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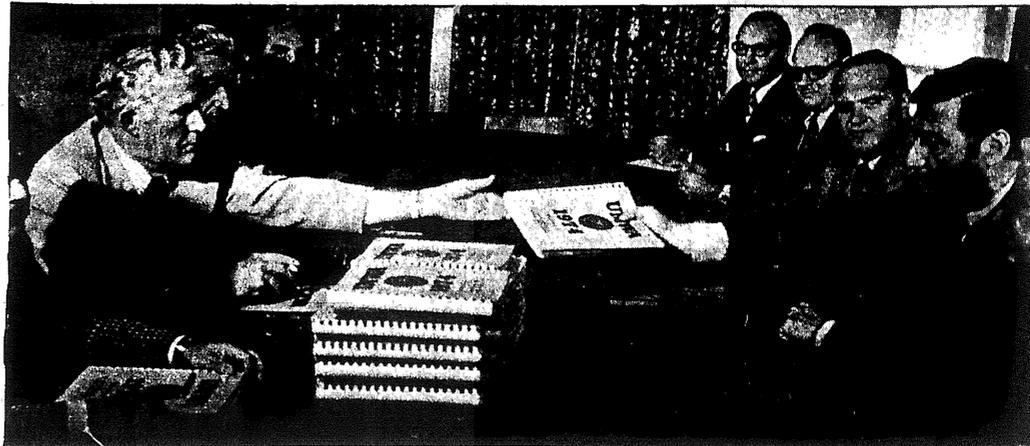
Vol 1

## MINERS' STRIKE LOOMS

BY BRENT DAVIS

On November 12, 125,000 miners will square off in a battle that has the potential to change the relations of class forces from coast to coast. When the United Mine Workers' contract with the coal owners expires, the eyes of the entire bourgeoisie and all class-conscious workers will be riveted on the coal fields. The fighting spirit of the miners is among the highest in the labor movement, and they know the power that the energy crisis gives them. The miners are determined to take long strides towards winning dignity, safety and a decent wage.

The effects of sizeable settlement for the miners could spread throughout the labor movement. The biggest unions have accepted pitiful wage gains without a strike. Many smaller unions and isolated locals are fighting heroically, but matched against stronger enemies. The example of the miners' victory could inspire the central divisions of labor's army, paving the way for a class-wide wage offensive.



UMWA President Arnold Miller presents the union's contract demands to the coal barons. Tomorrow Miller will retreat on the most important demands.

The miners' struggle has this potential, but many roadblocks must be smashed if that potential is to be realized. The Miller leadership will try to shackle the ranks, throwing away many of the most important union demands. The government, nervous about the shaky economy, will try to head off a lengthy strike. If such a strike does occur, the government may be forced to attack it head on. The entire labor bureaucracy will rally to prevent a class-wide explosion.

### UMW BARGAINING POSITION

The bargaining position of the is very good. The energy crisis has greatly increased the demand for coal, with the government now encouraging a shift away from oil use. The coal industry has been incapable of meeting this increased demand, and a

twenty million ton shortage is expected this year not counting the effects of the strike.

The coal industry is caught between the capital shortage affecting the entire economy and the strength of the UMW. Coal Age, an industry journal, estimates that \$12.5 million is required for a one million ton per year underground mine, and that such mines take several years to become operational.

This capital outlay and time lag is just the beginning of the coal industry's problems. Many key materials are in very short supply. The provisions of the 1969 mine safety act requiring explosion-proof machinery in all mines have recently come into effect, and this equipment is back ordered for years. Transportation facilities including railroad cars are insufficient to meet increased production.

The mine safety act of 1969, passed by Congress to head off the upsurge in the coal fields, has increased production costs. The average miner misses 31 days a year due to "absenteeism" and strike activity. The combination of these factors and bringing less efficient mines into operation, has lowered coal productivity from 16 tons per man per

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## Editorial

## BOSTON: DEFEND THE BLACK STUDENTS

The lynch-mob atmosphere in Boston is a vivid preview of what decaying capitalism intends for its wage-slaves. Unwilling and unable to grant a decent life for all, capitalism's only alternative is to set the exploited and oppressed at each other's throats. The racist violence of the white mob that nearly killed a passing black driver, the racist insults chalked and painted on walls, the stoning of school buses carrying blacks, the attack on a city transit bus driven by a black driver—these brutal events are the result of the strategy of ruling class liberalism to divide and conquer the working class.

The Boston crisis demonstrates the criminal intentions of both liberal and conservative bourgeois "sides." We denounce the vile hypocrisy of the bourgeois opponents of busing. Their call for "quality education" is a transparent mask for race privilege and segregation. The spectacle of

President Ford mouthing "quality education" as an alternative to busing when he has called for slashing Federal aid to education shows him fully as filthy a hypocrite as Richard Nixon.

Equally despicable is the liberal alternative. The racist violence in Boston is the inevitable result of a program—busing—which has pitted two sections of the exploited against each other. The Irish-Catholic working class neighborhoods of South Boston—now famous as "Southie"—are a depressed, high-unemployment area. The white working class youth of "Southie" are among the victims of U.S. capitalism. In their desperation, they have become mince-meat for demagogues whipping up their hate and fear of blacks. They have become the capitalists' racist tools in their attacks on these even more exploited and oppressed—the most

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# "Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores"

## BALANCE SHEET OF PABLOISM IN ARGENTINA

BY SHELLEY KRAMER

The Argentine **Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores** is the largest self-conceived Trotskyist party in Latin America. It has attracted hundreds of working-class militants over the last few years.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the policies of the PST are the subject of heated debate throughout the Trotskyist movement. Its successes and failures in the Argentine class struggle will be viewed by many workers who have been burned by the betrayal of reformism and Stalinism—and who are now seeking a revolutionary alternative—as a test of the revolutionary claims of all self-proclaimed Trotskyists.

The leadership crisis produced by Perón's death places the PST in an unusually advantageous position for a Trotskyist party at this time. The current political chaos is marked by about one political assassination a day, intense in-fighting within the Peronist government, and a wave of strikes in major industries challenging Perón's infamous **Gran Acuerdo Nacional** (Great National Agreement).

All this has left the left wing of the Peronist movement beheaded and confused. The "emperor" Perón is dead, and his successors have no clothes; they openly fight among themselves over the best means of damming up the working-class upsurge.

And while they deliberate, pandemonium reigns in the country. The fascist Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA) has published a list of left-wing political figures whom it plans to assassinate, and it has proceeded unhindered to murder one victim after another.

The Old Guard of Peronism, led by Lopes Rega and right-wing labor bureaucrats, has emerged the victor of government-level feuds over who can legitimately claim to be Perón's rightful heirs. Its victory has been celebrated by Isabel Perón's latest piece of legislation, which raises penalties for strikers and union oppositionists who rebel against the bureaucracy's brutal policing of the union rank and file.

The Montoneros, the largest left-wing Peronist force, has declared war on the government. Yet the Montoneros' "generals" are themselves only liberal Peronist politicians (like Perón's one-time stand-in, Hector Cámpora) who will never lead a war which risks upsetting capitalist class relations. The Communist Party's response to the growing proletarian upsurge and the Peronist repression and violence is to redouble its efforts to find bourgeois supporters for its popular-front proposals and to safeguard Buenos Aires's various trade deals with the U.S.S.R.

Considering the extreme isolation of petty-bourgeois guerrilla armies like the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the field is wide open for the PST to appeal to leftward-moving Peronist workers and students with a program which defends the interests and independence of the working class. The PST is directing its attention to these workers and students, but not the way a revolutionary party should. The PST's performance bears the worst trademarks of opportunism and adaptation.

### OPPORTUNISM

The PST, under the leadership of Nahuel Moreno and Juan Carlos Coral, has followed a thoroughly opportunist course since its birth as a party.

Moreno, a long-time Pabloite, left the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) with a group of his supporters in the late sixties. An enthusiastic advocate of guerrilla warfare in the early sixties, Moreno split with the PRT over its continued reliance on guerrilla methods. The major working-class struggles of the late 1960's, climaxing in the

1969 Cordoba general strike, shifted the attention of Moreno and his followers away from petty-bourgeois guerrillism. These labor struggles, closely following the defeat of Che Guevara's "model" guerrilla experiment in Bolivia, formed one link in a worldwide chain of workers' and students' upheavals and seemed to restore some of Moreno's lost faith in the working class.

In response to the workers' upsurge, Moreno (along with other one-time guerrillas like Hugo Blanco in Peru and under the tutelage of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party) began to champion a "classical model" for the Latin American revolution. Isolated guerrillism was now to be replaced by "mass mobilizations of workers and students." Underground guerrilla armies were now declared to be diversions from the main task of constructing mass workers' parties. The guerrilla adventures of the '60's were still defended—but considered obsolete now that the working class had "risen from the grave." The new line was trumpeted as the continuity of the Bolshevik tradition.

In reality, the PST's turn to the working class was but another kind of adaptation to petty-bourgeois leaderships—this time carried out within the labor movement proper. In order to win favor among the militant workers who led the rebellions of the late '60's, the PST muted its differences with their left-wing Peronist leaders.

A revolutionary party would have attacked the bourgeois program of these misleaders while engaging them in united fronts within the labor movement. The PST sought unity with the petty-bourgeois leaders first—leaving criticisms until later, when everyone would presumably be on friendlier terms. To win its own base in the working class the PST adjusted its politics to fit the petty-bourgeois prejudices and illusions among workers which the centrists and reformists ride upon and reinforce.

### NATIONALISM

The specific errors and betrayals of the PST all follow from this general adaptation to left-sounding bourgeois currents. Many advanced workers look to the PST for leadership, the PST adapts to petty-bourgeois reformists, and the reformists complete the chain by capitulating directly to the Argentine ruling class and the imperialists.

The Left Peronists appeal to the anti-imperialist sentiments of the working class in order to draw workers into bourgeois popular-front movements. Workers are encouraged to seek the strength to expel imperialism



outside of their own ranks, through alliances with "patriotic" sections of the bourgeoisie.

The PST vacillates between exposing these class-collaborationist schemes and draping itself in the bourgeois nationalist tradition. The PST's vacillation is extremely dangerous given the hammerlock which Peronism has exerted over the working class for the last thirty years.

In the 1950's Moreno and his supporters swallowed Peronism whole, liquidating their own "Trotskyist" party to enter the Peronist **Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional** (PSRN), and serving on the leading committee of the "62 Union Organizations," the legal wing of the Perón-dominated trade unions. The PST not only has never repudiated Moreno's past practices; it continues to peddle an ambiguous (i.e., capitulatory) line on Perón and his relationship to the working class.

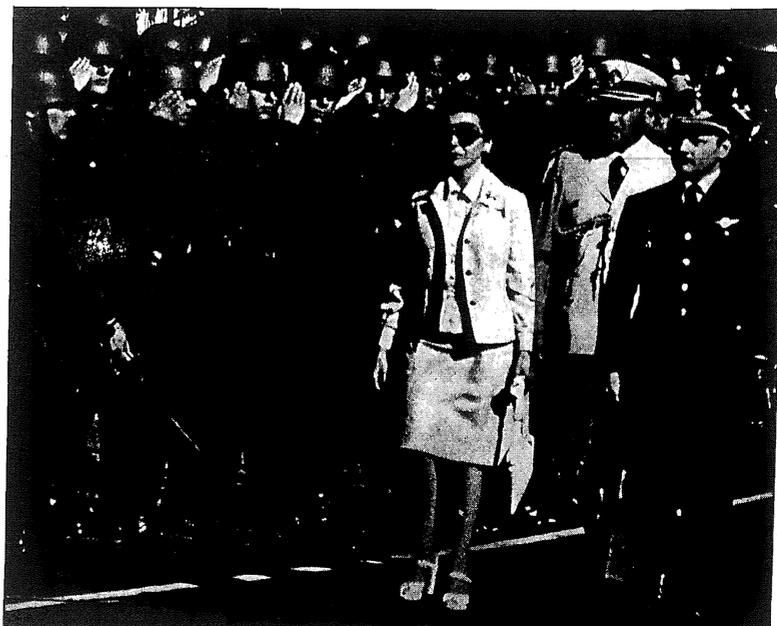
As recently as the August 20 issue of *Avanzada Socialista*, for example, the PST was still describing Perón's rule in 1946 as a "given moment" in which "a bourgeois nationalist movement would prefer to stand at the side of the workers against imperialism." The truth is that Perón never stood, not even for a moment, "at the side of the workers against imperialism." He used the working class as a lever, even granting it certain concessions, to gain a better deal for himself in his dealings with imperialists abroad and capitalists at home.

The PST's tendency to find "momentary" adherence to the proletarian cause among bourgeois nationalists leads the PST to gross errors today. The errors, while not yet as explicit as Moreno's liquidationism of the '50's, nonetheless serve to mislead and mistrain those advanced workers who are only now breaking from the grip of Peronism.

### BOURGEOIS NATIONALIZATION

Another recent example of the PST's adaptation to bourgeois nationalism was its line on the Peronist government's "oil nationalization" legislation. The bill was limited to providing the government's corporation a monopoly of gas sold at service stations. Hailed as a blow against imperialism, the law affected only 13.3 per cent of Shell and Esso sales.

Not surprisingly, this kind of "nationalization" measure, and even more "radical" measures along



Madame Peron reviews her troops. The PST ignores the need to organize proletarian armed self-defense, declaring that "the necessary response to capitalist reaction can always be found!"

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these lines, are popular in bourgeois circles. The PST again found itself "in agreement" with certain bourgeois politicians on this issue: "We agree with Oscar Alende (a favorite popular-front partner of the CP) that our oil should be exploited by Argentines and not by imperialists." (Intercontinental Press, July 22.)

The PST crosses the line which separates the legitimate tactic of temporary agreements with certain bourgeois forces on specific actions from substantial political, programmatic alliances with the class enemy. When bourgeois nationalists in the underdeveloped world take up democratic and even "socialist" slogans, revolutionaries must expose their real class motives and use the divisions within the ruling class to tactically further the proletariat's own aims.

In the Transitional Program, Trotsky specifically warns against blurring the difference between a revolutionary program for the expropriation of industry and the "muddle-headed reformist slogan of 'nationalization.'" Trotsky spells out the differences:

- 1.] We reject indemnification; 2.] We warn the masses against demagogues of the Peoples Front who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; 3.] We call on the masses to rely on their own revolutionary strength; 4.] We link up the question of expropriation with that of the seizure of power by the workers and farmers.

The PST's "agreement" with Alende betrays its class obligations on every count.

#### INTERNATIONALISM

The PST's wholesale adaptation to nationalism was evident from the start, in the founding program of the party itself. The PST was formed in 1971 out of fusion between the Moreno wing of the PRT and a left-wing split from the Argentine Socialist Party led by Juan Carlos Coral. Coral's group (also claiming the name PSA) maintained the social democratic, nationalist ideology of its forebear in a less obvious form.

