we believe that this organization will betray the interests of the proletariat if elected, most workers do not agree. We urge a vote for them as a vote for the working class, as the vehicle for demonstrating that it is the workers and not the capitalists that must control the state. But we warn that this alone is not sufficient, that for the workers to really control the state the reformists will have to be cast aside in favor of a revolutionary alternative."

This is how we treat the subject when the revolutionary forces are too weak to field a candidate—using the class independence of the social democrats to infuse our content: the need for a workers' government. And we warn that workers must overcome their illusions that reformism will really act in their interests once in power.

We warn that they will betray, and urge the workers to put them in power both as a demonstration of the need for a workers' government and so that the reformists can demonstrate by their policies, when in power, that they cannot meet the workers' needs.

LYING TO THE WORKERS

But when the reformists renounce their class independence, this type of critical support is no longer possible. From the beginning, they have demonstrated that they have absolutely no intention of forming a workers' government, BUT WILL BE JUST ANOTHER BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENT.

In such circumstances, we cannot pose to the workers that a vote for the reformists is a vote for the working class against the capitalists. That would be lying to the workers, not "saying what is." Even though the bourgeois forces may be numerically small, as in France, their presence—Mitterrand's acceptance of them in a coalition—breaks the class against class counterposition.

In France, Mitterrand never broke the "Unity of the Left." Despite his claims that he was the candidate of the Socialist Party, in fact he represented a broad coalition that included a bourgeois party, the Left Radicals.

In Chile, Allende's Popular Front was preponderantly made up of workers' parties. Here, too, the bourgeois forces were numerically small. The Chilean workers paid for their illusions in blood—the ultimate outcome of the Popular Front. But what differentiates Mitterrand from Allende, or would the comrade have supported Allende as well?

In Spain in the 1930's the bourgeois presence in the Popular Front was confined to a handful of politicians. Nevertheless, Trotsky warned repeatedly that to support the Popular Front was criminal—to support it critically or otherwise. The "shadow of the bourgeoisie" present was enough to determine its true meaning—betrayers of the working class who had broken the class against class alignment and therefore left no basis for support.

Or, in the United States, wouldn't your method lead to support for the Democratic

Party? To be sure the Democratic Party is not a workers' party. But it is an amalgam of various strands, not the least of which is the labor bureaucracy. In many ways, it has represented an ongoing Popular Front for years. And most American workers labor under the illusion that the Democrats are the "friends of labor." At some points many workers have even thought of it as a labor party. Why not "fight side by side" with the mass of workers who have illusions in the Democrats?

Because the Democratic Party directly represents the interests of the bourgeoisie, it ties workers directly to bourgeois interests in a way that the British Labor Party cannot. This is because the Democratic Party is not a workers' party and so cannot be exposed as such. The Popular Front plays a quite similar role.

The last sentence of your letter contains an error which may be significant—you equate "openly bourgeois" and "the facade of Popular Front" types of government, without differentiating tactics. We believe that no support can be extended to either. But from your viewpoint, you should make a distinction. What is the difference? Why can you vote for the Popular Front but not for the bourgeois parties standing alone?

The alternative that must be counterposed to the Popular Front is the united front. We are the strongest, most ardent champions of unity, but unity on a class basis. We propose the united front for specific tactical engagements, to demonstrate that we have a strategy to bring together various workers' groups, despite their differences, in a common bloc against the bourgeoisie. But the class line must be drawn when the bourgeoisie is brought into the bloc. To fail to do so can lead to the worst sort of capitulations.

Comradely,
Jack Gregory

I would like to subscribe to THE TORCH.

CHECK ONE.

6 issues for 50 cents.

12 issues for \$1.00.

26 issues for \$3.00.

Supporting subscription: \$5.00.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP CODE _____

Send to:
Revolutionary Socialist League
13755 Woodward Avenue
Highland Park, MI 48203

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

gle

represents the elemental rank and file against the unemployment of the revolutionaries with the leadership in struggle, are the only ones that through.

gue consistently for the ward in *The Torch*, the med into an invincible id to the two-party shell workers to victory. The e bourgeoisie is divided struggle is on the rise. ies to intervene in the st economic system and build the revolutionary ep past the Democrats, labor bureaucrats and vement to tear down the ce it with the rule of the ialism.

