



STRIKE WAVE U.S. WORKERS TAKE THE OFFENSIVE

By JON MYERS

American workers have taken the offensive. In an almost spontaneous response to the economic crisis, they have produced the largest strike wave since 1946 in this country. The combativity of the American working class is part of an international working class upsurge against the worldwide crisis of capitalism.

Over 1.6 million workers have participated in an estimated 3,240 stoppages over the last six months. There are almost 650,000 more workers on strike this year than in the same period of time in 1973.

The importance of the offensive is not registered in statistics alone. The depth of the strike wave has also been measured in terms of the extremely high level of combativity on the part of the rank and file. The strike wave has also reached out to a broader section of the class than ever before, which indicates that the American workers are entering into a new period of militancy.

The end of "wage-price controls" on April 30th signaled a sharp rise in strike activity. Workers attempted to fight the rising cost of living which produced, from April 1973 to April 1974, the sharpest decline in workers' real earnings in 10 years.

The offensive began earlier this year and was a signal for things to come. The construction trades in Northern California went on strike in December of last year, winning a \$1.25 an hour wage increase.

The construction workers, through the cooperation of their bureaucracy in the Construction Wage Stabilization Board, had been the focus of the government's success in keeping down wages for the last 3 years. Their militancy served notice to the government and to the labor bureaucracy that further attempts at a governmental wage-control policy would be unable to keep the rank and file in check. The "voluntary cooperation" of the bureaucracy, which was the key to the program, was no longer possible in the face of massive rank-and-file unrest.

The response of the construction workers, one of the most highly paid sections of the class, to the high unemployment and decay of their industry continues to play a leading role in this strike wave. The AFL-CIO was forced to call a march of over 50,000 construction workers in New Jersey this summer.

The response of the independent truckers last

winter to the "energy crisis" was also an indicator of the deep unrest throughout the labor movement. Fitzsimmons, the government's most prominent "labor statesman," had to call for the National Guard to prevent the stoppages from spreading to "his" drivers.

The labor bureaucrats had succeeded in preventing a unified, national wage offensive. The IBT and UAW national agreements of 1973, the USW agreements this year and the CWA agreement this August were massive sellouts. But they have not been able to prevent the voice of the rank and file from being heard. Rebellions have taken place throughout the country, even though the lack of leadership has allowed the rebellion to be scattered and isolated. But they haven't prevented large strikes. In June, 18 large stoppages (over 5,000 workers) accounted for 36% of all strikes.

The 1973 UAW contract has not been accepted peacefully. GM has been rocked by local strikes that the bureaucracy has been forced to sanction. Strikes at St. Louis, Norwood, Lordstown, Detroit and Kansas City were pressured by the rank and file. The A.O. Smith strike in Milwaukee threatens to cripple GM truck production. The Dodge workers in Warren, Michigan forced the UAW to call for a strike vote after a wildcat that produced a court injunction and mass arrests. Ford Stamping in Chicago Heights also struck over working conditions earlier this summer.

Even the massive treachery of the USW "no strike pledge" is threatened. The bureaucracy could not prevent the strikes of over 10,000 iron workers in Michigan and Minnesota and were forced to call a brief national copper strike to check the wave of wildcats that broke out among the 30,000 copper workers.

The CWA has temporarily prevented a national strike against AT&T, but the IBEW strike of 80,000 workers against Western Electric threatens that agreement. Wildcats have broken out in many CWA locals in Michigan, Minnesota, California, Ohio and Washington, D.C.

The depth of the response is indicated by the actions of some of the least organized and most oppressed sections of the class as well. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers were forced to call their first national strike in over 50 years. The Textile Workers' Union has been forced to attempt to renegotiate its contracts in the Deep South and the Farah workers were able to win a small

victory last winter.

This militancy has opened up possibilities for a new unionization offensive. The 3-week strike by 4,400 nurses in San Francisco forced the passage of a law covering hospitals under the provisions of the NLRA. Strikes of public employees, primarily blacks and women, in Ohio, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, have provided an impetus for their organizing efforts as well as the defense of their right to strike.

The issues of the strike wave are very clear: the right to a decent life and the defense of workers' organizations.

RIGHT TO LIVE

"Cost of Living? Who's living?"

This sums up the most immediate issue of the strikes -- wage increases and fights over cost of living provisions. The cost of living is up 12% a year, which has resulted in a decline over the last two years of workers' real weekly earnings by 5.6% a year. In 1973, the real purchasing power of workers took its largest dive since World War II.

American unit labor costs rose less than any other major industrial country over the last several years. This was due to smaller wage gains than anywhere else. Along with rising unemployment, the American working class, and especially its most oppressed sections, has seen the most vicious attack on its living standards in 20 years. The strike wave has been a basic defensive response to this rapid decline in the standard of living.

The fight over the cost-of-living has produced a stubborn response from the bosses. The Canadian rubber workers have been on strike for over 180 days against Firestone and Goodyear for a cost-of-living clause in their contract. The rubber companies defeated a COL clause in the 1973 1973 US Rubber contract. A Canadian victory would have an explosive impact on the 180,000 US Rubber workers.

For the rank and file workers the cost-of-living is not a question of the fact, but of the schemes and formulas that the union bureaucrats and the companies devise. The right to live is at stake. This demands a SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES. Every contract must insure an automatic rise in wages in relation to any rise in the cost of living. Anything less than a 1% rise in wages for every 1% rise in the COL means a cut in workers' living standards.

The capitalists have lost their chance for schemes. Today's fights are not ones of a "normal" collision between opposing interests. The fight for the sliding scale of wages is one of guarding the working class from decay and ruin.

WORKERS' DEFENSE

The trade unions are the basic means of defense of the workers' right to live a decent life in this country. The strike offensive has produced a actual wealth of the capitalists. The average hourly earnings this May showed a rate of increase of 19%, compared with 6.3% for 1973. For the second quarter of this year, workers' real wages (after adjustment for inflation) rose 1.2%. This reversed a two-year string of decline or no growth. However small, this represents a cut in the capitalists' share of the wealth and a victory for the workers.

The capitalists understand the meaning of this offensive. Threatened by the lack of power and respect in Washington due to the collapse of the Nixon administration and the cynicism of workers towards bourgeois politicians, the capitalists have met the offensive with a violent response on the local and state level. There has been no one in Washington to give them the cover of national "unity" and the bosses have revealed their real methods and instincts.

Every major strike has seen an attack on the workers' right to organize and fight for their demands. Naked police-state tactics have been used in Harlan County, Kentucky against the UMW. State police have broken up picket lines. Armed killers have been hired to shoot down strikers. Court injunctions, suits, and the jailing of local union leaders have become widespread. In Warren, Michigan, a local judge held court in a truck in front of the Dodge plant and declared strikers in contempt of court. Mass arrests of strikers have occurred at the Dow Midland USW strike, the US

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The Workers League is now running candidates, Helen Halyard and Terry Delgado, under the banner of the Workers' Party, in the 12th and 14th Congressional Districts in New York. To date these districts have been the province of liberal Democrat Shirley Chisholm. All workers should actively support this campaign against the bourgeois political parties and their stooges in the labor movement.

Work in this electoral contest, as in all bourgeois elections, must consist chiefly in making revolutionary propaganda; in denouncing the enemies of the workers; in fighting to win the masses to a proletarian program. To do otherwise -- to suggest that fundamental changes can be brought about through an electoral victory -- is to disarm the working class. Strict adherence to this policy was a condition of membership in the Bolshevik Comintern: "The electoral campaigns must be carried out not in the sense of obtaining a maximum number of votes, but in that of a revolutionary mobilisation of the masses around the watchwords of the Proletarian Revolution."

It is sufficient to place, next to this Bolshevik policy, the policies of the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, to recognize that work in either of these campaigns is worse than useless. Both are completely removed from the life of the workers. The CP's line of proving its utility to the liberal bourgeoisie reflects the Kremlin's international policy of capitulation to and collaboration with world capitalism. The SWP wishes only to gather support from the remnants of the middle class protest movements sufficient to prove to the bourgeois reformists, particularly the trade union bureaucracy, that the SWP itself can be more useful to them than the CP.

In the past, "left" organizations, placing greater importance in elections than does the working class -- hence feeling it necessary to say "something" -- have called for casting a protest vote to one or both of these parties. But the best protest vote, as American workers demonstrated in 1972 when a record number stayed away from the polls, is no vote at all.