The PST's 1971 Declaration of Principles, which outlines a common program for the new organization, capitulates to bourgeois nationalism on the critical question of the construction of an international proletarian leadership:

That, while recognizing the need for an International, neither of the executive committees, nor the party will yield that unalienable right to determine strategy and tactics to any leadership or tendency not rooted in the proletariat and the Argentine people. (Intercontinental Press, November 13, 1972)

This, while Moreno claimed political allegiance to the United Secretariat! The founders of the PST could not stomach the idea of "foreign" leaders invading their national turf. This antagonism toward the principles of democratic centralism reveals just what kind of International the PST would like to participate in—not a world party of the proletariat whose strict organization and discipline enable it to meet the power of the international bourgeoisie, but an international group of friends who exchange views while scrupulously keeping off of each others' "private property."

#### ELECTION POLICY

Much of the PST's growth has been due to its electoral activities in 1973. The party ran slates in both the March and the September elections, which brought the Peronists back to power. But the PST did not use its legal status in the elections to popularize a revolutionary program. It concentrated its efforts on creating a so-called "workers' pole"—sociologically, but not politically. Throughout the election campaigns, the questions of program and revolutionary leadership were subordinated to the PST's apolitical emphasis on class composition.

The PST called on Perón to demonstrate his allegiance to the working class by giving 80 per cent of his seats to workers. The PST held out the possibility of giving its support to Perón if his political representatives had the right sociological pedigrees. The PST defended this gross betrayal by explaining, "If the fault doesn't lie with Perón, we shall thereby help him to break the encirclement of his bureaucrats."

This opportunist maneuver played right into Perón's hands. It fed the popular myth that Perón was the unwilling tool of his labor henchmen. This is

the very excuse Perón has always employed when he has assigned those henchmen to their dirtiest work. At the same time, the PST's opposition to Perón was largely focused upon the sociological composition of his slate rather than the capitalist program he has stood for all along—whether his candidates have been workers or not.

#### UNITED FRONT

Following this maneuver, the PST formulated a new strategy, a step to the left of the first, but still based on a workerist, not a revolutionary socialist



Juan Carlos Coral, leader of the PST. The socialist banners and the photos of Trotsky are useful to Coral—to disguise his own betrayals of the revolution.

platform. The PST offered its place on the ballot to a broad "workers' and socialist front." While trying to establish a workers' united front for the elections was not wrong in itself, the PST failed to carry out the primary responsibility of revolutionaries engaged in united front work—they failed to fight for a revolutionary program, they politically subordinated themselves to the reformists.

To attract the greatest number of workers, the PST uncritically nominated Agustín Tosco, chief of the Light and Power Workers Union, for the presidential spot. The fact that Tosco was not a revolutionary socialist, that he publicly fed illusions in Perón and in the CP's popular-frontism, did not deter the PST.

It did deter Tosco, however, who declined the nomination, under pressure from the CP. By not raising criticisms of Tosco earlier, the PST found it difficult to use his refusal to expose his politics and reach his working-class base. By not waging an independent political struggle within the united front, the PST left Tosco's working-class supporters totally unprepared for Tosco's betrayal and unable to understand its roots.

#### DEMOCRACY

The PST's electoral strategies belie its stated opposition to the Popular Front by concentrating on the appearance rather than the program of political parties and alliances. Another way in which the PST capitulates to popular-frontism is its policy of concluding pacts with bourgeois parties "in defense of democratic rights."

Before Perón died, the PST participated in a series of political meetings (along with other bourgeois parties) at Perón's presidential mansion. According to Intercontinental Press (June 18, 1973), at the first meeting the PST attended in May of 1973, Coral "hailed the Peronist promises to restore political democracy."

After kneeling at the altar of bourgeois democracy, Coral swore on the reformists' bible—the utopian "peaceful road to socialism." Coral called for constitutional reforms to pave that road:

We think that in order to extend democratic freedoms changes must be made in the constitution and sanctioned by the sovereign will of the people, that the constitution must be made into an adequate framework for the period of the transition to socialism. (Intercontinental Press, June 18, 1973)

How disgusting Coral's performance looks when compared to the way revolutionaries have greeted empty promises like Perón's in the past. During the

1905 Russian Revolution, the Tsar issued a series of democratic promises to head off the growing general strike movement. Leon Trotsky boldly warned an assembled mass of workers against relying on the Tsar's promises:

Citizens! Our strength is in ourselves. With sword in hand we must defend freedom. The Tsar's manifesto, however . . . see! It is only a scrap of paper. Today it has been given us and tomorrow it will be taken away and torn into pieces as I am now tearing it into pieces, this paper-liberty, before your very eyes.

Only a scrap of paper—that is what revolutionaries say about the bourgeoisie's promises.

#### CLASS COLLABORATION

More recently (March, 1974) the PST agreed to a joint pact with the CP and the bourgeois parties pledging all participants to the "institutionalization of democracy" in Argentina. The declaration was drawn up by Ricardo Balbín (leader of the chief bourgeois opposition party), amended by the PST, and finally agreed to by all parties (although never formally signed by the PST for technical reasons). It stated:

Those who are here have confirmed their fundamental commitment not to spare initiatives or efforts to maintain and consolidate the process of institutionalization of the country in the framework of the democratic system and the practice of coexistence and constructive dialogue. . . . The difficult moments that the Republic is now passing through as a consequence of its confrontation with powers that have been weighing upon it for a long time will be successfully surmounted by solidarity actions of the sectors that respect the majority and popular desire for freedom that was expressed in the elections. . . . All of us understand the risks of the undertaking demanded by the country and are agreed beyond the differences of viewpoint on the depth and rhythm of the process of change—on the inexorable necessity of its realization. (Inprecor, August 3, 1973)

In concluding this pact, the PST subordinated its

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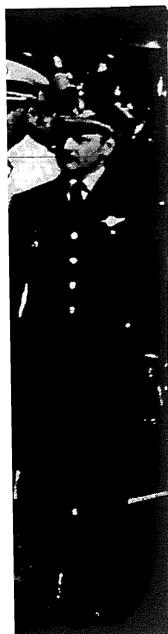
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(presumed) differences with the bourgeoisie on the "depth and rhythm" of change, to its agreement with the bourgeoisie on the "inexorable necessity" of the realization of Perón's undertaking. Despite the PST's hemming and hawing, there is only one meaning to this deliberately obscure jargon: the PST is ready to subordinate the program and interests of the proletariat—the socialist revolution—to the defense of Peronist "democracy."

While a revolutionary party has the responsibility to make temporary tactical alliances with bourgeois elements to fight a temporarily common enemy (i.e., to make episodic, temporary agreements to turn their rifles in the same direction), the PST impermissibly forms ongoing, programmatic blocs with bourgeois parties in the interests of blurring the class question.

### PACIFISM

Similarly, the PST has attacked the Argentine guerrilla movement, particularly the ERP, with arguments befitting pacifists, not revolutionary fighters. These arguments help the reformists whip up pacifist reactions to the guerrillas' failures at the very moment when armed self defense is a life and death question for the Argentine proletariat. They also drive resolute and courageous elements into the arms of the petty-bourgeois guerrillas.

Perón's death has unleashed fascist forces constrained until now by the often unpredictable vacillations of "El Líder." The bosses and union bureaucrats have imposed martial law inside the factories; strikers and oppositionists face death or imprisonment for defending their rights. Assassinations of left-wing leaders are a daily occurrence. The bourgeoisie is squeezing every last illusion in Peronism out of the working class by draping its profit-thirsty attacks on the workers in Peronist rhetoric.

In the August 20th issue of *Avanzada Socialista*, the PST attacks the guerrilla movement for its narrow concentration on armed struggle regardless of the "stage of the class struggle." The PST argues that armed struggle cannot be rushed, that workers will only turn to such measures when they are ready for them: "The most important task is to mobilize the working class and construct the tools it needs to take power... the necessary response to capitalist reaction can always be found, including armed struggle which always preoccupies the guerrillas" (emphasis added).

This disgustingly complacent reply to guerrillaism insults the anti-pacifist impulses which drive petty-bourgeois youth to the futile sacrifices of isolated acts of terrorism. Rather than call on these would-be revolutionaries to end their isolation from

the working class and devote themselves to the creation of a proletarian party which can wage an effective war against capitalism—the PST reinforces the guerrillas' prejudices by asserting that the working class is not yet interested in combat, and that preparations for combat are unnecessary ("the necessary response... can always be found"). The PST attacks the guerrillaist capitulation to bourgeois democratic nationalism—only to demand adaptation to the reformist union bureaucrats and militants. This is the PST's version of "turning to the working class."

Like its pacifist godfather, the SWP, the PST has assigned today to "mass mobilizations and party building" and a far-off tomorrow to armed struggle. This, despite the fact that armed struggle has in

continue as mere spectator, only observing the unleashing of situations of this gravity by the despotic union leadership." (*Intercontinental Press*, May 13, 1974)

"Mere spectator"? Everyone knows that Perón dictated the reign of terror! The reason for the "despotic" state of the unions today is the direct result of such intervention, finally leading to the total absorption of the union bureaucracy into the state under Perón. The PST's response to the growth of union violence is not armed workers' militias but greater government intervention! By calling on the "spectator" state to discipline the bureaucrats, the PST reinforces illusions in the state's "neutrality" and even benevolence at precisely the moment when the independence of the working class from the state and its armed self-defense must be relentlessly fought for and protected by revolutionaries.

### UNITED SECRETARIAT

The opportunism of the PST, a sympathizing section of the United Secretariat, has become a hot issue in the factional battle raging within that outfit. The United Secretariat's "International Majority Tendency" (led by Ernest Mandel) is trying to use the PST as a means of exposing its rival, the "Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency" (led by the SWP), which holds the PST up as a model.

But the Mandelites are not exactly the most convincing prosecuting attorneys. Their own history, and the history of their ex-proteges in the PRT, has hardly been free from the same methods of capitulation and opportunism. In fact, most of Moreno's crimes have been well within the bounds of the United Secretariat's practice. Moreno's policy of "deep entryism" into the Peronist movement of the 1950's was entirely consistent with the Pabloites' general advocacy of liquidation into Stalinist and reformist movements—a strategy Mandel and company defended.

Similarly, Moreno's endorsement of continental guerrilla warfare under Cuba's leadership and his plan to "synthesize the correct general theory and program (Trotskyism) with the correct specific theory and program ("Maoism or Castroism" SWP, *International Information Bulletin, Discussion on Latin America: 1968-1971*) expressed the common adaptation to nationalist and Stalinist guerrilla movements which allowed for the reunification of the United Secretariat in 1963. It is only Moreno's current method of adaptation which angers Mandel—because it threatens to strengthen the forces of his historic rival, the SWP.

### PABLOISM

Both the Mandelites and the SWP-PST subordinate the proletariat's program to the bourgeoisie in its various expressions of leadership. Their common method flows from their Pabloite world view.

Because the United Secretariat accepts Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba as workers' states, they are impelled to accept the general doctrine that petty-bourgeois leaderships based on petty-bourgeois programs are able to create workers' states. And once they accept this, the central tenet of Marxism—that "the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves"—becomes just an outdated phrase. The contributions of Lenin and Trotsky on the centrality of the revolutionary party and program become simply the ideal instruments for carrying out the revolution, but certainly not the only or even the most likely instruments. "Blunted instruments" (petty-bourgeois parties and programs), having proven themselves to these people capable of overthrowing capitalism, can no longer be opposed in the old way. The United Secretariat urges smaller revolutionary forces to enter and/or support these "blunted instruments," to loyally aid them in fulfilling their supposedly revolutionary mission.

Socialist revolution, in actuality the most class-conscious act of the proletariat, is thus reduced to a blind objective process. With or without the proletariat, with or without the revolutionary program, the workers' revolution will be made.

This is the course upon which the PST is embarked in Argentina. The parallels to the history

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Interior of Beccar headquarters of PST after bomb explosion earlier this year.



Sugan workers on strike in Tucuman. The Peronist Labor Ministry "reorganized" their union in order to break the strike.

fact already begun in Argentina! The "stage for armed struggle" must wait until the mass of workers have "found" the need to organize for their defense. The PST refuses to lead the working class, to say what the working class needs to hear, to educate and draw its vanguard into the tasks of the socialist revolution. Instead the PST, like all centrist parties, limits its message to what the mass of workers, still harnessed to reformist leaderships, expect and want to hear.

### "SPECTATOR STATE"

The working class is not deemed "ready" to defend itself. But the bourgeoisie's violence continues to escalate. So the PST's leaders turned to the only apparent savior—Perón himself. At a meeting which took place a few months before Perón's death, Coral called on Perón—the mastermind of the present offensive—to "stay the hand of the union bureaucracy." Incredibly, Coral demanded: "We maintain that the government cannot

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# MINERS' STRIKE LOOMS

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day in 1964 to 11 tons in 1973.

The coal shortage gives miners a great deal of leverage against the entire capitalist class. The two biggest coal consumers are the utility companies, which take 60 per cent of coal production for electrical power generation, and the steel companies, which take 20 per cent of production. Coal stockpiles for both are very low. The normal stockpile for utilities nationally is a 90 day supply. In September it had fallen to 75 days. Since converting their furnaces from coal to oil takes several months and a lot of money, the utilities would be crippled by a lengthy strike. The effects would be felt long before 75 days, as rationing would be used to try to stretch out coal supplies.

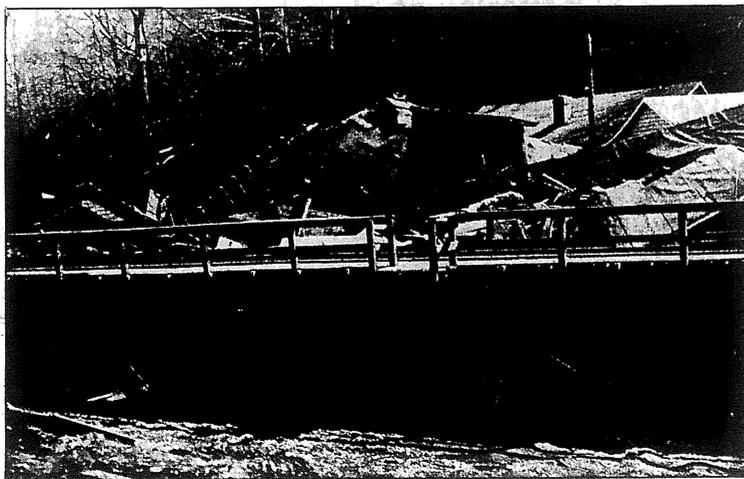
## STEEL IN WORSE POSITION

The steel industry is in even more desperate straits, averaging reserves of only two to three weeks. The steel industry uses coal to make coke and there is no substitute. The steel furnaces must be gradually banked, so steel cutbacks would begin almost immediately once the strike starts. Steel itself is in very short supply, and the steel mills running at full steam are a major prop for the economy. Significant cutbacks in steel production threaten to knock the bottom out of the economy.

