

## Joseph Stalin and Jim Jones

# Cult Suicide in Guyana: Why?

Even the mass media's voracious appetite for the sensationally grotesque isolated event has been glutted by the Jonescult mass suicide in the jungles of Guyana. The bizarre die-in is delivered up in a mix of gory detail, pop psychology, titillating rumor and an utterly misguided search for "understanding" of cults in America. Unlike last year's crash of two jumbo 747 jets in the Canary Islands, this mass death was not an accident; nor was it simply tragic, but absurd and sick.

There was the counting of corpses. Corpses upon corpses; infants under their parents, sometimes three deep, rotting in the heat and humidity, decomposing hellishly in an atmosphere so putrid and forbidding that the original tally of the dead was underestimated by more than half as the body counters could not bring themselves to get close enough to the scene. It was reported first that 400 were dead and an approximately equal number had fled the mass suicide for the surrounding wilds. It was preferable to imagine the desperate families running into the jungle to face the poisonous insects and snakes, the crocodiles and piranhas, than to think of them accepting Kool-Aid and cyanide at the command of an insane cult leader. Then more bodies were found. Thus far, more than 900 bodies have been discovered in the open-air pavilion that was surrounded by armed guards. There were 250 children, and a few were found with their throats cut. It was mass suicide and mass murder on an unbelievable scale.

Then came the identification of the

corpses. The hundreds of aluminum caskets flown to the graves registration center in Dover, Delaware, where the staff had been trained in the Vietnam war. Some may never be identified. But the collective identification was certain and striking: mostly black, but more integrated than nearly every neighborhood in the U.S.; disproportionately elderly or children; poor; Californian. Common images of American life were suddenly recast as theater of the grotesque—the clothes, the style, and they even did it with Kool-Aid. Saturday morning children's TV ads mixed with the image of the "people's doctor" and the "people's nurse" squirting death down the children's throats. The Madison Avenue image-makers for the General Foods conglomerate cannot purchase enough time and space to erase the horrible associations of that tin tub of Kool-Aid death at Jonestown.

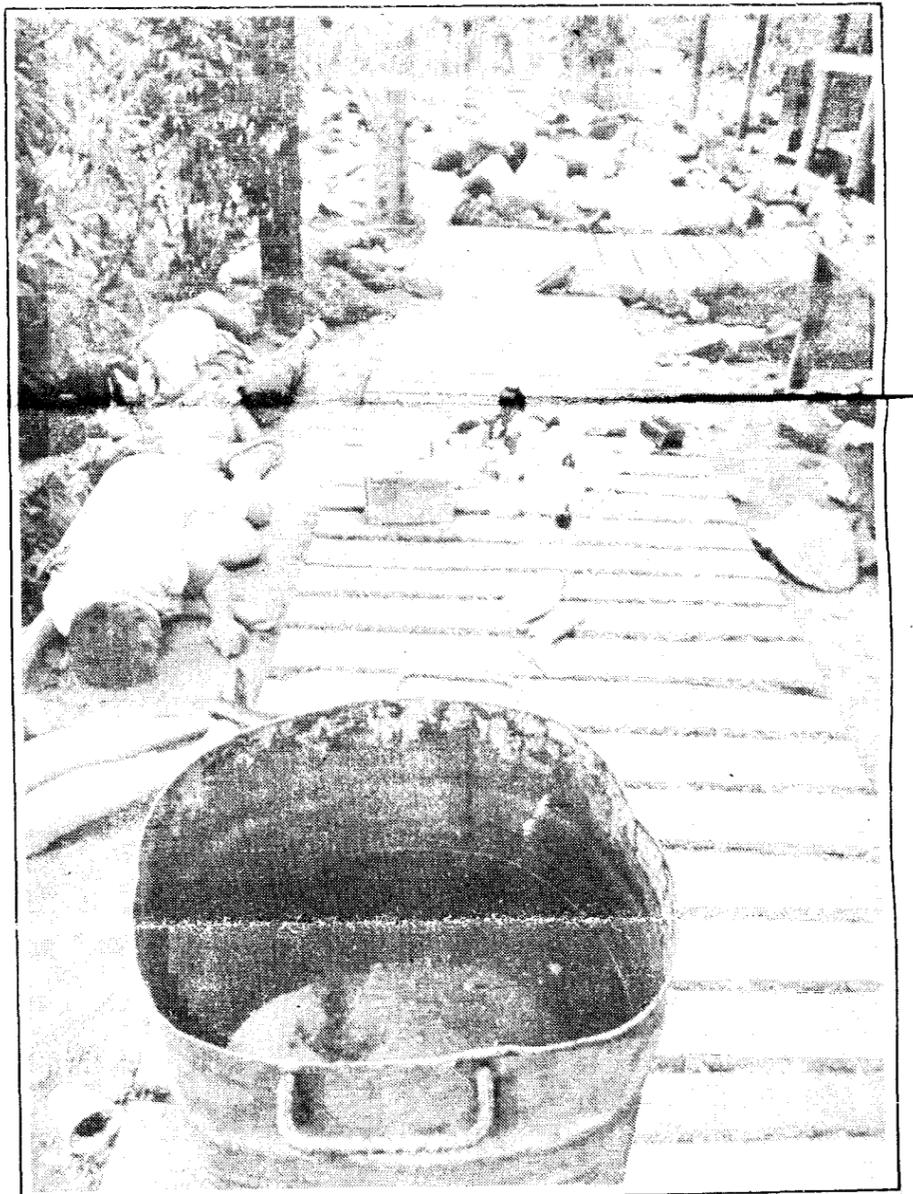
### Making Sense of the Senseless

In America it is the psychology of the cop, not the soldier, which is pervasive. Cops kill other people; soldiers put their own lives at risk. When the U.S. troops in Vietnam discovered they weren't going to be just dishing it out, but might actually get hurt, they fell apart. This characteristic contemporary American imperialist pig mentality contributed to the initial hesitancy about believing the Jonestown adherents had actually killed themselves.

The People's Temple mass suicide was a sick perversion of something the smug media pundits don't even understand. The American Indians understood it when they said, "Today is a good day to die." The "un-American" spirit of willingness to sacrifice oneself for what one believes is a noble impulse, but in this case perverted in the service of the ego of a Jim Jones. But the Jones follower who wrote in her suicide note, "I am more than tired of this wretched, merciless planet and the hell it holds for so many masses of beautiful people," added the real measure of dignity to a bizarre event.

Recoiling from the fact of mass suicide, the columnists and broadcasters have featured interviews with psychiatrists. Purported historical parallels and precedents have been uncovered, along with the banal details of the life of Jim Jones; speculation about motives, the sociology of cultism and the obligatory quotes from Durkheim on suicide and Robert Lifton on "brainwashing." But the historical parallels offered are false and the quotes irrelevant.

The *New York Times*, for instance, has presented the mass suicide at Masada as historical precedent, along with kamikaze pilots in World War II.



Kool-Aid and cyanide.

Johnston/Washington Post

But the 964 Jews of Masada who chose suicide in 79 A.D. rather than face torture and death at the hands of the victorious Romans are hardly comparable. Nor is a warrior cult trained to die in battle a basis for comparison with the Jonescult suicides.

Similarly the sociologists are busy trying to place the Jonescult on a continuum of cults that runs back to ancient times and across cultures, from the cargo cults of Melanesia to the Amish fundamentalist communitarians of Pennsylvania. All irrelevant. One particularly inane *New York Times* (26 November) article explains how the religious are wonderfully American: "The idea of going off into the wilderness to start a new way of life is a thoroughly American tradition ... the United States was, after all, founded by minority religious groups seeking free-

dom from persecution." Actually, from Wounded Knee to Vietnam, genocide—the mass murder of others—is more of an American tradition than mass suicide.

Of course there is a long history of millenarian religion. In the Judeo-Christian apocalyptic tradition it is not unusual for religious, political and economic motives to be interwoven in a visionary fabric of the total transformation of the world. The appeal of messianism to the oppressed is well known. Minority religious movements often go to extremes to mobilize the emotions and win new adherents. The annals of social psychiatry are filled with cases of "epidemic" dance frenzies, of medieval mass dances lasting sometimes for weeks. In the early period of the Reformation it was not so unusual

*continued on page 4*



Robinson/S.F. Examiner

Jim Jones: promised new life, delivered death.

## Send Butcher Loan Back to Saigon!

The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service recently discovered that former South Vietnamese general Nguyen Ngoc Loan committed a war crime and should have his U.S. permanent residence status rescinded. The U.S. public will remember Loan as the Saigon police chief who ten years ago shocked millions of television viewers as they watched him execute in cold blood a "suspected Viet Cong sympathizer." Having lifted this professional anti-communist killer out of Vietnam in 1975 and started him on a "new life" as a restaurateur in a suburb of Washington, D.C., the oh-so-moral U.S. government now finds it expedient to slap his hand for "moral turpitude."

Presumably deep in juridical research for some years now, the INS dredged up a law of the puppet Thieu government which Loan violated. Liberal guilt and the *New York Times* may be satisfied by this discovery, but the very existence of the Saigon regime was a heinous crime against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Justice demands at a minimum that such murderers as Loan be shipped back to Indochina to face the victims of their barbarous acts. And they should be joined by their American counterparts and masters, from the small fry like William Calley to the Kissingers, Nixons, McNamaras and Westmorelands who masterminded the whole business.

But, the INS now says, Loan will not even be deported, for the South Vietnamese government whose "law" he violated no longer exists. At most the Immigration Service will take away his green card,



General Loan executes Vietcong suspect in 1968.

Adams/AP

letting him stay indefinitely in the country.

The bourgeoisie's purpose in granting asylum to such mercenary killers is coldly political. The Vietnamese "boat people"—among them numerous torturers, drug pushers and brothel keepers—tug the heartstrings of the U.S. government. Yet in 1973, when thousands of workers and leftists were butchered in Santiago stadium, the U.S. refused to admit even one persecuted Chilean. Why? As we wrote three years ago of Washington's Vietnamese friends:

"From Bangkok to Paris to New York, wherever this fleeing pack of poisonous rats goes, they will become a center of the most dangerous and vicious anti-communist activity. Worse than the gusanos who left Cuba, 'our allies' will be used by the CIA for the dirtiest

of tricks against communists, labor and blacks."  
—*WT* No. 68, 9 May 1975

Already these imperialist killers are hard at work propping up dictatorships from Nicaragua to Zaire. Others, like Loan, are biding their time until the CIA and the Pentagon can put them to use again. Hitler-lover Nguyen Cao Ky, for example, now owns a liquor store in California and made the news last year when he watched the Nixon/Frost interviews on TV with his neighbor, former peacenik Tom Hayden! While the U.S. continues to protect the Loans and Kys, honoring Kissinger as a statesman of peace and allowing Nixon to make millions from his memoirs, we demand: *No asylum for Indochinese war criminals! Send the mass murderers back to Saigon!* ■

## Somoza: Let Them Eat Less!

The OAS committee set up to "mediate" the Nicaraguan political crisis had just delivered its findings to President Anastasio Somoza. The three-member group (U.S., Guatemala and the Dominican Republic) endorsed the call of the anti-Somoza Broad Opposition Front calling on the dictator to resign and for the formation of a "government of national union." Moreover, all members of his family should be removed from the National Guard and the whole lot of them should clear out of the country. Pronto.

That was October 25. The next day the chief stockholder of Somozalandia, Inc. called a press conference in his concrete-walled headquarters (known even among his cronies as "the bunker") inside an army post atop a hill overlooking the capital city of Managua. As the foreign correspondents crowded in, Somoza announced to the hushed gathering "part of a program of great importance for the future of the country."

What was this momentous announcement? "After the heart attack which I suffered in the summer of 1977..." he began. Perhaps he was going to resign on the spot, "for reasons of health." Was a plane waiting nearby to whisk him off to Miami or Spain's Marbella, graveyards for deposed East European royalty and tinpot Latin caudillos? Not exactly. He went on:

"...I realized that I was not eating well. So I tried to find out how to live better and avoid the dietary deficiencies



Meiselas/Magnum

Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

that lead to coronaries, to diabetes and obesity. And I found a person who had studied nutrition in the country whose inhabitants eat the most in all the world: the United States."

Good for him. But what about the important program? That's it!

"I have contracted with Doctor John Leonard of the Institute of Health in Tucson to set up a program designed to fight against overnutrition in this country."

*Overnutrition?* And right there to answer the dumbfounded journalists' questions was the wafer-thin Dr. Leonard himself. Was he aware that the incidence of *undernutrition* in Nicaragua was among the highest in the world? Certainly, for a document distributed at the beginning of the press conference pointed out that over half of all children under six years of age in the country are affected. Had he tested his program anywhere else before? No, Nicaragua was going to be the test case, since the problem was only beginning there!

