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Newspaper of the
**Revolutionary
Socialist League**

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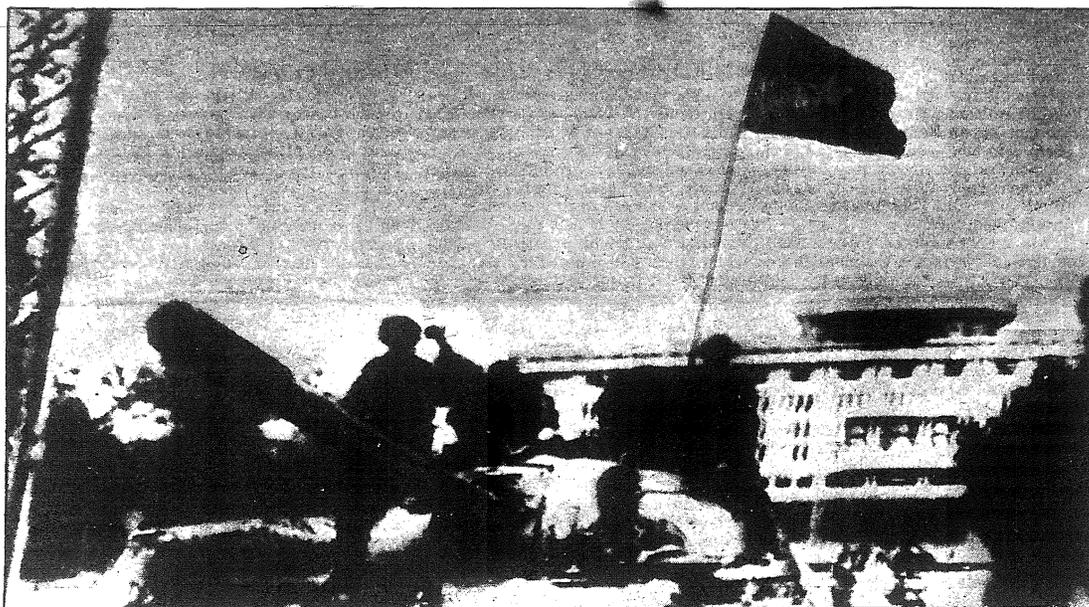
Vol. 2, No. 5

May 15 - June 14, 1975

Imperialism Routed in S.E. Asia

FOR PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

by Jack Gregory



MOMENT OF VICTORY: PRG forces take over Saigon Presidential Palace in final defeat of U.S. and its puppets in South Vietnam. Defeat of U.S. imperialism provides great opportunities for world proletariat.

The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese masses against French, Japanese and U.S. imperialism came to a victorious climax on April 30. The fall of Saigon following on the heels of the defeat of the American puppets in Phnom Penh, is a giant step forward for the world's toiling masses.

The victories of Vietnam and Cambodia have ejected parasitic U.S. imperialism from the back of the masses. The tremendous weakening of U.S. hegemony internationally opens up great opportunities for the class struggle. The Indochinese people have shown in struggle that the American war machine is not invincible. Their success is an inspiration to the exploited and oppressed of all nations.

But no credit is due the Stalinist leaderships of the PRG and the Khmer Rouge. Imperialism has been expelled despite their efforts to betray and limit the struggle at every turn. While revisionists of all stripes hail the establishment of "socialist societies" or "workers' states" in Vietnam and Cambodia, the Stalinists are consolidating state capitalist rule over the heroic workers and peasants.

Revolutionary socialists cannot confine themselves to simply uncritically hailing these anti-imperialist victories, great though they are. As the true allies of the Indochinese masses, we must point to the limits of the gains won if left at the present basis, and combat the illusions that are rife about the nature of the Stalinist leaders. The proletarian revolution remains on the agenda in Vietnam and Cambodia.

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APRIL 26: WORKERS ROUT HACKS

On April 26, 60,000 workers massed in Washington, D.C. demanding jobs. The "Rally for Jobs Now" in RFK Stadium, sponsored by the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, revealed the growing anger and frustration among workers at the economic attacks and the failure of the labor bureaucracy to pose even a semblance of a strategy to roll back the capitalist offensive.

The April 26 demonstration came to a sudden end when hundreds of militant workers spilled out of the stands and onto the playing field as Hubert Humphrey mounted the speakers' platform. The

militants' actions expressed the thoughts of thousands in the stands who were fed up with hearing rhetoric from Democratic Party politicians and labor bureaucrats in place of concrete actions to fight unemployment.

The actions of these militants brought to the fore the conflict between the mass of rank and file workers, hard hit by economic crisis, and the corrupt labor bureaucracy. And the fact that 60,000 showed up for an ill-prepared rally shows that the ranks are willing to fight, and that it is the treachery of the bureaucrats that has been responsible for the relative calm in the

class struggle. The IUD, headed by Steelworkers President I.W. Abel, had a two-fold purpose in organizing the rally. Abel and his cohorts are fully aware of the bitterness of the workers. They also

know that if something is not done soon either to alleviate the unemployment or to appear as if something is being done the bitterness may break out leading to a massive upsurge. Such a movement could quickly get out of the bureaucrats' control, threatening the bureaucrats' positions and the system as a whole. Consequently, Abel and company organized the rally 1) to build support for the Democratic Party and to pressure the Democratic Congress to

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INSIDE

For Proletarian Revolution

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To explain how it was that Stalinism was able to capture the allegiance of the masses, and how it was able to lead a successful anti-imperialist struggle and actually take power, we must examine both the nature of the recent military victory and its roots in the social and economic conditions in Southeast Asia.

ROUT

The military victory of the PRG forces in the past few weeks was a complete rout of the puppet forces. Following the fall of the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands on March 10, the tottering Thieu regime caved in like the house of cards that it was. Ban Me Thuot was taken by a thousand Montagnard tribesmen who previously had been the foundation of the CIA-front organization FURLO. The defection of the Montagnards represented the complete crumbling of any vestiges of popular support for Thieu, and made it clear that the puppets could no longer control the Central Highlands. This internal erosion, rather than the U.S. tale of a "massive influx of North Vietnamese troops," lay behind the decision to evacuate the Highlands.

Defeat quickly turned to rout. Thieu's army was plagued with massive defections, had lost whatever fighting spirit it had ever had, and was no match for the PRG forces. Despite overall numerical superiority and complete domination of the skies, the puppet Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) offered serious resistance only once. That was at Xuan Loc, outside Saigon, where a bitter battle ended with the victory of the PRG and forced Thieu's resignation.

The rapid collapse demonstrated the popular



WHEELING AND DEALING: Le Duc Tho's negotiations with Kissinger in 1973 were part of imperialist maneuvers over fate of Indochinese masses. U.S., Soviet Union and China all wanted to limit Southeast Asian struggle to preserve imperialist status quo.

nature of the PRG victory. Like Chiang in China and Batista in Cuba before him, Thieu had alienated all segments of the population. Even sections of the bourgeoisie were for his ouster, as the South Vietnamese regime had become almost completely parasitic. Thieu's only base was located in Washington D.C. and among imperialist hangers-on. Why was this so?

U.S. imperialism in decay is incapable of delivering on the demagogic promises of freedom and economic development which it rhetorically holds out to the world's masses. Instead of

development, there is systematic exploitation, looting and plundering of underdeveloped areas. The gap between the advanced and the backward nations has steadily increased, while the living conditions of the workers and peasants has plunged downward. Nowhere is this more true than in South Asia—witness the mass famine that has struck India and Bangladesh in the past year.

Under these conditions, it is difficult to maintain even the trappings of bourgeois democracy. The desperate material conditions bring the threat of social revolution to the fore, requiring ever more brutal regimes to hold the class struggle in check. Parasitic imperialism polarizes these nations ever more sharply into an overwhelming mass of impoverished peasants and workers on one pole, and a handful of well-to-do imperialist collaborators on the other. The social base for the client regime continually shrinks, further pushing towards the need for repressive regimes. This in turn drives the antagonisms towards U.S. imperialism and its lackeys forward more rapidly, pouring fuel on the class struggle.

Consequently, anti-imperialist sentiment is overwhelming in the underdeveloped nations, and this has been particularly true in Vietnam. The Vietnamese struggled courageously against Japanese imperialism during World War II, only to have French domination re-established with the help of British troops. Following the Vietminh's crushing victory over the French at Dien Bien Phu, the Geneva Agreement of 1954 promised free elections within six months to re-unify the country. But because Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese Communists would have carried 80 per cent of the vote, Eisenhower and South Vietnam's Diem backed out of the elections, spurring two decades of further struggle. Land in the Mekong Delta which had been divided up and parceled out to small peasants by the Vietminh was reclaimed and handed back to the large landlords by Diem—a step not even taken by the reactionary Bourbons following the defeat of Napoleon.

The Vietnamese Stalinists drew great strength from the imperialist-imposed misery. They stood as the alternative to continued blood-sucking and poverty, promising broad-based economic reforms, expulsion of imperialism, division of the land and national unity. Mao's victory in China was held up as a model. The Chinese Stalinists had been able (for the most part) to eliminate the famine and starvation that had plagued China under Chiang and to achieve national unity, something more tangible to the Vietnamese masses than the U.S. promises of freedom and democracy.

GREAT VICTORY

The expulsion of imperialism is indeed a great victory for the Vietnamese people, as it was for the Chinese masses before them. The ejection of the parasitic gang of plunderers and the expropriation of imperialist holdings removes a blood-sucking leech from the national economy.

But this condition is not lasting. Economic advancement today requires a highly developed international division of labor; underdeveloped countries are particularly dependent upon technology and equipment produced in the industrial nations. The increased exploitation of the proletariat and the peasantry can produce limited gains, but

over time the dependence on industrial nations with a higher organic composition of capital must result in renewed subjugation to unequal trade conditions, meaning renewed exploitation by imperialism.

Cuba, for example, tried to break out of this stranglehold through the "Ten Million Ton Sugar Harvest," which only resulted in distortion of its national economy and complete dependence upon Soviet imperialism. China's break from U.S. imperialism quickly resulted in domination by the U.S.S.R. Mao's break from Russia in the late fifties immediately brought on the economic chaos of the Great Leap Forward, when a convulsive depression rocked China until 1963. China has more recently



STATE CAPITALIST STRATEGISTS: Vietminh leaders Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh and No Nuyen Giap used 1954 victory over French imperialism to consolidate state capitalism in North Vietnam. Same brutal suppression of proletariat and peasantry heads Stalinist plans for South Vietnam and Cambodia.

realized that it cannot go it alone, and its support of reactionary NATO is precipitated by its need for American investment to bail out its staggering economy.

China is trying to balance itself between U.S. and Soviet imperialism, and is actually leaning towards support of U.S. imperialist foreign policy. Cuba, in its current attempt to open up trade with the U.S. and other western nations, is motivated by similar forces. These attempts to break from Soviet economic domination demonstrate the imperialist nature of Russia's economic relations with the other Stalinist states, and graphically show that only international proletarian revolution provides a lasting way out for the world's masses.

STALINISM

When capitalism is falling to pieces, where there is no hope for maintaining its rule on a pluralistic basis, Stalinism provides a last, limited hope. The Chinese Stalinists, claiming to be "building socialism," eliminated the most elementary democratic rights of the working class in exchange for national unity and limited reforms. Indeed, the central factor making these reforms possible was the ability to discipline the working class to increase the rate of exploitation and to place production into the hands of a centralized bourgeoisie.

One hundred years ago, the state did not intervene forcefully in production. The bourgeoisie did not want its constraint, and the system flourished without it. Today, as capitalism crumbles, the state must increasingly "interfere" to maintain capitalist production, even on the pluralistic basis of the West. In areas where the system is near disintegration, complete statification is the final and only alternative to maintain and temporarily stabilize capitalism.

Stalinism performs this stabilizing task effectively. The unstable social conditions in Southeast Asia made the maintenance of bourgeois rule increasingly difficult. The masses threatened to spill beyond bourgeois limits, to the proletarian revolution. Under such conditions, Stalinism could not contain the class struggle without appearing to offer a militant alternative. As opposed to its openly class-collaborationist practice in the West, the Indochinese Stalinists had to pose as revolution-

aries, precisely to prevent socialist struggle. Upon coming to power, this image enables them to centralize, rationalize and maintain capitalism without the head-on collision with the proletariat otherwise required—a collision otherwise requiring the fascist heel.

The heroic Vietnamese people find themselves in the vise of increased exploitation by the ruling Stalinists; limited reforms circumscribed by the need to once more fall under imperialist sway; no chance of qualitatively breaking through the gulf separating the industrial nations from the nations that they exploit. The Vietnamese proletariat will be forcibly deprived of elementary democratic rights in the Stalinists' attempts to keep the workers in check and to preserve capitalism.

This situation is a direct result of the methods which the Vietnamese Stalinists employed over the past three decades. The proletariat was not organized along class lines in the urban centers; instead it was betrayed and its revolutionary leaders murdered. The Stalinists based themselves upon non-proletarian forces, and this was not for accidental reasons.

MORTAL THREAT

The revolutionary organization of the proletariat is a mortal threat to Stalinism. If the Vietnamese workers had led the revolutionary struggle, this would have meant mass strikes, workers' councils, occupation and workers' control of plants, and in general organs of dual power. The Stalinists' goal of rationalizing the economy through increased disciplining of the proletariat would have brought on massive resistance from the confident, organized workers. Rather than risk this, the Stalinists sought a safer way to impose their rule. This required the betrayal of the Saigon workers, who were indeed a powerful organized force thirty years ago. It required Ho's "negotiated" acceptance of French troops in Vietnam in 1946 and the "negotiations" with British imperialism in 1945 while the Trotskyist-led Saigon workers were being crushed by British troops. It required the abandonment of the urban proletariat after murdering the Trotskyist militants in 1946.

This concretely meant propping up and stabilizing capitalism. The Stalinists placed the need to discipline the working class before the struggle against imperialism. After beheading the proletarian threat, they then turned to non-proletarian elements who could be more easily manipulated into an insurrectionary force that was not fraught with the same dangers as were the workers. It was not passivity on the part of the Vietnamese proletariat that made the Stalinists turn to building a peasant-based army. Rather, they enforced passivity upon a militant working class.

The struggle of the Vietminh was not marked by proletarian upheavals in the urban centers. Quite the opposite. When the Stalinists took over a city, they changed some places on the top but basically maintained the same apparatus underneath. The workers were told to remain at work as the armies neared, not to rise up. Everything was pointing to blunting the self-organization of the proletariat, to prepare the way for capitalist rule by the Stalinists that was to follow.

We have just seen this dynamic repeated all over again in the past two months. Why didn't the workers of Phnom Penh, Da Nang, and Saigon explode as the Khmer Rouge and PRG forces neared? Why didn't the Stalinists call upon the workers to take militant actions? The workers would undoubtedly have responded in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle. But this would have spelled danger, the danger of proletarian revolution, to the budding state-capitalists.

Indeed, only after vainly searching for a section of the South Vietnamese bourgeoisie with whom to strike a deal for a coalition government, and moreover only after Thieu demonstrated that he was falling of his own weight, did the Stalinists take power (the North Vietnamese had not planned a major offensive for this spring, despite the erosion of the puppet state).