The production shortfall has not damaged the coal operator's profits. Coal prices are sailing ahead at the same tempo as oil prices. In August of 1973, the utilities were paying \$9 per ton for steam coal on the market. This February the price had risen to \$35, and the increase in the price of metallurgical coal was almost as outrageous. Profits in the coal industry were up before the price skyrocketed. From the first quarter of '72 to the first quarter of '73, Peabody Coal, the largest producer, saw its profits rise 83 per cent.

The profits on coal production are just the beginning of the story, however. For 40 years the UMW has pursued a policy of encouraging the centralization of capital in the coal industry (a policy discussed in *Torch* No. 15), and the union leadership and the coal giants have been successful. Instead of an industry dominated by hordes of small producers, today the coal industry is dominated by some of the largest corporations in America.

The top 15 producers mine over 50 per cent of the nation's coal. Of the top 15, only four are independent coal producers. The other 11 are owned by giant corporations. Kennecott Copper, Continental Oil, Occidental Petroleum, U.S. Steel, General Dynamics and Bethlehem Steel all own major coal producers. The profits of these corporations are



Wreckage from the February, 1972 Buffalo Creek, West Virginia disaster.

shooting way ahead of the general rate of profit. These profits make a very tempting target for the miners.

## THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

The coal shortage, accompanied by rising profits and prices, forms part of the backdrop to the contract negotiations. Another key part of that backdrop is the British miners' strike in February of this year. 270,000 miners pressed wage demands well beyond the limits allowed by the Tory

government's wage controls.

Their militancy proved too great for the conservative National Miner's Union bureaucracy to head off, and the miners struck. The militancy of the miners and the solidarity of the entire English working class threw back the ruling class. The then Prime Minister Heath went down to defeat in the elections he called as part of his campaign against the miners. Wilson's new Labour government was forced to meet the miners' demands.

The UMW leadership, the coal industry and the U.S. government are all very conscious of the British example. From it they have learned two lessons. The first is that it is extremely difficult to take the miners head on and beat them. The second is that if they can keep the miners isolated, they can prevent a partial victory from spreading.

## THE COAL OPERATORS STRATEGY

The major coal operators appear resigned to giving the miners a relatively big package. They see the militancy of the miners, the picture of England comes to mind, and they don't want a fight they are going to lose. The sting of a relatively large settlement will be lessened by several factors. With

the price of coal rising, the higher costs can be passed through to the consumers. Even for the steel companies, who buy the coal they mine, higher coal prices allows shifting their profits to their coal divisions, which gives them a tax break. The cost of the miners' settlement is only a small part of total costs for these firms who are primarily based in other industries.

For the major producers, especially those who consume their coal, such as steel, the utilities and General Dynamics, continuing production and increasing productivity are the crucial concerns. They will be willing to make concessions to the miners in a range of areas, if they can get concessions from the union on productivity.

Above all, this means cutting down the number of wildcat strikes. The 1968 miners' contract included a provision for \$120 a year bonus for miners, with fines taken out of it for wildcats. The companies will be pushing for increased penalties, incentives and anything else to limit wildcats.

The biggest pain-killer for the major producers is that a relatively large package will force further centralization of the industry, i.e., the small



British miners demonstrate in February. Their struggle contains valuable lessons for U.S. miners today.

producers will be driven out of business. Advances for the miners on safety will have this effect particularly sharply.

The larger producers tend to have safer mines than the smaller companies. With the shortage of mining machinery and its growing costs, the large companies are somewhat more willing to invest in preventing accidents that destroy machinery as well as miners. Mining disasters can shut down mines for months or forever, and the major producers, when forced by miner militancy, will be willing to make slight concessions to limit such disasters.

Much of the cost of increased safety provisions will be much cheaper on a per ton basis for the larger mines. For example, the union is demanding a full-time, company-paid safety inspector for every mine. Any safety improvements and many other advances for the miners, will greatly increase the lowest amount of capital necessary to run a mine.

Already the business press is talking about a wave of mergers and acquisitions following the contract. This is a most important benefit to the major producers. Many of the steel companies, Republic for one, are having difficulty getting enough coal. Further centralization of the industry will make it easier for them to buy the coal mines they are looking for. If the economy declines, the demand for coal declines with it. The further centralization of the industry may allow the major producers to limit production and keep prices jacked up when this occurs.

## THE SMALL PRODUCERS

The strategy of the major producers to give relatively big concessions in return for aid in quelling wildcats, increased centralization of the industry and for a short strike, represents a mortal threat to the small producers.

This has created tension within the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, the major bargaining vehicle for the coal operators. The BCOA's membership already screens out many of the smallest producers, many of whom are non-union. Of the union mines, the BCOA tends to represent the larger companies. Only 50 per cent of the union mines are in the BCOA, but they account for 80 per cent of the union coal. The steel companies, the biggest in the industry until the oil companies came in during the '60's, have traditionally carried most clout in the BCOA.

The tension within the BCOA has forced a change in chief negotiator. R. Heath Larry of the steel industry was removed, and Walter Wallace, former chief negotiator in the pulp and paper industry, was brought in from outside the industry to handle negotiations. This concession was all the small producers got, however. Their representative on the bargaining committee walked out of the negotiations, suggesting that the union and the big producers were making a deal the small producers could not tolerate. They cannot afford a costly settlement and are taking a harder line against the

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### THE GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The operators have an ally in their struggle against the miners—the government. To be more precise, the major operators have an ally, for Ford is lined up with them solidly. Representing the interests of the entire bourgeoisie, Ford is most of all concerned with preventing a lengthy coal strike with its ruinous consequences for the economy. In light of the energy crisis, he is concerned with increasing coal production as much as the operators are. Consequently, as *Business Week* reported, "There are indications that government efforts to avert a nationwide strike in November include a warning to the coal operators not to be 'stingy' in their wage offer."

This advice to the operators, aimed in part to strengthen the large producers against the smaller, is very different than the advice Ford gives in most contract situations. Ford is developing an austerity program and a costly settlement in coal will hurt his efforts. But Ford remembers Britain, and he sees no alternative. U.S. miners have ripped to shreds numerous attempts to hold their wages down in the past and are not likely to be cowed this time.

Ford wants to avoid a head-to-head battle with the miners. As *U.S. News and World Report* puts it, a Taft-Hartley injunction "is regarded as useless by many observers in the coal industry." But Ford may not be able to avoid such a confrontation. If Miller is not able to sell a package to the UMW membership and a lengthy strike occurs, Ford will be under tremendous pressure to break the strike.

The government has a number of different carrots and sticks it can throw at the miners. Besides pressure on the companies to raise their offer, the government has control over enforcement of mine safety laws, air pollution regulations, import and export policies for coal and strip-mine legislation. Ford can offer a deal to the Miller leadership, threaten retaliation, or do both. The press has already reported plans by the Federal Energy Office to take charge of coal allocation if a strike develops.

This control could be a strike-breaking tool, although not a very effective one. But the government could use it in an openly provocative manner. Troops could be sent to protect and convoy scab coal that otherwise would not make it out of Appalachia during a strike. While scab coal (25 per cent of production) production cannot be increased

massively to substitute for union coal, troops roaming around Appalachia would have an intimidating effect. Any of these moves will be accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign, attacking the miners for their "irresponsibility" in striking.

If all of this fails, Ford might be forced to move directly against the miners, declaring a national emergency, invoking the Taft-Hartley Act, passing special anti-strike legislation or even seizing the mines.

The government would much prefer avoiding this, even at the expense of a big settlement. A direct strike-breaking attack by the government here could have a powerful effect. Militant forces in many unions would demand demonstrations and strikes to aid the miners and the effect of a big settlement then would be even more electric. In the U.S., auto, steel, rubber and the other large labor battalions have not struck recently. An attack on the miners might be the signal for these workers to join battle.

### THE FORCES IN THE UMW

The combativeness of the miners has not developed overnight. The militant tradition of the 1930's and 1940's sagged during the '50's and early '60's as coal production and profits declined, and the size of the work force plummeted. As coal production began to rise in the mid-'60's, the class struggle heated up in the coal fields.

A wave of wildcats forced Tony Boyle, successor to John L. Lewis as head of the union, to negotiate a new contract in 1964. The same year an oppositionist, Steve Kochis, won 20,000 votes running against Boyle. The 1964 contract won no improvements on safety, and next few years saw waves of wildcats on this issue.

Wildcat activity forced improvements in the contract of 1966, and the upsurge forced Boyle to call a national strike in 1968. The miners revolt reached new heights in 1969, when a three-week wildcat shut down all West Virginia coal production until the legislature made Black Lung a compensational disease.

In an attempt to place himself at the head of this upsurge, Joseph Yablonski, long-time UMW bureaucrat, ran for president, gaining 43,000 votes in a blatantly rigged election. Yablonski's murder did not quell the uprising in the mine pits. During the '70's, strikes resulted in 4.1 per cent of all

working days being lost, compared to 1.1 per cent in the '60's. The authorized national contract strike in 1971 continued as wildcats until the payboard approved the miners' wage hike.

Boyle's inability to keep the miners in the pits convinced the liberal bourgeoisie that he had to go. The Labor Department invalidated the 1969 election results. It ordered a new election, and effectively took control of the UMW to maximize the chances that Boyle would lose. Arnold Miller, one of the leaders of the Black Lung strike, placed himself at the head of the miners upsurge. With the backing of the liberal-reform Miners for Democracy, which brought together forces from the Black Lung struggle, the Yablonski campaign and the fight against the payboard, Miller was swept to victory in the 1972 election, gaining 70,000 votes.

### UMW RANKS CONFIDENT

The string of victories won by the miners against the operators and against the Boyle bureaucracy has built up the confidence and combativeness of the miners. The results were made clear in last December's UMW convention. Forced to make concessions to the ranks' demands for democracy, Miller saw the convention pass resolutions demanding a host of essential improvements—improvements he had no intention of fighting for. In addition to straight economic demands (wage increase, cost of living protection and tripling the payments into the welfare and retirement fund), the convention demanded much that would cut productivity. A six hour day at eight hours pay, quadruple time for holiday work, and end to compulsory overtime and numerous safety demands—all these are essential to the miners. All are a serious threat to coal-hungry capitalism.

The recent victory in organizing the Brookside mine and the coal shortage have raised the miner's morale to new heights. As one miner put it, "We'll never get another chance like this in my lifetime. If we don't get it this year, we'll never get it."

Within the union leadership, the old Boyle forces retain control over many locals, districts and still occupy seats on the International Executive Board. The retired miners, disenfranchised for most UMW elections at the last convention, were a major source of support for these right-wing elements. However, the biggest reason they have the strength they do is that Miller abandoned the fight against them. Shortly after getting elected, Miller dissolved the

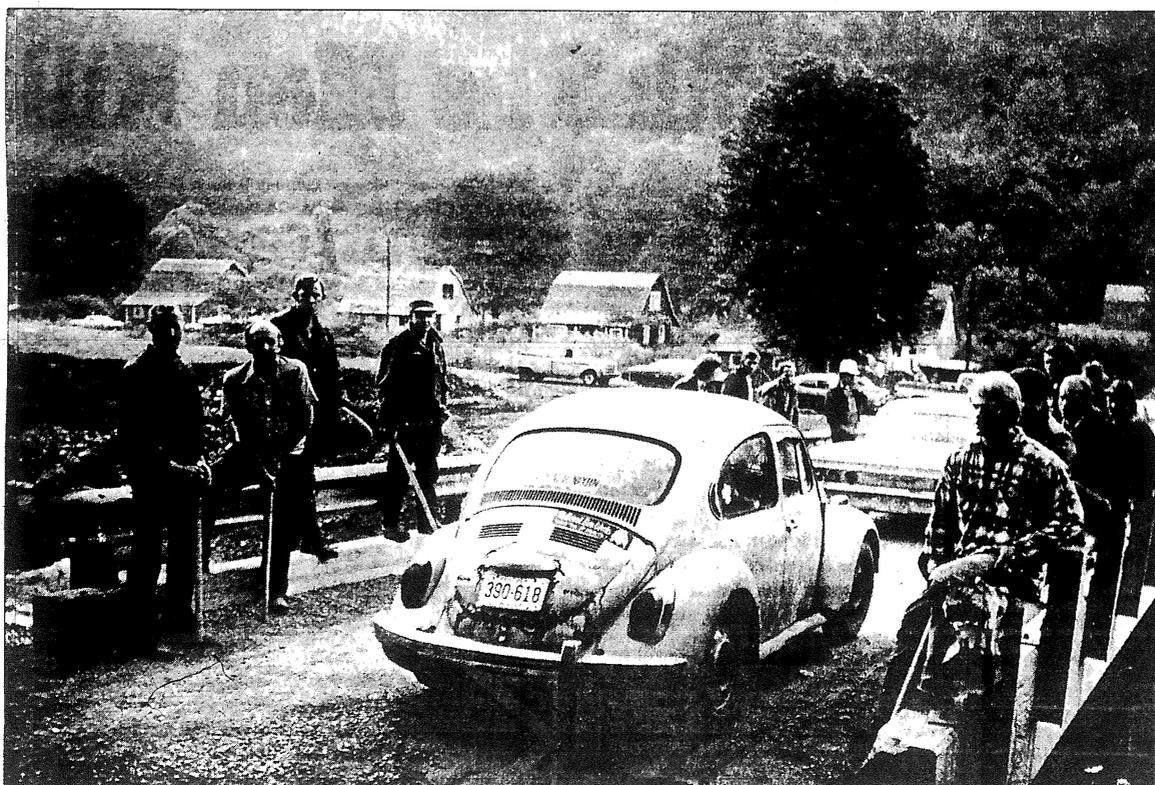
MFD. Claiming that he wanted to end factionalism in the union, Miller actually was afraid that the MFD might provide a basis for an organized militant opposition. Miller refused to campaign for the militant candidates in the district elections, preferring to mend fences with the right-wing forces.

The strong right wing acts as a balance against militants to the left of Miller. Miller's "anti-factionalism" allows him to stand between the contending factions, acting independently to consolidate his own forces. "Anti-factionalism" serves another purpose for Miller.

The militant opposition appears to be unorganized at this time, with the bulk of these miners supporting Miller, but with criticisms. Many of the MFD militants did not want to see the MFD dissolved. Miller's campaign against wildcats has begun to raise questions among militant miners, particularly in West Virginia. The conservative organizing policies and the belated aid to the Brookside miners has also encouraged militant opposition. However, the bulk of the militant miners still believe that Miller can lead them to victory.

### MILLER'S STRATEGY

Miller's hold over the union is precarious. The operators and the government know that Miller's



"Bloody Harlan"—Coal operator violence has been a way of life in Harlan County, Kentucky for more than 40 years. Here, Duke Power "security guards" use force to break up a picket line at the Highsplint mine.

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to the miners in the pits bourgeoisie that he had to go. He invalidated the 1969 election and a new election, and he got the UMW to maximize its vote. He would lose. Arnold Miller, the Black Lung strike, placed the miners upsurge. With the National Miners for Democracy, he won the Black Lung campaign and the fight for a new contract was swept to victory in 1970, 70,000 votes.

