

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

# The Workers' Advocate

## Supplement



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VOICE OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY, USA

May 20, 1986

## The 100th anniversary of May Day

### May 1, 1886 – May 1, 1986

May First is a special day for all class-conscious workers. It is a day when militant workers all over the world declare their solidarity in the struggle against their exploiters. Whenever the workers' movement is on the rise, it is a day when the workers come out to declare their intention not just to produce the goods that the world lives on, but to change the world.

This year the black workers of South Africa chose May First to demonstrate their anger at white minority rule. They staged the biggest general strike in their history. As many as three and one-half million workers struck, and another million students boycotted classes in solidarity.

And in El Salvador, after years of death squads and repression, for a second year in a row the workers marched into the streets of the capital, San Salvador, in a May Day protest. 35,000 strong, they defiantly painted slogans against U.S imperialism on the U.S. embassy and indicated support for the popular insurgency.

In Paraguay, where fascist terror has also suppressed almost all political action for years, the workers fought police clubs, tear gas and water cannon to carry out their May Day actions. In Chile, groaning under the fascist yoke, three workers were shot as hundreds and hundreds of May Day demonstrators defied Pinochet's ban on action. In Mexico City the youth fought police in a protest against the PRI regime.

In country after country, the working class declared it was a force to be reckoned with.

In the U.S. too, May Day did not go unnoticed. The events were not large and dramatic, as in some of the other countries. But despite the attempts of the bourgeoisie to wipe out May Day, to turn it into "Law Day" or a "National Prayer Day", the class-conscious vanguard of the workers welcomed May Day as the proletarian holiday. The Marxist-Leninist Party used the occasion of May Day, and the month of

preparations for it, to set before the working class a summation of the present tasks before it and a call to get organized in the struggle against Reaganism and the capitalist offensive. And as this year marks the centennial of the original May Day general strike of 1886 in the U.S., special attention was paid to drawing out its lessons.

In this issue of **The Supplement** we carry two of the speeches given at May Day rallies of the Marxist-Leninist Party. The next issue of **The Workers' Advocate** will report on the May Day activities themselves, in which our Party brought May Day to the factories and working class neighborhoods and also raised the red banner of struggle in the midst of the official May Day commemoration in Chicago in which the reformists attempted to tear the revolutionary heart out of May Day.

See inside for two May Day speeches:

**Lessons of the May Day General Strike for**

**the Fight Against Concessions ..... page 26**  
**Workers of All Countries, Unite! ..... page 30**

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### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

On <u>The Color Purple</u> .....	2
Kemp, Fair Haired Boy of the Bourgeoisie, Denounced in Buffalo .....	5
On the Spirited Strike at Northern Telecom .....	5
Editorial of "Arm the Spirit".....	6
Correspondence .....	8
More on the Struggle Within the Anti-Apartheid Movement .....	9

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Reference Material for Last Issue's Articles on  
"France and the New Line of the 7th Congress" ..14-26

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## A FEW COMMENTS ON "THE COLOR PURPLE"

A noisy debate has been taking place over the movie The Color Purple, which is based upon Alice Walker's book of the same name. Some laud it as a brilliant tribute to the cause of women's liberation, while there are others who consider the work to be a virulent racist tract.

Still, the movie has attracted fairly large, and mostly sympathetic, audiences, especially among women and black people. Large numbers of people have also read the book.

The film and book have provided a portrayal of some features of the oppression of black women. While the setting in The Color Purple is among rural black people in the South in the early decades of this century, the problem of women's oppression continues to exist today, albeit in different conditions, among women of all races. Few works of art, and even fewer movies, dwell on the subject of black women, which is no doubt why The Color Purple finds a sympathetic response. There is a belief that the work has a positive message for women.

There are even those who go so far as to claim that the movie portrays its heroine, Celie, as "overthrowing the shackles" of sexual oppression.

But we find that The Color Purple gives a very superficial treatment of the nature of oppression of black women, and the solutions offered up are individualistic, romanticized and bourgeois. In the final analysis, this has little to do with assisting the struggle of women of the working class and oppressed nationalities.

The truth is that there is really very little spirit of struggle in the work, even in the confines

of Celie's terrible domestic oppression.

### What The Color Purple Says

As has been widely noted, there are some differences between the book and the movie. While in one or two places the movie has made certain events from the book more dramatic and impressive--which is undoubtedly because of the nature of the film medium--in the main however the movie is worse. The movie glamorizes the life of rural black people in the South in the early decades of this century to the point of absurdity. It presents the black people as living in relatively good economic conditions; and the luscious photography reinforced this glamorized view of the grinding poverty that actually existed. As well, the characters in the movie were simplistic. In particular, the male characters were depicted as caricatures, somewhat as buffoons. And even the theme of the plight of women was not all that developed.

Indeed, for such reasons, even some of the defenders of The Color Purple point instead to the ostensibly greater value of the book. So this review is based mainly on the book. Our criticism, though, holds true for the movie as well as the book.

The book focuses on the personal relations between a handful of rural black men and women in Georgia from 1906 through the thirties. An impression has been created that The Color Purple is about poor black farming people. But in fact, the work centers around the relatively more prosperous elements of this black community, not the dirt poor toilers. This is true both of the movie and the book, although the movie manages to wildly prettify in general the economic status of black people.

For the most part, the political and economic conditions--the vicious racism and the exploitation by the rich that oppress black women and whose pressures foster domestic oppression of black women as well--are ignored. While the book offers an exposure of sexual oppression and abuse, it is written from a narrow, bourgeois feminist perspective, with simplistic and spiritual solutions shown as the way out.

The story unfolds with Celie, a 14 year old black girl, writing a letter to God about the anguish of being molested by her "Pa", later found to be her step-father.

Her "Pa" arranges a marriage for her with "Mister", who needs someone to clean the house and watch his kids. "Pa" adds a cow along with Celie as part of the bargain to make sure "Mister" will take her off his hands. "Pa" considers Celie a bad influence on the other children. She encourages her sister to fight off his advances.

Celie becomes "Mister's" submissive, hard-working wife at home and in the field, abused and beat by her husband, and mistreated by his children. "Mis-

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ter" is a small farmer whose family works the land.

While most independent black farmers worked small plots of land on poor soil, were burdened by debt, lived and worked in a brutal racist environment, and even faced the danger of the repeated lynchings that took place, the book hardly ever touches upon how these economic and social problems brought great pressure on family and personal relations. It is not that you don't get the impression of the characters living in a racist society, but that is merely in the background -- all the emotions are concentrated in the treatment of the personal relations between the black men and women characters.

Meanwhile, Mr. has a mistress, Shug Avery, a popular juke joint singer. He brings her into the house when she is down and out to nurse back to health. To most wives this would be a real affront, but Celie has little reason to care for her marriage. And Shug intrigues her.

To Celie, a sheltered, oppressed and impoverished farm wife, Shug Avery is dazzling, wealthy, sophisticated and liberated, this sophistication presumably being the image behind the title "the color purple". They develop a close relationship. Celie ends up leaving Mr., without much of a struggle about this change, and takes up a lesbian relationship with Shug.

She quickly builds up a successful small sewing business, inherits a home from her real father, and all her problems are solved.

There is another woman in the book--Sofia, a poor farm worker who is Celie's daughter-in-law--but she is not promoted as a model. She has a strong rebellious spirit and stands up not only against abuse from her husband, but also stands up boldly to an assault by the racist mayor and to a racist gang. As a result of this fight she is thrown into jail for years, followed by several more years of forced servitude to the mayor.

The book ends strangely, as does the movie. Everything is harmonized and portrayed in idyllic terms. Even the themes being developed are turned around. (It is typical of The Color Purple that everything is eclectic and confused, and no theme is developed consistently. As a result, the impression on the reader or viewer often depends on which scene happens to strike their attention most sharply.) One is left a bit bewildered about this reconciliation. It appears to be a "spiritual" or religious reconciliation; in general, both the book and the movie take up a number of religious and "spiritual" themes.

#### **Women's Oppression Doesn't Spring from Nowhere, Independent of the Social Conditions**

By focusing merely on the personal abuse of Celie, by caricaturing all black male characters, and by obscuring the social and economic conditions around Celie, The Color Purple makes a mystery of the source of women's oppression, which springs in this story from nowhere, or possibly from men in

general; and the struggle against women's oppression is reduced to simply a narrow question of standing up against sexual oppression in personal relations. There is no question of organizing struggle against the oppression of the black people and the exploitation of the toilers. There is no theme on how the personal relations of the oppressed masses change in the course of struggle. There is no theme on the relation of the marital relations to the social conditions facing Celie, these conditions being at most a backdrop to the story, just as this or that variety of plant life on the farm is.

In fact it is from this bourgeois feminist perspective that Walker works out the solution to Celie's oppression. In so far as any solution is presented by Walker, it appears to be religion or spiritual changes, and becoming a prosperous entrepreneur; as well, the movie may perhaps suggest the idea of separation from men.

The changes Celie makes in her life involve leaving her husband and taking on a female lover, opening up a sewing business and obtaining a house. Naturally any progressive person supports the right to divorce and equal economic rights of women, but the struggle for these things is not a theme of the movie either. Instead the movie centers on introspective psychological tinkering with one's personal life.

As a result, even the book itself portrays that much of these things change little. Celie's relationship with Shug ends in collapse as Shug moves on to another lover. So what tends to stand out as the solution for Celie's economic plight that is promoted by Alice Walker -- through opening up a prosperous small business.

This is of course a well-known theme promoted by bourgeois feminism that women should solve their economic problems by becoming a bourgeois or at least a petty-bourgeois. And such a theme is also advocated by the black bourgeoisie as the way forward for black people. But solving the problem of poverty and economic dependence on a husband by inheriting money and opening up a business is hardly an option for the masses of working class and black women.

Celie suffered from extreme sexual and domestic abuse. The isolated and backward rural society she lived in was conducive to such extreme forms of oppression. But Alice Walker does not indict the backwardness of such rural existence; rather she tends to romanticize it, and the movie does it ten times more. After all, religious and spiritual reconciliations are supposed to be superior to mere considerations of time and place.

Today the vast majority of black women live in urban conditions. This, and the fact that many black women have become wage workers, has eliminated a few of the particular forms of oppression specific to the conditions of yesterday's backward rural life. Still, the particular oppression of women continues to exist as a harsh fact of life, including domestic oppression. The deep economic stagna-

tion, the increasing Reaganite offensive against the working class (which ends up hitting even harder at the black workers) and the Reaganite racist offensive all increase the oppression. In order for women to live as people, in order for them to take an active role in the political and social movements to change society, they have to sure that they are not ground down. At the same time, the very conditions of the particular oppression of women ensure that the struggle against it must be connected to the general class struggle.