But the campaign of the Workers League HAS brought forward the "watchwords of the Proletarian Revolution": the fight for the Labor Party; the sliding scale of wages and hours; the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only solution to the conditions of the workers and oppressed masses. The support which the Workers League has aroused, and directed toward this campaign, among workers, the blacks, and the youth in New York, is indicative of the increased militancy and political consciousness of the most oppressed sections of the working class.

While continuing to put forward our differences with the Workers League and to point out to its supporters the weaknesses of the campaign, we can and must offer them all our practical support, including our votes, in this struggle against the capitalist order.

V
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Helen Halyard



Teresa Delgado

WORKERS PARTY

Their army AND OURS

In this period of rising class struggles and the eruption of revolutionary situations everywhere, the bourgeoisie is preparing to fight its way out of the intolerable situation in which it finds itself. The police and the armed forces are being overhauled as organs of violence and repression against the working class.

The "volunteer army" is a major element of this retooling. It is an attempt to replace the potentially explosive draftee army with a reliable, "hardcore," cadre force, loyal only to those who feed it and immune to the pressure and sentiments of the proletariat.

The British Army is now fully volunteer. This has permitted British imperialism to carry out its policies in Northern Ireland without fear of the disruptions -- demoralization, disobedience, even "fragging" -- which plagued and ultimately contributed to the crippling of the American army in Vietnam. This is especially striking in view of the revolutionary possibilities opening up in Britain itself.

The American imperialists have adopted the same idea, called the "Modern Volunteer Army," or VOLAR. Realizing that the ghetto rebellions foreshadowed massive revolts by the working class, and drawing the lessons of the collapse of the Army in Vietnam, the bourgeoisie set up the Gates Commission, a panel composed of the cleverer henchmen of the capitalists. This body recommended the establishment of the volunteer army, which, despite the objections of the diehards and muckrakers in the Pentagon and in the Congress, eventually was established in July, 1973. This was the actual content of that much-heralded "reform," the end of the draft.

In spite of much prophesying of gloom and doom by the opponents of VOLAR, the concept has been a complete success. After its first year of operation it had achieved, in June of this year, all its goals in terms of recruitment and overall strength. And all this occurred without damaging the previously volunteer forces as well.

This is not surprising. In the midst of a recession which itself is only one more step towards collapse, the unemployment line becomes increasingly the recruitment line. When the starting pay for a new recruit is \$326.00 per month, along with better conditions, benefits, bonuses and other gimmicks, there is a real inducement for the more desperate and adventurous elements of the working class to enlist. Soon the workers and the oppressed will be faced with an alien force whose devotion will be only to those who have given it things unimaginable in its experience outside the army.

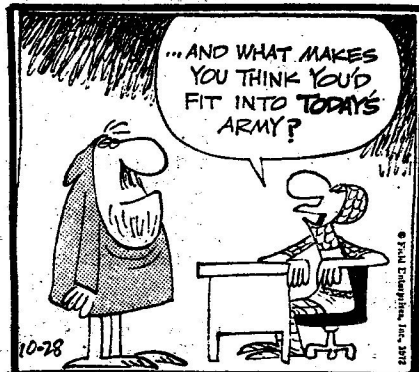


By its purely moral-liberal call for the abolition of the draft, without giving the slightest thought to what would replace it, the middle-class protest movement did its bit for the accomplishment of the capitalists' objectives. The radicals ridiculed the very idea of VOLAR in many of the ways that the military Bourbons did. Nobody would join (not anyone the radicals knew!), it would be all black (and thus notoriously unreliable) and it would be too expensive (but not more expensive to capitalism than no army at all!). These insightful and original arguments convinced them that, for them, VOLAR was no problem at all. Thus radicalism and pacifism, when a serious blow could have been dealt to bourgeois military capacity, once again objectively reinforced the strength of the bosses.

If the working class is to survive and conquer in this "epoch of wars and revolutions" it must be armed. That means above all MILITARY TRAINING, without which even armed workers are mincemeat for a modern army. The draft provided that training, in part, for large numbers of workers. And the class instinct of the proletariat realizes that fact to such an extent that it is even willing, in favor of compulsory military service -- as attested to in poll after poll over the years.

We believe that the desire of the workers for military training must be counterposed to the bourgeoisie's army. Not their army, but ours! The "Proletarian Military Policy" of the Trotskyists must be revived in the form of a call for a LABOR DRAFT. The trade unions must provide military training for their members, for all the working people, at the expense of the capitalist government. The workers must control their own fate through their own military force, under the control of their own organizations. Thus the working class will get the training it needs and wants without being at the mercy of the stupidity, brutality and plots of the capitalist war machine.

Such a policy demands an all-out fight by the trade unions and in the trade unions. Only a mass mobilization of the working class which sweeps aside the pro-capitalist bureaucracy, which will oppose the Labor Draft to the end, can ensure the proletariat from destruction.



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"STRIKE WAVE"

CONTINUED

Borax strike, and in Fresno, California. The latest "counter-insurgency" techniques, such as the use of low-flying helicopters to harass strikers, have already been used in California.

Trotsky's observation, that "the bourgeoisie is nowhere satisfied with official police and army. In the United States, even during 'peaceful' times, the bourgeoisie maintains militarized battalions of scabs and privately armed thugs in factories," has been proven true by the US Borax company in Boron, California. It is spending \$6,000 a day to maintain its own army with uniforms which is fed on steak and lobsters. And at the same time the bourgeois press blames the workers for inflation.

WORKERS' DEFENSE is a question of the right to exist. The need for some form of organization to defend the right to strike has been demonstrated with concreteness in every strike.

Mass picketing is the initial and often spontaneous step taken by workers in the creation of their defense efforts. This immediately exposes the union bureaucracy and the state which are for picketing—as long as it doesn't prevent scabs from breaking the strike! Mass picket detachments have always been key to strikes in the past—the Minneapolis, Toledo and San Francisco strikes of 1934, the auto sit-downs of 1936.

American workers are learning these lessons today once again. This strike wave will provide training for greater battles to come. Borax workers have organized roving picket squads with walkie-talkie radios to prevent scabs from breaking their strike. Mass picketing has been key to the militancy of the Dow Midland strike, the strike of Western Electric in New Jersey.

Women have played a key role in the organization of the defense of workers. The wives of strikers took over the picket lines in Harlan County and in Fresno, California, after their striking husbands were arrested. This has been not only a powerful material aid to the strikes but has also been key in the ability of the unions to win the sympathy and aid of the rest of the class, isolating the bosses and their goons.

The viciousness of the response of the capitalists proves that WORKERS' DEFENSE GUARDS must be created to protect every strike. The most militant workers understand this already and must explain this necessity throughout the working class movement.

BLACK GAINS OF '60'S WIPED OUT

By A REPORTER

The US Census Bureau has recently released the "Economic and Social Status of the Black Population of the United States -- 1973." Through its own figures, this report is a powerful indictment of American capitalism, which has proven itself to be unable to improve the status of blacks in this country. In fact, its continued existence means the steady erosion of even the small gains won by the black masses in the 1960's.

The report covers a wide range of subjects dealing with population growth, housing patterns, educational levels, incomes, and other categories. Every category demonstrates a steady decline of the standard of living of blacks from 1969 to the present.

Small gains in economic status were made by blacks in the middle and late 1960's, but were wiped out during Nixon's term of office. In 1973 the median income of black families was \$7,269, about 58% of the \$12,595 for white families. This represents a decline from 1969 when the income level of black families was 61% of whites.

The report shows that a typical black family earned .2% less in 1973 than it did in 1969, while white earnings show an increase of 6.1%. This is a marked reversal of the pattern set earlier when

THE MINES ARE NEXT

The duration of the strike wave remains to be decided. If it remains largely confined to local and isolated strikes it will wear itself out. This is the strategy of the state and its agents—the labor bureaucracy. The bureaucrats quickly moved to prevent any reaction to Nixon's resignation, which could have been a signal for a national labor offensive. Despite the fact that the cynicism of workers towards both the Democrats and Republicans is at an all-time high, Meany quickly endorsed Ford. Ford has already set in motion (with the council on the "stabilization" of wages and prices and the "economic summit") steps for restoring real, if not announced, wage controls.

