

NOW BIWEEKLY!

STACKS OVERSIZE

# the TORCH



15¢

Newspaper of the  
**Revolutionary  
Socialist League**

Reconstruct the Fourth International!

Vol 1

May 1 - May 16, 1974

No. 8

# IMPEACHMENT SHOWDOWN

BY BRUCE LANDAU

After months of maneuvering for position, the struggle within the U.S. ruling class between Richard Nixon and his opponents is coming to a head. The New York Times of April 7 reported that "There appears little question left that Congress sees impeachment as a near certainty."

As we go to press, a preliminary showdown is shaping up between Nixon and the House Judiciary Committee over the Committee's demand for access to the famous White House tapes. Both Democrats and Republicans now publicly predict Nixon will be brought to trial before the Senate in late August.

The Torch has often discussed the reason for the ruling class's present political turmoil. As U.S. capitalism's general crisis deepens, the bourgeoisie desperately needs to drive up profits through a frontal assault on the working class, its wages, its working conditions, its democratic rights. To spearhead this assault, the capitalist state must be strengthened dramatically.

Richard Nixon agrees with this program, but--because of the scandals he is involved in--he is actually undermining the power and prestige of the Presidency and the state generally. To carry forward its "strong state" program, to restore the public's faith in the state, the bourgeoisie knows it must get Nixon out of the White House.

## FEARING THE MASSES

But knowing this was not enough to make the bourgeoisie move against Nixon before now. Why not?

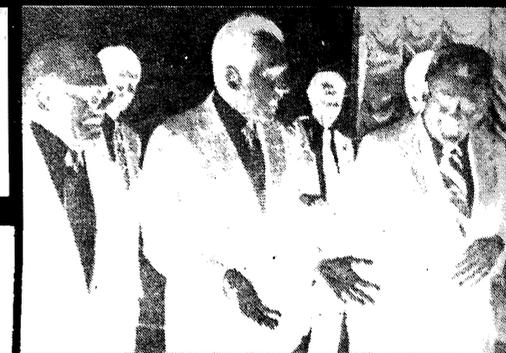
Because the bourgeoisie has been afraid of the impact which a full-scale confrontation with Nixon might have on the U.S. working class. Such a confrontation, after all, might get out of hand and tear the lid off the whole stinking garbage pail of capitalist politics generally. This appeared all the more dangerous coming in the middle of a profound economic crisis which is already straining the patience of the working class to the breaking point.

Might not a public conflict within the ruling class encourage the proletariat's contempt for all bourgeois parties and politicians? With the capitalist politicians at each other's throats, couldn't the working class surge forward against a divided enemy in order to turn back the current attack on its own living standards? Wouldn't an open split in the ruling class encourage the proletariat to enter the political arena under its own banner?

These have been the ruling class's fears. These were the fears which lay behind the months-long debate within the ruling class over whether Nixon should simply be forced to resign or actually be



BELOW: Nixon barnstorms in last-ditch effort to rebuild support. ABOVE: Nixon briefs chief hacks Meany [left] and Brennan



impeached. Arguing for resignation, right-wing Republican Senator James Buckley (N.Y.) warned that impeachment meant "a slow, agonizing, inch-by-inch process of attrition." in public view. A quieter, behind-closed-doors resignation was necessary, he insisted, "in order to preserve the Presidency."

The Wall Street Journal is an old fan of Buckley's, but

the Journal favors impeachment. The Journal wants a strong-man President capable of concentrating political power in his own hands in order to break the resistance of the working class.

"A forced resignation," warned the Journal on March 21, "would create a precedent that almost certainly would be turned against future Presidents who take unpopular

positions." And what good is a strong-man President to the ruling class if he cannot "take unpopular positions?" The Journal believes that strengthening the powers of the Presidency requires that Congress go through the entire procedure of impeachment, even though this means "a certain messiness."

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# Italian Capitalists Turning Right

by Paul Benjamin

The fall of Italian Premier Mariano Rumor's coalition government in March has opened a new and crucial phase of the class struggle in Italy. For two years the Italian proletariat has fought the ruling class to a standstill. Italy's bourgeois parliamentary democracy is visibly crumbling under the blows of this struggle. The proletarian forces in Italy now stand face to face with the most corrupt and reactionary defenders of capitalism in Italy, the open supporters of strong-man government and military rule.

The Italian bourgeoisie placed Rumor in power in July, 1973, for the express purpose of defusing the class struggle. His regime represented a desperate attempt to restore the old "center-left" coalition between the Christian Democrats (the major bourgeois party in Italy) and the reformist Socialist Party, a coalition which had ruled Italy through the boom years of the Italian "economic miracle" from 1963 to 1972.

## FALSE PROMISES

Rumor came into office with a grandiose program of social reforms. He proclaimed a three-month price freeze to soothe proletarian anger over soaring inflation. He promised



cheap housing and efficient urban transport. He pledged economic development for the poverty-stricken South.

This was enough for the Socialist Party, which entered the government and gave Rumor unwavering support. It was enough, too, for the Italian Communist Party (PCI) which proclaimed an "historic compromise" with the regime. And it was enough for the trade union leaders belonging to both the Socialist and Communist Parties, who declared a "social truce" and urged workers to end their strikes and put off their wage claims. The London *Economist* rhapsodized about the "New Deal" at work in Italy.



Metal workers spearhead class struggle in Italy

But no amount of promises could conceal the real deterioration of working-class living standards under the Rumor regime. When the price freeze ended last winter, the price of bread went up 30 per cent, the price of pasta almost 50 per cent. Electricity and gas bills were scheduled to more than double. Sugar and salt were not to be found. In the midst of runaway inflation—over 20 per cent annually—Fiat, the largest employer in Italy, threatened layoffs of more than 300,000 workers.

By December, Italian workers began to renew their offensive. Militants in the Fiat plants began a series of strikes despite the opposition of the union bureaucracy, strikes which won massive support from their co-workers. By late February, the union hacks were pressured into calling a national general strike for February 27. Even the *New York Times* was forced to admit the real meaning of the bureaucracy's grudging "militancy," noting that the walk-outs "were clearly aimed at channeling the deep discontent over inflation into a moderate demonstration, and taking the wind out of the sails of militant labor radicals."

## GOVERNMENT FALLS

Rumor hoped to save his government by tapping the resources of U.S. imperialism through the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF demanded a massive attack on the working class as the price of its financial support, including reductions in public services, large tax increases, credit restrictions and increased unemployment.

Caught between the necessity of cracking down and fear of the

working class's response, the government collapsed. Rumor now presides over a caretaker regime which has given up even the pretense of solving the economic crisis and is paralyzed by its own internal differences on how to deal with the proletariat's growing militancy.

## RULING CLASS DIVISIONS

One section of the bourgeoisie, led by Fiat head Gianni Agnelli, hopes to defuse the crisis by bringing the PCI into the government to police the "general lowering of the standard of living" which Agnelli declares is necessary to save Italian capitalism.

The right wing of the bourgeoisie is terrified of this policy. They do not, of course, fear the PCI itself. Instead, they fear the proletarian forces which lie behind the PCI and which now mistakenly look to the PCI for leadership. These reactionaries fear that—as in Chile—a Popular Front regime will encourage the proletariat's pent-up aspirations for power and trigger a sweeping attack on capitalist rule, despite the PCI's intentions of holding the working class in check.

The right-wing Christian Democrats, in short, are travelling down the same road that the Chilean Christian Democrats took last September. In the face of working-class militancy, they are abandoning their hollow claim to be the "shield of democracy" and beginning a campaign of intimidation and repression which poses the threat of strong-man rule or military coup, leaning on a growing fascist movement.

Since January, the Italian Joint Chiefs of Staff have been meeting to discuss ways of "purifying" the

functioning of the Italian state. On January 27, the right-wing Roman daily paper *Il Tempo* referred to a series of exceptional security measures (a state of preparedness at Rome's major airport, security guards at Cabinet offices, Parliament and the state television office) and carried a declaration from the Minister of the Interior warning that "an undetermined attack during the night could not be excluded."

The Defense Minister denied everything. Nevertheless, open discussion of a possible coup continues in the Italian press, while army "field maneuvers" continue and right-wing newspapers whip up nationalist hysteria against neighboring Yugoslavia as an excuse for the increase in military activity.