It is class society and capitalism which are at the root of the oppression of women. Under capitalism, women face low pay, high unemployment, and various forms of job and social discrimination. It is also capitalism which promotes a culture permeated with male supremacy and anti-women ideas. It is also capitalism which reinforces the domestic drudgery that women have been suffering from since the birth of class society. And the existence of this oppression side by side with formal equality in the main brings out the class basis of women's oppression even more sharply.

To fight against the oppression of women calls for mass struggle, and it calls for this struggle to be directed against the capitalist ruling class. This is a fight facing the entire working class, men and women together. Ultimately a socialist society offers the only real possibilities for the full emancipation of women. Then women will not only have full formal rights but they will also participate fully in the political, economic and intellectual life of the society.

#### What About the Charge of Racism?

There is indeed an intelligent case to be made that The Color Purple feeds into some of the current racist propaganda themes of the capitalist rulers. However this is not the case being made by those who have launched a crusade of hurling the most extreme, and often absurd, charges against the The Color Purple.

This point of view is being expressed by a number of prominent black bourgeois figures. They are angry at the film because they believe that black life should be presented in the same glorified, hypocritical light that the bourgeoisie as a whole uses to present the life of whites in the U.S. And there is also a strong current of male chauvinism in the black bourgeoisie, so that it particularly dislikes portrayal of the question of the domestic problems of black women.

Thus, while part of the black bourgeoisie supported the film simply because it was a film with black characters and black actors, another part went on the rampage against the film. Some bourgeois did both simultaneously: a local chapter of the NAACP first denounced the film as racist, and then denounced the Academy Awards as racist for not giving the film an award.

A section of the opportunists, which habitually

trail along behind and glorify the stands of the the black bourgeoisie as part of their subservience to all the forces of reformism, echoed the-absurd charges against The Color Purple. For example, the pro-Soviet revisionist Communist Party of the USA finds The Color Purple as the 1980's equivalent of the old D.W. Griffith racist film Birth of a Nation, which was a barefaced propaganda piece for the KKK. They claimed that the film simply presented the black people as dirt.

This is ridiculous. As we remarked at the beginning of this review, the film has attracted large audiences of black people, including politically active black people, who haven't noticed this alleged extreme racism of the film. It is not a film that white racists who have made a point of going to see it.

Moreover, such charges only damage any serious discussion of how The Color Purple reinforces the racist themes of the bourgeoisie.

#### Grist to the Mill of the Reaganite Racist Offensive

A major cultural item such as The Color Purple cannot be detached from the general climate we live in. Today the capitalist rulers are on a renewed racist drive against the black people. This racist offensive is headed up by Reagan himself. There are many themes promoted in this campaign.

Among these ideas, one that is heavily emphasized is that there is no longer an issue of fighting institutionalized racism. Nor is there supposed to be a question of economic oppression and exploitation: you see, the Reaganites crow, some blacks have "made it". And one knows how the Reaganites present the working class as not being exploited but essentially exploiting the bourgeoisie. So any remaining problems faced by the black people (predominantly working class) are supposed to be due to psychological problems of the black community, lack of motivation, etc. One fashionable idea that is stressed today as the cause of poverty among black people is the so-called "crisis of the black family".

And the solutions that are advocated for black people's problems are fully in line with this analysis. They call for black people to "lift themselves by their bootstraps". And they call for all manner of psychological and spiritual solutions, all detached from fighting the oppression of the black people by the capitalist ruling class.

It is not too difficult to see that The Color Purple can help to reinforce these Reaganite bourgeois themes. Even though the movie portrays racism, this is merely a subordinate theme, a backdrop that is not portrayed as really relevant to the basic issues raised by the movie. And economic exploitation drops out altogether from the film. The movie focuses on abusive personal relations between black men and women, relations that somehow just exist.

And what's more, Celie's finds freedom through becoming a prosperous small businesswoman, which is fully in line with the Reaganite lie of liberation through capitalist entrepreneurship and the hypocritical Reaganite glorification of the conditions of small businesses.

Some may object, saying, well this is just one work, depicting just one facet of life. But this argument doesn't wash. Not only is the story un-

realistic in itself, but it is part of a general stream-of TV programs, newspaper articles, etc. which reinforce the same point of view. And so when Hollywood -- which is not exactly known as being partisan on the side of the black people -- puts out one of its top movies on black life, it is not surprising that it ends up being in line with the general ideas being propagated by the Reaganite bourgeoisie about black people. <-

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### **Down with aggression against Nicaragua!** **REAGANITES FAIR-HEADED BOY KEMP DENOUNCED IN BUFFALO**

The Amherst court house was to be the stage of a constituent meeting arranged for March 15 by congressman Jack Kemp, the fair-headed boy of Reaganite reaction. But about 100 protesters stood outside the city court building Amherst, New York to oppose the 100 million dollars in government aid for the reactionary contra forces attacking the Nicaraguan people. The demonstrators were carrying placards with slogans like **"No to the contras!"** and **"Hands off Nicaragua!"** The protesters wanted to denounce Kemp specifically for his recent support for money for the war on Nicaragua.

The protest continued inside the meeting, where better than 200 people were present. The spirit of the masses was high as they denounced the terrorist nature of the contras and creatively exposed Kemp's empty demagoguery about freedom and democracy. Teachers, workers and students fired irate questions, denunciations and testimonials at Kemp. The testimonials were from various individuals who had visited Nicaragua and seen with their own eyes the terrorist deeds of Reagan's and Kemp's class brothers, the contras. They testified to the burning and bombing of villages, schools, homes, farms, and crops and to the cold-blooded murder of workers, peasants, teachers, and others.

At various points jeers and signs charged Kemp with lying as he continually tried to hide the true nature of the contras. Everytime Kemp make another outrageous statement, dozens of signs were held up saying **"It's a lie."** The indignant masses demanded of Kemp "Exactly what do you mean by freedom and democracy?"

Kemp also tried to justify his support for war on

Nicaragua by raising the bogey of the Soviet threat, the Cuban threat, and the threat to the American borders. The masses mocked Kemp's imperialist logic, demanding to know where this threatened border was and "Do you consider Honduras to be the American border?"

Kemp was left blustering and redfaced, so he resorted to redbaiting and suggested that it was "un-American" not to take the Soviet threat and terrorism seriously. No, Mr. Kemp, the class-conscious workers, who have no use for the Soviet imperialists, have no use for you either. It is you, with your friends Reagan and the CIA and your millions of dollars for State Department-sponsored murderers, that are the terrorist threat that immediately confronts us in the U.S. It is you who love terrorism and bloodletting' in the true sense of the word, with your confessions of love for the contra criminals and for butchers like the Duarte death-squad government. You only point to the crimes of Soviet imperialism in Afghanistan and elsewhere to whitewash your own crimes in sponsoring murdering gangs in Nicaragua, in trading in the blood of Afghani people, in supporting the blood-stained racist government in South Africa, and in bombing and killing and running amok all over the world.

Mass denunciations of top imperialist spokesmen like Kemp are an important part of the solidarity movement with the Nicaraguan people. Rallies, protests, and other mass actions should be continued, and they should target U.S. imperialism as the enemy of the working people of the U.S. and of the world. <-

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### **A SPIRITED STRIKE OF COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS AT NORTHERN TELECOM**

On April 1 almost 600 workers from Northern Telecom (NTI) went out on strike against the arrogant takeback demands of management.

The workers took strike action in the face of huge concession demands. The managements was demanding givebacks in wages, medical benefits, and

the workweek to say nothing of trying to impose a two-tier wage scale and a regressive promotion plan.

The NTI capitalists were surprised by the solidarity of the strike. They tried to woo strikers back to work with deals and promises, but the majority of strikers stood firm. The TMI management showed

their ruthless brutality on the very first day of the strike when management personnel ran over two workers in Massachusetts with a car, hospitalizing both of them; this savage attack was denounced by NII workers from Boston to New York.

The NII management brought scabs in from Texas, California and North Carolina and other nonunion areas of NII's operations (only 600 of NII's total U.S. workforce of over 22,000 is unionized), but this too failed before the workers' resistance. NII workers in Boston, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Philadelphia, Washington and Baltimore held rallies, roving pickets, regular pickets, marches and vigils at company offices, warehouses and customer sites.

The strike at NII won the respect and support of a wide spectrum of other workers. Some passing the picket lines showed their support by taking up slogans, giving the clenched fist or raised thumb or by honking their vehicles' horns. The workers must stand together as a class to beat back the arrogant offensive of the capitalists!

#### **While the Workers Stood Firm, the CWA Bureaucrats Pulled a Fast One**

Through the 13-day struggle the strikers showed a high spirit of sacrifice and stood solid. But we were unsuccessful in winning our major demands. This is because the union chiefs of Local 1109 pulled a fast one on the workers. This is not surprising since through the strike the union chiefs

did precious little about the scabs NII brought in. And they disorganized the mass actions of the strikers.

The contract deal of April 12 between NII and the union chiefs was an swindle pulled on the workers. While the bureaucrats hailed the contract as "...the best contract negotiated by a major corporation in the past three years" and sung to the skies some minor provisions, they hid all the things they gave away to NII.

For instance, the contract introduced a semi-two tier pay scale with entry level technicians designated as cable-pullers and started at \$2.32/hr less than the former tech 1 entry position. This opens the door for a full-blown two tier system. And in addition the union chiefs agreed to a promotion progression table that makes it harder than ever and takes longer to go from one level of technician to another.

The union hacks also abandoned the wage demands. While earlier they huffed and puffed that the company can shove a 3% increase, they accepted a 10.75% increase over 39 months (3 1/4 years) which averages out to just a fraction above 3% per year.

On close examination, the contract really stinks. After a spirited 13-day strike the workers made few gains and the company got more than we did. It is clear that it was only the mass actions that got us anything and that scared and disrupted the NII capitalists. This is an important lesson for the future because the contract might be signed but the fight is far from over. <-

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#### **A Militant Prisoners' Paper THE EDITORIAL FROM "ARM THE SPIRIT"**

The May 1 issue of **The Workers' Advocate** reported that the Texas prisoners fighting brutal conditions in the jails had moved from a hunger strike to building organization. We reprinted an excerpt from the draft editorial of the first issue of their new organization's journal **Arm the Spirit**, which was being circulated among the provisional central committee of the organization for approval. The full text of this draft editorial is printed below.