## CONFIDENT

control by the miners against the Boyle bureaucracy and combativeness of the miners were made clear in last year's election. Forced to make concessions for democracy, the miners pass resolutions for wage increases, health improvements—improvement of fighting for. In economic demands (wage increases, health and retirement fund), the miners would cut back on pay at eight hours pay, pay work, and end to numerous safety demands to the miners. All are angry capitalism.

organizing the Brookside have raised the miner's one miner put it, "We'll never get this in my lifetime. If we'll never get it."

ship, the old Boyle forces locals, districts and still National Executive Board. The miners are in charge for most UMW elements. However, the strength they do is the fight against them. Miller dissolved the union, Miller is afraid that the MFD is a basis for an militant opposition. Miller campaign for the militant in the district elections, Miller mend fences with the miners.

right wing acts as a militant to the left Miller's "anti-factional" him to stand between factions, acting indecisive to consolidate his own "anti-factionalism" serves as a cover for Miller.

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## MINER'S STRATEGY

control over the union is the operators and the miners know that Miller's

# STRATEGIES FOR THE 1974 UMW CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS



## The Big Operators

Meet some wage and safety demands in return for ending wildcats and increasing productivity. Centralize the industry as much as possible. Keep any strike short.



## The Government

Urge operators to meet some UMW demands to prevent a long strike. Build Miller's prestige so he can control the ranks. If a long strike occurs, break it.



## Arnold Miller

Control the ranks. Help the producers centralize. Isolate any strike activity and keep it short. Win as much in wages and safety as possible.



## The Revolutionaries

Pose united action by miners, setting example for all workers. Expose Miller's retreat. Build militant solidarity in other industries. If government threatens to break strike, build a general strike.

control over the ranks is a must for their strategy to work. Miller has to be able to sell the miners a settlement, and he has to be able to control the wildcats.

The government has tried to strengthen Miller's hands. Government Mediator Usery pressured Duke Power into settling the Brookside strike. This victory added enormously to Miller's prestige, answering the right-wing forces who swore that Harlan could never be organized, and the militant forces who demanded more support to the strike. Ford's inviting Miller to the White House economic summit and placing him on the Collective Bargaining Commission is a further attempt to convince the miners that Miller has clout for them.

Miller is caught between his dedication to capitalism and the militancy of the ranks. He desperately wants to avoid a long strike. His general outlook is to nurture the coal industry into a sustained prosperity, an impossible dream, and he knows what a long strike would do to the industry and the entire economy.

More importantly, he knows what a long strike would do to his relations with the government and the industry. If Miller cannot control the militancy of the ranks, the capitalists' efforts to build his prestige will disappear. If he does not produce extremely good results for the miners, opposition to Miller in the union would mushroom.

Miller's fear of a long strike has led him to publicly retreat on a whole host of the demands the convention passed. A Scripps-Howard reporter noted that "Some of the most publicized demands—like the six-hour work day and double time for overtime, triple time for Sunday and quadruple time for holidays—are fairly far down on the list." The Wall Street Journal reported that Miller is trying to get only "a foot in the door" on such necessities as sick leave, dental care, unemployment and severance benefits, voluntary overtime and union-approved safety programs.

When the business press knows that something is "far down on the list" or is a "foot in the door," the coal operators know that Miller does not wish to press them. Miller's militant talk of a six month strike is being replaced with frequent references to a settlement without any strike. And his refusal to use a second five-day memorial period, a contract provision that allows the union to shut down production for a week, is further proof of his regard for the operators and the level of stockpiles.

## MILLER'S RETREAT

But Miller has to come back with something big. Despite their growing profits, the coal operators, even the biggest, cannot afford to meet the most important demands passed at the convention. While resigned to a settlement larger than previous ones, they will try to hold the package down. Miller will therefore have to push hard to get anything that has a chance of passing the ranks. At a minimum, a settlement would have to include a cost-of-living clause, a significant increase in welfare fund payments, a wage hike and some progress on safety.

Faced with this situation, Miller will drive for a settlement that comes across heaviest on wage and "benefits" issues, retreating as much as he can on any productivity related questions. He will make a bloc with the major producers, who can afford a larger settlement. In return, Miller will pledge to continue his campaign against wildcats, with a possibility that the contract will include further penalties against wildcatters. With inflation soaring, Miller's contract will not even truly protect

the miners' wages in the years to come. This retreat will be a waste of the tremendous opportunity the miners have this year.

One possible deal Miller could cook up, depending on the depth of the split among the operators, is to sign a contract with the major producers. If the smaller producers will not sign, Miller would strike them. Such a strike would not cripple steel production. With some union coal moving, militants would be discouraged from stopping the movement of scab coal. With steel production continuing, the economy would not be threatened until the utilities' supplies ran low.

Miller would have a strike to show the ranks that he actually fought the companies. Moreover, a selective strike, on top of an expensive agreement,



Miller discusses with reactionary labor-hater Gerald Ford how to avoid a coal strike.

would hasten the centralization of the industry by further weakening the smaller producers. The major producers might give a somewhat better settlement in return for this favor. If the split in the operators is not deep enough for this strategy, Miller will probably be forced to call a short strike to prove his toughness to the ranks.

Miller's strategy poses grave dangers to the miners. The retreat on essential demands passed at the convention is bad enough. But the threat of a selective strike opens the door to molding the contract to fit the individual operator's ability to pay, rather than a uniform contract for the entire industry. Miller has indicated the beginnings of this strategy by raising the scheme of giving the western strip mines a lower per-ton payment to the retirement fund.

If Miller implements this, and follows it up with a selective strike in the East, the stage is set for ability-to-pay type contracts. John Lewis and Tony Boyle used sweetheart contracts extensively to

achieve the same end. These deals weakened the union by creating divisions within the membership and a hatred of the union on the part of many miners.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

A miners' victory can have an explosive effect on the entire working class. With the example of the miners before them, auto, steel, transportation and other workers are much more likely to press their own wage claims. If these unions do rip up their contracts and fight for immediate wage reopeners, they will join the many smaller unions and locals already in the fight. The result would be a shift in the relation of class forces to the proletariat's advantage.

This process will not occur spontaneously. Other unions have been in an excellent bargaining position, only to have the union bureaucracy rescue the companies with a sell-out contract.

The revolutionaries must consciously intervene to affect the results of the UMW contract. The fight against the coal operators, against the government strike-breaking, against a Miller sell-out and against the labor bureaucracy's attempts to keep the miners isolated—it is all the same fight.

Central to this strategy is uncompromising exposure of Miller's class collaborationist role. The politically advanced miners retain their faith in Miller. This gives Miller tremendous leverage to carry out his plans for a sell-out. He will be able to significantly control the militancy of the ranks in fighting government strike-breaking. He will fight hard to prevent militant solidarity actions by the rest of the working class to aid the miners. If miner militants and advanced workers throughout the labor movement keep their illusions in Miller, the labor bureaucracy, pointing to Miller's opposition,

will have a ready-made excuse to cover their own betrayals in refusing aid to the miners.

## CENTRISTS PROVIDE LEFT COVER

In the 1972 UMW election, the present members of the Revolutionary Socialist League advocated a policy of critical support to Miller. This policy was designed to open up the situation in the UMW, to express our support for the militant aspirations of the pro-Miller miners and to place Miller in the position where he would either be forced to carry out his promises to the miners or be exposed in practice in the eyes of the miners. Such a policy was designed to prove in action the substance of our charges that Miller represents an agent of the bourgeoisie. This policy has been vindicated by subsequent events. The task is now to complete the exposure of Miller, to expose his sell-out tactics and pave the way for the construction of a revolutionary leadership in the UMW.

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Many self-proclaimed revolutionary tendencies will attack the R.S.L. for its exposure of Miller. In the name of a false unity during the struggle, groups like the International Socialists, the Communist Party, October League and the Socialist Workers Party will strive to provide Miller with a left cover, preventing militants from breaking with their reformist leadership. This centrist strategy is not only a betrayal of the revolution—it is an immediate betrayal of the miners' struggle today. "Unity" under Miller's thumb really means division, dividing the miners in large mines from the small mines and dividing the miners from the rest of the class.

The government propaganda campaign against the miners will be a concerted bourgeois attack to prevent that unity. With inflation and unemployment growing, only a revolutionary program can successfully answer the bourgeoisie's propaganda campaign.

Revolutionaries must explain concretely and specifically how the miners' struggle is in the interests of the entire working class—emphasizing the potential for a class-wide wage offensive. A vague sympathy with the miners will pale in importance compared to rising utility rates and

strike-caused lay-offs for more backward workers.

In the context of both defending the miners and building towards a class-wide upsurge, the R.S.L. calls for militant solidarity actions with the miners. The labor movement must "hot cargo" all coal during the strike. If railroad, barge and dock workers refused to touch the strike-breaking coal, the miners' strike would be immediately effective.

Other energy workers should carry out sympathy strikes which would strengthen the miners. The oil workers contract expires in January. They need the strength of the miners even more than the miners need their aid. Oil workers and power workers striking with the miners in November would give these workers much added leverage in their own pay demands. Steel workers should refuse to touch coal during the strike, making the miners' strike more powerful and turning a potential lay-off into a strike for a wage re-opener.

The sharpest need for a class-wide defense of the UMW will be posed if the government attempts to openly break the strike. The threat of anti-strike legislation is real, and the labor movement's response must be the general strike.

If the government can successfully break the miners' strike, the right to strike will have received a severe blow. Revolutionaries must begin now to

point out this danger and begin educating the most advanced workers to the need for a general strike. This education requires an across the board attack on the labor bureaucracy, who will do all they can to prevent it. They are well aware that a general strike to defend the UMW is very likely to spill over into a general strike against inflation and unemployment, smashing Ford's austerity program before it gets off the ground. A congress of Labor and Oppressed People, an emergency convention of specially elected delegates from all working class organizations, is necessary to build and co-ordinate these solidarity actions.

Today, many of the best miners maintain their illusions in types like Miller, as do most militants throughout the working class. The largest so-called socialist organizations feed these illusions. The chances that the revolutionary forces will be able to bring about a thorough miners' victory and a class-wide upsurge are very small.

But in carrying out the revolutionary strategy, the R.S.L. will maximize the possibilities of this occurring. Just as important, the R.S.L. will further the education of the most advanced workers so that the revolutionary forces and the working class will be in a strengthened position as further opportunities present themselves.

## Apologists for Counter-revolution

# Revolutionary Union on Russia

Robert Avakian, spokesman for the Revolutionary Union, one of the prominent US Maoist organizations, spoke on the Soviet Union at an RU forum in Detroit on September 18.

Avakian began his analysis by pointing out the centrality of Marx's analysis of capital to the question of state-capitalism. Marx, Avakian correctly said, traced capitalism to the capital-labor relationship, i.e., the relationship between classes. The bourgeoisie holds its position as exploiting class based on its control of the means of production. The proletariat is defined as a class by its total separation from control of the means of production. The worker possesses nothing but his ability to labor, which he must sell to the capitalist for a wage.

All the laws of the capitalist economy derive from this basic class relation. The U.S.S.R. is state-capitalist because the proletariat is divorced from the means of production. The form of capitalist property as state property in no way alters the basic class relation.

Avakian recognized that the analysis of Russian state-capitalism cannot remain purely a matter of definitions. The process of Russian counter-revolution must be explained. But it is here that the RU's false political position, their commitment to Stalinism-Maoism, turns their theoretical analysis into an apology for counter-revolution.

### COUNTERREVOLUTION

As *The Torch* has previously explained, Russia in 1917 underwent a workers' revolution. The isolation, poverty and cultural backwardness of workers' Russia after World War I and the liquidation of thousands of the most class-conscious proletarians in the civil war, however, led to bureaucratic deformations in the workers' state.

Bureaucratization meant primarily the rise of a privileged layer in the

Bolshevik party and the state apparatus, for which Joseph Stalin was the spokesman. In the party struggles of the 1920's this layer was triumphant. Then, from 1928 to 1938, the proletariat was kicked out of power completely, its living standards cut in half,



Josef Stalin [above] was the gravedigger of the Bolshevik Party. The "Revolutionary Union" however considers Stalin [along with his pupil, Mao] the continuator of Bolshevism!

the democratic gains of women and national minorities destroyed.

Most important of all, the Bolshevik Party—the sole carrier of the revolutionary banner after the Soviets atrophied—was completely destroyed. In 1936-1938 Stalin executed almost the entire surviving leadership of the party of the October Revolution, as well as the general staff of the Red Army. By 1938 the proletarian character of the Bolshevik Party was irrevocably destroyed.

Stalin's program was "Socialism in One Country." Basically this meant "industrialization in one country." In place of the Left Opposition's program—the development of industry under control of the proletariat combined with an international revolutionary policy—Stalin attempted to make peace with the capitalist world and build up industry ruthlessly as alien property out of control of the proletar-

iat. With the smashing of the proletariat's class power this property became alien class property—capital.

This process is in no way understood by the Revolutionary Union. The RU's spokesman, Avakian, under the guise of focusing on the right questions—the party and the economy—examined only the aftermath of the above-mentioned counterrevolutionary process, i.e., the 1940's and '50's.

Avakian found a formal statement of the capitalist restoration in Khrushchev's thesis of the "Two Wholes" (the party was no longer a workers' party, but a party of the whole people; the state was no longer a workers' state, but a state of the whole people). But it was Stalin himself who proclaimed the "two wholes" during the last years of the Stalinist counter-revolution—not Khrushchev in 1956.

The 1936 constitution proclaimed the end of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In effect, the state was proclaimed a state of the whole people. Within the Bolshevik party, the technocrats, intellectuals and state bureaucrats were welcomed into full membership. The party, too, was now a party of "the whole people," that is, of the state-capitalist ruling class.

Avakian placed the decay of the Bolshevik party in the 1940's. According to him, the party was weakened by the masses of uneducated cadre drawn into it in World War II, while the influence of these cadres was increased by the loss of the most advanced workers at the front lines. Avakian made no mention, however, of the destruction of the entire leadership of October by Stalin in the '30's.

Finally, Avakian charged Khrushchev with placing planning on a capitalist basis. To Avakian, planning under Stalin was socialist because sectoral needs were subordinated to the national plan; under his successors, profit accounting at the factory level took the place of national planning. But this is confusing the post-Stalin bureaucracy's attempts to

rationalize state-capitalist planning, with the capitalist nature of the planning itself.

### RU AND STALIN

In sum, it was Stalin who was the gravedigger of the proletarian power in Russia. The RU, however, accepts Stalin's political betrayal of Leninism—"socialism in one country," the class-collaborationist Popular Front, the liquidation of the Third International. They support Stalin's gangster methods. As a result, they support Stalin's strangling of the October Revolution.

To give up Stalin, they would have to give up Mao—since Mao carried out Stalin's program in China. The proletariat played no role in the 1949 revolution and remains an exploited class under Chinese state-capitalism today. For the RU to give up Maoism would be to repudiate themselves.

