

India in Crisis

JUNE 30—Indira Gandhi has ignited a short fuse in India, the political powder-keg of Asia. Last year civil disorder racked the state of Bihar and in Gujarat the government was brought down by a state-wide general strike. Last year's national railway strike—the longest and most costly in the country's history—was savagely crushed by the government. In recent months, as government repression mounted to quell spreading food riots, Prime Minister Gandhi was caught at a low ebb of popular support. Her "New" Congress Party was routed by an opposition coalition in Gujarat elections a few weeks ago and simultaneously she was convicted by a lower court of corrupt election practices. Now the regime has abandoned all pretense to democratic rule, arresting hundreds of political opponents to its left and right, muzzling the press, suspending civil liberties and plunging the nation into its most severe constitutional and political crisis since the end of British colonial rule in 1947.

The issue of political corruption is socially explosive in India. Although clean government is the rallying cry of moralist social uplifters like the recently arrested Jaya Prakash Narayan, anti-corruption protests (which have mobilized hundreds of thousands in mass

demonstrations) are not simply a matter of moral outrage. The vast poverty and mass starvation which permeate Indian life are set in a framework of government procurement and distribution of grain and other essential commodities. Petty functionaries and political big-wigs of the ruling Congress Party have for years hoarded and profited on the black market with the supplies that mean the difference between life and death for millions. Whereas in the U.S. charges of political swindling are most often buried by ineffectual investigating committees, in India they frequently lead to mass attacks on the state granaries and the fall of local governments. Now it is the national government itself that is threatened.

Faced with the prospect of a nationwide anti-corruption, anti-Indira campaign that could topple her government, Gandhi has abandoned the image of "respected mother" and taken the road of bonapartist police-state rule. For patrician-populists like the Prime Minister or her father Jawaharlal Nehru to be stripped of their bourgeois-democratic veneer is an important political exposure. For a quarter of a century these phony "anti-imperialists" have intoned in the haughtiest Oxford English that it is



Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

AP

preferable by far to starve in "democratic" India than to eat in "totalitarian" China. Though she speaks often of Joan of Arc, Indira Gandhi's 1975 New Year's message sounds more like a "third world" Marie Antoinette:

"Some totalitarian systems, it is true, have put all their people to work, have eliminated flies and also dissenters—we

deliberately chose the democratic system although we knew it was slower in its ways."

The bourgeois press has been filled with facile comparisons to Watergate, but the situations are divided by more than the fact that charges of corruption have far greater impact among the Indian masses. The Indian bourgeoisie is far from stable, and the country is too hungry to be consistently administered by parliamentary means. Gandhi's landslide electoral victory in 1971, which provided her with unchallenged political dominance at the national level, came in the flush of chauvinist hysteria triggered by the India-Pakistan war. Her slogan then was "Abolish Poverty," but far from eliminating hunger India has become steadily poorer. While Indira Gandhi and Richard Nixon both have appetites to bonapartism, it is in India that these appetites are being realized on a massive scale.

One comparison with Watergate is valid. The bourgeois opponents of Gandhi and Nixon never indicted them for their real and monstrous crimes against the working people of the world. The repression that has just hit the "respectable" politicians in India has gone on against the left and labor movement for

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New York Times/Bernard Weinraub

Street in Calcutta last September, where 200,000 people were reported to be homeless.



UPI

Jaya Prakash Narayan, an opposition leader, addressing rally in New Delhi before he was arrested.



Paris Match

North Vietnamese tank crew in Saigon.

After the Imperialist Defeat

Indochina

DEFORMED REVOLUTION

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India

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years. In the states of West Bengal and Orissa tens of thousands of "Naxalite" leftists have been rounded up, tortured and imprisoned since 1969. Only last year during the railway strike Gandhi arrested 50,000 workers and detained them without trial; another 16,000 were fired and 12,000 evicted from their government-owned hovels. Her crimes against the oppressed of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh far surpass mere election law violations!

Typically, Gandhi orchestrated her bid for bonapartist powers in the tones of a "democratic-socialist" populist. The day after the "state of emergency" was decreed and mass arrests began she spoke on all-India radio of the need to save democracy from "the deep and widespread conspiracy which has been brewing ever since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit to the common man and woman of India." Her chorus in this effort continues to be the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India

(CPI), always ready to defend such a "progressive nationalist" from the spectre of CIA and domestic counterrevolutionary plots. Last year the Stalinists' main contributions in this field consisted of an attempt to keep the hopelessly corrupt Congress government of Gujarat in power and scabbing on the rail strike.

While the rightist reactionaries are undoubtedly gaining in strength by cynical expressions of support for the classless anti-corruption movement—even though they are themselves some of the most notoriously venal and black-marketeering elements—there are tremendous possibilities of a massive outbreak of plebian anger in the form of food riots directed against the exploitative regime. As the political fortunes of the New Congress Party have waned in recent months, the reactionary communalist Jan Sangh Party has held a number of giant rallies. But its ability to pose as a defender of the poor and oppressed is due solely to the absence of a revolutionary leadership which by leading the key sectors of the proletariat in militant struggle against the Gandhi regime would be able to win to its side the masses of petty-bourgeois peasants, urban and rural unemployed and



Food riot in New Delhi

Workers Press

specially oppressed castes in the fight to overthrow capitalist rule.

India represents the most dramatic confirmation of the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, that it is only the proletariat, supported by the peasantry—not the atomized peasantry itself or the weak bourgeoisie—that can achieve bourgeois-democratic tasks by establishing its own class dictatorship. Although parading with "socialist" airs, the Indian bourgeoisie has been completely unable to carry out even the most minimal agricultural reforms, much less the vast agrarian revolution necessary to free the exploited peasantry from the burden of remnants of feudalism. Its phony "anti-imperialism" was exposed by Nehru's 1959 attack on China in conjunction with a CIA-financed and organized "revolt" by the Tibetan feudal rulers.

The impoverished toiling masses of India are in desperate need of a revolutionary Trotskyist party which, basing itself on the proletariat, leads the fight for land to the tiller, expropriation of the bourgeoisie and a workers and peasants government which alone can lead India out of the mire of poverty and grinding social oppression. ■

CORRECTIONS

There are some minor factual errors which require correction in two recent *WV* articles on Portugal. The short note "Protest Portugal MRPP Ban" (*WV* No. 70, 6 June) states that "In more than 50 issues of *Peking Review* since the dictatorial Caetano regime was toppled in Lisbon last April, not one word has appeared on Portugal." It should have said that there was no mention of internal events in Portugal (Portuguese imperialism was mentioned several times in *Peking Review* in relation to Africa).

The article "Dead End for Portuguese Maoists" (*WV* No. 71, 20 June) mentions an article from the 19 May *Hsinhua Weekly* on the Portuguese Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, stating that "This is the first time that the Chinese have mentioned any Portuguese group in their news agency dispatches." We have subsequently learned that the daily *Hsinhua News Bulletin* of 5 April published an article entitled "Delegation of Portuguese Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) Feted in Peking." This confirms our earlier inference that the rightest PCP-ML had won the favor of the Chinese bureaucracy over the more militant MRPP.

Also in this article, the wrong picture was placed over a caption reading "MRPP militants and soldier supporters demonstrate..." The published photo shows the presentation of MRPP candidates for the "constituent assembly" at a Lisbon rally in March. Finally, the article incorrectly states that *República* was reopened. Rather, the government had declared its willingness to let the newspaper resume publication under its Socialist Party editor. However, when it attempted to reopen the premises on June 17 there was a confrontation between SP supporters and the printers, who are supporters of the Communist Party. As of June 25 the paper remains closed.

Save Joan Little from Death Row!



Jill Krementz

Joan Little goes on trial for her life July 14 in Raleigh, North Carolina. This 20-year-old black woman, while waiting in jail on appeal of a breaking-and-entering charge, fought against being raped by a 62-year-old white jailer. She fled in fear after the early morning struggle, leaving the ice-pick wielding attacker in her cell—pants off, covered with semen and stabbed with his own weapon. Aware that under a draconian North Carolina statute escaped prisoners can be legally shot on sight, Little turned herself in to the State Bureau of Investigation, accompanied by her lawyers, when she learned her attacker was dead.

Although it is a clear case of justified self-defense, Little was indicted for first-degree murder by a grand jury in September of last year. Her lawyers charge that the jury was selected on a discriminatory basis and that this hand-picked body was denied important evidence (e.g., that the body of the dead jailer was naked below the waist and that he was stabbed on the legs yet there were no stab marks on his trousers which were found in the corridor). A motion to dismiss the indictment was denied, but defense lawyers have succeeded in moving the trial from Beauford County, the jailer's home, to Raleigh.

After the Supreme Court struck down "capricious" and "arbitrary" death sentences in 1972, North Carolina and 32 other states rewrote their murder laws in order to retain capital punishment. North Carolina currently has 72 convicts on death row, the highest number of any state in the country. Socialists and labor militants must oppose the death penalty in the bloody hands of the capitalist class. The murder charge against Little must be dropped!

The Partisan Defense Committee, legal defense arm of the Spartacist League, supports Joan Little against the state's outrageous and vindictive murder charge and has sent a contribution to assist with legal fees. For additional information on this case, contact: Southern Poverty Law Center (Julian Bond), 119 South McDonough, Montgomery, Alabama 36101.

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At Local 6 Convention :

ILWU Bureaucrats Push Pay Cuts

SAN FRANCISCO—The annual convention of International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 6, held here on June 7, was dominated by sharp clashes between the incumbent leadership headed by President Curtis McClain and a combative oppositional grouping, the Militant Caucus (MC). The tone was set early on when three resolutions proposing renegotiation of the contract were submitted to the convention. The leadership simply relegated all contract matters to the last point on the agenda and quickly crushed an attempt by an MC delegate to raise the contract as the first order of business. Thus, even though more than a quarter of the delegates voted to consider contract issues immediately (and a petition was circulated bearing the signatures of over 500 warehousemen in Teamsters Local 583 demanding a reopening of the northern California master warehouse contract), the crucial issue of how to fight the economic depression was never discussed.

Instead of solutions to their problems, all the delegates got was an officers' report saying that Local 6 and the rest of the labor movement are in deep trouble, something not even George Meany would deny. According to McClain, they should trust the leadership, who "...did a good job of policing our contracts and servicing the membership." But the 10 percent of the Local membership unemployed due to plant closures or the workers at Thrifty Drugs suspended for a strike against production quotas imposed in violation of the contract doubtless have a different perspective on the "services" of McClain & Co. The Militant Caucus countered the bureaucracy's platitudes with a concrete strategy for reversing union losses: reopening the contract in order to fight layoffs through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay, a full cost-of-living escalator clause and a joint struggle for jobs together with Teamster warehousemen and the clerical and longshore sections of the ILWU.

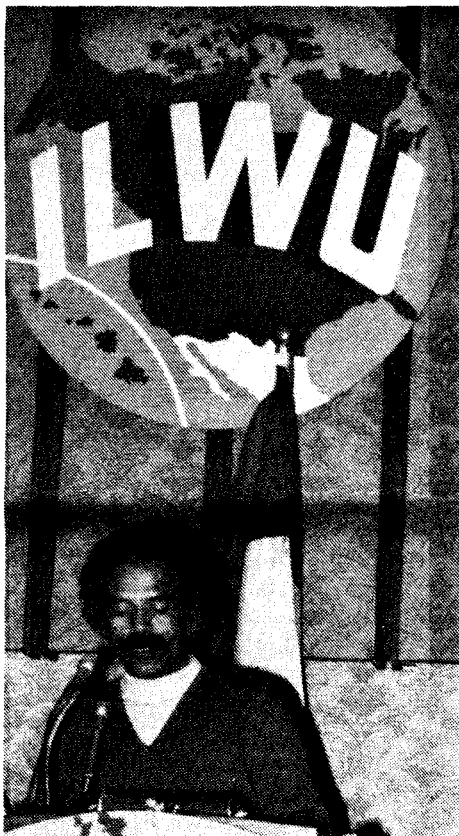
Although the Local 6 leadership successfully derailed the fight over renegotiations through their stacked agenda, the question of unemployment and a shorter workweek resurfaced several times. At one point a resolution proposing a "30 for 40" Committee was introduced by a supporter of the Progressive Labor-backed Workers Action Movement (WAM). Although the proposed committee did not propose action beyond educating the public, Keith Eickman, the Local's secretary-treasurer, felt compelled to amend the resolution by renaming it the Shorter Work Week Committee.