The provisional Central committee publicly announces the creation of **PRISONERS' UNITED FOR REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION (PURE)**, and its newsletter organ, **ARM THE SPIRIT**, primarily intended to bring a revolutionary education and training of cadres to all prisoners, male and female, held captive in the infamous Texas Department of Corrections (TDC), and to bring militant unity to the sporadic prison movement in the ongoing struggle of prisoners for democratic and human rights. The current crimes and cobwebs of lies committed by prisonrats to cover-up

their criminal institution and ways needs to be exposed in a true revolutionary manner. The capitalist media will not expose the full reality of these crimes because it represents the interests of political reaction and fascism. It is up to us to build our own prisoners' and workers' press to expose these enemies of true democracy. There is a shameful stranglehold on the minds and every day lives of the prison masses by the forces of Amerikkkan dollarism, terror, its imperialism and fascism. We must break this yoke! As victims of this imperialist beast, we know that there is no "justice" and no future for us, and our loved ones, our class, in this country because it is "just us" that continue to be victimized by the system of Amerikkkan "democracy" and dollarism. And in further class perpetuation of these class crimes, we are daily being used as unwilling pawns and cannon fodder to enrich the personal lives and empires of the fascist state and its sons and daughters of privileged blood-suckers who have never known want, and who live by the ruthless economic exploitation

of the labor power of the poor. For us poor, it is not an Amerikkkan "dream" but an Amerikkkan nightmare, as Brother Malcolm X correctly put it.

The TDC has a criminal and shameful history of ruthless racial and class oppression and exploitation of its prison masses, the majority which are Chicanos/Mejicanos, Afro-Americans, and other minorities, including poor Whites. The common element that binds us all together is the reality that we all are in prison because we are poor, kept in a permanent state of ignorance and could not afford the luxury of amerikkkan "justice" in this country. The corporate beast, TDC, has always used the old imperialist strategy that the ruling class has historically used against the indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, in its super-plunder of Third World peoples and its land and that is: militarism, racism, divide and conquer. It is only through unity and re-education that we can defeat this "big stick" policy and struggle to liberate our peoples from this Amerikkkan arrogance, economic exploitation and genocide. We must discover our humanity; we must free our minds of all capitalist programming filth; we must discover our true class interests and our love for revolutionary struggle and change. We must study the system of race/class economics so that we can begin to grasp who we really are, the history of genocide against our peoples, how we are manipulated into prison by Amerikkkan dollarism, and how the blood-sucking exploiters enforce their class-rule over our daily lives and act as the "architects" of our slave destiny. We must build our character, adopt new revolutionary values, and fight for our freedom. The rich revolutionary history and culture of our past generations that have heroically laid down their lives for our peoples, must be studied and understood so that we can forge a shining path in our struggle for the future, for a socialist society, a socialist world.

Although we fully realize that courts in this country are controlled by the mighty dollar, if the system professes to render "equal justice for all," something we well know to be class hypocrisy, then we take it at its word, and in the interests of re-educating the prison masses, demand the extension of their dollar-democracy, not with the expectation that courts will cure our suffering, but to engage ourselves in live political education, training and expose the system for what it really is, a double-standard of justice; to study true working class

politics; to ARM THE SPIRIT with revolutionary history, culture, art, consciousness, values and theory and to prepare our minds for the upcoming socialist revolution in this country. Within Amerikkka's prisons sleeps a dynamic force of political power of revolutionary cadres that must be awakened and enlisted in the great army of the proletariat in our struggle to defeat imperialism and fascism. Our basic goal is to awaken this sleeping revolutionary giant through revolutionary education.

ARM THE SPIRIT will be the voice of all prisoners and we can make it as effective as we want it to be. It will not be a "literary" project. Nor are we interested in "competing" with other prison reform groups. It will carry live, everyday exposures on the immense prison brutality, corruption and tyranny our brothers and sisters go through in the TDC—the result of the sharpening of class conflicts by political imperialism to the immense degree and growth of the revolt of the working masses—and apply those experiences to the theoretical study of the doctrine of class struggle for a true revolutionary education for prisoners. We will also plan many activities and other projects to save the interests and needs of poor people—inside and outside—including the start of the: "JUST US" LEGAL DEFENSE FRONT (JULDF) to give legal assistance to the poor. We ask all prisoners to stand up for their human rights and to contribute toward building PURE, ARM THE SPIRIT, and JULDF. Write and let us know your comments, ideas, suggestions, criticism, etc., on how to improve the newsletter. If you are terrified with hearing words like, "imperialism," "fascism," "socialist revolution," cannot stand to hear about the class reality poor people face in this country, and find the thought of socialist revolution "unpleasant," then obviously this newsletter is not meant for your eyes. Put it down and feel free to return to your sex magazines, your television soap-box operas, your football-game opium, and your other typical Amerikkkan illusions. We feel that your spirit has been broken and demoralized by fascism and you deserve to be treated like a "dog," because with your indifference you are contributing to your own prison spiritual slavery! If you are interested in what you have read here, and would like further information, write and let us know. Stay tuned for future announcements. Together we can, and will make a difference! We have nothing to lose but our chains!

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CORRESPONDENCE

April 8, 1986

Dear Friends,

The day that the April 1 WA arrived with my renewal notice, I had been thinking about the paper, both about how much I have appreciated your work and that it must be about time to renew. I am more than happy to be able to continue my support for your efforts. I would like to renew for a year, but you have probably noticed that I have sent more than \$9.00. Two reasons for that:

1) Sometimes we lend out or cut up issues as we need. So I would appreciate it if I could get back copies of Vol. 15, No. 12 Dec. 1985 and Vol. 16, No. 2 March 1986.

2) Anything that's left, please use toward the paper's expenses. It might sound dumb, but I wish you could bring back the red masthead. (I know my contribution won't do it!)

As I said, receiving the MLP's literature has been a heartening experience. In personal contacts and political work, the paper has constantly provided a wealth of facts on every event of concern and has certainly helped me to argue a more consistently materialist interpretation. The theoretical issues taken up by the party in the past year have also provoked us to much reading, thought and discussion. In fact, I feel we have barely scratched the surface of the lessons to be learned from the Seventh Comintern Congress. Looking back, the documents issued from the 13th Plenum [of the Executive Committee of the CI] reveal even more starkly the [later] rapid ascent of the revisionist policies. The rigorous positions still held by the American party contrast dramatically with those expressed only a couple of years later after the Congress. At the very least, it is easy to understand why activists were so demoralized by this shift. Looking around today, it is amazing the extent to which the official documents from the right-wing social democrats of the USSR and its allies continue to expound the positions taken at the 7th Congress, despite the absolute deletion of any mention of any figure between Lenin and Brezhnev. Yet as interesting as the documents themselves may be, it is also clear that we now face a pressing need to pursue more thoroughly the historical analysis of the victory of revisionism and its social form in "really existing socialism." I hoped that before the May Day centennial ends, you will be able to make available or at least point attention to the crucial sources for an understanding of the history of the worker's movement and Marxism-Leninism in the U.S. At the same time, I would wish that we could hear more on the nature of the Soviet state and society.

If this all sounds a little on the bookish side, I'd like to tell you about our modest political efforts here at the University of Texas. Maybe you already know, but this is one conservative student body in a reactionary institution. Even causes like

apartheid and divestment that have ignited other campuses have been little more than fodder for the newspapers here. The main organizers, the Steve Biko Committee, have adopted an increasingly militant tone, but do not match their actions with their words. Even other "progressive" organization follows the most liberal of lines, putting on membership drives, writing letters to congressmen and avoiding any trace of internationalism or principled opposition. We have little to show on the plus side. Last fall, we met CIA recruitment day at the business school here with a small, around 20, demo, but with an explicitly anti-imperialist call. We used signs to spotlight recent U.S. imperialist atrocities around the world and our leaflet called out the CIA as the criminal instrument of the American state's militarist policy. The rally caught the university off guard. It flaunted one of their key repressive devices, the so-called free speech zone, where, unlike any other part of campus, speech is "free". Nor did we have any "sponsor". Without an official organization to discipline, the university's only resort would have been arrest. Although several of us found this demo a distinct step forward, many of the younger activists became discouraged at the relatively small size of the group and the lack of any concrete results to show for our efforts.

More recently, a local fraternity received a special send off to their spring break. The last Friday before vacation Pi Kappa Alpha had scheduled their annual Porter Party. The porters are a unique piece of UT [University of Texas] culture. The most reactionary fraternities employ black alcoholic men at dirt wages to perform menial labor and to serve as butt for the vicious racist notions about black men that these wealthy young rednecks find so amusing. The party itself "honors" one such man who drank himself to death while in the benevolent employment of the "Pikes". For six years the ads for the party featured a crude caricature of a drunken fat black man. An impromptu demo last year caught the frats off guard and led them to delay advertising the party until the day before this year and to delete the caricature from the ad. We put up another demo anyway and marched under the slogan "No racist parties, no racist frats!" When the frat officers came to speak with us, they faced demands to end these racist shenanigans and to pay their black employees a living wage. After the TV left and before the cops came, we got barraged with bottles and cans. While many of the younger activists tried to engage in fruitless discussion with these up and coming young bourgeoisie, the generally militant tone and the obvious distress suffered by the Pikes showed the value of independent anti-racist actions. This year, the demo doubled from twenty to forty participants and next year we will do better. Most importantly, both demonstrations gave new student activists a chance to compare the



work done by liberals and by dialectical materialists. Need I say, that the liberals covered themselves with shame and that the materialists continued to deepen their influence among the genuinely committed and effective activists.

In the next year, I know that the Advocate will be a useful tool for the nuts and bolts of agitational work and for our more important work to really raise the level of political consciousness

among UT activists to active struggle for revolutionary goals. I hope as well that I will have the time to write and let you know some things about the WA that I feel prevent the newspaper from being as effective a tool as it might be. Thank you for your time and thank you again for your invaluable help,

[A reader from the University of Texas] <>

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## MORE ON THE STRUGGLE WITHIN THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

The May 1 issue of **The Workers' Advocate** carried material on the mass actions against apartheid that blossomed across the U.S. in March and April, particularly on the university campuses. One of the features in this movement that stood out particularly clearly was that each of the advances of the movement was only achieved against the opposition of the reformist forces. Each major struggle reported on by **The Workers' Advocate** was opposed or even denounced by the reformist forces.

In this issue of the **Supplement** we carry additional material on some of the struggles reported in **The Workers' Advocate**.