RECTORY

Woodward Ave., Rm. 200
nd Park, MI 48203

. Halsted
o, ILL 60606

ox 5162
and, Ohio 44101

Woodward Ave., Rm. 200
nd Park, MI 48203

Vermont
geles, CA 90007

on Square W. Rm. 925
ork, N.Y. 10003

(Milwaukee address.)

ox 90929
aukee, WISC 53202

ocialist League Publishing

adau
k Gregory
Derek Hirst

Woodward Ave., Highland
ptions: (including Mexico
\$3.00; supporting, \$5.00;
mail, \$4.50; foreign air mail

3 issues for \$.50, 12 issues

—\$.10 per copy.

ily represent the views of
nary Socialist League.

ss postage rates is pending

Peronism Without Perón

Cont'd. from p. 1

in the least the enemies of capital and the future will show that we have been its true defenders." The expense of trying to satisfy both the capitalists and the working class finally plunged the economy into serious economic crisis in the early fifties. Although Perón was prepared to wage the "necessary" attack on the working class, an impatient military saved him the trouble by overthrowing his government in 1955.

The military's coup saved Perón from exposing himself before the working class as a willing agent of capital. And the dictatorial military regimes which followed served to preserve and intensify popular illusions in Perón. The constant battles between the military and the working class, climaxing in the Cordobazo (the general strikes which swept the industrial province of Córdoba in 1969 and 1971) unified the working class around a single demand: Bring back Perón!

PERÓN'S RETURN

The military's failure to contain the class struggle gave Perón's opposition reason to once again consider an alliance with "El Líder." Only Perón stood a chance of placating the fantastically combative working class and bringing an end to guerrilla

warfare. The opposition, however, knew that Argentine capitalism could not bear another round of revolutionary fanfare and social reform.

The economy could afford very little in the way of reforms and the working class threatened to use any concessions to its advantage. The opposition sought guarantees from Perón that he would impose an austerity program against the working class and lead a full-scale attack on the left. The negotiations between Perón and General Lanusse in 1972 provided the bourgeoisie with the guarantees they were waiting for.

CLASS HOSTILITY

Perón's willingness to make peace with his old enemies and do their bidding in the labor movement exacerbated the class hostilities within the Peronist movement. Workers who had enshrined the Perón years as a paradise of nationalism and reform, youth who believed that only the legendary Perón could lead the revolution for the "socialist fatherland," were sorely disappointed by Perón's second coming.

Perón angrily responded to criticisms within his movement by pointing out how cooperative the opposition was in comparison. It is no wonder. From September to

June Perón carried out the systematic attack on the working class which the opposition had clamored for.

THE SOCIAL PACT

Heading the list of his "accomplishments" was the Social Pact, an economic offensive against the standard of living of the working class, which Perón negotiated between business representatives and his labor henchmen last year. Under the Social Pact wages were frozen after a 13 per cent increase, while prices supposedly "frozen" continued to climb past 24 per cent.

Perón also presided over the passage of the "university normalization law" which banned political activity on the campuses, thereby undercutting the base of the left Peronist and socialist youth groups. The icing on Perón's cake was the "anti-terrorist" legislation which restored the military's favorite repressive measures. Even members of the Peronist bloc in congress could not swallow this latter outrage and resigned in protest.

THE "DOGMATIC STAGE"

Perón's program gave substance to his favorite homily

to the working class, "To work and home again." In other words, workers were to break their backs to produce more for the fatherland but were to leave its political destiny to Perón and only Perón. Perón rationalized his new conservatism by declaring that the country had reached the "dogmatic stage" of the Peronist revolution.

The dogmatic stage called for ending the struggle for "social justice" and turning to the work of "economically liberating" the fatherland. The beneficiaries of this "liberation" would of course be the national bourgeoisie.

Integral to Perón's dogmatic stage was his publicly declared "war against Marxism" which launched a witchhunt against leftists within the Peronist movement as well as outside of it. Despite all this, however, Perón's working class supporters stood by him much the way the peasantry in Russia defended the czar despite his reactionary policies. In both cases the ordeal of the masses was attributed to the work of evil counsellors.

Precisely because Perón's innocence was assumed, workers felt few qualms about resisting the repressive measures of his government. Workers aimed their fire at the class-collaborationist Peronist labor bureaucracy and launched a series of strikes to break the Social Pact.

In the months preceding Perón's death it was becoming clear that he could not succeed where the military had failed; he too could not squelch the class struggle. As a result his hand-picked labor lieutenants resorted more frequently to violence and murder to whip their union members into line.

