

Butchers Meet in Jerusalem

"We Like Each Other"



Anwar Sadat

AP

NOVEMBER 21—Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's dramatic 44-hour visit to Israel has been acclaimed as a great act of peacemaking and cursed as a betrayal. In the West Sadat's visit has been hailed as a major breakthrough toward permanent peace in the Near East. An atmosphere of elation is reported among the Hebrew-speaking Israeli

masses, who see this as an indication that the head of the most powerful Arab state is now reconciled to the existence of the Zionist state (and presumably willing to at least negotiate over Israel's territorial expansion since the 1967 war). Sales of Egyptian flags have been huge in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

But in the Arab countries outside Egypt Sadat is now being reviled as a traitor. Most Arab states have denounced him for breaking a common front, fearing that a separate peace with Egypt would encourage Israel to attack elsewhere (Syria for example). The Palestinians are understandably outraged. Sadat's announcement of his proposed visit coincided with some of the worst Israeli terror bombing raids on southern Lebanon in the last two years. In response to the proposal armed Palestinians last week invaded the Egyptian embassy in Athens, while mass demonstrations against the Cairo regime were held in other Arab capitals.

The Egyptian president certainly went out of his way to offend Arab nationalists. In his speech to the Knesset he failed to demand that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) be present in any Geneva talks. He kissed the leading rabbi and Golda Meir, and as if that wasn't enough, he went to pray at the Al Aksa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem (thereby implicitly recog-

nizing the Zionist expansionist claims). Damascus declared a "day of mourning," while Libya threatened to demand Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League. In Cairo Sadat's foreign minister Ismail Fahmy resigned in protest, and his successor stepped down shortly thereafter.

While the Western press has hailed Sadat's "bold initiative," there is general (but guardedly expressed) recognition that his chances for any success are extremely slim. Jimmy Carter called it the most important peace mission of the decade but also urged Begin not to send the Egyptian leader home "without something significant." For behind Begin's posture of openness lies the reality of an Israeli war machine that has expanded enormously since the 1973 war. More than \$1 billion of U.S. military aid has been allocated for this fiscal year alone; the Israeli arms industry now produces 40 percent of its total arsenal (including tanks, missiles and fighter planes), and Israel's nuclear capacity is an open secret.

In reality Sadat's personal presence in Jerusalem is not a significant step toward peace in the Near East. Nor has Sadat suddenly become a "traitor" to the anti-Zionist cause and Palestinian national rights. Neither Sadat nor Nasser nor Assad nor any Arab head of state has ever stood for the just national rights of the Palestinian people. The Palesti-



Menahem Begin

David Rubinger

an cause was simply a *pretext* for territorial expansionism; anti-Zionist Arab nationalism has been a vehicle enabling bourgeois rulers, from Nasserite Egypt to Ba'athist Syria, to direct the masses' anger against the *foreign* enemy.

When in 1948 the Zionists (with

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Unions Must Mobilize to Defend Firemen!

British Strikes Challenge Wage Guidelines

Callaghan Calls on Army to Scab

LONDON—Britain's first-ever national firemen's strike, now entering its second week, poses the most determined challenge thus far to Phase Three of the Labour government's anti-working-class "Social Contract." The first two phases of Labour's pay restraints have succeeded in holding down wage rates—the *Economist* (12 November) estimates that the real standard of living of British workers has been slashed 8 percent in the last year—while prices remain uncontrolled and have soared.

Britain's 32,000 firemen are striking for a 30 percent wage increase (which

will barely bring their real wages up to the pre-Social Contract level) and for a reduction in their workweek from 48 hours to 42. In negotiations so far the government has effectively conceded the reduction in hours while rigidly holding to its 10 percent wages "guidelines." Hypocritically telling firemen that "we are not unsympathetic" to their plight, Labour prime minister James Callaghan has nonetheless dispatched 12,000 troops to scab on the strike. This is probably the largest strikebreaking force used in Britain since the general strike of 1926.

The firemen's strike is by no means

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Firemen march for higher wages in Liverpool.

Socialist Worker

Which Way?

WSL: Between Trotskyism and the USec

LONDON—As the British working class reels under the impact of the "Social Contract" assaults of a bankrupt bourgeoisie, the fake-Trotskyist organisations present symptoms of increasing morbidity. The British "far left" is littered with more than a dozen—perhaps as many as two dozen—self-styled "Trotskyist" groupings, characterized internally by internecine cliquish squabbling and externally by parochialism and programmatic amorphousness. Even their predilection for ersatz "mass work" in their separate bailiwicks cannot keep them from jostling each other on the cluttered centrist turf to the left of the Labour Party. Frantic escapism on the crucial programmatic questions of the day cannot insulate them from the pull of larger and hungrier centrist formations.

The inveterate manoeuvrists of the International Marxist Group (IMG), English "section" of the Pabloist United Secretariat (USec), have high hopes for "regrouping" substantial bits and pieces from the centrist smorgasbord. In a burst of rare frankness a prominent IMG spokesman told a recent public meeting of one of the minuscule denizens of the centrist swamp that the IMG looked forward to picking up the leftovers as the London Spartacist Group polarised and split the redundant centrist groups.

A prime target for the IMG's tender ministrations appears to be the Workers Socialist League (WSL). Expelled from the Gerry Healy/Mike Banda Workers Revolutionary Party at the end of 1974 as a clot centered around Alan Thornett's trade-union work at the Oxford-Cowley Leyland car plant, the WSL is flirting with the USec in a serious way. It shares its front group—the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement (CDLM)—with the USec, whose Scottish affiliate holds the CDLM franchise there. And its Greek co-thinkers are evidently heading toward fusion with the Greek Pabloists, while the WSL takes no exception to their declaration that "we have many times asked these comrades for discussions because we want to try and agree with them on principles..." The anti-Pabloist rhetoric inherited from its predecessor organisation is empty; with no semblance of a coherent programme, the WSL has no justification for existence separate from the opportunist USec.

The WSL is entering its fourth year without a coherent line on Ireland, on the Labour Party, on guerrillism, on Portugal. Trotsky might have had the Thornett group in mind when he noted in 1933, "centrism after all is nothing but crystallised confusion." One week *Socialist Press* will carry an article with a class-struggle position on Ireland, only to subsequently publish a call for the "nationalist population to strike to prise loose the grip of imperialism" (*Socialist Press*, 17 August 1977). In an attempt to polemicise against the Pabloists, the WSL quotes Trotsky against those who call on the bourgeois state to ban fascists, then calls on the same state to arm black guerrillas in South Africa. On Portugal the WSL's unclear views give implicit support to both of the most common opportunist positions current in the USec (see *Socialist Press*, 3 September 1975 and 6 October 1976).

Misleading the Workers

When Alan Thornett ran for president of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU—the largest union in Britain) earlier this year, he centred his programme on opposition to wage controls and the call for union democracy. His most "radical" demand was for the nationalisation of bankrupt firms. Instead of raising the call for a revolutionary workers government to expropriate the capitalist class, Thornett called on "left" Labour MP's [Members of Parliament] to oust the present Callaghan/Denis Healey leadership and form a government to carry out his reformist programme. In the TGWU campaign, as usual, the WSL consciously avoided raising any opposition to chauvinist import controls or to the intervention of British imperialism in Ireland.

In the second round of the 1976 elections in Britain's second-largest union, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, the WSL backed Bob Wright of the Communist Party-dominated "Broad Left" for assistant general secretary. Wright, a "left" bureaucrat whom even the WSL conceded did not pose "an alternate policy" to the incumbents (*Socialist Press*, 5 May 1976), is notorious for ordering workers to cross official union picket lines in a car strike at Chrysler in Stoke, Coventry in 1973 (*Socialist Worker*, 31 January 1973). During his campaign he urged import controls and advocated the "workers participation" (in management) schemes put forward in the government's Ryder plan. This posed no problem for the WSL as it scrambled to line up with the IMG and others in his support.

With this approach it was no surprise to find the WSL lecturing the Spartacist tendency about our refusal to support Ed Sadlowski in last February's presidential elections in the Steelworkers union in U.S. Castigating us for standing "outside of that development," the WSL's centre-spread article (*Socialist Press*, 26 October 1977) had nothing to say about Sadlowski's commitment to enforce Abel's no-strike pledge, his endorsement of Jimmy Carter, his policy of suing the union in the bourgeois courts. By terming Sadlowski a "fake left," the WSL slid neatly over the main danger: reinforcing the illusion that this out-bureaucrat is a *real militant* or any kind of class-struggle oppo-



Wiard/Report

MPs Foote, Benn and Heffer at Tribune Group meeting in October.

ment of the pro-capitalist labour bureaucracy.

The CDLM programme is a simple reflection of the economist programme put forward by Thornett in his own union. Its core is opposition to wage controls and spending cuts and calls for more "democracy" in the unions though recently it has added a demand for a sliding scale of wages to offset the effects of inflation. Radical-sounding measures such as "open the books" and "nationalisations" are limited to firms which declare redundancies or threaten bankruptcy. The narrow, Anglocentric reformism of the CDLM programme means it has nothing to say about British imperialism. It is silent on the Labour government's support for the Common Market or NATO and on the continuing military occupation of Northern Ireland.

WSL Labour Loyalism

It is perhaps on the question of the Labour Party that the WSL's opportunism stands out in sharpest relief. Despite the Labour government's blatant attacks on the workers' living standards to

Labour runs joint slates with the Liberals (*Socialist Press*, 17 August 1977). For Leninists, critical support is a tactic to expose the contradiction between the reformists' claims to represent the workers' interests and their real pro-capitalist policies. There is no basis for critical support when this contradiction is suppressed through bourgeois coalitionism or popular fronts.

The WSL's particular formula for its capitulation to the pervasive Labourism of the British proletariat is to call on the Labour "lefts" to fight the Callaghan-Healey leadership. Rather than deriving tactics from the Leninist perspective of the need to split and destroy the Labour Party, the WSL promotes a strategy of a "united front" with the "lefts". This is sometimes explained as a tactic to "expose" the "lefts"—who have unanimously supported every anti-working-class measure implemented by the Labour Party from the Social Contract to the coalition with the Liberals. At other times, it is presented as a development of the call in the *Transitional Programme* for a workers government (*Trotskyism Today* No. 11).

The Trotskyist call for a workers government is a call for the proletariat to mobilise its own independent organs of class rule: factory committees, workers militias, workers councils, for the conquest of state power. It is not a call on the social democrats to reshuffle the cabinet—to replace Callaghan with Tony Benn or Ian Mikardo as the chairman of the board of British capitalism. Centrists like the WSL try to transmute the workers government slogan into something more palatable—e.g. "a government which will support the working class" ([CRDL pamphlet] *The Case for a Sliding Scale of Wages*).

This attempt to vitiate the revolutionary thrust of the Trotskyist slogan of a workers government symbolizes the WSL's retreat from the healthiest aspects of the Healyite heritage to which it lays claim. In 1961, when the Healyites were the most vocal polemicists against Pabloist revisionism, they denounced Pabloist opportunism in the Belgian general strike. One of the key points made in an open letter by Tom Kemp to Ernest Mandel (republished in a pamphlet, *Class Struggle in Belgium*) was the necessity for Trotskyist clarity on the question of the workers government. Against Mandel, who was at that time seeking to pressure the Belgian left social democrats into setting up a government which would "support the workers," the Healyites said:

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Alan Thornett

Socialist Worker

boost capitalist profitability, the WSL continues to support Labour at the polls and to sharply criticise left-wing organisations which stand candidates against Labour. In fact opposition to anything short of a mass party running for election was one of Thornett's founding positions when he departed the Healyites. Though camouflaged as an argument over Healyite substitutionalism, this liquidationist line transforms the tactic of critical support to Labour into a strategy of political support for reformism.

In March of this year when the Labour Party signed a formal parliamentary pact with the bourgeois Liberals, the WSL loudly denounced this "reactionary coalition" but continued to call for votes to Labour in the bye-elections, insisting it would do so until

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CP, Fraser Defeat Australian Power Workers Strike

The following report is based on articles in Australasian Spartacist No. 48, November 1977.

SYDNEY—The eleven-week strike by Victoria power workers has provided [Australian] Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser with the opportunity he had been looking for to call federal elections more than a year before they were due. Fearing that if he waited too long the economic downturn would worsen and give the Labor Party (ALP) the advantage, Fraser has been angling for the election for months.

Thus the Liberal-Country Party coalition government has been provoking strike situations throughout the country in order to blame the state of the economy on "union disruption." And when the government's unnecessary power cuts and stand-downs [layoffs] in response to the Victoria power strike led to a severe industrial crisis, Fraser called for elections for December 10 with the familiar catchcry—"who's running the country?" In this age-old code phrase for union-bashing the Liberal Party has found its campaign theme. As the Sydney weekly *National Times* (24 October) reported:

"The Victoria power strike and to a much lesser extent other strikes in NSW [New South Wales], Western Australia and Queensland have given the federal government the chance to make it a key issue in terms of the need to check union power."