The situation in the mines this fall will be key to the direction that the strike offensive takes. On November 12th, the contract for 125,000 UMW members expires. A strike is predicted. The situation in the mines has been explosive for the last two years. There have been constant wildcats in West Virginia this winter, a wildcat of 4,000 miners in Ohio that has just ended and constant unrest in Harlan County.

The miners have always played a vanguard role in the American working class. After doing his best to prevent a national protest strike over the forced use of scabs in the Duke Power strike, Arnold Miller was forced to call a 5-day protest strike on August 19th. Miller's election over Boyle last year has proven to be a spur to workers' militancy and Miller's betrayals have become increasingly clear to miners. His support is rapidly eroding. The Wall Street Journal admits: "It is questionable whether the union could stop next week's walkout even if it were so inclined or a court ordered it to. Throughout this summer, sympathy for a closedown has been growing in the fields of southern West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky and Mr. Miller's control of his members there IS LESS THAN TOTAL."

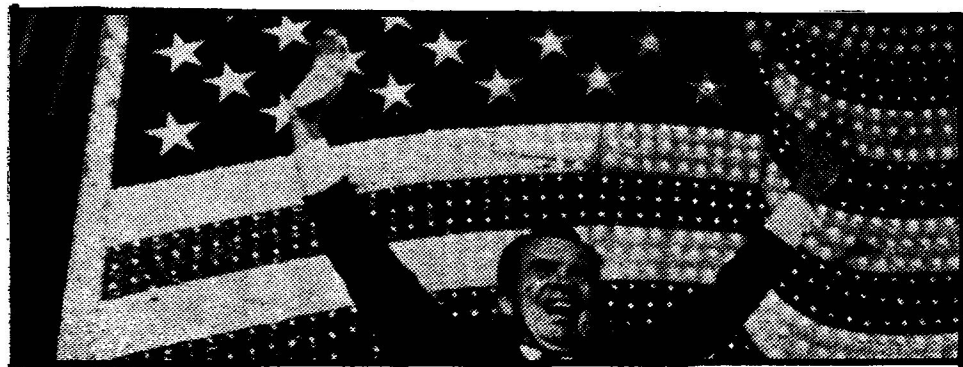
The bosses have already started a scare campaign to isolate the miners. Edgar B. Speer, the chairman of U.S. Steel, has stated: "If Miller can't sign a contract next fall, the economy will go to hell in a handbasket real quick. Do you want an auto? Do you want a job? Do you want to eat? That's what it's all about."

For the striking miners of Kentucky it is indeed a question of the right to eat and have a job. That has been the question for the over 1.6 million workers who have already been on strike this year. The working class and the oppressed will be on the side of the miners this fall and they don't need Speer to tell them what it's all about.

between 1965 and 1969 the real income of blacks jumped 32%, double the average gain for white families.

Black poverty has increased. 31.4% of all blacks live below the poverty line—set at \$4,540 a year. The ghettos of the major cities have grown while less and less housing is being built. Official black unemployment figures remained at 9% during 1973 which was a "good" year for (un)employment. These figures don't reveal half the truth—that unemployment has soared to 45% on Chicago's West Side and is about 50% or more for youth in the large cities. American capitalism means permanent unemployment for a whole layer of the black population.

The "American dream" is a racist lie for blacks in this country. Blacks are now more oppressed than they were 10 years ago despite the gains made in the '60's. Since 1969, the "upturns" in the economy have meant nothing for blacks; their status continues to worsen. The report will be used by government and businessmen to plan further attacks on the black population. For the majority of blacks it is just one more sign of the fact that the continued existence of US capitalism is incompatible with the struggle of blacks for even a decent existence in this country.



OBITUARY for a politician and his time

By JON MYERS

Nixon is gone. He was forced out by his employers like the corporation lawyer he is, who doesn't perform and whose services are no longer needed.

Nixon's departure symbolizes the end of a period in this country's history. He was THE bourgeois politician of the post World War II boom in the United States. Nixon rose to prominence on the basis of this boom in California, its focal point. His political methods, vicious redbaiting and anticommunism, paralleled the cutthroat tactics of the businessmen he represented.

What were seen as Nixon's individual traits were what Trotsky called, "inerently individual scratches made by a higher law of development." Nixon's personality was the personality of a period in this country's history. Now he is the epitome of the end of that period, abandoned by all but the hardcore 20% right wing of this country.

WHAT BROUGHT NIXON DOWN?

It was the social crisis in America, not Watergate itself that brought Nixon down. Capitalism's decay means instability for bourgeois regimes all over the world. Nixon is not the only bourgeois politician in the world to lose power this year. He has plenty of company.

The difficulties faced by capitalism permit no softening of the class tensions in society. The ruling class is preparing for war against the workers and there is very little room for "mistakes". And Richard Nixon made plenty.

Workers' consciousness reflects this change as well. Anticommunism was Nixon's trademark in a period of working class defeat and reaction. The working class is now on the offensive and American workers are no longer as susceptible to anticommunist demagoguery. Along with this has come an increase in the political cynicism of workers towards bourgeois politicians. Problems of this country can no longer be passed off as being due to the "Red menace," and a "Checkers" speech would be laughed at today.

The decision to remove Nixon on the part of the ruling class, as drawn-out and laggardly as the process was, reflects its instability and decadence. The capitalists were no longer in a position to force down the working class' throat a leader universally hated and despised. Their stupidity and bungling of the Nixon affair reflect the consciousness of a dying class.

It must be understood that Nixon was brought down by his employers. The pressure of the working class was indirect, removing any possibility of the capitalists' getting off the hook. The removal itself is no gain. The institutions of capitalist oppression are preserved.

TREACHERY OF THE BUREAUCRACY

Throughout this period the question for the working class was one of building an offensive to take the matter out of the hands of the bourgeoisie. The nature of Nixon's removal -- impeachment or resignation -- was secondary to the question of this offensive.

The trade union bureaucracy was the major obstacle to this offensive. George Meany passively supported Nixon in 1972 and now gives his support to Gerald Ford. Labor Secretary Brennan, Meany's boy, as well as Teamster head Frank Fitzsimmons, actually provided rightwing opposition to Nixon's removal.

The rest of the bureaucracy thoroughly subordinated itself to the liberals. The AFL-CIO abandoned its impeachment campaign in favor of a "veto-proof Congress" -- which they now have abandoned as well in hopes of not scaring voters away from the Democrats.

The bureaucrats never put forward an independent program. They allowed a new President to come to power who was never elected by anybody! New elections should have been demanded. A Congress of Labor and the oppressed to build a working class response to Nixon's crimes was never organized. And a Labor Party was absolutely demanded in a political situation in which both the Democrats and Republicans stood totally exposed as the parties of the rich and of the crooks.

The labor bureaucrats pursued this policy in direct opposition to the majority of workers. Opposition to Nixon had always run deep among blacks and other sections of the oppressed. But the last year saw a marked erosion of support to Nixon on the part of the majority of white workers as well. The fact that Nixon's resignation was seen as a partial victory by almost every section of the American working class may provide a powerful stimulus to the strike offensive. The working class has moved beyond the bureaucrats with the strike offensive and may soon challenge them in the political arena as well.

A TURNING POINT

The response of the working class is one more sign that Watergate is not just one more scandal. The last two Presidents of the United States have been driven from office. Illusions in "clean government" and "national unity" have almost disappeared as the working class senses that it has new power.

The crisis of the bourgeoisie will continue and deepen. Ford and his successors won't have it any easier than Nixon and will have no more to offer in terms of concessions to the working class or increased democracy than did Nixon. The stability of the past is over. The future of the bourgeoisie is one of increased decay and ruin. For the working class it is one of revolutionary action.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

IS A DEPRESSION COMING?



A DISGUISED LENIN IN HIDING DURING 1917



TROTSKY IN EXILE IN MEXICO

The strangled and desecrated October Revolution served notice that it was still alive.

Trotsky, 1940

By MARGARET BRECHT

Only one year ago, following its expulsion from the Shachtmanite International Socialists, the Revolutionary Socialist League announced, in the first issue of THE TORCH, its solidarity with the tradition and program of Trotskyism. Today it believes that this tradition and program represent, through the position on the class nature of the Stalinist states, a betrayal of the proletariat.