## STRONG-MAN STRATEGY

Amintore Fanfani, political secretary of the Christian Democrats, has emerged as the leader of the right wing of the bourgeoisie. He is using the threat of a military coup to justify his own desire for strong-man rule, insisting that "We must give assurances . . . that a serene and free existence won't be rendered impossible by perpetual disorder."

Fanfani, in alliance with the Vatican, the open fascists, and the right-wing of his own party, is using the May 12 referendum on repealing legal divorce in Italy (a major issue in this Catholic country) as the vehicle for his campaign. He has transformed the referendum into an anti-communist crusade.

In pursuing this crusade, Fanfani has not hesitated to paralyze the government, or to declare war on the

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Agnelli supporters in his own party. In the meantime, the fascists have taken the offensive in a campaign of shootings, sabotage and assaults all over Italy.

## BANKRUPTCY

The PCI cannot defend Italian workers from this assault. The PCI reaction to the ruling class's repressive campaigns has been shameless grovelling before the government and the military, while condemning those sections of the proletariat which fought back as "irresponsible" or as "fascist provocateurs." After greeting the Rumor government with enthusiasm, the PCI's response to the growing workers' resistance to Rumor was to declare its readiness to "shoulder its responsibilities"—in other words, to join in Rumor's government.

The fall of Rumor, and the resulting ruling class offensive, has exposed the total bankruptcy of the PCI strategy. The PCI is still clinging to its "historic compromise" with the worthless Rumor caretaker regime.

Originally, the PCI sought to avoid a fight on the divorce referendum, hoping to avoid antagonizing the Catholic sentiment and the Christian Democrats. Fanfani's campaign has forced the PCI to finally come out in support of legal divorce, while desperately whining against the "politicization of the encounter."

The PCI's bankruptcy has placed the Italian proletariat in mortal danger. The international capitalist crisis which followed World War II created Mussolini's Black Shirts, and a quarter-century of fascist rule. As the present world crisis sharpens, the Italian ruling class is once again turning to the whip in an effort to drive down the proletariat. The PCI, in leading the Italian working class down the "peaceful road to socialism" is leaving the working class defenseless at the hands of its worst enemies.

# Abel, Bosses Unite to Crush Steelworkers

by Lee O'Shaughnessy and Jack Gregory

The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the steel industry reached agreement on a three-year contract on Friday, April 12. The contract calls for a 60 cents an hour pay increase over the three years of the pact and a cost of living adjustment that on the average will raise wages by one-half per cent for every one per cent increase in inflation.

Although the settlement is being hailed as a great victory by USWA President I.W. Abel, it represents a defeat for steelworkers. In the current skyrocketing inflation, this agreement will result in a cut in real wages. For example, even if inflation doesn't increase beyond the current 10 per cent rate, real wages in steel will fall two per cent annually. If the cost of living soars to 15 per cent (which is likely), real wages will be slashed by over four per cent.

The most dangerous clause in the contract is one which extends the "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" until 1980. The ENA is a no-strike clause—it bars national strikes against the steel industry, thereby eliminating the major weapon in the hands of steelworkers.

The no-strike deal is the pride and joy of I.W. Abel, who sees it as a major breakthrough in labor-management relations, eliminating what he calls the "boom-bust cycle" of standard negotiations which run the risks (to the corporations) of crippling strikes. Abel hails the ENA as a model to be duplicated by other unions. Indeed, AFL-CIO President George Meany has *already* come out for outlawing strikes by federal and state employees, while Nixon has submitted a bill to Congress to outlaw strikes by the Teamsters and other unions in transportation-related industries.

The strike has always been and remains the major defensive weapon in the hands of the working class. By stripping away the right to strike in the face of the employers' offensive against wages and working conditions, Abel and the labor bureaucracy as a whole are acting as direct

order to remain competitive with foreign steel, the domestic industry must generate far more capital than it does at present, and this will be done through massive intensification of the productivity drive. The future holds in store mass unemployment, speed-up greatly accelerated from present levels, and wholesale wage-cutting.

The capital shortage in steel is crippling. Insufficient profits will hold investment to \$1.8 billion this year—half

power. Contracts are not submitted to the membership for approval, but instead passed on by a council of bureaucrats.

Abel took this one step further when he put the ENA into effect in early 1973. There was not even so much as an announcement in *Steel Labor* (the USWA newspaper) indicating what was happening in the negotiations until *after* the ENA was already agreed upon. Of course, it was never submitted to a vote by the



Partners in betrayal: Meany (left) and Abel at last USWA Convention.

the amount needed to update and replace plant and equipment. This underinvestment means that domestic steel is being even farther behind its Japanese and West German rivals. Basic steel desperately needs labor peace" on its terms now—which is what Abel has given it—while it prepares the crushing onslaught to be launched in the near future behind this cover.

Significant sections of the USWA membership are bitterly opposed to the ENA no-strike pledge and the productivity deals, but have been unable to influence Abel's decisions. In a trade union movement noted for the rigid control exercised by the bureaucracy, the Steelworkers is one of the most undemocratic. This has been true historically. Organized from the top down in 1937 by John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers, the Steelworkers' bureaucracy from the beginning has done its best to bar the rank and file from any decision-making

membership. This, despite the fact that in 1968 the Abel bureaucracy had insisted that "no agreement of this type could possibly be reached, under any circumstances" without "a poll of the membership involved."

The strangling of internal democracy in the USWA goes hand in hand with the growing ties between the union and the government best exemplified in the no-strike, compulsory arbitration ENA. To enforce his collaborationist policy which has led to speed-up, real wage cuts, and unemployment, Abel must rule the union with an iron hand.

The ENA is a message from Abel to the rest of the labor bureaucracy, signaling that the coast is clear to deliver workers in their unions bound and gagged to the corporations and the state; it will require conscious struggle on the part of the proletariat against its misleaders to preserve the essential gain of trade unionism, the right to strike.

## CHILE:

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## Editorial

# BUILD THE BIWEEKLY TORCH

With this issue, *The Torch* begins biweekly publication.

The bi-weekly *Torch* is a major step forward for the Revolutionary Socialist League, marking the strides made in just seven months of independent existence. We will now be able to provide more frequent and consistent coverage of the struggles of the proletariat, both in the U.S. and internationally. *The Torch* will now reach broader audiences and serve as a more effective weapon in the battle to reconstruct the revolutionary leadership of the international proletariat, the Fourth International.

Biweekly publication enables us to far more effectively carry out our primary tasks of reaching the advanced workers and training these workers in the theoretical, analytical, and practical aspects of Marxism. It will increase our regular readership, enabling more workers to see our views developed and explained over time, and to see the essential unity in the class struggle in all of its international manifestations.

It is appropriate that the first issue of the biweekly *Torch* appears while the international proletariat commemorates May Day. May Day originated in this country in 1886 with a wave of general strikes demanding the eight-hour day. In 1890, the Second (Socialist) International inaugurated May Day internationally as the day of commemoration of the class struggle and solidarity of the workers of the world.

The eight-hour day movement of 1886 signaled the maturity of American industrial workers as a force fighting to counterpose its own class interests to those of the bourgeoisie in brutal and bloody confrontations. In this century, the mass struggle of the American proletariat has exploded many times—to name some of the most notable, the Seattle general

strike of 1919 (see centerfold); the Toledo, Minneapolis, and San Francisco general strikes of 1934; and the great sit-down strikes that built the CIO, highlighted by the tremendous Flint strike against General Motors in 1936-37 that won union recognition for the UAW.

As these struggles indicate, American workers have lacked neither courage nor the combativity necessary to smash the bourgeoisie. The only ingredient missing has been revolutionary leadership. The wretched role played by the labor bureaucracy in the Seattle general strike and the class collaborationist role of the Communist Party in the 1930's blocked upsurges from spreading and channeled them into narrow reformist limits where they were isolated and tamed.

Internationally, the pattern has been similar. Proletarian upsurges in Britain, China, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and many other nations in the 1920's and 1930's were misled and betrayed by the class-collaborationist Social Democratic and Communist Parties. There, too, the absence of revolutionary leadership for the proletariat spelled disaster.

May Day, 1974, witnesses the rampant inflation and general economic breakup that spell the collapse of the post-World War II stabilization. Once more, the general strike is being posed by the proletariat—embryonically in the near-general strike in Philadelphia in December 1972 and in the recent San Francisco mass strike—as the proletariat resists the bourgeoisie's attempt to stabilize capitalism at the expense of the workers' living and working conditions.