Behind the change in name was the no-win approach of the bureaucrats. Eickman proceeded to argue for a seven hour day at seven hours' pay, a call for a 12.5 percent pay cut!! In the 13 June issue of the *Dispatcher*, International President Harry Bridges chimed in: "I sure do not line up with those that come to the working ranks hollering slogans such as 30 hours a week with 40 hours' pay." No, indeed!

The delegates weren't buying the leadership's song-and-dance about the virtues of "7 for 7." A motion was introduced by Warehouse Victory, an opposition group supported by the Maoist Revolutionary Union (RU), which read in part: "We oppose any bosses' schemes to share the burden and

the poverty of a shorter work week with a pay cut." Although the officers opposed this motion, it was passed by the delegates.

Calling for a reduction in wages is clearly not the most popular proposal these days, so in addition to their usual steamroller tactics the other main weapon of the ILWU tops at the Local 6 convention was Stalinist-style red-baiting. The star in this department was a business agent from San Francisco, Al Lannon. Lannon prepared a written statement denouncing the Militant Caucus—whose members were the prime movers in mobilizing the membership in defense of the KNC Glass strike in January—saying its members belonged



ILWU Local President Curtis McClain

on the CIA payroll if they weren't there already. While such vile slanders from sellout artists like Lannon (who tried to table the motion against a pay cut) carry little or no credibility, the red-baiting binge (joined by Bridges in his speech to the meeting) did disgust a number of delegates, many of whom left after the fight over the contract.

In the discussion on the officers' report, the Militant Caucus challenged McClain to take a position on the escalating racist violence and attacks on the democratic rights of non-whites and immigrant workers—key questions facing the entire labor movement. Although the union is heavily black and Spanish-speaking and these workers face everything from Operation Zebra to mass roundups of "illegal aliens" by the Immigration Department (including raids on ILWU warehouses), McClain said nothing about the issue.

The Militant Caucus, however, submitted resolutions calling for labor defense of busing and opposing deportations. The key section of the latter resolution said, "If necessary the ILWU will protect its members and other foreign born workers with strikes against deportation and with flying squads to defend against immigration raids." The bureaucrats' position was contained in a resolution passed by the International convention in April and introduced at the Local

6 meeting by business agent Abba Ramos. It petitions the federal government to stop harassing foreign workers already in the country while taking steps to "devise more effective means of preventing illegal entry." This resolution for more border guards was defeated through the efforts of the MC and other oppositionists.

Although the Militant Caucus motion was prevented from coming to a vote by the usual parliamentary tricks, another motion (submitted by Warehouse Victory) was eventually passed calling for the union to bar government Immigration agents from union property and warehouses where Local 6 members worked. This resolution was supportable, but lacked the organizational means to implement it, i.e., the flying squads and strikes against deportations proposed by the MC.

The Militant Caucus proposed additional motions on a broad range of issues facing the union and its membership. A resolution calling for Spanish translations of all official union literature was mysteriously lost by the bureaucrats. An MC motion calling for "no asylum to Indochinese war criminals" and "open the border to Chilean refugees" was gutted of its clear class line by the bureaucrats' chauvinist amendment that Vietnamese refugees should not get welfare until every needy American receives government assistance. One motion which drew particular opposition from the leadership was for a rank-and-file strike support committee. As the ILWU tops' sabotage of the bitter Boron strike last year demonstrated, they are deathly afraid of a militant mobilization of the ranks. (The distrust is mutual, as the membership demonstrated after the convention when they voted down a \$2 dues increase.) Still another Militant Caucus resolution called on the union to break with the Democrats and fight for a workers party and a workers government.

While the Militant Caucus presented resolutions encompassing the major issues facing the working class and pointing the way to decisive victory, this was not true of the other opposition groups which preferred to stay only one step removed from the incumbent bureaucrats. The lone WAM supporter confined his efforts to the "30 for 40" committee. For its part, Warehouse Victory showed its true colors by *abstaining* on the crucial agenda fight to let motions for reopening the contract onto the floor. This was no isolated slip, as during the discussions Warehouse Victory supporters remained silent on the officers' report, the dues increase, Vietnamese refugees, and the workers party/workers government motion, while failing to clearly denounce the vicious red-baiting and slanders hurled at the Militant Caucus throughout the day. In a revealing statement, Warehouse Victory leader Vern Bown distinguished himself from the Militant Caucus by remarking that, "Of course, I have no program to stop layoffs or runaways." This "program" of cowardly silence and reformist capitulation may make life more comfortable for pseudo-militants and deflect the bureaucrats' attack toward those who present a consistent class-struggle policy. But it will never provide the kind of leadership necessary to put the union on the road to victory, whether in the Thrifty strike or the fight to put an end to the exploitation of capitalist rule. ■

Bridges Orders Dockers to Work Without Contract

SAN FRANCISCO, June 29—ILWU President Harry Bridges has just informed all West Coast longshore locals that they will continue on the job after their contract expires on July 1. This means working with no contract, no Pay Guarantee Plan (PGP), no paid holidays and no employers' contribution to the health and welfare fund.

Bridges has been trying to ram through a sellout contract ever since he started negotiations six months early in December. The proposed contract would do nothing to stop the drastic decline of longshore jobs, which have dropped from 26,000 in 1948 to 11,700 today.

Unable to get the required two-thirds vote from the membership or to amend the ratification procedure through the Coast Caucus, Bridges has decided to starve the dockers into submission. This is a logical step for a phony "leader" who can't sweet-talk the hard-nosed negotiators of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) out of another nickel and is completely unwilling to lead the militant strike required for victory on the basic issues of jobs, hours, wages and manning scales.

While longshoremen will be forced to subsist on short-time pay or unemployment, the bosses have never had it so good. As tonnage and productivity go up, the PMA can sweat even greater profits out of their workforce if they don't have to pay the PGP, welfare or holiday pay. In a depression the companies hold the whip hand and are unwilling to settle even for the status quo. The PMA is so emboldened by Bridges' spineless capitulation that rumors are already circulating of a lockout to force still greater concessions from the union.

Bridges' union-wrecking course is rapidly becoming clear to many longshoremen who remember how the International sabotaged the lengthy 1971 strike by giving in to government injunctions, permitting cargo to be diverted through Canadian and Mexican ILWU ports and forcing the strikers to handle perishable goods and military cargo. In fact, this bitter experience has immobilized much of the rank and file, who oppose the sellout contract but are fearful of the prospect of a strike run by Bridges.

The only way out of this dead-end is a militant strike run on the basis of class-struggle principles. A group of oppositionists in Local 10 who publish the *Longshore Militant* call for an immediate strike vote and an elected strike committee to take direction of the strike and negotiations out of Bridges' hands. They have raised a set of contract demands centering on six hours' work for eight hours' pay, higher wages, full cost-of-living escalators, "A" registration for all "B" men, unconditional right to strike, elimination of the "steady men" practices and full union control over hiring, skill training and manning scales. They call for a coast-wide strike, international solidarity and no capitulation to the government or military shipping demands. These militants put forward the only program which points the way in the struggle against the employers' attacks and Bridges' betrayals.

Release Class-War Prisoners from Junta's Jails!



Prisoners of the military junta at Chile's National Stadium in Santiago, September 1973.

Gamma

The harsh reality which the great majority of the imprisoned comrades in Chile are experiencing is the truth which the communications media do not tell. The bloody and implacable persecution unleashed upon the working class has not been halted. Behind the bars, torture, death, hunger and cold assault comrades who best express the will of the proletariat. For them there is no recourse to aid, not even the slightest legal attention, neither appeals nor trials. There is even less possibility of inclusion in the deportation lists. For them there is no economic aid or medical attention, no visits from

"The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality. The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got."

—Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party

international organizations. They are not permitted to receive family visitors or carry on correspondence. Their fate does not depend on influential friends because their strenuous, anonymous efforts were always carried out in the ranks, together with their own people during the most difficult times.

It is because they are proletarian leaders, union officials, founders of the *cordones industriales*, the core of the miners' councils, peasants' councils and communal (slum) councils as well as militant fighters within the armed forces that they are singled out as the principal enemies of the bourgeois Military Junta. The tens of thousands of our class who have already been massacred and the present desperate blows render the situation of the imprisoned comrades extremely dangerous.

The dramatic starvation not only affects their families but the entire country, allowing the cruel capitalist executioners to eliminate ever more comrades, silently and with impunity.

The most class-conscious leaders of the proletariat today are in need of true internationalist solidarity. Their lives and future are now in the hands of their comrades in struggle who understand the magnitude of the injustice they suffer.

The sailors who have been tortured since July of 1973, with Sergeant Cardenas at their head, must be saved: their combative example in opposing the military coup, their revolutionary loyalty in defense of their class, their sacrifice inside the most reactionary sector of the Armed Forces, the navy, must receive the response of solidarity they deserve. They underwent ferocious torture from July to September of 1973 and have suffered even worse

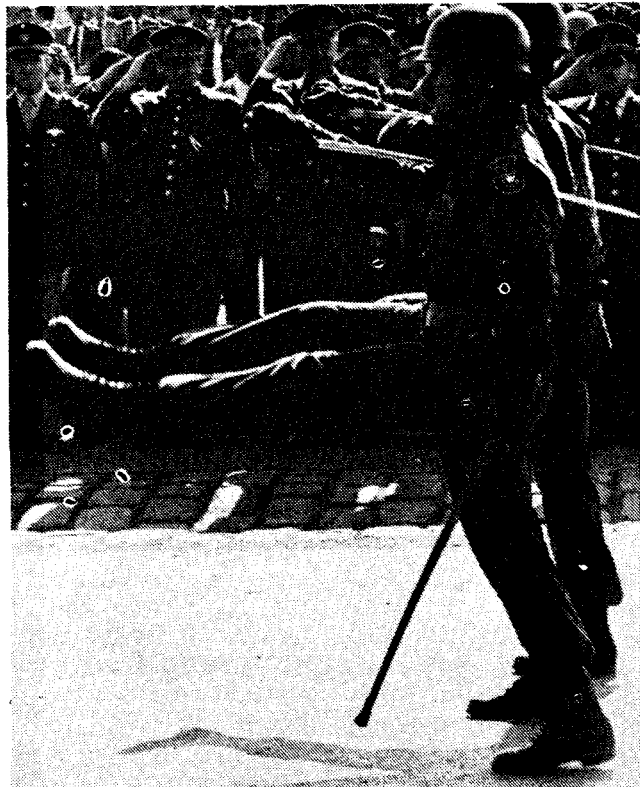
since then. Defenseless, these men were experimented on by the butchers using fascist methods which were later generalized.

Every electric shock, each fingernail extracted, every sexual organ destroyed, every rape in front of children, every bloody beating, all the mental and physical disabilities which result, every death under torture is a direct outrage to the working class as a whole: a lesson which must never be forgotten.

These Chilean political prisoners represent the historically indestructible working class. Although after the defeat they are persecuted, cheated, betrayed and beaten today, tomorrow they will be able to draw the lessons and advance more consciously and with greater determination toward decisive victory in the future.