The bureaucrats' goons broke strikes at Citroen and at the Swift packing house in Rosario, beating up male and female strikers demanding higher wages. In the port town of Comodoro Rivadavia they seized the local union

headquarters of the oil workers and together with police mowed down workers fighting to reclaim their union.

Leftist newspapers were forcibly closed and political offices bombed. Three members of the Partido Socialista de Trabajadores (PST) (a sympathizing section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International) who were involved in oppositional activities in their unions were kidnapped and murdered by union goons. Only a few hours before the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party Youth met in June, one of its members was murdered while postering for the conference. Undaunted the conference voted for a policy of "critical support" to Perón "with the stress on support."

CORDOBA

The most ominous sign of what Perón had in store for the working class was the Córdoba coup in February.

With Perón's approval provincial police and right-wing bureaucrats joined forces to bring this left-wing hold under control. The governor, deputy governor and heads of provincial municipalities—all moderate to Peronists—were placed under lock and key.

Union thugs patrolled the streets and over one thousand leftists were jailed. The left-wing bureaucrats, who had formed only a minority in the provincial CGT, were given the opportunity to elect a "normalized" CGT leader.

The reason for the Córdoba coup was the success of the left-wing unions in winning the Social Pact. The Peronist provincial government recognized the workers' gains compelled by the action. He would have been useless to the capitalists could not even control his subordinates. So he went go-ahead sign to the police and sat back in "inaction" while the movement split apart.

TEST OF LEADERSHIP

The events in Córdoba were a decisive test for Perón on the left. This was their hold, the home of the Cordobazo, the scene of class strikes and demonstrations. Yet in this decisive confrontation Perón and the left emerged victorious. The left wing forces were caught unprepared for the attack, particularly the face of Perón's comrade with the putschists.

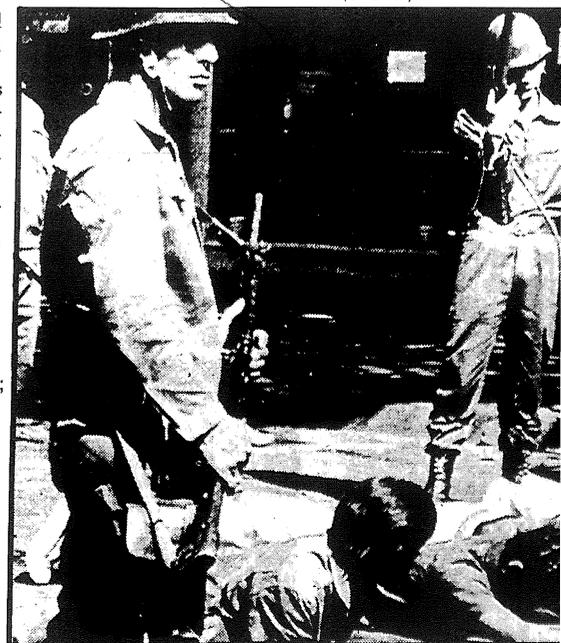
First came the capitulation of Obregón and López governor and deputy governor. When Perón indicated support for the coup, the resistance collapsed. He set the tone for servile imitations: "I am still a socialist, the great hope of the people (Perón) and I do not



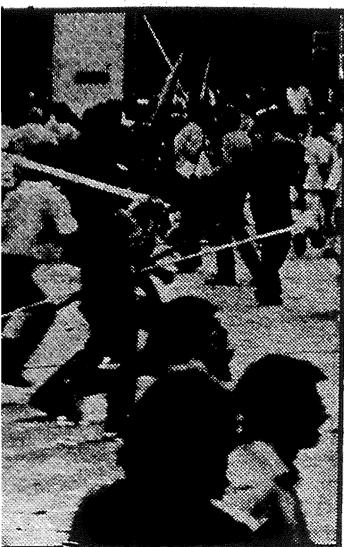
Right Peronists attack left-wingers at May Day rally. Beneath his rhetoric, Peron lined up solidly with the rightists.



Peron with his wife Eva during his first reign. Military coup in 1955 saved Peron from exposing himself to most Argentine workers, who regarded him as an exiled hero.



Soldiers humiliate left-wingers arrested in massive street demonstration.



death his rhetoric, Peron lined up solidly

With Perón's approval, provincial police and right-wing bureaucrats joined forces to bring this left-wing stronghold under control. The governor, deputy governor, and heads of provincial ministries—all moderate to left-wing Peronists—were placed under lock and key.