Of course Australian yellow-press magnate Rupert Murdoch—who played a key role in bringing down the ALP government of Gough Whitlam, Fraser's predecessor—could be counted on to come to the aid of his friends in need. His papers produced screaming headlines—"Stop Industrial Anarchy Now," or "Defending the Sort of Society We Want"—to magnify the anti-labour scare campaign. The incredible attack on the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ) in the national daily *Australian* on 21 October represented Murdoch's using any excuse to keep the hysteria going.

Under the headline "Agitators Inflame a Dangerous Situation," the *Australian* decried SL "agitators" roaming the LaTrobe Valley "goading" workers "into a walkout that would shut down electricity supplies and bring the entire State to its knees":

"Almost daily an organisation calling itself the Spartacist League moves among the workers at the power plant gates with leaflets designed to inflame an already grim situation."

State of Emergency Declared

By the time it was over, the strike by the 2,300 power maintenance workers in the LaTrobe Valley outside Melbourne had taken on a scope and significance which far surpassed their claim for a \$40 wage increase, justifiable and vital as that was. The struck generator plants served most of the state of Victoria and although the strike never involved more than the maintenance workers, government-ordered power cuts led to the shutting down of industries throughout the state and to the temporary stand-downs of half a million workers. A state of emergency was called in Victoria and there was serious speculation that the army would be called in to break a strike for the first time in 28 years. Moreover the fight around the wage increase threatened to topple wage indexation [wage limitations] and even challenged the arbitration system itself.

Playing the strike for all it was worth, Fraser used the opportunity to ram through Parliament amendments giving the Industrial Relations Board (IRB) sweeping new powers. At the same time Fraser and Victoria premier Hamer trod carefully. The state of emergency and the newly amended Essential Services Act were never implemented to break the strike. The threatened firings were postponed; the scabs recruited to replace the strikers were never bused into the valley.

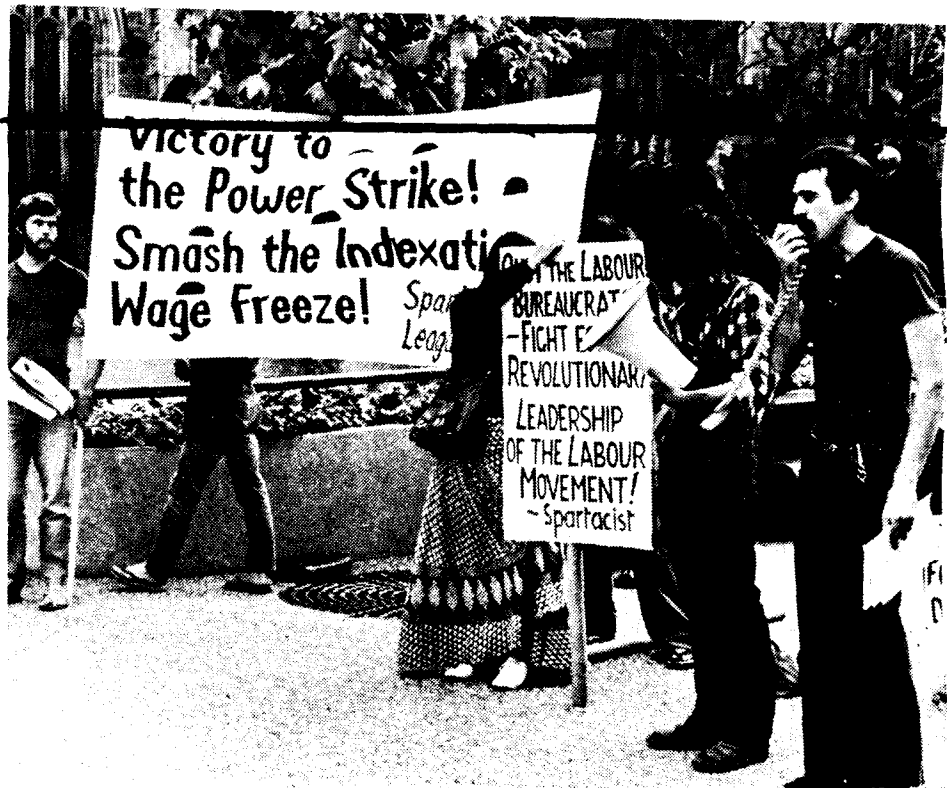
This hesitation testified to the widespread sympathy for the strike despite the power cuts and stand-downs, and despite the massive media barrage of anti-strike propaganda. Fraser knew full well that one false move such as the use of troops or mass arrests could put the entire country out on strike in a matter of days, sending all his plans for a second term down the drain.

ALP/CPA Bureaucrats Frustrate Strike Militancy

After months of getting a runaround from the State Electricity Commission the power workers walked off the job last August vowing not to go back without "money in hand." And when they finally returned to work October 25 they had not been broken but betrayed. Although including members of eleven different unions, the strikers came chiefly from the Communist Party of Australia (CPA)-led Amalgamated Metal Workers (AMWU) of the electric power generating stations outside Melbourne. The strike was a genuine rank-and-file action, initiated by the LaTrobe Valley shop stewards. The workforce is a militant bunch, conscious of past sellouts of the ALP bureaucrats. Many are recent immigrants from Britain with the key leader, Sammy Armstrong, a CPer from Glasgow.



Electrical power workers set up picket line to stop coal deliveries.



Australasian Spartacist

SL spokesman addresses rally in support of Victorian power workers strike.

Both the ALP and top CPA bureaucrats were discredited in the Valley from the beginning of the strike. Thus CPA member John Halfpenny, head of the AMWU, was booed and jeered when he addressed the strikers' meetings. Bob Hawke, head of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), craftily waited till late in the game when the strikers were already considerably worn down before stepping in to arrange the deal.

With Halfpenny being booed down, the bureaucrats' task was to get the shop stewards to give in, which took longer but worked in the end. In meeting after meeting Armstrong came on to put over the deal which, with the workers worn down financially and the government threatening ever more dire reprisals, was eventually accepted. In late October the maintenance workers returned to work on the strength of the settlement worked out by Bob Hawke, calling for a new

Arbitration Commission which will take weeks. And although the hearing could result in some sort of upward readjustment, the strike ended in a serious defeat since the workers had sworn not to go back empty-handed.

The strike itself was one of the most combative in years. For almost three months the workers stayed out solidly without strike pay and were living on subsistence. For the first time in the Valley, picket lines were thrown up to stop scab fuel deliveries. Four separate times the strikers voted to remain out, and when on October 13 they were talked into returning to work by their leaders (on the promise of a hearing before the Arbitration Commission) they stayed at work only five days. After a rebuff from the Commission, which arrogantly offered them not a cent, they resumed the strike with less opposition than before.

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OCI: Election Brokers for French Popular Front

—translated from a supplement to *Le Bolchévique*, 16 November 1977

Undisguised panic has gripped the fake-Trotskyists of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) since the discussions on “actualising” the Common Program theatrically exploded in September and ushered in a period of demagogic exchange of insults by the Socialist (PS) and Communist (PCF) leaders. Years of LCR and OCI “criticisms” of the parties of the Union of the Left (which never prevented them from calling for votes to the candidates of this bourgeois popular front) are drowned out in hysterical campaigns by both groups for “unity” at all costs to assure “victory” in the spring elections. “We Need Unity” screamed identical headlines in *Rouge* and *Informations Ouvrières*, echoing *Le Matin*’s “Enough—Stop Your Quarrels.” While the OCI and LCR may be cynical, their headlines are undoubtedly sincere, for how could there be a role for left pressure groups on the popular front if there is no popular front to pressure?

In case anyone still doubts the OCI’s willingness to subordinate its Trotskyist “orthodoxy” to the needs of the reformists’ electoral campaigns, the OCI Central Committee has obligingly restated in the simplest of terms the classic Stalinist two-stage strategy for tying the workers to their class enemy.

“While stressing that the OCI continues to fight, as before, to set up the republic of [workers] councils, the first step on this path is to aid the laboring masses and youth in achieving the united front to satisfy their demands and sweep away the Fifth Republic and its institutions.” [our emphasis]

—*Informations Ouvrières*, 28 September

Just as it had before, especially in its 1974 campaign for Mitterrand, the OCI must use sleight-of-hand to conceal the fact that when the reformist workers parties participate in a popular front their candidates run as part of a bourgeois formation. In 1974 the OCI was unique in passing Mitterrand off as simply “the first secretary of the Socialist Party” rather than the common candidate of the popular front. Now, after having for months disappeared the call for the PCF and PS to break with the bourgeois Radicals, the OCI blithely acts as if the recent fireworks between [the PCF’s] Marchais, [the PS’s] Mitterrand and [the Radicals’] Fabre have annulled that bloc with the Radicals. But to date there has not been a single word or incident indicating a break by the reformist workers parties from the popular-front framework. On the contrary, they all claim to be the “best defenders” of their version of an “updated” Common Program and—updated or not—the Common Program is the concrete framework of this popular-front alliance.

“Unconditional” Support to the Popular Front

Now the OCI calls on the workers “to vote PCF-PS unconditionally” (*Informations Ouvrières*, 26 October [emphasis added]). But there is no doubt as to the “condition” required by the PCF and PS: endorsement of the strategy of popular-front parliamentary alliances and the Common Program. To call for a “PCF-PS majority in the National Assembly,” given the present relationship of forces, the pervasive illusions within the working class, and without any definitive break by the reformists from the popular front is not a “class

against class” vote but can be only a veiled call for the election of a popular-front government. Demands for a “PCF-PS government without capitalist ministers” or implicit calls for a break with the Left Radicals and Gaullists are rendered only so much posturing by the word “unconditionally.”

The OCI is so scared of being a hindrance to the electoral victory of the Union of the Left or its components that it will continue its policy of refusing to run its own candidates in the 1978 parliamentary elections, cringing at the idea that even the few votes it might win could be seen as a *real* protest against the reformist traitors—the OCI calls this “refusing to help the right.” At the time of the municipal elections [last spring], the OCI managed (unlike the LCR and Lutte Ouvrière) to maintain a fig leaf of “opposition” to the popular front by refusing to vote for the candidates of bourgeois parties in the Union of the Left. We wrote:

“Candidates running on the OCI’s positions could merit critical support from Trotskyists as a partial and deformed opposition to the popular front. But there are no OCI candidates in the municipal elections, and not by accident.”

—*WV* No. 148, 1 March (original emphasis)

Some OCIers try to make excuses for their organization by claiming that the municipal elections were relatively unimportant; but the “importance” of the legislative elections has only stimulated the full flowering of the OCI’s capitulationist methodology.

It takes the most cynical disdain for consistency—to say nothing of the needs of the French workers—for the OCI to cite in the same issue of *IO* “the balance sheet of the [Chilean] Popular Unity as a counterrevolutionary popular front” and then a few pages later to discuss “unity to assure the victory of a PCF or PS candidate in the second round” as being “the road of victory.” Such grotesque and shameless expressions of contradiction are the recourse of centrists caught in the act of betrayal. Joaquin Maurin of the Spanish POUM explained the POUM’s entry into the Barcelona popular front [in 1936]: “We are for the popular front because we are against it” (quoted in *Joaquin Maurin 1893-1973* by Don Bareman).

The militants of the Ligue Trotskyste de France and international Spartacist tendency reply to such brazen opportunism: the workers have nothing to gain in the victory of one bourgeois formation over another. The debate in the Union of the Left summit meetings is not over nationalizations, but over which of the reformist traitors will put a better face on attacks on the working class, and which party will have the whip hand in administering the nationalized industries.

It should be no surprise that the minuscule Left Radicals seemed to have a decisive influence in the debates over “updating” the Common Program. Though they represent, in Trotsky’s words, merely the “shadow of the bourgeoisie,” they are the bourgeoisie’s guarantee that the Union of the Left will never go beyond its program which promises to keep hands off the state apparatus and the ruling class. At the same time, their presence serves as an excuse for Marchais and Mitterrand not to “go back on their agreement” by fighting for the interests of the working class.

A revolutionary party does not “share the experience” of popular frontism with the workers, any more than it



Economist

Union of the Left leaders at September meeting. From left, Radical Fabre, Communist Marchais and Socialist Mitterrand.

would “share the experience” of patriotic frenzy when interimperialist war breaks out. As the *minimum condition* for electoral support the workers must demand that the PCF and PS break with their bourgeois electoral partners and with the Common Program which provides the framework for this class-collaborationist alliance. By linking these slogans with transitional demands, a Trotskyist organization would seek to split and destroy the reformist parties, winning over their working-class base, pointing the way toward the necessary extra-parliamentary struggles and toward a workers government, which as Trotsky said in the Transitional Program is “only a popular name for the dictatorship of the proletariat,” and which must rest upon working-class organs of dual power.