This is part and parcel of Stalinism's international role of stabilizing decaying world capitalism. Only where the old bourgeoisie is no longer capable of maintaining order in any form through pluralistic means, where its downfall is imminent, will the

Stalinists take power. And then it is not to establish a new social system, but to preserve capitalism (although now in a stratified form).

PEASANTRY BETRAYED

The aspirations of the peasantry will not be achieved under the PRG regime. The PRG promises division of the land, and some may well occur in the initial stages. But not for long. Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh had also promised division of the land as part of their program. But two years after coming to power, in 1956, the North Vietnamese launched a forced collectivization program that resulted in open warfare in the countryside. Truong Chinh, presently president of North Vietnam's National Assembly, headed the collectivization effort and was demoted for two years because of its bloody repercussions.

China went through a similar collectivization program in the Fifties. Rejecting the Bolshevik method of gradual collectivization of the land based upon patiently demonstrating the efficiency of large-scale agriculture to the poor peasants, the Asian Stalinists have emulated the policies of Stalin himself. In place of Lenin's perspective of the proletariat leading the peasantry in the socialist revolution, Stalinism has used the peasantry to build a military and state apparatus already largely formed before the final seizure of power to blunt the proletariat's struggle during the anti-imperialist campaign, and afterwards to stand over and assault both the proletariat and the peasantry.

In Vietnam, the Stalinists based themselves on non-proletarian forces and placed themselves outside the workers' movement, leading an anti-imperialist force which at the same time enforced passivity upon the proletariat, disciplining it against struggling in its own name, held it back from struggling for socialism, and is now consolidating its rule on a capitalist basis. We extend military support in the struggle against imperialism, but to this force outside the workers' movement we give no form of political support whatsoever.

Having come to power in Vietnam and Cambodia,

Stalinism has gained a tactical advantage over the U.S. In Laos, Thailand, South Korea and the Philippines the same eroding of a social base for the lackeys of U.S. imperialism is taking place. Once more, the anti-imperialist appeal of Stalinism is powerful.

But both the U.S.S.R. and China are actively seeking to restrain their allies. Despite the ripeness of the conjuncture, neither of these states wants to rock the boat any further. Russia, badly in need of technol-

ogy and trade with the U.S., wants to reassure the senior imperialist power that it can be counted on to preserve the status quo. China, which wants to use the U.S. to balance the Russian threat on its borders and to its economy, likewise is adopting a policy of restraint.

For example, the bourgeois press is filled with reports of both Russia and China urging Kim Il-Sung to hold back in Korea. Thailand, wanting to reduce the anti-imperialist pressure on its regime, has demanded that the U.S. withdraw its troops, but China is opposed. China wants the U.S. to remain to counter the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean. Russia waited one full day before acknowledging the fall of Saigon, and then (on May Day) prominently featured American astronauts and scarcely mentioned the U.S. imperialist role in Southeast Asia.

Just as the Vietnamese Stalinists placed the need to shackle the proletariat above the anti-imperialist struggle, so the Russians and Chinese place the need to stabilize international capitalism first. If the pressure from the masses

threatens to spill beyond them, the Stalinists may be forced to risk worsening relations with the U.S. in order to confine the liberation movements within bourgeois limits. In devastated Asia, this may occur at any time. But at the present juncture, the Stalinist leadership is bent on preserving stability on the current basis.

The Pabloite tendencies remain blind to the dynamics at work. The Spartacist League, for example, now has two new "deformed workers' states" on its hands. Most of Indochina has now "gone Communist" by the SL's standards, meaning that they have set up state-capitalist regimes which the Spartacists adorn with the label workers' states. After decades of warning us that the Stalinists will betray the proletariat, they now find that non-proletarian forces have set up proletarian states in the absence of the proletariat. These shrewd analysts are not shaken in the least by the fact that, under their theory, non-proletarian forces are able to accomplish the proletarian revolution in the epoch when, according to Lenin and Trotsky, the leadership of the proletariat is required to win lasting gains.

Ernest Mandel's "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" has gone further still, declaring the North Vietnamese Communist Party to be a genuine revolutionary party. The USec has reduced the theory of the permanent revolution to the sole need to spread the revolution to Laos. (Inprecor, April 28, 1975)

The Pabloites shut their eyes to the basic forces at work in this epoch. Even in the West, the bourgeois state must intervene more and more to maintain capitalist conditions of production. Dying capitalism must attempt to rationalize an irrational system, which it can only do minimally, and at that basically at a national level. In the progressive epoch, in the nineteenth century, capitalism neither desired nor received much interference from the state. Now, it is essential.

Where capitalism has virtually collapsed, where it is dying of cannibalization, the state must take charge completely. It must discipline the proletar-



Anti-Thieu forces battle troops in 1974 Saigon demonstration. The militancy and initiative of the masses, crucial in defeating U.S. imperialism, constitutes a mortal threat to the Stalinist betrayers.

iat, attempt to centralize production to increase rationalization, and directly appropriate the production of surplus-value. This, as we have seen, makes possible limited reforms for periods of time, while in the long run crashing into the international anarchy of capitalist production. But these limited reforms, combined with the ability to convince the proletariat that it is "building socialism" and thereby make it succumb to increased exploitation, are why the Stalinists can come to power on non-proletarian forces. It is because they are maintaining capitalism, breathing slight breath into the dying system, on a stratified basis.

As we have seen, they are powered on by the system's crumbling and their anti-imperialist appeal. They can strike a revolutionary stance when opposing U.S. imperialism. But in the explosive situation in Vietnam and Cambodia, as previously in China, this appeal cannot be directed to the organization of the proletariat. Its threat of proletarian revolution is a threat to the Stalinists as well. Therefore they orient to more easily controlled

Editorials

For Workers' Revolution!

Reports out of Cambodia tell of complete evacuation of Phnom Penh. The city's two million residents apparently were marched to the countryside by the Khmer Rouge. Even the city's hospitals were emptied, with patients being wheeled out on their beds.

The Stalinist leadership of the Khmer Rouge is taking these steps, ostensibly, to carry out an "agricultural revolution," as well as to inspire the city-dwellers with the spirit of the revolution.

Whatever their intentions, one thing is clear: cities spell danger to the Cambodian Stalinists. It may well be that the Khmer Rouge leadership is acting to disperse merchants and other lingering remnants of U.S. imperialism. But it is more than coincidence that the Phnom Penh proletariat is being removed from its natural center of concentration and organization while state-capitalist rule is being consolidated.

This is the real danger of the city to Stalinism. Just as the Vietnamese Stalinists placed the need to quell the threat of proletarian revolution ahead of the anti-imperialist struggle (see "For Proletarian Revolution" in this issue), so the Cambodian Stalinists must make sure that the proletariat is kept under control.

Cambodia fully exposes the ridiculous Pabloite theories that call the Stalinist regimes "deformed workers' states." What is the first thing that this

"workers' state" does? It isolates and disperses the workers! Can there be any doubt that when the proletariat is returned to Phnom Penh, it will be when the Stalinists believe that conditions are sufficiently tame, when the workers have been "inspired" into believing that they are building socialism? And isn't it clear that what will follow will be the elimination of all rights of independent organization, of the right to strike, and the attempt to exact the maximum amount of surplus-value from the backs of the proletariat?

There can be no proletarian revolution without the proletariat. It is just plain nonsense to assert that there has been a workers' revolution when the proletariat is manipulated and marched around like so many pawns on a chess board.

And this is not just the problem of the Pabloites. What will the Maoist groups in this country say to all this? In the U.S., they call for the liberation of the proletariat, and conceive (at least in their propaganda) of a revolution based on workers' councils (soviets). Will they call for workers' councils in Cambodia and Vietnam? Will they demand that the elementary rights of the working class be safeguarded?

Not likely. They have never demanded the same of their Chinese mentors. And this should tell workers in this country what they can expect from the Maoists. They can bank on the fact that

Maoism will betray the working class, that if they ever gain hegemony the independent action of the workers in this country will be as frightening to them as is the organization of the Cambodian proletariat.

The Revolutionary Socialist League considers the expulsion of U.S. imperialism to be a victory for the heroic masses of Cambodia and Indochina, and a victory that will weaken the U.S. and thereby open great opportunities for proletarian revolution. But we stand unalterably opposed to every "theory" that says that somehow the proletarian revolution has already been accomplished behind the backs of the workers. Such theories, be they Pabloite, Maoist, or from the Moscow-oriented CP's, only sow the illusions that Stalinism can carry out the proletarian revolution, that the relation of the workers in production is a matter of secondary importance or no importance at all, and that the emancipation of the proletariat is not, as Marx said, "the task of the proletariat itself."

The struggle in Indochina is far from over. The task facing the proletariat now is to lead the peasantry in the socialist revolution, to overthrow the new capitalist rulers and establish rule in its own name. Every class-conscious worker must not only stand in solidarity with the victory over U.S. imperialism, but as well stand with the Indochinese workers in their continuing battle. Ahead to the proletarian revolution!

No Aid, No Chauvinism!

The U.S. bourgeoisie is waving a double-edged sword with the Vietnamese "refugees." One edge is the phony "humanitarian" solicitude being bestowed upon this group that is for the most part made up of collaborators and hangers-on of U.S. imperialism's bloody oppression of the Vietnamese masses. The second edge is the potential to whip up racism and national chauvinism among American workers; the bourgeoisie hopes to use workers' hostility to the Thieu gang to instill hatred and fear of all foreigners.

The "humanitarianism" is less than touching. After decades of saturation bombing, napalming, murdering and looting; after destroying the land, butchering the people, and attempting to eliminate the culture; after all this, U.S. imperialism pretends to have second thoughts about the welfare of the Vietnamese. Of course, the sudden concern of Ford and the bourgeoisie has nothing to do with humanitarianism. U.S. imperialism has launched this monstrous public relations stunt to convince its agents throughout the world that, even if they meet the same fate as Thieu, there will be a nice safe home for them on the North American continent.

Lon Nol has emerged as a millionaire residing in Honolulu. The New York Times reports that Thieu is a billionaire. The "refugee" issue is being used to demonstrate to puppets across the globe that they can continue to share in the imperialist booty, and if the U.S. cannot protect their tottering rule, they can still enjoy the fruits of plunder in pleasant surroundings.

For the fleeing South Vietnamese bourgeoisie, for the collaborators of the CIA and the military, for the members of Thieu's apparatus, and for the prostitutes, night club owners, and other "entertainers" of the imperialist presence, we have no sympathy. They must not be given sanctuary to wash their bloody hands. No "humanitarian" aid for this crew; the war criminals among them should be shipped back to Vietnam to taste their just rewards.

It is particularly nauseating that this farce is being acted out while the U.S. bourgeoisie and its lieutenants in the labor bureaucracy are fomenting a virulent national chauvinist campaign against immigrant workers in the U.S. as well as workers abroad. Foreign workers in the U.S. are being threatened with wholesale deportation, as the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats try to blame them for the unemployment whose real roots are the anarchic capitalist system itself. Meanwhile, propaganda for protectionism mounts from industry and the labor hacks; bureaucracy-pushed signs such as "Jobs Not Imports" and "Stop Exporting Jobs, Limit Imports" were numerous at the April 26 HUD demonstration in Washington.

So in this context, while foreign workers are being shipped out of the U.S. and while a massive campaign is being waged to pit American workers against their class brothers elsewhere, Ford calls for admitting and funding the South Vietnamese bourgeoisie and other imperialist lackeys. And this is the sword's second edge.

While Ford pleads for aid and asylum, other sectors of the ruling class (and especially the bourgeois press) are playing upon the theme that the Vietnamese will be taking jobs from Americans. Absolutely no capitulation can be made to this reactionary line. We call for a sliding scale of hours internationally, cutting the work week at no loss in pay to provide jobs for all workers, whatever their nationality. We call for organizing the unorganized internationally, with parity pay at union rates. In this context, we are for a free immigration policy to allow workers access to available jobs wherever they may be.

American workers must repel both thrusts of the U.S. ruling class. No phony "humanitarian" aid for imperialism's clients, and a return of the thousands of war criminals among them! But as well, not a single concession to racism and national chauvinism. Fight the deportations! Against protectionism! Open the borders with jobs for all workers of the world!

League Forum

-Detroit

VIETNAM
AND THE IMPERIALIST CRISIS

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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
13100 WOODWARD AVENUE
HIGHLAND PARK, MICHIGAN

SUNDAY, MAY 18 3 P.M.

©1975 by the Revolutionary Socialist League Publishing Company

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Published monthly at 13755 Woodward Avenue, Highland Park, Michigan 48203.
Subscriptions: (including Mexico and Canada) 26 issues for \$3.00; supporting, \$5.00; foreign seairmail, \$4.50; foreign airmail (unsealed), \$14.00
Domestic introductory subscriptions: 6 issues for \$.50; 12 issues for \$1.00

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Workers' Defense Guards Fight Racists

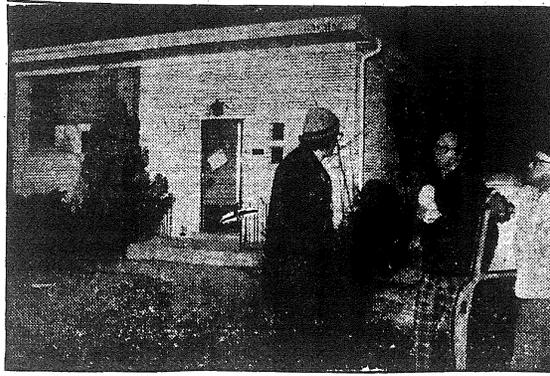
In an important step forward for the working class, UAW Local 6 has organized a workers' defense guard to protect the house of a black family moving into an all-white neighborhood in Broadview, Illinois. C.B. Dennis, a black auto worker who owns the home, is employed at the Melrose Park International Harvester Plant and is a member of Local 6.

Even before Dennis had moved in, the house's windows were smashed and three fires were set. The attacks on the Dennis home are part of a wave of such attacks in the Chicago area. Others have occurred on Chicago's Southwest Side, and appear to be the work of the National White People's Socialist Party (Nazis).

Local 6 set up the defense guard at its April 13 membership meeting. The key part of the resolution was introduced by the Revolutionary Autoworkers' Committee (RAC), which generally supports the politics of the RSL, and stated that "Local 6 offers support to the families under attack in the form of volunteer defense guards of union members to protect their homes." That night, union members started showing up in shifts to defend the Dennis home.

The leaflet distributed by the RAC pointed to the political context of the struggle in Local 6 and the urgent need for an organized response of the working class:

These attacks are part of a growing offensive by the Klu Klux Klan, the Nazis, and other social scum, who thrive



UAW Local 6 members stand guard at home of their union brother. City-wide workers' defense guards must be organized to repel growing right-wing attacks.

on race hatred. . . . As the economy deteriorates, the capitalists grow more desperate in their attempts to beat down the working class. . . . Banking on the pervasive racism of American society the Nazis are used to set white workers against black. In this way, the capitalists hope to terrorize black workers and break their fighting spirit. And they hope to mislead whites into attacking blacks, rather than the capitalist system which has produced the social crisis. The vicious attacks on blacks today will be followed by open strike-breaking and union-busting tomorrow.