The reformist labor bureaucracy stands as a barrier to the struggles of the working class. Rather than mobilize nationwide work stoppages, building to massive

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## Where We Stand

# CAPITALISM AND TERRORISM

Revolutionary Marxists have always opposed political strategies based upon acts of individual terrorism, such as kidnappings, bombings, and assassinations. Our opposition is not based upon any kind of religious or "moral" objections to killing agents, representatives or members of the ruling class. Hardly. It is based upon an assessment of the demoralizing impact of these activities, when isolated from the mass struggles of the proletariat, on the consciousness, elan and organization of the workers and oppressed masses.

Bourgeois rule is characterized by exceptional brutality. Every day capitalism commits countless atrocities. We leave aside the constant state of war and its millions of murdered and crippled victims. Innumerable "small" events, occurrences so "tiny" that they are overlooked by all

but the victims, constantly occur. The glorified butchery that passes for medicine in the public health facilities in this country; the forced sterilization of black, brown, and poor white women; the case of the syphilitic black men who were used as guinea pigs in an "experiment" and then cynically left untreated to rot and die are just a few random examples.

Privately the bourgeoisie calls these trifles the necessary costs of capitalism. Publicly, the bourgeoisie and its public relations agents describe them as rough edges on a constantly expanding capitalist freedom. The workers' struggles against the various aspects of capitalist barbarity are totally uncalled for, the bourgeoisie lectures, totally unnecessary and in fact quite detrimental to the public weal.

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## LEAGUE FORUMS

Chicago

### PICKET LINES OR BREAD LINES?

A BATTLE PLAN FOR AMERICAN LABOR

3:00 P.M. SUNDAY MAY 10

160 NORTH HALSTED

SPEAKER:

BRENT DAVIS, CENTRAL COMMITTEE, RSL

50 CENT DONATION

### Fund Drive Reaches 140%

The Revolutionary Socialist League's second fund drive ended April 30 with \$11,136 collected. This is nearly 40 per cent above the goal of \$8,000. Nearly \$1,000 more in late-arriving pledges is expected.

When the League was formed less than a year ago, its members and leaders set themselves the primary goal of launching *The Torch* as the vehicle to reach the most advanced workers with the program of revolutionary Marxism. *The Torch* was to present the League's full theory and program in clear, hard-hitting style, with a professional layout and schedule. Our first fund drive, last autumn, aimed at raising \$7,500 to purchase typesetting and other equipment for *The Torch*.

Over \$11,000 was actually raised. This second fund drive aimed at launching biweekly publication of *The Torch*. With this issue, that goal is achieved.

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# IMPEACHMENT SHOWDOWN

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During the last month or so, the bourgeoisie's fears of taking Nixon on frontally have been fading. Capitalist politicians are now bolder than ever in demanding and predicting impeachment. Why this new-found bravery? Where is the old fear of the masses?

## NEW BOLDNESS

The answer is simple. The bourgeoisie is less afraid of the proletariat because the proletariat's leaders have convincingly sworn their loyalty to the bourgeoisie and have already started to make good on their oaths. The leadership of the trade unions has reassured the capitalists and their politicians that they may settle their own problems without fear of the workers. Meany, Woodcock, Fitzsimmons, and Co. promise to keep the unwashed masses under control.

Imagine for a moment how the labor movement would respond to the present situation if it had a leadership loyal not the bourgeoisie but to the working class.

The number of workers being thrown out of their jobs today is soaring. Real wages have been declining for months in the face of an all-consuming inflation. The power of the capitalist state is being strengthened at all levels in preparation for a stepped-up campaign against the proletariat's democratic rights.

A revolutionary union leadership would use the bourgeoisie's temporary divisions to carry forward the workers' struggle against the capitalist offensive. It would lead the working class to political independence of all wings of the bourgeoisie. It would never tolerate the ruling class's attempt to solve the "Nixon question" by its own methods, through its own political institutions, for its own benefit!

A revolutionary leadership would call a nationwide Congress of Labor and the Oppressed where democratically elected representatives of workers and the oppressed masses would meet and hammer out a strategy. That Congress would mobilize the working class for a general strike to force Nixon out and demand new elections. It would launch a revolutionary labor party standing on a socialist program, a party that would lead the working class,

fight for the only government which it can trust, a workers' government.

Instead of letting the bourgeoisie's hired lackeys conduct the impeachment proceedings, the general strike would demand that Nixon be hauled before the Congress of Labor and the Oppressed—and there answer for all his crimes against the oppressed and exploited people of the world.

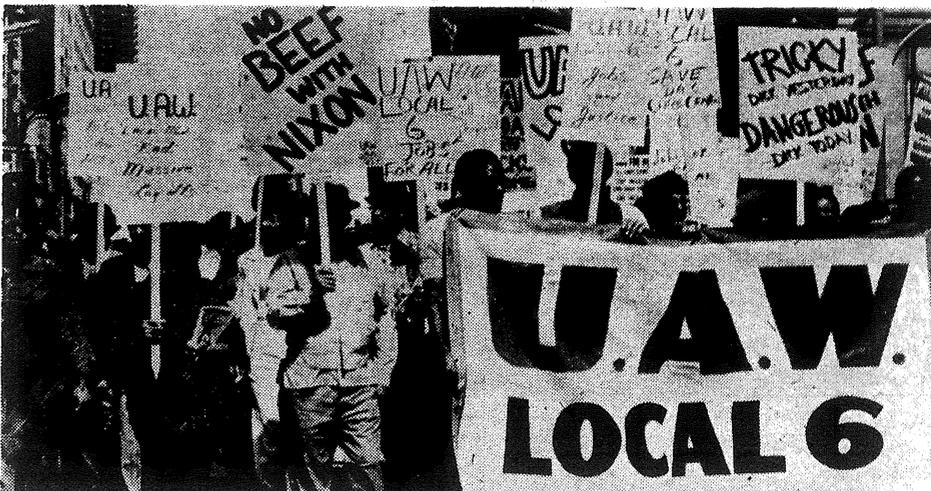
The key to this entire strategy would be the old Bolshevik watchword: "Workers, do not trust the ruling class! Rely only on your own strength! Fight only for your own class interests!"

## LABOR LIEUTENANTS OF CAPITALISM

But this kind of proletarian strategy is the furthest thing from the minds of today's union tops. Instead of using the Nixon crisis to further the interests of the working class against their exploiters, Meany, Woodcock, and Co. devote all their efforts to keeping the proletariat tied firmly to the bourgeoisie's leading-strings.

The reformist labor bureaucracy has systematically sold out the workers in every one of their recent confrontations with the bourgeoisie: last summer's wildcats and then the formal strikes against the automobile barons, the capitulation on the rotten Master Freight Agreement, Fitzsimmons' torpedoing of the independent truckers' strike during the winter, the cynical betrayal of San Francisco's strike movement in March.

Politically, the union bureaucracy is playing the very same role. Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters moans that poor President Nixon is getting "a bad press!" The



Chicago auto workers demonstrate disgust with Nixon in September march against inflation, unemployment, and wage controls.

anti-Nixon bureaucrats are little better. They commit the workers' organizations to the most passive, servile support for bourgeois impeachment—impeachment by the ruling class's own kept Congress! George Meany crowed on April 1 that "we, as a group of workers millions strong, can play our part in giving America back to its people." In fact, his support for the anti-Nixon bourgeoisie is simply a promise to "give America back" to the architects of the strong capitalist state.

Does anyone really believe that the bourgeoisie's Congress will conduct impeachment in such a way as to bring out all the relevant evidence? Of course not. The most damning evidence—which would reveal the crimes not only of Nixon but of the entire ruling class—will be carefully suppressed. Nixon will be removed and the campaign to beef up the power of the state against the workers will proceed.

## L.A. County Strike Set

LOS ANGELES, APRIL 24—In one of the potentially most important actions in Los Angeles's recent history, some 60,000 county workers last night voted overwhelmingly to go on strike on April 29.

Spurred by the power of the San Francisco mass strike and infuriated by ridiculously low wage offers by the county supervisors, the county workers have forced their leaders to act. The Coalition of County Workers says it will strike until its demands for at least an eight per cent wage increase as well as numerous other issues are met. This coalition of eight unions is the first time county workers have united to fight, and it represents a tremendous advance for public employees.

If the Coalition stands firm, the city's threat of mass firings will be a joke. Workers must remember, however, that the Coalition leaders are the same bureaucrats who sold them out in the past, and that they will have to fight their union tops along with the county to win a decent settlement. (Further developments and more detailed treatment in the next issue of The Torch.)