Marie Antoinette, at least, would have been amused. But in poverty-stricken Nicaragua, the tens of thousands now homeless and penniless following brutal bombardment of the main cities by the hated National Guard won't see anything funny in Somoza's professed concern for their nutritional standards. The obscene ravings of this petty tyrant, gorged on the blood of the thousands massacred by his praetorian guard, seem to prove the old adage that "those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first drive mad." In any case, the workers and peasants of this Central American fieldom can permanently solve Somoza's own overeating problem—by rising up and throwing off the chains of capitalist-imperialist exploitation which he embodies. ■

## Letter

### WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

EDITOR: Jan Norden

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Darlene Kamiura

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mike Beech

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jon Brule, Charles Burroughs, George Foster, Liz Gordon, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

Published biweekly, skipping an issue in August and a week in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 260 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013. Telephone: 966-6841 (Editorial), 925-5665 (Business)

Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, NY 10001. Domestic subscriptions: \$3.00/24 issues. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

No. 220

1 December 1978

### SWP on Iran

Latham, N.Y.  
Nov. 6, 1978

Spartacist League

Dear Comrades:

On the day before the elections, I wish you the best and regret that I can not vote for your candidate, Marjorie Stamberg. Perhaps, though, the small contribution that I enclose can assist you in your work....

Being isolated as I am here in Albany, your newspaper is the only correct perspective on what is happening in the world. I regret you had to curtail publication, but I understand the need and hope that in some way I may be able to help. As more things occur on the political scene, it becomes harder to keep track. And the SWP's *Militant* (?) gets worse each week. Take for example their reportage on Iran. They downplay

the importance of the religious leaders and reassure themselves with simply noting it is a working class movement. The crisis in and need for revolutionary leadership is not the significant point of departure in their Nov. 10th issue, as they console themselves with: "Even if the shah manages to survive the current upsurge (Goodness! Isn't that where we should begin consideration?), the days of October 1978 will go down in Iranian History as the beginning of the end for the Pahlavi dynasty." How glib! How voluble! How jejune! Walter Cronkite couldn't have said it better. If not more elegant, surely more relevant is your closing remark in the 3rd Nov. issue: "Above all what is needed is an authentic Trotskyist vanguard party in Iran to lead the masses to victory over the jet-setting despot now in power and the apostles of the seventh century seeking to oust him." The difference in intent is clear enough and is appreciated. Keep up the good work. Most comradely,  
V.B.

WORKERS VANGUARD

# Union Tops Knife California Teamster Strike

OAKLAND, November 23 The four-month-old strike of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) against the four major California supermarket chains ended in defeat today as the 3,500 striking drivers and warehousemen voted to accept binding arbitration of the unresolved issues with no amnesty for strikers.

In the bitterly fought strike the bosses went after the Teamsters with no holds barred, challenging the powerful union with the kind of frontal assault they have not dared to engage in for years. Directly enlisting the support of the cops, courts and strikebreaking thugs, the grocery store employers ripped up the picket lines. Court injunctions were secured limiting pickets. One striker, Randy Hill, was killed in August as he did picket duty. Scores of others were arrested and injured.

On October 26 even Jimmy Carter's Justice Department got into the act when the Organized Crime Strike Force raided the headquarters of IBT Local 70 and seized the union's records. Utilizing such policies of intimidation and violence, the bosses amassed a huge strikebreaking force of some 2,500 scabs. In the end it was the failure to make a sizable dent in this scabbing that drove the members to vote for an agreement that was even worse than the one they overwhelmingly rejected in August.

From the beginning, the Fitzsimmons bureaucracy of the IBT played a vicious role in the strike, initially denying strike sanction, then attempting to force sellout deals down the throats of the membership. They finally crippled the strike by withdrawing Teamster pickets from distribution centers in southern California and Denver and repeatedly denying the requests of the striking locals to extend strike action to Safeway operations nationwide.

The final settlement, worked out in Washington with Fitzsimmons and federal mediators, while reportedly requiring the bosses to get rid of the scabs hired during the strike, also allows the employers to fire Teamsters for "gross misconduct" during the strike. There are now reportedly 77 strikers on the bosses' hit list. Safeway's computerized speed-up plan, along with other important contractual issues such as cost-of-living formulas, reductions in



Striking teamster stops scab truck at Safeway warehouse in Richmond. WV Photo

night differential pay, starting time disputes and grievance procedures, are now all in the lap of an arbitrator. Thus, with the blessing of Fitzsimmons, the workers are going back without a contract and with some of the best militants fired.

The eight striking locals—and particularly militant Local 315 in Contra Costa County, which initiated the strike on July 18 in defiance of the International—courageously refused to bow to the bosses' violence and Fitzsimmons' cowardly backstabbing for several months. In the end, however, such isolated militancy was not enough. In the face of the massive strikebreaking, local union leaders had nothing to suggest except an impotent consumer boycott.

In particular, they took special care to obey court injunctions against mass picketing, limiting the pickets to four at a gate and seeking to avoid mass confrontations with the scabs brought in by the bosses. The few official mass pickets which did take place were token affairs designed to reinforce faith in the Democratic Party by rallies featuring people like Congressman Ron Dellums. Only by mobilizing the labor movement in effective mass pickets, not by pleading with the capitalist party politicians,

could the strike have been won.

The California supermarket strike could well be a dress rehearsal for the upcoming negotiations for the Teamster master freight contract next spring. It is no secret that Carter regards this settlement as pivotal to the success of his wage guidelines. In preparing for this battle, it is crucial that Teamster militants learn the key lesson of the California defeat, the need to break from reliance on the capitalist government and the Democratic Party.

At a forum sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) on November 17, invited guest speakers included two members of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). TDU has in recent months picked up a certain measure of support in the Teamsters as the most vocal organized opposition to the Fitzsimmons bureaucracy. Its sub-reformist program, however, does not go beyond the traditional militant business unionism once espoused by Jimmy Hoffa.

A central cornerstone of TDU's strategy has been to call on the government to intervene in the IBT to "guarantee" democracy, a policy which only plays into the hands of the bosses. TDU leader Pete Camarata even testified before Congress, advising that Teamster officials ought to be jailed. Not surprisingly, the Carter government has seized on the issue of corruption for its own purposes. Several IBT officials have recently been indicted on criminal charges for mishandling of union funds, a hardly veiled ploy to blackmail the Teamsters into line in the upcoming contract dispute.

During the supermarket strike, TDU occasionally paid lip service to the need for mass picketing. But at no time were they willing to take on the anti-Fitzsimmons local officials they are busy wooing who refused to implement this policy. Nor did the TDU ever call for the election of democratic strike committees

in every local in order to broaden the leadership of the strike.

One of the speakers at the SWP forum was Frank Grinnon, introduced as a steward in Local 315 and a member of TDU; Grinnon is also co-author of an article on the supermarket strike appearing in the 24 November issue of the SWP's *Militant*. Grinnon belatedly attempted to put on a left face, arguing in favor of a policy of mass-picketing the central distribution facilities. He hastened to assure the audience, however, that he was of course absolutely opposed to openly criticizing the leadership of the union which stood in the way of this policy. And this was borne out in the *Militant* article, which does not mention once the role of Fitzsimmons, IBT Western Conference leader Bill Grami, or the local Teamster leaders.

Attempting to squelch any criticism of its policies, the SWP blatantly refused to call on members of the Militant Caucus of the ILWU. However, the role of the Caucus in fighting for ILWU Warehousemen to hot-cargo scab products in solidarity with the IBT strike was well-known to several Teamsters present. One of the panel speakers, the elected chairman of the Local 315 strike committee, demanded that ILWU oppositionist Bob Mandel be given the floor. Mandel, a Militant Caucus leader and member of the executive board of ILWU Local 6, emphasized that neither Grinnon nor any other SWP supporter had the guts to confront the Teamster officials with the demand for mass picketing during the heat of the strike when it counted. Mandel also blasted the SWP for its support to trade-union bureaucrats of the Arnold Miller/Ed Sadlowski stripe and sharply criticized the scabbing by prominent SWP steel worker Andrew Pulley in Chicago during the rail strike.

Grinnon feebly attempted to justify such scabbing by claiming that it was a railroad workers strike, not a steel workers strike. It was precisely such phony logic that was used by union officials on the West Coast who undercut the Teamsters strike by ordering retail clerks, butchers and other workers to cross the IBT lines. Such apologies for scabbing did not sit well with a number of militants, including one retail clerk who had been fired for respecting the Teamster picket lines, and who denounced the SWP's opportunism.

The SWP's recent enthusing over such two-bit advocates of union-busting court suits as the TDU is perfectly consistent with its support to bigger-name opportunists (Miller/Sadlowski) with the same policies. For its part TDU proved again during the California supermarket strike that it is no alternative to Fitzsimmons & Co. Only by rejecting all varieties of pro-capitalist trade unionism and grouping themselves around a program solidly based on working-class independence from the capitalist parties and state can Teamster militants arm themselves for the battles that lie ahead. ■

## Spartacist Candidate Outdoes Reformists in NYC Vote

Official vote tallies released by the New York Board of Elections for the November 7 balloting show that Marjorie Stamberg, Spartacist Party candidate for State Assembly in the 64th District (Greenwich Village-Chelsea), received a total of 909 votes, or more than 3.2 percent of the votes cast for that office. Stamberg received more than 9 percent of the vote in three election districts and more than 6 percent in nine districts. These numbers represent a substantial showing for a revolutionary socialist candidate in the United States.

In 17 New York City Assembly districts the Liberal candidate received fewer votes than the Trotskyist candidate did in the 64th, and in only eight districts did a Liberal "third party" candidate exceed our total. In fact, ten Republican Assembly candidates' totals fell short of Stamberg's mark!

The Spartacist Party's revolutionary

campaign actually won a far better response among the electorate than the reformist efforts of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Communist Party (CP). The SWP's two Congressional candidates, Sharon Grant and Ken Miliner, whose Brooklyn and Harlem campaigns covered several Assembly districts each, both received fewer votes than Marjorie Stamberg won in a single district. Grant drew only 560 votes and Miliner 612, or 1.4 and .99 percent respectively. The CP and SWP gubernatorial candidates, who garnered roughly 2,000 votes each in Manhattan, received their highest vote totals in the 64th Assembly District. However, the CP's Jarvis Tyner (470 votes in the district) and the SWP's Diane Feeley (449 votes) attracted only half the proportion of voters who cast their ballots for the revolutionary candidate Marjorie Stamberg. ■

### Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

— MARXIST LITERATURE —

#### Bay Area

Friday: 3:00-6:00p.m.  
Saturday: 3:00-6:00p.m.  
1634 Telegraph  
3rd Floor  
(near 17th Street)  
Oakland, California  
Phone: (415) 835-1535

#### Chicago

Tuesday: 5:30-9:00p.m.  
Saturday: 2:00-5:30p.m.  
523 S. Plymouth Court  
3rd Floor  
Chicago, Illinois  
Phone: (312) 427-0003

#### New York

Monday through  
Friday: 6:30-9:00p.m.  
Saturday: 1:00-4:00p.m.  
260 West Broadway  
Room 522  
New York, New York  
Phone: (212) 925-5665

# Cult Suicide...

(continued from page 1)

for a bunch of believers to strip naked for the greater glory of god (and who knows what benefit for their libido) and dance around. It was an ecstatic tradition and—like the cargo cults' confrontation with advanced technology—not without its adaptive qualities. There has been plenty of Shaking, Quaking and faking as well as a number of serious utopian communitarian experiments, particularly in the 19th century, based on the false notion that the world might be influenced by "good example."

But what has any of this to do with Jim Jones and the People's Temple? They were not Reformationist ecstasies nor was Jonestown a transcendental Brook Farm. Despite the best efforts of the sociologists and research journalists, the People's Temple is something new under the sun—mass paranoid suicidal madness. The researchers may dig up a few of the ecstasies who became hysterical and perhaps tortured a nun or two behind the walls of a convent, but mass suicide? Never.

## Joe Stalin and Jim Jones

The attempts to fix Jonestown in relation to the real world miss its special character. After all, cultist political revivalism is not so rare in the U.S. Why does this cult act in a way different from all other cults?

What does it take to be a cult? In the first place there is no cult without a cult leader, el leader máximo, the infallible definer of the profane outside the bounds of his control and self-totem. Also necessary is a rigidly authoritarian organizational command enabling the cult leader to effectively discipline the members to his will and drive out critics of little faith.