Union thugs patrolled the streets and over one thousand leftists were jailed. The right-wing bureaucrats, whose unions formed only a minority of the provincial CGT, used the opportunity to elect a new "normalized" CGT leadership.

The reason for the coup in Cordoba was the success of left-wing unions in breaking the Social Pact. The fact that the Peronist provincial government recognized the workers' gains compelled Perón to action. He would have proven useless to the capitalists if he could not even control his own subordinates. So he waved the go-ahead sign to the fascist police and sat back in "ignorance" while the Peronist movement split apart.

TEST OF LEADERSHIP

The events in Cordoba were a decisive test for the Peronist left. This was their stronghold, the home of the Cordobazos, the scene of countless strikes and demonstrations. Yet in this decisive confrontation Perón and the right emerged victorious. The left-wing forces were caught unprepared for the attack and particularly helpless in the face of Perón's complicity with the putschists.

First came the capitulations of Obregón and López, the governor and deputy governor. When Perón indicated his support for the coup their resistance collapsed. Obregón set the tone for servile recantations: "I am still a soldier of the great hope of the nation (Perón) and I do not plan to

desert no matter what battle post I am assigned."

The resignation of Atilio López was a crushing blow to the working class's defensive struggle. López was one of the most influential left-wing union leaders in Argentina. His union, the bus drivers' union, had spearheaded the Cordoba strike action against the Social Pact.

The mantle then fell to the "class struggle tendency" of the labor movement, headed up by Rene Salamanca and Agustín Tosco. Supposedly independent of and to the left of Peronism, these union leaders enjoy the support of many of the most politically advanced workers of Cordoba.

In the midst of the crisis they simply took their cues from López and the Peronist left. The CGT Combativo (an alliance of López's left Peronist unions with Tosco and Salamanca's class struggle unions) limited its resistance to "lightning" rallies. It made no provisions to organize and arm workers against the right despite the numerous dress rehearsals for February they had experienced throughout the year.

The Montoneros registered as strong a complaint as they dared over Cordoba:

We mobilized as never before to bring back Perón and win the elections, to defend the military and begin a process of social justice and liberalization, eliminating our economic dependence. And we won. The Peronists of Cordoba won a Peronist governor and deputy governor from the working class who was in the struggles. And all of us Cordobeses, with the same drive that we showed in the Cordobazo, put our shoulders to the wheel to develop a revolutionary program of reconstructing Cordoba and country; and suddenly everything has fal-

len through.

However, when Perón publicized his support for the coup, the Montoneros were caught in their usual quandary: how to abide by Perón's leadership while opposing his actions. And even under the impact of Cordoba the Montoneros resolved their dilemma by pledging to continue to work within the Peronist

bourgeoisie on the one hand and the demands of their working class base on the other. Cordoba demonstrated the reformist and centrist character of these leaderships by demonstrating their inability to break with Perón and with the interests of capitalism.

However, the pressure of their working class supporters

sacrifice at the hands of Perón's seedy successors. With Perón gone the coast is clear for a clash of class forces which will smash the Peronist movement into a million pieces.

The capitalist class and the military also have little use for the present Peronist government. López Rega's "blood and iron" methods of taming the working class can more easily and reliably be left to the military itself.

THE FUTURE

The future of Argentina boils down to a question of timing. Can the military move quickly, stun and defeat the working class, and once more place itself in power? Or will the working class's resistance cause the capitalists to pause and consider an interim reformist solution?

Either of these alternatives—gorilla or reformist—would spell defeat for the working class. The Argentine working class is running a race against time which can only be won if a revolutionary leadership is created capable of assuming the offensive.

POWER

The power and tenacity of the working class is not in doubt. The Cordobazos symbolize the limitless potential of the working class in struggle. The united action of the Cordoban proletariat and student population brought down the Onganía dictatorship and later forced the issue of Perón's return.

But in the absence of a revolutionary leadership which could clearly distinguish between the needs of the proletariat and the needs of the bourgeoisie (no matter how well disguised) the most ambitious actions of the proletariat could only replace one bourgeois master with another. Perón rode the working class to power and then used the forces of the state to carry through a bourgeois attack.

LEADERSHIP

Today the Argentine proletariat, with the powerful weapon of its strength and unity within reach, stands before a nervous and divided ruling class. The time has never been as ripe for decisive proletarian leadership.