### The Struggle Against the Unloading of South African Cargo

One of the significant struggles occurred on the docks of San Francisco where a militant blockade was held to prevent the unloading of South Africa cargo. The activists not only opposed the South African racists, but stood their grounds against the attacks of the police, sent by administration of the liberal paragon, Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

In reporting on this struggle, **The Workers' Advocate** showed that their self-sacrificing and militant stands was denounced by the reformist forces in the anti-apartheid movement. And it was the local branch of our Party that immediately upheld the banner of struggle and supported the activists against attack. Having themselves taken part in the struggle, they also issued a leaflet in defense of

the struggle against attacks from the reformists, and from the Trotskyites, who echoed the reformist attacks but in the terms of "revolutionary" phrasemongering. We reprint excerpts from this leaflet.

### The Struggle at MIT

The anti-apartheid movement also flared up at MIT. Here too every step of the movement was taken against diehard resistance of the reformist forces. **The Workers' Advocate** showed the protracted struggle between the two trends in the anti-apartheid movement, with the reformist forces consciously splitting the movement and boycotting militant actions.

At MIT the reformists specially vented their ire at the progressive, underground paper **The Student** and at the Marxist-Leninist Party. The bourgeois student newspaper, **The Tech**, took upon itself to be the voice of red-baiting. It hypocritically denoun-

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On the Actions at Pier 80:	
In Defense of the Anti-Apartheid Movement .....	10
On the Anti-Apartheid Movement at M.I.T.:	
MLP, USA Replies to <u>The Tech</u> .....	11
In Defense of Our Movement -	
<u>The Student</u> Replies to <u>The Tech</u> .....	13

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ced the anti-imperialist work as "outside socialist agitation" — while welcoming onto campus every capitalist politician it could find.

Here, as additional material to the article in

**The Workers' Advocate** on the movement at MIT, we reproduce the replies to **The Tech** of **The Student** and of **Boston Worker**, voice of the Boston Branch of the MLP. <>

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## IN DEFENSE OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

Whenever the mass struggle gains militancy and goes outside the bounds of what is acceptable to the Democratic Party, the reformists and revisionists wring their hands in despair. This happened once again in the struggle to prevent the unloading of South African cargo in San Francisco. When the activists displayed determination and militant spirit, the reformists and revisionists began a chorus of slander.

### Giving Impetus to the Anti-Apartheid Movement

The MLP, which had taken part in the mass struggle, immediately issued a leaflet in defense of the struggle and circulated it among the activists. This leaflet pointed to the significance of the dock action in being a real struggle that went outside the bounds of Democratic Party talk-shop politics. Among other things, it stated that:

"The March 10th and 11th actions at Pier 80 proved to be significant actions for building the anti-apartheid movement. In particular these actions broke the stranglehold of the Democratic Party and revisionist leaders of BAFSAM (Bay Area Free South Africa Movement) who have never done anything at Pier 80 but stage 'information' pickets in front of an empty dock with no ship in port.

"The action also rejected the pacifist's love for 'symbolic' actions with an active and forceful blockade at the gate and militant confrontations with the S.F.P.D. In fact, activists voted at CAA's (Campaign Against Apartheid) March 9th meeting against putting the straitjacket of pacifist tactics on the Pier 80 action.

"Anyone with any sentiment at all for building the anti-apartheid movement has to appreciate these things."

### Liberal Democrats and Revisionists Oppose the Militant Actions

The leaflet then points out that the liberal Democrats and the revisionists around the pro-Soviet CP came out against the struggle. They employed dirty and lying means to undermine the struggle. They had more opposition to militancy than to apartheid.

The leaflet pointed out:

"It's clear that the revisionist CP and

leaders of BAFSAM were acute aware that their monopoly on the movement and their insistence on the tamest forms might be broken by a militant mass action which enlivened the activists. Right from the start the Pier 80 action did not meet their approval. They did not want these actions to take place and they attempted to sabotage them.

"Different CP forces lied about the arrival of the Nedlloyd Kembla and they tried to stop the distribution of the leaflet which announced the action at their peoples' World banquet March 9th. Furthermore, at the action itself a prominent CP member advocated moving the action to City hall to get help from Mayor Feinstein ... i.e. anything but a militant stand against apartheid."

### "Left" Rhetoric on Behalf of the Union Bureaucrats

The liberals and the revisionists openly opposed the action from rightist motives. But some opportunists tried to give a "left" ring to their opposition to militancy. They denounced the activists for not having accomplished miracles at one stroke. However, this "leftist" impatience was just a pose. These forces were actually denouncing the action because they were opposed to anything that went outside the bounds of what the union bureaucrats would accept.

The leaflet pointed out:

"At the March 23rd Campaign Against Apartheid meeting, a handful of trotskysts from Internationalist Workers Party (IWP) distributed a leaflet scolding the CAA and the March 10th and 11th anti-apartheid actions at Pier 80 for making 'serious mistakes' and for failing 'to stop the unloading of the ship for more than one day, and, more importantly, fail[ing] to generate a larger movement to stop South African cargo among the labor movement in particular.' They even accused the activists of holding this action as a 'substitute for the mobilization of the power of the working class,' as a 'substitute for the actions of the workers.'"

The MLP leaflet went on to ridicule these "r-r-revolutionary" phrases of the IWP and point out the real concern that was motivating them. It pointed out that when IWP talked about the "labor movement" and workers' actions, they really had something else in mind. It stated that:

"In line with this, note should be taken of the fact that when IWP talks of 'mobilizing the working class' what they actually mean is going to the top trade union hacks of the Labor Council and begging them to 'lead'."

The leaflet goes on to say:

"It is important, only to note that they [the IWP] are **attacking** the concrete forward motion that took place as a result of the action at Pier 80. Could it be that the IWP is just as afraid as the CPUSA that the anti-apartheid movement might slip from the grip of the Democratic Party? IWP's letter is just one small voice in a chorus of attacks on the anti-apartheid movement coming from the likes of the Democratic Party, the 'Communist' Party USA and various 'left' Trotskyists."

### What the Liberal Democrats Want the Movement to Do

The leaflet then described the confines in which the Democratic Party wanted to keep the movement, confines defended by the revisionists. It stated:

"The Democrats talk about 'human rights' and sanctions against apartheid, but what they really oppose is the black masses rising in revolution to overthrow the racist regime. They puff up the most token measures,... They want the oppressed South African masses to fold their arms and wait on the good graces of imperialism and racist Botha, and they want the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. to give up militant struggle and become a lobbying group for the Democratic Party.

"This is why Democratic Party officials always show up in a posture of support when militant struggle breaks out. Whether it is Willie Brown on the steps of Biko [at the

University of California at Berkeley] or John George at the Pier 80 docks we hear the same refrain. They gush with promises to 'hold up the UC budget' or to 'bring out hundreds and thousands' to mass actions, but these promises are as empty as their congressional sanctions or their city council resolutions against trade with apartheid. The only thing the Democrats deliver to the anti-apartheid movement is police to suppress any militant actions.

"The CP revisionists and reformists provide the Democrats with a platform at every tame action they organize."

And the leaflet also went on to expose the trade union bureaucrats, who not only sit on the backs of the workers in this country but sabotage the solidarity movement with the black workers of South Africa.

### Forge Unity with the Working Masses

The leaflet concluded by setting before the anti-apartheid movement the path of uniting for struggle "the masses of working class people, oppressed nationalities and progressive people. ... It is they who have no interest in maintaining the capitalist and imperialist system that squeezes the working people at home and sits on the black people in South Africa. It is they who have not restricted themselves to posturing in front of TV cameras. ... The anti-apartheid activists should not hesitate to bypass the union bureaucrats and unite with the ordinary workers in mass actions against apartheid." And this unity with the working masses "must be forged in struggle against our 'own' imperialists and in solidarity with the revolution in South Africa which will smash the racist regime of Botha once and for all."

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## MLP, USA REPLIES TO THE TECH

The following article is reprinted from the March 12, 1986 issue of the **Boston Worker**, newspaper of the Boston Branch of the MLP, USA. Subheads have been added.

For over a week now **The Tech** has been carrying out an editorial page campaign against the militancy of the anti-apartheid movement on campus. This campaign has been carried out through editorials purporting to give friendly advice to the movement and through highlighting the letters of disgruntled racists, liberals and anti-communists who have answered its call for attacks on the movement. Since a central feature of **The Tech's** campaign against the movement is the demand that the movement exclude the

participation of the Marxist-Leninist Party, we feel it only fitting that we respond to these attacks.

### The Link Between Apartheid in South Africa and Racism in the U.S.

**The Tech** and its columnists and letter writers are very upset that the MIT Coalition Against Apartheid not only demanded immediate divestment but also demanded an end to the racist, anti-poor, anti-working class policies that have cut black enrollment by 50 percent in the last 6 years. The connection between this demand and the anti-apartheid struggle, according to **The Tech**, is "at best tenuous. And of course the demand that MIT guarantee the jobs of its food service workers is nothing but

an extraneous "stereotypical demand of outside socialist agitators for working class reform".

Now if **The Tech** and the anti-communist letter writers would stop their pro-capitalist agitation long enough they might discover the missing link between the anti-apartheid movement and all these other demands. They might notice that executives of the same corporations and banks that have made big profits off the exploitation of nearly slave black labor in South Africa are members of the MIT Corporation. These capitalists and executives decide not only investment policy of the endowment but also such things as admissions and financial aid policy and how the Corporation will deal with its workers. The missing link, dear editors, is imperialism, big monopoly capitalism, which carries out the same policies of racism and exploitation of the workers at home as it does abroad.

Actually the editors of **The Tech** are aware of these facts but they get frantic when they see their master being attacked on too many fronts at once. They worry that too many students may come to see that there is not just a problem of "moral shortsightedness" but that the whole system is rotten.

#### The Tech Opposes the Anti-Racist and Pro-Worker Demands

And finally the editors of **The Tech** oppose the raising of demands in defense of the food service workers and demands for increased minority enrollment because they oppose these demands in and of themselves. On February 28 **The Tech** ran an editorial supporting the administration's plans to contract out the jobs of the food service workers. And in the fall of 1984 Garfinkel was writing articles denouncing remedial programs for minority students from ghetto schools as being reverse discrimination. Garfinkel demanded the abolition of such programs with arguments exactly the same as those given by the Reaganites and the KKK. **Tech**, your racism is showing.

#### The Tech Denounces the Militancy of the Movement

**The Tech**, and especially Mr. Garfinkel, are very upset with the militancy of the demonstrations which took place last week, with the fact that the coalition took a stand in favor of the struggle of the black masses in South Africa and that a growing section of the movement stands for revolution in South Africa. In particular the editors of **The Tech** are upset by the fact that militant students have denounced Gray and the Corporation members as imperialists and racists and called for mass struggle to force them to make changes. How impolite and obstructionist to serious reasoned debate! Or, as Garfinkel would say, what irresponsible ranting and raving.