The only way that the proletariat can break up this cozy arrangement is by taking the Nixon case into its own hands with a general strike and a trial before the Congress of Labor. Only that jury could be depended upon to expose all the crimes committed by Nixon and the U.S. bourgeoisie to the light of day.

## FREE HAND

But, typically, the very thought of challenging the bourgeoisie's right to handle the Nixon case by itself makes the union tops gag. Meany commits the whole AFL-CIO to congressional impeachment, thoughtfully explaining on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation" that Nixon "is entitled to the same presumption of innocence as everyone else in this country."

The heads of the United Auto Workers and the International Association of Machinists cover their capitulation with the same disgusting argument: "Only through impeachment by the House of Representatives can the President receive a trial by the U.S. Senate with the full protection of the legal rights of a President." (AFL-CIO News, March 30, 1974)

These are flat promises by capitalism's labor lieutenants that the unions will not use the bourgeoisie's political problems to advance the proletariat's cause, that the bourgeoisie will be given an absolutely free hand to resolve the Nixon crisis in its own interests and as it sees fit. No wonder the ruling class's self-confidence is growing!

The working class today is actually in an excellent position to deal its exploiters a series of devastating blows. This is true because the

bourgeoisie has not yet had a chance to really get its over-all anti-working-class strategy underway. The present layoffs, inflation, and victimizations are serious, but they have not yet crippled the class's fighting power. At the same time, the bourgeoisie has been weakened by the scandals surrounding the White House.

The refusal of the union chiefs to use this temporary weakness to strengthen the defenses of the working class is the most criminal class treason. If this is how Meany & Co. perform when the odds are in the workers' favor, think of the gross treachery they will commit once the bourgeoisie has again put its house in order and steps up its attack on the proletariat.

## NEW LEADERSHIP

Nixon's bungling has proven to the ruling class that it needs a new leadership. This is the real meaning of impeachment. The rotten capitulation of the union tops in the present period is only more proof that the proletariat desperately needs a new leadership as well.

The proletariat needs a new general staff, one made up of revolutionary socialists capable of mobilizing and directing the tremendous potential power of the workers against the ruling class and its institutions. It needs a revolutionary leadership able and determined to exploit every advantage which the working class has and capable of using every one of the bourgeoisie's weaknesses to advance the struggle for workers' power — for socialism. The struggle to build that leadership is the most important, the most urgent, task facing the working class today.

# THE SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE

## 1919

by Jim Raskin

The First World War gave birth to tremendous working-class upsurges throughout the world. Led by the Bolshevik Party, the Russian workers took state power. In Hungary and Bavaria, soviets (workers' councils) ruled. The Italian workers seized factories and paralyzed the country. Chinese workers swelled the ranks of the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement.

Bourgeois historians rarely mention this world-wide upsurge, usually pretending that the Russian Revolution was nothing but an isolated fluke. When they do make a passing reference to the post-war class struggle in Europe, they always add that the United States, at least, remained silent. In this way they try to preserve the illusion that the American working class has always been immune to the laws of class struggle, that plans for revolution in the United States have always been and will always be a day-dream.

### Class Struggle in 1919

But the fact is that the post-war proletarian offensive respected no national boundaries. Its impact shook the United States ruling class as well.

It is now 55 years since 1919, when four million workers struck, representing one-fourth of the entire work force. Their struggle was fueled by bitterness against the recently-ended imperialist war, the stupendous inflation engineered by the ruling class in order to cut down the workers' real wages, and taken from the historic victory of the working class of Russia.

The class struggle in the U.S. in 1919 reached its greatest intensity in the city of Seattle. There, the working class took control of the city and its workings for one week in a massive general strike, destroying the bourgeois lie that "the workers can't rule."

It is no surprise that Seattle was the one American city to have a general strike after the war. Labor in Seattle was stronger and more radical than in any other place in the U.S.

The Seattle craft unions were organized into a Central Labor Council, probably the strongest local labor organization in the country. It had its own daily newspaper, the *Union Record*, with a circulation of 112,000.

All factions in the Seattle labor movement verbally supported the Bolshevik Revolution. The Seattle longshoremen fought pitched battles to prevent the loading of arms being sent to smash the Russian workers. The local AFL and IWW set up Soldiers', Sailors' and Workingmen's

councils openly modeled on the Soviets.

### The Strike Begins

The general strike in Seattle was touched off by a strike in the local shipyards. The Seattle shipyards were under the control of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, the Government body that controlled shipbuilding during the war. Charles Piez, its chief, forced a strike by trying to lower wages and working conditions in the Seattle yards. On January 21 the Metal Trades Council struck the shipyards.

The Metal Trades Council immediately requested a vote by the Central Labor Council for a general strike. Even the more conservative unions like the housepainters voted overwhelmingly for the general strike.

On February 6, sixty thousand workers from all different trades left their jobs. In addition to members of the AFL, the IWW and Japanese workers from segregated unions also downed tools.

Binn



May Day poster from Hungarian Soviet Republic, 1919

Representatives from one hundred and eleven unions formed a General Strike Committee. This body chose a fifteen member Executive Committee to run the general strike and to issue a daily strike bulletin.

These committees did more than just run the strike; they ran the entire city of Seattle.

The executive committee held public meetings at 1:30 p.m. every day in the Labor Temple. These meetings were open and workers would come to confer with the committee on how to run the city.

During the strike, the committee controlled all aspects of the city's life. It allowed one laundry to operate to service the hospital. Certain emergency vehicles were also allowed to operate, but the committee required them to display a sign reading, "Exempted by the General Strike Committee."

So that the local children would have milk, the truckdrivers arranged to go directly to the farmers. They then set up distribution points at select grocery stores. One dairy was allowed to pasteurize milk for the

## When Workers

hospital.

The unions set up large dining halls to feed those who could not eat at home. Union members could eat for 25 cents, all others for 35 cents. By the end of the strike these halls were serving 30,000 meals a day.

The General Strike Committee set up a workers' guard made up of 300 veterans called the War Veterans Guard. This guard kept order during the strike. While it was in operation crime in Seattle dropped by 70 per cent!

The workers took control of Seattle and ran the whole show. American workers saw that they could take power and run the society without the capitalists and their state machine.

The workers' control over Seattle lasted only a short time. Within five days the strike was over. The Mayor of Seattle demanded that the strike end on Saturday, February 8. That day the Executive Committee voted 13 to 1 to request that the General Strike Committee call off the strike.

At first the Strike Committee refused, but when several unions, such as the streetcar workers, broke ranks it ended the strike. Everyone except the shipyard workers returned to work on February 11.

The local bosses followed up the unions' retreat with a massive offensive. They formed the Associated Industries of Seattle to institute the open shop. The unions began to fall apart and some industries like building and printing became open shop. The shipyard workers were smashed.

Why did the Seattle general strike lose so badly? Seattle had the strongest labor organization in the country. It was led by figures that make current "rank and file militants" like Jordan Sims and Arnold Miller look sick. Here were all the elements which some think are sufficient for victory, yet there was only defeat. What went wrong?

### What Went Wrong?

For one, the strike had no clear program. Because there was no clear set of demands the workers became confused and demoralized.

The greatest pressure for capitulation came from the national leaderships of the various AFL unions. They isolated the Seattle locals from the rest of the US working class. The leaders of the Seattle strike had no perspective for

spreading their city. They nationally against AFL leadership any strategy to strike to victory.

The most powerful Seattle labor "Progressives" led. The Progressive International meeting in Chicago, the general strike realized that they an implicitly re and they opposed.

Before the strike Duncan and his sabotage it. They 4th, to plan their First they tried to on the strike. Wh used their influence earliest possible.

### Bosses'

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# THE GENERAL STRIKE,

## When Workers Ruled the City

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spreading their movement outside their city. They waged no struggle nationally against the reactionary AFL leadership. Nor did they have any strategy to lead the Seattle strike to victory.

The most powerful local figures in Seattle labor were the so-called "Progressives" led by James Duncan. The Progressives had been away at an International Workers' Defense meeting in Chicago when the vote for the general strike was taken. They realized that the general strike was an implicitly revolutionary action, and they opposed it.

Before the strike even started Duncan and his friends plotted to sabotage it. They met on February 4th, to plan their course of action. First they tried to get a time limit set on the strike. When this failed, they used their influence to push for the earliest possible end to the strike.