The RU is thus tied hand and foot to Stalin. Incapable of breaking with Stalinism, they are incapable of understanding the destruction of the workers' state in Russia. The RU's analysis of Russia is only a cover for their own capitulation to bourgeois forces.

The direct corollary of the RU's vacillation and centrism is their political COWARDICE. The physical exclusion of RSL members from the forum by Avakian, and the refusal to allow RSL members to sell *The Torch* even outside the forum, is only the most concrete example of this political cowardice.

Like Stalin, the RU resorts to political gangsterism in order to protect themselves and their centrist politics which they cannot defend politically. The proletariat requires an open debate in order to choose its leadership. It requires a revolutionary regroupment around the program of Lenin. The Leninist program today is the program of Trotskyism. For this reason the RU is terrified to confront Trotskyism in an open political debate.

[Note: These are made by Walter Socialist League League held in

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# SPARTACISTS' PETTY-BOURGEOIS THEORIES

## MARXISM AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

[Note: These are excerpts from the presentation made by Walter Dahl of the Revolutionary Socialist League in a debate with the Spartacist League held in New York on October 26.]

The world economic crisis is comprehensible only to Marxists. No capitalist politician can find a solution to the unprecedented inflation, growing unemployment, production shutdowns, and shortages of vital materials. No bourgeois economist has been able to explain, much less predict, the unraveling of world capitalism that followed the post-World War II period of economic stability. In fact, most left-wing theorists who claim to be Marxists failed to foresee the current crisis, and therefore have not warned the working class of the dangers and opportunities it faces as capitalism's facade of stability shatters.

During the post-war boom, the 20-year period of relative prosperity and stability in the advanced countries of the West, Marxism appeared to lose its conviction. It was relatively easy to be a Marxist in the '30's, during the Great Depression, when the collapse of capitalism was plain for all to see. It was far more difficult to retain the Marxist program during the '50's and early '60's.

### MARX AND KEYNES

Self-avowed "Marxists" rallied round the Keynesian analysis at this time. John Strachey, a British socialist, discovered that Marxists had insufficiently understood the benefits of democracy in eliminating depressions. Paul Sweezy of *Monthly Review* and his followers decided that because of monopolization there was no longer any sense to Marx's law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and abandoned both this law and the labor theory of value.

Ernest Mandel of the so-called Fourth International proclaimed the third industrial revolution, the era of neo-capitalism, when capitalism miraculously had recovered its progressive capabilities.

Strachey, Sweezy, Mandel—the best-known "Marxist" economists—all capitulated to the facade of stability during the post-war boom.

### THE EPOCH OF DECAY

This was in direct contradiction to the Marxist analysis that we live in the epoch of imperialist decay. This is the epoch (beginning roughly at the turn of the century) in which the productive forces of capitalist society have come into conflict with the dominant capitalist relations of production. As Marx foresaw, the capitalist mode of production has become a fetter holding back the development of the productive forces.

Unlike the conditions of the 19th century, when capitalism succeeded in developing the productive forces to an extent unimaginable to all previous societies, today capitalism cannot qualitatively transform production.

It cannot raise the underdeveloped nations to the level of the advanced—rather, the gap between the

two sectors grows ever-wider. It can no longer pull out of depressions without gross destruction of the productive forces (as witness World War II). Likewise, it must utilize the brutal methods of fascism to beat back the organized proletariat in times of crisis. It must escalate its looting of raw materials from the underdeveloped nations.

The growth that does occur in this epoch tends to be partial, sectoral and at the expense of the system's future ability to grow. Growth in the advanced countries occurs at the expense of the underdeveloped countries. Growth in one period is destroyed by wars and depressions in the next. The drive is towards ever-more destructive wars; it is towards the decimation of the proletariat through fascism; it is towards creating huge raw materials shortages (as Lenin foresaw in his *Imperialism*). It is towards disruption of the world market through



Lenin and Trotsky [center], the leaders of the Russian Revolution, celebrate the 3rd anniversary of the creation of the world's first workers' state. Both leaders emphasized the crisis of leadership in the epoch of imperialist decay, capitalism's last stage.

autarchy and by reducing sectors of the world (South Asia, West Africa) to the level where investment is increasingly less profitable.

In this epoch, the bourgeoisie is not capable of completing the democratic tasks in any country—underdeveloped or advanced. Over time, it must attempt to roll them back—that is what fascism represents. The world proletariat is the only fundamentally revolutionary force in this epoch—and therefore this is the epoch of proletarian revolution and the transition to socialism.

But the proletariat must rise to its revolutionary tasks. If not, this epoch will see famine, depressions of devastating scope, and nuclear war. This is the heart of Leninism and Trotskyism: the theory of imperialism as the highest and last stage of capitalism, the theory of the permanent revolution, the Transitional Program, and the Fourth International. The objective conditions are ripe for the socialist revolution; what is lacking is the revolutionary leadership. The crisis of the epoch can thus be reduced to the crisis of leadership.

These fundamental questions underlie the issues

we are debating here. It is our contention that the Spartacist League has abandoned the heritage of Trotskyism. It has denied the method of Marxism in analyzing the world economy; it has denied the theory of the permanent revolution and imperialism in dealing with the oppressed; it has ripped the guts out of the Transitional Program. It therefore stands before the working class as a centrist tendency, an obstacle on the road to the proletarian revolution.

In particular, the Spartacist League denies the pre-revolutionary character of the present period. It denies the necessity of a depression for capitalism. It downplays the tendency towards strongman rule, Bonapartism, and fascism. It therefore fails to prepare the working class for the revolutionary role it must play in the world today—if the revolutionary character of the epoch is not to take on, once again, its counter-revolutionary aspect.

In short, the Spartacist League—like Mandel, Sweezy and Strachey—has been completely disoriented by the post-war recovery of capitalism. While clinging to the phrase "epoch of decay," they have gutted it of all content. To the Spartacists, as we shall see, the epoch of decay is synonymous with stable capitalism. They, like the other epigones, have been overwhelmed by their empirical observations of the post-war world.

So before going any further, I will outline the analysis that the Revolutionary Socialist League has developed of the post-war boom—and its unraveling in recent years (a full explanation has been presented in *Torch* No. 15—see Jack Gregory, "On the Brink of Depression").

### POST-WAR BOOM

This analysis is based on Lenin's theory of imperialism. Under the conditions resulting from World War II, the U.S. bourgeoisie was able to break out of the pre-war imperialist deadlock and appropriate to itself a vast share of the world's production of surplus-value. The Soviet Union did likewise in its imperialist sphere.

The defeat of the European and Japanese working classes—as a consequence of the Great Depression, the World War, and the betrayal of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaderships—established a high rate of exploitation in these areas. This tremendous exploitation of the workers, together with the destruction of industry during the war, made possible profitable investments and the reconstruction of Western Europe and Japan on the basis of new technology. The American bourgeoisie, because of its overpowering military and industrial position after the war, its imperialist apparatus, organized around the international monetary system established at Bretton Woods, was able to siphon surplus-value from both the rebuilt advanced countries and the semi-colonial countries.

### U.S. HEGEMONY

This represented the international concentration and centralization of capital in the hands of the United States bourgeoisie. It was mirrored by the state-induced capital centralization within the country in favor of the leading corporations.

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The Spartacist League denies the pre-revolutionary character of this period. It denies the necessity of a depression for capitalism. To the SL, the epoch of decay is synonymous with stable capitalism. It downplays the tendency towards strongman rule and therefore fails to prepare the working class for the revolutionary role it must play today.

So long as concentration and centralization of capital are possible on a large enough scale, as Marx explained, recovery and a new boom are possible. And this is what occurred: real wages increased, unemployment was reduced sharply, and physical production increased internationally. A period of relative stability ensued.

This constitutes a boom in the epoch of decay. We will never again look upon a world capitalism capable of growing at the rate that it did in the progressive epoch. We have already indicated that limitations of growth in the epoch of decay. But the fact that capitalism was able to stabilize and grow in the post-war period demonstrate that this was a period of boom.

But the boom had clear limitations. In the U.S. the increased state intervention into the economy concentrated in building up war industries and other unproductive ventures, whose massive costs drained capital away from the productive sectors of the economy. At the same time, the build-up of industry abroad allowed domestic investment to fall behind, setting into motion a long process of obsolescence and deterioration of the U.S.'s productive equipment. 25 years after its post-war hegemony, the U.S. is no longer unchallenged in economic strength. The world situation internationally is now heading toward one of old-style imperialist rivalry and impending conflict.

Furthermore, the falling rate of profit has meant that growth rates in Europe and Japan have slowed. This plus the intensification of the class struggle made it increasingly difficult for these countries to absorb the inflationary paper values exported from the U.S. Inflation, the sharpest evidence of the present crisis, grew out of the roots planted in the post-war period; the steady expansion of credit and government deficits created vast amounts of fictitious capital that the stock market has now begun to discount.

#### EXPORT OF INFLATION

These inflationary tendencies were exported throughout the world because of the privileged position of the U.S. dollar. As a result, inflation has already undermined the international monetary system—it was this linchpin of the imperialist network that was the first component to break down.

Today, the lack of sufficient capital for investment (despite inflated profits), the decline of real wages due to inflation, the destruction of the environment under the pressure of business to reap profits without paying costs, the rotting away of public services—all these are the visible signs of decay previously hidden under a veneer of imperialist prosperity.

The erosion of the post-war boom determines the character of the present period. The world-wide shortage of capital for investment is the major manifestation of the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, made plain as a shortage of surplus-value relative to the massive claims upon it. Today, capital must once more be concentrated and centralized; weak capitals must be eliminated, the working class standard of living attacked, and the mountains of fictitious capital leveled. This requires depression, war, or both.

So the necessity of a full-scale depression confronts the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will be forced to increase the burden on the working classes, using the treacherous Stalinist and Social Democratic parties where possible—and the methods of strongman rule will once more come to the fore. Economic nationalism and the drive towards inter-imperialist war will accelerate.

In the epoch of imperialist decay, the capitalist state must tend to assume ever greater powers because of the need for economic and political centralization. During periods of crisis, or of working class resistance, this centralization takes on a Bonapartist, or military form. In other words, the need for state control in this epoch makes a rapid transition to strongman rule possible—the weapons are already there.

#### PRE-REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

What makes the current period pre-revolutionary is that the endurance of the proletariat is being stretched to the limit—at a time when the working

## The Spartacist's inability to account for the post-war boom set the stage for the present crisis. There was no boom and therefore can't be any crisis.



In this epoch, and especially during times of crisis, capitalism can only reduce the underdeveloped nations to starvation, epidemic and ruin.



A fascist rally in Italy, August, 1974. As capitalism's contradictions sharpen, fascism arises again to smash the working class down.

Some 30,000 New Jersey construction workers converged on the Statehouse in Trenton July 29 demanding jobs. The deepening economic crisis will give the revolutionaries a wider hearing in the proletariat than they have had in decades.

classes of many countries are not demoralized and are willing to fight—they have not suffered a decisive defeat in 25 years.

#### INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

The Portuguese events are not an isolated incident. There are crises in Italy, Britain and Argentina. Combined with the events in Chile, Greece, the energy crisis and the world famine, it is clear that the development of working class insurgency will continue, producing major class confrontations in which the question of who is to have state power is posed.

Under these circumstances, as capitalist decay grows even more rotten, as one country after another turns to military dictatorship when bourgeois democracy becomes inadequate—and as World War III looms as the outcome of intensifying imperialist rivalries—the socialist revolution becomes a necessity for survival. The necessity of revolution and the material conditions for working class power exist—what is missing is the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat—that is what Trotsky referred to as the crisis of proletarian leadership.

#### TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The Transitional Program was formulated precisely to guide the proletariat in its struggle, to arm it against the bourgeoisie's drive to destroy all organizations of the working class through Bonapartism and fascism. It is the program of the proletariat in the epoch of decay—and first of all it is based upon the understanding that the bourgeoisie cannot eliminate depression and war, and must savagely attack the proletariat through the most brutal forms of bourgeois rule.

The Spartacists' program and analysis has nothing in common with this, despite their superficial adoption of the form of the Transitional Program. Since they do not understand that capitalism cannot maintain stability indefinitely, they fail to warn the working class of the dangers of Bonapartism and fascism, hence make a mockery of

the analysis upon which the Transitional Program is based.

Workers' Vanguard of July, 1973 sums up the SL's approach:

Communists do not need to project the imminence of a catastrophic economic crisis and fascist rule to justify the need for socialist revolution. The highest inflation in twenty years, a 5% rate of officially acknowledged unemployment and a venal and moribund union bureaucracy actively collaborating with a reactionary government to hold down wages—these conditions are a quite sufficient precondition for building the vanguard communist party and class-struggle opposition in the unions.

The Spartacists use this analysis to justify their passive, complacent, anti-Marxist notion that there is no need to recognize the inexorable drive of capitalism toward depression, fascism and war. They dismiss every type of economic crisis. The tasks of revolutionaries in the epoch of decay are thus reduced to the struggle against inflation and unemployment; apparently, the present conditions will be maintained forever.

#### WATERGATE

This repudiation of the Marxist understanding of the epoch necessarily has implications in the SL's practice. Workers Vanguard's coverage of Watergate illustrates the Spartacists' faith in the stability of bourgeois democracy. "There are those who see the Watergate affair as a sign of impending fascism or full-scale Bonapartism," said the October 26, 1973 issue. "In fact, it is just the opposite—Congress is restoring the norms of U.S. bourgeois democracy, and the power of the government has been greatly reduced."

Here the Spartacists are opposing the two sides of a dialectical relationship to one another. Nixon was not a Bonapartist leader—in that the Spartacists are correct. But in the epoch of decay, the capitalist state must tend to assume ever greater powers because of the need for economic and political centralization.

Before the Watergate scandal broke, Nixon was steadily enlarging the powers of the executive branch and following a strong-government policy. Watergate represented a detour from that road, but not the shift into reverse gear that the Spartacists see. Despite Watergate, in critical periods such as

the winter fuel shortage Congress was eager to give powers to the discredited

Now, the ruling class discipline the working class of the economy. Whether Ford-Rockefeller regime 1976 remains to be seen, it means that "the power greatly reduced."