LCR and OCI Unity-Mongering

Of course for the LCR the current “unity” campaign takes the form of pressure on the Stalinists; for the OCI, on the social democrats. Thus at a September 27 press conference, LCR leader Alain Krivine jumped into the debate over nationalizations and—echoing the terms set down in 1971 by Marchais—called for “a minimum threshold of nationalizations which will make it possible to change the logic of the capitalist system” (*Le Monde*, 29 September). The OCI, for its part, leaped into the fray on the side of the social democrats. When the PS declared itself willing to withdraw on the second round in order to boost the popular front’s electoral showing, the OCI proclaimed obsequiously that “on this precise point, the attitude of Mauroy and Mitterrand corresponds totally to the workers’ interests, which demand a fight for a PS-PCF majority in the legislative elections” (*Informations Ouvrières*, 3 November). What about Mitterrand’s similar agreement with the Radicals—does this also correspond “totally to the workers’ interests”?

If you can’t have “unity,” says the OCI, “the least you can do” is a campaign for withdrawal [on the second round] (*Informations Ouvrières*, 26

October)—a first step to the first step. A petition campaign was not enough; there must be an organizational structure to implement this “minimum” goal. So, in the cities where PS candidates are particularly threatened, “the workers are encouraged to regroup with the unitary rank and file committees so that the PCF leaders in these cities will come out for withdrawal” (*Informations Ouvrières*, 3 November). The OCI is pushing this campaign because it allows it to claim there is a difference in the degree of treachery of the PCF and PS. If, according to Lambertist “dialectics,” unity of the reformist traitors is good for the workers, then the PCF is “worse” for the workers than the PS. In its most recent paper (*Informations Ouvrières*, 26 October) the OCI even goes so far as to say that it does not consider calling this policy “Stalinophobic” to be an insult!

In fact both *equally counterrevolutionary* reformist bureaucracies will go to any lengths to deliver the working class bound and gagged to the bosses. The OCI’s “withdrawal” campaign is only the latest of many attempts to prettify the social-democratic bureaucracy—from Portugal to Germany to France.

“One can appreciate the problem of the young OCIer from Villetaneuse who attacks a Stalinist bureaucrat for breaking “unity”—carefully avoiding any reference to the central question of the popular front—and gets the sanctimonious answer, “Better to lose the elections than to be elected on a bad program” (*Informations Ouvrières*, 26 October). *IO* concludes, “Who does he think he’s kidding?” And just who does the OCI think it’s kidding, comrades!

Trotsky was far from gentle with those who—like the OCI—talked like social democrats about “unconditional unity.” Replying in 1935 to the arguments of the French followers of Marceau Pivert that “the masses want unity” and that we must not “cut ourselves off from the masses,” he wrote:

“We say in answer that the *instinctive* urge to unity is quite often an urge peculiar to the masses; but a *conscious* striving for unity on a *revolutionary*

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basis is peculiar to the *vanguard* of the proletariat. Which of these tendencies should revolutionary Marxists support? For example, the organizational unity of the working class has long existed in England. But at the same time it implies the political unity of the working class with the imperialist bourgeoisie.... Under such conditions 'organizational unity' is a conspiracy of the workers' bureaucracy against the basic interests of the proletariat. But are things any better in France?... From its outset the united front in France was converted into an instrument of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The organizational merger of the two parties, if realized, would signify *under present conditions* only the preparation for national unity. ...When centrists, tailing the rights, begin to declaim too much about unity, the Marxist is duty-bound to be on guard. *Unity between whom? In the name of what? Against whom?* Unless there is a clear definition of aims and tasks the slogan of unity can become the worst possible trap. The Marxists are for the unity of genuine revolutionists, for the fusion of militant internationalists, who alone are capable of leading the proletariat on the road of the socialist revolution."

—"Introduction to Fred Zeller's Pamphlet," 7 November 1935

Leninist Party the Key, Not Amorphous "Rank-and-File" Groups

The OCI's capitulationist policies are rooted in its anti-Leninist conception of party building. The OCI's strategy for the construction of the party is to build a "Workers Revolutionary League" (LOR), a regroupment on a minimum, explicitly centrist program to salvage "broad layers" breaking from the PCF and PS. With this view the OCI has formed a whole series of ill-fated front groups, from the Workers Alliance Committees in the post-1968 period, through the "political groups" (1973) to the present "Unitary Rank-and-File Committees" (CUB). Each time the program has been progressively more watered down, but the masses still fail to rally round.

The OCI's conception of building the party through the "LOR" is fundamentally liquidationist since it projects party building by advancing the program in stages (first, forming a centrist regroupment, afterwards...). Thus the OCI imagines that it must first advance a minimum program in order to entice the masses away from the traditional parties:

"In other words, *in the first stage* to get cadres and militants to oppose the apparatuses, without giving them grounds to think that the OCI asks them to break immediately from the confidence (eroded, to be sure, but still confidence) which they still have in the traditional leaderships."

—Theses adopted by the 17th OCI Congress (June 1971), *La Vérité* No. 561, July 1973 (our emphasis)

But Lenin always insisted that the revolutionary party can be built only on the basis of unity around the revolutionary program. Lenin and Trotsky sought to build the revolutionary party through revolutionary regroupment—intervening on the basis of the full revolutionary program to provoke splits in reformist and centrist parties and winning the

base to the revolutionary program. Thus Lenin built the parties of the Third International by provoking splits in the social democracy on the basis of the "21 Conditions," which represented the *full program* of the Communist International. Likewise, the international Spartacist tendency, though on a far smaller scale, has been built through fusions based on the full Trotskyist program, a notable example being our recent fusion with the Chilean Organización Trotskista Revolucionaria.

The OCI's position that the formation of a revolutionary party must inevitably pass through a "broad" regroupment of different political tendencies is an essentially social-democratic conception typical of the pre-World War I social democracy. So it is not surprising that an OCI leader feels compelled to explicitly solidarize with Luxemburg against Lenin on the method of building the party:

"The centralist rigidity of *What Is to Be Done?* is linked to the particular characteristics of the Russian proletariat, i.e., a nascent proletariat.... The role of the revolutionary intelligentsia as a factor of organization and consciousness, as Lenin portrays it, is thus proportional to the degree of relative backwardness of a proletariat legally deprived of any form of trade-union or political organization.

"Thus the conflict between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg for example seems—aside from personal features—the expression of the immense distance separating one of the least cultured proletariats of Europe from the German proletariat, the strongest and politically most vigorous and ripest in the world."

—Jean-Jacques Marie, Introduction to *What Is to Be Done?*

The Leninist method of party building was reaffirmed by Trotsky in the historic faction fight in the French section against Molinier and Frank, a fight whose lessons are still relevant today. In late 1935, when the Trotskyist GBL was about to leave the SFIO [French section of the Second International] and form an independent party, after a period of entrism, a sharp factional struggle broke out around the orientation to take toward the Gauche Révolutionnaire (GR—Revolutionary Left), a "broad layer" in the left wing of the SFIO. Trotsky insisted on a hard polemical struggle against [GR leader] Pivert based on the need for the Fourth International, the main programmatic difference between the GBL and Pivert.

Molinier and Frank opposed Trotsky, putting forward a conception of party building which is strikingly parallel to that of the OCI. Molinier-Frank wanted to put together an ongoing "United Front" with the Pivertists by forming together with them the "Revolutionary Action Groups" (GAR), based on a four-point minimum (centrist) program. The GAR, they thought, would serve as a structure to lure the unsuspecting Pivertists into the Trotskyists' nets. Molinier-Frank's idea of a press was parallel to their method of party building. With a notion oddly reminiscent of *Informations Ouvrières*, they launched *La Commune* not as the organ of the party but as the expression of the GAR, diluting the programmatic level in order to become a "mass press" on the cheap.

Molinier-Frank's conception—like that of the OCI—necessarily represents a programmatic capitulation, since it seeks a shortcut to the masses by forming a bloc with "broad layers" (the centrist formations) while gradually assimilating them into the party. Drawing on the experience of the entry into the SFIO and the GBL's relations with Pivert's GR, Trotsky tirelessly insisted that the revolutionary party can be built only on a firm programmatic basis, drawing a sharp line between the revolutionists and the centrists. He characterized the differences with Molinier-Frank as "irreconcilable" and condemned them for their "capitulation to the social-patriotic wave" ("A Capitulation to the Centrists," 3 December

1935). Today when the OCI claims Trotsky took a neutral position, maintaining "an equally severe judgment" of his supporters and the Molinierist splitters ([OCI's] *Some Lessons from Our History*) this is simply to obscure the central question in this important struggle—the method of building the Bolshevik party.

To give an "orthodox" cover to its capitulation to the popular front, the OCI tries to make an analogy between its "committees," such as the CUB, and Trotsky's 1935 call for "Action Committees." But for Trotsky the Action Committees were organs of class struggle, linked to the revolutionary action of the working class. He insisted:

"However, it would be a mistake to think that it is possible at a set day and hour to call the proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses to elect committees of action on the basis of a given statute. Such an approach would be purely bureaucratic and consequently barren."

—"For Committees of Action, Not the Popular Front," 26 November 1935

Trotsky saw the Action Committees as being formed through the independent mobilization of the working class against the bourgeois state. He explicitly *counterposed* them to the popular front, projecting that Action Committees which took up such tasks as the creation of a workers militia could become organs of dual power, soviets.

But the OCI makes it clear that its "committees" are not intended for the revolutionary mobilization of the proletariat. Any committees the OCI succeeds in setting up are intended to support and exert pressure on a parliamentary government of the principal parties of the popular front:

"...the united front of the workers parties and organizations; a government of the workers parties without bourgeois ministers representing the bourgeois parties and organizations; the demand that this government, once constituted, satisfy the masses' demands and base itself on the proletariat organized in committees, in soviets; that it take measures to expropriate capital and begin to destroy the bourgeois state apparatus, etc."

—*La Correspondance Internationale*, special issue, December 1976

OCI Abandons Fight Against Pabloism

The OCI's position on the 1974 presidential elections marked its consolidation on a right-centrist line. One of the most notable capitulations marking this turn was its abandonment of the struggle against Pabloism in order to rebuild its bridges toward the Pabloist United Secretariat (USec) and particularly the USec's reformist wing, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

In 1965 Stéphane Just wrote in *Défense du Trotskysme*:

"It was the Cuban revolution which revealed that the SWP leadership had given up building a revolutionary party in the USA, and that from now on it set its task as winning the leaders of the petty-bourgeois movements to the program of socialist revolution.

"There was no longer anything to prevent it from rallying overtly to the political positions of Pabloism."

—*La Vérité* No. 530-531, September 1965

Yet starting in 1973 the OCI discovered that the SWP, which had renounced the 1953-54 split with the Pabloists and in 1963 crawled back to the Pabloist fold, had now become "Trotskyist" and "not centrist." But it wasn't the SWP which had changed! The SWP continues to provide ample proof of what has been clear since the mid-1960's—that it is a hardened reformist organization.

The SWP spent the Vietnam war years building a class-collaborationist bloc with bourgeois politicians (the National Peace Action Coalition) on the basis of the single slogan "Out Now," and refusing to call for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. In the women's movement it oriented for years toward building a class-collaborationist coalition (WONAAC) with bourgeois feminists,

declaring that feminism is "revolutionary in itself," and rejecting the slogan of "Free Abortion on Demand" as "sectarian." Three years ago in its "socialist Watersuit" the SWP renounced in court "violence or any other illegal activity." In 1976 the SWP's presidential campaign centered on adding some "democratic" amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The SWP's democratic illusions are shown clearly by its longstanding defense of free speech for fascists. Recently it called on the USSR to take the "initiative for disarmament," abandoning the Trotskyist position for military defense of the Soviet Union. And the latest of its campaigns in defense of the interests of its own bourgeoisie was its agitation in alliance with ecologists and openly reactionary elements against the Concorde landing in New York.

In October 1976, pursuing its barefaced courtship of the SWP reformists, the OCI closed the book on even formal struggle against Pabloism by signing a joint declaration with the USec leadership which recognized the USec's pretensions to be the Fourth International and characterized the LCR as "revolutionary." While making this vain attempt to enter the USec, the OCI addressed a major polemic to "Comrade Mandel," demonstrating to what lengths it was willing to go in polite and responsible behavior if only the Pabloists would permit. The OCI's 35-page document ("25 Thèses du Camarade Ernest Mandel...") *La Correspondance Internationale*, special issue, December 1976) does not even mention Pabloism, barely hints at the differences which historically separated the OCI from the Pabloists, and reserves the most honeyed flattery for Mandel ("such a subtle connoisseur of the Marxist classics, of Trotsky in particular," etc. etc.).

But now, after assiduously courting the SWP reformists for three years, the OCI may be left out in the cold by the dissolution of the SWP's "Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" and the rapprochement of the two wings of the USec. In the period preceding the USec's 1974 World Congress, the OCI advised its supporters in the USec to support the pro-SWP faction. Today OCI supporters present the rapprochement of the two wings of the USec as a capitulation by the SWP to Mandel's majority....