### Bosses' Offensive

Seattle's was not just a simple local general strike; it fit into a broader context. In 1919, the American bourgeoisie was trying ruthlessly to smash the working class. In these circumstances it had to be sure that no group of workers was victorious. If a general strike had won in Seattle it would have stiffened working class resistance all over the United States.

In addition, the labor bureaucracy had cozied up to the capitalists throughout World War I. Every struggle in 1919 was directly opposed by the bureaucrats, and Seattle was no exception. The hostility of the national AFL Executive Council (which called the general strike un-American) reflected this fact.

By striking the shipyards the workers of Seattle were fighting the Emergency Fleet Corporation — which was in fact the U.S. government. The government was working hand in hand with the capitalists to smash the labor movement. Breaking the Seattle general strike was crucial to their strategy, so the state was ready to fight. It refused to meet the actually mild demands of the shipyard workers and ordered armed troops to Seattle, making it clear that the government was willing to resort to violence against the workers.

Under these circumstances local trade union militancy was not enough. Isolated, the Seattle general strike was doomed.

When the Seattle workers were

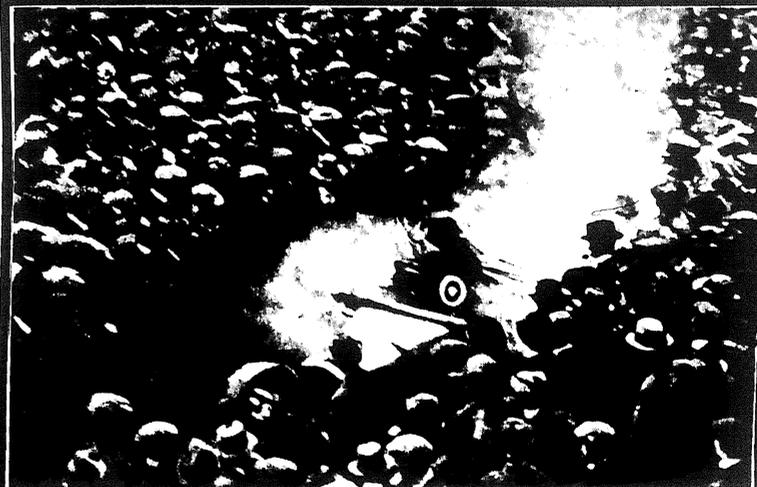
smashed they were not alone. The same thing happened to the steel workers, to the miners and to almost every other group of workers who struck in 1919. The same thing happened to workers the world over and for the same reasons.

The "radicals" who led the strikes and uprisings were not revolutionaries. They could not and would not recognize that victory for the workers required a revolution — smashing the power of the ruling class and its state machine. Only an international revolutionary leadership could have led the workers to victory.

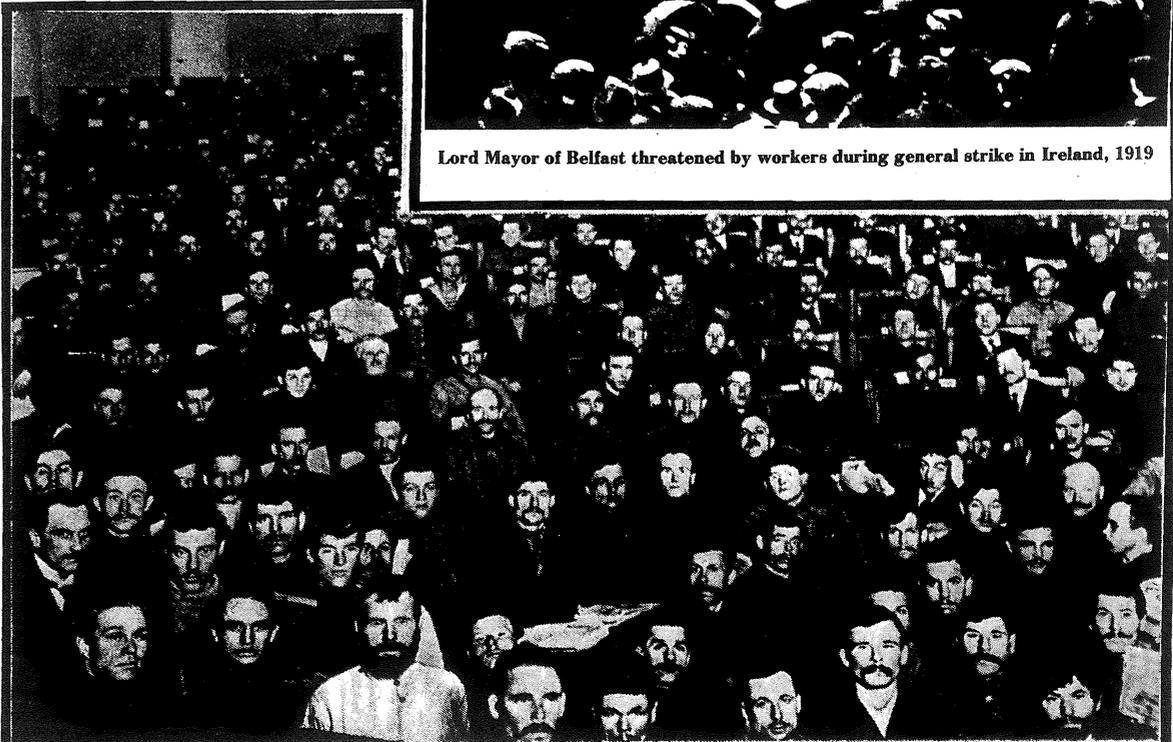
It was to provide just such a leadership that only a few weeks after the defeat of the Seattle general strike and in the midst of world-wide class war, the First Congress of the Communist International met in Moscow. The Comintern fought to build revolutionary parties in every nation, parties that could have led the workers to victory rather than defeat had they been built, trained, and steeled in time. Unfortunately they were not, and the workers suffered for it.



Workers mass outside Skinner and Eddy shipyard at height of Seattle General Strike



Lord Mayor of Belfast threatened by workers during general strike in Ireland, 1919



Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets, January 1918. Bolshevik-led Soviets provided revolutionary leadership in the Russian Revolution.

# ECONOMISTS BLAST "BIG PROFITS" MYTH

BY JACK GREGORY

Beneath the veneer of a boom, American capitalism has basically stagnated in the post-World War II period. The stagnation is fundamentally caused by inability to generate enough capital to introduce new more efficient technology. Instead (as analyzed in *The Torch* #6), a large part of the U.S.'s basic production capacity has been left to decay while the bourgeoisie has plundered the underdeveloped nations, robbed the future, and greatly exaggerated profits through monetary manipulation and other artificial means.

The U.S. ruling class is now increasingly embarrassed by this overstatement of its profits. In its current massive propaganda campaign, aimed at justifying its demands for higher profits necessary to extract the capital it needs, it must explain away the record paper profits of 1972 and 1973. Those paper profits on the surface seem to indicate that the bourgeoisie does indeed have enough capital on hand to overhaul the productive plant already. And so for the first time, a sizable section of the bourgeoisie and its "economic advisors" has been faced with the need to stop exaggerating profits.

The clearest instance of this trend appears in an article in the March issue of *Fortune* written by Henry C. Wallich and Mabel I. Wallich. The article is entitled, "Profits Aren't As Good As They Look," and it demonstrates that to a large degree the reported increases in profits over the past two years have been based on accounting practices that over-estimated corporate profits by some \$24 billion (about 25 percent of total profits).

The Wallich article was written as a warning to the bourgeoisie about the illusory nature of corporate profits. Henry C. Wallich is a professor of economics at Yale and a recent appointee to the Federal Reserve Board; his concern is how best to preserve the capitalist system. The Wallichs are troubled by capitalism's actually inadequate level of capital formation, and in essence they urge corporations to get down to business instead of masking their small-profit plight.

Thus, in their role as advisers to the bourgeoisie, the Wallichs inadvertently present striking confirmation of our analysis that a large portion of reported profits is really fictitious—i.e., based on monetary manipulation and accounting tricks rather than real production. The Wallichs are particularly cha-

grined by an estimated \$8 billion additional corporate tax payments resulting from overstating profits. The article asserts that corporations exaggerate their earnings primarily in an attempt to make their issues on the stock exchange appear stronger, but notes that this method no longer works, since big investors assume that profit figures are distorted in deciding which stocks to buy.