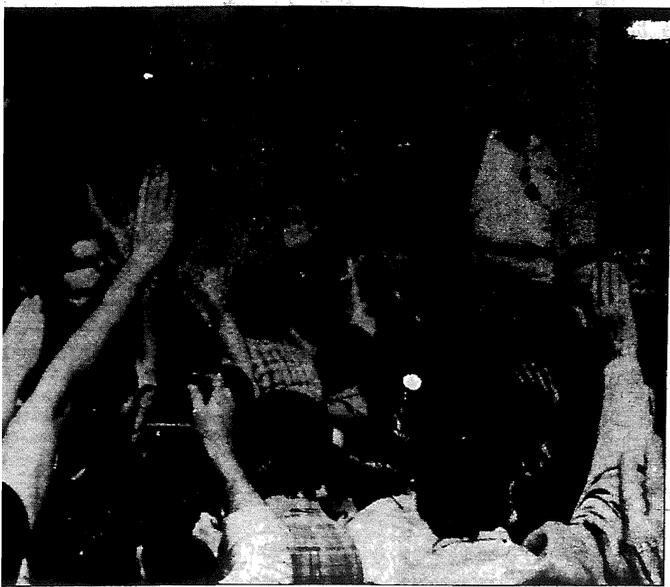
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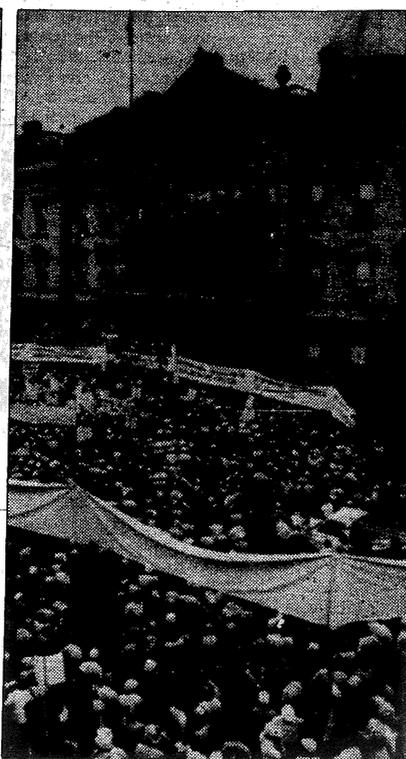
The key to the Spartacist capitalist crisis of today (although perhaps the workers' theory that there is no boom and therefore can't be any crisis. Under this theory, they have the prolonged economic crisis and a relatively low level of class struggle in unemployment, the working class production, the increasing the advanced countries, for a quarter of a century change in the character of predominant international relations. Nor do they need to boom has eroded, how the post-war period masked why the decay is now becoming empiricists perceive By denying the exist

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the 30,000 New Jersey construction workers converged on the Statehouse in Trenton July 29 demanding jobs. The deepening economic crisis will give revolutionaries a wider hearing in the proletariat than they have had in decades.



Japanese farmers protest rising equipment prices. Only a Trotskyist leadership in the working class can direct the petty-bourgeoisie's anger against the real cause of their ruin—the capitalist class.

is upon which the Transitional Program of the Workers Vanguard of July, 1973 sums up the approach:

It does not need to project the imminence of a catastrophic economic crisis and fascist rule to justify the need for socialist revolution. The highest rate in twenty years, a 5% rate of officially registered unemployment and a venal and reactionary union bureaucracy actively collaborating with a reactionary government to hold down wages under these conditions are a quite sufficient basis for building the vanguard communist party and class-struggle opposition in the unions. The Spartacists use this analysis to justify their complacent, anti-Marxist notion that there is no need to recognize the inexorable drive of capitalism toward depression, fascism and war. They dismiss every type of economic crisis. The Spartacist revolutionaries in the epoch of decay are called to the struggle against inflation and stagflation; apparently, the present conditions are maintained forever.

#### WATERGATE

The abdication of the Marxist understanding of Watergate necessarily has implications in the SL's Workers Vanguard's coverage of Watergate. It betrays the Spartacists' faith in the stability of bourgeois democracy. "There are those who see Watergate as a sign of impending fascism and Bonapartism," said the October 26, 1973 issue. "In fact, it is just the opposite—constituting the norms of U.S. bourgeois democracy and the power of the government has been reduced."

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When the Watergate scandal broke, Nixon was enlarging the powers of the executive branch following a strong-government policy. Watergate represented a detour from that road, but it did not put the Spartacists into reverse gear that the Spartacists were in Watergate, in critical periods such as

the winter fuel shortage and the Middle East war, Congress was eager to grant additional emergency powers to the discredited President.

Now, the ruling class must find a way to discipline the working class, because of the fragility of the economy. Whether this will be done by the Ford-Rockefeller regime or by the Democrats in 1976 remains to be seen, but in no case will it or can it mean that "the power of the government has been greatly reduced."

#### ITALY

Elsewhere in the same article, the Spartacists appear to realize that strong government is a necessity. "The U.S.'s tasks as the leading imperialist power require a dominant executive." But this wisdom doesn't last long, for the article continues, "Italy can muddle along without a stable cabinet because the real business of government is carried out by the permanent civil service. Not so for the U.S. . . ." Once more, it is Italy whose severe problems can be solved, according to the Spartacists, within the framework of bourgeois democracy. Italy, the country threatened by military coup, the country that invented fascism, has been excused from the consequences of the world crisis.

#### "NO BOOM"

The key to the Spartacists' conception that the capitalist crisis of today is just another downturn (although perhaps the worst since World War II) is their theory that there was no post-war boom. Under this theory, they have no need to account for the prolonged economic stability after the war: the relatively low level of class struggle, the reduction in unemployment, the world-wide rise in industrial production, the increasing real wages of workers in the advanced countries, the absence of depression for a quarter of a century—that is, the apparent change in the character of the epoch from predominant international crisis to sectoral expansion. Nor do they need to explain why the post-war boom has eroded, how the surface prosperity of the post-war period masked its underlying decay, and why the decay is now becoming so obvious that even empiricists perceive it.

By denying the existence of the post-war boom,

the Spartacists avoid coming to grips with the fact that the world today is in a period unlike the post-war decades, a pre-revolutionary period in which capitalism's deepening crisis will generate revolutionary situations across the world. All the Spartacists know is that there is an epoch of decay in which revolutionary situations will sprout, conjuncturally, here and there—like weeds in the well-kept garden of class relations that no mere passing storm can disturb.

#### TROTSKY ABUSED

This interpretation of the epoch of decay runs so counter to Marxism that the Spartacists are forced to distort a statement by Trotsky in order to make their point. Workers Vanguard (June 8, 1973) quotes from Trotsky's "Report on the World Economic Crisis" delivered to the Communist International in 1921:

So long as capitalism is not overthrown by the proletarian revolution, it will continue to live in cycles, swinging up and down. Crises and booms were inherent in capitalism from its very birth; they will accompany it to its grave. [The First Five Years of the Communist International, Vol. I, p. 200]

In order to leave the impression that Trotsky shares the Spartacists' conception that economic oscillations are all that Marxists have to say about the development of capitalism, Trotsky's next sentence had to be omitted:

But to determine capitalism's age and its general condition—to establish whether it is still developing or whether it has matured or whether it is in decline—one must diagnose the character of the cycles.

Precisely what the Spartacists refuse to do—since diagnosing the character of the cycles would compel them to distinguish periods, trends, and even epochs. Their method leads them directly to the bourgeois picture of continual capitalist "development," marred by the business cycle, so that episodes like the post-war boom can be taken for granted. The Marxist method requires looking beneath the surface of every boom in the epoch of declining capitalism to determine its actual character and indicate the sources of future crises.

For the post-war boom, the Spartacists might equally well have decided, based on their method, would have to be permanent. The outcome is the

same either way. By calling the post-war boom a myth, the Spartacists surrender to the bourgeois myth that renewed prosperity is around the corner.

#### SL'S "THEORY"

How do the Spartacists back up their denial of the post-war boom? It is worth examining their theoretical justification, as put forward by Joseph Seymour in an article written in early 1972. The article was written as a polemic against the "three principle currents of Marxist revisionism" represented by Paul Sweezy, Ernest Mandel and Michael Kidron of the British International Socialists.

Seymour points out that the three share the notion that post-war capitalism has fundamentally changed, and has become what Mandel calls "neo-capitalism." This Seymour believes is a necessary consequence of the idea of a post-war boom, for he thinks that there is no way to account for such a boom except by assuming that capitalism underwent major structural changes that could guarantee permanent prosperity and stability. Seymour argues that boom equals new epoch:

All theories of fundamental post-war capitalist change assume that post-war capitalism has performed extraordinarily well. This exceptional performance can only be explained if major structural reforms have taken place. Bourgeois and revisionist theorists then search for the structural changes behind this otherwise inexplicable boom—Keynesian-type stabilization policy, capitalist planning, increased government expenditure, the 'permanent arms economy,' etc.

The first, and in some ways most important myth of neo-capitalism is the post-war boom. The general impression of a post-war boom comes from comparing the post-war period to the 1930's. Since the 1930's constituted the greatest depression in capitalist history, it is not surprising that post-war capitalism should appear much more successful.

Seymour objects to comparing the post-war years with the pre-war decade on the grounds that the Great Depression was abnormal. He forgets that the depression's ten-year duration, and the fact that it was ended only by the World War, led most Marxists to expect that depression conditions were normal for the epoch of capitalist decay. The Fourth International believed that capitalism would collapse into a renewed depression after the war.

James Cannon, for example, the leading U.S. Trotskyist of the period, wrote in 1946 that there would soon come "another crisis and depression which would make the 1929-32 conditions look prosperous by comparison." Even if the Spartacists' denial of the post-war boom were correct, they would still have to explain theoretically why there was no post-war depression.

#### SL VS. SL

The Spartacists' contempt for the idea of a post-war boom, and Seymour's smug contention that it can be held only by "bourgeois and revisionist theorists," are especially ironic in the light of the fact that the idea was the property of the Spartacist League itself up through 1971. For example, Spartacist magazine of April-May 1971, reports:

The 'American Century', the longest continuous boom in the reactionary period of capitalism, has come to an end. This phase was based on a permanent Cold War economy, under which the capitalist class' general staff could regulate ups and downs by carefully measured government transfusions.

Here is not only an acceptance of the post-war boom (not surprising in itself, except when compared to the Spartacists' later fulminations against the idea), but also a thoroughly "bourgeois and revisionist" explanation for it. We are told that the boom was based on the government's ability to regulate the economy by fiscal adjustments ("carefully adjusted government transfusions")—precisely the Keynesian theory that government controls and a government sector superimposed on the private sector could be carefully planned and would thereby keep the economy humming along without disruptions or crises.

Seymour's jibe that the post-war boom "can only be explained if major structural reforms have taken place. . . Keynesian-type stabilization policy, capitalist planning, increased government expenditure,

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## The SL's successive theories have tailed events without pointing out the direction of the economy, relying on bankrupt bourgeois methods.

the 'permanent arms economy,' etc." scores a direct hit on the unfortunate Spartacist writer of 1971, who managed to compress all these theories into one small paragraph.

### SL'S KEYNESIANISM

This 1971 version of the post-war boom was not an isolated occurrence; it occurred in various Spartacist statements on economics up to 1971. In that period the Spartacists also had an explanation for the end of the boom, which they called "the deepening economic and political crisis in the U.S., part of the world capitalist crisis"—an assessment forthright enough to be denounced by today's Spartacists as crisis-mongering. Their explanation was the government's "delicately balanced economic policy" had been disrupted by the Vietnam war when the war "mushroomed into unmanageable proportions." So the Spartacists swallowed the Keynesian theory whole.

Keynesian policy failed, according to them, not because it was fundamentally an illusion covering up the world-wide plundering of U.S. imperialism, but because war spending caused too great a distortion in the federal budget for the economy to be successfully managed. Lots of bourgeois theorists objected to that too.

### NO BOOM, NO CRISIS

For most of its history, therefore, the Spartacist League accepted both the post-war boom and the Keynesian explanations for it. Their inability to account for the boom, except by means of the bourgeois theories that Seymour so righteously charges to others, set the stage for their current attitude that there hadn't been a boom at all and therefore there can't be any post-war crisis.

So they changed their analysis without acknowledging the change; and just recently they have been talking "crisis" and even "catastrophe"—again, without acknowledging that their theory of last year ruled out the possibility of crisis.

The Spartacist League's failure to present a Marxist analysis of the world economy is characteristic of centrist groupings. The SL's successive theories have tailed events without pointing out the direction of the economy beforehand. Despite their claims to Bolshevism, they have failed to prepare the working class for the dangers it faces and the revolutionary tasks it must accomplish. Promising to provide revolutionary leadership, they have instead relied on bourgeois methods which have proved to be bankrupt in the hands of all their practitioners, both bourgeois and pseudo-socialist.

Since the Spartacist League has an economic analysis which in reality denies that this is the epoch of decay, their practice must follow suit. We have already seen how they fail to prepare the working class of the danger of strongman rule, Bonapartism and fascism in their analysis of Watergate and their optimistic faith in the stability of Italy's "permanent civil service." These are not isolated examples, since by not understanding objective conditions the Spartacist League mangles the Transitional Program.

### TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM GUTTED

For example, here is how the Spartacists lay claim to the Trotskyist tradition:

It is clear that a deep economic crisis coming in a period of generally rising class struggle, particularly in Europe, can lead to revolutionary situations. The Transitional Program of the Fourth International, written in 1938, is a strategic document which is valid for the epoch of imperialism, i.e., of capitalist decline. Many of its particular demands, formulated in an earlier period of sharp economic downturn, are of special relevance today. The following demands, arising out of the concrete conjuncture in the major capitalist countries, must be raised by the labor movement if the workers are not to suffer a sharp reduction of their living standards.

What a passive and reformist interpretation of

the Transitional Program! The world economic crisis has been reduced to a "period of sharp economic downturn"—and so has the Great Depression of the 1930's. The Spartacists ignore Trotsky's estimate of the period when the Transitional Program was written as something more than an economic downturn: "a pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization," whose strategic task "consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. . . ."

That is, the task of revolutionaries is not simply to raise demands to defend the workers' standard of living, but to demonstrate that the only alternative to depression, military takeovers, fascism and war is the socialist revolution.

The demands that the Spartacists raise "arising



Nixon before his fall. The Spartacist League—hopeless empiricists—denies the connection between capitalism's economic and social crisis and the leadership crisis within the ruling class.

out of the concrete conjuncture" are limited to three. None of them shows how to fight inflation (although the article refers to "unprecedented massive inflation" which "cannot drop significantly and may well rise").

### WORKERS' DEFENSE? NO NEED

Worse, the Spartacists' truncated program has nothing to say about the need for workers' defense, although *Workers Vanguard* has indignantly denied our accusation in *Torch* No. 9 that they capitulate in just this way to pacifism. Not only do the Spartacists overlook the danger of armed repression by the bourgeoisie and its agents who run the state—they take great pains to deny that the danger exists! Here is how they justify one of their three demands, "Occupation of Closed-Down Plants—Nationalize them under Workers Control!":

The British Labour government is formally committed to widespread nationalizations and an anti-deflationary fiscal policy. The Italian Christian Democratic/Socialist coalition has promised to minimize industrial layoffs, providing the unions will accept increased taxes. Thus the political conditions in Britain and Italy are such that a wave of plant seizures organized by the unions would not simply be crushed by the armed forces of the state. That is not, therefore, an adventurist tactic.

Such trust in the promises and commitments of bourgeois governments is a gift that the ruling class does not deserve from "Trotskyists." Do the Spartacists actually believe that the capitalists who factories are seized by the workers will not call in the police, and the army if necessary? That the British and Italian governments, whatever their economic promises, will refuse to use force? And that the bourgeoisie will not have its privately-owned supply of thugs to bring into action as well?