LTF Upholds Anti-Pabloist Fight

Intervening in an OCI educational last June, a comrade of the Ligue Trotskyste de France sketched the degeneration of the OCI:

"In 1956, when the OCI was the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) and fought against the Pabloites and for Trotskyism, it refused to vote for the PCF and the SFIO when they were in a popular-front formation. It attacked electoralist illusions by projecting a revolutionary battle against the bourgeoisie, whereas the Pabloites voted for the PCF and PS. Who defends that policy today? Today, the OCI has given up the fight against the popular front, not even bothering to preserve appearances....

"In 1972 I was recruited to the AJS [de facto youth group of the OCI] on the slogan of the workers government. Today, using the same excuses as the social democrats, the OCI restricts itself to calling for a Republic in Spain.

"The first book they had me read when I was in the AJS was *Défense du Trotskysme*, where they criticized the SWP, saying that it had nothing in common with Trotskyism, and rightly so: I saw the SWP in the U.S., where it defends free speech for fascists.... But today in the OCI they say that the SWP has miraculously become Trotskyist again.

"When I was in the AJS, we attacked the Pabloists. Today, the OCI leadership signs a document with Mandel and Frank which calls the LCR revolutionary and says that the USec is the Fourth International, without quotation marks, moreover. The OCI is not fighting Pabloism. Today, it is the Ligue Trotskyste de France which has taken up that banner.

"Like the PCI of the 1950's, there are not many of us; but we, the international Spartacist tendency, represent the programmatic continuity of Lenin and Trotsky." ■

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The Maoists United Will Never Be R

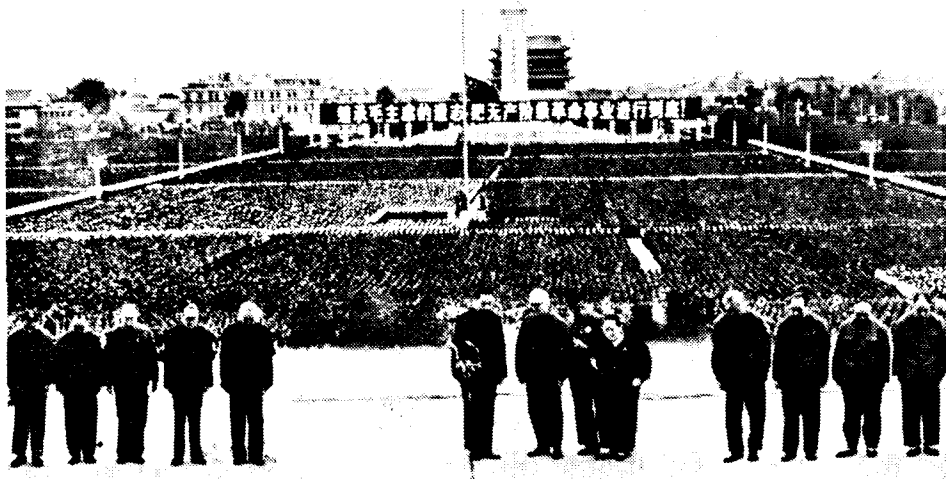
The rise of New Left Maoism in the late 1960's represented a radicalization among students and youth so rapid and broad that it quickly went beyond the framework of the established ostensibly Leninist organizations. The New Leftists were attracted to Maoism by the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," which they saw as a radical upheaval of youth, analogous to their own experiences in storming the campuses, instead of the manipulated mobilization by a wing of the Peking bureaucracy which it was. They of course turned their backs on the Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as being too right-wing and legalistic. But they also rejected the older Maoist organizations, Milt Rosen's Progressive Labor Party (PL) and Nelson Peery's California Communist League (now Communist Labor Party), because of their dogmatic, "old-fashioned" Stalinist style.

The heyday of New Left Maoism came in 1968-69 and was exemplified by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in that period. While it influenced tens of thousands of students and non-campus youth, this current utterly lacked political cohesion, as was seen at the spectacular June 1969 SDS split conference. On the one side there was PL, which despite its crude "pro-working-class" line was still formally Maoist; and bitterly opposed to it was a feuding gang calling itself the "Revolutionary Youth Movement" (RYM). The scene could have been lifted from one of Chiang Ching's "Cultural Revolution" operas: in the workshops, Bay Area Revolutionary Union leader Bob Avakian was arguing that "Third World people" were the vanguard; up on the platform RYM leaders Bernadine Dohrn and Michael Klonsky were devising one bureaucratic ploy after another to frustrate the PL-led majority; and down on the floor the Ohio delegation would periodically wave its Little Red Books whenever tensions rose.

Following the irrevocable SDS split, Progressive Labor grew for a time on the strength of its flamboyant "revolutionary communist" militancy but was ultimately led by its unique combination of opportunism, sectarianism and theoretical know-nothingism into the dead-end of a small, eclectic Stalinist sect without a country. Dohrn, Mark Rudd and their gang became the Weathermen and went underground with no great effect. And while Klonsky's October League (OL) jockeyed for position with Avakian's Revolutionary Union (RU) over the allegiance of the remnants of non-Weatherman RYM, well over a hundred New Left Maoist collectives bloomed in almost every part of the country.

The fracturing of New Left Maoism was not accidental, nor are the political confusions and organizational maneuverism which have been its hallmark. They are based on the fact that the Chinese bureaucracy has never been interested in (or capable of) giving revolutionary leadership to its international followers. Thus on the decisive black question in the U.S. the only reference which can be gleaned from the entire corpus of "Mao Thought" is a single empty message of solidarity penned in 1967. And despite their initial sharp attacks on Khrushchevite "revisionism," the nationalist Peking rulers have never made the slightest pretense of building a new International—or, until now, even taking sides in the sharp disputes among its adherents in the West.

Both Klonsky and Avakian realized that their success on becoming top dog of U.S. Maoism depended on roping in the local collectives, so the next eight



党和国家领导人华国锋、×××、叶剑英、×××、宋庆龄、××、×××、李先念、陈锡联、纪登奎、汪东兴、吴德、许世友、韦国清、李德生、陈永贵、吴桂贤、苏振华、倪志福、赛福鼎在追悼大会上。

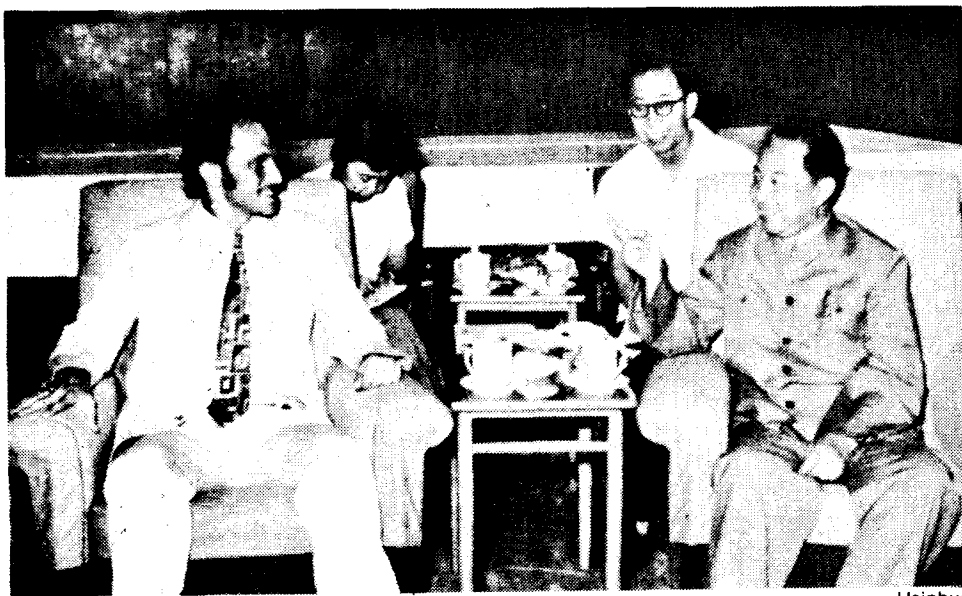
Hsinhua

Stalinist falsification: "Gang of Four" bureaucrats were removed from history, their names replaced by X's.

years have seen innumerable regroupment palavers and often kaleidoscopic organizational realignments (see the informative, but partial map drawn up by the "Third Period" Stalinist Communist Workers Group which accompanies this article). So cynical was the maneuvering that the main protagonists repeatedly interchanged their "principled positions" in accordance with their successes or failures in regroupment deals. Originally the OL favored "party building" over "building the united front against imperialism," while the RU had the opposite position. But when "movement unity" became the fad, the OL changed its tune. Then when the RU fell out with the Black Workers Congress (BWC), the other main component of the "National Liaison Committee," suddenly Avakian came out for "building the party NOW." Seeing the RU's

star on the wane, Klonsky came out for the "united front" and was relatively successful in attracting a number of collectives (see "Maoist Fusion Fizzles," *Young Spartacus*, December 1974).

The major regroupments which produced the RU (since renamed the Revolutionary Communist Party [RCP]) and the OL (now the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist [CPML]) coincided with a sharp rightward turn in China's foreign policy—support to Madame Bandaranaike's suppression of Guevarist youth rebels in Ceylon, support for Pakistan's nationalist butchery in East Bengal, and above all the beginnings of the alliance with Nixon's America. As "Home on the Range" was being intoned in the Great Hall of the Peoples to greet the mad bomber of Vietnam, a severe crisis of conscience hit the U.S. Maoist movement. Under the impact of



Hsinhua

Chairman Hua presenting Mike Klonsky the American franchise in Peking.



Gamma-Liaison

People's Liberation Army support for the new chairman, Hua.

Peking's openly counterrevolutionary foreign policy, some Maoist collectives found their way to genuine revolutionary Marxism, the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League (SL). Fusions with the Communist Working Collective (a split from the Communist League) and with the Buffalo Marxist Caucus (a regroupment from the Progressive Labor wing of SDS and the Mao-oid New Left) played an important role in the transformation of the SL from a sub-propaganda group into the nucleus of the vanguard party.

The Dregs of New Left Maoism

In general those New Left collectives which did not adhere to serious party formations by the end of the Maoist regroupment period of the early 1970's degenerated into hardened circle-spirit Menshevik groupings. Cliques, local ultra-parochialism, extreme hostility to Marxist theory and program, and sub-reformist activism became the norm. The very existence of these collectives represented a contradiction. As self-proclaimed "Marxist-Leninists" they were formally committed to building a centralized party; in practice they rejected such a formation.

Peking's long delay in granting an American franchise perpetuated the existence of the many Maoist collectives, since every little group could look forward to a new, grand regroupment which would at long last create a party officially endorsed by Mao. But now the pretensions and illusions of most American Maoists have been irreparably shattered, as usual by the seemingly capricious actions of the rulers of the Forbidden City. Last July 20 Li Hsiennien of the political bureau of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) proclaimed one *Michael Klonsky the cardinal of American Maoism*:

"The founding of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) of the U.S. has reflected the aspirations of the proletariat and the working people of the U.S. and also marked a new victory for the Marxist-Leninist movement in the U.S. "...we extend our warm congratulations on the founding of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) of the U.S. and on the election of comrade Klonsky and comrade Klehr as chairman and vice-chairman...."

—*Call*, 1 August

This crushing blow to every other Maoist organization in the U.S. is even more bitter because "Chairman" Klonsky is a certified political dolt.

Now all the Maoist collectives face an excruciating situation at two levels. They cannot claim to accept the CPC's leadership unless they march forthwith to the drummer Klonsky, which for most is the equivalent of political suicide. And they cannot claim to be "Marxist-Leninist" without at least making a pretense of building a party.

As if anticipating the ill wind from the East, in the last year a new current has emerged in the diffuse "ML scene": the "anti-dogmatists." "Anti-dogmatism" is a code word for rejection of orthodox Maoism and foreign leadership. Whereas in the past "ML" unity maneuvers were conducted in the spirit of more-Mao-than-thou, today various collectives are talking about "unity" and "party-building" on the basis of *independence* from hard-line Maoism and from fealty to Peking.

Among such "anti-dogmatist Marxist-Leninist" collectives are the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC), the Potomac Socialist Organization (PSO), the Tucson Marxist Leninist Collective, the Socialist Union of Baltimore, the Ann Arbor Collective (M-L), the Detroit Marxist-Leninist Organization, the Movement for a Revolutionary Left, El Comité and, not to be forgotten, the East 12th Street Study Group in New York City.

Repeated

What chiefly distinguishes these "anti-dogmatist" collectives is both a commitment to localized, low-level economist activism and/or disdain for a comprehensive programmatic worldview. This philistine notion of deriving a full revolutionary program from the latest local garbage collectors' strike is expressed in its pristine form by the Potomac Socialist Organization:

"...we hold that the correct balance between practice and theory, between the objective conditions and the subjective will, between the working-class movement in the U.S. and international Marxist-Leninist ideology, can best be developed through sustained application of these ideas in daily, local working-class struggle situations."
 —"Preconditions of party-formation," *Guardian*,
 23 February 1977

In other words the PSO believes that the entire doctrinal and programmatic universe of Marxism-Leninism "can best be developed" through immersion in the proletarian struggles of the Washington, D.C. area.