The Wallichs point to two techniques through which the bourgeoisie overstates its profits. The first is what they term "inventory profits." Roughly three-quarters of American corporations calculate the cost of their inventory stock at the amounts they laid out for the commodities when they were first placed in inventory. This fails to account for inflation which boosts the price of the items while they sit in stock; when the inventory is depleted, it must be replaced with goods charged at current prices. In this way, corporations undervalue their costs and hence overvalue their profits.

Inventory profits are purely fictitious. This deceptive accounting technique doesn't change the amount of capital accruing from sales—they simply overestimate the part of this revenue that is really profit. According to the Wallichs, in 1973 "inventory profits" amounted to roughly \$17 billion.

The second source of phony profits pointed to by the Wallichs is inadequate depreciation. Depreciation refers to the amount by which machinery decreases in value as it ages because of wear and tear. Most U.S. corporations depreciate their machinery on the basis of its original cost rather than on what its replacement cost would be if inflation were taken into account.

When machinery wears down and must be replaced, new machinery must be of course purchased at current inflated rates. Underdepre-

ciation of capital means that inadequate amounts are set aside for replacing worn down machines; the additional amount which should be set aside is falsely counted as a clear profit.

Just as in the case of inventory profits, these paper profits are liquidated when new purchases are necessary.

## Violence Flares in Dow Strike

by Dan McCourtney

MIDLAND, MICHIGAN—The five week old strike of 5,300 workers at the Dow Chemical corporation's massive Midland plant continues with no immediate prospect of settlement. A score of workers have been injured and over a hundred have been arrested after battling state police seeking to enforce a court injunction which aims at reducing picketers from a massive army of hundreds to a token force of 30.

Such a token force could offer little resistance to company scabs and cops who have so far kept production rolling, though at a considerably reduced level. The list of those so far arrested includes the wives of many workers who fought shoulder to shoulder with the men against the ferocious attack of a hundred state police on the very first day of the strike—the first strike to hit Midland since 1948.

### STRUGGLE AGAINST INFLATION

Victory for the Dow-Midland workers is vital. At stake is their demand for a full cost-of-living escalator. Without this they will be unable to even keep pace with the skyrocketing inflation that will slash real wages and reduce their standard of living. The bosses at Dow have refused to yield. Their latest offer amounts simply to a contemptuous juggling of figures offering to raise the maximum on the cost-of-living in return for a smaller wage package.

Few workers would be willing to accept at this time after 30 days of uncompromising sacrifice. Such an offer is in fact intended only

According to the Wallichs, U.S. corporations underdepreciated their plant and equipment by over \$7 billion last year.

The *Fortune* article just begins to scratch the surface of fictitious valuation of profits. As analyzed in *TORCH* #6, the proliferation of credit and debt represents a tremendous overvaluation of profits by the bourgeoisie. All in all, U.S. capitalism cannot through present methods gather sufficient capital to introduce the massive doses of new technology it needs to break out of its stagnation.

If corporations follow the Wallichs' advice, they will

indeed cut their already disproportionate small tax load, placing the burden of financing government expenditures even more squarely on the shoulders of American workers.

This is just one aspect of the assault on the proletariat's living standards being planned by the bourgeoisie. In the coming period it will be increasingly forced to turn to other methods—an even harsher brutalization of underdeveloped nations and an all-out assault on the proletariat—as it desperately seeks out the only avenues available to keep its head above water.



Militant pickets mass outside Dow plant.

for public relations purposes. The clear intention of Dow throughout the whole strike—what has given it its brutal character—is the Dow bosses' aim to break the back of the union whose resistance has so far exceeded expectations.

### LABOR FAKERS

The strike goes on despite the efforts of the United Steel Workers bureaucracy to shift the arena of battle to the hotel suites of federal mediators and the capitalist courts, where they feel more at ease. These labor fakers have been forced to give battle by the overwhelming pressure of the ranks; they will retreat at the first chance into the familiar posture of compromise to sell out the strike. *Steel Labor* boasts that Dow and other "short-sighted", "unenlightened" bosses were not taking on a handful of scattered unions but the united strength of 1.4 million USWA workers, but

the bureaucrats have done nothing to mobilize this strength in defense of the Dow Midland workers. In fact, they have precluded the use of this weapon in advance through a previous no-strike agreement with the steel bosses—the so-called "Experimental Negotiating Agreement".

In the last week six brine wells which the Dow plant relies upon for many chemical processes were wrecked by fire. Volunteer firemen at the scene (many of whom are also Dow workers) refused to cross picket lines to extinguish the fire. While this may cut plant production, it will not cripple it. To beat the bosses at Dow a class struggle policy is needed—a strategy that mobilizes workers in solidarity strikes all across the country. Such a strategy would quickly cure the "myopic vision" of capitalists intent on crushing the organizations and living standards of the workers.

# New "Cultural Revolution" in China

by Derek Hirst

A new "cultural revolution" is developing in China today. Like the first one seven years ago, it reflects serious divisions within the Chinese ruling class. Two wings of the capitalist class of China are at war with each other over foreign and domestic policy, and each tries to mobilize masses of students, workers, and peasants behind itself to strengthen its hand.

China's ruling class today faces the same fundamental problem of every ruling class the world over: how to expand production and consolidate capital in the era of capitalist decay. The new "cultural revolution" in China is in part a debate over how this problem will be approached.

One part of the debate on how to increase production centers on personal incentives granted to workers for outstanding production. The question is especially important now that demands for wage increases are on the rise. Chinese newspapers for the past several months have warned workers that demands for increases are reactionary deviations. These incentives, which are meant to stave off workers' demands by creating a layer of "privileged" workers, rarely exceed \$5.00 a year.

The so-called "radical faction" headed by Chiang Ching, Mao's wife, and two members of the powerful Politburo, Wang Hung-wen and Yao Wen-yuan, both of whom gained prominence in Shanghai during the last "cultural revolution," oppose incentives. In the place of higher wages for a privileged layer this faction would concentrate on patriotic "mass struggle" campaigns, such as the current anti-Confucius campaign, to spur especially the peasants on to dedication to productivity for less money.

## CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

Another form of incentives demonstrates the slow tendency toward capital accumulation at work. Factories, and their finances, are for the most part controlled by local governments in China. But when a factory manufactures for export, which happens increasingly as foreign trade jumps, the central government, having collected the money from the foreign buyer, pays the factory itself the wholesale price rather than the local government. Factory managers are allowed to deposit the money in banks and use it for any purpose they like except plant expansion. The central government is using the export market not only to accumulate capital at the expense of local governments, but also to further control all economic expansion and investment capital.

The chief advocate of both incentives and the slow growth of centralized capital is the "moderate" Chou En-lai and his long-time finance minister, Li Hsien-nien. Also, it is Chou who is

most identified with the foreign policy which opened China to the eager interest of the western and Japanese bourgeoisie.

The attacks against Chou's foreign policy are varied. The threat of importing western inflation and exporting desperately needed materials is harped on. Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka's recent loss of face makes China's former hospitality to this crook awkward. Alternative programs of orienting to Europe or even Russia have been raised. But Chou and allied high officials are quick to assure the U.S. bourgeoisie that Sino-American relations will continue to improve.

Instead of attacking current foreign policy directly, the "radical faction" has preferred Byzantine indirection and has concentrated its fire on western culture, especially the music of certain 19th-century European composers.

## ROLE OF THE ARMY

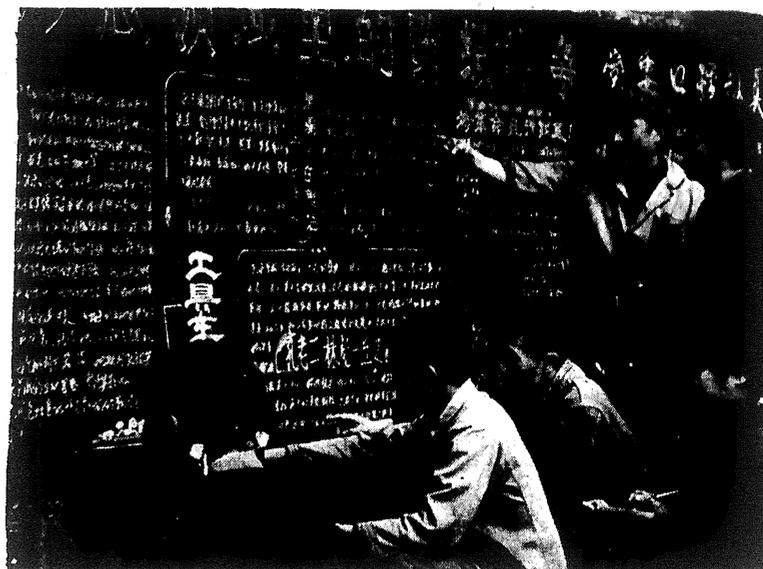
Chou En-Lai, in response to these attacks, has during recent months reverted to Mao's tactic during the last "cultural revolution." He seeks support in certain sectors of the army.