RAC pointed out that the fascist forces today are still relatively weak and that a courageous mobilization of the proletariat, black and white, could

nip them in the bud.

Such a mobilization requires building workers' defense guards. The working class cannot rely on the police. The cops are the armed thugs of the bourgeoisie—they have no interest in defending the working class. Despite an occasional action for public rela-

tions purposes, the police will form an alliance with right-wing forces. In Chicago, the police have actively aided right-wing groups such as the Legion of Justice in attacks on radical organizations.

In the current situation, the cops say they will take care of things, that workers' defense guards are unnecessary and provocative. But the local police chief also admitted in advance that the police would not be able to give adequate protection to the Dennis home. In the upcoming struggles against the capitalist attack on the working class, workers' defense guards will play a key role in defending the labor movement not only against the Nazis, but against the police themselves.

The biggest obstacle in the fight against fascist attacks is the labor bureaucracy. As the RAC leaflet pointed out, because they are committed to defending capitalism,

These cowards betray the workers rather than lead a serious fight to defend the unions and oppressed minorities. Even the most immediate measures for defense cannot be left in the hands of the bureaucracy. Locals must both pass resolutions with real teeth in them, and elect rank and file committees with the authority to carry out the necessary measures.

While the motion for a rank and file committee to coordinate the defense guard failed, RAC's position has been borne out by events. The leadership of Local 6, which could not actively oppose the defense guard motion, has attempted to sabotage it. Bob Stack, chairman of the shop committee, deprecatingly labeled the defense guard a "vigilante squad." He proposed "getting the police to do their job." This proposal is nothing but a trap to disarm Local 6, and leave Dennis to the whims of the bourgeois cops.

Leaders of Local 6 have also tried to discredit the volunteer defense guard by saying it is a group of radicals with no official standing in the local. These hacks conveniently ignore the fact that the entire local voted for the defense guard. They are also circulating the charge that the radicals and revolutionaries in Local 6 are trying to use brother Dennis.

But their concern for Dennis is shown by the fact that of the entire executive board and shop committee only the president, Norm Roth, has volunteered for guard duty. (Roth generally supports the Communist

Party's policies in the UAW, and must cover his left flank by supporting the defense guard, while trying to keep it within the most limited confines, politically under the thumb of the Local 6 leadership.) The actions of the Local 6 bureaucrats prove what the RSL has always said about the charge of being "splitters" of the working class—the real splitters are the bureaucrats, who must head off any serious struggle within the working class in order to preserve capitalist stability.

The Spartacist League is now attempting to put itself forward as the leading force in the Local 6 campaign. The truth lies elsewhere. The SL approached the Local 6 situation with its usual degree of cowardice and cynicism. The SL wanted to wage a vigorous campaign—on paper. They were all for raising motions at union meetings and writing articles in their press. But they had no taste for building a real defense guard.

This was seen in the role of the SL in a United Front committee around the attacks against black families on the Southwest Side. The SL advocated a propagandistic approach, and cautioned against doing anything "adventurist or silly" (i.e., building a defense guard). When the RSL's proposal to offer the families aid in a physical defense of the homes passed, the SL walked out of the meeting. Their parting words to the committee, and therefore to the black families, were "let it sink."

Of a piece with this is the motion introduced by the Labor Struggle Caucus in Local 6 (a caucus which the SL thinks is a model for the labor movement). The LSC resolution kept its options open: "Be it resolved that our local immediately contact other labor organizations, black groups and sympathetic community groups to prepare to mobilize a mass labor-black defense to protect the family and house of Brother Dennis."

The key phrase is "... to prepare to mobilize. . . ." In the face of the immediate threat of the Nazis, this constitutes an outright betrayal. What it says in essence is that in the future, when the working class is prepared, it should form defense guards. The Labor Struggle Caucus knows defense guards are needed now, but will wait to actually propose them until the working class is "ready." Only the RAC motions, which put into practice the responsibility of revolutionary leadership to "say what is" to the proletariat, insured that the local would form the defense guard immediately, even before a "mass" defense could be organized.

Local 6 has taken an important step in defending its membership and pointing the road forward for the working class. This example must be generalized. The RSL is working to build a city-wide conference on defense of Labor and the Oppressed to meet the growing fascist threat. Working class militants must join with us in this effort by putting forward resolutions for such a conference in all union in the Chicago area.

Today's right-wing attacks against black workers represent tomorrow's attacks against the entire working

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LETTERS

Hacks Control Illinois Jobless Rally

Dear Comrade Editor:

On Wednesday, April 9, rank-and-file members of UAW Region 4, USW District 31, and the statewide AFSCME local met in Springfield, Illinois to demand jobs and better unemployment benefits. Almost 400,000 Illinois workers are laid off today. Barely 2,000 people showed up for the Springfield demonstration. The UAW leadership and two women's groups (ERA Central and the Coalition of Labor Union Women) made sure that the announced "UAW Jobless Rally" took on a right-wing thrust.

The critical question of jobs and unemployment quickly was subordinated to a reactionary circus of bureaucrats and Democratic Party hacks calling for passage of the so-called Equal Rights Amendment. As *The Torch* has pointed out, these clowns have become a serious threat to working women—unionized and non-unionized alike.

Despite earlier public assurances that no politicians would be allowed to speak, Governor Dan ("Welfare Cuts") Walker was allowed to do his dirty work at the rally, too. The leadership of the rally let Walker "sympathize" with the unemployed, but allowed no public criticism of

Walker's program of speed-up and layoffs of the AFSCME workers who handle Unemployment Compensation benefits.

How did this happen? Robert Johnston, UAW Regional Director, has to put on a show before the 130,000 UAW members in Illinois. Just like Woodcock, Johnston postures militantly—but keeps the demonstration small and under his thumb. Just like Woodcock, Johnston represents the point of view of the bosses in the workers' movement. That's why he can tell us to vote for the "good" Democrats and the "good" Republicans next year.

Concentrated in the key industrial sectors, we do have a lot of power. But we will not be able to exercise that power fully until we overthrow and replace these labor fakers. Part of the fight to build a revolutionary party is the fight to destroy the authority of all those union hacks who defend the dictatorship of the bankers and businessmen.

Building a revolutionary leadership in the unions is a long, hard task. The RSL and its newspaper, *The Torch*, have begun that struggle.

For Socialist Revolution,
Lee O'Shaughnessy

April 26

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do something about unemployment and other aspects of the crisis, and 2) to make it look as if the union leadership is preparing to lead a real fight for the needs of the working class.

The hacks' cynical motives show through from top to bottom. From the start the IUD tops did their best to sabotage the demonstration they had called. The IUD came out for the rally only after two other groups, the National Coalition to Fight Inflation and Unemployment, a Communist Party-led group, and a coalition of New York-New Jersey unions led by Victor Gotbaum of District Council 37 of AFSCME had begun to build for a demonstration.

In addition, the IUD announced their intention to hold a rally in March purposely giving as little time as possible to build mass support. On top of this, they did virtually nothing to mobilize the ranks; the vast bulk of locals in the IUD failed to arrange transportation or to put out publicity. Finally, the IUD planned only a rally at RFK stadium; even a march in Washington was too militant for these heroes.

The tactic of the liberal wing of the sponsors of the demonstration was similar. Gotbaum's group called for a march from the Capitol to join the rally at the stadium. But they planned this march to look more like a Sunday stroll than a militant labor demonstration. The march was completely unorganized, except for a few New York contingents.

DEATH IN THE FAMILY?

Abel, the supposed organizer of the rally, decided not to attend, excusing himself because of a death in the family. While millions of workers are without jobs and millions more are only one step higher on the ladder, this "leader of labor" ducked out of addressing the workers in Washington because of a death in the family.

The keynote speech of the rally was given by Walter Burke, Secretary-Treasurer of the Steelworkers and Abel's understudy. In his talk, Burke proposed various measures: public works, increased federal spending on construction, tax cuts and expanding the money supply to get the economy moving again and to cut unemployment. These measures, especially in the pitiful amounts the bureaucracy requests, will do very little to cut down unemployment. Since the measures will be financed by increasing the already huge budget deficit, while no effort will be made to liquidate the mountains of fictitious capital encumbering the system, the result will be a fantastic escalation of inflation.

WPA

Burke's conception on public works underlines his bourgeois approach. He hailed the Works Progress Administration of the 1930's and held it up as a model for today. He has a short memory. The WPA and related programs barely made a dent in unemployment; it was only the preparations for World War II that significantly cut down on joblessness. The WPA paid starvation wages to keep workers busy, primarily on various make-work projects. Because of the low wages and bad conditions, massive strikes racked the WPA.

Burke followed the WPA tradition by calling only for about one-eighth the jobs that are needed and by omitting the call for guaranteed unionization on all public service jobs. Despite the fact that many workers carried signs calling for a shorter work-week with no loss in pay (the hacks have certainly heard of this idea), the bureaucrats refused to raise this demand. They refused to call for financing their spending projects through taxing the capitalists and they proposed no serious measures against the oil companies and other monopolies.

On top of this, the program was laced with protectionism, designed to sell the American worker a phony national solution to the crisis and to divide them from their international brothers and sisters. They peddle this nationalist poison at a time when

only an international proletarian solution can resolve the crisis in the interests of the overwhelming mass of humanity. In short, the entire package presented by the fat cats had not a hint of fighting the capitalists or making them pay for the crisis. It did have a strong hint of lining up with "our" American capitalists against all sorts of "foreign threats."

Burke's proposed "strategy" was of a piece with his demands. The bureaucracy proposed one and only one way to fight for their miserable program—vote for the Democratic Party. Walter Burke rallies the workers to limit their strength to voting. No calls for strike action from this labor leader. No call for a labor party or general strike. Just the old rag of supporting the Democratic Party of the U.S. ruling class.

The rank and file workers who came to



Militant workers angrily confront hacks on speakers platform to demand a real fight for jobs instead of empty rhetoric. Good squad links hands in front of platform to protect bureaucrats from workers.

Washington had a different idea than the bureaucrats about why they were there. They did not come hundreds of miles to stroll down East Capitol St. or to listen to blathering politicians. They came to fight for jobs. This was the sentiment that was expressed by the actions of the young militants who bolted the stands and turned the rally into a demonstration on the playing field.

It began during Burke's speech when one worker went onto the field and marched across it carrying a placard demanding jobs. He received a massive ovation from the workers in the stands. When the police hustled him off the field, other workers took his place. As more police rushed out to control the demonstrators they were met by a rising chorus of boos and raspberries from the stands.

By this time, Hubert Humphrey was rising to take his turn at the microphone. As the New York Times put it: "Then when Senator Humphrey rose to speak, it was as if a signal had been given and several hundred persons ran onto the field . . ." These workers shouted Humphrey down. Humphrey quickly retired while a variety of hacks and politicians tried to restore "order." They tried to close the gates to the stadium while workers were still entering it, an action as stupid and reactionary

as it was useless. The workers ripped the gate off its hinges. They did get into the stadium, but they hardly got into the rally. The union tops, running for cover, cancelled it then and there.

Although the bureaucrats planned a rally for their own reactionary purposes, the workers led by the younger militants turned it into a serious protest against the economic devastation. Although their consciousness was mixed (the first worker on the field carried a "Stop Exporting Our Jobs" sign, indicating that even militant workers are infected with national chauvinism), the workers clearly demonstrated their demand for militant action and gave Humphrey the treatment he and his ilk deserve. A victory for the workers, the rally was a defeat for the bureaucrats who demonstrated their singular inability to keep their members under control.

The demonstration in Washington cannot help but have an impact on the political struggle shaping up within the bureaucracy, and this may give the ranks more maneuvering room.

MEANY

The rally and march were held in opposition to the Meany wing of the labor bureaucracy. Meany has opposed all mass demonstrations in Washington and refused to speak at this one. He represents the extreme right-wing of the bureaucracy and combines unbending resistance to the ranks with racism, anti-communism and war-mongering.

Abel has been closely identified with Meany's policies. He has pioneered class collaborationism through his no-strike Experimental Negotiating Agreement. He has supported Meany's line on the war in Vietnam and for a phony "neutrality" during the 1972 Presidential elections. Abel's agreement to give his name to the Washington rally indicates a possible rift with his pal.

At the other end of the not very broad spectrum is a loose stratum of "left," i.e., liberal, bureaucrats whose stance is more adapted to coopting left-moving workers. Much of the base of this group consists of unskilled production workers, many of whom are black, from whom they are subject to considerable pressure.

Leonard Woodcock of the UAW is one of these "lefts." While having no real programmatic differences with Meany and Abel at this time, he comes across with more militant verbiage and liberal-sounding policies, and was shown capable, at least in February, of holding a demonstration in Washington and keeping it under his thumb.

COME BACK, JOHN L. LEWIS

Within the IUD there are labor tops like Jerry Wurf of AFSCME, Paul Jennings of the International Union of Electrical Workers and Sol Stein of the Textile Workers who have been calling for a more militant image for the AFL-CIO. While they have not led an open fight against Meany and Abel, they did demand a march on Washington. In addition, there are types like Edward Sadlowski, an opposition bureaucrat who has challenged Abel in the Steelworkers. Despite the strength of this labor "left," there has been no coherent anti-Meany regroupment within the labor bureaucracy as a whole and no figure around whom these bureaucrats can rally and attempt to tie their ranks.

The present stasis in the labor bureaucracy cannot continue for much longer. Sooner or later the discontent in the ranks will force a section of the bureaucrats to move left in order to control and coopt the increasingly radical workers. The demonstration in Washington may signal the very beginning of this process. For now, Meany's hand is strengthened. He warned the other bureaucrats of the dangers of holding a rally and march in Washington. The laugh is his.

At the same time, the rally was a signal to the liberal bureaucrats that to maintain their positions and to save capitalism they need a more radical stance. Instead of moving right, which would undermine their position vis a vis Meany, they will begin to edge further to the left, seeking to build more explicit ties with the liberal Democrats and to construct a left liberal political movement within the Democratic Party. This is one route by which an American Popular Front movement may develop.

If the liberal hacks do indeed move left, they will

SADLOWSKI—Reformist Roadblock To Steelworkers' Struggle

by Paul Carson

As the economic and political crisis of international capitalism deepens, the bourgeoisie intensifies its efforts to ward off the threat of proletarian revolution. Since taking the working class head-on is very dangerous for the bourgeoisie, it usually relies on more subtle indirect approaches, relying on direct assault as a last resort. In a phrase, the classic approach of the bourgeoisie is summed up in the adage of British imperialism: Divide and Rule.

To make this effective, concessions or illusions of concessions are offered to certain sectors of the working class. In this way, these sectors end up making an alliance with the capitalist class at the direct expense of other (usually more oppressed) workers and of the interests of the international working class as a whole.

EFFECTIVE IN U.S.

This technique has been especially effective in the United States where the working class, despite its power and militant history, is among the least politically conscious of any proletariat in the world. The U.S. working class, in particular the majority of the white workers, have been easily bribed into betraying their more oppressed brothers and sisters, both within the U.S. and abroad.