These "anti-dogmatist" "MLers" are fond of referring to Lenin during the

Iskra period (1900-03), but their self-identification with the early Russian social democracy is both grossly ahistoric and profoundly politically false on several levels. To begin with, the Russian working class at this time was atomized, prevented from building stable mass organizations by tsarist repression. Thus both the *Iskra*ists and their opponents, the Economists, had to directly organize the working class through struggles which were localized and episodic. In contrast, U.S. workers have powerful mass organizations in the trade unions and are prevented from struggling for proletarian socialism by a consciously pro-capitalist bureaucracy. The central strategic task of an American communist vanguard party is to oust the Meany/Fraser bureaucracy and replace it at the head of the organized working class.

Further, at the level of organization Lenin's main fight with the Economists and their successors, the Mensheviks, was precisely his opposition to the autonomous, localized "circle spirit." In his declaration "To the Party" (August

1904), he summed up the Bolshevik/Menshevik split:

"...the essence of its internal struggle is a conflict between the circle spirit and the party spirit.... Under the name of the Party 'minority' there have united a variety of elements who are linked by a conscious or unconscious desire to preserve circle relationships, pre-party forms of organization."

If there is an analogy from this period to the "anti-dogmatist" Maoists today, it is certainly not with the Bolsheviks but with their anti-centralist opponents, whose policy Lenin attacked as "elevat[ing] their instinctive anarchism to a principle of struggle, misnaming it a desire for 'autonomy,' a demand for 'tolerance,' etc." A more apt description of the political psychology of groups like the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, the Potomac Socialist Organization, the Ann Arbor Collective (M-L), et al. would be hard to find.

Enter the Wily Opportunists of the *Guardian*

It is doubtful that groups like the PWOC, PSO, El Comité, etc., in

themselves would have the capacity or will to put together a national organization. But in the past two years or so "critical Maoism" has found an influential patron in the "independent radical" *Guardian*. It is mainly in the pages of the *Guardian* that there has been talk of a new regroupment of "anti-dogmatist ML" collectives. Yet despite a momentary seeming identity of interests, the glib *Guardian* journalists and the primitivist New Left Mao-oid collectives represent fundamentally different animals.

As a political current, from its origins up to today the *Guardian* has always been the expression par excellence of American "progressives." Its constituency is the world of left-liberal and



Irwin Silber WV Photo

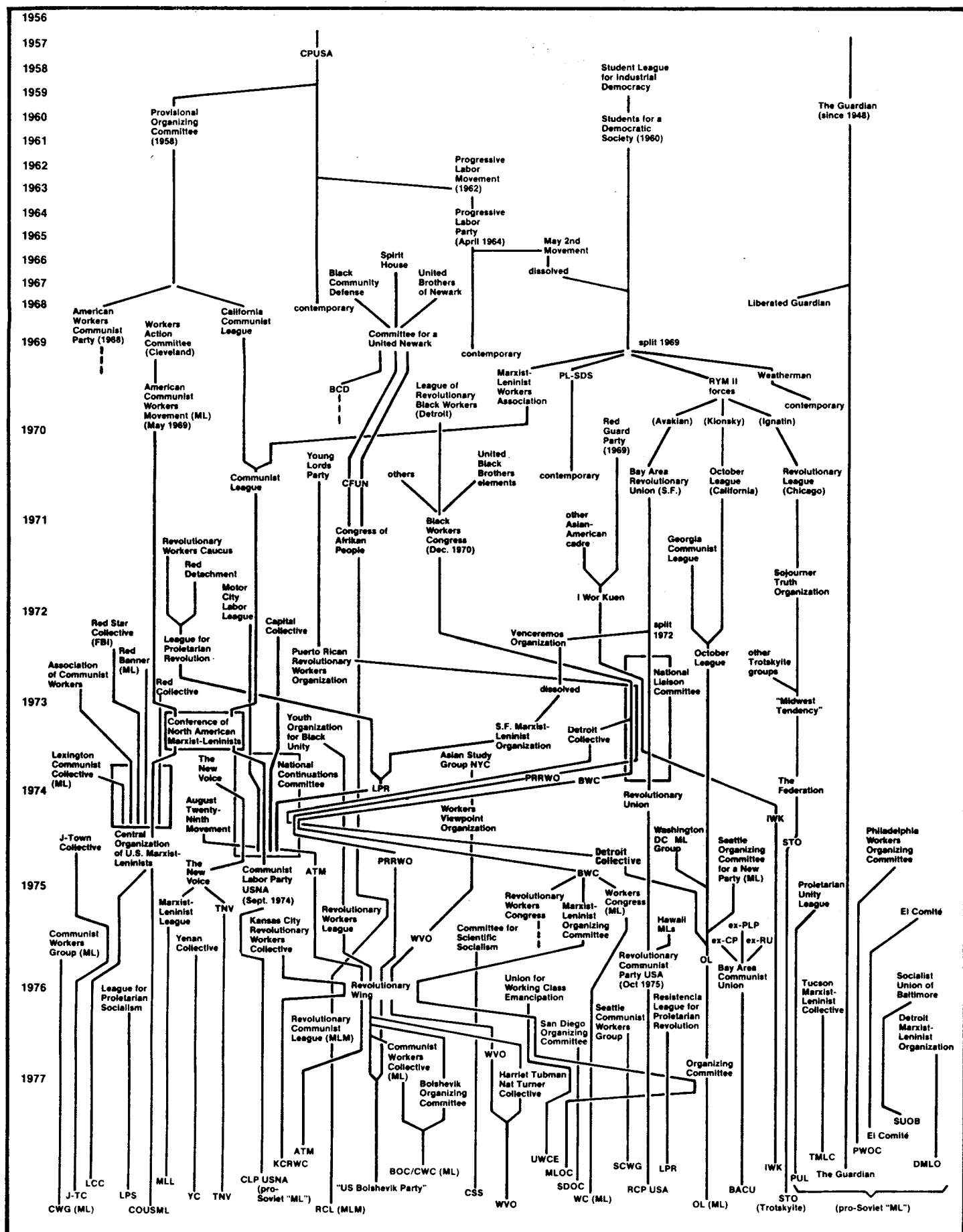
radical petty-bourgeois, pro-Stalinist fellow-travelers. That is why Irwin Silber & Co. have been able to go through apparently far-reaching political shifts with relative ease, from supporting bourgeois liberal-populist demagogues like Henry Wallace to supporting Ho Chi Minh and Mao. In all cases, the *Guardian* faithfully reflected the major shifts of opinion in the radical fringe, which is the most that American Stalinism has ever managed to drum up in the way of bourgeois support for popular frontism.

The *National Guardian* originated when a right split from the Communist Party merged with Henry Wallace's Progressive Party, which in turn had been brokered by the CP. Wallace was FDR's third-term vice president, and the *National Guardian* (18 October 1948) pledged its commitment to the "continuation and development of the progressive tradition set in our time by Franklin Delano Roosevelt." When the first rumblings of the New Left could be heard in the early 1960's, the paper asked skeptically "Is There a New Left?" But once it realized there was such a current big enough to build its circulation base, the *National Guardian* carried out an abrupt shift, appearing under its shortened name and with a zippier format, filled with new rhetoric and touting new heroes. On 10 February 1968 it declared:

"We dedicate this, the first issue of the new *Guardian* to those heroic liberation fighters who last week began a major offensive against American imperialism in South Vietnam and particularly the nineteen patriots who stormed the U.S. embassy in Saigon."

With the split of SDS and the death of the New Left, the *Guardian* continued to serve as a clearing house for aging, footloose New Left radicals from the Vermont hills to Telegraph Avenue. Its usual posture was as the tribune of

continued on page 8



"Family tree" of U.S. Maoists taken from newsletter of the Communist Workers Group (ML). Although the splits, fusions and isolated sectlets shown above indicate the many divisions within U.S. Maoism, the chart is far from complete!

Maoists...

(continued from page 7)

"unity" of the "Marxist-Leninist movement." However, when in the fall and winter of 1975 China went all the way with South Africa and the CIA in Angola, most American radicals became critical of Peking's alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union. Acutely sensitive to the growing rift between mainstream radicalism and orthodox Maoism, the *Guardian* too became "comradely critical" of China's foreign policy. Under the banner of "anti-dogmatic ML unity" the *Guardian* is seeking to revive late-1960's New Leftism in both its organizational amorphousness and its generalized support to "Third World" nationalism.

A savagely perceptive attack on the *Guardian* and its new friends has been written by the Communist Workers Group in Kansas City, a "Third Period" ultra-Stalinist sect which publishes *Forward*. In contrast to the mind-deadening unreadability of most Stalin-Mao Thought, *Forward* has a lively and finely ironic style which, while no compensation for its wretched political program, is a virtue nonetheless. *Forward* (August 1977) has this to say about the *Guardian's* line:

"As any attentive reader of the *Guardian* knows, that newspaper does not have, properly speaking, a political line of its own. Its 'line' is, rather, the sum total of events beyond its control, the political biases of its contributors and editors, the criticisms leveled against it by other 'ML' organizations, and most importantly the current mood of its subscribers. It is the *Guardian's* subscribers and sustainers in particular who determine its 'line,' since in supplying monthly donations, in encouraging their friends to subscribe, in shopping at the *Guardian* marketplace, in creating a 'demand' for *Guardian* T-shirts, Chinese work jackets, *Guardian* calendars, Kim Il Sung reprints, and so on, it is they who determine the *Guardian's* existence. This 'irresistible historical force,' purchasing power, which supplies the *Guardian* with both its economic and political raison d'être and occupies in its editors' minds the space usually reserved for political integrity, drives them with the most extreme caution to seek the golden mean. Thus prior to or during a major political event, the *Guardian's* editors nervously extemporize, avoid taking any 'extreme' position in either direction, caution against drawing conclusions too soon, and await the inevitable flood of correspondence from their readers. These are given prominent display in the 'Letters' column, so many letters adamantly for, so many adamantly against. After thus polling its constituency for a few weeks running, the *Guardian's* editors simply split the difference, declare the discussion closed and *voilà* its political 'line.'" [emphasis in original]

Although *Forward's* delightful empirical description certainly hits the mark, its analysis of the *Guardian* as the flabby, dilletantish right wing of "Marxism-Leninism" is shortsighted and in that sense false. The *Guardian's* Maoist posture of the late 1960's-early 1970's was only a passing phase, corresponding to a period when this was the dominant attitude among "independent radicals." As in the days of Wallace and the Progressive Party, the *Guardian* still orients to the rad-lib "progressives." The actual political distance between the *Guardian* and the *Village Voice* or *New York Review of Books* is far less than its voguish "ML" terminology would indicate. If the collectives like the PWOC, PSO, etc., can be likened to the circle-spirit Economists, then Silber's *Guardian* is analogous to the Russian "legal Marxists" of the same period, the aspiring left advisers to the liberal bourgeoisie.

The *Guardian* exists as a publicity agent for forces capable of influencing bourgeois liberalism. As such it is organically incapable of adhering to a party formation, for to do so would automatically make the *Guardianites* competitors of the very movements they seek collaboration with. Building a party would violate the *Guardian's* very

reason for existence—to maneuver for influence in U.S. and international "progressive" circles.

Economism vs. Progressivism

Thus the "dialogue"/dispute over party-building between the *Guardian* and the various "anti-dogmatist" collectives has been essentially artificial—for the record only. The *Guardian*, for the above-stated reasons, has no intention of adhering to a party formation, and collectives like the PWOC and PSO will never allow any kind of national leadership to determine their highly valued activities among the working masses of Philadelphia, Washington,



"Progressive" Henry Wallace and Franklin Roosevelt.

D.C., Tucson or Ann Arbor. Above all, these parochial workerists seek to escape from politics, i.e., from taking any unpopular position. So, for the record, the dispute took the usual, sterile form of "theory vs. practice." Ho hum.

The most extreme philistine spokesmen for the economist practitioners is the East 12th Street Study Group in NYC. It berates the *Guardian* and the rest of the American left for their preoccupation with foreign affairs, which presumably don't concern U.S. workers. They write:

"The debate on Angola, for example, has been conducted as an internal and 'in house' discussion in isolation from the working class and has in some cases been detrimental to the work of political activists. As one frustrated activist expressed it upon her return from a left-misled community crisis meeting, 'The left is so far ahead of the working class, or thinks it is, that the major issue in America is Angola, as though the issues here have been resolved.'"

—"We must be organizers for action," *Guardian*, 8 June 1977

Faced with this unabashed, anti-political capitulation to the backwardness of the American working class, even Irwin Silber can sound rather orthodox:

"A party is, by its very nature, a 'voluntaristic' organization which attempts to introduce into the class struggle between the working class and bourgeoisie a factor which does not flow spontaneously from that struggle—that is, the organization and leadership of a vanguard force which bases itself, in the first place, on the theories of scientific socialism."