At an educational conference following immediately upon the purge of the Soviet Defensists from the RSL, all those who maintain the Trotskyist position were discussed, together with Kautskyites, Stalinists and Pabloites, under the theme of "bourgeois ideology dressed in Marxist or proletarian forms." It was concluded, in an obvious reference to the purged -- those who now publish TRUTH -- that: "Once identified, the carriers of bourgeois ideology must be combatted and politically smashed."

CENTRISM

This rapid evolution is only an extreme example of the general development of centrism, centrism rooted in the precarious social position of the petty bourgeoisie. As the economic crisis has unfolded and the class struggle has risen, the petty-bourgeois organizations have grown, stagnated, and, most especially, split and splintered. While some see this as simply a hopeless division and "attrition" of "left" forces, revolutionaries recognize it as the process of the proletariat's selection of its leadership.

In the face of new events and new tasks, each group takes its stand on the program of the proletariat, and stands or falls in accordance with this. The SWP and the International Socialists each having reached its peak in the period of middle class protest, now await only the opportunity to openly dissolve into reformism. Those who are fit for leadership remain and those who are not are swept away.

THE RSL

Faced with the open capitulation of the IS to the labor bureaucracy, those who were to form the RSL had no critique of Shachtmanism to which to turn but Trotskyism. For the majority, this represented not a break with centrism, but the acquisition of an ultraleft cover for their opportunism. While proclaiming the abandonment of all other past positions in favor of the new-found Trotskyism, the "converts" from the beginning of the struggle in the IS REFUSED to reconsider their opposition to the Trotskyist position on the Russian Question.

But the class struggle is merciless to those who wish to borrow from the proletarian program in order to play at revolution. At first, the majority considered its one "difference" to be subordinate to its more fundamental agreement, and to lead, in this period, to no significant practical disagreements. Now, succumbing to the propaganda of American imperialism, abandoning the dictum of Lenin -- "Fist against your own bourgeoisie" -- the RSL points to the menace of the "Russian and Chinese bourgeoisies" and to itself as the ONLY heralds of this "imminent" danger to the American workers. They are mistaken; others are interested in "Why the Russian ruling class must be overthrown."

Such caprice in the adoption of political positions, characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie in flight, has been encountered more than once in our movement. On the eve of the Second World War, Cannon warned:

The Russian Question has been and remains

The Russian Question has been and remains the question of the revolution . . . It was once said of a book -- I think it was Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" -- who touches this book, touches a man. In the same sense it can be said, "Who touches the Russian Question, touches a revolution." Therefore be serious about it. Don't play with it.

In its haste, and with no regard for this warning, the RSL has done our movement a service. It has managed to demonstrate with utter clarity, by its arguments for its Russian position, that in its flight from Marxism it is heading toward, the only alternative, religion.

RELIGION

For the RSL, the only thing which distinguishes a workers' state from a capitalist state is the "presence" of "proletarian consciousness." The capitalist law of motion, the law of value, flows, not from relations of production peculiar to capitalism, but from the existence of a "dichotomy" between "rulers and ruled," between "capital" and "labor." And, according to the RSL, the Stalinist purge of 1936-38 wiped out the "last element of proletarian consciousness." Through this the Russian proletariat was reduced to the status of "ruled," of "labor;" hence the reestablishment of the "dichotomy," the capitalist law of motion, and capitalism.

Those who begin analysis with "consciousness," from this draw "classes," then conclude "capitalism" cannot long avoid the search for the Holy Spirit. What purports to be a "state-capital-

ist" analysis is in fact an analysis of the Soviet Union as a slave society, RETROGRESSIVE with respect to world capitalism. The method and conclusion are in complete harmony. Indeed the RSL has already discovered and unmasked a "Satan." In its document STATE-CAPITALISM AND THE RUSSIAN QUESTION: A ROUGH DRAFT, it argues that the Bolshevik-Leninists, through their analysis of the Soviet state, left the proletariat defenseless and hence contributed to the alleged Stalinist obliteration of its consciousness.

MARXISM

Against these defeatists, the supporters of Trotsky's position reasserted the validity of the fundamentals of historical materialism and the struggle of the Left Opposition. Developing the views of the Opposition on the economic basis of the workers' state, as they were expressed by Trotsky and Preobrazhensky, the Soviet Defensists argued that to overthrow the workers' state it is necessary to overthrow the relations of production on which it is based. The Stalinist bureaucracy, neither a capitalist class nor slaveholding one, arose and maintains itself on the basis of the conflict between these relations of production and capitalist relations of production -- between the law of preliminary socialist accumulation and the law of value. It is precisely a Bonapartist caste analagous to the labor bureaucracy under capitalism.

It was only the struggle of the Left Opposition which saved the revolution from total defeat.

The Leninists could not save the Soviet regime from the process of degeneration and the difficulties of the personal regime. But it saved it from complete dissolution by barring the road to capitalist restoration. The progressive reforms of the bureaucracy were the by-products of the Opposition's revolutionary struggle. (Leon Trotsky, "How Stalin Defeated the Opposition," WRITINGS 1935-36)

The growth of sympathy to this tradition in the Soviet proletariat today is testimony, not only to the absurdity of the RSL's contentions regarding the elimination of consciousness, but also to the absolute correctness of the struggle which the RSL denigrates.

PABLO AND THE RSL

The RSL's world view coincides exactly with that of the Pabloites. Both, reacting empirically to post-WWII events, declare that the Trotskyist program must be revised, that expansion of the productive forces has taken place on the basis of capitalist relations, that it was through petty-bourgeois forces that the bourgeoisies in Eastern Europe, China and Cuba were expropriated, both groups attribute to the Stalinist bureaucracy independent roots in production; the Pabloites through the conception of "centuries of deformed workers' states," the RSL through the conception of "the new historical form of the organization of capitalist production" -- state-capitalism. In this is expressed their abandonment of the Marxist conception of this revolutionary epoch, the role of the proletariat in the transition from capitalism to socialism, and their identification of the gains of the proletariat with Stalinism. While at present these tendencies draw different conclusions, and the RSL declares itself hostile to Pabloism, they will find themselves in harmony on fundamentals and, in the future, on the same side of the barricades.

For Trotskyists, the post WWII events in Eastern Europe, etc., represent a confirmation of the analysis of Stalinism in the program of the Fourth International. In these social overturns we see no new vitality to Stalinism, even less a proof of its alleged revolutionary capacities, but the vitality of the conquests of the Russian proletariat. The situation then was analagous to the one analyzed by Trotsky in the USSR in 1928-33. The Stalinists, having betrayed the revolutions and fostered bourgeois property relations, were then forced to move in order to defend their own position, resting on the relations of production established by October, against the very bourgeois class they had allowed to be strengthened. In Trotsky's words, describing the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in Eastern Poland: "The strangled and desecrated October revolution served notice that it was still alive." So it was in China and Cuba.

The manner in which these expropriations are carried out prepares the way for future defeats, just as the way in which industrialization and collectivization in the Soviet Union were carried out did so. To glorify these social overturns, as do the Pabloites, is the same as glorifying the signing of sweetheart contracts by, say, the Teamsters Union. To take the approach of the RSL is to argue that the workers would be better off with NO union. The defense of the institutions of the proletariat, be they unions or deformed workers' states, requires the elimination of the parasitic bureaucracies. Of this REVOLUTIONARY task, the Pabloites and the RSL are incapable.

THE MAJORITY BLOC

While from the first the RSL's Russian position was the clearest manifestation of its centrism, it was not the only one. Thus, this centrism could be seen even by those who did not adhere to the Soviet Defensist position. While the Landy/Taber

majority of the leadership pretended to adhere to the fundamentals of Trotskyism, it refused to wage a resolute struggle against those who did not. Those who continued to maintain revisionist of the epoch, of the economic crisis, and of the Fourth International -- that it was doomed from its founding by its defensist position -- were dealt with as members of the "family" and their differences as a subject for "family quarrels." Indeed, the organizational policy of the Landy/Taber majority was dictated from the beginning by its desire to maintain this bloc.

At the same time, however, this same leadership opposed the admission of the Communist Tendency into its ranks. But because the struggle against Shachtmanism had been waged under the banner of Trotskyism, this leadership could not openly propose to exclude the CT on the basis of its orthodox position on the Russian Question. Instead, they raised all manner of secondary political and PERSONAL questions, refused to hold formal discussions, and attempted provocations. When this approach failed, they had no choice but to admit the CT. But while this leadership characterized the CT in THE TORCH as "the only principled opposition tendency to have emerged from the decrepit Socialist Workers' Party," it carried on a covert campaign against it.