Yet the contending leaderships within the working class—whether Peronist, Stalinist or pseudo-Trotskyist—cover for the bourgeoisie's weakness and vacillation by restraining the revolutionary aspirations of the proletariat. A regroupment of revolutionary workers into a new revolutionary party is essential if the chaos produced by Perón's death is to be turned into the order of the dictatorship of the proletariat.



Peron's corpse lies in state in Buenos Aires. His death will mean turmoil in Argentina, as workers and bourgeoisie ready for massive class confrontations.

movement in order to return Perón to his true mission.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party, the largest in Latin America and a considerable force in the Cordoban labor movement, weasled out of exposing Perón's role in the coup by assigning its blame solely to the "extreme right" which was allegedly "working under the orders of the imperialists and CIA." The CP was hardly ready to point an accusatory finger at Perón only months after enthusiastically endorsing his candidacy. Labelling the coup a CIA plot was a handy way to get Perón and his CP hangers-on off the hook.

Each layer of the Cordoban left leaned on the next layer closer to Perón for support, and as each layer peeled off and capitulated, the next layer down followed suit; more conditionally to be sure, but followed suit nonetheless. Obregón and López, and the Montoneros and CP bowed before the whole lot.

The leadership of the Peronist left was caught between the demands of Perón and the

forced these misleaderships to stand up to Perón on occasion. During Perón's May Day rally the Montoneros and Peronist Youth (JP) responded to Perón's insulting harangues against "beardless," "insolent," and "stupid" youth by chanting, "What's going on General? The national government is full of gorillas," and "The union bureaucracy is going to be done away with."

Thousands of young Peronists walked away in protest calling out, "The traitors remain, the fighters leave." This same militancy within the Peronist movement has caused left-leaning bureaucrats to lead highly militant strikes against the Social Pact. In response to these challenges Perón ritualistically threatened to resign on June 12 if these "traitors to the homeland" were not adequately dealt with.

Perón's death promises to unleash the tremendous militancy of the Argentine working class. The sharply polarized Peronist movement has lost its linchpin. The Peronist right stands naked before the working class, stripped of the "emperor's clothes." Workers will not stand for more

headquarters of the oil workers and together with police mowed down workers fighting to reclaim their union.

Leftist newspapers were forcibly closed and political offices bombed. Three members of the Partido Socialista de Trabajadores (PST) (a sympathizing section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International) who were involved in oppositional activities in their unions were kidnapped and murdered by union goons. Only a few hours before the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party Youth met in June, one of its members was murdered while postering for the conference. Undaunted the conference voted for a policy of "critical support" to Perón "with the stress on support."

CORDOBA

The most ominous sign of what Perón had in store for the working class was the Cordoba coup in February.



Soldiers humiliate left-wingers arrested in massive street demonstrations in Mendoza, Argentina last April.

U.A.W. Convention

crats. With their terms extended past the 1976 contract round and rejection taken out of the membership's hands, they are in better position to ram through another sell-out contract two years from now. Most important of all, they were able to railroad these measures through without opening up discussion of the ranks' real needs, and thereby insured a relatively peaceful meeting.

The executive board's maneuvers found their counterpart in the gyrations of the major opposition groups, the United National Caucus (UNC) and the Auto Workers Action Caucus (AWAC).

THE UNC...

The UNC was the most prominent opposition grouping at the convention. Mainly based in Detroit area skilled trades, the caucus has a paper program which calls for a sliding scale of wages (30 hours work for 40 hours pay) and a labor party, crucial demands to repel the attack of the auto magnates.

But the UNC does not put itself forward as a revolutionary leadership alternative to the Woodcock-Mazey gang, and so constantly downplays its platform in the most crass, opportunist way. The Los Angeles convention was a case

in point, as UNC supporters barely mentioned their programmatic demands and instead draped themselves in the mantle of Walter Reuther.

The UNC focused almost exclusively on union democracy: "Reuther would never have asked for a three-year term"; "Reuther would never have taken contract ratification out of the hands of the ranks," and so on, glorifying a dead bureaucrat while offering no way out of the mass unemployment situation.

The group's groveling before Reuther indicates their future direction. They too are expecting the lull to end, and hope to become the home of disaffected out-bureaucrats and to keep from being "isolated" by posing as left versions of Woodcock and Mazey. At the convention Paul Schrade, former Western Regional Director of the UAW, attended every UNC meeting. Schrade has sniffed out the essence of the UNC, and hopes to use it as a vehicle for regaining his executive board post.