Imagine that! Here you have millions of black workers and high school students fighting and dying

in the streets of South Africa to overthrow a regime that has kept them as slaves for over a hundred years. Here you have Corporation members running companies that are making big profits off the exploitation of South African blacks and helping prop up the racist regime. Here you have Paul Gray arrogantly proclaiming to the world that the Corporation doesn't care what the students or faculty think: it will keep its investments in companies doing business in South Africa. And this is the same Paul Gray who told minority students that they were unqualified and that if they raised too much protest fewer minorities would be admitted. But we are not supposed to call these people racists and imperialists. We are supposed to be polite and try to have reasoned discussion with them (incidentally, the Corporation has even refused that) as if they did not know what they were doing, as if they did not know where their profits and positions come from.

The attitude of the editors of **The Tech** is an example of the disgusting obsequiousness that capitalism promotes among the intellectual strata. No matter what the rich and powerful may do you are supposed to be polite and try to understand. Let **The Tech** worry about the offended egos of Paul Gray and the Corporation members. We, for our part, will worry about and defend the interests of the black masses in South Africa, the workers and oppressed masses around the world, and the students who have the courage to take their side.

#### The Role of the MLP and The Student in the Anti-Apartheid Movement

One of the basic themes of **The Tech's** inside agitation against the movement is that the recent wave of militancy, as well as the wider demands and the anti-imperialist slogans raised in the demonstration, are a result of the participation of the MLP and **The Student** in the movement.

Now we must admit that here **The Tech** has a certain point. For three years the MLP has been carrying out systematic revolutionary agitation among the students at MIT. We have encouraged a militant fight against the racist and anti-working class admissions and financial aid policies of the Corporation. We have helped the militant activists on campus organize **The Student**. We have constantly advocated the need for the students to take up an anti-imperialist stand and to link up with the revolutionary working class movement.

We, together with **The Student**, organized the first anti-apartheid march on campus in December of 1984. From that time we have constantly agitated on the need for the anti-apartheid movement to not only raise the slogan of divestment but to also support the revolution in South Africa, to oppose the imperialist system, and to fight racism and Reaganism in the U.S. The MLP, together with the militants around **The Student**, continued to push for mass action and to encourage every sign of militancy even when

the liberal wing of the anti-apartheid movement (Garfinkel's reasonable new leaders) wanted to call off all actions last fall in order to work in Gray's Colloquium.

The work and views of the MLP have won the respect of numerous students on the campus. Thus it was only natural that when the students wanted to have mass actions that the MLP and **The Student** would have considerable influence in the movement.

**In Contrast with the MIT Corporation,  
the Marxist-Leninists Do Not Believe in  
Using Coercion and Manipulation Against the Masses**

Contrary to the views of the editors of **The Tech**, the influence of the MLP is not due to coercion or manipulation but rather due to persuasion, the strength of our ideas, and our example. For example, the four demands of the coalition were approved in a mass democratic meeting of the people who put up the shanty town. After long discussion three demands were approved unanimously and the fourth on the food service workers was approved by a vote of about 40 to 3. There were only two members of the MLP present at this meeting, and although they argued their views they did not vote. Similarly last Friday only three worker MLP activists participated in the march. Nevertheless nearly 80% of the march took up the anti-imperialist and anti-racist slogans raised by the MLP supporters. Clearly people did this of their own free will.

Unlike Paul Gray and the Corporation we Marxist-Leninists do not believe in using coercion and manipulation against the masses. We realize that a solid revolutionary movement can only be built by the conscious participation of the mass of workers, students and activists.

**The Tech's Cry of "Outside Agitator"  
Defends repression Against the Movement**

**The Tech** rails against us being "outside socialist agitators" who are not part of the "legitimate protest of the MIT community." This disgusting localist and elitist demagoguery plays the dirty role of helping MIT forcibly exclude both MLP and **The Student** from the campus. Numerous times in the past campus police have harassed worker supporters of MLP, threatened them with arrest, or evicted them from campus. Last month the campus police came out in force to prevent **The Student** from using empty classrooms for meetings. **The Tech's** dirty propaganda about "illegitimate outside socialist agitation" only assists this repression by the administration.

Actually, the editors of **The Tech** do not mind outside agitators as long as they are pro-capitalist. They did not complain when Mel King and Thomas Gallagher spoke to an anti-apartheid rally. After all, they are safe politicians of the Democratic Party. When **The Tech** objects to is the socialist part. They are opposed to anyone who tries to upset the Institute's plans to turn out students who will be mindless "me generation" servants of the capitalists and their government. But no matter what, we of the MLP will continue to help students at MIT build their movement and we will work to win them to the side of the working class and socialism.

The editors of **The Tech** promise that if the progressive students exclude MLP and **The Student** from the movement then the movement will grow by leaps and bounds. But in fact the movement has grown to its highest level in years with the participation and to no small extent as a result of the work of the MLP and **The Student**. The right-wingers and the pseudo-liberals of **The Tech** would like the progressive students to begin apologizing first for the presence of the MLP in the movement, then for their own militancy, until finally the movement is liquidated altogether. But we are confident that the militant students at MIT are not about to go down that dead end path. <>

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**IN DEFENSE OF OUR MOVEMENT  
The Student Replies to The Tech**

The following article is reprinted from the March 6, 1986 issue of **The Student**.

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Last Tuesday the Editorial Board of **The Tech** issued a statement claiming to support the current anti-apartheid protests while also denouncing the activists' protests against MIT's resegregation [removal of minorities] of the student body and exploitation of the dining service workers. **The Tech** patronizingly claims that there exists merely a "tenuous connection" between the anti-apartheid

struggle, the anti-racist struggle and the workers' struggle. **The Tech** goes so far as to advise that the political movement "would have been stronger had distracting elements been removed from the ... demands ..."

We believe that all activists should pay careful attention to what **The Tech** is recommending for the movement: a dead end.

The born-again anti-apartheid activists of **The Tech** want us to believe that they have the surest formula for forcing MIT to divest. But careful analysis shows that **The Tech's** position is nothing new. **The Tech** clings to the liberal Democrats'

failed strategy of "morally cleansing the portfolio", while letting the imperialists off the hook. But divestment is not an end in itself. We are demanding divestment as part of building support for the liberation struggle of the black workers and youth in South Africa. Divestment alone will certainly not bring down the apartheid regime. Neither will university divestment end U.S. support for the regime, which includes many forms of economic, political and military collaboration. Development the struggle for divestment is a step in building up a broader, militant struggle that will really cut the U.S. ties to the South African government.

In order for this movement to be built up, activists must realize that the policy of the U.S. ruling class operates the same in South Africa and in the U.S. The politicians of the rich always recoil against this analysis and that is why **The Tech** editors lash out against linking the MIT Corporation's support for apartheid to their resegregation of the Institute. But we of **The Student** do not choose to be hypocritical liberals who criticize what goes on across the ocean while closing our eyes to the reality of the life for the black people in the U.S. As for the issue of the food service workers, it is dealt with in a separate article in

this issue of **The Student**.

**The Tech** further denounces the anti-apartheid movement for allowing the participation of "non-MIT activists such as the Marxist-Leninist Party." **The Student** condemns this right-wing, red-baiting, McCarthyite position of **The Tech**. We believe it is crucial for the anti-apartheid activists to break the ideological indoctrination efforts of MIT with direct discussions on strategy and tactics with the revolutionary workers. To ban the community activists from the MIT campus, as **The Tech** suggests, prevents the [student] activists from grasping the working class perspective of the anti-apartheid struggle, thereby weakening the fight against the U.S. corporations. Furthermore it is a distortion to say that all MLP supporters are non-students since the MLP has strong support among the working class students at MIT, including the Editorial Board of **The Student**.

The anti-apartheid activists have charted a bold political course of struggle against the imperialist connections between South African apartheid, and racism and exploitation of workers at home. Let there be no doubt that the movement is taking up a militant banner of struggle, and students and workers everywhere should rally to the cause. <>

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#### REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR THE STUDY OF FRANCE AND THE NEW LINE OF THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE CI

The last issue of the **Supplement** (April 15, 1986) contained articles showing how the turn away from Leninism, which in the PCF began in 1934 and which was officially proclaimed as the new world line at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935, harmed the French working class movement and undermined the French Communist Party (PCF). The example of the PCF was taken because the Seventh Congress itself had given France as a model and because to this day there exists a myth that the work in this period of the PCF, and of the Popular Front government that it supported, were brilliant examples of the success of the line of the Seventh Congress. The truth is just the opposite. Any serious examination of this period of history from the point of view of class struggle shows the fiasco of the new line.

Due to lack of space, certain reference materials referred to by these articles were not printed. Here we supply these materials.

It should be noted that these reference materials illustrate only a few particular points. Hence, taken by themselves, they do not provide a picture of the overall themes from the last issue of the **Supplement**. Even to understand the significance of these materials, and how they fit in, one must refer back to the last **Supplement**.

Here we shall make only a few comments on these materials. We do not intend these comments as a substitute to referring to the articles in the last **Supplement**.

The reference materials include the following:

- 1) A brief account of the battles against the fascists in France during February 1934 — see p.18;
- 2) The 1936 program of the People's Front in France — see p. 20;
- 3) The 1936 national election results — see p. 22; and
- 4) The text of the proposals for merger of the communists and social-democrats exchanged between the PCF and the SFIO in 1937 -- see p.23

#### On the Description of the February Days of 1934

We include R.P. Dutt's description of the battles against the fascists of February 1934 in France. The "February Days" were one of the crucial periods in the mid-1930's in France. And the course of these battles provides a snapshot of the various class forces in France: the proletariat incensed at the fascists, the liberal bourgeoisie giving way before the fascists, and the reformists tailing the liberals.

The significance of the February days is described in detail in the **Supplement** of April 1986, so here we restrict ourselves to a comment on Dutt and his book **Fascism and Social Revolution**. Dutt's book contains a number of valuable descriptions of the development of the working class movement and of capitalist reaction from the end of World War I to the first half of the 1930's. But his theorizing has certain defects.

The general line of the CI after the Sixth Congress, and prior to the change marked by the Seventh Congress of the CI, was correct and much important work was accomplished. But there were certain rigidities in the views of the CI leadership, a certain one-sidedness in dealing with certain delicate tactical questions. Dutt reflects some of these rigidities in his book, as well as setting forth certain peculiar generalizations and doubtful theories that seem to be his own.