The reformist trade union bureaucracy based on and tied to the labor

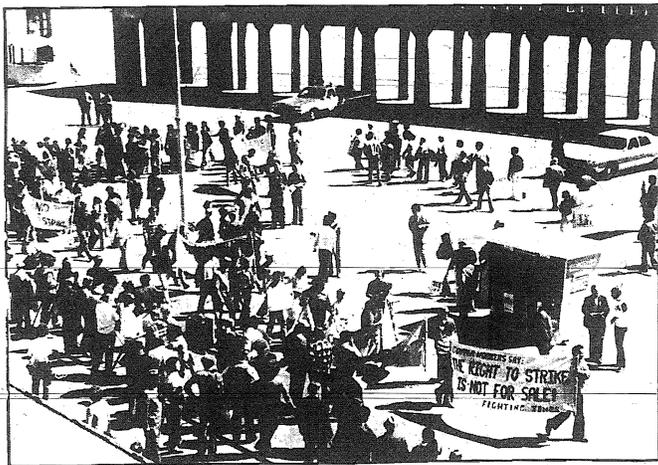
become angrier, more militant and more suspicious of their present trade union misleaders, more left-sounding leaders are required. Despite their noises and the fact that they are often forced to lead militant struggles, these leaders are more, not less effective, in corraling the ranks and preventing them from proceeding to the real task at hand, the overthrow of capitalism.

It is in this context that the developing fight within the bureaucracy of the USWA must be seen.

The Steelworkers has always been a union where the democratic rights of workers are virtually non-existent. Since steel is crucial to capitalist economy this was important to the bourgeoisie and the government. And the trade union bureaucrats. John L. Lewis, who supported the campaign to organize the steelworkers, Phil Murray, Lewis's toady-turned-enemy and the first USWA President and David McDonald, proponent of "tuxedo unionism," for their own reasons complied with the capitalists' request. Steel's chronic capital shortage throughout most of the post-war boom made this "cooperation" all the more important to the steel bosses and the bourgeoisie as a whole.

ABEL CONTINUES BETRAYALS

The present President of the USWA, I.W. Abel, has more than continued in this honorable tradition.



Steelworkers protest Abel's no-strike agreement (ENA) at USWA convention last October. Sadlowski offers no program to fight the ENA which keeps steelworkers in the stranglehold of the capitalist offensive.

aristocracy has been a key lever in implementing this tactic. By refusing to organize the millions of unorganized workers and by using might and main to keep the unions within the bounds of simple trade unionism, the bureaucrats divide the organized workers from the unorganized and unemployed. In this way concessions can be granted to the organized workers, leaving the unorganized and unemployed with little but the promise of improving their conditions "in the future."

As the class struggle intensifies and increasing sectors of the working class

He has been a veritable pioneer in attacking the working class. He continued the union's de facto no-strike policy (there has been no national steel strike since 1959) and has gone further. Nixon thought highly enough of Abel to appoint him to the National Commission on Productivity and the Pay Board. In 1971, Abel sponsored a plan establishing "joint" in-plant labor-management Committees on Productivity (read speed-up) resulting in a 25 per cent rise in on-the-job injuries.

But Abel's most impressive accomplishment in this saga of betrayal



JOB HUNTING: Ed Sadlowski in successful campaign for USWA District 31 Director. Victory was stepping-stone in Sadlowski's bid for USWA presidency in 1977, representing liberal wing of U.S. ruling class.

is the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) signed in 1973 in which the union gave up the right to strike until 1980. Just as the most vicious attacks on steelworkers are looming, Abel ties their hands.

But today there are rumblings in the ranks of the steelworkers. Abel is despised by rank-and-file steelworkers throughout the union. The combination of the ENA with last year's spiraling inflation produced a contract that will mean a sharp cut in real wages. It also came when the steel industry's profits were temporarily booming.

The contradiction between the "sacrifices" being forced on steelworkers and the obvious ability of the industry to pay more, helped spur discontent around the country. Although there was no well-organized opposition to Abel at the 1974 Convention, a series of speakers from the floor denounced the ENA.

The ENA was also accompanied by promises of job security—the absence of the strike threat was supposed to "stabilize" the industry. Today, 35,000 steelworkers are out of work and many more are on a short week. The number of unemployed steelworkers is rising fast—the figures given here will be too low when this issue of The Torch goes to print.

These layoffs can only further lower Abel's credibility. If Abel loses his ability to control the ranks, he loses his value to the bourgeoisie. For the working class, the main danger is that a slicker class-collaborationist will take his place. And the bourgeoisie is finding such a man in Ed Sadlowski.

ENTER ED SADLOWSKI

Ed Sadlowski, former president of USWA Local 65 (U.S. Steel-South Works) won a landslide victory in the election for Director of District 31 last November. This was viewed as a "message to Abel" since Abel supported the loser, his hack Sam Evett. The election was a re-run of a 1973 contest which Evett won by stuffing

the ballot boxes; Sadlowski went to court and Evett agreed to the new election.

In his campaign Sadlowski never took Abel head-on. He never made an issue out of Abel's despicable betrayal of steelworkers—in particular the ENA. There was not even a hint of class struggle in the plant-gate campaign literature. The campaign only focused on Evett's dishonesty and on union democracy; Sadlowski's own program to fight the steel companies was purposely kept vague.

NO CRITICAL SUPPORT

Raising no real issues, Sadlowski's campaign was nothing but a bureaucratic maneuver. As a result, there was no basis for utilizing the Leninist tactic of critical support, i.e., placing him in power in order to expose him for failing to carry out his promises. Having made no promises, and having attracted no significant layer of advanced workers to exert pressure to hold him to his promises, the critical support tactic could only have been turned into its opposite. It would have given a revolutionary cover to an unambiguously bureaucratic campaign.

This is in contrast to Arnold Miller's campaign for UMW President in 1972. Miller led and identified himself with legitimate and significant rank and file struggles against the UMW bureaucracy and the coal companies. As a result, his campaign had a contradictory nature, representing Miller's bureaucratic intentions on the one hand and the workers' struggle for union democracy, improved safety provisions, pensions, etc., on the other. Critical support for Miller in that case represented a vote for the miners' struggle and an effort to expose Miller for failing to fulfill his promises to his supporters while in a position to do so. Sadlowski represents no such struggle. Support to his campaign could only have served to disorient the workers.

After taking office, Sadlowski showed 1,000 workers at U.S. Steel's Gary Works just how "militant" he is. These workers were laid off when Gary Works shut down its open-hearth furnaces rather than pay a fine for not meeting pollution standards. The only way to save those jobs would have been to strike the Gary Works, and other plants if necessary, around the demand "No Pollution and No Layoffs." Such a fight in Gary might have led to a national fight against layoffs. But the only "militancy" Sadlowski could muster was a public statement blaming U.S. Steel, which was no consolation to the workers who lost their jobs.

For Sadlowski, the first priority is getting Abel's job in 1977. He is already working on this campaign.

At 9070 South Chicago Ave. is a storefront which served as Sadlowski's Chicago headquarters during his race against Evett. That election was last November; the headquarters is Cont'd. next page

still open. Its main activity is Sadlowski's current campaign to call a Special Convention to roll back the dues increase and officers' salary increases that passed at last year's convention. If 25 per cent of all USWA locals endorse the call for the convention, Abel will be forced to hold one. Sadlowski claims to have around a third of the Locals he needs behind the call.

But the dues issue is a shuck. It is another ruse to build Sadlowski's base while dodging a fight against Abel's betrayals. A "Special" Convention of steelworkers that didn't discuss repealing the ENA and fighting layoffs and inflation that are crippling the union would be a farce. And the union's Constitution explicitly forbids discussion of items not mentioned in the Call for a Special Convention.

To build his machine, Sadlowski has to gain the support of local bureaucrats and staffers around the country. Abel is hated by the ranks; the dues issue gives bureaucrats a chance to make a fight against Abel and improve their image. And the issue is such a minuscule one that it won't even hurt their standing with the steel industry.

Among steelworkers, the dues issue has the most appeal among the highest paid workers. The dues increase removed the \$10 ceiling on dues, and these workers are now being hit for as much as \$20 a month.

But Sadlowski has nothing to offer the most oppressed steelworkers—the blacks, Latinos and women who are forced into the worst jobs. These workers are potentially the most militant fighters, but today they are mostly cynical about the union. While Sadlowski's campaign may draw in a few of these workers, who see nothing better going, it will keep the vast majority of these potentially militant fighters on the sidelines.

POPULAR FRONT

Sadlowski is more than just another left-talking trade union bureaucrat. He represents part of a well organized campaign of important liberal bourgeois forces to refurbish the trade union bureaucracy in the interests of constructing a popular front movement in the United States.

Seeing the heightened struggle of enraged workers throughout the world and recognizing that this too may come to pass in the U.S., the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie is planning ahead, seeking to lay the basis for a radical-sounding, class-collaborationist movement to corral, disorient and defeat the working class.

Sadlowski is supported, aided and protected by Joe Rauh, Jr., Washing-

ton lawyer and a bigshot in liberal Democratic Party circles. Rauh also sponsored UMW President Arnold Miller in his successful campaign for office and James Morrissey, who was unsuccessful in his effort to become President of the National Maritime Union in 1973.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Sadlowski's loyalty to this campaign and to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party was dramatized at a \$25-a-plate dinner held for him in Chicago on March 23. All the big names among the liberal Democrats of Illinois were there: Governor Walker, William Singer (who challenged Daley in the mayoral primaries with Sadlowski's endorsement), Richard Newhouse (a black liberal Democrat who also challenged Daley) and some local aldermen. Sadlowski's speech indicated his willingness to build this wing



Abel and George Meany plan class-collaborationist strategy at AFL-CIO Executive Council. Sadlowski hopes to use Abel's close ties with Meany to bolster his phony "militant" image and corral the USW ranks into narrow reformist channels.

of the Democratic Party, in return for some token reforms:

We're putting the politicians and the liberals on notice right now that we want a piece of the good life. It's getting close to 1976 and a lot of the politicians will be coming around asking our help. When they do, we're going to ask "What have you done for us?"

Sadlowski's main value to a Popular Front would be his ability to mobilize militant workers behind it. His strategy requires help from centrists and reformists active in the union. And, unfortunately, most of these groups are giving Sadlowski a big build-up.

The Communist Party's supporters, quite numerous in the USWA, have largely played the role of cheerleaders for Sadlowski's campaign. They are

now active in building the campaign for a Special Convention. Their alliance with Sadlowski was highlighted at a Sadlowski campaign rally last fall when Staffman Ray O'Malley held up a copy of *Labor Today*, the organ of the CP's labor front group, and urged everyone to pick up their free copy in the back. Besides the CP, centrist groups like the International Socialists (IS) and the October League (OL) built up Sadlowski as a rank-and-file leader and hailed his election as a great victory for the ranks.

The Revolutionary Union (RU) plays a different variation on the same theme. They don't know how to fight Sadlowski, but they understand that it doesn't look revolutionary to tail such a blatant reformist. So they gave him "critical support"—not in the Leninist sense, but as a way of avoiding the issue. In practice they have tried to pretend, like ostriches, that Sadlowski doesn't exist, while they capitulate to him politically.

A recent leaflet handed out by RU supporters called on steelworkers to fight against the dues increase. The leaflet was handed out at the plant where Sadlowski used to work. But it didn't mention the Special Convention Sadlowski is trying to organize, and it didn't take a stand either for or against Sadlowski! The effect of the leaflet was to build Sadlowski's base. Sadlowski is the one who pretends that dues is the most pressing issue facing steelworkers. The RU fools nobody when it sings the same tune without giving credit to the composer.

Sadlowski gladly accepts the help he's getting from all these groups today. His strategy for 1977 is flexible. If the struggle in steel dies down, he may well turn his back on the centrists and accept the second spot on a ticket with Abel's hand-picked successor (Abel can't run again himself—he's too old). Or he may try to head off the independent growth of the centrists and revolutionaries by talking militant himself and challenging Abel's machine. What route he takes depends on his own strength, the course of the class struggle and the needs of the liberal bourgeoisie. But, in any event, those centrists who are building up Sadlowski's machine are setting steelworkers up for defeat.

RSL

The Revolutionary Socialist League has been fighting the reformist strategy of Sadlowski. Our supporters, through their bulletin *Revolutionary Steelworker*, have ruthlessly exposed Sadlowski's unwillingness to even fight the steel companies. While

we oppose the dues increase, we are calling for an Open Special Convention to build a fight against the ENA, layoffs and inflation. An Open Convention could organize an industry-wide strike for Wage Reopeners and a Sliding Scale of Hours and Wages to solve the problems of inflation and unemployment. And the Convention could reach out to the rest of the labor movement, to build a class-wide offensive against the bosses' attacks.

We are fighting for an Open Convention. In Chicago area locals, we are raising motions for a Special Convention to deal with the ENA, inflation and unemployment, or amending motions for a Convention on dues to include these vital issues. We have already earned the hatred of local bureaucrats for our hard-hitting attacks on Sadlowski. Local 1033's newspaper attacked *Revolutionary Steelworker* as "garbage literature" which dared to call the union leaders "class-collaborationist" and called for the "revolutionary overthrow of capitalism" (these last two charges are true).

CYNICISM AND REVOLUTION

Those who are tailing Sadlowski's campaign are plainly cynical about the proletariat's ability to fight. This point was proven by John Chico, Financial Secretary of Local 65, who will get Sadlowski's support to run for local president. When he attended a caucus meeting of rank-and-file steelworkers, he responded to the RSL's program by saying, "The American working class is very conservative—you'll scare them away with that." The centrists and reformists at the caucus meeting parroted his line. Believing that "workers aren't ready" to hear about revolution—or even a serious struggle against the ENA—they preferred to "start small" by building Sadlowski's machine.

The RSL has confidence in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. The courage and militancy of steelworkers has been demonstrated time and again. The latest example is a wildcat in Campbell, Ohio, where 58,000 workers walked out to reverse the layoffs of 18 workers in the blooming mill. This despite the District Director who urged them to go back to work, and a court injunction ordering the same.

To mobilize the militancy of steelworkers throughout the country, a revolutionary party is needed. The RSL is fighting to build this party. One of the biggest roadblocks to this struggle is Sadlowski-style reformism and the cowardice and cynicism of the centrists who are tailing him.

Defense Guards

Cont'd. from p. 5

class and all its institutions. It is critical that militants build a united defense against the budding fascist movement immediately, rather than waiting until the working class is "prepared" (without correct leadership it will never be prepared) or until a mass right-wing movement self-confidently grows because it met with no resistance to its violence. We call on militants to join with the Revolutionary Socialist League in the struggle for an aggressive defense of the working class against the right-wing threat.

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be met by the Stalinist Communist Party and the right-centrist Socialist Workers Party. Both groups have loyally denounced the demonstration on the playing field. The CP denounced it as a "provocation" engineered by "ultra-leftists" and implied, in its typical treacherous manner, that the latter are racist agents of the bourgeoisie. As the *Daily World* put it: "rank and file workers (sic) interviewed by the *Daily World* expressed suspicion that a Watergate style "dirty trick" was being perpetrated before their very eyes." (Who

can these 'rank and filers' have been?)