OUR ERROR

Those who were to become the leadership of the Soviet Defensist minority and the Trotskyist Tendency, both those who were at that time defeatists and those who were not, recognized this Landy/Taber policy as a dangerous one, but failed to draw the proper conclusion, i.e., that the RSL was centrism. As a consequence, we did not follow a correct policy, thereby allowing for the consolidation of the anti-Trotskyist leadership and leaving ourselves not fully prepared for the struggle when it became necessary.

In his discussion of the problems of the French Trotskyists, Trotsky pointed out that:

In politics there is nothing more dangerous than an APPARENT, EXTERNAL SOLIDARITY THAT COVERS UP DIFFERENCES IN FUNDAMENTAL TENDENCIES. Under such conditions the struggle around ideas is inevitably replaced by personal conflicts and quarrels that poison the whole atmosphere.

So it was in the RSL. The major political disputes which preceded the open conflict on the Russian Question were clouded by personal antagonisms. This was the case in the majority's refusal to defend the Arab states against US imperialism, in its refusal to give critical support in France to the candidates of the CP and the SP against the bourgeois candidates, and in its Stalinist attack on Surrealism which appeared in THE TORCH -- all of which were opposed by the minority.

But we dealt with each of these betrayals by the majority, not as MANIFESTATIONS of its centrism character, but as discrete events, "differences" which could be resolved. The warning of a friend has proven farsighted:

But it is surely true in agreement with Spinoza and Leibnitz, for whom each MONAD is the reflection of the entire

universe, that the allegedly "small" details are sometimes the bearers of enormous revelations.

Had we earlier drawn the correct conclusions and followed the necessary policy, a more decisive defeat to the majority would have been dealt and more supporters probably would have been won.

CAMPAIGN OF SLANDER

Once the defeatist leadership brought their policy toward Soviet Defensists into the open, it became impossible for anyone with the slightest respect for the traditions of our movement to fail to conclude that the organization was centrism. With the defection of leading members from the state-capitalist camp, those who remained coupled an actual closing of the discussion on the Russian Question with slanderous attacks, conducted throughout the branches, against the Soviet Defensists.

The character of the campaign was dictated by the class nature of the majority. Incapable of politically attacking the Trotskyists, they had no choice but to attempt to discredit them through personal attacks in the style to which they are accustomed, that of petty-bourgeois circle life. The policy pursued coincided with that of the petty-bourgeois minority in the SWP in 1940. The 1940 minority's attack on the Cannon leadership, however, will emerge, in comparison to the documents of the RSL leadership, as a high point of principle in the defeatist movement.

They could not have carried out EVEN this BANKRUPT campaign without the treachery of Terry Shephard, formerly a Soviet Defensist and member of the CT. Shephard, while claiming to be a Soviet Defensist, broke with the minority, charging that their "functioning" was unprincipled, that they were "entrists" and "cliquists." This became the political cover for the round of horror stories and psychologizing which had already begun. The gossip, however, was now offered as "evidence" of Shephard's "charges."

Shephard, of course, claimed that the issue in dispute was not the Russian Question, but the question of "functioning." In fact, for Shephard, it was neither; it was the question of self-preservation. He demonstrated this when he announced, at the meeting where the first Soviet Defensists were expelled, that he had become a supporter of the state-capitalist position.

The facts of the defeatists' campaign speak for themselves. They are outlined in our statement, "The Purge of the Trotskyists from the RSL."

None but petty bourgeois refuse to publish articles, refuse to engage in debates which they themselves propose, expel alleged entrists and cliquists one by one, remain silent at the appeal of these individuals, and refuse even to publish a statement on the purge of major section of the leadership.

The response of the Trotskyists to this attack was dictated by the necessity to fight for the proletarian program. Thus, we refused to respond to the slander or to lend any credibility to the pretense of discussion that was attempted. Cannon pointed out:

People who can be disoriented and swept off their feet by rumors and gossip and unsupported accusations will not be very reliable soldiers in the hard days coming...

Such comrades need not simply a reassurance about this or that fairy tale. They need a re-education in the principles and methods of Marxist politics. Only then will it be possible to rely on them for future battles.

We called for a commission to investigate the allegations and for debate on the basis of documents following the Central Committee's discussion. Our work and intervention was focused on the Russian Question and those other questions -- the capitulation of the RSL to the bourgeoisie's campaign against the SLA and its refusal to support the workers' candidate in France -- which most clearly illustrated the direction of the RSL. Because we were purged before the struggle, from our point of view, was concluded, it has been necessary to submit a counter-resolution and an appeal to the RSL's Convention. Continuing the struggle through these means will serve to strengthen our cadre and to further exacerbate the political tensions within the RSL.

ORTHODOX TROTSKYISM

The views we put forward on the Russian Question in the course of our struggle, summarized in the resolution "In Defense of October," constitute a reaffirmation and elaboration of the Orthodox Trotskyist position. We have begun to assess the deviations within the Fourth International after the war, which were fully expressed in the Pabloite betrayal and which foreshadowed its breakup. Without this, no tendency can move forward.

While recognizing the weaknesses of the Fourth International, indicated by its inability to defeat Pabloism, we must also recognize our debt to its cadres. We stand on their shoulders. More than anything else, it was the contempt displayed by the RSL majority for the tradition and cadres of the Fourth International which compelled those who had been defeatists to reconsider their views.

We are Orthodox Trotskyists. By this we mean we stand in the best tradition of the Fourth International after the war. In the labor camps in Russia, all opponents of Stalinism were referred to as Trotskyists, even capitulators and Bukharinists. So it was by the name ORTHODOX Trotskyists that the TROTSKYISTS distinguished themselves. And it was under the banner of Orthodox Trotskyism that those who were to form the International Committee sought to defend the Fourth International from Pabloism.

But we have learned well that it is not enough to assert agreement with the Transitional Program, to declare oneself an Orthodox Trotskyist. It is necessary to prove this in the daily and difficult battle to construct the revolutionary leadership. We will continue our work on the Russian Question. We must also face the American Question. The proletariat has no use for global politicians who know nothing of their own country and their own working class. This work we begin with the publication of TRUTH.

We are confident that in the course of our work, we will meet with the best elements from the present organizations and with the growing number of proletarian militants; and that with them we will join in the reconstruction of the Fourth International and see a WORLD October.

IN DEFENSE OF OCTOBER



The road we have traveled....

Who touches the Russian Question
-- touches a revolution
...be serious about it...

Cannon, 1939

PORTUGAL

The Real Situation



By AN OBSERVER

What is the situation in Portugal today and where is it going?

A concrete analysis of political events provides the first steps towards making decisions that are effective. Thus, Marxists must proceed beyond the limits of rhetoric -- "Spinola is a fascist" -- and determine exactly what lies behind appearances.

The coup itself must be analyzed in this way. It is NOT a "fascist" overturn, organized in order to intensify the already fierce repression existing under Portuguese corporatism, or to continue the colonial wars in Africa. Those who have adopted such a perspective have been wrong at every turn, screaming that Spinola was plotting to keep Guinea-Bissau as a colony -- up until the very moment that it was granted independence.

BEHIND THE COUP

The coup is in fact a response by almost the whole Portuguese bourgeoisie -- hence its bloodless character -- to the inability of the old Salazar-Caetano corporatist government to deal with the problems facing Portuguese capitalism -- the disastrous colonial wars which contribute no wealth to the coffers of Portugal and instead drain it of men and money, the chronic backwardness and underdevelopment of the country, and its complete inability to compete on the world market with other capitalist countries. The young officers, standing in, so to speak, for the more modern and technocratic layers of the ruling class, and Spinola, as a sterling representative of the old establishment elements, carried out this neat surgical operation FOR the bourgeoisie -- NOT against it.