In a recent shuffle of military personnel, Chen Hsi-lien, who has long been close to Chou, was moved from his command post in Manchuria to control of the Peking military region. Chou will not have to worry about military uprisings directed at him. In addition, it is estimated that China's military budget this year took a large leap to an all-time high of \$70 billion. This probably is at least 60 per cent more than is spent by the Chinese government on public education and health. Also, a campaign began recently, probably directed by Chou, to expand the electronics industry and make it more productive, which always benefits the army.

This move to the army, though, may seriously hamper another goal of the current "cultural revolution," a goal which Chou would want to emphasize.

During the last "cultural revolution," leading military figures like Lin Piao took advantage of the power which had been invested in the army by removing a large number of local and regional posts from the direct authority of the party and putting them under their own control. The purging of these local military rulers have gone on for years but is far from complete.

That the present "cultural revolution" began with strong attacks on Lin Piao made it evident that Lin Piao's lackeys who have retained power at the local levels, as well as other military ("anti-Party") local leaders, were to be a prime target. Chou needs to fill these posts with his own henchmen in order to carry out his programs. His reliance on the army during the present turmoil may slow this process.



Posters blame Lin Piao and Confucius for China's problems. Who will be the next scapegoat?

The "radical faction," especially Chiang Ching, will also be scouting for opportunities to gain control of these posts. Chiang must establish her authority before Mao dies. Otherwise she will undoubtedly lose her voice in the party.

## SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Neither faction in this dispute stands for the interests of the Chinese workers and peasants. The "radical faction" seeks to raise the rate of exploitation of the working class through massive speed-up campaigns

draped in the rhetoric of "cultural revolution." Its hatred of foreign trade reflects only its determination to build up an independent national capitalism in China through stepped-up plunder of its own people. The "moderate faction" also pursues a capitalist program, but believes this is best served through closer ties to the world market and by encouraging speed-up through a disguised form of piece-work ("incentives"). Socialist revolution to overthrow the entire Chinese ruling class is the only program which stands for the interests of the Chinese masses.

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## in Dow



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## Terrorism

Cont'd. from p. 4



But despite the "unnecessary" character of the class struggle, it does indeed occur. When it threatens to get out of control, the bourgeoisie announces it must attend to the crucial business of suppressing "troublemakers" to maintain its right to perpetrate its crimes unopposed.

Terrorism, when isolated from a mass workers' offensive, plays into the repressive designs of the bourgeoisie. It provides the excuse for mass repression, giving the bourgeoisie the opportunity to divert attention from the permanent reality of capitalist brutality and shift it to the so-called "viciousness" of the terrorist act. In this way, the appropriate hysteria of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, otherwise known as "public opinion," is created which overwhelms the less advanced layers of the work-

SLA terrorist actions give excuse for police repression of all workers.



# Runaway Shops Rob Autoworkers

by Jon Coleman

United Auto Workers President Leonard Woodcock has announced the filing of a lawsuit on behalf of 2,000 Federal-Mogul workers left jobless when F-M moved from Detroit to Illinois and Alabama. The suit charged discrimination under the Federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).

Runaway shops are an increasingly important weapon used to beat down the working class. Companies in growing numbers are fleeing to the South (like F-M) and to underdeveloped countries to slash their wage rates. In their search for areas of greater profitability, the corporations leave behind a growing number of unemployed older workers. Three-quarters of a million U.S. workers age 45 and older are jobless—a 22 per cent rise in the last five years.

At Federal-Mogul, workers averaged 50 years old with 21 years seniority. The UAW suit asks the company to pay the pensions, health insurance premiums, and other fringe benefits that workers lost as a result of the move.

By looking to the courts to guarantee these benefits, the UAW bureaucracy is helping bind the union more closely with the state. The courts are no allies of the working class—they are the tools of the bosses. By going to the courts, the bureaucrats are appealing to the state to intervene in the labor move-

ment. They won't have to ask twice.

The government is already heavily involved in the labor movement, seeking among other things to impose no-strike agreements on the model of I.W. Abel's sell-out arrangement in steel. Even should the courts decide in favor of the UAW in this particular instance, it would only sow illusions that the state and the courts are impartial, fair institutions standing above the class struggle.

Such illusions already exist, and they disarm the workers. When a truly decisive confrontation occurs, the courts will line up with the corporations against the workers, issuing injunctions and sanctioning the use of police and National Guard as strike-breakers.

This has been the historic role of the courts. Woodcock, by inviting the courts and hence the state to intervene, helps tie the workers to the police arm of the capitalist state. The benefits which the UAW bureaucrats seek to defend by court action were won in the first place by the struggles of organized workers, and only that struggle can guarantee them.

### PROGRAM

This requires a class struggle program, not the class collaboration of the bureaucrats. Runaway shops have disastrous effects not only on the workers left behind; they depress the living standards

of all workers. A program that embraces the interests of all workers is needed to repel the attacks.

Such a program begins with the demand for a sliding scale of hours and wages. That is, to insure full employment jobs must be divided among all who can work, at wages which assure a decent existence. This means reducing the number of hours in the work-day so that all can have jobs. At the same time, full cost of living protection must be guaranteed.

To defeat international runaways, workers need universal wage scales for all corporations. This would prevent corporations from increasing the rate of exploitation by moving.

### PROTECTIONISM

The UAW, in addition to its collaborationist use of the courts, throws up a reactionary nationalist policy calling for protectionist tariffs to cut imports. In other words, they call on the government to attack the living standards of foreign workers, thus helping the capitalists to play one section of the class against another.

The Woodcock bureaucracy hamstring workers in the fight against runaways. A successful struggle will require a class struggle program and a leadership that will fight on such a program, a revolutionary leadership in place of Woodcock and his hacks.

ing class and oppressed sectors and provides the needed cover for an assault on the most advanced workers and their allies and later on broader layers as well.

The recent wave of terrorism, most particularly the activities of the so-called "Symbionese Liberation Army" comes at a convenient time for the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is planning to use the SLA-type tactics as a pretext for a crackdown on the organizations of the working class, to increase the powers of the police and the various domestic spy agencies and to further limit the already narrowing civil liberties of the workers and oppressed people

## Biweekly Torch

Cont'd. from p. 4

general strikes against inflation and unemployment that would pull in the unorganized and unemployed as well, it increasingly renounces the right to strike at all (see article on Steelworkers, page 3) and narrows the scope of struggles, abandoning the unorganized workers and blocking coordinated action by several unions. In place of international labor solidarity, it opposes the interests of American workers to those of foreign workers. Instead of constructing a revolutionary labor party and building political strikes for a workers' government in opposition to Nixon, Watergate, and the bankruptcy of both capitalist parties, it continues to go hat in hand to the Democrats, pleading for crumbs from the bosses' table.

We have entered the decisive period of the class struggle. The rightward march of the international bourgeoisie threatens the proletariat with fascism in the

of the United States.

Whether or not Patricia Hearst was party to her own kidnapping, whether or not the SLA includes government agents are interesting points for speculation, but they are strictly secondary to the objective political significance of their recent acts.

The ruling class has been made wary by the tremendous international upsurge in the class struggle. Britain, Argentina, India, Ethiopia, Italy, etc., form only the tip of the iceberg—and the bourgeoisie knows it. All of world capitalism has entered a period of intense crisis, and the bourgeoisie has no plans to sit by and idly watch the foundations of its rule and privileges be demolished. It is organizing and training its forces, preparing its offensive against the working class and in particular its growing advance guard of militant and revolutionary-minded elements.

In the United States, the bourgeoisie is looking desperately for an excuse to divert attention from the wearying government crisis, the deepening economic recession, and the thousand other sources of proletarian anger and disgust. The capitalist class will use (indeed, create) whatever incidents might serve them in their cynical maneuver.

In short, the bourgeoisie is honing its weapons. The proletariat must prepare its own. Isolated acts of individualistic terrorism are only self-defeating diversions from our necessary preparations.

coming years. The only alternative is the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for socialism, and if this struggle is to succeed, the construction of a revolutionary leadership is crucial. The labor bureaucracy, the Social Democracy, the Communist Parties, and the various centrist pretenders must be swept aside and the road opened toward reconstructing the world proletarian party for socialist revolution, the Fourth International.