The Spartacists' treacherous reliance on the soft words of the bourgeoisies' Social Democratic servants comes in the same article that reports that "rumors of a military coup needed to impose 'austerity' flourish" in Italy. Rumors like this are not mere gossip for the Spartacists' columns, but a warning to the working class.

Trotsky's Transitional Program calls for the slogans of workers' self-defense and a workers' militia precisely in the context from which the Spartacists remove them—the bourgeoisie's attacks on sit-down strikers. The experience of the 1930's, repeated today in Chile, proves that the bourgeoisie reacts with violence when thwarted by its own system's contradictions and the rising demands of the workers.

The organization of the workers for self-defense against scabs, police and gangsters cannot be replaced by naive trust in the government's good will. If the working class is to defend itself and fight to maintain its deteriorating standard of living, workers' cynicism and passivity must be uprooted.

The slogans of workers' defense are needed today in order that the proletariat train itself, learn self-confidence, and find the road to power. Otherwise, the revolutionary character of the epoch—the epoch of capitalist decay for which the program was created—will take on its counter-revolutionary aspect.

In short, the Spartacist League understands neither the objective conditions, nor the method of the Transitional Program, and therefore cannot possibly provide a revolutionary leadership. This empiricist outfit, recognizing neither boom nor depression, fails to warn of the danger of fascism; it

guts the call for workers' self-defense; it urges the working class to ignore the danger of the bourgeoisie using its armed might against them. These are just a few of the many incredible errors which must flow from a grouping that postures as revolutionary while standing on empiricism.

Promising to provide revolutionary leadership, the Spartacist League has instead relied on bourgeois methods which have proved to be completely bankrupt in the hands of all their practitioners, both bourgeois and pseudo-socialist.

Their program, mimicking their complacent theories, is a watered-down and passive rendition of the Transitional Program. The Spartacists' disarming of the working class, done in the name of Trotsky and revolutionary internationalism, makes them an obstacle on the road to socialist revolution that revolutionaries have to expose and politically defeat.

# Editorial

# DEFENSE BLACKS

Cont'd. from p. 1  
oppressed wage-slaves  
blacks.

This explosion of inevitable result, program. As The busing is a total b and black student rotting schools. Th it offers to some whites—who are b are hused out of.

Neither liberals education for all education will imp share it assumes t system—but capit services, an overh being slashed to k

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Unfortunately, socialism which "socialist" groups program—the Soci ers League, the S tional Socialists, o proletariat and esp leadership they so

Instead of posi panded education fo back a cynical far capitalism at each programs are pos capitulate to liber democratic rights of the program of libe

The most disgust the Spartacist Lea militant left wing o result, its slogans— "Extend Busing to quated in the New

## LEAGUE

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## Editorial

# DEFEND THE BLACK STUDENTS

Cont'd. from p. 1

oppressed wage-slaves of American capitalism, the blacks.

This explosion of racist violence is not only the inevitable result, but even the aim of the liberal program. As *The Torch* has previously explained, busing is a total hoax. It proposes to spread white and black students a little more evenly through rotting schools. The slight and mainly illusory gains it offers to some blacks come at the expense of whites—who are bused into the schools the blacks are bused out of.

Neither liberals nor conservatives can expand education for all. The argument that black education will improve when whites are forced to share it assumes that capitalism is an expanding system—but capitalism is decaying. All social services, an overhead cost for the bourgeoisie, are being slashed to keep up profits.

### "ONLY FAIR?"

To the moralists of liberalism and their "socialist" hangers-on it is "only fair" that whites suffer worsening conditions to make room for a token reform for blacks. But for revolutionary socialists to support such a conception would be a terrible crime, an acceptance of the limits of capitalism, a capitulation to its devious strategy.

Unfortunately, it is precisely this betrayal of socialism which has been committed by the "socialist" groups that support the busing program—the Socialist Workers Party, the Workers League, the Spartacist League, the International Socialists, etc. These groups deprive the proletariat and especially the black workers of the leadership they so desperately need.

Instead of posing the socialist alternative—expanded education for all at capitalist expense—they back a cynical farce which hurls the victims of capitalism at each other's throats. Their own programs are posed for "later." These groups capitulate to liberalism; they are unable to pose the democratic rights of the oppressed independently of the program of liberal capitalism.

The most disgusting such capitulation is that of the Spartacist League, which offers itself as the militant left wing of the bourgeois program. As a result, its slogans—"Implement Busing Program," "Extend Busing to the Suburbs"—are approvingly quoted in the *New York Times*.

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The immediate question posed in Boston is the defense of the basic democratic rights of blacks. At the same time, the crisis poses the question of how these rights are to be defended—through the program of the bourgeoisie to create a race war within the working class; or through the program of the proletariat.

### DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

For revolutionary socialists, the starting point is that only the socialist revolution can secure and guarantee the democratic rights of the oppressed. The various bourgeois programs which talk about democratic rights are actually designed to smash them. We support the rights of blacks to equality, access to any schools and neighborhoods, safety from racist violence. We support blacks today against the racist violence in Boston. We support their right today to attend school in South Boston and anywhere else. We support these rights without giving any support whatsoever to the busing program. We do this precisely to separate the democratic content of the black demand for equality and democratic rights from the fraud of the liberal program.

Likewise, we support the right of whites to attend the schools of their choice—and not to be forced into worse schools as the price of token black advance—without supporting their claims to privileges, to racist exclusion of blacks who have the right to attend the same schools.

The basic Trotskyist method of approaching this question—unknown to those centrists who call themselves "Trotskyists"—was stated as long ago as 1927 in the Platform of the Left Opposition: "It is necessary to achieve an increasing equalization in the wages of different groups of workers, by way of a systematic raising of the lower-paid groups; in no case by a lowering of the higher-paid." This method

of approach is fully applicable to the democratic demands of specially exploited and oppressed groups.

Because this is the only method of solving the terrible problem of racism, revolutionary socialists know that democratic rights can only be gained through the transitional demands contained in the socialist revolutionary program. Capitalism cannot implement the democratic demands, even "partially" or "incompletely"—it can only destroy democracy as its death agony increases.

We support the rights of blacks to attend school anywhere. We support this through the program of improved, expanded education for all, at the expense of the capitalists. To make these demands meaningful, they must be coupled with the program of full employment through the sliding scale of wages and hours, and the rebuilding of the cities at capitalist expense, central demands of the Transitional Program. We defend blacks and support their rights in today's specific situation while calling for this program to win these rights by revolutionary means.

Finally, we call for workers' defense guards to defend black rights and the black community against racist violence. We call on black workers to form armed defense organizations and to demand in the trade unions the official formation of workers' defense guards. We counterpose this to the Socialist Workers Party's despicable call for federal troops.

### POLICE

Even today the bourgeois police openly sympathize with the whites while they intervene at the last moment to save the black victim from the white mob. Tomorrow they will again turn their clubs and guns openly against the black masses—and against the entire working class, white and black.

Socialists must call for the working class and the oppressed slaves of American capitalism to defend themselves through their own class power, not the bourgeois police and army. Socialists must call upon them to defend themselves through their own class program, not the bourgeois program. Anything else is a betrayal of socialism, the working class and all oppressed people.

## Los Angeles

## Forum

COAL AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE:  
The UMW and the Tasks of the Labor Movement

Speaker: Fred Larson

Tuesday, November 19 8:00 P.M.

1910 S. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles

## League Mounts \$10,000 Fall Fund Drive

The Revolutionary Socialist League was born of the contradiction between the sharply accelerating crisis of world capitalism and the lack of a revolutionary proletarian leadership. The so-called revolutionary organizations—including self-proclaimed "Trotskyists" such as the United Secretariat, the International Committee, International Socialists and the Spartacist League and its international grouplets—provide only misleadership. In place of the revolutionary analysis of capitalism and the fighting proletarian program to meet the crisis, they offer capitulation to the petty bourgeoisie or a sterile sectarianism that gravitates toward opportunism at the first "opportunity."

Born in a fight against centrist leadership, the RSL has elaborated the Leninist-Trotskyist program, strategy and tactics for the approaching revolutionary crisis. We have shown the road to revolution in the United States, Britain, South America and elsewhere. We have elaborated the application of Leninist revolutionary tactics in the Middle East war, and the understanding of the Stalinist states as state-capitalist societies, born of counterrevolution and the maintenance of capitalism in its epoch of decay. We have cohered and trained our own organization and launched *The Torch* as the propaganda organ to bring our program to the advanced workers in the United

States and abroad. We have undertaken this work in a struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

In the League's second year, its need for funds from its friends is as sharp as ever. The tasks are enormous—the improvement and professionalization of *The Torch*, the dissemination of theoretical and programmatic writings internationally, the expansion of international discussions and intervention, the development of a systematic presence in the trade unions and movements of the oppressed, including a network of labor bulletins supplementing *The Torch* in the day-to-day life of the working class, the expansion and professionalization of our staff.

The League's two previous fund drives, in autumn 1973 and spring 1974, both raised substantially more than expected. In view of this the goal of this autumn's fund drive has been raised to \$10,000. Once again our members and sympathizers are making great sacrifices to meet this goal and finance the League. Our readers and friends can do no less. We appeal to you to make the greatest possible contribution before the end of the drive on November 25. Make checks payable to Revolutionary Socialist League, RSL or Sy Landy.



# Workers League Opposes United Front

by Wayne Gordon

The strength of the working class lies in its solidarity, its weakness in its disunity. The divisions are deep between white workers and black and brown, between men and women workers, between unionized and unorganized, between skilled crafts and production line workers.

Even the urge to overcome class disunity is used to weaken the proletariat. Union hacks use "unity" as a defense against militant oppositionists. They sell out the interests of blacks and other specially oppressed workers to maintain the facade of racist "unity."

## UNITED FRONT

The task of revolutionary Marxists is to convince the workers that a real, lasting unity can only be reached around the revolutionary program, the Trotskyist Transitional Program. For this purpose, Marxists developed the strategy of the **united front**. We demand of the union bureaucrats and reformists and of other left groupings, that they unite in specific class actions. In order for us to win their followers to our program and leadership, we denounce them for every limitation they put on the struggle.

While still in the leadership of the Communist International, Trotsky declared:

**The outlived groupings and factions are interested in preserving intact and immutable all the barriers dividing the working class into segments. We, on the other hand, have a vital task in pulling down the barriers of conservatism and in teaching the working class to follow our example. Herein lies the whole meaning of the united front policy, a meaning which derives directly from the social revolutionary essence of our party. (The First Five Years of the Communist International, Vol. 2, p. 168)**

The Workers League is one of the groups which claims to stand on the methods and program of Lenin and Trotsky. It claims to reject the revisionism of the Socialist Workers Party and offers the appearance of being Trotskyist. In fact, as we will show, it is one of "... the outlived groupings and factions... interested in preserving intact and immutable all the barriers dividing the working class."

## THE WL CAMPAIGN

The New York Revolutionary Socialist League sent a letter to the New York City Workers League, declaring our support for the election campaigns of Helen Halyard and Terry Delgado in the 14th and 12th Congressional Districts in Brooklyn, running on the "Workers Party" slate. Delgado is running against Shirley Chisholm, the Democratic Party's pet "black woman militant."

The WL's "Election Platform" (Bulletin, June 21, 1974—all further

references are to the WL's Bulletin) warns workers of the deepening economic crisis and of the tendency towards political dictatorship. It correctly demands that

**... the trade unions call for a Congress of Labor... for the building of a labor party pledged to a socialist program to meet the crisis... [including] nationalization of industry... without compensation... by a workers government.**

The campaign is supportable. Its program is far superior to that of the Socialist Workers Party candidate in the 12th CD, Maxine Williams. Her program calls for, among other things, "community control" of education (electing local bourgeois governments to boss school workers) and hiring "local residents" to be police.

## OUR DIFFERENCES

We have important objections to the Workers Party program. For example, the Platform declares: "Racism is openly encouraged by the government which uses the busing issue to divide the working class." This statement, correct as far as it goes, hides the fact that the Workers League has repeatedly stated that it is for busing. ("Opposition to busing can have only one meaning, and that is conceding to racists and reactionary fascist forces." March 27, 1972)

While the RSL supports the right of blacks to go to any school they want, we oppose the strategy of busing, of forcing the children of any workers to attend rotten, slum schools. Not only the anti-busing conservatives, but also the pro-busing liberals use "the busing issue to divide the working class."

The Platform also predicts repression of the workers and even goes so far as to say that "... the preparations for civil war against the entire working class are far advanced." However, neither the Platform nor the Bulletin ever call on the trade unions to build workers' defense guards to defend workers and minorities from fascist thuggery or violent government attacks.

Despite these and other differences, we were sincerely willing to aid the Workers League campaign in any way, such as helping the petition drive necessary for getting on the ballot. As in any principled united front, we would have insisted upon our right to sell **The Torch**, raise our differences with the Workers League and to expose the latter's inconsistency and vacillations.

In any case, the WL informed us that "we aren't interested" in any united front work.

Such a reaction is typical of the WL, which has frequently refused to join with other groups in common activities. The WL had been recently running an "Oust Nixon" campaign. Not only did the WL refuse to go to any of the anti-Nixon demonstrations held by other organizations, but it

refused to allow members of other organizations to attend the WL demonstrations, even keeping the places and times secret from everyone but its supporters! When a big demonstration, to defend the rights of Haitian refugees, was held in May right in the middle of their Brooklyn campaign area, the WL did not show up.

## WALL OFF POLITICS

The WL does all it can to wall its members and supporters off from other political tendencies. It excludes political opponents from public forums and meetings. Its members are under strict orders not to talk to outside groups. The WL does not dare to drop its anti-Trotskyist sectarianism.

Regardless of the merits of its positions, the Young Socialist members could not defend the WL-YS program. They are attracted to the YS on a very low level. Young adults are offered barbecues, summer camps, basketball games and dances as come-ons to a very little Marxism. People attracted in such a non-political fashion had better be kept away from other tendencies.

The WL has another good reason to be sectarian. The sectarianism is a barrier against the WL's persistent tendency toward opportunism.

This dynamic can be clearly seen in the WL line on the labor party. The Workers League has continually raised the call for a labor party. Today, it calls for such a party on the basis of a socialist program. But for years it called for such a party to be formed on a reformist program.

What it did not and still does not understand is why Trotsky first advocated raising the labor party slogan in 1938. Trotsky's call for a labor party in the U.S. was based on the method of the united front. He started from the objective need for a revolutionary party and the actual smallness of the revolutionary party (then the SWP) and its isolation from the masses.

The labor party slogan was thus a tactic which the vanguard could use to struggle for a revolutionary party in a way which placed them in a united front relationship with the mass of workers. In joint struggle for an independent party of the working class, the vanguard would fight for a revolutionary program for this party.