The old dictator, Caetano, now in exile in Brazil, tells in his memoirs of an incident which sums up the stupidity of the old ruling group and the desperation which the rational elements of the ruling class felt about the situation. In 1972, Spinola, then commander-in-chief in Guinea, returned to Caetano with a proposal for a negotiated settlement there. Caetano rejected any such idea, stating that a DEFEAT was preferable to a peaceful settlement. To Spinola, Caetano relates, this came as a "shocking statement." Indeed; and perhaps this was one shock too many for the much-buffed Portuguese capitalists. For, when Spinola was removed by Caetano from his post as chief-of-staff of the Army for the views expressed in his book, PORTUGAL AND THE FUTURE, views tied-up particularly with the African situation, the bourgeoisie's last hopes of a gradual encroachment of reality on the consciousness of the government were dissipated and the ruling class gave the signal to its servants in the army. Then the coup was made.

The bourgeoisie had several conceptions which it sought to implement with the coup. First, it DID seek to end the colonial wars in order to replace a permanent minus on the balance sheet of the Portuguese economy with a healthy credit -- replacing war with a neocolonial independence which would guarantee favorable trade and economic relations with Portugal without the costs of administration. Secondly, it sought to open up the country to American and other foreign investment, which had been lagging due to the incredible backwardness of the old regime. A prime example of this backwardness was the fact that Portugal was not a member of the Common Market, thus leaving an already disadvantaged country completely out in the cold as far as foreign trade, economic development and general prosperity went. Both of these objectives, the capitalists hoped, would enable them to reduce to manageable proportions a ruinous inflation rate which, while bad enough in other countries, was much worse in Portugal.

THE WORKING CLASS

And they also hoped to be able to deal with what already was, and what they knew would now particularly become, a menacing and dangerous foe -- the working class. In one sense, if they

succeeded in their plans in regard to the colonies and the economic situation, then the problem of the working class could be dealt with -- at least sufficiently to prevent any really major problems.

That was all very well for the future, but the present gave the bourgeoisie some problems. Not only had those material concessions which were to be used to pacify the workers not yet been created, but the actions of the workers threatened to remove from the sphere of possibility all the schemes of the capitalists. The workers had done in regard to the coup, which the bourgeoisie had been conscious of, but had decided to chance anyway, exactly what the working class does with any opening, any opportunity for it to move forward -- it follows it through to the end, pushes it as far as it can go, exploits the situation to the maximum degree possible. This, and only this, is the "logic" of the permanent revolution. When the whole struggle of the proletariat impels it towards taking power, because in this epoch that is the only way in which its needs, even of the simplest type, can really be met, then any "democratic" opening for the working class poses much more serious consequences for the bourgeoisie than a mere political change at the top would seem to mean.

ENTER THE CP AND SP

The bourgeoisie was thus in a bad situation. But, in its hour of need, there came to its rescue the Communist Party of Alvaro Cunhal and the Socialist Party of Mario Soares. And neither of these two parties had any truck with "permanent revolution," whatsoever.

The Socialist Party, like all social-democratic parties, has no truck with ANY kind of revolution, let alone a PERMANENT one. It believes that capitalism can be changed neatly and peacefully into something which will no longer be nasty and cruel, but just and democratic instead. But it excludes revolution as the means of making this change. Instead, like a kindly teacher, it seeks to REFORM capitalism, to develop the best aspects of its character, as though it could grow into a worthy citizen once it was past its troubled youth.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, while it talks about revolution quite a bit, is in practice even more reformist than the SP. This is because it has been trained and disciplined in the Stalinist school to do nothing else than carry out the Kremlin's orders. And since the Kremlin bureaucracy, far from being a red menace, is concerned exclusively with proving to world imperialism how reliable, eminently trustworthy, and completely unrevolutionary it is (all the better to protect the bureaucrats' privileges from disappearing), so the duty of the CP's everywhere is to loyally do everything in their power to prevent revolutionary movements from triumphing or even from developing.

The particular "theory" which they oppose to the theory of the permanent revolution, that in order to carry out the tasks of democracy the workers must establish their dictatorship, is the "two-stage revolution." First, you have a democratic revolution against feudalism, monarchs, etc., which establishes capitalism and THEN, when capitalism has developed everything nicely, including the working class so that it's ready to govern, the workers can have socialism. This is a neat package and would be nice work if you could get it, but somehow it doesn't work. Everywhere the CP has established its "theory" in practice, the result has been a disaster for the working class.

So, when the bourgeoisie was at its weakest, when possibilities were wide open for setting a course that would lead in the direction of revolution, the CP and the SP followed exactly the policy designed to result in a defeat. Instead of fighting against the government of Spinola, the CP and the SP JOINED it, telling the workers that it was THEIR government, a DEMOCRATIC government. Of course, this "democratic workers' government" refused to grant the economic and political demands of the oppressed and refused to restructure the economy in any way other than that which would benefit the ruling class as a whole.

And when the workers somehow thought that they should press ahead with their demands, EVEN against "their own" government, then the CP and SP SCABBED on the strikes and BROKE them. And when that was impossible, then they supported the "workers' government" in its suppressions of working-class struggles and of civil liberties.

POPULAR FRONT -- A LA DEGAULLE

Entering into a coalition with the capitalists, for electoral or governmental purposes, is the Popular Front strategy. It is the logical continuation of the class-collaborationist and traitorous politics of the CP and SP. In fact, it is in the "People's Front" that these policies bear their full fruit. It was the popular front government which betrayed the Spanish Revolution and which led to Franco's triumph. And the Unidad Popular of Allende prepared the way of the bloody and merciless dictatorship in Chile today.

But all popular fronts do not have to end in Fascism or in deepest reaction to serve the bourgeoisie's interests. This is the case with the one in Portugal today. The idea is to prevent the workers from moving to establish their rule and then to stabilize the situation into "normal" capitalist rule. That is why Spinola fancies himself a new DeGaulle. Not only because he will save the homeland, not only because as a known rightist only he can do what must be done, not only because he will prevent the ex-colonies from becoming "Communist" (as DeGaulle, through his trade and foreign policies, did not seek to isolate the Algerians and thus prevented another "Cuba.") but because he wishes to imitate another successful scheme of the General.

In 1945, when DeGaulle returned to France, he was coming back to a country in which the CP had become the leading party of the working class. In addition, because of the leading role it had played in the Resistance, it had large numbers of trained and armed men under its control. The working class, as in all the other capitalist countries, was on the offensive, seeking to make major economic and social gains. Faced with this situation, DeGaulle invited the CP (and the SP, too, for what it was worth) into his government. Seeking to do Stalin's bidding -- get along with the capitalists -- the CP did just that. DeGaulle used these "working-class" parties as a stone wall against which the workers could pound their heads, as betrayers of the great revolutionary possibilities then existing. And then when their use was at an end, when the working class was exhausted, DeGaulle simply gave the Stalinists and reformists their walking papers and capitalist France proceeded about its business unimpeded.

This is clearly Spinola's scheme as well. And the CP and SP have done their best to imitate their French brothers. The workers offensive is subsiding and the situation is beginning to "stabilize." The pink slips for the traitors are already being drawn up. They deserve no better, but the workers will pay the greatest price.

NO HOPE FOR SPINOLA

But Spinola is kidding himself. DeGaulle was able to succeed in France not only because of the CP and SP but because he was riding on the tip of the wave of postwar prosperity, a conservatizing influence for over a generation in the West. And in 1958, when he "solved" the Algerian situation, the boom was at its peak. But ten years later came 1968 and the abortive revolution. Since then NOTHING has been the same. There will be no generation of stability for Spinola, not even a decade. That is all over with. The Common Market is falling apart, there is no salvation there. NATO, as can be seen from the Cyprus situation, will not survive for long. The world market faces collapse and the big powers have nothing to spare for little Portugal.

The working class will not conquer in Portugal right now. Thanks to the betrayers, Spinola and capitalism have a grace period. But that will be short-lived. Soon new and greater, better-prepared and better-led, upsurges of the Portuguese, and Spanish, and world working class will erupt -- and will triumph.

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Gulag

CONTINUED

must attempt to obscure the actual guilt of the SR's through his customary sarcasm, this time by ridiculing the SR's as impotent talkers incapable of undertaking any action, let alone a terrorist conspiracy.

These are only two examples of the general PATTERN of misrepresentation and deception which Solzhenitsyn pursues in his attempt to connect Bolshevism, the socialist revolution, with Stalinism, its negation. It would take another book to unravel all his lies and distortions.