The biweekly *Torch* is a major step on this road. As Lenin pointed out, the revolutionary newspaper serves not only the tasks of propaganda and agitation; most importantly it is "a collective organizer." In the coming period, the nucleus of a reconstructed Fourth International will regroup around *The Torch* and its supporters internationally. More than ever, the burning task of every revolutionary in this period is to build the leadership of the proletariat by building *The Torch*.

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# Banks Paralyze N.Y.C. Transit

by Walter Dahl



New York City transit strikers, 1951. 23 years later, transit workers and subway riders still are stung by banks.

Once again the New York City transit workers' contract has been signed to the accompaniment of threats of a whopping fare increase. Although the wage increase won by the Transport Workers Union was only 14 per cent over two years, a jump in the transit fare from 35 cents to 60 cents is being "feared" by politicians of all stripes—and blamed on the transit workers.

The scene is familiar: the New York transit fare has gone up five times since 1949, when it was 5 cents, with the union held responsible every time. Yet during these 25 years 15,000 transit jobs have been lost, ridership has fallen off by 45 per cent, several elevated lines have been torn down, and service and safety have deteriorated because of the lack of maintenance.

The reason for this decay is that transit systems are financed by schemes designed not to run subways and buses but to pay off the banks. The New York subways were originally built and paid for by the city, then leased to private operating companies owned by the Rockefeller and Morgan banks. They were bought back by the city in 1940, after years of neglect, at astronomically inflated prices. Between 1894 and 1940, the city paid out over \$1.4 billion for subways, raising the money through bank loans. In 1940 an additional \$315 million was borrowed by selling tax-free bonds to the same banks whose subsidiaries were selling the subways back to the city!

Consequently, New York taxpayers have to pay off a monstrous transit debt—over \$130 million per

year, currently. In all, 10 per cent of the city budget goes to pay debt service.

In order to keep transit financing out of the hands of politicians who might be subject to public pressure, independent "public" transit authorities have been set up. When the first such authority was set up in New York in 1953, Commissioner Robert Moses said, "We did not believe that such an authority could sell bonds and remain solvent unless it had a free hand to raise fares without public debate and popular approval." The Metropolitan Transit Authority conceived by Governor Nelson Rockefeller in 1969 is controlled by the same banks who robbed the subways in the 30's under private management and now collect the massive transit debts.

New Yorkers are clearly disgusted with this rip-off operation. They rejected new transit bond issues at the polls in 1971 and 1973 in protest against the taxes that would inevitably be raised afterwards to pay debt service.

Politicians from New York and other cities are now clamoring for federal subsidies for urban transit. This amounts only to passing the buck to the entire working class through federal taxation. The federal government would then act as collection agency for the banks on a national level.

Cheap, efficient public transportation will remain a dream until a workers' government takes over the banks and corporations which have been milking the working class for decades through transit bonds and other swindles.

## NIXON de la p. 12

contra los pueblos oprimidos y explotados del mundo.

La clave de toda esta estrategia sería la vieja consigna bolchevique: "¡Obreros, no confíen de la clase gobernante! ¡Cuenten sólo con su propia fuerza! ¡Luchen sólo por sus propios intereses de clase!"

Pero este tipo de estrategia proletaria es lo más lejano a las mentes de los dirigentes actuales de los sindicatos. En vez de usar la crisis de Nixon para avanzar los intereses de la clase obrera contra sus explotadores, Meany, Woodcock, y Cia. dedican todos sus esfuerzos a mantener al proletariado firmemente bajo las riendas de la burguesía.

### TRAICIONES SISTEMATICAS

La burocracia sindical reformista ha traicionado sistemáticamente a los obreros en cada una de sus confrontaciones recientes con la burguesía: prueba de ello son las huelgas desautorizadas y luego las huelgas formales contra los magnates de la industria automotriz el verano pasado, la capitulación de 1973 en el contrato de los camioneros sindicalizados, los ataques recientes de Fitzsimmons a la huelga de los camioneros independientes en el invierno, y la cínica traición del movimiento de huelga de San Francisco en marzo.

Políticamente, la burocracia sindical está jugando precisamente el mismo rol. Frank Fitzsimmons de los

Teamsters (camioneros) se queja de que al pobre presidente Nixon ¡lo maltrata la prensa! Los burócratas anti-Nixon son poco mejores. Ellos comprometen a las organizaciones obreras al apoyo más servil y pasivo del enjuiciamiento—¡al enjuiciamiento por el Congreso de la clase gobernante! George Meany se jactaba en abril de que "nosotros, como un grupo de millones de obreros, podemos ayudar a devolver el país al pueblo." En realidad, su apoyo a la burguesía anti-Nixon es una promesa de "devolver el país" a los arquitectos del estado capitalista fuerte.

¿Acaso hay alguien que realmente cree que el Congreso de la burguesía llevaría a cabo el enjuiciamiento de tal manera que aparezcan todos los hechos que vienen al caso? Claro que no. La evidencia más condenante—la cual revelaría los crímenes no sólo de Nixon sino de toda la clase gobernante—será cuidadosamente suprimida. Nixon será removido y la campaña para fortalecer el poder del estado contra los obreros seguirá adelante.

El único modo en que el proletariado puede romper este cómodo arreglo es tomando el caso de Nixon en sus propias manos, con una huelga general y un juicio ante el Congreso del Trabajo. Sólo ese jurado podría ser confiado para hacer que todos los crímenes de Nixon y de la burguesía de E.U. salieran a luz del día.

Pero, típicamente, el sólo pensamiento de retar el derecho de la burguesía de tratar por sí misma el caso de Nixon le produce náuseas a los

líderes sindicales vendidos. Meany compromete a toda la AFL-CIO al enjuiciamiento en el Congreso y explica meditabundo ante las cámaras de televisión que Nixon "tiene derecho al mismo supuesto de inocencia que cualquier otra persona."

Los dirigentes del sindicato de obreros de la industria automotriz (UAW) y del sindicato de maquinistas (International Association of Machinists) cubren su capitulación con el mismo podrido argumento: "sólo por medio del enjuiciamiento en la Cámara de Diputados puede el presidente ser procesado por el Senado de E.U. con la plena protección de los derechos legales de un presidente" (AFL-CIO News 30 de marzo de 1974).

Estas son promesas descartadas por parte de los lugartenientes del capitalismo de que los sindicatos no usarán los problemas políticos de la burguesía para avanzar la causa del proletariado, de que la burguesía tendrá mano libre para resolver la crisis de Nixon como mejor le convenga y como quiera. ¡Cómo no va ir en aumento la confianza de la clase gobernante en sí misma!

La clase obrera hoy está en verdad en una excelente posición para asestar una serie de golpes tremendos a sus explotadores. Esto es cierto porque la burguesía aun no ha tenido la oportunidad de realmente echar a andar su estrategia contra la clase obrera. Los despidos, la inflación y las represiones que se ven actualmente son cosas serias, pero aun no han paralizado la fuerza de lucha de la

clase obrera. Al mismo tiempo, la burguesía ha sido debilitado por los escándalos en torno a la Casa Blanca.

La negativa de los jefes sindicales de usar ésta debilidad momentánea para fortalecer las defensas de la clase obrera es la más vil traición de clase. Si Meany y Cia. se comportan así cuando las cosas están a su favor, ¡qué traición tan grande cometerán una vez que la burguesía haya puesto sus asuntos en orden y acelere su ataque contra el proletariado!

### UN NUEVO LIDERATO

Las medidas de pata de Nixon le han probado a la clase gobernante que necesita un nuevo liderato. Este es el verdadero sentido del enjuiciamiento. La podrida capitulación de los jefes sindicales en el periodo actual es sólo mayor prueba de que el proletariado también necesita desesperadamente un nuevo liderato.

El proletariado necesita un nuevo estado mayor, uno formado por socialistas revolucionarios capaces de movilizar y dirigir el tremendo poder latente de los obreros contra la clase gobernante y sus instituciones. Necesita un liderato revolucionario que pueda y se dedique a explotar toda ventaja que tenga la clase obrera y capaz de usar cada una de las debilidades de la burguesía para avanzar la lucha por el poder obrero—por el socialismo. La lucha para construir ese liderato es la tarea más importante, más urgente a la que se enfrenta hoy la clase obrera.

(traducción: A.V.)