—*Guardian*, 4 May 1977

In reality the *Guardian* has as little to do with the "theories of scientific socialism" as it has to do with trade-union or community work. The *Guardian's* "theories" are an eclectic amalgam of Stalinoid notions designed to justify its positions of the moment. The latter are not derived from a coherent programmatic world view but from a desire to please the latest whims of its "independent radical" constituency. That Silber's talk of "theory" is mere bombast is proven by the *Guardian's* refusal to take a position on the class character of the Soviet Union, one of the key questions of our time and indispensable for taking a clear position on China.

Clarity is obviously not what this

trendy crowd is after. What the *Guardian* calls the primacy of "theory" is nothing more than a literary propagandistic orientation. Its purpose is to provide the necessary cover of ambiguity and sophistry to evade responsibility for the more revolting aspects of Stalinism, while continuing to act as publicity agent for various nationalist movements and "Third World" Stalinist forces. It is this desire to be with the big leagues—rubbing shoulders with the famous, occasionally visiting China or Vietnam—which causes the *Guardian* to reject local activism. After all, where would they be without the endless stories of that "progressive" journalist

claims the clubs are also supposed to "help develop and support national organizational forms that will move the party-building process forward." More than one *Guardian* supporter present expressed confusion over the "double messages" presented by Silber.

The real message, however, came in his pitch for the clubs to mainly work to increase the financial and circulation base of the paper. As a result of its turn toward "critical Maoism" the *Guardian* has suffered the loss of some pro-China supporters, just as it lost some dyed-in-the-wool "friends of the Soviet Union" when it took up the New Left banner in the late 1960's. In response to its "comradely criticism" of their foreign policy, Peking rulers canceled the *Guardian* Tours of People's China. So in large part the clubs have been launched to satisfy pressing financial needs. "Questions of local political action," said Silber, would be "somewhat secondary."

It can be imagined what the response of localist collectives has been to this slap in the face. The October issue of the PWOC's *Organizer* whines, "...the *Guardian* has assumed a posture of 'benign neglect' [toward the "anti-dogmatist" collectives]. It has chosen to stand on the periphery of these efforts, and now has counterposed its own narrow plan." Thus it appears that the grand regroupment of the dregs of the New Left is going nowhere. A half-hearted replay of the Maoist "unity" maneuvers of the early 1970's, the "anti-dogmatist" lash-up has apparently bitten the dust.

The Peking-Loyal Losers

If the "critical Maoists" have absolutely no future as a unified tendency, then the remaining Peking-loyal organizations who have been left out in the cold by China's endorsement of Klonosky have no future even as local collectives. Ever since the break-up last year of the so-called "Revolutionary Wing," the self-styled "hard" Maoist groups—notably the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRW), the Revolutionary Workers League, the Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO) and the August Twenty-Ninth Movement (ATM)—have been in complete disarray. WVO has now proclaimed itself the sole "leading center" of "Marxism-Leninism-Mao-tsetung Thought" in the U.S. and a split-off from the PRRW has denounced its parent organization as "Trotskyite."

Some refugee collectives from the defunct "Revolutionary Wing" (which was largely the initiative of the PRRW) joined with some other hapless local Maoist groups to discuss "party-building" prospects at a conference last March in Denver. Convened by the Colorado Organization for Revolutionary Struggle (CORES), this meeting brought together the League for Proletarian Revolution (LPR—formerly Resistencia Puertorriqueña), the ATM, the Kansas City Revolutionary Workers Collective and the Lexington Communist Collective. Evidently the sole basis for "unity" of these collectives was submission to the "leadership" of the Hua regime in China and the Enver Hoxha regime in Albania. Thus, explaining why the Wichita Communist Cell was "dis-invited" to the Denver forum when its pro-"Gang of Four" views became known, the sponsors stated:

"Our position on the gang of four is that we start from the premise, the unity that the Communist Party of China (CPC) as well as the Party of Labor of Albania (PLA) are the international leadership of the communist movement and that they have proved this in theory and in practice...."

"CORES considers the recognition of the international leadership of the CPC and the PLA to be a fundamental line of demarcation between all genuine Marxist-Leninists and all the sham Marxist-Leninists. On this point we make no concessions."

—*Party Building: The Overall*

Wilfred Burchett (who doubtless only tortures his readers) to inform its armchair radical supporters of strange happenings in far-off places.

These deep-going differences between the *Guardian* and the "anti-dogmatist" collectives have prevented them from uniting in any common framework. Still the *Guardian* feels impelled to make some show of "party-building" and in September established "Guardian Clubs" in ten major cities. The clubs have been formed around ten programmatic points (reduced from an original 29), which allows Silber & Co. to present them as a step toward a pre-party formation while at the same time serving as a means to smoke out members of existing Maoist tendencies and any other troublemakers. The ten-point program reasserts that U.S. imperialism is "the principal enemy," while labelling the Soviet Union "a hegemonic superpower" (whose class nature is conveniently left undefined). And the kicker: "Within the antirevisionist, 'new communist' movement, the dominant error has been ultra-'leftism' and sectarianism" (*Guardian*, 7 September).

The nature and purpose of these clubs is described by the acid pen of the dogmatic Stalinist *Forward* group:

"The *Guardian* would just as soon continue as an 'independent' newsweekly quietly pandering its radical chic and boosting its subscription lists, and leave this 'party' business alone. But in claiming to be Marxist-Leninist, it must at least go through the motions of building a new communist party.... At the same time it must be especially careful not to offend its constituency or place 'outrageous' demands on their fragile dedication to the cause. It must assure them that 'party-building' is not, after all, such a frightful thing; ...and that, besides, the readership can carry on their usual business as easily under the 'party' label as they can under the title '*Guardian* sustainer.'"

—*Forward*, August 1977

The *Guardian* has yet to spell out how the *Guardian* Clubs are related to its professed commitment to "party-building." At a promotional meeting in Chicago on September 26 Silber said that the clubs will not bother other "Marxist-Leninists" because "we are not interested in bringing into being an organization that competes with other organizations." Yet in the next breath he

The ever-sarcastic *Forward* commented on Peking's granting of the franchise to Klonsky:

"It has laid, in the view of the pro-CPC but anti-CP-ML circles, a rather rotten egg. It is so rotten, in fact, it will be difficult for the RCP, Revolutionary Wing, WC(ML), New Voice, PUL, M. Nicolaus and others even to mention the CP-ML's new favored status without, on the one hand, attacking the CPC outright, or on the other, making themselves look even more ridiculous. The CPC's recognition of the CP-ML is not after all, an inadvertent error or simple tactical maneuver. It is the CPC's view, as expressed by Politbureau member Li Hsien-nien, '...The founding of the CP-ML of the US has reflected the aspirations of the proletariat and the working people of the US...' The American proletariat aspires, in the CPC's view, to have a *nitwit* at its head." [emphasis in original]

—*Forward*, August 1977

Trotskyism—The Continuity of Leninism

Behind the futile scrambling for position of the American Maoist sects lies the fundamental fact that their "glorious" bureaucratic leaders in Peking have always viewed their "foreign" flunkies with utter disdain. The job of "MLMers" in the West is to be loyal, period; then perhaps they will receive a few crumbs from the banquet tables of the Great Hall of the Peoples. It was Klonsky's slavish apologies for every twist and turn of Chinese foreign policy—including in particular the OL's denunciation of "Cuban mercenaries" in Angola—that won him the coveted handshake. From Stalin's deliberate refusal to supply sufficient arms to the Spanish workers fighting Franco to his dissolution of the Comintern in the interests of anti-Axis "unity" to Peking's total disinterest in building a new International—the *nationalist* Stalinist bureaucrats have always used their international disciples as doormats.

The explosion of New Left radicalism in the late 1960's represented a commendable sense of solidarity with the heroic Vietnamese masses fighting the greatest imperialist power on earth, with the workers and students who brought Gaullist France to the brink of revolution, with black ghetto youth who battled cops in Watts, Detroit and Newark. For thousands of radicalized youth, Maoism appeared to be the contemporary expression of revolutionary communism. Only a relatively few New Left radicals were able to grasp the bankruptcy and ultimately counterrevolutionary nature of Maoist-Stalinist doctrine and find their way to the Trotskyism of the Spartacist League. In doing so they had to break with "the movement" and accept a certain political isolation from the mainstream of petty-bourgeois radicalism.

But today a New Left Maoist faces the unenviable choice of joining the pro-U.S. imperialist CPML of the "nitwit" Klonsky or burying himself in nickel-and-dime labor struggles and outright social work through some local collective. In contrast, those ex-New Left radicals who joined the Spartacist League in the late 1960's and early 1970's are participating in the construction of a genuine international democratic-centralist tendency, whose American section is building the basis for future revolutionary leadership of the organized workers movement through waging exemplary struggles today and forging a Leninist party on granite programmatic foundations rather than endless maneuverism and sycophantic toadyism. In the end principled Marxist politics will defeat opportunism and faddishness. ■

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Sadat..

(continued from page 1)

the bloody Irgun terrorist Menahem Begin leading the pack) drove out the Palestinian Arabs, Egypt, Trans-Jordan and Syria fought to *carve up* the former British mandate for themselves. The 1967 and 1973 conflicts were likewise wars of territorial expansion on both sides. It is conflicting state ambitions, not the Palestinian question, which guarantee war between expansionist Israel and the surrounding Arab states. This does not mean that a separate peace settlement could not be signed—already Jordan's Hussein and Lebanese Maronites have more than cordial relations with their Zionist neighbor. But this is based on Israeli military predominance, and should the balance of forces shift then new wars could break out at any moment.

Following the 1973 war Sadat turned from military confrontation, dependent on an alliance with the Soviet Union, to a diplomatic offensive through alliance with U.S. imperialism. Sadat has shown in every way that his regime desires to become a client of the U.S.; his personal visit to Israel is designed to prove to Washington that he really accepts the Zionist state—he only wants some territorial adjustments. While Begin might eventually make a deal for a large chunk of the Sinai (excepting Gaza and with conditions on the straits of Aqaba), Tel Aviv will defy Washington when it believes its vital national interests are at stake. Sadat's latest diplomatic maneuver is based on an illusion shared by Arab nationalists and their international leftist sympathizers, namely that Israel is a U.S. puppet state. Yet since the 1967 war Washington has pressured Israel to pull out of most of the occupied territories—to no avail.

Begin reported after his talk with Sadat, "We like each other." They do have more than a little in common: they are both capitalist military butchers; both oppress the Palestinians and the working masses. The rulers of the Arab East, the Assads and Qaddafis no less than the Sadats and Husseins, are not "betrayers" of Palestinian national rights; they are enemies and oppressors of the Palestinian people. In the unlikely event that the Arab states should conquer Israel, the Palestinians will suffer the same disastrous fate as in Gaza under Nasser's Egypt, during Black September in Hussein's Jordan, and last year in Lebanon under the boot of Assad's Syria.

When confronting Israel the Arab

ruling classes seek popular support by claiming to stand for "Palestinian national liberation" and the "Arab Revolution." Fake-leftists tail along behind them, supporting one "anti-imperialist" colonel after another. When seeking through diplomacy what they cannot gain in war, the Arab rulers must openly conciliate Zionism, and their cheerleaders of yesterday cry "traitor." It is not accidental that the most confrontationist "anti-Zionist" states, Iraq and Libya, do not border Israel and thus do not have to risk much in urging greater military intransigence. But in those, like Egypt, on whose territory a war would be fought the rulers are openly fearful of a new defeat and the social upheaval which could come in its wake. The strikes and food riots in Cairo in January 1976 and 1977 shook Sadat's regime to the foundations; his army shot down scores and wounded hundreds of protesters. Now he is willing to make a desperate move in international diplomacy in the hopes of earning Washington's gratitude and aid dollars.

In 1939 the French ambassador to Germany, Coulongre, in his last talk with Hitler said, "I would also have the fear that as a result of the war, there would be only one real victor—Mr. Trotsky." The Nazi dictator accepted as self-evident this prediction of revolutionary upheaval in the wake of a conflagration between the imperialist powers. Today the Iranian Shah is certainly conscious of this danger inherent in a new Near East war and seeks to build up an army which can serve as a pretorian guard over the entire Persian Gulf area. Sadat, with one eye nervously looking over his shoulder at the restive Egyptian working masses, fears the same. But even Begin, although he appears to have the upper hand militarily, faces tremendous discontent over his anti-working-class economic policies and very real war-weariness which doubtless fed into the tumultuous welcome given Sadat.

The road to Palestinian national self-determination does not go through an alliance with the Arab bourgeois states against Israel. It lies in an alliance of the Arab workers and peasants with the Hebrew-speaking proletariat against the Begins, Sadats and Assads.