The bourgeoisie is also becoming aware of this. Its military police-state regime in Chile is increasing repression, despite what its fascist-like demagogic propaganda pretends.

It is the duty of every proletarian party, of every trade union, of every individual worker, as well as of every human-rights organization, to provide support in this emergency. This initial list includes the names



Paris Match

The Chilean army passes in review before butcher Pinochet after September 1973 coup.

of some of those who have been located. Many others remain. Organizations can assume the defense of one or more of the comrades and apply pressure so that they may leave the country. In order for some of them to appear on the deportation lists it is indispensable that a jurist with international support manages to reach them and take charge of their cases. After that a government willing to receive the prisoner is necessary. In general a job offer is necessary to open the borders of certain countries. Only in this manner will the doors of asylum be opened, together with the arms of their class comrades in struggle who await them in exile.

We must remember that every imprisoned working-class leader represents many comrades who are concerned for his fate. Every jailed activist represents thousands of affected comrades, every barbaric torture concerns the entire proletarian movement. Every death of a working-class militant signifies a danger and a lesson. Every consistent proletarian fighter thus saved is a step toward socialism.

THE PROLETARIAT OF ALL COUNTRIES WILL ANSWER THIS CHALLENGE!!!

FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHILEAN WORKING CLASS!!!

FOR UNITED ACTION BY THE WORLD PROLETARIAT!!!

OSCAR ALEXIS SILVA VIDAL—miner (ENAMI), 30 years old, arrested 16 September 1973; in the Santiago Penitentiary.

JOSE ANTONIO ALVAREZ RIFFO—miner (ENAMI), 29 years old.

ADOLFO OLVARES HEVIA—construction worker, 53 years old; prisoner in Chacabuco concentration camp.

PABLO MUÑOZ LEDEZMA—union leader, member of the Socialist Party, 26 years old.

LEANDRO ESPINOZA—working-class leader, arrested in March 1975.

ERMINA GEORGINA CONCHA GALVEZ—worker, 35 years old, arrested in December 1973; being held in the Santiago Women's Prison.

VICTOR CALDERON—leader of the FTR (trade-union group led by the MIR) at Valparaiso customs house, arrested in Santiago in November 1974.

DOMINGO SEPULVEDA—leader of SOQUIMICH (chemical workers' union), 52 years old.

RUBEN ALCAIDE—port worker, arrested 11 September 1973; in the Valparaiso jail.

LUIS LOPETEGUI—worker, arrested in San Fernando in September 1973, 19 years old.

CARLOS MORALES CUBILLOS—elementary school teacher, 50 years old; moved from Chacabuco to the hospital of the Santiago Jail.

VICTOR TORO—slum leader, member of the Political Bureau of the MIR.

SERGIO LIDID CESPEDES—Spanish teacher, leader of SUTE in Los Angeles (Chile), 32 years old, arrested 13 September 1973; being held in Chacabuco.

FRANCISCO MORENO—journalist, arrested 11 September 1973.

HUGO LENNI—administrator at Valparaiso Gas Company, 60 years old, being held at Valparaiso Jail together with his three sons since before 11 September 1973, for violating the Arms Control Law of the Popular Unity government.

DOMINA CHELEN ROJA.

JUAN CARDENAS—sergeant of the navy, arrested in July 1973.

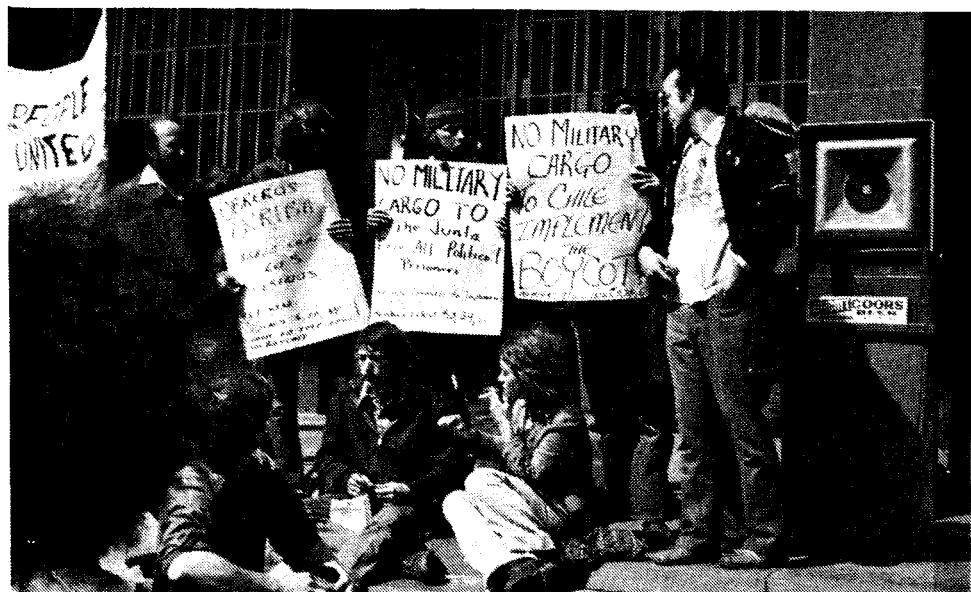
ERNESTO SUENZEN—sergeant of the navy, arrested in July 1973.

JUAN RAMIREZ—corporal of the navy, arrested in July 1973.

Comrades Cardenas, Suenzen and Ramirez are being held together with at least thirty sailors arrested in July 1973; the Law of Internal Security was used against them by the government of that time for opposing an attempted coup d'état.

COMMITTEE TO DEFEND THE WORKER AND SAILOR PRISONERS IN CHILE

For additional information, write:
Guillermo Weinklmeir, Poste Restante Bureau 30,
Paris 75012, France



ILWU militants at September 21, 1974 Chile rally in Bay Area, where they were excluded from speaking by the Stalinists. These unionists were responsible for insuring the enforcement of a two-day boycott of Chilean cargo called by the International Transport Workers Federation.

Stalinists Fume When Democrat Goes Home

Militants Polarize Labor Conference on Chile

SAN FRANCISCO—Over the past 20 months hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the world have protested against the barbaric atrocities committed by jackbooted butchers of the Chilean junta (more than 20,000 left/labor militants murdered, four times that many jailed and tortured in concentration camps, all workers parties and the CUT union federation outlawed, etc.). While there has been a regrettable lull in Chile defense actions lately, the spirit of proletarian international solidarity is far from dead. This was demonstrated at a recent Bay Area Trade Union Conference on Chile where a substantial minority of the official delegates opposed the class-collaborationist "moderation" and undemocratic obstructionism of the Stalinist/labor bureaucrat coalition which ran the meeting.

The June 14 conference was heavily advertised in *People's World*, West Coast newspaper of the reformist Communist Party (CP), and endorsed by numerous unions and labor bodies including the Labor Councils of San Mateo, Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties and the San Francisco Building Trades Council. About 150 trade unionists attended, including 60 official voting delegates representing locals of the United Auto Workers (UAW), Machinists (IAM), Steelworkers (USW), Longshoremen's (ILWU), Teamsters, Transit Workers, Retail Clerks, Printing Trades and other unions.

The conference was coordinated by Archie Brown, a member of ILWU Local 10 and the Communist Party's most prominent trade-union supporter in the Bay Area. It was cemented largely by the financial backing and political support of the ILWU bureaucracy and may, in fact, have been the price of ILWU President Harry Bridges' recent trip to the USSR. Although most of the delegates were

lower-level union officials whose reformist outlook generally coincided with the proposals of Brown and about five of his supporters, over a dozen delegates fought for real international solidarity actions.

From the very opening of the conference the line was sharply drawn between a significant minority supporting independent labor action and the dominant bureaucrat/Stalinist combination preaching reliance on the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Congressman Leo Ryan, a Democrat and so-called "friend of labor," was scheduled to make a keynote introductory speech. However, Bob Mandel, a delegate from ILWU Local 6 and a member of the Militant Caucus of that union, moved that Ryan be excluded since representatives of the bosses' parties have no place at labor conferences, and more particularly because the Democratic Party regularly votes money to the CIA which helped finance and organize the coup in Chile.

The chairman of the meeting, San Mateo County Labor Council President Toy Smith, ruled the amendment to the agenda out of order. When Mandel appealed, Smith (after whispered instructions from Archie Brown) refused to let the delegates vote. After Mandel insisted on the body's right to set its own agenda, Frank Brown (Archie's brother) grabbed him, with the sergeant-at-arms and several of Brown's supporters joining in the attack. But this Stalinist thug attack was quickly repulsed as outraged delegates from half a dozen union locals rose to defend Mandel.

While the frustrated goons murmured threats ("in the '30's we used to kill people like you"), Archie Brown called off the attack and stepped down from the podium along with Smith. The president of the S.F. retail clerks union was selected as new chairman, and from that point on the conference was conducted according

to democratic norms. Before Mandel's motion was ever voted, however, it was announced that Congressman Ryan had left. He may well have recalled the spectacle of California's Governor Brown's being shouted down by angry militants at an AFL-CIO jobs rally in Sacramento this spring.

The CP was infuriated by this resistance to its attempts to railroad the conference. The 25 June *Daily World* brayed that "A small, vocal group of ultra-leftists periodically disrupted the conference, demanding an immediate labor boycott of ships to and from Chile and raising points that were not on the agenda," i.e., the exclusion of capitalist politicians. Who the real disrupters was was clearly shown by the delegates' physical defense of Mandel and their demand for a democratic chairman in place of the ham-fisted maneuvers of Smith and Brown.

The *Daily World* account underlined the importance of Ryan's presence as part of the Stalinists' attempt to whip up support for a class-collaborationist "people's coalition." A CP-supported speaker at a rally later that evening was quoted as saying that "the strength needed to free the people of Chile lies in the kind of united front which was overthrown there in the first place." As militant delegates pointed out in opposing the Democratic Party speaker, the Allende coalition was not a united front for joint action by the workers movement but a popular front which prepared the way for the bloody coup by tying the proletariat to the class enemy.

Of the three scheduled workshops, the one on labor action attracted an overwhelming majority of conference participants. A motion was raised by a delegate from ILWU Local 34 (clerks) to initiate immediate informational picket lines at all ships to and from Chile and to distribute literature denouncing the crimes of the junta to all passengers, longshoremen and sailors. ILWU delegates who support the Militant Caucus of Local 6 (warehouse) and the *Longshore Militant*, an oppositional newsletter in Local 10, proposed an amendment calling for "immediate action by all unions in the

cargoing" goods to and from the junta, was nowhere to be seen on the docks during those days, and his Stalinist co-thinkers actually refused to let the brothers responsible for the success of the boycott speak at a Chile defense rally a few days later.

Completely ignoring last year's worldwide boycott, Brown supported his purposely vague motion at the June 14 conference by listing all the "reasons" why labor boycotts won't work. With typical bureaucratic cynicism and buck-passing, he predicted that longshoremen would never stop Chilean cargoes because that would violate the contract and the ranks were afraid to risk their weekly pay guarantee! This disgusting speech totally exposed the hollowness of Brown's multi-faceted do-nothing motion, which combined impotent consumer boycotts with a hint of labor action (as long as it's legal and doesn't violate the contract, of course).

The labor action workshop was soon polarized by another motion. Members of the Committee for a Militant UAW from the Fremont General Motors plant presented a motion calling for the restoration of freedom of the press in Portugal and the release of 500 members of the Maoist MRPP who had been arrested a few days earlier. Archie Brown's friends in the audience, who don't like criticisms of the Portuguese military government and its Communist Party supporters, repeatedly shouted and made so many phony points of order that it took the chair half an hour to create enough order for the UAW delegate to read the motion all the way through. The Stalinists had some difficulty explaining why repression of left and labor militants by the military junta is bad in Chile but good in Portugal. Although the motion failed, it received a third of the votes in the workshop.