All cults maintain an ideology at variance with perceived reality and sometimes observable fact. This necessary element of cultism is the ritual test of membership: to say (and perhaps believe) that black is white because The Leader says it is. The content of this cult ideology can vary widely even within the same cult at different periods depending on the perceived needs of the leader. Thus a cult like the People's Temple can be racial integrationist do-gooders in one period and evolve into self-destroyers in another. The Labor Committee cult of Lynn Marcus can be rationalist technocratic crackpots of the left in one period and provocateurs of the political right in another. The method of the cult remains the same: the ideology changes in strict accordance with the mental state of the cult leader. True Belief in the cult leader is the sole determining method. The act of adhesion entails the agreement to view reality through the distorted lens of the cult figure.

This set of rough criteria obviously applies to a good many organizations, both religious and political. Yet none seems capable of mass suicide. Psychiatrists tell of the mental patient who has



Eastfoto

just slashed his wrists, not fatally; when asked why he did not make a deeper cut, he responds: "What do you think I am, crazy?" No other cult has been that crazy.

The numerous cults of the religious right wing, for instance, practice a brand of revivalism that looks something like a People's Temple of the right. But by comparison they seem sane and safe. All they seem to do to crack the boredom of their radio sermons and mail-order bible businesses is to get involved in some sexual or financial scandal every so often. Papa evangelist Armstrong removes son Garner Ted for the sin of decadent living. Or some diamond-studded preacher is exposed for embodying the financial aspirations of his poor congregation. Or some charismatic fundamentalist is caught in ecstatic frenzy with the wives of the faithful.

While such cults exist on the fringes of religious and political life, they are deeply embedded in that fringe. They are recognized as the outskirts on the fairly stable bourgeois ideological landscape. They involve themselves in enthusiastic campaigns against sin that are clearly reflections of mainstream bourgeois politics, differing only perhaps in motive and in intensity from important right-wing sections of the bourgeoisie. So in California when they try to whip up a good burning at the stake for the sin of homosexuality, or launch a stoning of mothers who slaughter the unborn innocents, they are only more hysterical echoes of bourgeois political movements like the

Briggs Amendment claque or Right-to-Lifers. Even Billy James Hargis finds he is much too integrated into the ideological and political movements of the ruling class to allow for total eccentricity of the sort demonstrated in grisly fashion by Jim Jones. Hargis keeps bumping into reality; and he and others like him are shaped by the experience. Thus are set the limits of social madness.

Among cults on the left, points of contact with reality act as a brake upon the fantasy-into-reality games of the cult leader. Seemingly immutable forces pen him in, force him to redefine goals and merely pretend. Even where there is a strong component of irrationality or utopian nuttiness, the political left is in part defined by its relationship to class reality. Even the earlier Lynn Marcus could not control a world free of social constraint.

Even a cult leader on the grand historic scale, the megalomaniac Joseph Stalin and his Stalinist "cult of the personality," has its limits. Here was a monstrous self-mythologizing cult leader with an authoritarian bureaucracy. The author of hideous ideological distortions with terrible historical consequences. But just that recognition of the historical consequences of Stalin's cult draws the qualitative line between him and Jim Jones. Stalin was the gravedigger of the proletarian revolution. He had reactionary historical purpose, but historical purpose nevertheless.

It is one thing to propagate the false ideology of "socialism in one country" and even to force everyone but revolutionaries to agree to it, and quite another to actually rule a country based on the collectivized property of the proletariat. This was the contradictory brake on Stalin's cult. He could not turn Russia into a giant Jonestown. Like Jim Jones he could have his Stalingrad (and for a while everything else would be named Stalin as well), but Stalingrad existed in the real world, with a proletariat with a force of its own, and not as an emanation of Stalin's twisted spirit. Unlike Jones, Stalin's Caligula complex remained frustrated. And he knew it; according to one story, he was overheard to say, "Even I couldn't kill 35 million Ukrainians."

## And Ye Shall Be Free

What separates the Jones cult

fundamentally is that Jones broke free—he successfully cut his organization off from the pressures of the larger society. When he was a preacher in Indiana he looked like any number of social-uplift types who talked a brand of Christian brotherly love and social gospel. He was an integrationist. He was more politically effective than most cultists. In California, he made real inroads with bourgeois politicians and was able to turn out the vote for the Democrats. The letters from Rosalynn Carter and Mondale are testimony not to the bad judgment of those Democratic bigwigs, but to the relative respectability of the People's Temple congregation.

But the cult leader Jim Jones responded to the outside pressures of the world by withdrawing as much as possible from it. First to Ukiah, California and social-work projects like nursing homes for the elderly and the usual attempts to offer social "redemption" to slum dwellers, mainly in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Had he remained in California, Jones would have been just another cult leader, perhaps just a little more effective than most, in a country full of them. But precisely his political effectiveness allowed him to withdraw. He got the money and the recommendations, and off he went.

It is isolation in Guyana that made the suicide cult. There, cut off from the world, the members—many of whom had been attracted out of poverty to begin with—divested everything to the community. In a primitive environment, surrounded on all sides by real and imagined dangers, the ordinary rituals of cult life became overwhelmingly powerful. Like a tribal society where membership in the community means the difference between life and death, the initiate stands in terrible isolation, then



Larry Schacht, "people's doctor." He served the people cyanide.

enters recognizing that the community is all. Jim Jones becomes the incarnation of the spirit of the community, equated with life itself. From that moment on, events become random. Anything could happen. And it did. Jones made one of the possible choices available to him. It is not clear why, nor does it matter particularly. In this sense Jim Jones represents one of the maximum possibilities of human freedom within the status quo.

## Jonestown and the "Me Decade"

The "freedom" to which Jones and his followers escaped may go down as a suicide footnote to a decade of escapism.

It is not surprising that with the decomposition of New Left student



Manson and "Family."

Bantam Books



Newsweek



Synanon cult leader Dederich (right): vipers for investigators.

radicalism a period of demoralization would follow. The radical visions of the New Left, which never attached themselves to the motor of the working class, dissipated and left a massive petty-bourgeois residue with no sense of the future. The decade settled into an obsessive concern for the present moment. Although things got worse, the recognized bonds of human solidarity became narrowed until they circled only the self. Self-fulfillment became the order of the day. The nearly exclusive concern with self-development in what Christopher Lasch characterized as "Narcissist America" had become so obvious that "new journalist" decade definers began to dub the 1970's the "Me Decade."

It has been a particularly fertile culture medium for the growth of every sort of religious and therapy cult. For while there was nothing except to be fulfilled and happy, yet they were empty and miserable. Enter the Hare Krishna, the Moonies, the Scientologists, EST, astrologers, the People's Temple. It was a heyday for pseudo-science and a general level of superstition more appropriate to a peasant community than a modern industrial society. This year the Gallup pollsters announced that "54 percent of all Americans believe in angels," six out of ten in flying saucers, and more than a quarter think their lives are governed by the position of the stars (*Newweek*, 26 June 1978). The most hysterical evangelical practices have become so respectable that recently people who spoke in tongues convened to fill an entire Minnesota football field for an ecumenical babble.

But real life hadn't become any better. In fact, for a large proportion of the population—particularly ghetto youth—it had become considerably worse, more sterile, desperate and hopeless. It was from these demoralized milieus that most of the cults recruited. And in California, where rootlessness is institutionalized and violence individualized, the growth of cultism was especially favored. Craving for personal fulfillment blended with the residual earnestness of the 1960's to produce a most repulsive cultism. Even the governor, Jerry Brown, is some kind of Zen-Jesuit anti-sexual religious nut with desires to out-evangelize the ever born-again Carter.

It was in California that the New Left most clearly stamped its style on the petty bourgeoisie. And there was present in New Leftism enough romanticism that in its degeneracy it found some common ideological ground with the cultists. The hatred of society which took surreal and infantile fantasy forms were acted upon most gruesomely by Charles Manson and his "family" in the late 1960's. (It is worth noting that the vicarious terrorists of the Weathermen welcomed the murderer Manson as one of their own.) Then followed the killer cult of the SLA which added the glamor of ex-convicts and spoke in the social-work rhetoric of the New Left milieu as it carried out its murder and kidnapping missions in the name of the "people."

From Manson to the People's Temple, this cross-fertilization between the social-work style of the New Left and bizarre cultists has marked the decade with terror and death. Even the name "People's Temple" reflects the

same mix of social uplift and asceticism. Jonestown had a "people's doctor," Larry Schacht, who mixed the poison. He wanted to "serve the people." He served them cyanide.

### Patterns of Paranoia

The cults' pitch has been to the petty bourgeoisie, searching for self-fulfillment, and to the extremely poor. Hence the social composition of the People's Temple. The cults promised a private Nirvana club, with the stress on the privateness. In retreat from reality, the cults had an inherent tendency to paranoia. And the paranoia collided with another style of the 1970's: liberal muckraking. For the cults, it took the form of anxious relatives and private detectives, government agencies suspicious of financial chicanery, newspapers seeking new exposé sensations. A pattern emerged as the cults sank deeper and deeper into forms of escape from reality to protect their fantasy worlds from invasion.

Take, for instance, Synanon. Like the People's Temple, it was the darling of the liberals in the 1960's. It was the group that would solve the problem of drug addiction. Its techniques of humiliation were a little controversial at first, but the Synanon members sang that they would be junkies still were it not for their great leader, Chuck Dederich. The problem was that the addicts substituted addiction to the cult and had a hard time leaving its closed world.

When people did start leaving and ex-members began criticizing Synanon and calling for investigations, Dederich began to seal off his private world from the hostile "outside forces." And he meant to protect it with terror. Suddenly the pacifist, never-lift-a-finger-in-violence rehab cult was an armed killer cult. Dederich commanded his followers to shave their heads, take up a form of karate and begin a war against the enemy.

Recently lawyer Paul Morantz won a court decision against Synanon for clients suing for kidnapping. Then he put his hand in his mail box and was bitten nearly fatally by a rattlesnake which had had its warning rattles removed. The do-gooders of Synanon were no longer doing good.

L. Ron Hubbard's Scientology therapy cult has gone through a similar paranoid process. Formerly a gimmicky self-help eccentricity based on "engrams" to become "clear," in the late 1970's Scientology has gone over to trench warfare with the FBI. Hubbard, too, has had his exposers and declares he will not be uncovered, going onto the offensive against the "enemies without":

"Never agree to an investigation of Scientology... Only agree to an investigation of the attackers... start investigating them promptly for felonies or worse... start feeding lurid, blood, sex, crime, actual evidence on the attackers to the press... Make it rough, rough on the attackers all the way..."

—*Washington Post*, 16 August 1978

To make it "rough on the attackers" he is said to have sent some "moles" into government jobs.

On 8 July 1977 the FBI launched against the Scientology cult a search-and-destroy mission that may have

been the most intense since the Palmer Raids:

"134 FBI agents, armed with battering rams, chainsaws and sledge hammers, burst into Scientology headquarters in Los Angeles and Washington. They carted away thousands of documents, as well as a lock-picking kit, a black-jack, eavesdropping equipment, two pistols and even a vial marked 'vampire blood'."

—*Newweek*, 28 August 1978

How did this bland former science fiction novelist and cult therapist go off the deep end and get into a war with the FBI? Like Synanon and the rest, he was apparently responding to the desperate need to protect his private world by any means necessary.

Consider another cult which went off the deep end in the 1970's—the National Caucus of Labor Committees/U.S. Labor Party of L. Marcus. Once a faction in SDS, they became informers to the cops against "fabian terrorism" of the environmentalists. In wrenching his cult from the left to the bourgeois fringe right wing, he "deprogrammed" his membership. But torturing a woman in Washington Heights where she can drop



WV Photo

Lynn Marcus and NCLC "Operation Mop-Up": Gangster frenzy against the CP on the way out of the workers movement.

an SOS note from the window is not the same as torturing her in Guyana. Who knows what would happen to the few hundred youth organized around the sterile fantasy life of Lyndon LaRouche in Marcustown?

The pattern of escapism and paranoid counteroffensive is most fully realized in the Jonescult. They attained the fullest retreat from which to plan the doomsday defense of their privatized world. Typically their terminal course began when in 1977 disaffected members began to criticize the cult and threaten exposure. Some told stories of strange sexual coercion and the torturing of children, along with the usual kidnappings and brainwashing. *New West* magazine published an exposé, but Jones would not be exposed. He ran for Guyana and took his followers with him; having given away their possessions and abandoned their homes to go with him into the wilderness, they were at the mercy of his whim. He hired radical lawyer Charles Garry to defend the cult in court and began to consider end-game plans.

But the liberal muckrakers came after him. Congressman Ryan and a team of reporters invaded his private world. Jones planned to assassinate Ryan. Finally, he chose the mass death of his brethren rather than exposure.