The SWP, almost as craven as the CP in its capitulation to liberalism, denounced the on-field demonstration as a "disruption" which would give the enemies of labor an excuse to discredit the April 26 demonstration. The SWP, which claims to be "Trotskyist," wishes to curb the most militant workers in order to appease the bourgeoisie. This is the political method of the Popular Front. It is necessary to hold the workers in line so as not to frighten their liberal bourgeois allies. Of course these "allies" will stab the workers in the back after their Popular Front leaders are no longer needed to stop the

leftward motion of the workers.

To these people, young workers in, around or willing to follow organizations to their left are not really workers at all, but are "ultra-lefts" and "disrupters." They thereby reveal that despite their revolutionary rhetoric they represent the interests of the labor bureaucrats who seek to hold back the struggle to keep it respectable. This disgusting concern for bourgeois respectability reveals the essence of these rotten organizations. As the workers awake from their lethargy and begin to actively struggle for their needs, the reactionary role of these organizations will be increasingly revealed.

WORLD CRISIS

EXCERPTS FROM RSL CONVENTION RESOLUTION

Reprinted below are excerpts from the international section of the Tasks and Perspectives document adopted unanimously at the Second National Convention of the Revolutionary Socialist League, held in March. Further excerpts from this document will be printed in next month's Torch.

The international capitalist economy is headed for world depression. This depression is the necessary result of the origins and nature of the post-war boom. Up until now, the crisis has emerged relatively gradually, with the international economy more sliding into stagnation than (as yet) pitching head over heels into complete collapse. This, of course, can change quite suddenly depending upon a variety of economic and political factors.

U.S. HEGEMONY

The stability of the U.S. was key to the post-war boom. As long as the U.S. economy remained stable with a growing market, the export-oriented economies of Western Europe, and in particular Germany, Italy and Japan, were assured of markets for their products. In turn, the health of these countries was central to stabilizing the U.S. economy through a variety of imperialist methods.

The relatively slow development of the crisis in the post-war U.S. prevented the entire world economy from crashing down. First and foremost, this stability was based on the strength of the labor bureaucracy and the consequent relative quiescence of the working class. U.S. imperialist domination of the world enabled the U.S. bourgeoisie to bribe a substantial section of the U.S. working class, which not only increased the size of the labor aristocracy but also misled vast numbers of other workers.

The result, with the exception of a limited industrial militancy and the revolt of black and brown workers, was to strengthen the hold of the labor bureaucracy over the working class as a whole. In the past few years, this has paid off handsomely to the ruling class which has been able to restrain wages and increase productivity (increasing the rate of exploitation as a counter to the downward pressure on the rate of profit), even in the face of a rising working-class upsurge internationally.

A second factor behind the relatively slow development of the crisis in the U.S. is the tremendous international weight of the U.S., both economically and politically. After the monetary arrangements established by the Bretton Woods agreement (which had been crucial to post-war stability) completely unravelled in 1971, the U.S. used its muscle to get a head start in the dog-eat-dog competition that was replacing the previous imperialist equilibrium.

Instead of having the U.S. economy subsidized through the propping up of the dollar internationally, the U.S. fought to increase its advantages on the world market through changes in currency parities, devaluation of the dollar and favorable trade agreements. The result was that U.S. exports increased at the expense of those of other countries, granting the U.S. a greater share of the international surplus value.

COMMODITY SHORTAGES

The commodity shortages created by the post-war boom were, ironically, a third factor in the present slowness in development of the economic crisis. Shortages, particularly of steel and oil, meant an increased demand for many U.S. commodities.

The search for new sources of oil and other energy sources, and the construction of new refineries and shipping facilities led to a relative boom in the steel industry (making U.S. steel competitive on the world market) and the machine tool industry. This was true, to a lesser extent, of other sectors as well.

The result was that while the U.S. economy was actually in a recession, a number of important industrial sectors which would otherwise have been depressed were humming along, helping to cushion the decline in other parts of the economy. Today, steel is declining under the impact of the crisis and the recession has become general.

The international downturn, in which almost all the leading nations experience recession at the same time, is only the beginning of the crisis. Shortages of many essential goods (steel, oil, aluminum, fertilizer, food) are wreaking havoc on even the best endowed nations, while the intensified inflation which has been both a cause and an effect of these shortages, plus the bloated oil revenues of the OPEC nations, threatens to rip apart the entire apparatus of international credit and trade.

At the same time, the economic policies available to the capitalist class are increasingly ineffective. Since the nature of the post-war boom and the development of the present crisis both flow from the attempt at Keynesian economics, it comes as no surprise that Keynesian remedies no longer solve the problems. In fact, they have never handled the problems but merely hid them under the rug. Today, the rug is lumpy, the problems are showing through and the rug can no longer obscure them from view.

In a world economy with a decayed industrial apparatus, unravelling credit and trade mechanisms, burdened with a mountain of fictitious capital



MATCHED PAIR: Ford and Brezhnev may act like asses in public, but behind their toothy grins both realize that detente is best hope of bolstering their staggering economies at the expense of the world's masses.

and a struggling working class, Keynesian methods can only worsen rampant inflation or plunge the world into economic depression.

PATHS OF COLLAPSE

There are currently two general paths possible for international capitalism. One is the prospect of a relatively gradual slide to economic stagnation. This will be possible only if the international capitalist class is able to maintain the present rather ramshackle international monetary arrangements. Central to this possibility is the ability of the trade union bureaucracy to submit the working class to the intensified exploitation and hardship that this would mean. Eventually, even a gradual decline will collapse into general depression.

The other prospect is a relatively rapid decline into world depression, brought about by the ripping of the entire fabric of international trade and credit already reeling from the collapse of Herstatt Bank and Franklin National in the U.S. (the largest bank to collapse in U.S. history). Continued increases in the price of oil which would worsen the balance of payments situation of all the advanced countries and place even larger reserves in the hands of the Arab rulers than at present will render this prospect increasingly likely.

In the case of rapid decline, the initial result will most likely be a substantial dampening of the class struggle, as the rampant unemployment and economic uncertainty eat away at the confidence of the workers, although sectional outbreaks in the class struggle will undoubtedly continue. In addition, since the cyclical motion of the economy will continue, even slight upturns will bring a degree of hope and confidence to the workers. Sectional or ever generalized motion of the proletariat will increase.

If the decline is more gradual, its dampening impact on the class struggle will be lessened until depression breaks through and the economy plummets. In either scenario, the prospect for the immediate conjuncture is the continuation of the lull in the class struggle, although not necessarily as deep as the one we have recently undergone.

This lull, however, does not mean the obliteration of activity in the working class. While the economic crisis will tend to dampen job and strike action, the mood of the proletariat will express itself in more overtly political forms such as shifting electoral patterns, political struggle within the labor movement, and the shifting influences of the various reformist and centrist tendencies. In addition, while the worsening economic and social conditions will in the initial period tend to demoralize the mass of workers and generally blunt the class struggle, the very decay of capitalism will have a radicalizing effect on the most aware workers. Thus, a small stream of advanced and revolutionary-minded workers will emerge and grow in the coming conjuncture. This layer can potentially have an important impact on the entire political life of the working class.

Finally, it must be remembered that the class struggle does not simply mechanically reflect changes in the economy, although it is affected strongly by such change. If any section of the international working class, in Portugal, Italy or elsewhere, makes a real breakthrough from the reformist bounds imposed by the labor bureaucracies and reformist and centrist parties, this would have an enormous impact on the international proletariat as a whole.

UNSTABLE EQUILIBRIUM

Whatever the specific scenario, it should be clear that the world economy is still at the beginning of a long period of crisis. The old international division of labor, economic and political, is no longer workable. Yet there is nothing yet ready to take its place. The bourgeoisie must search for a new division of labor, a new international arrangement. The antagonistic nature of the division of labor under capitalism means that this new structure can only be established through an international struggle, through fascism and war.

As in the past, the only even temporarily stable form of this division of labor is one in which one or two capitalist countries are overwhelmingly predominant. These nations can then organize the

world around their interests, forcing less powerful countries to accept sacrifices in the interests of "international peace and order," i.e., the imperialist interests of the dominant power. The struggle for a new division of labor is therefore a struggle to establish a new hierarchy of power and influence capped by a dominant leader-power.

Just as the economic crisis has emerged slowly, so has the political crisis. At the moment this crisis has taken the form of overt political and governmental crises in individual nations, e.g. Greece, Chile, Portugal, Italy, Britain, etc. and semi-boiling international tension spots such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia, which pose the threat of world war. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are potent factors in the underlying global instability. At the same time, however, it is primarily the combined weight of these two nations that is holding back the wave of international chaos.

The world is thus posed in an unstable equilibrium which can be upset at the slightest jar. All the advanced countries are aware of the importance of U.S. stability in maintaining the health of international capitalism as a whole. They

post-war division of labor. Instead of the largely two-sided lineup that characterized the Cold War and the 1960's, a more pluralistic arrangement is emerging in which the weight of the former "third forces," China for example, is increasing. In these circumstances, the countries of Western Europe which (with the partial exception of France) were formerly the closest allies of the U.S. are moving toward a more independent political stance. In effect, the anarchic nature of international capitalism which was partially hidden by Cold War oligopoly is now reasserting itself. This atomization is still at the beginning stages. As it increases, it will cripple the ability of the international bourgeoisie to offset the impact of the international crisis.

Today, this atomization remains partially obscured by a thin skein of detente. This detente is based on a conservative reaction of the international capitalist class, particularly in the state-capitalist nations. It is an attempt to maintain the status quo, which is relatively favorable to Russia, under the basic leadership of the U.S. At present, the various bourgeoisies are prepared to try to settle differences



Italian worker proclaims "The Right to Strike is Inviolable."

The international working class today is in a better position, organizationally and economically, to defeat the bourgeoisie than in 1929.

The proletariat has suffered no decisive defeat in three decades.

are therefore caught in a dilemma. Faced with the pressure of their own working class, each national bourgeoisie seeks to grant concessions to the workers in order to buy time. This, however, cuts into their profits and worsens their general economic situation and forces them into conflict with the other capitalist states and particularly with the U.S. If on the other hand they continue to grant concessions to the U.S. to ensure its stability, they do so at the risk of a class explosion at home. So far, most nations have struck an uneasy balance. As the crisis deepens, however, and as the pressure of the class struggle intensifies, this compromise will become impossible.

A new complicating factor is the emergence of certain underdeveloped countries as independent political forces with significant weight. The OPEC countries are the chief examples. This development is the delayed payment for the post-war imperialist stabilizing techniques. The years of looting and living on borrowed time in the form of debts are now being called to account. The bourgeoisies of those countries which have large supplies of needed raw materials now have the leverage to ask for a larger slice of the international pie of surplus value. This is leading to a significant redistribution of wealth within the international capitalist class. At the same time, the other underdeveloped countries are subject to increasing devastation, floods, famine and general economic collapse under the impact of the world crisis.

The emergence of powerful "Third World" forces is an important aspect of the breakdown of the

through negotiation, even if they may lose by them. They prefer this to unleashing the world catastrophe that looms before them.

The detente is extremely tenuous, and must shatter as the crisis in the U.S. and U.S.S.R. deepens. Up until now, the state-capitalist countries have resisted many of the aspects of the crisis. This was largely the result of the size of this bloc, its still high degree of self-sufficiency and the large amount of state control of the respective economies. Various symptoms of the disease were hidden. For example, Russia has so far been able to partially absorb the international inflation in the producers' goods sector.

But since the Russian bourgeoisie, like its counterparts in the West, must strive to increase the rate of exploitation, the inflation will eventually be passed on to the workers through raising prices of consumer goods. It is therefore only a matter of time until the crisis manifests itself in a uniform and deadly manner throughout the world. As this happens, the detente will crumble to be replaced by a naked and bellicose rivalry of imperialist alliances.

CROSSROADS

Looked at broadly, then, the present conjuncture of an international scale takes the form of an unstable equilibrium, or stalemate. The U.S. bourgeoisie remains in the leading position of international capital, although this position is significantly weakened. The past months have seen the U.S. economy plunge into deep recession spearheaded by the auto crisis, exacerbating the

decline of the already shaky international economy. Every leading industrial nation in the West showed a decline in output in the fourth quarter of 1974, with unemployment up sharply internationally. In addition, the U.S.'s increasing inability to police the underdeveloped world has been starkly exposed through the debacles of the Kissinger negotiations in the Middle East, and the complete defeat of the U.S. in Southeast Asia.

The international bourgeoisie is desperately attempting to prevent collapse into outright depression. One motivation is the fear of individual firms that they will go under or be severely damaged in a crash. More fundamental, though, is the consciousness of the ruling class in this epoch that depression can lead to the collapse of the entire social framework—the bourgeoisie stands in mortal fear of the proletariat. This is the central reason that the ruling class finds depression "socially unacceptable" in this epoch.

The international proletariat is far better organized today on the economic level than in 1929. The trade unions are far larger, both relatively and in absolute numbers. Unlike the 1920's, the

policies will only worsen the liquidity crisis which has brought the banking system near the brink. More than pump-priming is needed.

Equilibrium or stalemate not only describes the relations between the international bourgeoisie, it also describes the state of the international class struggle. This aspect is intimately related to the first, since as we have indicated elsewhere, the antagonistic divisions among the international bourgeoisie and the antagonism between the classes are two sides of the basic antagonistic capitalist division of labor. It is precisely the stalemate in the class struggle that has enabled the present crippled international economy to continue limping along. It is the failure of the working class to achieve a decisive victory under its own banner that has allowed the international bourgeoisie to hold together the thread-bare international fabric. With the class struggle largely contained by the capitalist agents in the working class, the bourgeoisie has been able to maintain sufficient breathing room to prevent the occurrence of a major breakage in the structure of international capitalism.

This explains the apparent anomalies in the

working class have successfully corralled the workers and kept them within the bounds of capitalism. In Chile, the results of their treason led to a decisive although not total defeat of the working class. In Portugal, Britain, Italy and elsewhere they have kept tottering capitalist regimes from going over into the abyss.

The trade unions, whose leadership is already highly integrated with the state apparatus, must be drawn in still further. The British "Social Contract," the unofficial social pact in West Germany, wage-price controls in the U.S. which have been lifted but will have to be re-imposed, are all part of this process. The attack on the right to strike, grievance procedures, etc., will be stepped up. Corporatist schemes are already on the increase.

The political course emerging in the West follows from these conditions. Because the bourgeoisie requires increased state intervention while at the same time it fears a direct collision with the working class, it must utilize Popular Front-National Front variants of reformism. The reformist and Stalinist parties and the trade union bureaucracy must sell the bourgeois program to the working class.