THE CP AND THE AWAC

Far more dangerous and opportunist than the UNC is the newly-formed Auto Workers Action Caucus, supported by the Communist Party. The CP, through AWAC, is positioning itself to take advantage



Walter Reuther, hoisted by UAW workers when he swept to power at 1946 auto workers' convention. UNC still fosters illusions about Reuther.

tage of the expected explosion in the ranks, to grow from opposition to Woodcock while confining the ranks within reformist channels.

Lasker Smith, national chairman of AWAC, gives us a good idea of this group's strategy in a Labor Today article.

"It is only the militancy of

the rank and file that can create a willingness to fight on the part of elected officials. We're breathing down their backs. We're not really opposing them. We're just trying to make them more progressive."

Smith was true to his word. He and other AWAC leaders voted for Woodcock's re-election.

mands and refrain from criticizing the labor bureaucracy. Instead of fighting for a revolutionary program, instead of fighting to expose the bureaucrats and to replace them with a revolutionary leadership, the October League adopts the bureaucrats' methods.

They too accept in practice the limits of capitalism. They too accept the divisions among the workers created and reinforced by capital and

capital's agents. And once having decided against raising a revolutionary program, once having accepted the limits of the struggle imposed by the labor bureaucrats, the October League actively fights against all those who fight to expose the bureaucrats, and to unite the workers behind a revolutionary program.

The role of the October League in the Sloane strike shows the reactionary consequences of these politics. When faced with a class struggle alternative, such as the RSL presented at URW Local 621, the October League quickly became the open supporters of Bomarrito and the International leadership.

They acted as political police for the International by being the most vigorous opponents of the RSL's united front proposal. They became the physical police soon after.

When the promise of the boycott failed to pacify the Sloane workers, the International decided to assume direct control of Local 621 affairs. Local officers kept their titles, but the local was now run by International Representative José Guerrero.

Guerrero introduced various bureaucratic rules to lessen the participation of

AWAC openly proclaims itself as a reformist pressure group. When the ranks move against Woodcock, AWAC will be waiting with an "opposition" slate of out-bureaucrats straining to blunt the struggle.

FUTURE LINE-UPS

Through the jockeying and maneuvering that went on in Los Angeles, the contours of future developments can be glimpsed. The labor bureaucracy in general, not just in the UAW, is building its defenses against the end of the lull in the class struggle. Meanwhile, the CP is beginning to emerge behind various reformist caucuses—AWAC in auto, the National Steel Workers' Rank and File Committee, the United Action Caucus in the AFT, and others. They are busily setting in motion the wheels of rank and file cover to mislead the ranks in the coming battles.

But still, all the present contenders stand in fear of the response of the masses. With the struggle once more heating up, the years of inflation-generated wage-cutting may be met with one of the greatest explosions in the history of American labor. The power of the ranks offers tremendous opportunities for the development of a revolutionary leadership on a class struggle program that can expose the false leadership of Woodcock, the UNC, AWAC, and their ilk and lead the workers to victory.

both workers and revolutionaries in the strike. In addition, the International claimed that an industrial boycott was now in the works, a move clearly designed to further demoralize the workers.

The RSL responded with a leaflet denouncing Guerrero's undemocratic schemes, urging a serious industrial boycott (which means fighting Taft-Hartley), and proposing the united front again.

Even though their own right to participate in the strike was under attack, the October League chose to side with and play cop for Guerrero and the International when faced with a revolutionary alternative. October League members tried to physically prevent the RSL from distributing their leaflet, and threatened further thuggery if more attempts were made to do so.

At the following union meeting, the October League completed its chosen task—doing the bureaucracy's dirty work—by leading a move to exclude the RSL from the strike. Steven Weingarten identified himself for the first time as an October League member, although he had been a vocal participant in strike support work for nearly a

Cont'd. next page

October League

Cont'd. from p. 2

(Maoist) also opposed the League's strategy. Not only opposed, but organized to ensure its defeat at the February 18 meeting.

This was the inevitable result of the October League's Maoist program. Although the October League likes to

present itself as revolutionary, it is in reality centrist; revolutionary in words, reformist in practice.