Dutt's book was written prior to the Seventh Congress. But Dutt changed his stand and accepted the Seventh Congress of the CI, and this apparently was the start of his degeneration. He ended up simply another revisionist leader of a corrupted and worthless revisionist party in Great Britain.

### Program of the People's Front

We include the program of the People's Front. It will be noted that the program does not discuss forms of mass struggle but is simply a list of demands. In fact, it was basically an electoral pact and the demands were the election promises.

At first glance, the program demands a number of things. But the Popular Front government accomplished little. Hence the meaninglessness of flowery phrases that promise good things but are detached from the mass struggle is evident.

But closer examination reveals the backward character of much of the People's Front program.

Take the demands against fascism. At first sight, the program appears to demand a number of steps against the fascists. But on closer reading, it actually demands the strengthening of various state laws on "semi-military formations" in general, on "incitement to murder" or "attempts endangering the safety of the State" by anyone, from any direction, against "slander and blackmail", etc. In fact, the French government had not lacked the legal means to suppress the fascists; it had broad powers of suppression and it had repeatedly made use of them against the communists. What was needed was to demand that the fascists be suppressed. The program, however, precisely lacks this and instead demands the strengthening of the bourgeois legal apparatus and the strengthening of the power of law.

The issue of war and peace was also a burning question in the 30's. Here the program concentrates on reiterating the pacifist panaceas popular at that time. For example, the program placed much hope in the League of Nations. And what did it want the League to do? It did not explicitly demand steps

against the fascists, but that the League take up "defining the aggressor" and then enforce that definition. And the program propagated illusions about the possibility of "pass(ing) from armed peace to disarmed peace", etc.

Much of the economic demands of the program seem to center on those of interest to the small proprietors and the liberal bourgeoisie. For example, there is a good deal on the recomposition of the Bank of France, so that it would no longer be controlled by a narrow group of the richest capitalists. The program openly wants to have a broader representation, not just from "labor", but of "industrial, commercial, and agricultural activity". But there was little about what the bank should do. In fact, the Popular Front government did broaden the governing circles of this bank, while continuing its exploiting policies.

As well, there is much on financial corruption, also on agricultural measures much of which seem of most benefit to the stronger farmers. (There is a reference at one point to support for "agricultural co-operatives", but it has to be noted that agricultural producers' or proprietors' cooperatives under capitalist conditions usually benefit most the stronger farmers and the peasant bourgeoisie, which have the resources to take part in them and which benefits most from the marketing and purchasing advantages they provide. The nature of cooperatives can vary depending on the situation, and particularly whether they are connected to a political movement in the countryside. But such cooperatives are not the same as socialist cooperatives.)

There are various demands of particular use to the working class in this program: reduction of the work week without reduction in pay, unemployment insurance, trade union rights, extension of education (this last also useful beyond the working class, of course), etc. But many of these demands are barely mentioned and lack the detail that is added in the demands to other sectors.

Naturally, a real struggle against fascism and imperialist war would have been of fundamental importance to the working class. The working class needs not just this or that economic demand, but first and foremost the freedom to organize. But, as we have remarked, the sections of the program on fascism and the question of war are not formulated in the spirit of proletarian struggle either. And, the experience of the Popular Front government, as described in the **Supplement** of April, showed that this government did not call for proletarian struggle, but sought to paralyze it. The Popular Front government carried out few of the promises in its own program, for example, the reform of the Bank of France. The workers did make certain economic gains in the period of the Popular Front government, but these were mainly the result of the huge strike wave of 1936, unprecedented in previous French history; the Popular Front government hardly gave much more than was inevitable under the circumstances, and then it later announced the "pause" in which it

openly gave up implementation of its own program.

### Election Results

The election results from the 1932 and 1936 general national elections are included. They may provide some idea of French electoral politics.

However, it should be noted that these figures are quite crude because they cover over the different trends that affected the parties in different years between 1932 and 1936. For example, 1932-34 period resulted in crisis and loss of influence for the Radicals and the SFIO. But in 1936 the Popular Front gave a temporary boost to the SFIO (and probably the Radicals). It would be interesting to have the results of local and partial elections in France in order to trace this process, and also the process that set in after 1936.

Nevertheless these figures, rough as they are, do illustrate various things. They show a loss of strength by the Radicals (the party of the liberal bourgeoisie) and the dramatic growth of the voting strength of the PCF. Meanwhile the SFIO, despite its internal crisis, maintained its totals.

### The Unity Proposals Between the PCF and the French Social-Democrats (S.F.I.O.)

The new line of the 7th Congress called for the merger of the communist and social-democratic parties all over the world. The 7th Congress prettified the bourgeois, anti-working class features of the reformist, social-democratic parties. It held that the rise of fascism had impelled the reformists back into the camp of proletarian class struggle.

In France, the PCF therefore worked hard to unite with French social-democracy, the S.F.I.O. or French Socialist Party. It gave up its work to win the workers away from reformism and social-democracy, although the movement to the left of the working class movement and the bankruptcy of the Radical Party of the French liberal bourgeoisie had led to a severe crisis in French social-democracy.

The unity negotiations were conducted over such things as the program for the proposed joint party of communists and social-democrats. The reference material contains the proposed drafts from the PCF and the SFIO.

### On the Revolutionary Words of the French Reformists

The SFIO draft is notable for its revolutionary phrasemongering. It talks about "a party of class struggle and revolution", and it "accepts the Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it figures in the **Critique of the Gotha Program.**" It denounces "permanent and organic collaboration with bourgeois parties".

One would hardly know that the SFIO was in fact a tail to the French liberal bourgeoisie and that for years it had voted for and propped up one Radical

government after the other. Oh yes, the SFIO was for socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, revolution--so long as one could accomplish these things hand-in-hand with the Radicals.

The SFIO said it was not for "permanent and organic collaboration" with the *bourgeois parties*, but it was collaboration all the same. This was "utiliz(ing) secondary conflicts within the possessing class for the benefit of the toilers". In the name of "the defense of the rights and interests of the proletariat", it constantly trailed behind the Radicals to defend the bourgeois Republic.

The revolutionary verbiage of this most tame party of reformism shows that there is no one single phrase that guarantees one against reformism. The SFIO would agree to any phrase, if only it didn't have to leave its cozy niche with the bourgeoisie. And in turn much of the bourgeoisie was quite confident of the capitalist nature of the social-democrats and willing to allow them their "revolutionary" phrases, knowing full well their hollow nature.

### On the PCF's Draft

Meanwhile the PCF's draft unity platform was also written in high-flown language. Nevertheless, upon careful examination it can be seen that this platform has written into it the turn away from Leninism that was formalized at the Seventh Congress at the C.I. Here we will just refer to a few of these features.

The draft writes in the pacifist politics that also marked the Seventh Congress of the CI. The anti-war struggle was not connected to revolution but instead the peace slogan is taken up and put in the center. And note that this is not a simple agitational leaflet, but the proposed program of the united party of the French proletariat.

The draft revels in petty-bourgeois democratic illusions. For example, the second paragraph of Section V, on "Genuine Democracy", talks of "creating the conditions for the development of a true parliamentary democracy" as work "to prepare the progressive disappearance of the state with the goal of a communist society." Thus the dictatorship of the proletariat, which the program claims in the first paragraph of this section to support, is apparently presented as a purified and "true" parliamentary democracy.

As well, the draft proclaims support, in the case of war, for countries "in which there is a proletarian government or a democratic government, victim to a fascist aggression". The program goes on to link together support of the Soviet Union and support of Spain. But in fact the phrase "democratic government" refers to much more than the particular case of Spain. A democratic government which is not proletarian is presumably a bourgeois-democratic government. In this way the draft includes the PCF's new line on the defense of the bourgeois Republic as the task of the proletarian party in the fight against fascist aggression. And this blanket en-



dorsement of bourgeois-democracy meant creating illusions about "democratic" imperialism.

The draft also wipes out the concept of the distinction between proletarian class interests and petty-bourgeois politics. It vows not just defense of the proletariat, and not just the struggle to unite the non-proletarian, petty-bourgeois working masses behind the militant proletariat in the struggle against capitalism, but also the defense, without any qualification, of "the day-to-day interests of the toiling peasants, the small shopkeepers, the intellectuals and the office workers." There is no mention of the vacillating stand of the petty-bourgeoisie, which reflects its position in between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and no recognition that the socialist proletariat can only support certain interests of the petty-bourgeoisie. There is no mention of the struggle of the rural workers and semi-proletarians against the peasant bourgeoisie. And so forth.

(This is in addition to the fact that the PCF was actually at this time prettifying the liberal politics of the Radicals under the pretext that this, the main party of the French liberal bourgeoisie, was allegedly a petty-bourgeois party of the peasantry and other petty-bourgeois. In the name of supporting the petty-bourgeoisie or even "the middle classes", the PCF actually took up alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie.)

The program endorses the "independence of the trade union movement", which is a reference to the PCF's abolition of fractions in the unions and its endorsement of trade union neutrality. "Independence" of the unions, in left-wing French political terminology of the time, meant trade union neutrality. The program even goes on in this paragraph to pledge "the severest measures against those of its members who in their writings or actions harm this unity" which allegedly will be achieved by trade union neutrality.

The PCF's proposal on legality is actually even weaker than the SFIO's. The PCF's clause states that the party "carries on its activities in the sphere of legality", but in the future, if there are onslaughts of fascist reaction, it would continue its work in other forms. The SFIO proposal states in general that, while utilizing "all legal methods" for its "deliberated action", the party "will never let itself be halted in this action by the fetters of bourgeois legality." This formulation would allow for going beyond legality at any moment. But of course, this didn't mean that the SFIO was more militant than the PCF in practice, as it was actually tamer. It only meant that, as the liberal bourgeoisie didn't yet trust the PCF (as they did trust the SFIO), the PCF leaders seem to have felt constrained to bow deeper in their rhetoric so as not to scare it away.

### Obscuring the Differences

Comparison of the PCF and SFIO drafts reveals

various differences which are concealed under the high-flown verbiage. For example, the drafts appear to conduct a concealed fight over affiliation to the CI. The PCF draft never mentions the CI by name but talks of being "a member of an international organization whose goals and methods corresponds to its own" and says that the party "scrupulously applies the decisions adopted by international congresses." Although the only decision referred to in the draft is the Stuttgart Resolution--of the 1907 congress of the Second International--the draft is presumably hinting at belonging to the CI (3rd International).