Israel out of the occupied territories! Down with the reactionary Zionist and Arab nationalist regimes! For the right of self-determination for the Palestinian and Hebrew people, which can be democratically realized only through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution! For a socialist federation of the Near East! ■

Unfortunately for these out-of-touch would-be hardliners, the Peking and Tirana bureaucrats have since had a falling out, thus shattering their single point of "unity." At the March conference there was disagreement on just about everything. The party-building discussion was dominated by a dispute on—you guessed it—theory versus practice. The ATM accused the other groups of being literary sects:

"But if the advanced are those who have won the confidence of the laboring masses how have they done this except through their practice of leading the class struggle? And how do we win them over if all we do is talk? All we'll win over are the windbags, not the revolutionary leaders of the class and national movements."

—*Ibid.*

The ATM's concept of "leading the class struggle," however, was seen at the Fremont, California GM plant where the Resistance caucus, politically supported by the ATM, has careened between the bureaucratic cliques of the Brotherhood Caucus and the former Unity Team ("Brotherhood" Bureaucrats Collect on Sellout," *WV* No. 174, 23 September).

As could be expected the other groups, particularly the LPR, denounced the August Twenty-Ninth Movement for mindless economic activism:

"By labeling as 'leftist' anything that relates to theory, by dispensing with all ideological struggle with a simple, 'this is abstract, it's in the realm of ideas,' they [the ATM] have become an anti-theory trend in our movement. An anti-theory trend carries on a line of practice, practice, practice, that unless defeated will take these comrades to the marshes."

And so on and so forth. Anyone vaguely familiar with Mao Thought could write the dialogue at the Denver forum in their sleep. A computer could produce livelier and more original polemics.

The March conference was probably the last of many gatherings of its kind. These few small Maoist groups clung to the life raft of foreign authority. Yet a few months later this life raft split and sank for good. In July the PLA denounced the CPC for revisionism without so much as paying lip service to Mao Tse-tung Thought (see "Albania Denounces China," *WV* No. 169, 12 August). And then on July 20 came the final knockout blow. The "international leadership of the communist movement" recognized Klonsky's Communist Party Marxist-Leninist as its sole authorized outlet in the U.S. So already we are beginning to hear sour grapes from these spurned running dogs of Peking. Even the LPR is beginning to talk like "critical Maoists":

"If your view is that the task of the U.S. Marxist-Leninists is to repeat everything that the Chinese say, why don't you join the October League-CP whom the Chinese comrades have recognized as the party of the U.S. proletariat and with whom they have fraternal relations?"

—*Resistance*, October 1977

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British Strikers...

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the only recent challenge to the government's pay policy. For the first several weeks of November there were sporadic blackouts across the island as militant power worker shop stewards organised a "work-to-rule" campaign. Their claims were aimed at offsetting falling real wages by winning increased benefits, travel allowances and a £6-per-week increase in shift pay. Faced with the unanimous hostility of their official union leadership and Energy Secretary Tony Benn, a prominent Labour "left," the action fizzled out after 17 days. But it did serve to remind Britain's rulers of the combativity and real social power of this sector of the working class.

Earlier this month 850 air traffic controller assistants won a 14 percent wage hike beginning April 1978 with an additional 8 percent payable at some unspecified date after that. While the air traffic controller assistants' strike breached the government's official guidelines, it didn't even compensate for the inflation of the past year. In the year ending September the cost of living rose by 15.5 percent (*Economist*, 12 November). Furthermore the Labour government doesn't really expect to hold wage increases down to 10 percent. According to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (13 November), when Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey "talks about 10 percent, [he] does so in the hope of achieving 15 percent." The government reportedly conceded this because it feared that picket-line busting by the Royal Air Force to deliver fuel to the West Drayton air traffic control center posed a threat of spreading trade-union militancy.

In the case of the firemen the government has decided that it had to undertake the political risk of organising large-scale strikebreaking by military personnel. However despite the best efforts of the bourgeois press to whip up support for the uniformed scabs with tales of 17-year-old soldiers battling the flames and lurid descriptions of various people dying in fires, the strike is gathering momentum and popular support as it enters its second week. The firemen have thrown up picket lines around virtually every firehouse in the country and are preventing troops from getting access to equipment inside.

While the firemen have not bent in their determination to win this strike despite the propaganda barrage of the bourgeois press, the same cannot be said of the entire British left. The International-Communist League (I-CL), in the 11-18 November issue of *Workers' Action*, suggested that firemen should occupy their fire stations so they could put out fires in cases of "emergencies." But after being sharply rebuked by strikers that of course all fires are emergencies, *Workers' Action* meekly published a retraction the following week.

The fire officers (whose own "professional association" is putting in a pay claim for 40 percent on December 1) have thus far been accompanying the scabs on calls to give technical advice and assistance. However as the strike gathers strength the firemen have begun to set up picket lines at the makeshift scab stations, lines which most of the officers are not crossing. The determination of the rank-and-file firemen to win their struggle has led some of the fire officers to join the pickets. The firemen are also receiving increasing support from working-class communities across Britain as tens of thousands of people are signing petitions supporting the strike and making donations to the strike fund. At Duston fire station in London, for example, firemen collected 7,000 signatures and £800 in donations

during the first five days of the strike.

The Fleet Street capitalist press has been focusing a lot of attention on the fact that the firemen have retained control of the fire stations and the specialized firefighting equipment contained in them (most of which untrained army scabs would be unable to use effectively in any event). However thus far the government has been reluctant to send the army through the firemen's lines to get equipment, fearing the probable repercussions throughout the trade-union movement. In the first days of the strike there was scattered fighting between firemen and troops in Essex as the government intended to billet troops in fire stations there. In these clashes the firemen came out on top and successfully defended their picket lines.

The firemen have shown considerable initiative in organising their strike, with many of the more militant stations sending out flying picket squads to reinforce the lines at weaker points and to picket the scab depots to keep the officers out. After the government cut off phone services to fire stations controlled by strikers in London, militants set up a "pirate" radio station using equipment in the fire trucks which broadcast an hourly "Rank and File Bulletin." The government finally managed to force it off the air by jamming the four channels it was broadcasting on. The firemen, however, have countered by occasionally using their equipment to jam the broadcasts of the strikebreaking fire centers. In Merseyside strikers' wives are reported to be organising a nationwide campaign in support of their husbands, which is to include factory gate visits, petitions, collections and demonstrations (*Times* [London], 19 November).

None of the credit for any of these initiatives goes to the official leadership of the Fire Brigade Union (FBU), whose opposition to striking was overturned by a two-to-one majority at the FBU delegates' conference on 7 November. The conference majority also passed a motion specifying that the leadership was *not* empowered to end the strike with any less than the full 30 percent claim and that any such decisions could only be taken by a reconvened conference. An attempt by the FBU leadership to postpone the strike by first submitting it to a national mail ballot was resoundingly defeated. Throughout the strike the union leadership, headed by general secretary Terry Parry, has been extremely conciliatory to the government but has thus far been unable to derail the struggle.

The Labour government has quite explicitly staked its continuation in office on its ability to further depress the living standards of the working class. If the firemen decisively break the 10 percent limit, then Labour's pay policy will be in shambles. Since the end of Phase Two on August 1, only 3.5 percent of British workers have reached settlements, compared to the 17 percent who would have settled by November in a normal year (*Financial Times*, 17 November). The capitalist class recognises that if any sizeable group of workers breaks the pay limit it will spell the end of their hopes to get another year of wage cutting.

If and when that happens Callaghan's government will have outlived its usefulness to the employers and will be brought down by the decision of its bourgeois coalition partners, the Liberals. Speaking in the House of Commons on 17 November, Liberal Party spokesman Emyln Hooson made this unambiguously clear when he reportedly stated that "if the government negotiates an agreement [with the firemen] which effectively destroys their battle against inflation, then the arrangement with the Liberals is at an end" (*Times*, 16 November).

In a parliamentary vote of confidence in Callaghan's handling of the strike November 15, the bulk of the opposition Conservatives voted with the government while 38 Tribunites voted against.

The Tribunites, who have loyally supported both the Social Contract and the coalition with the Liberals, apparently decided that their vote on the firemen's strike provided an appropriate opportunity for them to refurbish their badly tarnished credentials as Labour "lefts," without of course endangering the continuation of "their" coalition government. In fact in voting against the leadership the Tribunites lamented only Callaghan's lack of "flexibility" in dealing with the firemen—but did not question the use of troops to break strikes.

Labour's difficulties in enforcing the wage restraints are just beginning with the firemen's strike. One of the most powerful and combative sections of the British proletariat, the miners, has put in a claim for an *immediate 90 percent* wage hike, thereby thumbing their noses at both the wage-slashing 10 percent "guidelines" as well as the government's 12-month "rule," which holds that pay settlements must be separated by at least a year, meaning that the miners would have to wait until next March.

Joe Gormley, president of the National Union of Mineworkers



Yorkshire miners demonstrating outside union executive meeting.

(NUM), had assured the government that the miners would accept the 12-month rule in return for the immediate introduction of "productivity bonuses" of less than one third the pay claim. The miners rejected this insulting piecework scheme in national balloting. Gormley's main opposition in the vote was from within the NUM bureaucracy, headed up by Arthur Scargill, leader of the Yorkshire miners and darling of the Communist Party.

After winning the vote Scargill eagerly reached an agreement with Gormley to stretch out negotiations with the National Coal Board for at least another month (with various local productivity deals being implemented in the meantime). But a decisive victory for the firemen could well create enough pressure from the NUM ranks to force the leadership to act on their pay claims, thus bringing Britain's powerful miners into a head-on confrontation with the government. For now all wings of the NUM bureaucracy are stalling for time, hoping that Callaghan can force the firemen to settle for something close to the pay guidelines.

While the miners are generally seen as posing the most serious threat to Labour's pay restraints, unions representing millions of other workers have also begun to put forward demands well in excess of the paltry 10 percent guidelines. One million local authority

manual workers who withdrew a settlement on 7 November are claiming 30 percent. Power workers, engineers [metal workers], seamen and even university lecturers are demanding 20-45 percent increases for their next settlement, while their leaders sit on their hands, hoping that the government will be able to control the firemen. None of these treacherous bureaucrats is prepared to bring their ranks out in support of the firemen and to thereby turn this strike into an all-out attack on the remnants of the tattered Social Contract.

The Callaghan government must not be allowed to suppress the *political* impact of the anti-wage restraints strikes by taking them on singly. By coming out *now* in solidarity with the firemen, other militant sectors where opposition to the 10 percent guidelines is burning hot—above all the miners—can greatly aid the isolated firemen and turn their strike into a broad offensive against the anti-working-class Social Contract and coalition government. The entire union movement must defend the firemen's strike from the

army scabs by reinforcing mass picket lines and other militant actions. And if Callaghan uses the army to smash the firemen's pickets or other strike activities, this must be answered by a general strike!

As the British working class stands on the verge of a massive explosion of the class struggle, the criminal character of Labour's alliance with the Liberals stands out more sharply than ever. The firemen's strike demonstrates anew that the condition posed by Labour's bourgeois allies for the maintenance of such a bloc is the suppression of every significant working-class struggle that threatens the austerity programme and the pay controls imposed by the ruling class. The continued existence of this wretched coalition is incompatible with leading major strike battles to victory.

The toleration of such an alliance, not only by every wing of the Labour Party but by the trade-union bureaucracy as well, has forced the working masses to endure countless sacrifices in the interests of moribund British imperialism. It is not only the reformists who stand condemned but every variety of centrist which has given electoral and political support to this class-collaborationist alliance. The creation of an authentic Trotskyist party in Britain, firmly grounded in opposition to all forms of coalitionism, has never been more urgent. ■

UMWA...

(continued from page 12)

recent ARB decision is a perfect example of the kind of "justice" that union members get under such compulsory arbitration schemes.

The combative miners have time and again downed their tools in the face of unresolved grievances, unfavorable arbitration decisions and hostile court rulings. But this is no thanks to the UMWA bureaucracy, which has consistently sowed illusions in arbitrators and the bourgeois state. Arnold Miller's succession to the presidency was essentially the result of the intervention of the Labor Department in the union, while both Patrick and Patterson continued this disgraceful pattern by seeking government supervision of last June's election.

Without the unlimited right to strike, any contract gain won by miners can be taken back by the coal operators. This demand is central in the upcoming

UMWA contract battle. Miller, Patrick and Patterson all now claim to support the inclusion of a "local right to strike" clause in the contract. If they give lip service to this demand, it is only because of the insistence of the rank and file, demonstrated in strike after strike, that they will not tolerate the subordination of their interests to the pro-company arbitrators and the courts.

However militants in the coalfields must beware of the treachery of the UMWA tops, whose local "right to strike," if actually realized, would probably require approval by the International in order to be exercised and would undoubtedly enmesh the miners in other bureaucratic straitjackets. The bureaucrats have already made clear that they would seek to provide guarantees against the roving picket squads in exchange for the "local right to strike." Miller was elected in 1972 claiming to support the "local right to strike" only to drop this demand in his first national negotiations with the coal operators in 1974. Eighty thousand

miners wildcatted in protest.