When the plenary session reconvened, reports from the different workshops were heard. The legislative workshop reported out a motion to send a letter of apology to Congressman Ryan. Militant delegates from the ILWU and other unions fought this, pointing out that such an apology was tantamount to a vote of confidence in the Democratic Party and its subsidies to the CIA, its intervention in



Stalinist goon attack on ILWU militant at recent Bay Area Trade Union Conference on Chile.

U.S. and internationally to stop any and all military shipments to the junta," for specific commercial embargoes with limited aims (such as freeing political prisoners), and a total labor boycott in the event of a further massive assault against the Chilean workers.

The delegates from Local 34, who are politically heterogeneous but serious in their efforts to aid persecuted Chilean class brothers and sisters, joined with the militant delegates from Locals 10 and 6 in jointly fighting for the amended motion. These same militants worked closely together last September to ensure that the ILWU in the Bay Area enforced a two-day boycott of Chilean cargo called by the International Transport Workers Federation. Archie Brown, who had originally authored a motion in Local 10 for "hot-

Vietnam and the Dominican Republic, its anti-labor laws like the one used to break the last longshore strike, etc. About 20 delegates out of 60 voted against this cringing apology.

Although providing little concrete aid to the Chilean working class, the June 14 conference did serve to expose the pretensions of the Stalinists, who are driven to a bureaucratic frenzy whenever their bankrupt policy of crawling to the Democrats is challenged. No less important, the call for working-class independence from the capitalist parties and for concrete actions of international labor solidarity put forward by militant delegates at the conference showed that there is a real alternative of class struggle to counter the defeatism and inaction of the reformists. ■

After the Imperialist Defeat

Indochina: Deformed Revolution

For half a century the workers and peasants of Indochina have fought tenaciously to break the stranglehold of imperialism. Their heroic will to struggle has been proven by incredible endurance in the face of years of the most barbaric repression and annihilation bombing. The victory signalled by the entry of troops of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the National Liberation Front (NLF) of South Vietnam into Saigon on April 30 belongs to the Indochinese working masses. Yet today it is not the proletariat that holds political power in Vietnam, governing through democratic soviets, but a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy that rules.

With the panicked flight of the Saigon bourgeoisie and the clear military victory by North Vietnamese armed forces, Vietnam has been wrenched from the orbit of imperialism and capitalist rule has been toppled. Similarly, a social revolution triumphed in Cambodia a few weeks earlier with the entry of the Khmer Rouge into Phnom Penh.

Does this mean, then, that the Vietnamese and Cambodian "Communists" are the iron-willed revolutionaries portrayed by the capitalist and Stalinist press throughout the world? Does this mean that peasant-based armies can usurp the role of revolutionary vanguard which Marxism has always ascribed to the proletariat? Does this mean that the Stalinist program of "two-stage" revolution is no longer a strategy of betrayal, as Trotskyists have maintained, but only a more "realistic" program for eventual victory?

By no means. The Vietnamese Stalinists, led by Ho Chi Minh, have repeatedly compromised and sold out the militant struggle of the working masses in the vain hope of achieving "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists. The cost: millions of dead as the battle has been needlessly drawn out for decades.

• In the 1930's the Indochinese Communist Party abandoned the struggle for national independence, instead calling for support to the popular-front government of French imperialism. In 1939, Stalinist representatives on the Saigon municipal council voted for war credits.

• In 1945 the Stalinist-led Viet Minh welcomed British and French colonial troops into Saigon. In March 1946 Ho Chi Minh signed an agreement for limited independence within the French Union and for the reintroduction of French troops. Six months later the French bombed and shelled Haiphong.

• In 1954 the Viet Minh agreed at Geneva (under pressure from Moscow and Peking) to abandon everything below the 17th parallel, although it controlled 85 percent of the country at the time. While the puppet Diem regime in Saigon proceeded to execute thousands of peasants, Ho refused to give substantial aid to southern insurgents until 1960.

• Following the signing of the 1973 Paris "Peace" Accords, the DRV/NLF subordinated all military considerations to the achievement of a class-collaborationist coalition government. Only the wretchedness of the Saigon regime, hopelessly corrupt and slavishly dependent upon U.S. imperialism, prevented the consolidation of such a capitalist coalition government.

Indochina and the Permanent Revolution

But if the Vietnamese Stalinists are as treacherous as ever, how can the over-

throw of capitalist rule in Saigon be explained by the theory of permanent revolution? Among ostensible Trotskyists there has been a wide variety of responses to this question. Some, such as the grovelling reformists of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) simply close their eyes to reality. In a statement on the taking of Saigon the SWP declared: "... the possibility now exists for achieving the long-strived-for goal of national unification and self-determination of Vietnam. The objective conditions also exist for a social revolution to abolish the entire system of exploitation for private profit" (*Militant*, 9 May). Lots of possibilities, it seems, but nothing of historical significance accomplished!

On the other hand, the SWP's factional opponents in the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" capitulate to the popularity of Ho Chi Minh and the NLF by declaring them to be "revolutionaries." An editorial in the 27 March *Inprecor*, the organ of the USec majority, states that "the struggle of the Indochinese peoples" has for 30 years been "a road for the struggles of the workers of the world that is an alternative to the reformist sidetrack. It is the alternative of revolutionary combat." With the taking of Saigon they announce "the first victorious 'permanent revolution' since the victory of the Cuban revolution" (*Inprecor*, 8 May).

The international Spartacist tendency has been unique in recognizing that capitalist rule has been overthrown in Vietnam and Cambodia while refusing to hide the crimes of Ho Chi Minh and his successors (such as the murder of several thousand Vietnamese Trotskyists following World War II). Calling for unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states of Indochina against imperialism, we also warn the Vietnamese working masses that they must place no confidence in their leaders, whose narrow nationalism is an obstacle to the only real defense of the gains of the Vietnamese revolution: its international extension and the ultimate obliteration of capitalism throughout the world. In order to take the revolution forward it is necessary to carry out a political revolution to overthrow Stalinist bureaucratic rule.

The establishment of deformed workers states in South Vietnam and Cambodia has come under exceptional historical circumstances. The options of U.S. imperialism were severely limited by the extreme unpopularity of renewed military intervention, the discrediting of the government in the wake of Watergate and CIA scandals, and the fact that decisive sectors of the American bourgeoisie had written off Indochina as a lost cause. Local bourgeois forces in Indochina were almost totally disorganized, unable even to rid themselves of the Thieu and Lon Nol cliques until it was too late. The decisive factor enabling the Stalinists to assume power in Indochina was the absence of a class-conscious proletariat fighting in its own interests.

The First Days of Stalinist Rule in Saigon

News reports of events in South Vietnam during the two months since the military victory of the DRV/NLF fully confirm our analysis and program. On the one hand, it is clear that there has been no "first stage" of alliance with "democratic, anti-imperialist" bourgeois forces. A general of the North Vietnamese army



Far Eastern Economic Review

Victory rally at Saigon Presidential Palace in May.

heads the "Military Management Committee" which administers Saigon, and no coalition government was formed. The real situation was accurately portrayed in the reported remark of the DRV officer who removed General Duong Van Minh from the South Vietnamese presidential palace after refusing to accept a formal transfer of power from the "third force" leader: "The revolution has seized complete power. The former Administration has been overthrown. No one can hand over what they have lost" (*New York Times*, 3 May).

In the succeeding days the "third force" has played no more of a role than it did on April 30. Asked about whether such groups will be represented in an eventual South Vietnamese government, the leader of the "People's Organization for the Application of the Paris Agreements," Tran Ngoc Lien, replied: "The victors are the PRG people. Our contribution has been quite small" (*Le Monde*, 23 May). A week later, one of the main "third force" organizations, the "Women's Movement for the Right to Life," dissolved in order to join the South Vietnam Liberation Women's Association, according to the official newspaper *Sai Gon Giai Phong* ("Liberated Saigon").

Concerning the question of nationalizations, the new authorities have issued contradictory statements. All abandoned properties (the majority of the industrial and major commercial establishments) have been expropriated. So, too, have the banks. On the other hand, a number of substantial French-owned businesses have been officially informed that they may stay on indefinitely, including Michelin and other major rubber plantations and the main brewery (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 June 1975). This, however, is not decisive in determining

the class character of a state. The Bolsheviks did not begin widespread nationalizations until mid-1918, although the soviets seized power nine months earlier, and privately owned industry was not finally eliminated until the mid-1920's.

The fundamental question is what class interests the state power serves. Although many "reeducated" civil servants may eventually serve in the new administration (just as a former economics minister is reportedly aiding the new authorities in reviving the economy), it is clear that the old capitalist state apparatus has been totally destroyed. This is particularly true of the former Saigon army, which melted away in a matter of hours.

For Workers Soviets, Not Bureaucratic Rule

The organizational framework of the new state power has not yet been decided. It is clear that, while for a time there will be a separate South Vietnam, rapid reunification is being sought. All references to the "People's Revolutionary Party" (which supposedly was the core of the NLF) have now been dropped, and a leading South Vietnamese official, Pham Hung, was recently officially described as a "member of the Vietnam Workers Party Central Committee Political Bureau and secretary of the South Vietnam party organization" (*New York Times*, 20 May). A North Vietnamese radio broadcast reportedly announced that the DRV National Assembly had urged that Hanoi be the capital of the reunited country.

But while the capitalist state has been decisively smashed, and the remaining bourgeois forces have been politically atomized so that they are presently incapable of acting as a coherent force,

the dictatorship of the exploiters has not been replaced by the democratic rule of the exploited through soviets such as existed in Russia at the time Lenin and Trotsky headed the Communist Party.

In a recent article entitled "Permanent Revolution in Vietnam" (*Inprecor*, 22 May), the USec majority's "Indochina expert" Pierre Rousset tries to mask this crucial fact by giving a distorted picture of the DRV/NLF takeover in Da Nang. After referring to "clandestine urban military actions; popular insurrectional movements; mass demonstrations" he concludes, "The new administration grows out of revolutionary action, and not primarily military action."

The USec is now willing to admit to the existence of certain "bureaucratic deformations" in North Vietnam, and even that the "revolutionary" Vietnamese leaders have "a programmatic adaptation...to the political heritage of the Stalinized Third International" which "continues to limit the conception that the Vietnamese CP has of the place in the workers state of structures of the Soviet type." But clearly this is only a minor omission in their eyes, which could be easily rectified by inviting Ernest Mandel to give speeches to the bureaucrats in

Hanoi and Saigon as he used to do in Havana.

In fact, the DRV/NLF victory was one of military occupation of the cities and there were no generalized urban uprisings by the working class. Nor are there any democratic organs through which the proletariat can determine government policy. It was precisely such soviet-type organs which were set up 30 years ago in Saigon at the initiative of the Trotskyist International Communist League and which were the organizing centers of the mass insurrection against the invading colonial troops after the end of World War II. Just as the Viet Minh opposed the "people's committees" (To Chuc Uy Banh Hanh Dong), first opposing and then sabotaging the Saigon insurrection of 1945, so today the Vietnamese Stalinists would quickly suppress any attempt by the working masses to set up political organs independent of bureaucratic control.

As for the "revolutionary people's committees" reportedly being established at the neighborhood level in the major cities, their relation to workers democracy is accurately expressed in the ceremonies in which these previously unknown "leaders" are "presented" to the popula-

tion (for a description, see *Le Monde*, 16 May).