In Britain, the Labor Party presides over the "Social Contract." Jack Jones, head of the Transport and General Workers Union with a reputation as a "left-winger" has openly implored British workers to make no demands that will endanger the corporations. In West Germany, the SPD and the trade union bureaucracy has been able to cut real wages by close to five per cent in the past year. In France, the CGT employs a policy of negotiation with Giscard. Japan's government has moved rightward in the past year, and is launching a productivity offensive with the collaboration of the right wing of the Japanese labor bureaucracy. Its success will be an indicator of how much a left cover can be eschewed.

France, perhaps, is even more key. Conditions in France are building to the same point they reached in May, 1968. Once more, unemployment is on the rise—indeed it is now double what it was seven years ago. Just as in 1968, the work week has been shortened repeatedly to cut wages. Despite the collaborationist misleadership of the Stalinist CGT the pressure of the proletariat has forced a number of massive strikes in the past year, and even induced the CGT to call a general strike as a safety valve. Another mass upsurge in France is a distinct possibility.

Barring that, the proletarian threat can still be sufficient to force a crisis in the Giscard government and bring a Popular Front coalition to power. On the other hand, if Giscard can cope with the current crisis it will be a signal to the bourgeoisie elsewhere that it can begin to step up the offensive.

The reformist and Stalinist leaderships have been fundamentally responsible for maintaining the degree of stability that capitalism has been able to retain. For example, West Germany's ability to dampen inflation and deliver goods on time without fear of delays from strikes has been based on "social peace" delivered by the reformists. While the international economy is in desperate straits, the possibility of avoiding an outright crash (for a time) through gradual concessions remains. Therefore, regardless of the particular party that comes to power in the industrial states, the reformists and Stalinists will continue to play a pivotal role for the bourgeoisie in this period.

Forty years ago, the bourgeoisie was wary of state intervention on a massive scale. It still viewed partial nationalization, large-scale deficit spending and the like as proto-socialist. This is far less true today. In the event of economic collapse, the bourgeoisie will resort to these measures without the time lag of the four years that existed in the Great Depression.

The closer proximity between the viewpoints of the big bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy (the common social ground being Keynesianism) is combined with the crisis of revolutionary leadership. There is no mass party feared by the bourgeoisie today even to the degree that Stalin's Comintern was in the Third Period. Similarly, the fear of "Soviet Bolshevism" has qualitatively lessened with the advent of full-blown state capitalism. In short, every sign points to class collaboration through the state as the dominant strategy in the next period.



French proletariat occupies Renault plant in 1968 upsurge. Conditions are ripe for major outbreak of class struggle in France.



Rhodesian blacks riot against racist, imperialist domination. Exploitation of Africa is key to propping up international capitalism.



Japanese railway workers strike over working conditions. Japan's ruling class is planning major offensive against working class this year.

European, Japanese and U.S. workers have suffered no decisive defeats in the past three decades. On the other hand, the crisis of leadership, the low political consciousness, the absence of a mass revolutionary party, are now more extreme. But the bourgeoisie is still afraid to take the workers in the advanced industrial states head on.

This is even more true in Europe than in the U.S. While unemployment has already passed 8 per cent in the U.S., the major nations of Western Europe have kept the jobless rate below three per cent. It will be a difficult and dangerous task to push unemployment much further; instead, these nations have generally substituted a much higher inflation rate than the U.S.

The European nations have taken the lead in trying to slow the crisis through Keynesian "anticyclical" fiscal policies. Enormous budget deficits are emerging as each nation desperately tries to "prime the pump." This can temporarily contain unemployment, but only at the expense of accelerating inflation rates that are already approaching 20 per cent. This deficit spending will hurl a mountain of fictitious capital into the economies, intensifying the already shaky credit situation and further destabilizing the international monetary structure. The need to dump ever-greater paper values into circulation will make it difficult to reach a stable monetary agreement.

We can expect, then, that in the immediate future the bourgeoisie in the West will seek to avoid a head-on confrontation with the working class, attempting to limit unemployment and effecting only moderate cuts in real wages. However, these

domestic situations in countries like Britain, Italy, Greece and Portugal. These countries, export-oriented and dependent on oil imports, have been exceptionally hard hit by the economic crisis. They ought to be well on their way toward Bonapartism and fascism. Yet the immediate situation in these countries appears to contradict this. Despite serious inroads, bourgeois democracy appears to remain strong in Britain. The fascist-Bonapartist dictatorship in Portugal was overthrown after 40 years. In Greece, the junta was overthrown after seven years, and bourgeois democracy has been established.

The answer to this apparent contradiction lies in the stalemate described above. The working class had not been able to break through beyond some initial victories over Bonapartist regimes. At the same time, with the exception of Chile, the working class has suffered no major defeats. The workers, however, are becoming aware of the crisis, both its depth, and (more slowly) its significance. The bourgeoisie is only a few steps ahead of it here. But this means that it is beginning to realize that to solve the crisis on a capitalist basis means a massive assault on the working class. It also knows that such an assault will not be easy to carry out, and it is not yet ready to do so. Instead, it is preparing its forces and maneuvering for position.

Central to this stalemate has been the role of the misleaders of the working class, the Stalinists and reformists. They have been playing their historic treacherous role exceptionally well. Particularly where the class struggle has most threatened to break out into the open, these betrayers of the

The present conjuncture is the calm before a great storm. While the economy has turned downward internationally, the class struggle remains in check. The class struggle remains on the economic level, with the politically advanced layer still molecular. Therefore, today the reformists are front and center; it is their task to bell the working class. At the current level of struggle, the centrists remain locked out of leadership of the masses. An overt accommodation between them and the bourgeoisie is not yet in order.

The current wave of splits among the centrist groupings (WRP, LO, WL, ISGB, ISUS, BWC, the cold split in the USEC) correspond to these conditions. Because of the absence of a sizable advanced layer and because the task of mass leadership does not yet confront centrism, the centrifugal pull on these formations is predominant. The struggle remains confined in large part to the level of ideas which have not yet been tested in the class struggle. The rightward drift of most of the centrists is an adaptation to the economic level of the struggle, an attempt to reach backward workers by lowering the level of the program.

The splits among the centrist tendencies correspond to the unity among the reformists. Because it is the turn of reformism, because their variant corresponds to, indeed is responsible for, the consciousness and level of struggle of the overwhelming mass of workers, and because the bourgeoisie must opt for this alternative today, we have seen SP-CP coalitions and their ilk in the fore.

But this reformist unity is already beginning to shatter, as for instance in Portugal. In Britain, where the situation is more mature and the Labor Party mainstream has already lost credibility among militants, Left Labor has been forced to differentiate itself from the Labor right (which in

fact organized first in response to the disaffection of militant workers).

In the U.S. on the other hand, where consciousness lags the most, we see only the beginnings of a liberal-labor unity. This unity is one possible path of the crystallization of a visible reformist alternative to Ford.

As reformism and left-reformism become discredited in the eyes of sectors of the working class, and as the class struggle and the crisis deepen, we can expect the growth of centrism. The current splitting process will be transformed into a drive towards unity, to provide the centrist alternative needed to mislead workers breaking from the stranglehold of reformism. While the splitting process of centrism and the "unity period" of reformism will continue in the immediate future, their duration will depend upon the development of the crisis and in particular of the class struggle.

The present "unity period" of reformism indicates the gradual unraveling of the crisis. The active collaboration of the reformists and Stalinists in propping up the bourgeoisie by providing a "left" cover for the state are preludes to military and Bonapartist rule. The Popular Front period generally corresponds to the sharpening of cross-currents in the class struggle. On the surface, the milieu appears to have shifted to the left, with the open emergence of SPs and CPs in coalition governments. Beneath the surface, however, the bourgeoisie sharpens its weapons for future confrontation with the working class. The military is waiting in the wings.

The form which Bonapartist rule will take depends upon the level of the proletariat's struggle: if it remains high, as in Portugal, the march towards Bonapartism may have to pass through a "left-military" phase, the National Front, where the

military is brought directly into the government while the workers are lulled by their misleaders into believing that they can rely on these "friends." As the situation in Chile neared open conflict, we should recall, the "loyal" military was brought into the government.

But the international proletariat has learned certain lessons from Chile. The Portuguese CP must play a more "left" role precisely because the workers are wary of the trap which the Chilean peaceful road represented. Similarly, the military, needed to intervene against the proletariat, increasingly must attempt to establish its legitimacy by posing as the ally of the working class. Today, more than in the past, the road to Bonapartism passes through a "left junta" phase.

In short, the sway of reformism, the lag in consciousness, the still relatively low level of struggle in the metropolitan countries indicates that even in the advent of economic collapse, the strength of the reformists will be maintained, at least for a while. At the same time, given the differences from the 1930's outlined above, the period of demoralization may be briefer.

The world crisis of capitalism in its epoch of decay thus remains a crisis of leadership. The reformist and centrist misleaders do not "substitute" themselves for an absent revolutionary leadership. They actively confine the proletariat's struggle to conform to the needs of the bourgeoisie, and attempt to annihilate potential nuclei of revolutionary leadership. In the period we are entering, enormous opportunities exist to build the leadership of the international working class. Before the Popular Front period gives way to widespread Bonapartism and fascism, it is crucial that the proletariat be armed with the leadership of the reconstructed Fourth International.

For Proletarian Revolution

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non-proletarian forces, which in turn can be used as a power base to keep the working class in check.

In the West, where the anti-imperialist appeal cannot yield the same results, where the system is not in as advanced a state of collapse, where more concessions can still be made to the proletariat, the Stalinists can and do orient inside the workers' movement. They channel and contain the workers' struggles with an orientation to sections of the labor aristocracy. They generally attempt to co-opt the proletarian struggle through class collaborationism directed from within the workers' movement.

But in Southeast Asia, they had to pose as revolutionaries, precisely to simultaneously utilize the anti-imperialist sentiment and to prevent it from spilling beyond capitalist boundaries. The advanced decay of the system requires more militant methods. Because these methods cannot be directed at the proletariat for fear of proletarian revolution, they must be and are directed elsewhere. Utilizing the collapse of the society, the lack of a social base for U.S. imperialism, Stalinism comes to power.

"EXCEPTIONAL"?

The Spartacists blithely argue that only under "exceptional conditions" can non-proletarian forces establish workers' states. In fact, this can happen under no conditions. But just what are the conditions under which Stalinism comes to power? We have described them, and they are by no means exceptional. If Stalinism can successfully throttle the proletariat, the same dynamic may be repeated in the future, and more than once. Decaying capitalism in the underdeveloped countries will increasingly be forced to turn to the state-capitalist alternative: China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Cuba—are these still "exceptions"?

We greet the victories in Cambodia and Vietnam as great blows to U.S. imperialism. But unlike the Stalinists and the Pabloites, we do not see them as "socialist" or "workers' states." That task belongs to the proletariat. We call upon the Indochinese proletariat to celebrate the expulsion of U.S. imperialism by continuing the struggle, by organizing for its class interests and leading the



Hanoi masses celebrate surrender of Saigon. North Vietnamese workers must join forces with rest of Indochinese proletariat to smash Stalinist state-capitalism and establish workers' rule.

peasantry to victory over the state-capitalist class now entrenching itself in power.

This can only be done by implementing the strategy of the permanent revolution. The Indochinese proletariat must take the lead in demanding that imperialism be swept out of Asia; tottering U.S. imperialism is ready to fall in Laos, Thailand, South Korea, and the Philippines, and only is able to maintain itself thanks to the cooperation of the Stalinist leaders in restraining the masses. U.S. workers must demonstrate solidarity by demanding U.S. imperialism out of Asia—no troops, no phony "aid!"

But the permanent revolution means more than simply spreading the defeat of the U.S. Lasting gains can only be accomplished through the proletarian revolution, and this revolution can have no leadership other than the proletariat. The Indochinese workers must not allow themselves to be fooled by capitalism dressed in socialist rhetoric. Not simply nationalization, but nationalization

under the control of the workers! Not the subjugation of the proletariat's rights, but the organization of the real vehicles of proletarian rule, workers' councils. For a genuine soviet federation in Indochina!

The Indochinese workers must reach out to the peasant masses, forcefully demanding division of the land and opposition to any new attempt at brutal Stalinist forced collectivization. The proletariat must demand that the masses be armed—to defend itself against the Stalinist rulers, the workers must organize their own independent militias and fight against any attempt to disarm them.

In North and South Vietnam, in Cambodia, in Laos—throughout Indochina, the workers must lead the peasantry, seizing the momentum of the anti-imperialist victory to reconstruct the Southeast Asian sections of the Fourth International, the revolutionary Trotskyist leadership murdered thirty years ago by Stalinism. The heroic workers and peasants of Indochina have demonstrated their determined struggle countless times. U.S. imperialism has been vanquished. Stalinist state-capitalism must follow it to defeat.

**U.S. Imperialism Out of Asia!
For Armed Workers' Militia!
For Workers' Control of Nationalized Industry!
For Workers' Councils!
For the Reconstruction of the Indochinese Sections
of the Fourth International!
For Proletarian Revolution in Indochina—Down
With Stalinism!**

SL-Truth-Landau: Who Lies?

The Spartacist League is at it again. The March 28 issue of *Workers Vanguard* (the SL's newspaper) rallies to the aid of the Landau-Olsen minority, the anti-Trotskyists who resigned from the Revolutionary Socialist League last February (see *The Torch*, Feb. 15-March 15).

The Spartacist League is determined to maintain its stranglehold on its title of "Hedda Hopper of the Left." No gossip, no matter how disgusting, is beneath the attention of the SL. In fact they are quite proud of this distinction, crowing that the SL is known to "publicize the doings of our competitors . . . lots of people send us their documents."

The SL prints this garbage without the slightest interest in its political content. They will pick up the dirtiest stick to poke at those who constitute a political threat to them. Most of the time they get left with the stuff all over them.

THE SL-TRUTH ROMANCE

This happened last year, when *Workers Vanguard* took up the struggle for the Brecht-Tracey clique, expelled from the RSL for entrism. The SL did handstands for this crew. They hailed Brecht-Tracey's "principled struggle" in the RSL, although no such thing ever occurred. They hid their political differences with Brecht-Tracey, in hopes of "principled" unification. And they dishonestly covered for these cynical entrists, attributing the problems in Brecht-Tracey's functioning to the RSL majority.

Now that Brecht-Tracey have concluded an unprincipled international alliance with Michel Varga's LIRQL, the SL's romance with them has ended. So the March 14 issue of *WV* discovers that "Truth Lies" and denounces Brecht and Tracey for a history of entrism, maneuverism and unprincipled political functioning. Naturally, *WV* neither takes responsibility for the flip-flop from its earlier articles, nor credits the RSL with having made all these characterizations long ago.

NEW GARBAGE

Now a second RSL minority has provided a new garbage pail for the SL to play in. No matter that this minority resigned rather than fight for its views. No matter that it was an unprincipled bloc which subordinated programmatic differences to a spurious unity on "organizational questions," a la Shachtman-Burnham-Abern. No matter that half of it denounced the League for sharing Trotsky's method of analyzing the epoch of imperialist decay, while the other half tried to twist Lenin of the

Iskra period into a confirmed abstentionist and passive study-group leader. No matter that the group refused to elaborate and defend a position on busing and black liberation in the midst of pitched battles in Boston. Despite all this, *Workers Vanguard* embraces Landau.