Militants must demand an end to any restriction on a local's ability to strike over its particular grievances. But in the coal industry, where many pits have fewer than 100 workers, isolated strikes would be far easier to defeat than those which pull out neighboring mines. It is precisely because of the tremendous social and political power of the mass miners' strikes that the bureaucracy is as afraid of them as the bosses. The 80,000-man wildcat against strikebreaking court injunctions in the summer of 1976 began as a job-posting dispute between the Cedar Coal Company and about 200 members of local 1759 in Cabin Creek, West Virginia. Miller & Co. threatened the local with receivership and expulsions in an effort to break the wildcat, which included half the union's working membership.

The ARB decision concludes with the statement: "The choice is the Miners'. They cannot legitimately argue that their survival is dependent on adherence

to their picketing and striking tradition[!]. For the shedding of that tradition merely means acceptance of the grievance procedure as the proper disputes-settling forum—which, in turn, amounts to no more than the honoring of the Agreement. There cannot be both pride in the tradition and respect for the Agreement."

The ARB is right about one thing: the miners' traditions of solidarity and respect for picket lines are indeed inconsistent with the rotten agreements shoved down the UMWA membership's throats by Miller and Patrick in 1974 and before that by Boyle and his supporters like Patterson. What the miners must shed is not their tradition of militancy but the present sellout contract with its grievance and arbitration procedures, and along with it the Millers, Patricks and Pattersons who have collaborated with the bosses in consistently subordinating the interests of the miners to the pro-company arbitrators and the bourgeois state. ■

Australian Power Workers...

(continued from page 3)

By demanding the wage increase while accepting the arbitration procedures the maintenance workers had painted themselves into a corner. The only ways out were abject capitulation to the Arbitration Board or an open strike against the arbitration system and the state. Lacking a class-struggle programme even the most militant stewards were at a loss, although it was clear that with the proper tactics they could have pulled out the other power workers and brought the state of Victoria to a halt.

While the strikers generally had the number of both the ALP and top CPA bureaucrats such as Hawke and Halfpenny, they unfortunately maintained their trust in Sam Armstrong, who was key to engineering the defeat. At a mass strike meeting October 13 where Armstrong was instrumental in arranging the first return to work, the SL distributed a leaflet, "Reject the Contract," warning that to accept Hawke's settlement would be to risk throwing away nine weeks of the strike for nothing. "Well, you were right last week," one steward told an SL supporter after the workers had voted to resume the strike. But what the workers would not buy from the thoroughly discredited Hawke

and Halfpenny they bought from Armstrong. As the media observed with interest:

"Firstly and most important was the strong personal persuasion of the secretary of the valley's shop stewards' committees Sammy Armstrong, who managed to overcome the workers' suspicions and distrust of such State union leaders as John Halfpenny....

"Having been a main force behind the strike from its early stages, Armstrong's turn-around was interesting to witness, especially his tirade of abuse over pamphlets handed around before the meeting by communist groups from Melbourne exhorting the men to stay on strike and smash wage indexation."

—National Times, 17 October

It was not without reason that both Armstrong and Murdoch's *Australian* singled out the Spartacist League for its attacks, for the SL's aggressive national campaign of strike-support work was remarkably effective. SL-initiated united-front committees were responsible for the first support rallies in Melbourne and the only support demonstration in Sydney. The committees organised protest pickets at Arbitration Commission hearings to denounce this phony "neutral" tool of the bosses and warn against any reliance upon it. Moreover the committees raised over \$3,000, more than 5 percent of the total of urgently needed strike funds collected nationally.

Murdoch's scare-mongering that "outsiders" were "living on the backs" of the strikers did not impress the militant workers. "This 'outside agitation' is real good, give us more," said one of the stewards. Moreover, alone on the left,

the SL offered programmatic direction to the strikers' militancy. It called on the power workers to draw the political conclusions from their situation, as the bourgeoisie had already done. One SL leaflet said:

"The *Age* and the *Financial Review* at least...know quite well that the \$40 wage claim is a direct challenge to the indexation wage freeze and Government policy of cutting real wages. They also know that the power workers' determined stand could be the first real test against the battery of anti-union laws compiled by State and Federal Governments this year. Power workers must confront these real political questions squarely and openly. The ACTU has refused. The Victorian Trades Hall Council...has not even met for the past month.... These class traitors have taken their stand. Power workers must take theirs—smash the indexation wage freeze! Down with the Arbitration system! Smash the Essential Services Act, the IRB and all anti-union laws!"

Calling for a statewide general strike if Hamer attempted to invoke penal powers or deregister unions and a nationwide general strike to meet any move to bring in troops or arrest strikers, the leaflet warned that unless the workers' militant stand "is linked to a class-struggle policy it can only ultimately lead back into the straitjacket of the union bureaucracy and the bosses' Arbitration Court." Trade-union militancy and democracy alone could not steer the workers past the class-collaborationist trap of reliance on the Arbitration Commission. That requires a class-struggle leadership, totally independent of the bourgeois state, to oust the reformist bureaucracy which props up the capitalist system.

Whoever wins the coming elections, little will change in Australia's current industrial situation. Wage indexation was instituted under the last Labour government, and the ALP is no less committed than Fraser to the arbitration system as a method of shackling the workers. The ALP's response to Fraser's undisguised union bashing has been to play up to the petty-bourgeois movement against uranium exports while ignoring the class struggle altogether.

Although in a limited degree the ALP represents an expression, however distorted, of political independence of the working class. Thus the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand calls for a vote to the ALP against the direct political representatives of the capitalists. But that in no way entails the least support to the treacherous policies of the ALP/ACTU leadership. Fraser's reactionary policies will be swept away once and for all only by forging a Trotskyist vanguard which can lead the LaTrobe power workers and all workers to victory through militant class struggle. ■

WSL: Between Trotskyism and the USec...

(continued from page 2)

"A workers' government is a government of the workers' councils. Such a government means the dictatorship of the proletariat. But experience has shown that a dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be established or maintained until the crisis of leadership is resolved, i.e. until a Marxist revolutionary leadership stands at the head of the proletariat, having routed the bureaucratic and reformist leadership in struggle....

"Trotskyists have always maintained that the struggle for dictatorship of the proletariat entails the defeat of the existing bureaucratic leadership of the labour movement. So long as the present leadership stands at the head of the movement in Belgium, your 'workers' government' would be a bourgeois government. What is more, this would still be true if the present leaders were succeeded by the 'trade union and socialist party left tendency' to which your letter refers. These people will play the role of classical left centrists as soon as the question of power is on the agenda....

"The only method by which right-wing domination of the labour movement can be overcome is the method of the socialist dictatorship of the working class, and such dictatorship is achieved only under the leadership of a Marxist party. There is no room in this for 'workers' governments' apart from the dictatorship of the proletariat, any more than there is for reliance upon 'Left' allies when the hour strikes for the struggle for power."

But the Pabloists may have the last laugh as far as the WSL is concerned. Like the far larger French OCI, whose split from Healy prefigured the WSL's subsequent spin-off, the inherited formulae of verbal anti-Pabloism have proved no substitute for Trotskyist politics and no bulwark against the cynical blandishments of the opportunist USec. Unwilling to contemplate the hard programmatic choices necessary to outline an authentically Trotskyist course, the WSL leadership is already contemplating doing a deal with the USec and has requested participation in its upcoming 11th World Congress.

The WSL's sterile illusion of "mass" work and its increased flurry of house-keeping activities (such as the increase in the frequency of *Socialist Press* from fortnightly to weekly) will not provide a stable niche on the centrist spectrum. For subjectively revolutionary elements in the WSL as among its countless British centrist competitors, the only road forward lies through a serious examination of the principled Trotskyist programme of the international Spartacist tendency. ■



Australian's slander (21 October) and SL reply (24 October).

WORKERS VANGUARD

Miller Sells Out Roving Pickets

Coal Bosses Threaten to Break UMWA

On the eve of the December 7 deadline for the expiration of the bituminous coal miners' national contract the industry Arbitration Review Board (ARB), a tripartite body with one representative each from the United Mine Workers (UMWA) and management and a so-called "neutral" chairman, issued a major decision which amounts to a frontal assault on the miners' most important tradition—respect for the picket line.

The far-reaching ruling of the ARB, the highest body in the union-management grievance procedure, issued out of a miners' strike last spring. In support of a job-posting grievance in early May involving five men at a mine owned by giant Consolidation Coal Company, three Consol job sites were struck on May 9. On May 17 the strike spread to other mines and facilities of the company's southern Appalachian region. Two days later the strike was lifted, but it resumed on May 23. Scores of miners were involved in the picketing.

Consol fired the five grievants for striking although this was reduced by an arbitrator to a 30-day suspension. The ARB upheld the suspension, stating however that it disagreed with the decision of the arbitrator to reduce the firings. It ruled that as of November 1 the coal bosses have the right to fire pickets who engage in unauthorized strikes.

The detailed ARB decision minced no words. The Board acknowledged that the UMWA contract lacks an explicit no-strike clause, "and that this fact represents an unusual state of affairs in modern American collective bargaining. We nevertheless do not believe," the ruling continued, "that the Agreement can reasonably be read as permitting resort to strike action... when it comes to disputes involving the proper interpretation and application of the Agreement."

Because of the miners' tradition of respect for picket lines, one picket in front of a mine site is generally sufficient to shut down production. Quoting an earlier board decision, the October 14 ARB statement said: "The problem is that the Mine Workers have demonstrated... an excellent concerted discipline and it is so well-known as to be 'judicially noticed' that one man, known to be a member of the Union and about whom information is gained that he has a grievance, can and does furnish ample signal to cause a work stoppage."

The ARB seeks to "rectify" this admirable situation by giving the bosses the right to fire such pickets on the spot! "We lump picketing with strike instiga-



Cops arrest Stearns, Kentucky strikers October 19 as bosses and courts conspire to stop mass picketing in 16 month strike.

tion and other strike-leadership manifestations as being of the same gravity. They constitute a capital offense by which we mean an offense which itself warrants discharges."

Making sure that there were no loopholes, the ARB made it clear that such penalties were to apply to pickets in unauthorized strikes, regardless of whether they picketed their own job sites or others. In the past militants who picketed mines other than their own were rarely disciplined. With the failure of the UMWA leadership to call union-sanctioned strikes against the attacks of the coal bosses, the key weapon of the miners has been the roving pickets that have spread strikes from one locale to another. This is clearly the key target of the ARB: "Next, we do not believe that a distinction can properly be drawn between the picketing of an employee's own mine and the picketing of other mines, be they mines of the employee's Employer or mines of another Employer."

Furthermore, the board ruled that:

"Inseparably involved, once more, is the Miners' traditional willingness to shut down mines in supposed aid of fellow Miners. Until this begins to be turned around, the passing out of information relating to a dispute even in public places near an affected mine (meaning beyond mine site entrances) cannot realistically be viewed as the exercise of

constitutionally-protected freedom of speech and must be viewed, instead, as a contractually improper act of work-stoppage inducement."

In other words, until miners are broken from their customary solidarity actions, leafletters are also subject to discharge!

Most outrageous was the stance of the UMWA leadership to this noxious ARB decision. Union president Arnold Miller did not condemn it; the union representative on the ARB, Robert Benedict, even refused to tell *WV* how he had voted on the issue! In fact he publicly upbraided District 17 president Jack Perry, who charged that the ruling violated the miners' right of free speech, using the hack response that "Freedom of speech doesn't give the right to yell fire in a crowded theater." Perry's criticisms, however, were rendered meaningless by his suggestion that the union challenge the ARB ruling in the courts, which have consistently ruled against the miners.

The failure of the top UMWA bureaucracy to attack the ruling simply reflects the fact that it is just as opposed to "unauthorized" strikes as the ARB. Not only Miller, but every wing of the union bureaucracy, including both LeRoy Patterson and Harry Patrick (Miller's rivals in this year's UMWA presidential elections), have consistently



Arnold Miller (left) with Joseph Brennan, president of BCOA, at opening of contract discussions.

opposed the wildcat strikes that have swept the coalfields over the past three years. On each occasion they have demanded that the strikers return to work unconditionally.

Although they might find it expedient to distance themselves from some of the particular conclusions of the ARB decision, the UMWA bureaucrats could hardly find fault with the basic logic behind the decision. For, in fact, the ARB lays out quite candidly the class-collaborationist philosophy espoused not only by the UMWA leadership but by the entire reformist trade-union bureaucracy.

The ARB wrote, "...nowadays, the use of arbitration in the terminal point of the grievance procedure coupled with assured labor peace during the life of the Agreement is practically universal in American collective-bargaining Agreements."

What such agreements essentially do, of course, is to deprive workers of the strike weapon in resolving disputes with the bosses. Without the threat of a strike, the bosses are free to allow thousands of grievances to accumulate unresolved. Should a dispute, after months and sometimes years, reach arbitration, there is no reason why the workers should expect satisfaction. The

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