The SFIO draft never says that the social-democrats oppose the CI. But the clause that the policy of the party "is determined by the Party itself deliberating in its congresses" was probably meant to be a hidden slap at the CI; the reformists probably agitated against the CI by pretending that the authority of the CI made the communists into automata.

Or again, the SFIO draft says nothing directly about the Soviet Union. But presumably its phrase about "the Marxist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it figures in the **Critique of the Gotha Program**" was meant in their eyes to distinguish their concept from that of the communists.

The situation is even worse with regard to the policy with respect to the liberal bourgeoisie, which is hidden in both programs.

The reference material contains not just the text of the two proposals, but also an introduction by the PCF. This introduction doesn't try to draw out the points at stake between the drafts, but instead simply demands unity. But despite everything, no matter how much it conceded to the social-democrats, the PCF would not be able to achieve unity. Despite the undermining effects of the new line of the Seventh Congress, the PCF still represented a different class from the SFIO, and this class difference between a proletarian party and a bourgeoisified reformist party, could not be overcome by simple phrases. This class difference was reflected in the way many SFIO leaders and parliamentarians even took positions in the puppet Vichy government that served the Nazis in World War II, while the PCF emerged as the main leader of the anti-fascist partisans.

If the PCF had achieved unity with the social-democrats, it would have had the pro-fascist capitulators right in its midst. The tragedy is that, while the PCF fought heroically in the French resistance, the new line that began at the Seventh Congress still corroded it from within. The PCF not only could not utilize the tremendous revolutionary energy unleashed by the struggle against fascism for strengthening the socialist revolutionary movement, but it eventually degenerated altogether into the corrupt, reformist, revisionist party it is today. (See the discussion of the line of the PCF after the liberation of France in "On the Orientation of the French CP (1944-1956)" in **The Workers' Advocate** of May 1, 1984.)

## THE ANTI-FASCIST BATTLES OF FEBRUARY 1934

Below is an excerpt from Fascism and Social Revolution by R.P. Dutt, 1935, pp. 272-278.

### 4. The February Days and the National Concentration Government in France

In France the development of the effects of the economic crisis appeared at first more slowly. But in the latest period the situation has gone forward with extreme rapidity, and the question of Fascism has become a burning issue.

The events of February 6-12, 1934, and the fall of the Daladier Government, leading to the formation of the transitional Doumergue Government of National Concentration, has brought to the front the whole question of Fascism and the increasing signs of advance to a direct armed struggle.

These events are of vital importance for the Western "democratic" countries, because in these events are set out with crystal clearness the two alternative paths, the path of the "left bloc" or bourgeois-liberal democracy, leading in fact to Fascism, or the path of the united working-class front of struggle, which can alone defeat Fascism.

What was the situation on the eve of the events of February 6-12? The national-chauvinist, Fascist and Royalist forces in France--at all times active beneath the democratic-republican exterior--developed extreme activity in the gathering crisis, and especially since the advent of Hitlerism, with the open alliance and assistance of the police authorities in Paris and of the big press, that is, of the State and finance-capital. At the same time the governmental forms were showing the same increase of executive powers and repression of the workers common to all capitalist governments in the present period. Even The Times on February 5, that is, before the decisive events, was compelled to note:

A contrast has been drawn between the severe repression of Communist manifestations and the comparative immunity from punishment of Royalist demonstrators and the Royalist newspaper which directly incites its readers to riot in the streets,

This was under a "Left" bourgeois Government, maintained in office in practice by the support of the Socialist Party. The majority in Parliament was "Left Cartel" majority, consisting of the Socialist Party and of the "Left" bourgeois groupings.

This "Left" bourgeois Government (previously under Chautemps, then under Daladier) was heavily

discredited by one of the typical recurrent financial and police scandals, the Stavisky scandal, which was being utilized by the reactionary forces to raise agitation against the parliamentary regime and to prepare a Government of National Concentration, just as the crisis of the franc was similarly used in 1926. After the dismissal of the police chief, Chiappe, who was notoriously hand-in-glove with the Royalist and Fascist elements, preparations were openly made--without interference--and proclaimed in the big press for a jingo riot on February 6, which was to serve as a preliminary trial of strength and spearhead for the Fascist advance.

What was the line of the Daladier Government and of "left democracy" in the face of this challenge? The Socialist Party voted its confidence in the Daladier Government, in the "Left" bourgeois Government, as the defender of "democracy" against Fascism. On the basis of their support the Daladier Government received a substantial parliamentary majority of 360 to 220 on the critical evening of February 6. As against this line the Communist Party, which had approached the Socialist Party for the united front against Fascism in March 1933, and been refused, called for the united front from below, called the workers to the streets against the Fascist attack, and through the unions began to make agitation for a general strike against the Fascist menace. The two lines were now to receive their practical demonstration in the events that followed.

The Daladier Government massed heavy military forces in Paris the days preceding February 6. But did it act against Fascism? The leaders of the Fascists and Royalists were allowed to carry on their preparations in complete freedom. Previously, on the eve of a Communist May Day demonstration, three thousand Communist leaders had been arrested in Paris in order to cripple the organization of the demonstration. On the eve of this reactionary demonstration not a single Fascist or Royalist leader was touched. The organizers of the reaction were given freedom of the streets to burn, destroy, set fire to Government buildings, and advance on the Chamber of Deputies; no adequate forces were placed against them; the police were inactive; the "Gardes Republicaines" and "Gardes Mobiles" were steadily commanded to retreat and give way before the bourgeois mob; only at the last moment, when the Chamber was nearly reached and the bourgeoisie demonstrators began to fire with their revolvers, the "Gardes Mobiles," not on the order of their officers, but in instinctive self-defense, fired back, and about a dozen of the dupes of the reaction and onlookers

were killed. The subsequent Commission of Enquiry established that the shooting was begun by the Fascist demonstrators and maintained for half an hour before any answering fire took place on the side of the Government forces; and that even so no order to fire was given by any officer but that the rank and file of the "Gardes Mobiles" began spontaneously to fire in self-defense and were immediately ordered to stop by their officers.

The sequel to this incident is instructive for the whole future of parliamentary democracy. Immediately following this incident, on the very next day, on February 7, the Daladier Government, which had just received an overwhelming parliamentary majority, resigned; and there was installed, amid the plaudits of the millionaire press, the Doumergue Government of National Concentration, with the semi-fascist Tardieu in a strategic position in its midst.

How did this happen? Why this sudden surrender of the legal Government with a parliamentary majority before the first Fascist street-offensive? This question is of crucial importance for all the Western "democratic" countries, where confidence in "democratic institutions" as the defense against Fascism is still preached.

Why did Daladier, "champion of democracy" and chosen representative of French Socialism, immediately resign before the Fascist extra-parliamentary offensive? Where, then, was the "sovereignty of Parliament," "law and order," the "will of the electors," and all the paper paraphernalia of bourgeois democracy? Flown to the winds, as soon as finance-capital gave the order in the opposite direction. The parliamentary majority might vote one thing; but finance-capital ordered another, and finance-capital was obeyed, including by the representatives of that parliamentary majority.

The Daladier Government issued an explanation that it resigned "to avoid further bloodshed":

The Government, while responsible for the maintenance of order, declined to ensure it by the employment of exceptional means, which might result in severer repressive action and further bloodshed. The Government had no wish to use soldiers against the demonstrators, and for that reason had laid down office.

The transparent hypocrisy of the "explanation" is manifest. As if any French bourgeois Government had ever hesitated to use the utmost violence against working-class demonstrators, not merely using soldiers against them, but organizing complete military operations against them, as was done on the night of the far more serious fighting of February 9, amid the applause of the entire bourgeois press.

Daladier resigned, not because he was a pacifist, but because he was a puppet of finance-capital and could do no other. Daladier resigned because he was compelled by the real ruling forces of the State, in relation to which a parliamentary majority was a mere stage-play. What else could he do? Even had he had the will to fight, he had no forces. The

police belonged to the reaction; the General Staff belonged to the reaction; it was reported that the old Marshal Lyautey threatened to lead the army on Paris if there should be any attempt at resistance by the parliamentary majority. He was as contemptible a helpless puppet as Asquith over Ulster.

Had he wished to fight, he could only have done one thing, to have publicly exposed the whole plot, and to have called on the proletarian masses, on the rank and file of the soldiers, to resist. But this would have meant to unloose the proletarian revolution, which he feared as much as any of the Bloc National or the Fascists. At bottom he was one with these; all the liberal-democratic pretense was no more than electoral humbug. He knew his duty. He went quietly.

**Therewith the whole card-castle of bourgeois democracy, of the "democratic" defense against Fascism, of "democracy versus dictatorship," of the whole Social Democratic line, came tumbling down.** The line of the "Left Cartel," of the French Socialist Party, of the parliamentary-democratic "defense" against Fascism, was proved once again only to have smoothed the way for the advance of Fascism, for a Government of the Right, for intensified dictatorship against the workers--so much so that the Socialist Party, after the damning exposure of February 6, was compelled to make a show in words of calling for the united front and supporting the general strike against Fascism, when it was no longer possible to hold back the workers with the "democratic" deception.

In his speech of apologia to his constituents on April 8 Daladier admitted that he was aware that a full counterrevolutionary coup was being prepared for February 6:

The Fascist organizations were mobilized to force an entry into the Chamber, to proclaim the fall of parliament and to impose a dictatorship. Authentic documents proving this, direct appeals to insurrection, have been placed in the hands of the Commission of Enquiry.

Why, then, did the Left-Democratic Government, with this information in its hands, take no action? Why did these "democrats," so merciless and rigorous against the slightest sign of Communist activity, making arrests and suppression right and left, not lay a finger on the Fascist press which was openly calling to insurrection? He has no answer. On the contrary, he is anxious to show that no serious measure of defense was taken:

It has been established that at no point was any order to fire given by the Government. Not a single machine-gun, not a single repeating-rifle was in the hands of the "Gardes Mobiles" or of the police.

Why did the Government, chosen by the parliamentary majority, take no steps to maintain itself against Fascism, but instead resign at once, despite its parliamentary majority? He admits that this question is perplexing "republican opinion":

Republican opinion is amazed that the Government should have resigned on February 7 instead of maintaining itself in power, since it had the majority in parliament.

He has no answer. He fumbles and stumbles over the question. He accuses fellow-ministers of having wanted to give way. He accuses the President of having insisted on his resignation. He hints at legal difficulties in the way of taking any effective measures, of making arrests, of proclaiming martial law: would the President have signed the decrees, or would parliament have supported him? As if there should have been a moment's difficulty or hesitation to carry through any steps whatever, if it had been workers, and not Fascists, who had advanced in armed formation to burn down Government buildings, invade the Chamber and proclaim a dictatorship. Finally he ends with the old lame excuse:

It seemed better to resign than to risk any further spilling of blood.