A COMPLETE REACTIONARY

These views are only part of a general reactionary outlook. Over and over again he states that all the sufferings of Russia are retribution for the October Revolution. The Civil War itself, and presumably the White Terror (which he neglects to mention) as well, represented only just resistance to the Bolsheviks' "immoral" dispersal of the bourgeois Constituent Assembly. The Russians "deserved" Stalin. And that too becomes a major theme. Solzhenitsyn's total contempt for the Russian people is openly expressed:

But even before there was any Civil War, it could be seen that Russia, due to the makeup of its population, was obviously not suited for any sort of socialism whatsoever. It was totally polluted. (p. 26) He continually refers to the Russian people as "rabbits," who, when arrested, give only a "lamblike bleat." Even his reference to the prisons as "our sewage disposal system" is only half ironic. And he has no hesitation in blaming the "gray-moustached working class" for supporting the terror, when in fact the terror was directed first of all against it and its interests.

Nothing is beyond him. Not only the bloody Czars, but the Nazis, even Hitler himself, compare favorably to the misery wrought by "socialism." He faithfully repeats the most vulgar slanders and lends credence to every imaginable White atrocity story by simply repeating the counterrevolutionary propaganda with the noncommittal preface, "it is said..." "It is said..." that the Bolsheviks fed live prisoners to zoo animals! (p. 174) One waits for, but somehow is spared: "It is said that the Bolsheviks ate babies." This agnostic phrase serves to absolve him of having to prove anything while permitting him to clearly imply its veracity. And, as a fitting complement to this class hatred, there is Solzhenitsyn's religious fanaticism. He cherishes this bastion of the old order for its hostility to the new. He cherishes the virtues it teaches -- humility, poverty -- which are so lacking in the working class and so ingrained in the world figure with his Swiss bank account. He praises the salutary effects of a defeat on Russia's soul, particularly, no doubt, if that defeat should be administered by international capitalism. In his boundless regressiveness he defends the Russian Orthodox Church not only from the Bolsheviks, who attacked it because it was as much a part of the Czarist regime, through its oppression and inculcation of superstition, as the Czar himself, but from the criticisms of TOLSTOY as well. Tolstoy taught that the "kingdom of God is within you:" but Orthodoxy and Solzhenitsyn reply that it is not, that it lies in golden vessels, jewel-encrusted relics, precious ikons, that it lies in the wealth extorted from an ignorant priest-ridden people. And neither that wealth nor those people should ever have been taken from them.

All this should indicate how utterly false is Ernest Mandel's assertion that this book is "Solzhenitsyn's Assault on Stalinism..." and on the October Revolution." This phrase is an attempt to pretend that Solzhenitsyn is not just another vulgar anticommunist -- who are all also against Stalinism... and October -- an attempt to tiptoe gingerly away from the uncritical enthusiasm which BOTH sections of the Pabloites (Mandel AND the Socialist Workers Party) have for years manifested

for Solzhenitsyn. The International Committee and the Workers League have replaced their blind enthusiasm with total silence. Solzhenitsyn has ceased to exist for them.

WHO DOES SOLZHENITSYN REPRESENT?

The centrists of all varieties were thrown off balance in this way because they do not understand the class dynamics of the USSR today. Solzhenitsyn is not an isolated or accidental figure. He reflects the views of the most nationalist section of the Soviet professional and technical middle classes. This social layer increasingly finds its privileges, privileges dependent upon and sustained by the bureaucracy's subjugation of the proletariat, to be too hemmed in, too limited, both by the bureaucratic terror and by the existence of relations of production incompatible with a free bourgeois development. The section which Solzhenitsyn stands for seeks to purge the USSR of Marxism (i.e., go back to capitalism) by a return to the obscurantism of Holy Mother Russia.

Solzhenitsyn makes no bones about his class loyalties. In a commentary on a 1930 frame-up trial comes a statement which expresses the political program of the pro-capitalist middle-classes:

How, then, could engineers NOT HAVE WANTED a democratic republic? How could ENGINEERS accept the DICTATORSHIP OF THE WORKERS, the dictatorship of their subordinates in industry, so little skilled or trained... but now occupying the top positions from which they supervised the ENGINEERS? Why shouldn't the engineers have considered it more natural for the structure of society to be headed by those who could intelligently direct its activities? (p. 390, emphasis in original)

This is a program of capitalist restoration, a program fostered by Stalinism's creation of an aristocratic and conservative stratum to replace the democratic initiatives of the masses, to extort the last effort from the workers in the futile effort to build "socialism in one country."

HIS BASIC FAILING

Solzhenitsyn's class position is what deprives him of the ability to truthfully present reality. This is nowhere more evident than in his treatment of the Trotskyists. What Solzhenitsyn fears and hates, even more than he hates Stalinism, is the prospect of a proletarian political revolution, of an uprising which would not merely remove the heavy hand of bureaucratic repression from the "engineers," but which would permanently eradicate the privileges which the middle classes so deeply embrace and so desperately seek to expand. Trotskyism means above all the struggle of the proletariat AGAINST the bureaucratic usurpation of power, FOR the maintenance of its control of the state. That struggle of the Soviet working class continues today and, while NOT YET Trotskyist, finds its reflection in the courageous, avowedly Leninist, struggle of General Grigorenko and his associates.

So, try as he may to dismiss the Trotskyists as losers in a power struggle -- "...who had chosen themselves such an unsuccessful leader" (p. 52) -- the FACTS keep coming back to bother him. Thus he must note that the single letter "T" for "Trotskyite" -- added to the initials for "Counter-Revolutionary Activity (KRD TO KRT)", "...made the life of a zek (prisoner-KT) in camp much harder." (p. 284)

Why IS that? And despite his repetitions of slanders against the Trotskyists' hunger strikes, he is forced to mention that, "no one paid for hunger strikes so much and so grievously." (p. 472) WHY IS THAT? His inability to answer, or even to pose, this question exemplifies above all the failure of this book, both political and artistic. Solzhenitsyn has never understood the reality and dynamic of the USSR, despite all his effort and suffering. He has NOT produced a REALISTIC picture of the Soviet Union. And he leaves his reader to say to himself: "No, that is not the way it is. That is NOT REAL."

HUNGARIAN

WORKERS REVOLT

By DAVID MARKOS

The "New Economic Mechanism" (NEM), introduced into the Hungarian economy in 1968, has produced widespread discontent among the proletariat. According to press reports, workers in the Budapest district of Csepel Island were "angry and threatening unrest." This island is the heart of the industrial proletariat of Hungary. Known as "Red Csepel," it was the stronghold of the Communist Party during the pro-Nazi regime of Horthy. And it was from here that the working class marched during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. These workers will oppose any steps, however masked, that threaten to reintroduce capitalism.

In a growing protest movement within the trade unions, all Hungarian workers opposed the new measures, which have lined the pockets of managers and well-to-do farmers much more than they have raised the standard of living of the working masses. The depth and dimensions of this protest can be seen from the fact that it forced Sander Gaspar, head of the state-run trade unions, to bring the matter to a confrontation on the Politburo, the CP's top leadership. Rezso Nyers, architect of the NEM, in opposing wage increases to the workers proposed by Gaspar, came into conflict with the Politburo and has lost his job as top chairwarmer for economic planning. Nyers opposed the new wage structure because he felt it would violate the "reforms" of 1968.

Attempting to bring the Hungarian economy out of the chaotic state of decades of mismanagement, the bureaucracy must resort to the so-called "reforms" of the NEM type. These policies boil down to an increased regulation of production according to the "profitability" of the various plants, state trusts, or farms involved. Private businesses are encouraged and the market instead of an economic PLAN increasingly determines the prices, quantity, and goods produced.

On the basis of these concessions to capitalist tendencies, a pro-capitalist layer of society is created. Farmers and factory managers, along with certain sympathetic sections of the professions find their wealth and power increased further by the introduction of these "reforms." Because proletarian property relations (state ownership of

the economy, etc.) harness the free development of this strata, these elements frequently find themselves in conflict with the bureaucracy resting on these relations.

Internationally, capitalism has also hailed the introduction of these "reforms" into the Eastern European deformed workers' states. The new policies have resulted in increased investment opportunities for stagnating Western economies. The last straw for the bureaucracy in the dispute over the NEM was Nyers' announcement to the Politburo that he was "going West." Undoubtedly, he saw a more lucrative position with the magnates of Capital than the parasites of proletarian rule could match.