There is a reason why the cultists fear exposure. Their existence depended on having as little commerce with the world

as possible. They ended with a simple syllogism: nobody investigates Jonestown and leaves alive.

The antagonists in these dramas shared the liberal illusions of exposure created in the post-Watergate period. To be investigated was to be destroyed; hadn't it happened to Nixon, the arch-paranoid symbol of the decade? For the liberal muckrakers exposure was the answer to everything. It was not in actual social struggle that political life went on, but in the media.

Unlike the anti-Communist paranoia of the 1950's, which was mobilized through McCarthyism to get public opinion behind the aims of U.S. imperialism, the paranoia of the 1970's was in part brought on by a deluge of exposures, from the dirty tricks of Watergate to the FBI/CIA machinations. A massive justified cynicism about the government set in. The CIA did try to kill Castro with poisoned shoe polish. It isn't hard to believe that in Jonestown many believed that the CIA was outside in the jungle about to slaughter them all. Those who pushed the conspiratorial view of history had a



Daily World

field day.

It is ironic that in Jonestown, the most prominent of all the spinners of conspiracy theories, Mark Lane, was on the spot as lawyer for Jim Jones. The Punch and Judy show put on by Lane and Garry at Jonestown provided ironic relief to the grisly affair. They have accused each other of knowing about the murder/suicide conspiracy and keeping it secret. Lane slid out from under the gun by declaring his loyalty to the cult and then explaining to the armed guard that somebody had to "live to tell the story." Then he ran. It certainly seems this paranoid cult got the right lawyers.

### Cultism, Freedom and Necessity

For Marxists, one of the most irritating aspects of the Jonestown media event is to see it portrayed as some kind of socialist experiment. We read with disgust the headline in *The New York Times* (21 November): "Defectors Say Jones Told Them: 'You Will Be Dying for Socialism'." And now *Pravda* has incredibly played into this absurd anti-Communist propaganda campaign by praising the Jonescult. Meanwhile the sinister anti-Communist Moonies are claiming that the People's Temple was acting out the Marxist program. The bourgeois media is doing all it can to associate socialism with

continued on page 11

# THE CAMPAIGN TO "REHABILITATE" BUKHARIN

## *You Can't Clean Up the Moscow Trials!*

A campaign for the rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin, the most prominent Old Bolshevik to be dragged through the last and most grotesque of the 1930's Moscow purge trials, has been underway since this spring mainly among Eurocommunist and left social-democratic circles. Bukharin was shot on 15 March 1938 after being condemned by Stalin's hangmen as a spy, provocateur and would-be assassin of Lenin. He left behind a young wife and son, who spent many years in prison camps.

Since the early 1960's his widow, A.M. Larina, and son Yuri Larin have been appealing to the Soviet state to rehabilitate Bukharin. The current campaign in the West was sparked by an open letter Larin wrote to Enrico Berlinguer, head of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), in March of this year, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of his father's death. "I am approaching you, Comrade Berlinguer," wrote Larin from Moscow, "because you are the leader of the largest Communist Party of Western Europe and have thrown off this burden [of 'Stalin's crimes']." Larin detailed the failure of efforts to rehabilitate Bukharin within the USSR itself:

"Beginning in 1961 my mother A.M. Larina and then I myself persistently raised with the highest Party-State organs of the country the question of the withdrawal of the monstrous allegations against N.I. Bukharin and his restoration to Party membership. This question was also raised with the Party leadership by the most senior of the Old Bolsheviks led by the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, E.D. Staseva. They died some time ago without receiving an answer and it was only last summer (1977) that we at last received some response.... An official of the Commission of Party Control of the Central Committee of the CPSU informed us by telephone that the accusations made at the trial of Bukharin had not been withdrawn as the process of examining the documents relating to the trial had not been completed; the question of the restoration of his Party membership could not, therefore, yet be resolved. This means that 40 years after the execution of my father we have received an answer, which, in effect, confirms the monstrous charges of Stalin. My approach to the Courts (the Supreme Court of the USSR) has been fruitless;



Nikolai Bukharin

the simple truth is they don't answer me."

quoted in Ken Coates, *The Case of Nikolai Bukharin* (1978)

This appeal has been picked up by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in England, which has launched a campaign, mainly directed at the Communist parties of Europe, to get signatures to its appeal, which reads: "I appeal to the Soviet government for the re-opening of the case of N.I. Bukharin, his rehabilitation, and a public explanation of the circumstances which led to his wrongful conviction."

Aside from the predictable early signatories—such as Simone de Beauvoir, Louis Althusser, Jiri Pelikan, Howard Fast, Noam Chomsky and a number of British Labour MPs—in addition the national executive of the Communist Party of Australia and the British CP have also signed the appeal, as have prominent individuals associated with the PCI, notably historian Paolo Spriano and Giuseppe Boffa.

Two signatures are of particular interest to Trotskyists—those of Ernest Mandel, leader of the self-styled United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) and Joseph Hansen of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

### **Can the Murderers Rehabilitate their Victims? Never!**

The United Secretariat has for some time been pursuing a policy of adaptation to "Eurocommunism," claiming that this phenomenon has introduced "new and tremendously vulnerable elements" into world Stalinism, which can "have fairly big effects in favor of Trotskyism." So said Mandel at a reunion of the "family of Trotskyism" in London—called to refute Gerry Healy's Stalin-style slander campaign against Hansen and another SWP leader, George Novack, as "accomplices of the GPU" in Trotsky's assassination. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the various assorted opportunists on the platform to cement new alliances and re-orient themselves to yet another "new world reality"—this time seeing Eurocommunism as the wave of the future.

Mandel proposed that "all comrades present here, of all different tendencies, factions and organizations," should undertake a "common political campaign" to ask the European CPs to "immediately, openly and publicly rehabilitate all the victims of Stalin, all the victims of the Moscow Trials," and to call on the Spanish Communist Party to expel Trotsky's assassin. After all, he cynically concluded, "It can't hurt to ask" (see our article "London Meeting: Fake-

Trotskyist Family Reunion." *WT* No. 141, 21 January 1977).

While at first glance this campaign may seem to be nothing more than a decent attempt to resurrect the truth about one of the most hideously slandered victims of Stalin's purges, nevertheless genuine Trotskyists cannot support it. We very much want to, and intend to, restore Nikolai Bukharin to his rightful place in history. The same goes for all those communists who perished in the great blood purges, and most particularly for Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition. This commitment does not derive simply from the interests of historical truth, but from the burning political necessity of the Trotskyist program for putting the proletariat in power.

The real historical reckoning will only come as a result of the proletarian political revolution to oust Stalin's heirs, together with social revolution in the capitalist countries. For the purpose of the purge trials and mass executions, as Max Shachtman (then a leader of the SWP) wrote in 1936, was that "the assault upon those figures that symbolize the dread words 'World Revolution' to the international bourgeoisie, is Stalin's way of taking the blood-oath to the latter that the international proletarian revolution, so long as the Kremlin is concerned, has long been interred" (*Behind the Moscow Trial*).

All those who appeal to the Kremlin to reinstate Bukharin in the "Party" accept the legitimacy of that bureaucracy as the continuation of Lenin's Bolshevik party. But there is no communist party in Russia today! The Left Opposition drew this conclusion already in 1933—even before the final purges which physically annihilated every last surviving member of the Central Committee of 1917, except Stalin, as well as the Red Army top command and virtually the entire middle-level cadre of the party. Trotsky raised the call for a new party in the USSR, and a new International, following the catastrophic betrayal by all the Stalinist parties in allowing Hitler to come to power without a fight.

What called itself the CPSU was now seeking "peaceful coexistence" with, and therefore the survival of, Western imperialism. Rather than a political party of the working class, it was simply the political vehicle of the Kremlin bureaucracy, a parasitic petty-bourgeois caste which seized control only by politically expropriating the working class and destroying the Communist Party. To call upon the Stalinist apparatus today to restore its victims of yesterday is to accept these criminals, sworn betrayers of revolution, as judges of the Bolshevik leaders they murdered. To call on the Kremlin to "rehabilitate" Trotsky is to embrace a perspective of bureaucratic self-reform and abandon the struggle for an independent Trotskyist party to sweep the usurpers from power.

### **The Cult of Bukharin**

While refusing to call on the Stalinist murderers to pass judgment



Khrushchev, Dimitrov, Stalin and Molotov review parade in 1937.

on their victims, while proclaiming their innocence and calling on the Soviet *working class* to restore them to their true role in history, we do not therefore glorify all those slain by the GPU as intrepid revolutionaries. In fact, those who were made to "confess" to the most absurd crimes at the Moscow Trials, then to be ignominiously shot after they had served their purpose, were one and all former right oppositionists, members of the Stalin faction or capitulationists. Many of them had already done years of dirty work for the Kremlin against the persecuted Left Opposition.

The current appeal is no doubt partially due to his family's latest efforts. But it is far from accidental that it is Bukharin—rather than, say, Zinoviev or Kamenev, not to mention Trotsky—who is the focus of the "rehabilitation" campaign. "Bukharinism" has been a popular current among sections of the East European Stalinist bureaucracy and among certain "socialist dissident" circles, as well as among Western liberals. Bukharin's biographer Stephen Cohen is representative of this viewpoint, as the concluding words of his book make clear:

"It... reformers succeed in creating a more liberal communism, a 'socialism with a human face,' Bukharin's outlook and the NEP-style order he defended may turn out to have been after all, the true prefiguration of the Communist future—the alternative to Stalinism after Stalin."

*Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (1971)

Those social and economic policies associated with Bukharin have exerted a widespread, if generally underground, influence among reformers in the East European bureaucratic/petty-bourgeois elite, from economists to top CP politicians. Alexander Erlich's *The Soviet Industrialization Debate* (1960) points out that: "It is astonishing to discover how many ideas of Bukharin's anti-Stalinist program of 1928-29 were adopted by current reformers as their own...." A later work by Moshe Lewin, *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates* (1974), is devoted to the thesis that Bukharinism is the major "undercurrent" of economic thought in the deformed workers states.

Cohen, Lewin and others cite such figures as Ota Sik, the author of

his advocacy of market-oriented autonomy for state enterprises and of a significant private peasant sector.

During the mid-1920's, the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP), Bukharin and his bloc partners Rykov and Tomsky represented the most conservative elements of the bureaucracy, those most conciliatory to the wealthier peasants (the kulaks) and petty capitalists (the Nepmen). Bukharin generalized the retreat, the "breathing space" which the NEP was intended to provide after the devastation of the Civil War, into a theory that reliance on the peasant private market was the only possible road to socialism. Hence his sensational 1924 challenge to the kulaks, "Enrich yourselves!" (This slogan, a direct translation of the admonition by Guizot, minister of France's "bourgeois monarch" Louis Philippe in the 1830's—"enrichissez-vous"—was too much even for Stalin.)

Bukharin actually provided early on much of the "theoretical" justification for Stalin's pronouncement of the theory of "socialism in one country." In explaining his theory of "peaceful-organic-economic" growth he wrote in early 1924 that "A victory in this type of class struggle (we abstract here from the problem of the external order) is the final victory of socialism." Bukharin even developed an implicit theoretical justification for the bureaucracy. In a long article, "The Bourgeois Revolution and the Proletarian Revolution" (1922), he developed his thesis that the proletariat as a class, throughout the world, was "unripe" and "unable to prepare itself for organizing all of society" prior to seizing power.

While Stalin may have been a more sinister figure than Bukharin, the economic program of the Bukharin/Rykov/Tomsky Right Opposition was the more immediate and dangerous threat to the preservation of proletarian state power. As the 1927 *Platform of the Joint Opposition* pointed out, these policies led to "abandonment of the fundamental principle of Marxism that only a powerful socialized industry can help the peasants transform agriculture along collectivist lines." The logic of this conciliation of petty commodity production would pose the threat of counterrevolution: "capital-

latitude for an educated technocratic elite, from which they are drawn—while claiming to avoid the harsh necessity of shattering bureaucratic domination by restoring workers democracy and soviets and extending the revolution internationally.

### Bukharin's Capitulation

Bukharin was hardly the staunch anti-Stalinist his supporters make him

Stalinist cartoons depict oppositionists as Nazi agents. Left: Bukharin and Trotsky. Right: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev.



out to be. Actually he was a vital ally of Stalin in smashing the United Opposition in 1926-27 at a crucial moment in the consolidation of the bureaucracy's power. Stalin found Bukharin's talents as a facile theorist and his popularity invaluable, and the lovable "favorite of the whole party" soon became one of the rabid polemicists against the left. Isaac Deutscher, in *The Prophet Unarmed* (1959), describes his "strange, almost macabre performance" at the 15th CPSU congress in October 1926, where his cynical sneers, vicious character assassination and sophisticated-sounding pyrotechnics caused even Stalin to laugh. "He does not argue with them, he slaughters them."