## TROTSKY ON THE LABOR PARTY

**... We cannot say to the trade unions, you should adhere to the SWP. It would be a joke... Why? Because the decline of capitalism develops ten—a hundred times faster than the speed of our party. It is a new discrepancy. The necessity of a political party is given by the objective conditions, but our party is too small, with too little authority to organize the workers into its own ranks... In a mass meeting 500 would agree on the**

**need for a labor party, only 5 to join our party... Then we must introduce our transitional slogans... [Leon Trotsky on the Labor Party in the United States]**

The entirety of the Workers League practice shows they do not understand the key Leninist tactic of the united front. Their labor party line, unlike Trotsky's, is not part of the united front approach at all. Thus the Workers League can jump from an opportunist line on the question to a formally correct call for a labor party based on a socialist program and still not get any nearer to Trotskyism. To the Workers League the labor party slogan is something they inherited from Trotsky which they carry around like so much baggage.

The character of the WL's line on the labor party was expressed quite clearly in 1972. When the AFL-CIO refused to endorse McGovern, the Bulletin headlined: "AFL-CIO Tops Threaten Labor Party at Miami." (July 17, 1972) An article explained: **What dominates this convention in fact is the complete break-up of the relationship between the labor movement and the Democratic Party. The Democratic Convention opened this week with the leadership of the AFL-CIO desperately seeking to hold back the movement of the working class for its own labor party...**

Of course, the "labor tops" had not completely broken with the Democratic Party and they certainly did not threaten a labor party, as their "neutral-for-Nixon" stance was to show. Meany broke with McGovern because McGovern was "against the war," not because he was more anti-labor than any other Democrat.

## FAIL TO WARN WORKERS

In any case, it was the job of the WL to warn workers that if the present labor bureaucracy ever formed its own labor party, it would be a sell-out, pro-capitalist labor party—not what the workers need, "a labor party on a socialist program." Not a word of this appears in the article.

The WL can "get away" with its opposition to the united front only because of the relatively low level of the class struggle in the U.S. today. When the AFL-CIO failed to organize a workers' movement to impeach Nixon, then the WL's little marches could be sold to its followers as the "mass movement."

But what will happen when the working class really goes into mass action? Perhaps the WL-YS will stay on the sidelines, with their isolated "mass actions." The young members would no doubt be disillusioned and demand that the WL join the real mass movement.

But then they will have to stand up in large union meetings or strike committees and defend their positions against the attacks of the union bureaucracies and of other left groups. They will have to try to respond to the reformism of the bureaucrats and the Communist Party, the centrism of most of the other left tendencies and the Trotskyism of the Revolutionary Socialist League. It won't be easy.

Despite the centrist character of the Workers League and the limitations of the program of its current campaign, we urge a vote for the Workers Party candidates in the 12th and 14th CD's in Brooklyn on Election Day.

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Cont'd. p. 17

# CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE SOUTH

## Part Three: The Twentieth Century

BY DAVID FRANKLIN

We have noted that the South historically functioned as a super-oppressed region within the United States, with similar characteristics to the exploitation of the "third world." But despite the similarities, there are fundamental differences. Due to a complex of reasons—the geographical proximity, the close commercial, communicative, transportative, and general cultural ties, etc.—the South was never economically subordinated to the same degree, or in the same form, as the more backward areas of the world.

And, politically, the differences are even sharper. In the third world, complete political went along with economic subjugation. One of the chief effects of the Compromise of 1876 was the enabling of the southern ruling class to exert a profound political impact in the U.S. nationwide, to serve as a political bulwark for the rule of the national bourgeoisie.

Furthermore, the South has undergone what the third world by and large has not—an economic "take-off," a quantitative economic transformation. This did not occur, though, before the bourgeois recognition of a "southern problem."

### THE "SOUTHERN PROBLEM"

Despite the advantages of the rape of the South for many a capitalist, the southern economy posed problems for U.S. capital in general. The quick-buck operations in the extractive industries had intensified the old problems of worn-out soil, cut-over timber lands, and worked-out mines.

Conversely, due to the backwardness of agriculture, many resources had been untapped, or yielded poor returns. In short, the future returns to capital from the South were being sacrificed for the present. This is hardly surprising, considering the general irrationality of capitalist production.

In the depression of the 1930's, the South was the hardest-hit region of the country. And it was in this period that the more far-sighted elements of the bourgeoisie saw that the "status quo" must be changed. As Franklin Roosevelt wrote in 1938: "... It is my conviction that the South presents right now the Nation's No. 1 economic problem—the Nation's problem, not merely the South's. For we have an economic imbalance in the Nation as a whole, due to this very condition of the South."

The federal government, in its own fashion,



A union organizing drive among hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina

attempted to transform the region, through such mechanisms as the Tennessee Valley Authority. But these were largely efforts in the agricultural infrastructure (e.g., better roads and communication between farming communities) and other peripheral aspects of the economy. In order to transform the economic base—production—it would require an upturn of capitalism in general. World War II and the post-war boom fulfilled these requirements.

### THE BOOM

The economic stimulus of the Second World War, and the temporary stabilization of capital following it, enabled a rapid expansion of capital in the South. From being an obvious embarrassment to the American bourgeoisie, the region is now ballyhooed as a showcase for the potential of latter-day capitalism.

From capital's own narrow point of view, the record had indeed been impressive. For example, if in 1939 the area was producing approximately \$11 billion worth of industrial goods, by 1955 this had increased to \$60 billion. Industrialization necessarily implies urbanization; and from being predominately rural, occupations have turned to the urban arena. By the late 1960's, for example, the agricultural work-force

in North Carolina was only 16.9 per cent of the total work-force; in Tennessee, only 14.3 per cent.

In agriculture, the old one-crop lien system has been supplanted. The mechanization and diversification of agriculture, and the application of scientific techniques to it, is in sharp contrast to the former, almost primitive methods of working the land. The changes in the economic substructure have had profound ramifications within southern society as a whole. Health, transportation, communications, etc., have been rapidly advanced.

In many formal aspects, then, the South more and more resembles the nation as a whole. (And it even surpasses the nation at large in some of the more decadent expressions of capitalism. Witness the exceptionally cheap commercialism and gaudy spectacle surrounding Hank Aaron's record-breaking home run in Atlanta Stadium. Perhaps a more mundane, but more noteworthy and measurable example, is the large role of the military in southern economy.)

### LIMITATIONS OF "PROSPERITY"

There are severe limitations to this "prosperity." In considering the per-capita income (a measure of wealth of all social classes), we find that the South's average, by 1970, was only 80 per cent of the nation's—a sharp climb from the past, no doubt, but quite a distance from the American norm. 40 per cent of the population lives in rural settings, compared to only 25 per cent nationally.

Neither has continuity been broken with the past in terms of the type of southern industry. Undoubtedly, heavy industry has moved into the region, often being directly related to traditional ones (the production of textile machinery, for instance).

But a survey of those traditional industries of importance: 697,000 in apparel; 275,000 in chemicals; and furniture and lumber industries employ each. As *South Today*, "Undeniably, the South encouraged primarily industry in which even often exists on the *South Today*, May-June, 1971.

Further, the financial largely from outside Northeast, with Atlanta way-station. To note whistling Dixie, as late

But most important, detached from class reality the "New South" is v

### "PROSPERITY"

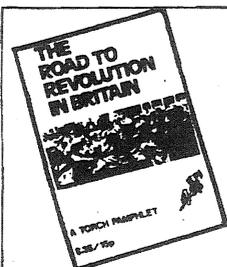
In agriculture, as a system is a thing of the past has dramatically dropped the end of problems for the farm. As *South Today* mechanization and capital-intensive farming Southerners off the land migrating to the city to stay in a rural setting winter, seasonal jobs in adds that "Federal per incomes for large farm provision for the small workers.")

And for the workers? is very much a thing wages average only 80 only three per cent from boom period). The "ch essentially a myth that fact; further, the abyss in southern cities merely

But even in industries the "southern differential example, a local transit \$3.66 an hour while his paid \$4.90; a building Mississippi was paid \$3. Illinois laborer got \$6.4 for workers under u estimated at between 20

### EXTRA REGI

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## South Africa and World Revolution

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But a survey of the work-force indicates that those traditional industries have not lost their importance: 697,000 textile workers; 421,900 in apparels; 275,000 in food processing; 212,800 in chemicals; and furniture, pulpwood, paper and lumber industries employ less than 200,000 workers each. As *South Today*, a bourgeois journal, admits: "Undeniably, the South has attracted and encouraged primarily low-wage, labor-intensive industry in which even the fully employed worker often exists on the margin of poverty." (*South Today*, May-June, 1973, p. 7)

Further, the financing of production still comes largely from outside the South, notably the Northeast, with Atlanta serving as the major way-station. To note this is hardly a matter of whistling Dixie, as later examination will show.

But most importantly, this "progress" cannot be detached from class relations, and it is here where the "New South" is very much the "Old South."

### "PROSPERITY" IN CLASS TERMS

In agriculture, as mentioned, the old one-crop system is a thing of the past, and tenant farming has dramatically dropped. But this has not meant the end of problems for the "little people" down on the farm. As *South Today* further notes: "Farm mechanization and the trend toward large, capital-intensive farms has pushed millions of Southerners off the land. They must choose between migrating to the city to live on ghetto incomes, or staying in a rural setting to work at odd jobs in the winter, seasonal jobs in the summer." (The article adds that "Federal policies have supported large incomes for large farmers, making almost no provision for the small farmer and the landless farm workers.")

And for the workers? The "southern differential" is very much a thing of the present. Industrial wages average only 80 per cent of the nation's (up only three per cent from the 1960 level—during a boom period). The "cheap living" in the South is essentially a myth that by no means offsets this fact; further, the abysmal lack of "public services" in southern cities merely intensifies the distinction.

But even in industries where unionization exists, the "southern differential" is preserved. In 1971, for example, a local transit worker in Atlanta was paid \$3.66 an hour while his New York counterpart was paid \$4.90; a building laborer in Jackson, Mississippi was paid \$3.09 an hour while a Peoria, Illinois laborer got \$6.44. Overall, the differential for workers under union contract has been estimated at between 20 and 30 per cent.

### EXTRA-REGIONAL EFFECTS

If we look back to per-capita income figures, we see that it hides class distinctions. It also hides something else: the fact that the historical

super-oppression of southern workers and rural poor has direct effects which affect more than those people presently living in the region. Many blacks and poor white "hillbillies," faced with poverty in the South, fled to such urban centers as Detroit and Chicago to find themselves in the "lower classes" of these areas.

Conversely, the "higher positions" in southern society that have been created by the post-war prosperity are largely filled by modern-day versions of "carpetbaggers." "You can go to any gathering of businessmen in Atlanta," says Edward D. Smith, chairman of the First National Bank of Atlanta, "and I'll bet you \$5 to a ginger cake that at least 50 per cent of them will not be natives." (*Business Week*, Sept. 2, 1972, p. 36)

It is not a particularly malicious regional southern bourgeoisie—great-grandsons of slave overseers or anything like that—that is the prime cause for the oppression of southern workers, but a typically malicious bourgeoisie that will screw workers anywhere, for as much as it can. Workers outside the South are not immune to these proceedings; many are thrown out of their jobs as their former employers head for the cheaper southern labor. A recent example of the old-fashioned runaway shop is the move of Federal-Mogul from Detroit to Alabama.

### THE "NEW" (OLD) POLITICS

Like the economy, the southern political structure has changed in form, but has maintained an exceptionally repressive content. One of the ways this is manifested is in the tax structures; the chief source of tax revenue in all the southern states is the general and selective sales tax, the most retrogressive of all taxes. Another example is the right-to-work laws existing throughout the South. Ostensibly aimed at giving a worker the "right" to not join a union, their main intent is to re-inforce the dominance of open shops. Nor is this extremely reactionary character limited to internal southern politics. If the "Solid South" is changing in party labels, its congressmen in Washington can be counted on to be the staunchest supporters of military spending, Vietnam-type wars, "law and order," and Richard Nixons, even when most of the rest of the capitalist class has already deserted him.

### PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The South, then, still remains a super-oppressed region of the U.S., but the forms of this oppression have changed. The region no longer bears the exact same relation to U.S. capital as it once did, but the primary way that historical continuity has been maintained is of utmost importance to the working class, the special exploitation of southern labor.

It boils down to this: capitalism, even in the period of the post-war boom, has shown itself to be

incapable of eliminating the super-oppression of southern workers. It will be even less able now, the post-war boom being transformed into a general decline. Perhaps God can think of an answer, but we shouldn't count on that either (he has a way of working through the channels of the prevailing



The 1920's: farm workers pull their plow by hand.

social relations anyway).

It is left for the socialist revolution to fulfill this task, in the process of abolishing the exploitation of the working class altogether. This demands a mobilization not only of southern workers, but of the international proletariat, in an all-out fight against capitalism.

This is Leon Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution, as applied to the ordeal of southern labor and the general political conclusions that flow from it.

## Pabloism in Argentina

Cont'd. from p. 4

of the Bolivian Revolutionary Workers Party (POR)—another one-time affiliate of the SWP—are ominous. These self-styled Trotskyists, through their constant capitulation to left-bourgeois currents, left the proletariat politically and physically unarmed before a right-wing coup d'etat. The result: four years of Banzer's military dictatorship.

The Argentine working class, however, is far from defeated. The recent strike wave clearly focused on the question of who will lead the labor movement forward. The leftward motion of the working class, combined with the rightward direction of the Peronist government, has sent shock waves through the mass Peronist movement and shaken its best elements into opposition.

These developments allow for the creation of a revolutionary leadership in the midst of the chaos of capitalist crisis—a leadership which can restore order on the proletariat's terms.

If the PST pursues its present course, it will not only prove incapable of providing this leadership—it will represent a major obstacle to the creation of such a leadership.

Revolutionaries within the PST's ranks must fight to prevent this outcome. They must challenge the PST's hardened centrist leadership with a truly revolutionary Trotskyist program—a program which Moreno and Coral claim to stand on but only use to deceive and disarm the workers who believe these claims.

The Transitional Program must be taken off the bookshelves and brought into combat—most urgently, today, the demand for armed workers' militias to defend the working class. The revolutionary program must be counterposed at every turn to the fake democratic program of the left-Peronists and their admirers.

Only such a decisive turn—a turn which requires the removal of the PST's present leadership—can prevent the PST from repeating the fate of the Bolivian POR.

Only such a struggle can contribute to a real victory of the working class in Latin America.

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## South Africa and World Revolution



U.S. miners protest importation of coal mined by slave labor in South Africa.

Cont'd. from p. 14

socialist revolution. Faced with totalitarian dictatorship, the South African liberation forces have a special need for outside, international aid.

The exiled members of the Pan African Congress and the African Congress (two major liberation organizations of the past) get aid from individual African governments, from the Organization of African Unity and from China or Russia. But these are all capitalist states. They cannot support a movement against international capitalism—which

is necessary for the liberation of the South African workers and peasants.

The workers of South Africa desperately need an international vanguard party composed of the revolutionary workers of all nations, with a socialist program of uncompromising opposition to all forms of capitalist rule. The struggle to rebuild the Trotskyist Fourth International on a revolutionary basis is a matter of life or death for the South African revolution.