As the economies of the deformed workers' states grow in complexity and in the development of technique more competitive with capitalism, the bureaucracy finds it increasingly difficult to rationalize production. Either it must rely on the participation of the proletarian masses themselves, or it must give way to methods of controlling the economy that strengthen the forces of capitalist restoration.

The movement of Hungarian workers proves that while reforms may mean a higher standard of living and some more legal freedoms for the upper strata of Hungarian society, they heighten tensions between these layers and the working class, whose continued subjugation is insured by these "reforms." Four years ago, Polish workers opposed price increases stemming from economic policies similar to those in Hungary. They brought down Gomulka, the old Stalinist prime minister, and forced the government to freeze food prices, as well as to make other concessions.

The fact that both these protest movements found their expression through the trade union movement is very significant. Though not allowed the right to strike, the trade unions will nevertheless become the arena in which the laboring masses of the deformed workers' states will sort out a revolutionary leadership; a leadership that will set itself the task of tearing the bureaucratic leeches from their victim and of restoring the supremacy of the proletariat.



HUNGARIAN WORKERS AROUND A TOPPLED STALIN IN 1956

In the next issue: a critique of Wohlforth's Theory of Structural Assimilation

GULAG ARCHIPELAGO

Reviewed By KEVIN TRACEY

This book is not history. Instead, it is a subtle FICTIONALIZATION of fact by a powerful but reactionary writer for purposes which twist "art" to their ends. Robert Ardrey used his literary skills to transform the scientific truth of the discovery of earliest man into the reactionary "human nature is bestial" claptrap of AFRICAN GENESIS. Similarly, the far more gifted Solzhenitsyn twists the somber reality of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution into a work which differs, not in its character as reactionary claptrap, but only in its EFFECTIVENESS, from Ardrey's hackwork.

THE QUESTION OF "REALISM"

REALISM as a literary school is exhausted; it has now given all that it can. The cultural backwardness of the USSR under Stalin and the inability of new currents to penetrate it, as well as his own conservative inclinations, impel Solzhenitsyn to the adoption of this historically outlived literary form. He is in many ways the last of the realists; and in his work can be seen both the past vitality and present decay of the school.

The objective of the realist school was, as its name implies, to faithfully represent the complex and changing nature of human society. It sought to do so by abstracting significant events out of the welter of confusing and incomprehensible subjective experiences and, by emphasizing the essential factors, to present the truth in comprehensible form.

This is precisely what Solzhenitsyn claims to be doing in his study of the Soviet prison system -- selecting events out of the whole history of modern Russia in order to arrange them in a form which corresponds to reality. But this is exactly where his work collapses. The ultimate test of realism is that it does faithfully represent reality. But Solzhenitsyn's Russia is not



real; it is a fantastic one-sided distortion of reality. However rich the skill with which the separate events are depicted, their unity, their totality, is made bankrupt by politics which cannot stand the truth.

SOLZHENITSYN'S PROBLEM

Since this "realist" CANNOT do what his technique is intended to do, the technique itself becomes deformed by the ends to which it is applied. His method of selection becomes explicitly prejudiced. In seeking to prove that Stalinism is the direct result of Bolshevism, Solzhenitsyn attempts to establish a direct line between the revolutionary justice of Lenin and Trotsky and the reactionary injustice of Stalin. He openly states his approach: "One needs to have only two points in order to draw a straight line." (p. 137) This geometry works on paper but in the real world a "straight line" is actually a curve. And in the real politics of the Russian Revolution there is no "straight line" between Lenin and Stalin, there is the actual curve of degeneration under the pressure of world imperialism and domestic backwardness.

So, try as he may to establish his "points" -- someone is arrested in 1918, someone is arrested in 1938 -- in order to draw his "straight line" -- Stalinism is Bolshevism because under BOTH Lenin AND Stalin there were arrests, trials and executions -- his construction breaks down when it is made even the least bit concrete. The Soviet Union of Lenin and Trotsky was a state in which the conquests of the workers were zealously defended and expanded. But Stalin's Russia was a state in which those conquests were reduced and encroached upon until there was nothing left but the hard core of proletarian property forms. The process that marked this change is exactly the process which makes Solzhenitsyn's "straight line" into our curve, which changes workers' democracy into bureaucratic totalitarianism.

When realism, in the selection and depiction of events, cannot match Solzhenitsyn's objectives -- and it must, to the extent that it is truthful, fall short -- he resorts to crude deceptions, to "rearranging" events, not in the manner of the great realists, but in the style of a common falsifier. Despite his earnest hatred for the KGB, he is forced to copy its tactics.

For instance, in recounting the trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal of Kosyrev, a corrupt member of the Cheka (the Soviet agency for the suppression of counterrevolution), Solzhenitsyn describes a striking scene which should prove to us that such trials were farces, that the secret police (the "Organs") always took care of their goons:

And even Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky (the head of the Cheka -- KT) himself... arrived in a state of alarm. His long burning zealot's face confronted the tribunal -- whose members sat with sinking hearts -- and he testified passionately in defense of the totally innocent Kosyrev and his high moral, revolutionary and professional qualities. (p. 318)

Here Solzhenitsyn posits his "point" that leads straight to the police dictatorship of Stalin. But there is one small problem. For in the very next sentence, he must state: "This testimony, alas, has not been preserved for us." We, alas, must conclude that Solzhenitsyn has INVENTED (how can it be?) the scene he so vividly depicts. And his "proof" loses even more of its impact when he mentions in passing that the judges, somehow overcoming their terrorization by the "knight of the revolution," actually managed to sentence the guilty Chekist to be shot. The FACTS thus speak against Solzhenitsyn's view of reality, which he can defend only with lies.

Solzhenitsyn continues his efforts in the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries. He informs us of the terrible injustice visited upon these heroes; they were allowed no defense counsel! But once again, this hammer blow against Bolshevism depends on just a small prevarication. Not only did the SR's actually have foreign "socialists" as attorneys, led by Vandervelde -- a noted lawyer, a social-patriot during the war, the head of the Second International and a minister in the bourgeois Belgian government -- but the Bolsheviks also permitted these same "attorneys" to attack the trial and Bolshevism in the Russian press. These no doubt minor details are ignored by Solzhenitsyn (and his editor) since they refute his arguments. Similarly, he

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IN MEMORIAM:

James P. Cannon 1890-1974

With the death of James P. Cannon we lose our last living link with the early revolutionary movements of the American working class. A generation which, like the American proletariat itself, was formed by the prairie fire of populist radicalism, which was educated on the speeches of Debs and in the bitter class struggles of the Industrial Workers of the World and which, in its maturity, brought into being the Communist movement in this country, has now passed completely into history.

But Cannon was superior to every other member of that generation. He passed beyond a domestic and limited perspective, which far better-known individuals could not transcend, and accepted and fought for the highest conquests of the international Marxist movement. Alone among his fellow revolutionaries, he was able to break from the Stalinist corruption of the American Communist Party, which had seemed to him the fruition of all the best hopes and dreams of the American radicals, and to carry on the struggle for socialism with the only program which truly represented the interests of the world revolution: the program of Trotskyism.

From that time on, Jim Cannon's name was inextricably connected with the history of the Trotskyist movement, with the struggle for the Fourth International. He made a major contribution to the construction of the world party, not only as an individual, but as the builder and leader of the American section of the International which served, because it was "proletarian in program and in composition," as an example and model for others.

No other section played such a decisive and beneficial role as did the Socialist Workers Party under Cannon for the development of the International.

While we know that Cannon ultimately did not match the requirements imposed upon him by the development of history -- nor did anyone else -- he fought hard enough against the destruction of the movement he had built to at least save the program. In terms of his qualities and of his contribution to the cause of the proletariat, he must be considered as being on at least equal terms with those whose names are far more famous: Debs, Haywood, Liebknecht, Connolly. That is what Trotsky meant when he spoke of him, without any deprecation, as a "genuine workers leader." No revolutionary movement can live which does not produce its Cannon.

And Cannon lived in order to produce a revolutionary movement. We know that because of the struggle which Jim Cannon waged -- in victory and in defeat -- in defense of the cause which was his life. that Trotskyism exists and that we are Trotskyists today.

And that is not so little.

"JOIN IN THE ONLY BATTLE
WHEREIN NO MAN CAN FAIL,
FOR WHOSO FADETH AND DIETH,
YET HIS DEEDS SHALL STILL PREVAIL"