"You have done well to make up your mind—this is the last minute—the iron curtain of history is just coming down." Bukharin reportedly told Zinoviev and Kamenev after the break-up of the Joint Opposition and their capitulation in December 1927. Bukharin was to remain behind that "iron curtain" of Stalinism even after Stalin had dumped him and the Right had become the Right Opposition. All Bukharin's differences with Stalin over industrialization and collectivization were consciously contained within the upper levels of the Soviet bureaucracy, bounded by his acceptance of the fundamental tenet of Stalinism: that an apparatus ruling over the proletariat, not soviet democracy, was necessary.

And Bukharin soon capitulated, in a manner no less despicable than Zinoviev's and Kamenev's. Writing some time later, Trotsky insisted on the intrabureaucratic nature of the Right Opposition's differences with Stalin:

"There is an altogether different, but in its kind no less symptomatic, significance in the 100 percent capitulation of Rykov, Tomsky, and Bukharin. The political cohorts of these leaders spread far into the camp of class enemies. We predicted more than once that the sharpening of the crisis of the revolution must inevitably throw the tiny Bolshevik head of the Right Opposition against its hefty counterrevolutionary tail. The moment for this has arrived. Alarmed by the mood of their own followers, leaders of the Right Opposition crawled on their knees to the official

leadership. They were able to go through with this all the more easily because no matter how acute the fight has become from moment to moment, it nevertheless remained a fight between left and right shadings in the camp of bureaucratic centrism."  
—"Alarm Signal!" (March 1933)

Right down to his execution in 1938 Bukharin never again played an independent political role, functioning simply as an errand boy for Stalin.

who allowed him to edit *Izvestia* for a while. He was also permitted to draft the notorious "Stalin Constitution" of 1936, then hailed as "the world's most democratic constitution." Bukharin was apparently proud of his role in producing this piece of sophistry, and the Russell Foundation devotes an entire chapter in Ken Coates' little book on the campaign to "Bukharin's Constitution." This is his "legacy" to the Soviet people, it seems, for:

"The cry of a whole new generation of critics of the Soviet Establishment since 1956 has been, not 'overthrow the Constitution,' but 'enforce the Constitution.'"

This amounts to a stunning criticism of the current generation of "Soviet dissidents." It would not have occurred to the Left Oppositionists jailed in the labor camps of Vorkuta and Siberia to appeal to Stalin on the basis of the "Bukharin Constitution." Nor, obviously, was it of much use to its author. But, then, neither were the rest of his voluminous writings on Stalin's behalf against the Left Opposition. There is never much point to ingratiating oneself with traitors.

As the miserable history of the Right Opposition demonstrates, "Bukharinism" was incapable of being any "alternative" to Stalinism as a "road to socialism." Bukharin's identification with the parasitic, bonapartist bureaucracy, and his recoil from the capitalist appetites of his base, completely paralyzed any independent struggle the Bukharinites could have mounted. Attempts by Stalinist reformers in East Europe to implement Bukharinist reforms have led only to increased class tensions and instability. The logic of "consistent Bukharinism"—i.e., "socialism in one country" built through reliance on market forces, particularly private peasant agriculture—leads ultimately to unleashing the forces of capitalist restoration.

The *only* revolutionary alternative to Stalinist domination of the degenerated deformed workers states is the program of Trotskyism: for the reestablishment of workers democracy through political revolution; for centralized economic planning and collectivization of agriculture, controlled

*continued on page 10*



Alexander Dubček with Leonid Brezhnev, left, in 1968.

Photo Reporter

Dubček's economic program during the 1968 Prague Spring, and Hungarian reform Stalinist Imre Nagy, executed in 1958 by "de-Stalinizer" Khrushchev, as proponents of Bukharinist policies, albeit in guarded fashion. What appeals to these liberal Stalinists in Bukharin's economic ideas is his opposition to centralized planning and

ism, recruiting its strength in the country, will undermine the foundations of socialism in the towns.

It is these aspects of Bukharinism which are particularly attractive to liberal Stalinist reformers of the Dubček or Imre Nagy variety, because they simultaneously appear to provide for more "freedom"—actually more

# FASH...

(continued from page 12)

maintaining industrial unionism, for the steel haulers, properly speaking, are not wage workers. The real danger lies in destroying the only established link between the owner-operators and the organized labor movement. FASH itself is not a trade union, nor would it be even if it officially "represented" the steel haulers with the carriers. It is essentially a trade association of small businessmen, in that sense resembling, for example, farmers' associations. Existing as an entity outside the trade unions, FASH would fall even more markedly under the domination of the small fleet owners and would be far easier to mobilize as a scab workforce against unionized Teamster drivers.

What policy, then, should Teamster militants pursue? It is not impossible to win the loyalty, or at least neutralize, the vast majority of the independents. A correct policy must take into account that large numbers of steel haulers strongly identify with the employed Teamster driver. Many haulers participating in the FASH strike are not centrally concerned with getting out of the Teamsters; they just want more money. A class-struggle Teamster leadership would seek drive a wedge among the independent truckers, winning over the genuine individual owner-operators and splitting out the small fleet owners, by fighting for demands that would insure that union conditions in the trucking industry cover all working drivers, including the operators.

The IBT bureaucracy however has done next to nothing to redress the just grievances of the owner-operators over long working hours, long and unpaid layovers, widespread violation of rules governing detention pay (which the drivers are supposed to get while their trucks are being loaded), etc. Rather, the IBT leadership has blocked consistently with the carriers and the government against even Teamster-organized independents, thereby fueling their hostility toward any affiliation with the labor movement.

From 1950 to 1967, for example, most of the steel haulers received only one rate increase, of about 5 percent. Long simmering discontent finally blew out in a strike in 1967 which began with a handful of drivers in Gary, Indiana and spread throughout the steelhauling industry, lasting 13 weeks and leading to the formation of FASH. In October 1969, FASH struck in Youngstown, Ohio and engaged in a bloody shoot-out with the Teamsters, leaving one IBT gunman dead and nearly 50 seriously wounded on both sides.

FASH struck nationally again in 1970, this time for nine weeks, winning both a rate increase and a separate vote on the steelhauling supplement. The drivers voted down the supplement three times in 1973 before it was finally ratified. In 1974, again over the opposition of the IBT leaders, the steel haulers joined other independent truckers in the now famous 12-day tie-up of the nation's major turnpikes, protesting the steep increases in fuel prices. Following a series of Labor Board and federal court wrangles, the steel haulers were stripped of their right to vote on their supplement, and in 1976 were saddled with a contract that cut their percentage pay over each of the last three years.

## Lessons from Teamster History

The kinds of policies needed to reverse the dangerous and deteriorating cleavage between the Teamsters and independent drivers were practiced before in the IBT. In the late 1930's, pioneer American Trotskyists like Farrell Dobbs, the Dunne brothers, Carl Skoglund and many others led vigorous Teamster battles against the trucking companies, and drew the owner-operators into the fight. From their stronghold in Minneapolis, the Trotskyists spearheaded an eleven-state



Hausner/NY Times

## Truckers in Connecticut gather support for 1973 slowdown.

over-the-road organizing campaign and helped transform the IBT from a small, weak craft union into the powerful labor organization it is today.

In their organizing, the Trotskyists carefully distinguished between the drivers who owned only their own rig, who were aggressively recruited to the union, and the operators who were in fact small fleet owners, who were excluded. Key to the Trotskyist policy was to fight for union wages for the independents, plus the cost of maintaining their trucks, as opposed to a flat-fee percentage of the freight bill. This served to tie the interests of the owner-operators to the Teamster fleet drivers fighting to increase their hourly wages. It also acted to curb the ability of the carriers to use their leasing arrangements with the independents to undercut the union by compelling long hours of unpaid or underpaid driving.

The Minneapolis Trotskyists' campaign directed at owner-operators was successful, although the social character of this section of the workforce almost guaranteed that it would encompass some individuals with strong anti-union sentiments. Thus in 1938 five owner-operators in league with the employers filed a "fink suit" asking the courts to tie up the Trotskyist-led Teamster local's funds, to appoint a receiver over the union, to ban "illegal picketing," etc. Nevertheless, writing many years later in the *Militant* (12 April 1974), Farrell Dobbs was able to assert that, for the most part:

"In the major struggles of that period against the trucking employers generally, the union's owner-operator members served loyally. They volunteered their trucks to transport pickets and shared in the picketing. A significant number of our casualties in battles with the cops were from among this category of workers. After the union had been consolidated, they continued to play a constructive role. Like other members of the organization, they looked upon those of their own kind who took an antilabor stance as links and dealt with them accordingly."

These early and successful approaches to the owner-operators were cut short by the 1941 purge of the Trotskyist leaders from the IBT by a vicious combination of federal prosecutions, jailings and bureaucratic attacks (in which, incidentally, Jimmy Hoffa played a key goon role). The Trotskyists were witchhunted because of their principled opposition to the then-impending imperialist slaughter of World War II, and a corrupt hidebound bureaucracy has ruled the IBT ever since.

## Dobbs vs. SWP

The once-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has long since degenerated into a reformist organization that in no sense speaks for Trotskyism. But as recently as 1974, Dobbs, still an SWP spokesman, was able to give a correct assessment of the development of groups like FASH in response to the

treacherous policies of the IBT bureaucrats:

"Since then [1941] the Teamster bureaucracy has reversed the trends we had set into motion. Democratic procedures used by the union's area committee in the pre-1941 period have been replaced by dictatorial methods in the present-day IBT conferences. More concern is shown for the wishes of the employers than is manifested toward the needs of the workers. The problems of the fleet drivers are neglected in many respects. At the same time, there has been an increasingly pronounced growth of independent owner-operators; and the union officialdom has little inclination and even less ability to cope with the situation.

"As a result, the owner-operators are ceasing to look upon the IBT as the organization through which they can undertake to alleviate the difficulties now confronting them. Those who remain members of the union are tending to organize themselves into factions, which act independently of the Teamster bureaucrats and, to an increasing extent, in cooperation with nonunion groups of owner-operators. Formations of this kind are springing up in various parts of the country. Cut loose as they are from trade-union influence, factors that cause individual owner-operators to dream of becoming small fleet owners assume greater weight in the shaping of their policies. The negative aspects of that outlook impair the interests of all over-the-road drivers at a time when the union has become enfeebled because of bureaucratic misleadership.

"Under those circumstances it becomes possible for the big trucking firms to mount a major attack on the IBT by maneuvering to intensify the hostility of owner-operators toward the organization. To the extent that they succeed in promoting such anti-union bias, every worker behind the wheel of a truck—owner-operators and fleet drivers alike—will be the ultimate victims. Only the bosses will be the gainers.

"This danger can be averted through a shift in union policy toward application under modern conditions of the basic course that was being shaped prior to 1941. That would block the bosses from splitting the owner-drivers away from the organized labor movement. Instead, the catch-all category of independent owner-operators could be separated into its component parts. Individual owner-operators could be brought back into effective alliance with the drivers of company fleets. Small fleet owners, who

masquerade under the designation "owner-operators," could be sorted out and placed in the employer category where they belong. Class lines within the industry would again become much clearer, and the workers would be in a better position to fight collectively in defense of their mutual interests."

A clearer statement of class-struggle policy toward the owner-operators would be hard to write. Yet in an article in the 1 December 1978 *Militant*, the SWP hails the current FASH strike and shamelessly supports the demand for "freedom" from the Teamsters. *Militant* staff writer Shelley Kramer cites Farrell Dobbs' policies toward organizing the owner-operators into the IBT in the 1930's at some length, only to support the misdirected movement of the independents now to get out! In three separate articles devoted to the steel haulers there is not one word suggesting policies Teamster militants might pursue today to keep the independents in the union or organize the two-thirds that are not.

Kramer predictably focuses on the "democratic right" of steel haulers to split from the Teamsters. Thus, using "democracy" as an excuse, the SWP advocates the owner-operators liquidate their ties with the organized labor movement, thereby reversing a historic gain of the trade-union movement and the only real protection that the majority of independents have against the increased immiseration that they face at the hands of the carriers and non-union fleet owners. And what about the supposed democratic right not to join unions, as embodied in section 14B ("right to work") of the National Labor Relations Act. For those who defend the gains of the labor movement, unlike Kramer and the rest of the SWP social democrats, the "democracy" of the capitalists must be subordinate to the interests of the working class.