Beneath the talk of revolution (infrequent as it usually is), the October League's political practice is economist. They limit their intervention to raising trade union de-



A Reprinting of Five Important Torch Articles

ORDER FROM: HAYMARKET BOOKS, 160 NORTH HALSTED ST., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60606

The Road to Revolution in Britain

35¢/15p

MO
CL
A hear

by E. Sirocco and

The highly-acclaimed Claudine represents a tempt of Hollywood black people who see themselves on screen as dope gangsters. This is the movie that life as it really is ignorant failure.

Unable to understand human relations of poverty and oppression makers of Claudine us a world in which has a heart of gold maybe the welfare. And for all its little tribulations, the turns out, is basic laughs.

THE CRITICS

Bourgeois criticism white, love Claudine by the wretched exploitation" flicker delighted to praise. . . warmth. . . dialogue." At last movie that shows residents in truth.

It's easy to see pleased. Middle-class both black and white picture poor black just like themselves less money. And the characters in Claudine they have their they're really not angry—certainly be afraid of.

The differences oppression of workers comfortable pet

year.

He delivered a tirade against the substance of which clearly the nature politics. "Ever knows my political chortled (a remark many raised eyebrows don't bring them meetings and dis-

He then stated political differences able to work with national Socialist Raza Unida Party Congreso Obrero refused to work with that was openly against the International's leadership the strike. This, a Steven Weingarten gave.

Finally, as Stalin do when faced with

MOVIES

CLAUDINE

A heart and soul comedy.

by E. Sirocco and Darryl Clark

The highly-acclaimed film *Claudine* represents the attempt of Hollywood to please black people who are sick of seeing themselves on the screen as dope fiends and gangsters. This is supposed to be the movie that shows black life as it really is. But it's an ignorant failure.

Unable to understand the human relations of a system of poverty and oppression, the makers of *Claudine* have given us a world in which everyone has a heart of gold—except maybe the welfare workers. And for all its little trials and tribulations, ghetto life, it turns out, is basically a lot of laughs.

THE CRITICS APPLAUD

Bourgeois critics, black and white, love *Claudine*. Appalled by the wretchedness of "blaxploitation" flicks, they are delighted to praise its "realism... warmth... authentic dialogue." At last, they cry, a movie that shows real ghetto residents in true-life situations.

It's easy to see why they're pleased. Middle-class critics, both black and white, like to picture poor blacks as really just like themselves, only with less money. And that's what the characters in *Claudine* are: they have their hassles, but they're really not oppressed or angry—certainly nothing to be afraid of.

The differences between the oppression of workers and the comfortable petty-bourgeois

year.

He delivered a lengthy tirade against the RSL, the substance of which indicated clearly the nature of Maoist politics. "Everyone here knows my political views," he chortled (a remark greeted by many raised eyebrows), "but I don't bring them into union meetings and disrupt."

He then stated that despite political differences, he was able to work with the International Socialists, the La Raza Unida Party, and the Congreso Obrero. But he refused to work with a group that was openly critical of the International's handling of the strike. This, according to Steven Weingarten, is divisive.

Finally, as Stalinists always do when faced with political

life of most movie characters (and movie critics!) is completely suppressed. This is just as much a lie as the *Superfly* version of the ghetto—but more reassuring.

It certainly is not the artistic quality of the film that wins this critical praise. It has just as little plot as the shoot-'em-up flicks, and the camerawork, often fuzzy and unimaginative, is inferior to the clearer, faster-moving photography of *The Mack*, or *Foxy Brown*. What the critics like is what *Claudine* says.

ROUTINE PLOT

Claudine's plot concerns Claudine Price, a black welfare mother of six, played hesitantly and somewhat woodenly by Diahann Carroll. She falls in love with Roop, a black garbageman, gamely enacted by James Earl Jones, who turns in the best performance in the movie. They get together, break up, get together again, and get married—all to the accompaniment of wisecracking from Claudine's kids.

If that sounds familiar, it will be no surprise to hear that the script wasn't even written about blacks originally. It's a routine boy-meets-girl story that had a few of the names changed at the last minute.

In between, the director throws in some barely-connected bits—mostly designed as signals to assure us that this movie is about poor people. (See? Poverty!) Claudine dodges the welfare worker (the director likes this one

opposition, Weingarten resorted to the lowest form of political slander by attacking the League as scabs and police agents.