Bureaucratic Depopulation of Cambodian Towns

In sharp contrast to the halting nationalizations of the South Vietnamese Stalinists, the victorious Cambodian Khmer Rouge has had no reluctance to expropriate the remnants of capitalist property. All imperialist investments and enterprises, including the important rubber plantations, have been taken over (*Le Monde*, 12 June). The Cambodian leadership has, however, moved just as swiftly in acts of bureaucratic stupidity and cruelty. The contradictory character of Stalinism was nowhere more graphically revealed than in the actions of the victorious Cambodian peasant army marching into Phnom Penh not to liberate the poor and working people but rather to brutally impose an immediate and total depopulation of the city.

For the bourgeois press, the gun-point depopulation was an anti-Communist propaganda bonanza. Sydney Schanberg's powerful and believable eyewitness account described how "Hospitals jammed with wounded were emptied

right down to the last patient. They went limping, crawling on crutches..." (*New York Times*, 9 May). It was an easy opportunity for professional cold warriors to characterize Communism as "anti-civilization." Liberals pontificated about Communists revelling in "inhumanity" and even Henry Kissinger (!) felt he could label this a "major atrocity."

For Stalinist cheerleaders of peasant-based guerrillaism these were simply cleansing actions in the "re-education" of urban dwellers. At the height of Stalin's bureaucratic forced-draft collectivization (which even Russian authorities now admit cost the lives of several million peasants) similar disingenuous apologies for bureaucratic arbitrariness were preferred by one Anna Louise Strong. Trotsky, of course, had called for collectivization (long before Stalin finally carried it out), but through the voluntary choice of the peasants.

In Cambodia some urban depopulation was indeed called for. The towns had become unmanageably swollen with refugees from the countryside, most driven there by U.S. saturation bombing. But Phnom Penh, which had already

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The Document the USec Majority Refuses to Print:

Appeal of the Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam

The following letter was sent to last year's "Tenth World Congress" of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International." This poignant appeal is itself a devastating comment on the liquidationist consequences of the USec's capitulation to Vietnamese Stalinism. If, as USec leaders allege, the "Vietnamese Communist Party" is "empirically revolutionary," and the "Vietnamese leadership as a whole has assimilated the decisive implications of the permanent revolution for colonial and semi-colonial countries" (Pierre Rousset, *Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien*), what interest can Ernest Mandel & Co. have in building a Vietnamese Trotskyist party?

It is small wonder, then, that to this day the Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam has received "no help whatsoever from the International or from the Ligue Communiste." Not only does the BLVG's letter remain unanswered, but the top leadership of the French Ligue (now LCR), the USec majority's star section, has refused to "publicize" the existence of the Vietnamese group even by publishing this letter in its internal bulletin or discussing the matter in its Central Committee!

The BLVG asks pointedly, "Should the International concern itself with a Vietnamese Trotskyist group" loyal to the USec under difficult conditions? And "Should we work towards the creation of a section of the Fourth International in Vietnam?" Following the taking of Saigon, the professional tailists of this fake-Trotskyist fake International have in effect responded to the questions of their Vietnamese comrades...in the negative.

In articles and statements celebrating the military victory of

DRV/NLF troops over the puppet Thieu regime, neither the guerrillaist majority nor the orthodox-posturing reformists of the minority "Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" have seen fit to even mention the assassination of several thousand Vietnamese Trotskyists by the followers of Ho Chi Minh in 1945-47. USec majorityites actually apologize for the Stalinist butchers and now hail the overthrow of capitalist rule in South Vietnam as "the first victorious 'permanent revolution' since the victory of the Cuban revolution" (*Inprecor*, 8 May 1975).

It has been left to the international Spartacist tendency to uphold the struggle of our martyred Vietnamese comrades and call for the formation of authentic Trotskyist parties in Indochina as part of a reborn Fourth International. While unconditionally defending the new deformed workers states of South Vietnam and Cambodia against imperialism, we have called for extending the revolutionary conquests and opening the road to socialism by political revolution to replace Stalinist bureaucratic rule with the democratic rule of the working class (supported by the exploited peasantry) through soviets.

Dear Comrades,

The Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Vietnam (BLV), sends you its fraternal greetings and wishes the Congress great success in keeping with our great hopes.

We know that serious subjects are presently being discussed in the International, especially the Vietnamese problem. We deeply regret that for material reasons

(date of the Congress became known too late, passports, visas...) the BLV is absent from your debates. We regret it all the more because our group does not have the same position as the International nor the comrades of the opposition. We could contribute original ideas as Vietnamese Trotskyists, having been able to read many Vietnamese documents hardly known outside of the country.

Our BLV group was constituted as a section of the International in 1947, by joining the International. It has a long history behind it. It was our group that had successfully led, during the 1946-1953 period, the movement of 20,000 emigrant workers in France... Our group was able to resist the most brutal repression of French imperialism during the first war in Vietnam.

...a small group remains in France and carries on in spite of a thousand difficulties. It is the present defender of Vietnamese Trotskyist traditions and ideas.

Although for tactical reasons we don't officially identify ourselves in our press as Trotskyists, all the Vietnamese political circles in France know of our existence, especially the North Vietnamese ruling circles. We are seeking to constantly intervene in the struggle against American imperialism through all sorts of actions taking many different forms.

In the very special historical conditions in Vietnam, where the enormous weight of the VCP ["Vietnamese Communist Party"] crushes all the organisations to its left, maintaining a Trotskyist group, even a propaganda group, is an extremely difficult task. We have been able to do this during these last years with no help whatsoever from the International

or from the Ligue Communiste.

In the political debate now unfolding in the International, we note two opposite errors. The first consists of prettying up the VCP to the point of labelling it a Revolutionary Party, thus forgetting the entire past historical development of this party, and not taking into account its present opportunistic and empirical policy which could cause serious setbacks for the Vietnamese Revolution. The second error is wanting at all costs to stick to the old schemas and refusing to see the evolution of this party in the new conditions and the fact that it has successfully led the national liberation struggle.

The BLV group is constantly careful to not fall into either of the two errors. It constantly attempts to keep in touch with reality, to understand it and to draw the lessons from it for action, never losing sight of the fundamental principles of Trotskyism and Leninism.

Comrades,

We request that you make our existence known to the sections and that you debate out the following questions.

1) Should the International concern itself with a Vietnamese Trotskyist group which has remained loyal to the International and which has carried on against great obstacles, in the most difficult of conditions?

2) Should we work towards the creation of a section of the Fourth International in Vietnam?

An answer to these two questions would already resolve half the debate under way on the Vietnamese problem.

Our very fraternal greetings,
the BLVG
February 5, 1974

900 Suspended in Montreal P.O.

Trudeau Assault on Postal Unions

TORONTO—Emboldened by the success of Quebec provincial authorities in recently placing four construction unions in receivership (under the time-worn guise of "fighting corruption"), and the capitulation of both East and West Coast longshore unions to federal strikebreaking back-to-work orders in April-May, the Canadian government has launched a full-scale offensive against the postal unions. The focal point is Montreal, where militant "posties" last year sparked a cross-Canada wildcat against government attempts to slash wages in conjunction with the introduction of automated sorting (see "Canadian Postal Strike Sellout," *WV* No. 44, 10 May 1974).

With disputes over automation continuing and contract negotiations going on with the two main postal unions, post office management moved to break the Montreal locals by firing 47 militants and handing out more than 900 suspensions. But, as happened last year and repeatedly in the past, both local and national union bureaucrats are capitulating to the government, leaving postal workers defenseless in the face of this brutal anti-labour assault. The Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC) which represents 16,000 letter carriers and postal truck drivers settled separately for a sellout contract in late May, while the 22,000-member Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) continues to negotiate.

Postal workers in Canada are governed by the repressive Public Service Staff Relations Act (PSSRA) which specifies that technological change, job classification and hiring and firing cannot be negotiated by the unions. While the government offers paltry, inadequate wage increases, workers are expected to swallow without protest the implementation of massive automation of the entire postal system (known as the MAPP Plan) which guarantees wide-scale layoffs, speedup and increased harassment.

In preparation for the move to automated MAPP facilities, the Post Office has begun to hire large numbers of non-union "casual" labour, thus providing a sizable pool of potential strikebreakers. The massive firings and suspensions in Montreal were a management attempt to crush a union campaign of slowdowns and partial work stoppages against this hiring of casuals. In response to a one-day "sick-in" on May 26 by the Montreal CUPW local to protest the victimizations, federal Postmaster-General Bryce Mackasey brought in *one thousand* scabs, most of them reportedly students (*Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 30 May). Mackasey had been threatening for several months to conduct a wholesale



Globe and Mail [Toronto]

Postal employees picket main P.O. in Montreal after walking out over contract this April.

attack on CUPW in Montreal to "weed out hoodlum elements" (union militants).

The key to protecting postal workers against threatened massive layoffs lies in militant struggle against the PSSRA and the government's union-busting offensive. This fight demands united action of the LCUC and CUPW, a unity which the bureaucrats of both unions have consistently opposed. Instead they have sought to limit contract negotiations to the "legal" issue of wages, and last fall they dissolved the joint bargaining council in an orgy of bureaucratic backstabbing. The wholesale sacking of Montreal CUPW militants demanded a swift nationwide response in solidarity with their victimized fellow union members. But CUPW national bureaucrats responded by admonishing postal workers in the rest of Canada not to be "provoked" into taking defensive strike action, thus giving the government a blank check to chew up the most militant sector of the union.

In the contract negotiations LCUC bureaucrats ignored entirely the question of MAPP and "recommended" that their membership adopt the federal conciliation board's inadequate wage offer of a \$1.70 per hour increase spread over two and a half years along with a partial cost-of-living escalator clause. A variety of cynical ploys was used to demoralize and confuse the ranks into accepting this sellout deal.

In mid-April the LCUC leadership announced that it had reached a "tentative" agreement with the government but stalled ratification meetings and even publication of the proposed settlement for almost a month. In the interim it launched a series of one-day rotating strikes, ostensibly to put heat on the government to settle but in fact intended only to let the ranks blow off steam. To ensure that these token strikes did not develop into a national walkout, the CUPW and LCUC leaderships negotiated a criminally divisive *agreement to scab* on each other's strikes.

Despite such disgusting manoeuvres, a number of local bureaucrats—headed by Guy Morrissette, president of the 2,500-member Montreal local—opposed the contract. The response of the LCUC national office was to promptly slap Montreal under trusteeship. This heavy-handed move backfired, however, when a mass meeting of Montreal LCUC members launched a three-day strike against the national. Morrissette, who simply wanted to sell out at a higher price, took this opportunity to viciously attack his own union by immediately filing an injunction against the trusteeship in the bourgeois courts.

The Montreal bureaucrats were unsuccessful in their attempt to turn down the settlement. The results of the national ratification vote announced May 26 were 82 percent in favour of the conciliation board's proposal.

The CUPW brass is pursuing a different tack in its contract negotiations by putting forward a series of "radical" demands—a \$3.26 per hour raise in a one-year contract, increased numbers of holidays and 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay (which CUPW president Joe Davidson "shrugs off... with a shade of embarrassment," according to the 2 April *Globe and Mail*). Obviously, the CUPW bureaucrats have no intention of fighting for these demands and are merely using them as a cover for their real activity around the contract—impotent parliamentary lobbying to obtain a change in the legal status of the Post Office from a government department to a Crown Corporation. This change in designation is intended to put postal workers outside the jurisdiction of the PSSRA and thus make it "legal" for CUPW to negotiate over automation.

The response to the cynical betrayals of the bureaucratic scum—afraid to take action for fear of upsetting backscratching relationships with the capitalists and their government—must be to throw out these traitors through a fight for a class-struggle leadership. Instead of depending on dead-end legalistic manoeuvring, such a leadership would base its strength on the independent mobilization of the ranks, leading them forward on a transitional program of militant demands and intransigent opposition to the class enemy.