This is hardly surprising from a group that enthuses over such trade-union bureaucrats as Miller and Sadlowski, as well as such dissident groups as Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) and the Professional Drivers Council (PROD), who similarly prate about "democracy" as an excuse to invite the capitalist government to intervene in internal union affairs. Thus the SWP cynically throws overboard the revolutionary traditions of the Minneapolis Teamsters of the 1930's, with their class-struggle orientation toward the owner-operators and their vigorous opposition to government snooping in the unions, as in the "fink suit" of 1938.

Decent hours and living standards for the independents will not be gained by groups like FASH, whose leaders not only want to decertify the Teamsters but boast of their readiness to scab on a Teamsters strike. Democratic union procedures and better contracts for Teamsters will not be found in Senate star-chamber exposés or federal court-houses. What is necessary is a new class-struggle union leadership, that would sweep aside both Fitzsimmons and his reformist opponents, and would unite Teamster warehousemen and working drivers, both owner-operators and fleet employees, in a united fight against the bosses and the Carter government. ■

## SPARTACIST LEAGUE LOCAL DIRECTORY

### Ann Arbor

c/o SYL Room 4102  
Michigan Union  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109  
(313) 663-9012

### Berkeley/Oakland

Box 23372  
Oakland, California 94623  
(415) 835-1535

### Boston

Box 188  
M.I.T. Station  
Cambridge, Mass 02139  
(617) 492-3928

### Chicago

Box 6441, Main P.O.  
Chicago, Illinois 60680  
(312) 427-0003

### Cleveland

Box 6765  
Cleveland, Ohio 44101  
(216) 621-5138

### Detroit

Box 663A, General P.O.  
Detroit, Michigan 48232  
(313) 868-9095

### Houston

Box 26474  
Houston, Texas 77207

### Los Angeles

Box 26282 Edendale Station  
Los Angeles, California 90026  
(213) 662-1564

### New York

Box 444 Canal Street Station  
New York, New York 10013  
(212) 925-2426

### San Diego

P.O. Box 2034  
Chula Vista, California 92012

### San Francisco

Box 5712  
San Francisco, California 94101  
(415) 863-6963

## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA

### Toronto

Box 7198, Station A  
Toronto, Ontario  
(416) 366-4107

### Vancouver

Box 26, Station A  
Vancouver, B.C.  
(604) 733-8848

### Winnipeg

Box 3952, Station B  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
(204) 589-7214

# British Ford Workers Breach Wage Guidelines

LONDON, November 27—Fifty-seven thousand workers at Ford Motor Company plants in Britain returned to work last Friday after a nine-week strike won them a 9.7 percent increase on basic wages. The size of the pay hike, while not even enough to keep up with Britain's rate of inflation, was not good news for Prime Minister James Callaghan and his Labour cabinet—it is nearly double the 5 percent limit set under Phase Four of the government's wage control programme. Paying no heed to Callaghan's pleas for yet more "austerity" sacrifices, the Ford workers showed that workers *can* beat the Labour government's wage controls through determined strike action, whereas without a strike they would have gained nothing more than the government-approved 5 percent which management originally offered.

However, at bottom the strike result was not a victory but a defeat for the Ford workers—they could have won much, much more, had it not been for the treachery of the union bureaucrats "leading" the strike. Saddled with a strike which had been forced upon them by spontaneous mass walkouts from the plants on September 21, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers and Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) bureaucrats throughout adopted a strategy of "containment." They managed both to prevent the strike from spreading to other workers and to sell out both of the key demands in the original claim. The first—a 25 percent pay rise, which would merely have brought workers' real wages back to where they were four years ago—was nowhere near attained; while the second, a call for a 35-hour working week, was completely ignored by the union negotiators after the first week of the strike.

The workers showed great militancy in the early days of the strike—militancy fueled by four years of vicious assaults on the standard of living of the British working class by the Labour government. But in the end Callaghan's cronies

in the bureaucracy were able to force a demoralised workforce to accept a contract virtually identical to the one they had already rejected three weeks before.

This sellout need not have happened. The road to victory was clear from the start. Section after section of the organised union movement—from local government workers to tanker drivers,

had been rejected three weeks before—an increase even smaller than that won by Ford workers last year. The only "concession" supposedly won since the last offer was a "softening" of the provisions concerning the "attendance allowance" which knocked the total maximum package up to 16.5 percent. This "allowance" was really nothing more than the reintroduction of penalty



Ford workers protest government wage limit during recent strike.

power workers, British Leyland car workers and the miners—had slapped down wage claims, scornfully rejecting Callaghan's 5 percent limit. Had they been brought out on strike alongside the Ford workers, Phase Four would have been smashed to pieces. But the bureaucrats feared above all else a wave of militant strikes which would have been a head-on challenge to the Callaghan government. Thus the Ford workers were criminally left to stand alone.

T&GWU chief negotiator Ron Todd palmed the final offer off to the workers by claiming that it was "the best we can achieve." But the settlement contained the same 9.75 percent basic rise which

clauses thrown out in 1969—a combination of the speed-up productivity deal and a no-strike "bonus" stopping "unofficial" strikes on the line.

Absolutely no one really believed that there were any substantial differences between the two offers. For the bureaucrats, the key issue at stake was the need to bring to an end a strike which posed a serious threat to the Labour government, in that it provided a potential rallying point for the tens of thousands of workers seeking to break the 5 percent limit. Demoralised, broke (strike pay was a mere £6 a week) and having no alternative leadership, the ranks voted to return to work, but there

was no enthusiasm for the settlement—as one striker put it: "...we have the companies blacked out right through Europe. It's the best position we have ever got them in, and we could have got more" (*Guardian*, 23 November).

For the past two days Callaghan has been attempting to salvage his credentials as the bourgeoisie's best bet for keeping the working class in line. He has threatened to impose government sanctions on Ford, primarily as a warning to other companies which may be considering large wage offers. And, in the teeth of all odds, he is maintaining the Phase Four hard line—no wage rises above the 5 percent—despite failure to secure a new "social contract"-type deal with the Trades Union Congress leadership.

However, there are still large sections of the organised union movement which are pursuing wage claims far beyond the 5 percent limit. Late last week, the miners union reaffirmed that it would continue its fight for a 40 percent pay increase. It is therefore critical that the lessons of the bureaucratic sellout at Ford be hammered home.

In order for the working class even to recoup the losses in its living standards sustained in four years of Labour's wage controls, it is necessary for all sections of the workers who have wage claims pending—especially the miners, the Leyland workers and local government employees—to come out *together* in strike action. But the Ford sellout has shown, once again, that the cowardly pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats have not the slightest intention of leading such a struggle against the Labour government.

What is needed is a class-struggle leadership of the labour movement, capable of championing united working-class strike action as the way forward for smashing wage controls. Such a leadership would fight for a programme to provide a *proletarian* alternative to the endemic crisis of British capitalism: a struggle for the smashing of the capitalist state and the creation of a workers government. ■

## Defend Gene Goldenfeld!

Gene Goldenfeld, a five-year member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), has gained new support in his fight against victimization by U.S. Steel for respecting picket lines. The October 23 membership meeting of USWA Local 1014 at U.S. Steel's Gary Works, where Goldenfeld is a journeyman motor inspector, went on record backing his grievance against a 38-day suspension for refusing to cross the picket lines which striking railroad workers had thrown up at the Gary Works in late September. The pickets were part of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airlines Clerks' dramatic four-day tie-up of the nation's railway system, which was brought to an end by President Carter's invoking of the strikebreaking Railway Labor Act.

Goldenfeld told *WT* that 150 steel workers at the meeting voted unanimously to throw the local's full support behind his grievance (see motion in box). In addition, Goldenfeld said a petition endorsing the motion that was circulated prior to the meeting was signed by 135 of his co-workers, including five local officials.

When the rail workers struck and set up their picket lines, attempting to shut

down the trains that carry iron ore and coal into the plant and finished steel out, Goldenfeld not only refused to cross them but distributed a leaflet urging that the leadership of the USWA instruct its members not to cross. He was charged

### LOCAL 1014 MOTION IN DEFENSE OF GENE GOLDENFELD

WHEREAS brother Goldenfeld is being unjustly disciplined for honoring picket lines and for expressing his views on union policy; and

WHEREAS the company will seek to use this as a precedent to victimize others and to threaten the right of union members to publicly express their views; be it therefore

RESOLVED that Local 1014 lends its wholehearted support to the grievance of brother Goldenfeld, and demands that the company immediately grant the grievance and tear up the suspensions, granting full back pay.

by the company with "unauthorized absence" and promoting a work stoppage, allegedly in violation of the contract's no-strike clause. The 38-day suspension he was given sets him up for firing over the next minor pretext.

Goldenfeld is waging a fight not only in his own defense, but for the right of all unionists to respect the most basic labor weapon: the strike picket line. In addition to mobilizing support within the union, Goldenfeld said he has also retained a lawyer and filed a charge against U.S. Steel with the National Labor Relations Board. In a leaflet distributed at Gary Works, Goldenfeld stated:

"I have filed the NLRB suit in order to leave no stone unturned in the fight against the suspension. However it would be foolish to rely on the government to defend the labor movement's use of militant tactics, like picket lines, against the companies. On the contrary, the government undermines labor solidarity any way it can. Just in 1978, 'Peanut Boss' Carter has shown this to the hilt: he used his 'emergency powers' to break the coal miners' strike and the rail strike. And both of these nationwide strikes were powerful only because workers honored each others' picket lines!

"The task of defending the picket line—

a weapon of class struggle—rests with the labor movement itself. Labor must mobilize to defend its own whenever a strike is attacked, a picket line busted up, or an individual militant singled out for victimization."

To help defray legal expenses, a defense fund has been established. The Partisan Defense Committee has made a donation to the Gene Goldenfeld Defense Fund and *WT* urges members and supporters of the labor movement to do the same. Contributions should be sent to: Gene Goldenfeld Defense Fund, c/o Box 66, Gary, Indiana 46402. ■

Order from/  
pay to:  
Spartacist  
Publishing Co.  
P.O. Box 1377  
G.P.O.  
NY, NY 10001

Price: \$1.50



# Bukharin...

(continued from page 7)

not by technocratic/bureaucratic elites but by genuine soviets; for economic integration of the workers states and extension of the revolution. And this requires the construction of a Trotskyist vanguard workers party irreconcilably hostile to all wings of the ruling bureaucracies.

## Can the Stalinists Rehabilitate Bukharin?

Certainly of all Stalin's victims among the Old Bolsheviks, Bukharin appears to be the one whom the bureaucracy could most easily claim as one of its own. Moreover, partial attempts at his rehabilitation have already occurred. During Khrushchev's tenure Bukharin's widow was granted a private audience with him to discuss the question. And in December 1962 a leading CPSU spokesman was permitted to go so far as to admit in public that "Neither Bukharin nor Rykov, of course, was a spy or a terrorist."

There have been a number of indications that Khrushchev was prepared to go all the way and officially rehabilitate Bukharin and some other Old Bolsheviks. The most detailed evidence to this effect comes from a letter by Zhores Medvedev to the Russell Foundation. According to Medvedev, after Khrushchev's toppling from power he discussed the question in 1968 with the author of a play entitled *Bolsheviks*:

"... Khrushchev began to explain that Bukharin and Kamenev were among the group of leaders whose rehabilitation was under consideration in 1958 after the 'elimination' of the Molotov-Malenkov 'anti-party' group from the Party leadership.

"The resolution about the reconsideration of the Moscow show trials was already ready and it was decided to publish it in newspapers. A Special Commission of the Central Committee had already completed the work and recommended rehabilitation. M. Suslov and some others were against this rehabilitation, but the majority was in favour. Probably Suslov alerted some of the leaders of the European Communist Parties. Among them, only the Italian Party supported the whole process of rehabilitation and wanted it to continue. Maurice Thorez, however, urgently flew to Moscow and urged Khrushchev to postpone the rehabilitation of Bukharin, Rykov, Zinoviev and others. 'After the XXth Congress and the Hungarian events we lost almost half our Party,' said Thorez. 'If you were formally to rehabilitate these who were tried in the open trials, we could lose the rest.... You can rehabilitate them, later, not all at the same time, but one after another, slowly.' 'These arguments influenced us,' said Khrushchev...."

While any rehabilitations of Stalin's victims pose certain difficulties for the Kremlin, the Eurocommunists are positively eager to take up the case of the right-Bolshevik Bukharin. The Italian Communist Party, in particular, has

devoted much attention to the case. The PCI newspaper *L'Unità* (16 June 1978) published a statement by historian Paolo Spriano saying, "The need to do justice to this eminent representative of the international communist movement ... is ... a moral and political necessity." Earlier, on 26 March *L'Unità* ran a long interview on the same subject, as did the PCI's cultural journal *Rinascita*, and on 22 June PCI spokesman Aldo Tortorella said in an interview with *La Repubblica*, "If today we are fighting for Bukharin, tomorrow we shall fight for Trotsky."