So, for the October League, revolutionary politics are to be kept in the closet or for private conversations. Political ideas can't be brought into union meetings because it's "divisive," since the Maoists believe that workers are too stupid to understand political discussions. And to criticize the International leadership is also divisive (tell that to the Chrysler workers beaten up by Woodcock and Fraser's goon squads).

I.S.-OL "UNITED FRONT"

The role of the International Socialists was less active but equally shame-faced. They

so much she does it twice); her kids fight; her daughter gets pregnant and Claudine beats her with a hairbrush. Her militant son talks about revolution, but of course no one listens.

DULL SOAP OPERA

If these bits carried a real sense of black life, black audiences would respond with an electric moment of surprise and delight at seeing their lives on the screen. In fact, they find it about as startling as a soap opera.

The note of reality most conspicuously missing is street life. Nearly all the action takes place indoors—and what kids in Harlem spend their lives indoors?



James Earl Jones and Diahann Carroll romp in *Claudine's* silly ending.

The one scene that touches briefly on street crime has James Earl Jones catching Claudine's younger son in a craps game in an alley. Jones saves him from a life of crime with some feeble arguments about staying in school and studying hard. Last but not least in the parade of stereotypes is Claudine's youngest son, who wishes he were invisible. Ralph Ellison would get sick.

FRAUD

In one especially awkward scene, the oppression and humiliation that welfare victims face comes across as a minor nuisance and a big joke. Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones, on being told that they are defrauding the Wel-

fare Department, storm out of the Welfare office yelling "Fraud! Fraud!" And that is that.

This is supposed to be hilarious but it's so flat that it is actually embarrassing. You can't even tell if they're doing a parody of the Welfare Department—a pointless thing to do—or if they're turning the accusation around and calling the Welfare Department a fraud, which would at least be the truth.

The real fraud in this scene, and others, is the plot. In *Claudine*, disasters roll off the characters like water off a duck's back—there are no consequences. The welfare worker catches Roop hiding behind a door in Claudine's

home, and sees all the stuff he's given her that she's not supposed to have. But nothing happens.

The two of them storm out of the Welfare Office yelling. How does the Welfare Department get back at them? It doesn't.

FANTASY

The ending of the movie is an even sillier fantasy. Claudine, Roop, and all the kids get into a brawl with the cops and they're hauled away in a paddy wagon. But in the closing credits, there they are, gaily sailing down the street hand in hand, not a care in the world. Maybe somebody told the judge that this is supposed to be a comedy.

There is no lack of material

for movies about ghetto life. The struggle for a decent life under capitalism is far tougher, and more moving, than the makers of *Claudine* have any idea of. The ability to find times of richness and joy even in the stinking conditions of capitalism is one of the signs of the creativity and fighting spirit with which the working class can remake the world.

The makers of *Claudine* don't know this. They've tried to show us the ghetto: a rat here, a welfare worker there. It comes across as a shadow, not as reality, because they see their characters as just like themselves. Sure, poverty has its problems, but nothing you have to take seriously; just keep your chin up and things

will turn out OK.

Jet reports that Diahann Carroll "insists that the real Diahann Carroll is almost identical to Claudine Price." And she explains that she is a single parent (with one child and lots of money), just like Claudine (with six kids and no money). She doesn't understand that the life of a black woman in the working class is completely different from that of a movie star—even though a few of their problems may be superficially similar.

Claudine trivializes both black people and the oppression they face. It can be summed up in a phrase from the Firesign Theater: "stories of honest working people, as told by rich Hollywood stars."

when Guerrero had no further use for their hatchet work, they would be the next to go.

OL: SECTARIAN AND OPPORTUNIST

The role of the October League demonstrates the twin nature of sectarianism and opportunism. On the one hand, the OL shamelessly adopts any position to keep the favor of the labor bureaucracy. And on the other, they refuse to

make a united defense with revolutionary groups even when the forces of the capitalist state are bearing down upon revolutionaries and the entire labor movement.

These penny ante thugs are already reenacting the historical betrayals of Stalinism. As they increasingly become important props for the labor bureaucracy, their political defeat becomes more and more necessary for the working class to move forward.

Classified

INPRECOR: Fortnightly information organ of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International published in English, French, Spanish, and German. One year subscription (25 issues) for \$7.50; air mail, \$16. Special 6-issue air mail introductory subscription, \$3.50. To subscribe, send name and address to Inprecor, 12-14 rue de la Buanderie, Brussels 1000 together with international money order made out to Gisela Scholtz.