There are several supposedly revolutionary groups backing oppositionists in the postal unions who pretend to be a militant alternative to the present sellout bureaucracies. But in the hopes of easily winning mass influence through reformist gimmicks and tailing after militant-posturing bureaucrats, most of these groups end up apologizing for abject betrayals by the LCUC/CUPW brass. The fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Marxist Group, for example, absolves the bureaucrats of their failure to defend victimized Montreal militants by asserting that "It is true that a national strike isn't possible yet." Instead, "pickets, demonstrations, slow-downs and cafeteria study sessions are possible" (*Old Mole*, June 1975).

The only organized oppositional grouping in the post office is the reformist Postal Action Committee (PAC) which is supported by the Stalinist Canadian Party of Labour, co-thinkers of the U.S. Progressive Labor Party. PAC has a two-point program for postal workers: "more militancy" and 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay. (The May issue of PAC's *Newsletter* carried the headline "'30 for 40'—Better than Mom's Apple Pie!") Instead of drawing the lesson that a minimal program limited to a few reforms can easily be adopted by any left-talking bureaucrat, the CPL chooses to interpret CUPW leader Davidson's adoption of "30 for 40" as proof of its influence in the working class. PAC's only criticism of the

bureaucracy's contract proposal is that it demands too much! It would be more "realistic" to focus on two contract demands—"30 for 40" and the 70 percent pay increase (*PAC Newsletter*, May 1975).

The folksy reformists of PAC have more to worry about than just having their program stolen by the bureaucracy. They are obviously feeling considerable heat as a result of their scabbing on the PSAC (Public Service Alliance of Canada) postal workers' strike in February, as well as their thug attack on a *Workers Vanguard* reporter who saw them crossing the picket line. The 22 March *Worker* carried a story claiming that "In front of Terminal A 3 Trots jumped a union member and a member of PAC." This is a lie, as all those PAC members and unionists present well know. What happened was that several PAC supporters jumped one *WV* photographer and attempted to take the camera he was using to take pictures of PAC members crossing the PSAC lines (see "Solidarity and Betrayal in Canadian Government Employees' Strike," *WV* No. 64, 14 March 1975).

The 5 April *Worker* then carried an apologetic letter from Peter Liebowitz, a leading PAC member, which "explains" that "Many members of the union weren't happy" about the union's decision to scab, "but we felt that if only a handful didn't cross then the boss could easily pick us off." The CPL followed up this shameless defense of strikebreaking with a string of hysterical anti-Trotskyist slanders in its press. Obviously they are acutely embarrassed by the fact that the Canadian Committee of the international Spartacist tendency (and even the opportunist RMG) advised CUPW members to honour the picket lines which the PAC crossed. No amount of "militant" huffing and puffing or lying can hide this betrayal.

The Postal Action Committee has no alternative to the trade-union reformism of the existing bureaucrats. Militant postal workers must seek to build a class-struggle leadership which has a program going beyond simple trade unionism, clearly posing the necessity for the revolutionary transformation of society based on the principle of production for use rather than profit. Under working-class rule the advance of technology and introduction of automation would benefit all workers instead of driving thousands onto the unemployment lines and welfare rolls in order to satisfy the profit hunger of the tiny minority of exploiters.

—For a national strike to defend the Montreal militants!

—No government intervention in the unions—smash the PSSRA!

—For a democratic merger of the LCUC and CUPW!

—Oust the bureaucrats—for a class-struggle leadership in the postal unions!

—Forward to a workers government!

"National Bargaining" Disputed at CWA Convention

SAN DIEGO—The Communications Workers of America (CWA) held its 37th annual convention here in mid-June, managing to avoid any discussion whatsoever of the main threat to phone workers—layoffs. The meeting—which served as a sounding board for nervous local presidents trying to combine loyalty to the International with a facade of independence for consumption by the ranks—did, however, see the eruption of substantial opposition to the worst features of the bureaucratic "national bargaining" scheme. This legacy of the Beirne regime railroaded through last year's convention eliminates ratification of the contract by the locals and puts bargaining in the hands of a few national officials.

The convention also soundly defeated an attempt by the leadership of Local 9410 (San Francisco) to attach a reactionary catch-all anti-dissent amendment to Article 19 of the International constitution. While a leadership-backed proposal to extend the period between conventions to 18 months was voted down, the show of independence by the delegates (a symptom of the lack of authority of the new president Glen Watts) was not all laudable. A motion to establish women's

committees (in locals where "appropriate") and a lukewarm motion for prison reform, both of which had the International's support, were defeated with demagogic arguments.

If a United Auto Workers convention resembles a slightly raucous New Year's Eve party, CWA conventions are more like a Rotary Club reunion—relatively sedate, complete with "in" rituals, and almost entirely white. The only major battle, on the question of bargaining, was introduced at the very beginning of the convention and was at times heated. However, the opposition oozed "good will" and carefully confined its protests within the strict limits of loyalty to the International bureaucracy.

Opposition to aspects of "national bargaining" centered on motions originally introduced in District 10, a southern region including Louisiana and Kentucky. The District 10 motions were passed overwhelmingly by a number of other units before the convention, including by Western Electric Installation and Long Lines National. Among the demands were an end to the news blackout around national bargaining, a completed strike vote two weeks before the contract expiration date, no work without a contract, and no national agreement which is injurious to critical local bargaining negotiations. Not included, however, is local-by-local ratification of the contract.

The International's response to these proposals was to shunt them off to a committee to "study" the problems and report back to the 1976 convention. About 30-40 percent of the delegates supported the District 10 motions in a vote which was close enough to require a physical division of the house. The opposition, however, was unable to lead a real fight against the CWA tops' maneuver because they themselves declared their loyalty to the International leadership. Jerico Fernandez, president of the New Orleans local, concluded his presentation by saying to the delegates "accept the leadership," and that far from taking power from the International officers, the District 10 motions "will put the power of all the delegates behind the leadership." Such servile declarations could only defuse opposition. If the leaders should be faithfully supported, then why not trust their committee to "study" the questions?

The Southern delegations, which generally favored more militancy, showed the contradictory character of simple trade unionism by opposing a mild prison reform motion and vigorously defending Governor George Wallace, despite the fact that this supposed "friend of the little guy" runs a viciously racist, anti-labor, low-wage open-shop state.

The defeat of the Article 19 amendment was a setback for Local 9410 President Kirkpatrick's virulent red-baiting campaign. His amendment was to permit bringing of charges against members who distribute any "unauthorized material" that would "tend to create a breakdown in the confidence, morale or unity of the rank and file." President Watts affirmed that even local officials could be tried under such a sweeping provision, a prospect which did not please the assembly. But although the International bureaucracy opposed the amendment, it should not be thought that they have no sympathy for Kirkpatrick. The report of the Constitutional Committee stated that

"We are aware of the existence of problems in the Local from which this proposal was received." The committee felt there was already ample weaponry in the existing constitution to crush dissent.

In his speech to the convention Kirkpatrick said that militant oppositionists, far from being a local problem, are the concern of the whole "free labor movement," and went on to praise "Operation South America" (i.e., the CIA- and company-backed "American Institute for Free Labor Development").

tions to the delegates, the first being for a mobilization of the membership to fight layoffs by "initiation of all necessary union action, up to and including a national strike to fight for a shorter work week with no loss in pay to create jobs for all." In addition, this resolution called for reopening the contract to throw out the "needs of service" clause and all other sections allowing layoffs and harassment.

On the important issue of racial and sexual discrimination, notorious throughout the Bell System, a MAC



WV photo

CWA convention in San Diego last month.

Watts also went out of his way to back the AIFLD, saying the CWA assists "free" unions "but not in either rightist or leftist countries." An example of this CIA brand of "unionism" was provided in Chile, where the AIFLD helped organize and finance a right-wing movement to topple the Allende government. After the military junta overthrew the elected government, outlawed the CUT union federation and jailed, tortured and killed thousands of workers and labor leaders, the generals arranged a meeting in January 1974 to form a new federation of 26 AIFLD-backed "unions."

Among the "problems" which Kirkpatrick and the Constitutional Committee referred to is the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) in Oakland and San Francisco. The Local 9410 tops are concerned about growing support for the MAC, which two years ago was instrumental in building a united front that defeated a similar Article 19 amendment. This spring, Jane Margolis, MAC candidate for convention delegate in 9410, received 230 votes, only 35 short of election.

Of the various oppositional groupings present at the convention, the MAC was the only one with a serious intervention. United Action, supported by the left social-democratic International Socialists (IS), barely managed to distribute its newsletter *Long Distance*, which simply enthused over the District 10 motions as an "important step." The group remained essentially invisible and offered no motions to the delegates. The Workers Action Movement (WAM) predictably was pushing its favorite gimmick, petitioning George Meany for "30 for 40."

The MAC, in contrast, offers a real break with the pro-capitalist policies of the CWA bureaucracy. In a special convention issue of its newspaper *Militant Action* it presented several resolu-

tion declared that using the courts and government agencies against the unions weakens labor; that "affirmative action programs" and other schemes for "preferential" hiring, firing, etc. are no solution to discrimination and open the door to union-busting; and called for the CWA to fight for equality for all by demanding a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, union control of hiring and upgrading, and full child care at company expense.

Further MAC resolutions were presented calling for the International to reopen the case of the nine fired members of Local 9410 whom Kirkpatrick has refused to defend; for labor/black defense of busing; for the CWA to break all ties with the AIFLD and the CIA; against the deportation of so-called "illegal aliens"—for full citizenship rights for all foreign workers; and against asylum for Indochinese war criminals—open the borders to Chilean refugees. MAC also called for the building of an independent political party of labor to fight the twin parties of capital—a workers party, based on the unions, to fight for a workers government.

Because the MAC stood out as the real potential militant leadership at the convention, it is not accidental that Watts singled it out in his closing remarks. He appealed to groups like MAC to "join together" instead of trying to "tear down." But it is those like Watts, not the MAC, who are the enemies of strong unions and whose policies of support for the companies and the capitalist government are the real obstacles to unity of the workers. As attacks on the CWA membership intensify this will become clear to more and more of the ranks. Thus the need for a national opposition in the CWA, with a class-struggle program such as that of the MAC, has never been more urgent. ■

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I.S. Launches "Agitational" Turn

The left social democratic International Socialists group is being prodded by its leadership into a "turn." The watchwords are "bolshevization" and "agitation." The expectation is of rapid, not to say phenomenal, growth, justified by the elevation of opportunism to the level of highest principle: "over the years we have developed a set of politics that fits the times...we are swimming with the tide."

The new orientation is set forth in two hastily drafted internal documents presented by the IS leadership in May, "For a Workers' Combat Organization—The Bolshevization of the IS" and "The IS, the Revolutionary Party and Democratic Centralism." Leaving aside the stirring exhortations to the membership which constitute the bulk of the documents (one subhead is entitled "For a Serious and Dedicated Organization"), the thrust of the new policy appears to be an attempt to pull in new recruits on the basis of minimal political agreement and a related effort to contain the differences which are bound to develop through imposing more rigid norms of internal party life.

Unlike some of the more recent entrants on the pseudo-Trotskyist scene, the IS has carved out for itself a comfortable niche as the virulently Stalinophobic variant of left reformism. In this incarnation it has been possible to recruit modest numbers of middle-class radicals drawn to the IS by its lack of seriousness, workerism and willingness to adapt to whatever is popular. But the IS now wishes to emulate the currently more flamboyantly successful operation of the International Socialists of Great Britain, whose temporary place in the sun is, however, facilitated by the much more highly advanced level of class consciousness among British workers as well as by the political bankruptcy of the entire British "far left."