Having remained silent for so long, the "moral necessity" felt by these veteran reformists is rather murky. But the political necessity is patently obvi-



D. Seymour

## Maurice Thorez

ous. While allowing them to take up cudgels for a historic figure of the Communist International, and thus refurbish their leftist credentials, it provides an opportunity to distance themselves further from the Kremlin. The real pressure they are facing is that of the imperialist "human rights" crusade led by Jimmy Carter. In order to prove their respectability and "democratic" reliability, the Eurocommunists defend Bukharin ... along with the likes of Anatoly Shcharansky, who even the Pentagon admits is guilty of passing Soviet defense secrets to the West.

## "Eurotrotskyists" Chase Eurocommunists

For the pseudo-Trotskyist revisionists of the United Secretariat, the

Bukharin case is a glorious opportunity to speed up their chase after the Eurocommunists. For them it is another expression of their fundamental Pabloist liquidationism—the belief that somehow the Stalinist bureaucracies, or their Eurocommunist former cohorts—can be revolutionized, or at least "radicalized." Thus Ernest Mandel appealed to the Eurocommunist leaders in his essay on the 1976 East Berlin conference of Communist Parties:

"They should demand the public rehabilitation of Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rakovsky, and all the Old Bolsheviks. They should demand that the works of these revolutionaries be freely published and distributed in the USSR and People's Democracies. Otherwise their pledges of socialist democracy have little credibility."

—From *Stalinism to Eurocommunism* (1978)

So now they're doing it. Must we now conclude that these bureaucrats' claims of "socialist democracy" are now... credible?!

For some time now the USec has been shilly-shallying on the issue of Eurocommunism, now declaring it "contradictory," now issuing a more orthodox condemnation of it as a rightist trend. But whenever they smell an opportunity the Mandelites' opportunism soon comes out. The flagship of the USec line, the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), recently published an article directed at the French CP's *L'Humanité* fête (*Rouge*, 9-10 September), in which it declares that now that the Eurocommunists admit Stalin committed a few crimes "all the explosive questions of the day" can no longer be suppressed. *Rouge* exhorts, "We must seize on the debate which has now opened ... to the extent that this is a movement born in the fight against Stalinism."

The LCR insists that the Eurocommunist phenomenon is "contradictory" because of the West European CPs' preoccupation with "respond[ing], even if in a partial fashion, to the democratic aspirations expressed by the workers in their struggle." Of course, it notes, if only to cover its tracks, the Eurocommunists "feel compelled to historically rehabilitate the ideas of Trotsky while totally refusing to draw the political consequences"!! As for the LCR's own goals, *Rouge* puts them succinctly:

"We battle for the rehabilitation of Trotsky and the assassinated Bolsheviks because we want to impose the recognition that Trotskyism is a current in the workers movement."

Just as legitimate as pro-capitalist reformism, you see. What a cringing, whining appeal: "Please, comrades Stalinists and Eurocommunists, just tell the workers we have a right to exist!" A clearer statement of political bankruptcy would be hard to find.

So today the "Eurotrotskyists" of the USec join the Eurocommunist reformists in scolding the Kremlin. But it is not only the Stalinist bureaucrats of the USSR who have dirty hands. The concern for workers democracy by the Mandelites and the SWP is highly selective. Following the lead of their former mentor Michel Pablo, who in the early 1950's split the Fourth International with his liquidationist program of "deep entry" into the Stalinist parties to pressure them to the left, the USec for years refused to defend the Chinese

Trotskyists jailed by Mao in 1949-51, slandering them as "refugees from a revolution." And not only did they apologize for Castro, labeling Cuba a healthy workers state that merely "lack[ed] the forms of workers democracy," but they remained criminally silent when the Cuban Trotskyists were imprisoned in the early 1960's. Barry Sheppard, today SWP national secretary, dismissed them cynically, remarking: "There are Trotskyists and there are Trotskyists. But if I were in Cuba, I wouldn't be arrested."

## Other Closets, Other Skeletons

The Eurocommunists would have us believe that Stalin's crimes were the result of a "cult of the personality," and in any case stopped with the death of the Secretary General in 1953. Like Mexican CP leader Valentín Campa, whose recently published memoirs detail how the GPU carried out the assassination of Trotsky, they seek to throw the blame exclusively on the Kremlin and "outside interference" in their parties (see "How the Stalinists Planned Trotsky's Murder," *WI* No. 218, 3 November 1978). But the infamous murder in Coyoacán, the shots in the neck in the Lubyanka basements, the mass executions in Stalin's Gulag were not the result of the individual perfidy of a megalomaniac. They were predictable and necessary to maintain in power a clique which precariously balances between imperialism and the working class, and thus furiously strikes out at every possible threat of revolution.

The Moscow Trials were part and parcel of the bloody logic of class collaboration, just like the 1927 massacre of communists in Shanghai or more recently the 1965 Indonesian coup, which left half a million dead, needlessly sacrificed on the altar of reformism. And the European Communist parties have plenty of skeletons in their own closets which they are having difficulty reconciling with their new-found "democratic" images. The most dramatic case is that of the Number One Eurocommunist, Spanish Communist Party (PCE) leader Santiago Carrillo, who was part of the PCE political bureau which approved of the arrest of Andrés Nin, who was assassinated in the cellar of a GPU prison in Spain in 1937. Carrillo also expelled scores of party members returning from the hellish Nazi concentration camps of Dachau and Mauthausen as "Gestapo-Trotskyite agents."

In order to build enthusiasm for the "rehabilitation" campaign, Ernest Mandel has played up various statements by Carrillo distancing himself from some of the most rabid Stalinist "excesses" of the 1930's. "He completely rehabilitates Andrés Nin after the infamous accusations made against him by the Spanish CP and the Communist International," writes Mandel in a review of Carrillo's book, *Eurocommunism and the State* (1977). Moreover, the PCE leader's talk of bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union represents, he says, "a formidable historic vindication of Trotsky and Trotskyism. It legitimizes, fifty years after, the heroic struggle of our Soviet comrades..." (*Inprecor*, 12 May 1977).

It is instructive to look at just how Carrillo deals with Nin and Trotsky, for it is instructive of the kind of "rehabilitation" that the Euroreformists will deal out to those who pose the threat of revolution. Carrillo, far from "vindicating" Trotskyism, rails against the Fourth Internationalists' attacks on the popular front: "... Trotsky's viewpoints about the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39 could not have been more wrong." As for Nin, he only says it was too bad the man was shot, but simply because the Republican courts didn't condemn to death other leaders associated with the Barcelona May Days workers uprising of 1937, which he labeled a "putsch" and "an act of high treason" which meant "opening the front to the Francoist forces." Some vindication!

# WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

24 issues—\$3; Introductory offer (6 issues): \$1. International rates: 24 issues—\$12 airmail/\$3 seairmail.

—includes *Spartacist*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable/mail to:  
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, N.Y. 10001

220

Limited edition now available.

## Workers Vanguard in BOUND VOLUMES

Volume 2 includes:

- WV nos. 35-58
- subject index

\$15.00

order from: pay to:  
SPARTACIST PUBLISHING CO.  
Box 1377, GPO  
New York, NY 10001

It should not be thought that just because they break with the Kremlin the Eurocommunists will no longer be capable of such vile crimes. Today the Italian CP is leading the "anti-terrorist" hysteria, calling for beefing up the forces of capitalist repression, while accusing anarcho-Maoist groups, in a language worthy of the Moscow trials, of being proto-fascist provocateurs and agents of foreign intelligence networks. The social democrats are just as capable of murdering revolutionists as the Stalinists—witness the bloody assassination of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg incited by the Scheidemann-Noske government in 1919. And the Eurocommunists' "rehabilitation" of the Old Bolsheviks will be about as meaningful as the West German social democrats' issuance of a stamp bearing the portrait of Luxemburg half a decade after they inspired her death.

We stand with Trotsky on the question of who will rehabilitate whom, and *how*:

"The victorious workers will remove him [Stalin] and his gangster collaborators from under the debris of the totalitarian abomination and make them account for the crimes committed by them at a real court. . . . the victorious working class will look through all the trials, public and secret, and erect on the squares of the liberated Soviet Union monuments to the unfortunate victims of the Stalin system of baseness and dishonor."

—"Cain-Dzhugashvili Goes the Whole Way" (March 1938)

### Only Trotskyism Withstood the Test

Bukharin's supporters have portrayed his March 1938 trial, labeled by Stalin the case of the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," as the Bolshevik leader's "finest hour." By skillful use of Aesopian language, Cohen writes, "Bukharin did not really confess to the criminal charges at all." Instead he sought to make a mockery of Stalin and his ex-Menshevik prosecutor Vyshinsky by declaring, "I plead guilty to . . . the sum total of crimes committed by this counter-revolutionary organization, irrespective of whether or not I knew of, whether or not I took a direct part in, any particular act"—and then denying the specific allegations.

It is true that Bukharin did not grovel in the pitiful manner of the rest of the accused in this courtroom mockery. The *New York Times* correspondent wrote:

"Mr. Bukharin alone, who all too obviously in his last words fully expected to die, was manly, proud and almost defiant. He is the first of the fifty-four men who have faced the court in the last three public treason trials who has not abased himself in the last hours of the trial."

However, while he was facing the inhuman (and very real) threat to murder his wife and son should he refuse to confess, and although he refused to admit many of the most ludicrous charges, acquitting himself well in his chosen Brechtian role, Bukharin did in fact confess. He thereby aided Stalin's monstrous Big Lie campaign to wipe out the remains of the Bolshevik general staff of 1917 with the device of extorted "confessions," and failed to stand by his condemned comrades.

Bukharin asked his wife to memorize a last statement, which for all his capitulations, rightist policies and identification with the bureaucracy, deserves to be placed on the scales of historical justice:

"I have been in the Party since I was eighteen, and the purpose of my life has always been to fight for the interests of the working class, for the victory of socialism. These days the paper with the sacred name *Pravda* [Truth] prints the filthiest lie, that I, Nikolai Bukharin, have wished to destroy the triumphs of October, to restore capitalism. That is unexampled insolence, that is a lie that could be equalled in insolence, in irresponsibility to the people, only by such a lie as this: it has been discovered that Nikolai Romanov devoted his whole life to the struggle against capitalism and monarchy, to the struggle for the achievement of a proletarian revolution. If, more than

once, I was mistaken about the methods of building socialism, let posterity judge me no more harshly than Vladimir Ilyich did. We were moving towards a single goal for the first time, on a still unblazed trail."

This is an honorable statement, though a private one, of a broken man. To those who see Bukharin as an anti-Stalinist oppositionist, we would cite the balanced assessment of his testament by the historian Roy Medvedev:

"This letter reveals not only Bukharin's personal tragedy but also his failure, to the very end, to comprehend the frightful meaning of events. Bukharin defends only himself in his letter; he writes nothing about Zinoviev, Kamenev, Piatakov, and the other Party leaders who had already been arrested and shot. He writes that he knew nothing about the existence of Riutin's and Uglanov's secret organizations, but he does not question their existence. Above all, he stresses that he 'started nothing against Stalin.'"

—*Let History Judge* (1973)

And he ends with an appeal to "a young and honest generation of Party leaders" to reinstate his party membership.

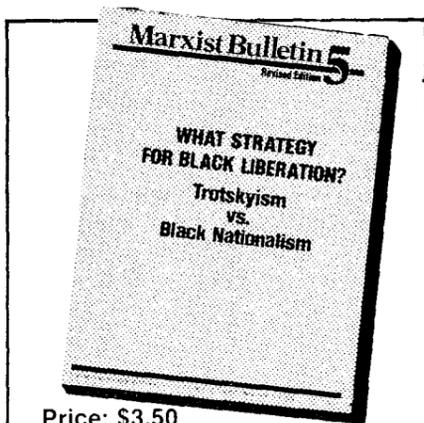
Compare this to Trotsky's defense of the Old Bolsheviks on "trial" at the first of Stalin's Moscow frame-ups. "There are no compelling reasons for me to take upon myself any political or moral responsibility for Zinoviev and Kamenev," he wrote in December 1936. "Discounting a brief interval—1926-27—they were always my bitter adversaries. . . . Yes, they lacked sufficient character. These words, however, should not be taken too simplistically. The strength of any material is measured in terms of the forces operating on it and tending to destroy it. . . . But I have in my possession a sufficient number of documents and facts which are easily verifiable; I am so well acquainted with the participants, their characters, their relations, and the entire background as to be able to state with absolute assurance that the accusation of terrorism against Zinoviev and Kamenev is from beginning to end a contemptible, police-manufactured frame-up, without an iota of truth in it."