But the SL seems to have learned something through the Brecht-Tracey fiasco. They have learned to try to cover their bases for the time when they decide there is nothing more to be gained from the Olsen-Landau group. They don't want to make bungling fools out of themselves again. So the SL discovers **caution**. Instead of phrases about "principled, courageous struggle," we hear that Landau is "thoughtful," "sensible" and so forth.

This ruse won't work either. The only way the SL could avoid getting caught on Olsen-Landau would be by putting forward a correct political analysis of the split, and this the SL is uninterested in (not to mention incapable of) doing.

The SL says hardly a word about the politics of Landau-Olsen, concentrating on gossip-column stuff about the RSL "regime." Although Landau has provided the SL with at least some of the documents of the fight, the SL carefully avoids summarizing his viewpoint, Olsen's viewpoint, or the viewpoint of the RSL majority. The reason is that to do so would make crystal clear exactly who was fighting for Leninism in this struggle—and that is not Landau or Olsen.

RIGHT-WING SPLIT

The SL knows this; SL spokesman George Crawford in Detroit characterized the resignations as "apparently a right-wing split." Even *Truth*, which is not exactly in love with the RSL, characterizes the Olsen-Landau group as right-wing, anti-working class and anti-Communist. The SL, however, prefers to avoid this embarrassing truth. They give lip service to the fact that the reasons for the split were "of course political," but then spend their time on Landau's charges against the RSL of "substitution of personal maneuver and backslapping for politics . . . abandonment of political debate," etc.

The best the SL or Landau can do is to try to back this up with stolen documents from December, 1973. These documents indicate that, a year and a half ago, the League recognized that the shortness of the faction fight in the IS and resultant lack of political consolidation of the League (particularly around the Russian question), meant that the internal life of the League was still too much dominated by informal methods and the interplay of personal and semi-formed political groupings.

At that time Landau was alone in refusing to recognize these problems for what they were. He argued against the majority view in a long statement and voted against the report when his whitewash was rejected. Subsequently, in the manner of an hysterical petty-bourgeois, Landau swung 180 degrees and claimed that the RSL was permanently branded by its early mistakes. In reality, the only ones who avoided political debate in the recent struggle were Landau and his followers.

The space given by Landau and the SL to these 1973 documents is a giveaway. If they mentioned the political issues and methods of the majority in the recent fight, it would expose the bankruptcy of their argument. For example, *WV* writes: "The new split actually consists of two elements," a "group" headed by Landau and one headed by Eric Olsen. Later, they speak of the "Landau and Olsen oppositions." Repeatedly, they refer to "both groupings."

What the SL skirts around in typical slimy manner is that the "two groupings" were a rotten bloc. The SL prefers not to mention the open rejection of Trotsky by half the bloc, the claimed adherence to Trotsky by the other half, or the fact that these two elements functioned in the RSL and continue to function today as a single political group. The SL knows full well that as the Olsen-Landau resignation statement puts it: "The members of the Revolutionary Tendency (sic!) differ among themselves on this question"—the "analytical" (read irrelevant to Landau) question of whether capitalism actively fetters the productive forces in this epoch, or develops them on an ever-greater scale.

SL "TACTICS"

This conscious deceit is part of another famous SL "tactic": the SL is trying to drive a wedge between the two groupings in hopes of picking up one of them. The explicit anti-Trotskyism of the Olsenites, however, may be too much for the SL to swallow. If so, they may prefer Landau's anti-working class, liberal study groupism—a feast fit only for Mensheviks!

It is no accident that the SL never mentions Olsen's view that Trotsky's analysis of the present epoch is "utterly mechanical and wrong." This is not merely because to do so would make it hard to avoid characterizing Olsen as an open revisionist. More than that, Olsen's analysis of the "cyclical ups and downs" of capitalism, its alternating periods of expansion and crisis, is in substance similar to the Spartacists'—a fact repeatedly brought out in the factional struggle. Olsen merely dispenses with the "orthodox" cover the SL prefers. The SL, which ordinarily would be pleased to point to agreement with opponents of the RSL, is silent about this because Olsen's open revisionism is too embarrassing.

Turning to the Landau side of the bloc, the SL writes that its earliest document "has dug up some excellent Lenin quotes from the 1900-1902 period." No one disputes Landau's library talents. The question is **what point** are the "excellent quotes"

employed to try to prove. Here the SL must admit a problem: "What seems to be missing from the Landau conception, however, is the insistence . . . on building a fighting propaganda group. . . ."

Bravo, comrades Spartacists! That's right! You managed to get the entire point of the factional struggle on the nature of the party into a parenthesis. Landau spent two lengthy and labored documents trying to prove that the revolutionary nucleus must withdraw from any involvement in the mass movements until a mythical later stage when it would be "prepared" to lead them. Landau's position is to withdraw even from propagandistic intervention. Landau even insisted that he was not "ready" to take a position on the race conflict in Boston, although not before admitting the possibility of calling for federal troops to "protect" the black students. The SL mentions none of this although it possesses the documents.

NOSE COUNTING

The SL is left with nothing more than a pathetic, apolitical attack on the RSL. Unable to deal with the political issues, the SL counts noses: the loss of the Landau-Olsen group, *WV* prophesies, puts the League "below a viable level." (This, from the tendency which, during the Turner-Elens fight in 1968, shrank to some 40-odd members and could not manage to put out a publication for a year!)

Why is the SL reduced to such a state? Why has the SL been hysterically predicting the absolutely imminent demise of the RSL for the past year and a half? Why is such an inordinate amount of the SL's limited resources thrown into "combat" against our "rapidly disintegrating left-Shachtmanite sect?"

The reason, to coin a favorite SL phrase, is "of course political." What the SL cannot tolerate about the RSL is that the RSL stands to its left, and systematically attacks the SL's opportunist capitulations to Zionism, integrationism, trade union chauvinism, pacifism and the like. *WV* prefers Landau's characterization of the SL as sectarian (which it has grown quite accustomed to over the years). The RSL's exposure of the SL as an opportunist tendency is too painful.

The SL may pick up some of the pieces of the Olsen-Landau orbit, which is already close to the SL on fundamental issues—those who are willing to junk their state capitalist analysis for the big green pasture of the SL. This would merely confirm the RSL's analysis that the SL is moving rapidly to the right.

In order to shield its cadre from the RSL's attacks and avoid taking up the political issues, the SL must continue to hide behind the cover of its recent modest growth and the projected death of the RSL. "If we just wish hard enough, just have enough faith, maybe the RSL will vanish," hmm? Unfortunately for the SL, proletarian politics is not a fairy tale. All the wishing and posturing in the world will not remove the RSL from the SL's path. But then, wishing and posturing never made a revolution either.

Permanent Revolution: Black Liberation And The American Revolution

This pamphlet contains the resolution on black liberation passed by the RSL's founding convention and two supplementary resolutions.

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A TORCH PAMPHLET

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Inflation Hits The Soviet Bloc

by Walter Dahl

The economic crisis that is dragging world capitalism towards depression is not by-passing the state-capitalist countries. Despite the "socialist" bloc's claim to have overthrown capitalism, the Eastern European nations and the USSR are showing increasing signs of being infected with the same disease that afflicts the traditional form of capitalism.

One of these signs is the impact that the world-wide surge in raw materials prices is having on the Eastern European nations.

Although the Russian economy is nearly self-sufficient in raw materials, most of the other Eastern European countries are highly dependent on imports, both from the West and from the USSR. Recently the Russian rulers have made clear their intention of using this economic leverage to strengthen their imperialist domination over the region.

OIL

Oil is the outstanding example. Russia, the world's second largest producer after the U.S., has in the past sold oil to East Europe at prices set well in advance according to the state-capitalist Five-Year Plans. This arrangement was intended to lay the basis for stable international planning within Comecon, the East European Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Prices for goods traded between Comecon nations were determined by the world market prices over the previous five-year period. The current Five-Year Plan expires at the end of this year, and a large upward revision in oil prices has long been expected—to the advantage of the USSR.

But Russia has already jumped the gun. An oil price increase of 131 per cent has been imposed on Hungary, as an indication of what is expected throughout East Europe. This hike was not based on the traditional five-year period of world market prices. Instead, the Russians took advantage of the quadrupling of oil prices that followed the 1973 Mid-East war. In addition, Comecon has announced that its internal trade prices will now be revalued annually instead of every five years, because of the rapidity of world inflation. This change will benefit the USSR primarily, because of its monopoly of raw materials in the region.

In the past year, the East European officials have resisted passing on the inflated import prices to consumers (although in Poland, food prices jumped eight per cent according to official statistics, and 30 per cent on the black market). The ruling Communist Parties are well aware of the dangers they face if they impose sharp consumer price boosts.

POLAND

The Polish workers' uprisings of the winter of 1970-71 were triggered by just such events. For a time, hidden price increases (black market increases and the substitution of shoddier goods

at equal prices) had prevented a real rise in the workers' standard of living. The last straw was an open 20 per cent rise in food prices coupled with a new "incentive wage scheme," announced in December, 1970. Shipyard workers struck in protest and organized armed marches against the Party. After two months of strikes throughout the country, the near-revolt was cooled by the ouster of the Gomulka leadership and the promise of real wage gains to the most militant sections of the working class.

The workers of East Europe have proved several times that there are limits to the cutbacks they will accept from their rulers. They will be put to the test once again, since the bureaucracies are now plagued by external price pressures in addition to the internal pressures that have constrained state capitalism from the start.

Consumer goods industries traditionally have the lowest priority under state capitalism since these countries are desperately trying to catch up to the advanced capitalism of the West by investing in the producers' goods industries rather than in consumption. The current (1971-75) Five-Year Plan in the USSR is a case study of this dynamic. It had been loudly publicized as the "Consumers' Plan"; revised priorities and trade with the West were supposed to finally bring the Russian workers up to a "Western" standard of living. But as with previous Plans, it became clear by 1973 that the consumer goods targets would not be reached. So the 1974 goals for light industry were revised downward. But even this new goal was not achieved. Agricultural production fared worst of all, with a decline of 3.7 per cent compared with 1973. At the same time, the revised targets for industrial production were overfulfilled, showing that the state-capitalist priorities had not changed at all.

WORKERS COME LAST

The compulsion to expand industrial production at the expense of consumption is not some whim of the bureaucrats. It is the result of the capitalist drive to accumulate, a drive intensified in the state-capitalist countries because of their relative backwardness. This tendency was analyzed by Marx a century ago and it still holds true, for state capitalism as well as for traditional capitalism. (The theory that Western capitalism is geared towards the rapid expansion of consumer goods is a myth popularized during the post-war boom of the 1950's and 60's. This myth was turned into dogma by numerous bourgeois apologists in addition to "Marxists" like Joseph Stalin and the Spartacist League.)

Consumer goods are therefore invariably underproduced in Eastern Europe, and this is a constant source of inflation. Whether it emerges in official form or only in the "hidden" forms mentioned above depends on the bureaucrats' assessment of their political options. But the inflationary pressure is always there.

Another cause of state-capitalist inflation is a form of fictitious capital. The state-capitalist Plans are presented in two parts: material and financial. Financial credits for the equipment needed by industries are awarded by state banks to the enterprises requesting them according to the physical plan, even when the credits demanded exceed the planned cost. Thus there is a built-in tendency for the money supply to exceed the actual value of goods produced. In Poland, for example, total loans outstanding multiplied 6.7 times, while production multiplied 2.6 times in the decade from 1950 to 1960. The ratio has declined a little since then, but it is still vast.

The economic reforms of the late 1960's have somewhat reduced this tendency towards arbitrary expansion of money, but the increased trade with the West has substituted external sources of inflation. It is the combination of both sources that plagues Eastern Europe today.

BUREAUCRACY DIVIDES

The reforms of the 60's were favored by the liberal wing of the state-capitalist bureaucracy. In addition to expanded trade with the West for modern machinery, the reforms permitted each plant manager to exercise

"detente" with the U.S. by cutting off East-West trade. While it lasts, the detente offers the imperialist rivals certain economic benefits at a time of intensifying crisis. One recent example reported by *Business Week* was a deal between Russian and Polish banks, on the one hand, and the Bankers Trust Company and the Chase Manhattan Bank on the other, to finance nickel mining in Yugoslavia.

FALLING PROFIT RATE

Surging raw materials prices, shortages of consumer goods, chronic crisis in agriculture, conflict within the bureaucracy over economic reforms—these are but the surface reflections of the underlying contradictions of these economies. The tendency of the rate of profit to fall is starkly visible in the traditional capitalist countries in the form of severe shortages of capital needed for productive investment. This law, the main economic reflection of the crisis in capitalism, can also be seen in the state-capitalist countries.

First take growth rates. The following table shows the average yearly growth rates of the national income for the various Comecon countries. (These figures are taken from their own official statistics and substantially overstate the performance of the economies.)

Average Annual Growth Rate of National Income

	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75 (planned)
Bulgaria	13.4	10.0	6.6	8.3	8.0
Czechoslovakia	8.0	6.8	1.9	7.1	5.0
East Germany	11.8	5.0	3.4	5.3	4.9
Hungary	6.4	7.2	4.5	6.3	5.5
Poland	8.6	6.6	6.2	6.2	7.0
Rumania	14.6	7.2	9.6	7.6	11.5
U.S.S.R.	11.4	9.1	6.5	7.8	6.7

some independent control over his firm's profits. The purpose was to redirect the economy from "extensive" growth based on rapid expansion of industry using the excess labor from the countryside, to "intensive" growth based on greater efficiency and productivity. The reforms were opposed by the conservative wing of the bureaucracy, which feared removing economic power from the hands of the centralized apparatus.

Of all the countries in the Russian bloc, Hungary has gone furthest with economic reforms, to the extent that the monopoly of foreign trade broke down and individual firms were authorized to trade with the West. The Hungarian Party Congress meeting in March was expected to take a conservative turn under the pressure of Russia's "oil weapon." Although some of the liberals' steps have been reversed and a few of the leading liberal bureaucrats have been ousted, it is significant that the Russians did not insist on a thorough change. The Russians are unwilling to risk their

This table shows a general decline in growth rates from the time of the first post-war Five Year Plans to the present. The results of the current plan are not all known, but even the planned figures (with one exception) are designed to maintain the current decline. And it is generally known that the early years of the current plan did not even reach the targeted figures, while the later years are bound to be affected by the developing world crisis. Since the function of capitalist profits is to serve for reinvestment and capital accumulation, growth rates tend to reflect the profit rate. The persistent decline in the growth rate of the Russian and East European economies thus reflects the falling rate of profit.

PRODUCTIVITY CRISIS

Another manifestation of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall is the recurring crises of productivity that periodically afflicts capitalist economies. One means to offset the falling tendency of the rate of profit is to

increase the rate of exploitation of labor (which is roughly analogous to labor productivity). If the rate of exploitation is increased, the mass of profits produced is augmented and the fall in the profit rate can be checked, at least temporarily. Hence the constant drive on the part of the capitalists to increase labor productivity and their concern when such productivity lags.