Modelling itself on the success of its British affiliate, the IS now sets itself the task of "opening the gates to the workers." The turn toward "bolshevization" is a reflection of the simple realization that serious proletarian militants can only be repelled by the IS environment of dilettantism and inveterate in-fighting. The IS leadership itself, smug in the conviction that the new agitational turn will automatically dispose of the old garbage, describes the history of the IS from 1970-73 as "the star system of bourgeois individualism, the leadership of personalities, of individual stars with their own personal bases, clienteles, cliques and eventually factions.... Coming out of the universities we had individual leaders [who]...competed against one another, had personal clienteles who they serviced or represented, spread information and gossip to their bases...." The responsibility for this situation is conveniently foisted off on the elements of the old IS leadership which in 1973 left to form the Revolutionary Socialist League.

The documents extol the IS's version of "democratic centralism"—a much-abused phrase which, not for the first time, is being invoked by these left reformists to conceal the attempt to suppress internal political differentiation. Sandwiched in between reams of the IS's usual super-democratic rhetoric are a few ominous indications of the bureaucratic perversion of Leninist organizational functioning expounded by the IS leadership. The documents blithely assert that "the expulsion of the RSL was, correctly, not for explicit overt acts, but mainly for views...which could only lead to a systematic effort to wreck the IS." The Stalinophobic IS is apparently not ashamed to borrow from the arsenal of Stalinism the practice of political expulsions! Lest this threat should not prove a sufficient deterrent to potential opposi-

tions, the IS leadership also proposes to keep the ranks uninformed of disputes within the leadership through an organizational innovation proudly labelled "voluntary discipline" of members of leading bodies in not taking differences to the membership.

"Basic Training"

It is clear from the documents that the IS intends to undertake a recruitment drive aimed at workers who presumably can be attracted by the organization's new-found "agitational" activity, with very little regard for the level of political agreement. The example of this "short-cut" which immediately comes to mind is the experience of the now moribund Workers League over the past several years. The IS leadership must be aware of this similarity, but rationalizes that this time "the period" will make it possible.

Of course this is a challenging and fruitful period for revolutionary activity. Of course U.S. workers can increasingly be won to commit their lives to a Leninist organization. The experience of the Spartacist League confirms that this is already taking place on a small scale. But it is absurd to expect to build a stable cadre organization out of recruits with little political knowledge drawn to the IS on the basis of its promises of "agitation."

Lest anyone doubt that this is precisely what the IS intends, the documents are quite clear. "... there must be an absolute end to any bourgeois academic concepts of what a person needs to know (usually needs to have read) before they are 'eligible' for membership. Workers who are involved in a fight to the finish with their own boss or trade union bureaucracy don't have to prove anything to us except that they are willing to fight more effectively by joining our organization." And further: "Workers who join us are doing so not to change us by talk about their own pet notions on points where they differ with us, as so many intellectuals want to, but to be more effective class fighters." This notion is deeply contemptuous of the working class. Far from being uninterested in ideas (dismissed by the IS as "pet notions"), class-conscious workers recognize perfectly well that putting forward a principled class-struggle program is the key to being an "effective class fighter."

The IS's disdain for its hoped-for recruits shines through all the adulation it heaps on the working class. Even the choice of terminology is revealing. The IS writes, "we talk about training and not abstract education.... Our training will be broader than our education ever was," the very phrase unwittingly suggesting the "vocational training" the bourgeoisie confers upon working-class youth, whose aim is to provide a minimum of education

and a maximum of exploitable skills. The documents go so far as to promise a new "Basic Training Program," unfortunately conjuring up images of Uncle Sam's indoctrination sessions. And what could be more condescending than the promise that "we will teach our new members how to sell Workers Power and in the course of it convince them that the paper's fundamental role is as an organizer"?

The IS proposes to recruit workers "not on the basis of selecting us as one political tendency among many in the movement." A National Committee proposal "For a Worker Membership Campaign" indicates how the IS intends to deal with the danger of its new recruits' belatedly discovering the existence of other tendencies: an ambitious plan for "impressive," "showpiece" rallies specifies the intention of "excluding known Sparts and calling (for questions only, not discussion) only on workers who are close to the IS to speak from the floor" (*IS National Report*, Vol. III No. 18, 1-16 May 1975).

Neither its "basic training" scheme nor the isolation of new recruits from opponent political tendencies—which means isolation from the real world—will bring the IS any lasting success in its get-rich-quick plan to recruit workers. Whatever members the IS does recruit in this manner will experience a rapid turnover with the accompanying demoralization. The IS leadership would do well to examine the horrible example of the Workers League. But if history shows anything, it is that opportunists are incapable of learning from history.

"Pressure Groups"

As part of its new image, the IS appears to want to strike out a bit independently of the sleazy crew of out-bureaucrats the IS has christened "rank-and-file leaders." Here the aspiring social democrats of the IS are caught in a bind. As they recognize, whatever appearance of influence they possess is due to their role as "advisors, pushers from behind" to the likes of Pete Kelley, Jordan Sims and Edith Fox of the United National Caucus of the UAW and similar "pressure groups" in other unions. At the same time the IS feels the need to present a somewhat more leftist posture than these nakedly careerist bureaucratic elements—but "without in any sense breaking with or abandoning them." (For an account of the gyrations of IS trade-union supporters attempting to walk this tightrope, see "UNC Backs Busing, Union Defense Guards," *WV* No. 71, 20 June 1975). The IS does not want to place all its chips on groupings like the UNC, not out of any sudden attack of vestigial principles, but out of the nagging (and thoroughly justified) fear that an upsurge of working-class militancy will sweep the

UNC onto the garbage heap where it belongs. Without the UNC and similar outfits the IS could not posture as being in the "big time."

This desire for a more "independent" face does not constitute any sort of left turn. The IS has been drawn deeper and deeper into trade-union opportunism. In fact, it hides some of its most flagrant tailist excesses from the readership of *Workers Power* and does not publicize them even among its own ranks. In UAW Local 6 near Chicago, IS-influenced Local members heavily backed a so-called "Rank-and-File Coalition" whose doings the IS press reported uncritically. What the IS failed to mention was that this new "rank-and-file" outfit was headed up by Norm Roth, then-president of the Local, who supported the "Woodcock Team" at the last UAW Convention. *Workers Power* also devoted front-page coverage to the formation of a union defense guard for the home of a black Local 6 member, but neglected to mention that the motion which it printed in full was put forward by an oppositional grouping in Local 6—the Labor Struggle Caucus—which the IS does not support, preferring instead to suck up to the likes of Roth.

In a similar incident, when some genuine trade-union militants were mistakenly invited to participate in an IS panel in the Bay Area and took the opportunity to sharply criticize the IS's brand of union work, the IS failed to report it not only in *Workers Power* but even in its own internal report of the conference (see "Longshore Militants Confront I.S. at 'Rank and File' Conference," *WV* No. 60, 17 January 1975).

It is certainly amusing to expose the cheap falsifications of these self-appointed champions of "anti-elitism," but there is also a message here. Whatever their pretensions to "agitation," the IS does not have and cannot acquire the hegemonic position on the ostensibly revolutionary left which would permit it to shield its hoped-for proletarian recruits from contact with unpleasant realities, such as the example of principled trade-union activity undertaken by real class-struggle militants. All the stage-managed rallies in the world will not provide a short-cut to winning, developing and holding a cohesive cadre of committed communist workers. While the IS puffs itself up with opportunist gimmicks, the Spartacist League will continue to show that principles are not a hindrance to building a revolutionary Marxist party, but the only way. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Gotbaum...

(continued from page 12)

guardians of Carey, Beame and the bankers' class rule!

Gotbaum's plan to "fight" layoffs also plays directly into a possible race polarization. The "plan" is to have laid-off city workers hired under the federally-financed Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) at the expense of those presently employed under the program, who happen to be mainly minority-group ghetto residents! An incredulous delegate at the DC 37 delegates' meeting pointed out that CETA jobs only last a year. Gotbaum's response was that CETA was a depression program and therefore would be extended to the end of the depression, at which point jobs will reappear and workers will be rehired! Gotbaum plans to get work for 10,000 to 15,000 laid-off city workers (only half the number he himself predicted would be laid off) with such fairy tails, while any militant trade unionist knows that without a serious fight against layoffs, the jobs can be kissed goodbye forever.

The SWP's "Turn" to the Labor Movement

In addition to isolated strike votes, demonstrations and wildcats, rank-and-file frustration and pressure produced one ostensibly pan-union meeting on June 18, open to students and community groups as well, to plan for a march which was held yesterday. The meeting and march were built by supporters of the reformist views of the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who circulated an "action proposal" in various unions and corralled two local union presidents subject to pressure from the ranks—Pat Knight of SSEU and David Beasley of the library workers—to sponsor the event.

The SWP-backed proposal at the June 18 meeting, which was presented from the podium and voted up before the several counterproposals could be debated (a slick bureaucratic maneuver by Knight, who was chairing), was a study in the mildest reformism designed to appeal to disgruntled city officials, Democratic Party politicians and petty-bourgeois elements who might be enticed by the SWP into a "broad" pressure bloc "to turn around priorities." Its operative paragraph read:

"To begin this crucial process of uniting against these attacks, and of building the kind of strong social movement it will take to turn around the priorities in this city, we—the undersigned—are proposing a march on City Hall, to begin at noon from Union Square, Saturday, June 28, of all those affected by the city crisis, demanding 1) No Layoffs! and 2) No Cutbacks!"

To reassure the ruling class of its thoroughly non-revolutionary intentions, the SWP buried its own organizational presence at both the meeting and yesterday's march. Furthermore, members of the SWP-dominated National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR) spoke from the floor against any form of strike action to achieve the objectives, thus ensuring that the bloc would remain firmly within the bounds of capitalist politics and help to prevent mass mobilization of the workers and poor. One unidentified NSCAR supporter intoned, "These people who are calling for a strike are nothing but sectarians!" But at least three city unions—including the two sponsoring the meeting and march—had already voted (only on paper, to be sure) for strike action! The "action proposal" was little more than a way for Knight and Beasley to look militant without actually doing anything more than Gotbaum himself, and for the SWP to initiate one more reformist "movement," this time as a way of maneuvering itself into the good graces of left-talking trade-union bureaucrats.

The SWP's reformism knows no bounds. It not only sought to build a

"broad" reformist movement with Knight and Beasley, but was, until the pink slips came, completely uncritical of Gotbaum in its paper, the *Militant*! The SWP was evidently completely satisfied with Gotbaum's participation in the impotent and farcical march in Washington on April 26th and with his support for petty-bourgeois community groups in New York School District I in bureaucratic maneuvering to oppose teachers' union president Shanker, who supports their racist school board opponents. Matching the SWP's reformism at the June 18 meeting was the crackpot National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC)—"U.S. Labor Party," which advocated merely a "debt moratorium" (a demand also supported by the SWP).

For a City-Wide General Strike!

Some of the many counterproposals and speakers from the floor at the meeting reflected sentiment for strike action, although most allowed themselves to be dismissed as adventurist, such as the Progressive Labor Party's usual mindless "strike, sit-down, walk out" agitation. The most cynically adventurist proposal was made by Dennis Cribbens—an SSEU delegate and long-time supporter of the views of the Workers League, a pseudo-Trotskyist sect—who was recognized for the first counterproposal by Knight. While the Workers League calls in its propaganda and paper, the *Bulletin*, for a general strike, Cribbens' proposal downplayed this goal. Instead, predicting the refusals of Gotbaum, Knight and Beasley to call strikes, he called for occupations of individual welfare centers by case workers! At most, one or two centers where Cribbens' dwindling Committee for a New Leadership has a member or two would be affected by such a call. Nothing would be accomplished, since case workers are hardly the most strategic sector of city workers.

Incredibly, while calling for nationalization of the banks, the WL is against calling for cancellation of the debt because this might "precipitate a banking panic that would bring down the entire world credit structure" (*Bulletin*, 3 June). This concern for the financial health of the banking industry is touching, but more appropriate in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* than a socialist newspaper.