Bukharin can be "rehabilitated" by the Kremlin and Eurocommunists for the same reason that Trotsky never will be: he did not represent a revolutionary opposition to the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie. In the last analysis, it was not a question of individual heroics or personality. The Trotskyists maintained their integrity and were able to resist to the end because they were fighting for a program which offered a real answer to the bloody crimes of Stalin. This point was vividly made by Leopold Trepper, one of the most courageous Soviet intelligence agents operating underground in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II. "Who did protest?" he asks:

"The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor. . . ."

"Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. . . . They did not 'confess,' for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

*The Great Game* (1977)



**Marxist Bulletin 5**  
Revised Edition

**WHAT STRATEGY FOR BLACK LIBERATION?**  
Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism

Price: \$3.50

Make checks payable/mail to:  
Spartacist Publishing Co.  
P.O. Box 1377 GPO  
New York, N.Y. 10001

## Cult Suicide...

(continued from page 5)

Jonestown, perhaps hoping the appeal of socialism will suffer the same fate as Kool-Aid.

In one of the more vicious attempts to "explain" the Jonestown death cult, *Village Voice* columnists Alex Cockburn and James Ridgeway link the Jones cult to the Black Panther Party. Inspired no doubt by the fact that both had Charles Garry for a lawyer, the *Voice* went on to note that the groups had in common a certain success in recruiting from the ghetto, support among rich guilty liberals and the use of gangster tactics. They might have added in their liberal smear of the Panthers that Eldridge Cleaver had offered the slogan of "revolutionary suicide."

But the Black Panthers did not commit suicide! They were killed by the government. The most militant expression of ghetto-organized left-wing black nationalism, the Panthers were hunted down, framed up, jailed and murdered in a campaign of organized secret FBI terror which in its rational murderous intent makes the Jonestown suicide look benign by comparison. Aspects of irrationality within the Panthers simply made the government's job easier. The Panthers' frustrated practice of vicarious terrorism—cartoons showing little black children and old people aiming automatic weapons at cops, with the slogan "Off the Pigs"—was part of an apocalyptic ghetto fantasy which provided an excuse for the cops to "off" the Panthers.

Certainly black nationalism in America has a strong component of utopian irrationality, for it is simply at odds with political reality. Sometimes this takes a more political form, as with the Panthers, while with the Black Muslims for example it is primarily religious.

The Panthers, the Muslims and Jim Jones recruited out of the same desperate ghetto milieu—the streetcorners and bars, the prisons. All deliver "rehabilitation" of drug addicts, petty criminals, prostitutes; all promise a better life. But for the Panthers the promise was "revolution in our lifetime"; when they decided that was hopeless, it was "revolutionary suicide" or a dive into the Democratic Party.

## Get the Witchhunters, Not the Witches!

So now the government cult-hunt will be on. Concerned parents of cult-ridden children will cheer, urging the FBI to destroy the nests of cultism. But a widespread government investigation will only add a witchhunt to the witches.

"Why has the FBI never investigated the People's Temple?" demand the mourning families and friends of the dead. "While the Jonescult runs around with end-game assassination squads, what is the government doing?" We can tell you what they are doing. The FBI is investigating us.

The secret police is not in the business of "protecting people," nor can it be. It is in the business of spying on, disrupting and sometimes killing members of the left, black and labor movements. Its sanctimonious talk about violence or the potential for terrorism is just the legal cover to maintain projects like COINTELPRO and the pick-up list for concentration camps.

The FBI has tens of thousands of pages of investigative reports on the Spartacist League, some of which we are beginning to recover through Freedom of Information Act inquiries. We notice that field office investigations are constantly discovering that the SL is not involved in illegal, conspiratorial or violent activities, and requesting that surveillance be discon-

tinued. Of course, Washington inevitably overrules them.

For instance in Boston, the field office noted that "SPL [FBI code name for the SL] are not stockpiling weapons" and "it is not believed SPL . . . would consider such an action." Then the Boston office offered the following definition:

"The SPL/SYL philosophy lends itself to a takeover by them (the working man) of the United States Government at some future time when the people as a whole want to do it. No statement of an armed revolution at this time or in the future was ever known to have been made."

But with such a definition, how would the FBI justify continued harassment of the SL? So Washington quickly wrote back to set the Boston office straight on "national priorities" according to "existing instructions." Similar discussions took place between Washington and its Milwaukee field office. And in Los Angeles the field office wanted to drop its spying on the SL altogether. Fat chance! Stamped on the FBI's documents on "SPL" are clear instructions: "Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification."

To hell with the cults. Let them kill themselves if that is their desire. Americans ought to turn their anger at the witchhunters instead of the witches.

Desperate ghetto conditions produce visions of apocalypse. They also produce subjectively revolutionary men and women who want to strike out against their oppressors. Sometimes these elements get mixed up in the same organization. It is indicative that nearly every black mass leader has been deeply religious: M.L. King and Malcolm X are only recent examples. And there has been a certain traffic both ways between the religionists and the politicians: Malcolm X began a trajectory out of the mosque into radical political life, while ex-Panther Cleaver has become an imperialist for Christ.

But whatever the overlap, the People's Temple rhetoric about "socialism" and the fantastic elements of Panther ideology do not make an identity between these phenomena. The *Voice's* cheap amalgam is at bottom an attempt to alibi the government's bloody destruction of the Black Panther Party.

Marxists could not be more estranged from the Jonestown nightmare. We ground our party in the realities of the life of the proletariat. For us human freedom is a goal to be struggled for in the real world. Our trade-union work is the struggle to become rooted in the very unfree life of the working class. It is unthinkable that a cult like the Marcuses, for instance, could maintain trade-union fractions; they are too full of themselves, too busy saving the world for their cult leader. Communists are rooted in the real world because they are working for the future. Unlike the self-developers who don't believe in a social future and would never waste their precious personal time on politics, revolutionaries are committed to a program for making our visions of social justice reality.

The horror of Jonestown recalls the most violent fantasies of the New Left. But even some New Left radicals—before so many became the humorless ascetics of the cults—understood the value of fantasy. If Jonestown seems like an episode out of the animated *Fritz the Cat* cartoon, the spirit of Fritz with his pragmatic sense of personal survival is missing.

For Marxists the alternatives are not madness or cynicism. It is through communist society alone that man will leave the realm of necessity for the realm of freedom. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## FASH Seeks to Split Teamsters

# Steel Hauler Strike in Midwest

Several thousand truck drivers who transport the output of the nation's steel mills began parking their rigs November 10, in response to a strike call from the Fraternal Association of Steel Haulers (FASH). So far, the strike seems to have had far less impact than its initiators expected. Though FASH chief Bill Hill claims that 60 to 70 percent of the steel haulers have joined the strike, that figure seems clearly exaggerated. Seven major steel companies are in court seeking injunctions against FASH pickets, but none of them say that more than 20 percent of their deliveries have been affected by the strike and no production cutbacks or layoffs have been announced.

The shutdown could still snowball. FASH claims that its first walkout, in 1967, started with only 20 drivers and grew within a month to encompass over 85 percent of the steelhauling industry. FASH spokesmen hope the current strike will spread in a similar fashion. In addition to picket lines being set up at truck entrances to some Midwest steel mills, steel haulers defying the strike call have been confronted with a number of other persuaders: nearly 200 violent attacks against rigs still on the road have been reported, including shootings, bricks thrown through windshields from turnpike overpasses, and tire slashings.

Some 30,000 independent truck owners carry over 50 percent of all finished steel products from the mills to fabricating plants. The drivers are required by federal regulations to lease their rigs to carriers who then pay the drivers a percentage of the fee charged for transporting the load—currently running about 70 percent. FASH has issued a 10-point list of demands, including a higher percentage, standard state regulations on truck weights and dimensions, elimination of state fuel and mileage taxes, federal license plates and uniform leasing arrangements. But FASH's central demand—as it has been for most of the group's 11-year history—is for independence for the



FASH pickets at U.S. Steel plant gate in Lorain, Ohio.

WV Photo

steel haulers from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT).

The Teamsters cover about 10,000 of the independent drivers through the steel haulers supplement to the union's Master Freight Agreement. Three times in the last 10 years FASH has unsuccessfully petitioned the NLRB to decertify the union. FASH's current strategy is to break the steel haulers out of the Teamster contract prior to its expiration next March 31, forcing the carriers to deal with it rather than the IBT. Denouncing the "slavery" of the "Mafia-dominated" Teamsters, FASH leaders in fact vow to work next spring even if the Teamsters call a nationwide strike, in effect offering to scab if the carriers will cooperate.

As could be expected, the FASH walkout is bitterly opposed by the Teamster leadership, which has ordered

its members to ignore the "illegal" walkout and which is acting in collusion with the carriers, state police and federal law enforcement agencies in attempting to break the strike. Last week, IBT president Frank Fitzsimmons met with Attorney General Griffin Bell to urge harsh measures to end the strike and Bell has ordered U.S. attorneys and the FBI to "investigate." And Ohio Teamster leader Jackie Presser has called on the Labor Department to charge FASH with illegal interference with interstate commerce, pointing to permanent injunctions against FASH issued in 1971 and 1974.

Teamster spokesmen are upholding the right of the carriers to fire drivers who refuse to continue hauling and, in the case of at least two Pittsburgh-area steel mills, have dispatched Teamster members to help local police escort trucks through FASH picket lines. That the IBT so jealously aids the cops is both sordid and ironic in view of the fact that the Justice Department and a good number of grand juries are trying to put Teamster leaders behind bars on charges ranging from fraud and extortion to assault and murder.

The clash between the Teamsters and FASH raises important questions for IBT members, the labor movement and Marxists. Can owner-operators, who are properly speaking not workers at all but a petty-bourgeois stratum, intermediate between the working class and the employers, be successfully organized into the labor movement? And, if so, how?

In recent years the number of independent truckers has mushroomed, so that there are now about 100,000 carrying all kinds of freight—of whom only about 20 percent are organized into the Teamsters. This expansion has come at the expense of the predominantly unionized fleet companies. Major shippers have resorted increasingly to utilizing owner-operators because of

substantial cost savings: the owner-operators work grueling 80 to 100 hour weeks at declining commission rates. While many make a fairly decent income, their hourly rates of compensation are in fact generally much lower than the employed drivers.

In addition, the independent himself bears the expense of purchasing and maintaining his own equipment, paying for fuel, insurance, etc.—factors which make it ever more difficult for them to make ends meet without working longer hours and ignoring basic safety standards. Under these conditions there is a fantastic turnover rate. Thousands of independent truckers go bankrupt every year and are replaced by new owner-operators willing to work on even thinner margins. As a result, the expansion of the owner-operator trade poses a serious threat to established union standards on wages, working hours and conditions.

Further, the independents are by no means a homogeneous layer. Many are not "owner-operators" but in fact more successful entrepreneurs who have become small fleet owners employing non-union labor. FASH spokesmen conceded to *WV* that it is not uncommon for its members to own up to five trucks, hiring non-rig-owning drivers to run these small fleets. It is particularly this group of small employers that identifies most strongly, not with trade unions but with capital, whose conditions of existence—exploiting labor—it shares. Depending on the policies pursued by the organized labor movement, this sector can exercise considerable influence over the rest of the independents in fueling anti-union sentiments.

There is an inherent contradiction between the economic basis of the trade unions, which seek to protect their members by raising wages and shortening hours, and the economic reality (and resulting mentality) of the aspiring owner-operator. In striving to become a small fleet owner, his successes are grounded on squeezing out his competition, his willingness to work longer hours under less favorable conditions.

The independent truckers are a volatile petty-bourgeois stratum that wavers between the working class and big business. At times, even the perceived interests of the independents who own more than one rig may correspond with those of the working class. Thus, the 1974 work stoppage protesting the sudden rise in fuel prices following the Arab oil embargo was a supportable action in the interests of working people generally, who were forced to bear the brunt of the Nixon administration's price-gouging policies. At the other extreme, owner-operators can be mobilized as shock troops against the workers movement. This was the case in 1973 in Chile, when the strike of independent truck owners was one of the main battering rams of reaction in toppling the Allende regime.

The demand raised by FASH to separate from the Teamsters is therefore particularly dangerous and reactionary. It is not even essentially a question of

*continued on page 8*



National Guard escorting convoy of trucks during 1973-74 protest.

UPI