The state-capitalist economies are by no means free from this dynamic. In fact, the Russian economy has been plagued with lagging productivity since the late 1950's. According to Abram Bergson (as cited in *Business Week* of April 4, 1975), "factor productivity"—GNP produced per combined unit of labor and capital—in the USSR grew at only 0.7 per cent per year between 1958 and 1967 after growing by 1.7 per cent yearly from 1950 to 1958. (While "factor productivity" involves more than labor productivity, a decline in the former will almost invariably reflect a decline in the latter.)

While this tendency abated during the late 1960's, it has re-emerged in force during the 1970's. According to Russian reports, in the first four years of the current plan, industrial productivity rose 26.4 per cent compared with a goal of 29 per cent and construction productivity rose 22.6 per cent compared with a plan target of 28.5 per cent. This trend toward lagging productivity and the consequent drive of the Russian bourgeoisie to increase the exploitation of the working class is rooted in exactly the same dynamic that motivates the speed-up and productivity drives in the traditional capitalist countries.

The Russian productivity crisis

explains much of the Russian desire for detente and trade with the West. The development of the Russian economy has been based to a large degree on "extensive" methods, in particular on a rapid expansion of the labor force and the re-investment of a high percentage of the national income in capital goods. In effect, the ruthless exploitation of a rapidly growing labor force working long hours for low wages was used to finance the construction of Russia's industrial base.

But there are definite limits to the ability of "extensive" methods to raise productivity. After a point, poorly-paid workers, exhausted from working long hours become less productive, not more, despite the application of more machinery to the production process. (In fact, such highly oppressed workers are often incapable of operating such machinery.) In Russia this was one of the factors that prompted the moves toward "liberalization" and increasing the production of consumer goods on the part of Stalin's successors.

The pressure of the workers for more consumer goods and a slowdown in the rate of growth of the Russian labor force has undercut the "traditional Soviet growth model" and has forced the bureaucracy to look for other means to increase productivity. They now seek to increase productivity more by introducing the latest technological developments in place of substantial increases in the volume of investment.

The result has been to tie the Russian and Eastern European economies closer to the rest of world capitalism and to make them increasingly vulnerable to the contradictions of the world market. Since the Russian economy has always been incapable of generating its own technological advances, the Russian bureaucrats are forced to import more and more advanced machines and processes from the West. At a time of high inflation in the latter, the increased imports aggravate the internal pressures toward inflation.

This will mean either: 1) curtailing of the importation of advanced capital

equipment and further stagnation of the Russian and East European economies, or 2) maintenance and expansion of these imports, which makes these economies increasingly prone to the traditional forms of capitalist crisis. In their efforts to escape the frying pan of internal contradictions, the state-capitalist bourgeoisies merely expose themselves further to the fires of the world market.

The state-capitalist bourgeoisie, subject to the same laws of capitalism as the West, cannot avoid the coming international collapse—and the confrontation with the proletariat that will inevitably be forced on the bureaucracies that try to escape economic stagnation. In one way or another, the Russian and East European workers will make their presence felt. The crisis will only be solved by the revolutionary proletariat rising to the task of overthrowing capitalism in all its forms and taking hold of production in the name of the emancipation of the working class and all mankind.

CP BACKS ANTI-COMMUNISM

In keeping with its policy of painting progressive sounding union bureaucrats in bright red colors, the Metro (see "Defend Outlaw," p. 16) supporters of the Communist Party voted in favor of Biller's anti-communist amendments.

The reason? One sympathizer of the CP explained that while Biller indeed was a class-collaborationist hack who time and again has sold out postal workers, he nevertheless represented a break with the Neanderthal Meany Shanker-

Van Arsdale leadership of the AFL-CIO.

The CP has again exposed itself as the most consistent apologist for the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie, whose agents "break" with the Meanys and Shankers only to head off the workers' struggle and pave the way for the defeat of the working class. In microcosm the CP's policy in Metro duplicates its international role—practiced with disastrous results from Chile to Kurdistan—of sabotaging the struggle of the workers in order to placate the liberal capitalists and their trade union lackeys.

DEFEND OUTLAW!

Cont'd. from p. 16

Postal Service, it will be a defeat for all postal workers. Attacks on others will follow. . . . Let there be no doubt that Biller is beginning a reactionary mobilization. . . . Every P.O. worker must rally to Outlaw's defense."

If the red-baiting campaign against Outlaw succeeds, the way will be opened for purging every left-wing opponent of Biller. Biller will gain self-confidence in his ability to discipline the ranks, having a free hand to smash any potential nucleus for organized opposition. Therefore, the attack on Outlaw is an attack on the fight against the Biller leadership.

But while Outlaw has attracted many of the most politically conscious and militant workers in the union, its RU-imposed program of militant reformism is no substitute for a revolutionary strategy to defend postal workers today.

Outlaw is the RU's model for trade union work, and it demonstrates the RU's opportunist practice. What does the RU focus on for the upcoming contract? It calls for "More!" How much more? How can it be achieved? What about taxing the banks and corporations? What about nationalization of USPS under workers' control? Outlaw's RU-oriented leadership does not say. Instead it replies "More!", a slogan popularized nearly a century ago by the notorious class-collaborationist Samuel Gompers as his way out of posing a class

struggle strategy.

More than "More!" is needed. This reformist slogan conveniently avoids the need to pose a unified struggle against the capitalist offensive, and does not point to the roots of the attack being the capitalist system itself. But this is in keeping with the RU's general practice. The RU attempts to pull the wool over workers' eyes, to convince them that it's really not necessary to organize on a revolutionary basis today. For now, something less will do:

We in the RU definitely believe that a high level organization is necessary to make the revolution. . . . But what is needed in the PO at this time is a broad-based group that is open to any postal worker who wants to fight the bosses and sees that as part of a broader fight.

Or, as the November, 1974 issue of Outlaw stated:

Outlaw is not a communist organization. Outlaw is an anti-imperialist organization of postal workers. We are united around our day to day struggles and the understanding that our interests lay with all other workers and against the ruling class of big business and their political front men.

Outlaw certainly is not a communist organization. But what is an "anti-imperialist organization?" On what basis does it go about its work? By "summing up" day to day needs. Search high and low, and you will find nothing more from the RU. Outlaw is explicitly anti-imperialist, but not explicitly anti-capitalist, despite the

fact that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism! Therefore, it is not explicitly revolutionary. Instead, it caters to the day to day moods of the masses, instead of tying these to the revolutionary struggle.

This is a two-stage method. Today, Outlaw sums up immediate needs and fights only for them ("More!"). Tomorrow, it will worry about the need to organize on a revolutionary basis. Today, reforms. Revolutionary leadership? That's for later. Or, as the RU says: "A minimum program, short of the dictatorship of the proletariat, provides the basis at this time for the struggle against imperialism."

Without the conscious struggle for revolutionary leadership, without a class struggle alternative clearly stated, the working class will never be ready. Its struggle will be continually co-opted and sold out by left-sounding bureaucrats who are also for "More!" (wasn't Gompers?) or by the RU itself, which will "compromise" when it sees itself capable of winning more influence.

COPS OF THE LEFT

By saying that workers aren't ready to struggle on a revolutionary basis today, the RU places itself in the position of attempting to contain the class struggle at a reformist level. Just as Biller attacks them, so must the RU operate like the policemen of the left against revolutionaries who will not accept bourgeois limits. This is why the RU has launched a campaign of physical harassment against the Revolutionary Socialist League. That is why the RSL in Outlaw is now in

danger of being expelled by the RU leadership. Biller attacks Outlaw because their militancy jeopardizes his outright sellouts; the RU attacks the RSL because our revolutionary perspectives threaten to expose their reformist betrayals.

Outlaw is planning to bring an injunction against Biller for manipulating the vote at the April 16 meeting. In other words, the RU is asking the bourgeois courts, the legal arm of the state power, to intervene in internal union affairs. Biller must be dealt with, but by the workers themselves, not by the bourgeois state. The state is looking for exactly such opportunities to appear as the "friend" of the rank and file, precisely in order to tie the unions more closely to the state and to the bourgeoisie. By going to the courts, the RU supporters in Outlaw only help spread the illusions that workers cannot fight in their own self-interest and that the "neutral" state can be relied upon.

While opposing Outlaw's reformist approach, all militants must stand in solidarity with Outlaw against Biller's anti-communist campaign. This red-baiting will appear in union after union as the bureaucrats attempt to eliminate all opposition to their complicity in the bourgeois attacks of unemployment, inflation and speed-up. We call for a united campaign to DEFEND OUTLAW!

At the same time, a revolutionary alternative to Biller must be built, and it will not be built around the RU's militant reformism. In the next issue of *The Torch* we will put forward the program and strategy necessary for the current contract struggle.

Postal Workers Under Attack

DEFEND 'OUTLAW'!

by Mary Robinson

NEW YORK—On April 16, the Metro Area Postal Union (New York area local of the American Postal Workers Union) meeting erupted into a chair-throwing, fist-swinging confrontation between President Moe Biller's goon squad and an angry vocal opposition to the Biller machine. As the July 20 contract expiration date approaches, the Biller leadership is moving to consolidate its position over the ranks. A record turnout of almost 1,500 workers at this meeting foreshadows the growing restiveness and combativity of N.Y. area postal workers.

Biller and the Metro leadership have proposed a series of constitutional amendments that are designed to strip away the ranks' ability to control their leaders. Until now stewards have been elected by workers in their station, division, section or tour. This control over stewards, however, has been thrown into jeopardy by the Biller-backed amendments. Article 11, Section 9 states: "The President may remove any steward for just cause." Now the president, not the ranks, will determine who remains steward and who doesn't!

"JUST CAUSE"

In an attempt to fool the ranks, Biller's paper, *Union Mail*, says, "The revised Constitution positively puts the rank and file membership FIRST!" Despite Biller's blatant lies to the contrary, the central thrust of the amendments is to place all levels of union membership directly in his hands. Those stewards who demonstrate their opposition to Biller's class-collaborationist policies can expect to be stripped of their positions by the Biller machine. "Just cause" will provide the constitutional cover.

At the April 16 meeting, Biller's amendments did not get the two-thirds majority required to carry. Biller bureaucratically ruled that they had passed. When faced with calls to divide the house, he abruptly adjourned the meeting and sent his goon squad to attack the vocal opposition.

The confrontation demonstrated that a growing and now substantial number of New York postal workers have lost their illusions about Moe Biller. For some time, Biller has been able to confuse the ranks and diffuse militancy through "left" rhetoric and an undeserved reputation for militancy. He is typical of an emerging layer of bureaucrats, like Ed Sadlowski in steel (see "Sادلowski: Reformist Roadblock to Steelworkers' Struggle" in this issue), who seek to channel the growing anger of the ranks through co-optive gestures.

This is particularly necessary in the postal union. The brutal capitalist offensive, spearheaded by mounting layoffs and speed-up schemes, is hitting postal workers especially hard. The attempt to "rationalize" the "semi-public" U.S. Postal Service to bolster profits has already taken the

form of the Kokomo Plan (sharply increasing the load on carriers), slashed hours for "substitutes" (10 per cent of the work force), and the introduction of mechanical mark-up. All of these lay the basis for increased reduction of the postal work force through attrition, closing up one of the few areas of potential employment in the staggering economy.

threat of wide-spread opposition to the new contract looms. Therefore, Biller must attempt to chop off any group to the left of him, since they might be potential centers for organizing opposition to the contract.

This is the purpose of the new constitutional amendments. In particular, they are immediately aimed at attacking Outlaw, a caucus heavily

of the Government of the United States of America."

Biller now has the "constitutional" right to expel his opponents on political grounds, using these vicious anti-communist/amendments. Arousing a witch-hunt atmosphere, Biller hopes, will both enable him to shift the ranks' attention away from his sellout on the contract while allowing him to root out the organized opposition, especially Outlaw.

But this is not enough. Biller knows that the New Jersey Bulk facility poses the greatest threat to the acceptance of a sellout contract. When USPS tried to change the work shifts at the Bulk, workers responded immediately with a strike. Article 11, Section 4 is a direct attack on the union leadership at the Bulk facility. This amendment gives the president the right to "designate those units of employees of the postal service which shall each be entitled to elect and be represented by a steward."

This amendment is designed to remove Kenny Leiner



Militant New York area postal workers mobilize against bureaucracy's attack on ranks. Local President Moe Biller's constitutional amendments are designed to crush all current and future opposition to Biller's rotten sell-out leadership.

Biller's job is to sell a rotten contract to the ranks, and to keep them in line between contracts. But New York postal workers are among the most militant elements in this country. It was New York area workers who sparked 1970's national postal strike, the first major strike against the U.S. government and the first national wildcat strike. Precisely because the 1970 strike unleashed the vast power and potential of a national mobilization of workers (and significantly one in which black rank and filers played a central role), today postal workers enter the contract fight with an increased confidence and determination to hold the line against management's offensive.

COLLISION COURSE

These attitudes are on a collision course with the capitalist offensive. This is where Biller comes in. Biller raises radical demands, such as cutting the work week to 28 hours with no reduction in pay. Through verbal opposition to right-wing national APWU President Filby, he has acquired a reputation of being "militant."

But as the attacks on postal workers proceed, Biller's failure to put forward a way of resisting the USPS offensive has tarnished his image. The

influenced by the Maoist Revolutionary Union (RU). Because Outlaw is the largest organized opposition to Biller's sell-out policy, and because it is gaining influence as the contract nears, Biller must attempt to crush it.

FALSE UNITY

Biller frames his attacks under the guise of unity, arguing "the negotiation process demands the utmost unity between rank and file and its negotiators, so that management is confronted with the strongest team the union can put into the collective bargaining field" (*Union Mail*, March, 1975).

But Biller's unity talk is a cover for his capitulations and an excuse for his attacks against the left. Article 16, Section 1 of Biller's amendments threatens workers with probation, suspension or expulsion if they are found: 1) "engaging in a movement which has for its purpose the fostering of a rival organization"; 2) "engaging in conduct harmful to the union, damaging the union's capacity to properly represent and service its members or otherwise adversely affecting the Union to civil liability"; or 3) "joining or lending active support to any organization or movement whose purpose and objectives are contrary to the fundamental principles

as union director at the N.J. Bulk Center by increasing those voting to include more conservative work areas. A trade union militant and supporter of Outlaw, Leiner represents a volatile section of postal workers. By changing those voting on directors, Biller can effectively manipulate elections to these critical posts, remove Leiner without the direct intervention of the Biller machine and behold an opposition movement from the Bulk Center.

In an official Metro News Flash of April 17, Biller called supporters of Outlaw "management stooges," "chronic malcontents," "union busters." Biller has escalated the campaign against Outlaw with the following, "The Metro membership has declared "OUT WITH OUTLAW!" All postal workers must rally to DEFEND OUTLAW from Biller's attacks.

The campaign against Outlaw began last June. At that time the *Torch Postal Bulletin*, published by the Revolutionary Socialist League, warned of a mounting campaign against Outlaw and pointed the way to fight Biller's reactionary mobilization. The *Torch Postal Bulletin* said, "If Biller succeeds in mobilizing the most reactionary elements in the union to drive Outlaw out of Metro or the

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