Indochina...

(continued from page 7)

discharged its thin layer of capitalists, also contained a stratum of workers and petty bourgeoisie constituting the only developed basis of Cambodia's urban economy. For Marxists it is crucial to preserve this economic infrastructure while beginning an orderly program for the relocation of the peasant refugees. In any case the working and poor population should have itself decided in democratic soviets how to deal with artificially overpopulated cities. Certainly they would not decide to drive out the aged and the infirm, which surely would kill them.

Today there is the beginnings of a repopulation of the urban centers, but reportedly with selected relocated peasants who are given lessons in "urban hygiene." A thin bureaucracy worried that it cannot control a proletariat will continue policies designed to consolidate its rule at the expense of the interests of the laboring masses.

For Political Revolution!

In the wake of the overthrow of capitalist rule in Vietnam and Cambodia (and the continuing consolidation of state power in the hands of the Pathet Lao to the north), cynical Stalinist apologists will soon begin inventing "explanations" for the absence of a "democratic" stage of the Indochinese Revolution. The fake-Trotskyist centrists of the USec majority

A general strike must be led by city workers in key sectors such as transit, bridges, phone, sanitation, etc. Other workers and community groups should be drawn into strike and support actions. Elected strike committees would be necessary in order to permit the ranks to effectively oppose a sellout by the treacherous union bureaucrats and strengthen the strike by aiding the mobilization of the mass of workers. Only the Spartacist League presented a proposal to the June 18 meeting which pointed in the direction of a general strike without calling for isolated, impotent and adventurist actions:

"RESOLVED that this conference take steps to initiate a united-front demonstration for working-class action calling on their respective trade unions and organizations for such a demonstration based on the following demands:

1. For a city-wide general strike against cut-backs and layoffs.
2. Cancel the debt, expropriate the banks without compensation."

The motion was also supported from the floor by a spokesman of the Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the National Maritime Union, who pointed out that the class-collaborationist trade-union bureaucracy is the main obstacle to its implementation, and that the unions must break from the Democratic Party to form a workers party to fight for a workers government.

It is noteworthy that the Spartacist League in its proposal and speakers was the only tendency to mention the cops and the need to break with these enemies of the working class. The supporters of the SWP-backed "action proposal," while noting the need for unity across racial lines, nevertheless called for *everybody* affected by the crisis to unite, failing to exclude the cops. The Workers League and Committee for a New Leadership in SSEU are strangely silent on the cops now when by their past views they should be demanding that the cops lead the workers: in 1971 the WL called for a general strike to support a brief New York police strike, and the CNL demanded that welfare cops be supported in their demands, which were mainly aimed at being allowed to carry guns! Thus all tendencies except the SL are playing into the hands of Gotbaum, who passes off the PBA as part of the labor movement and uses it as an excuse for not striking

"alone" (i.e., without the "solidarity" of the PBA).

After a futile debate on 12 counterproposals following the passage of the "action proposal" (which, as Knight made clear, made debate on other proposals purely academic) the meeting degenerated into bedlam and total confusion. In protest against the bureaucratism and cynical maneuvering of the chair and the SWP, which had rendered the meeting a completely unserious farce, the SL withdrew its proposal.

The march turned out to be something less than the SWP's hoped for recrudescence of the "broad" reformist antiwar marches of the 1960's: less than 300 people showed up. The spiritless marchers chanted such puerile slogans as "Abe Beame, you liar, we'll set your ass on fire." The SWP did not put up a speaker, and only one of the Democratic nonentities it had lined up showed. The rally ended with a minister singing "We Shall Not Be Moved." The Spartacist League, while not supporting the demonstration (or the "action proposal" which spawned it) was present, and was the only group to raise a banner calling for a city-wide general strike.

For municipal workers there is only one answer—a city-wide general strike to stop layoffs, cutbacks, and to cancel the debt and expropriate the banks. Such a program requires a break with the cops and capitalist politicians, and the forging of alliances with community groups under the leadership of militant, class-struggle unions. The Gotbaums and DeLurys, their chiefs in the AFL-CIO, and their friends in fake "socialist" groups such as the SWP stand as an obstacle to this course. The bureaucrats and their Democratic Party allies must be thrown out, to be replaced by class-struggle leadership, which must be built through the formation of militant caucuses in the unions. Only a revolutionary party committed to the fight for a class-struggle program, against the trade-union bureaucracy and for a workers party based on the trade unions and a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie can lead in the formation of a class-struggle leadership for the unions and immediate mass struggles going beyond the bounds set by capitalism. For that, the revolutionary Trotskyist program of the Spartacist League is the key. ■

can be expected to continue their time-honored policy aspiring to be the "theoretician"-lawyers and (unsolicited) advisers of the new Stalinist regimes as they have attempted to do with Castro, Mao and Ho Chi Minh in the past. The SWP will continue with its head-in-the-sand posture until its refusal to recognize the reality of a social revolution becomes an embarrassment in petty-bourgeois milieu—whereupon it will then discover a peaceful transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Those who would defend the banners of authentic Trotskyism must declare clearly that it is the duty of all class-

conscious workers to defend the historic gains represented by the overthrow of capitalist class rule in the new deformed workers states of Indochina. At the same time they must struggle to take the revolutionary gains forward, by workers political revolution against bureaucratic rule in Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh. This task—the taking of the reins of state power by the laboring masses themselves and the international extension of the revolution in both capitalist and deformed workers states—requires the leadership of Trotskyist parties in Indochina as a part of a reborn Fourth International. ■

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Gotbaum Accepts NYC Layoffs

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Expropriate the Banks!**

**For a Workers Party and
a Workers Government!**

NEW YORK, June 29—Municipal workers here are engaged in the final, catastrophic battle of the city budget crisis manufactured by Mayor Beame and the giant New York banks. A "compromise" now being worked out in Albany could mean anywhere from 10,000 to 40,000 new layoffs of city workers by July 1, on top of thousands already laid off and additional thousands of city jobs lost through attrition since the beginning of the year.

The layoffs will mean drastic cutbacks in education, hospitals, fire protection, sanitation, welfare case-handling, child-care centers and many other already grossly inadequate services, with the worst cuts being made in ghetto areas. The entire working-class and poor population of New York City will be the losers unless the municipal unions launch a city-wide general strike to stop all layoffs and cutbacks, to cancel the city debt and expropriate the banks without compensation. But the city labor leaders have betrayed the workers every step of the way and are the chief agency preventing such a mobilization, allowing the ruling circles to accomplish their despicable aims.

Gotbaum Accepts "Meaningless" Pink Slips

Among the worst of these so-called "leaders" is Victor Gotbaum, head of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a collection of locals representing a majority of the city workers. It was Gotbaum who proposed forced retirement of older workers early in the crisis—a measure too strong even for the likes of Peter Brennan, Nixon's "labor" cabinet appointee! Gotbaum maintained later that he would rather accept layoffs than cuts in the contractual benefits of his members, although he had already sold out on these as well, describing the benefits as "crap" which his members "never should have got" in the first place! At a recent DC 37 delegates' meeting Gotbaum incredibly poooh-pooohed the looming pink slips as "meaningless," while he sketched out a "plan" which amounted to accepting the layoffs!

These betrayals have not been accomplished without creating considerable restiveness in the ranks of city workers, and much talk of strikes, workplace occupations and other labor action. As far back as last December, the 11,000-member Social Service Employees Union, Local 371, a part of DC 37 representing welfare case workers, voted to take strike action. Since then Laborers and Library locals have also voted to strike. There have been numerous, though isolated, demonstrations of hospital



SL contingent at June 28 demonstration against NYC layoffs.

WV Photo

workers, social service workers and sympathetic community organizations. Last Friday, sanitationmen in three major centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn struck against layoffs of almost 3,000 men which they were immediately faced with following the passage of Beame's city budget the day before. During a single day hundreds of tons of garbage accumulated on downtown streets, and 140 sanitationmen at one garage were briefly suspended for alleged massive acts of sabotage against sanitation trucks.

This incident recalled the 1971 bridge-tenders' strike, in which New York was paralyzed for two days when workers locked bridges across the rivers and sanitation trucks with slashed tires were left blocking highways. The 1971 strike demonstrated the potential power of the workers in key sectors to shut down the city and thus completely change the terms of struggle in their favor. But the strike was sold out by none other than Gotbaum, who sent the men back to work with nothing more than a vague promise of future legislative discussion on pensions!

The Advent of "Big MAC"

The main outlines of the capitalists' "solution" of the crisis have been laid down with the creation of "Big MAC" (Municipal Assistance Corporation), a special board which includes prominent lawyers, politicians and representatives of leading corporations (such as Felix Rohatyn, ITT's Watergate whiz kid). The politicians have willingly surrendered to this board the power to "supervise" the city budget, so that they can be taken off the hook while they continue to channel city revenues into the pockets of the financial note-holders. The board is attempting to sell new bond issues to investors on the basis of the

increased "security" MAC's control provides. Thus the vicious circle of increasing city indebtedness, declining living standards of the workers and poor and enrichment of the bankers and financiers will continue unabated.

Prior to the creation of "Big MAC," Beame and Gotbaum made a weak pretense of fighting the banks. Beame moaned, "I don't think the banks give a goddamn about the city of New York" (*New York Times*, 16 May), and threatened the financial moguls with "investigations." Gotbaum declared First National City Bank the "No. 1 enemy," and called for an impotent campaign of depositor withdrawals. MAC's arrival, however, reduced the dispute within the ruling class to simple bartering over the amount of layoffs, and silenced even Gotbaum's weak criticisms despite the continuing inevitability of massive layoffs and cuts in services, unless labor fights back.

Cops Are Not Workers!

The city crisis has been accompanied by an underlying threat of vicious race polarization which the city cops, also facing layoffs, have been trying hard to provoke. Their "fear city" campaign was designed to play upon the racist fears of the petty-bourgeois salesmen and tourists, which view New York as a haven for criminals and muggers who are invariably identified as practically synonymous with the entire black and Latin populations. By this they hope to pressure Beame and the ruling class into rescinding the layoffs. Patrolmen's Benevolent Association head Ken McFeely has been portrayed at various points of the crisis as the most "militant" in opposing Beame, and has sought to cultivate an image as a "labor leader." It would be the most dangerous error, however, for city workers to consider the cops as "workers" or as allies in any sense.

capitalist state who correctly view themselves as indispensable to the very same oppressors who are the cause of the "crisis." Workers can be temporarily laid off or permanently thrown onto unemployment rolls, but the bosses' state will never voluntarily weaken its ability to enforce its will against the workers. Sizable police layoffs will certainly not occur: a few may go, but the number will be insignificant compared to the virtual doubling of most urban police forces since the late 1960's.

All of the proposed cuts in service are being made to affect minority ghetto areas of the city the worst. The bankers and the cops know that the latter will be needed to cram the cuts down the throats of the welfare victims, employed and unemployed ghetto residents by being the first line of "defense" against the popular resistance, by fomenting riots to head off more effective protests, etc. The PBA's standard line, of course, is that cops' jobs should be saved by throwing "chiselers" off welfare.

For city labor to ally itself with the police means to voluntarily counterpose itself to the community groups it seeks the support of! This will aggravate the normal tendency of multi-class petty-bourgeois community groups to view the (relatively) highly paid city workers as the enemy rather than the ruling class and the state, thus laying the basis for a mobilization of community groups against the trade unions similar to the union-busting offensive against the 1968 teachers' strike. And yet the municipal union leaders remain silent or treat McFeely as an ally, just as AFSCME nationally welcomes cops and prison guards (the butchers of Attica!) into its ranks as union members! Militants must demand cops out of the unions and no alliance with the armed

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