Thus the swan song of parliamentary democracy, the regime of blood against the workers, of bloodshed unlimited in imperialist war, but toothless and helpless against Fascism and reaction. On February 6-7, 1934, parliamentary democracy in France signed its death-warrant.

The Fascist-Royalist demonstrations of February 6 were in reality only the preliminary offensive of the reaction to conceal and defeat the real rising movement of mass-discontent, the rising movement of the working class, against which a Government of intensified dictatorship was required. Hence the peculiar character of the maneuver which installed the Government of National Concentration.

The full significance of this process--first, the preliminary preparations under cover of the "Left" Daladier Government, and the military massing of artillery and troops by this Government with the support of the Socialists, and then, at the critical moment, the replacement of this Government by a Right Government of National Concentration--was laid bare in the days following February 6, as the working class came increasingly into action.

The battles of Friday, February 9, when the Communist demonstration had been banned by the Government, and the workers fought for possession of the streets, enormously exceeded in their range February 6, and were turned into a full military operation by

the Government. 23,000 troops and 14,000 police were called into action against the workers.

In contrast to Tuesday night (February 6), when the police offered only half-hearted resistance to the Fascist and Royalist rioters till it was too late, the city was turned into an armed camp. (Daily Herald, February 10, 1934.)

The capitalist dictatorship had no scruples now to "employ exceptional means" or "use soldiers against the demonstrators." But the strength of the working-class resistance was such that it was successful to give pause to the first wave of the Fascist attack.

This was still further shown in the country-wide General Strike of February 12. The Communist slogan for the 24 hours general strike received such wide mass support that the reformist unions were compelled formally to take it up, even though they tried to sabotage its execution, going so far as to turn it in their actual instructions (the railwaymen) into a "fifteen minutes" or even "one minute" strike. But the strike and the accompanying united front demonstrations won overwhelming support throughout the country. The true path of the struggle against Fascism was thus shown. The rising strength of the united working-class front of struggle in France was laid bare as the sole power of the fight against the rising Fascist offensive of French finance-capital.

The Government of National Concentration in France is thus revealed as a typical transition Government of the advance to Fascism. Its functions may be summed up: first, by the concentration of all forces to counter and defeat the rising wave of working-class discontent; second, in view of the strength of the working-class resistance, to cover the too open Fascist designs with a show of "appeasement" and "safeguarding" of parliamentary democratic institutions; third, to carry through the heavy offensive against the working class required by finance-capital, as shown in the cuts' campaign; and fourth, to provide the cover under which the Fascist forces can carry forward their preparations for a further assault.

Today the Fascist and Royalist forces are actively carrying forward their armed preparations, and speak openly of a future coup. The signs point to critical conflicts in the near future in France. <>

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### PROGRAM OF THE POPULAR FRONT -- 1936

Both the program and the explanatory remarks below are taken from the 1941 book The Fall of the French Republic by D.N. Pritt.

The preamble of the Program demands ran as fol-

lows:

"The program of the immediate demands that the Rassemblement Populaire publishes today is the result of a unanimous agreement between the ten organizations represented on the National Committee of the Rassemblement: Ligue des Droits de l'Homme

[League for the Rights of Man], Comité de vigilance des intellectuels anti-fascistes, Comité mondial contre le Fascisme and le Guerre (Amsterdam-Pleyel) [World Committee Against Fascism and War], Mouvement d'anciens Combattants [Veterans' Movement], the Radical Party, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Socialist-Republican Union, the Confederation Generale du Travail, and the Confederation Generale du Travail Unitaire...."

It should be noted that this was no parliamentary combination only, but contained the two great trade union federations, one of them, the C.G.T., friendly with the Socialist, and the other, the C.G.T.U., with the Communist Party. This was remarkable not merely as a sign of unity but also because the whole tradition of French trade unionism, unlike that of Britain, had been against participation in parliamentary politics. [i.e. it was remarkable that they endorsed a parliamentary pact. Despite Pritt's remark to the contrary, this pact was basically a parliamentary pact. - WAS] Four other organizations joining this program were also aloof from party politics. The program continued:

"The program is directly inspired by the watch-words of the 14th July. These parties and organizations representing millions of human beings who have sworn to remain united, in accordance with their oath, 'to defend democratic freedom, to give bread to the workers, work to the young, and peace to humanity as a whole', have together sought the practical means of common, immediate, and continuous action. This program is voluntarily limited to measures that can be immediately applied. The National Committee wishes every party and organization belonging to the Rassemblement Populaire to join in this common action without abandoning their own principles, doctrines, or ultimate objectives...."

The program was in two parts -- political demands and economic demands. The political demands began with:

#### "(I) DEFENSE OF LIBERTY

- (a) General Amnesty
- (b) Against the Fascist Leagues
  - (i) Effective disarmament and dissolution of semi-military formations, in accordance with the law.
  - (ii) The putting into force of legal enactments in cases of incitement to murder or of attempts endangering the safety of the State.
- (c) The cleansing of public life, especially through the enforcement of parliamentary disqualifications (i.e. inability of deputies to hold certain offices).
- (d) The Press
  - (i) Repeal of the infamous laws and decrees restricting freedom of opinion
  - (ii) Reform of the Press by the adoption of legislative measures

(a) which will make possible the effective repression of slander and blackmail;

(b) which will guarantee normal means of existence to journals, which will compel them to publish the source of their finance, which will end the private monopolies of commercial publicity, and the scandals of financial publicity, and which, finally, will prevent the formation of a Press trust.

(iii) The organization of State broadcasting messages, with the aim of ensuring the accuracy of information and the equality of political and social organizations at the microphone.

#### (e) Trade Union Liberties

(i) Application and observance of trade union rights for all;

(ii) Observance of factory legislation concerning women.

#### (f) Education and Freedom of Conscience

(i) To safeguard the development of public education, not only by the necessary grants, but also by reforms such as the extension of compulsory attendance at school up to the age of fourteen, and in secondary education, the proper selection of pupils as an essential accompaniment of grants.

(ii) To guarantee to all concerned, pupils and teachers, full freedom of conscience, particularly by ensuring the neutrality of education, its non-religious character, and the civic rights of the teaching staff.

#### (g) Colonial territories

The setting up of a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry into the political, economic and cultural situation in France's overseas territories, especially in French North Africa and Indo-China."

The next section of the Program, dealing with the defense of peace, ran as follows:

"(A) Appeal to the people, and particularly to the working masses, for collaboration in the maintenance and organization of peace.

(B) International collaboration within the framework of the League of Nations for collective security, by defining the aggressor and by the automatic and joint application of sanctions in cases of aggression.

(C) A ceaseless endeavor to pass from armed peace to disarmed peace, first by a convention of limitation, and then by the general, simultaneous, and effectively controlled reduction of armaments.

(D) Nationalization of the war industries and suppression of private trade in arms.

(E) Repudiation of secret diplomacy; international action and public negotiations to bring back to Geneva the states which have left it, without weakening the constituent principles of the League of Nations; collective security and indivisible peace.

(F) Simplification of the procedure provided in the League of Nations Covenant for the pacific adjustment of treaties, which are dangerous to the peace of the world.

(G) *Extension*, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, of the system of pacts open to all nations, on the lines of the Franco-Soviet Pact."

The Economic Demands began with the "restoration of purchasing power destroyed or reduced by the crisis", and were in three parts, the first appealing mainly to the working-class, the second to the peasantry, and the third to all opponents of the finance oligarchy and its tricks. They ran as follows:

"I. Restoration of purchasing power destroyed or reduced by the crisis. Against unemployment and the crisis in industry.

(a) The establishment of a national unemployment fund.

(b) Reduction of the working week without reduction of weekly wages.

(c) Drawing young workers into employment by establishing a system of adequate pensions for aged workers.

(d) The rapid carrying out of a scheme of large-scale works of public utility, both urban and rural, linking local savings with schemes financed by the State and municipalities.

#### **Against the agricultural and commercial crisis**

(a) Revision of prices of agricultural produce, combined with a fight against speculation and high prices, so as to reduce the gap between wholesale and retail prices.

(b) In order to put an end to the levies taken by speculators from both producers and consumers, the setting up of a National Grain Board representing all sections concerned.

(c) Support for agricultural co-operatives, supply of fertilizers at cost price by the National Boards for Nitrogen and Potash, control and certification of sales of superphosphates and other fertilizers, extension of agricultural credits, reduction of leasehold rents.

(d) Suspension of distraints and the regulation of debt repayments.

(e) Pending the complete and earliest possible removal of all the injustices inflicted by the economy decrees, the immediate repeal of measures affecting those groups whose conditions of life has been most severely endangered by these decrees.

#### **II. Against the robbery of savings and for a better organization of credit**

(a) Regulation of banking business.

(b) Regulation of balance sheets issued by banks and limited liability companies.

(c) Further regulation of the powers of directors of companies.

(d) Prohibition of State servants who have retired, or are on the reserved list, from being members of boards of directors of companies.

(e) In order to remove credit and savings from the control of the economic oligarchy, to transform the Banque de France, now a privately owned bank, into the Banque de la France (i.e. to nationalize it).

(f) Abolition of the Council of Regents of the Bank of France.

(g) Extension of the powers of the Governor of the Bank of France, under permanent control of a council composed of representatives of the executive authority, and representatives of the main organized forces of labor and of industrial, commercial, and agricultural activity.

(f) Conversion of the capital of the bank into bonds, with measures to safeguard the interests of small holders.

#### **III. Against Financial Corruption**

(a) Control of the trade in armaments, in conjunction with the nationalization of war industries.

(b) Abolition of waste in armaments and military departments.

(c) The setting up of a War Pensions Fund.

(d) Democratic reform of the tax system so as to relax the fiscal burden with a view to economic revival, and the finding of financial resources through measures directed against large fortunes (rapid steepening of the rates of tax on incomes of over 75,000 francs -- reorganization of death-duties, taxation of monopoly profits in such a way as to prevent any repercussions on the prices paid by consumers).

(e) Prevention of fraud in connection with transferable securities.

(f) Control of exports of capital, and punishment for evasion by the most rigorous measures, up to the confiscation of property concealed abroad or its equivalent value in France." <>

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### **RESULTS OF THE 1936 ELECTIONS**

The following passage and footnote on the election figures is taken from D.N. Pritt's 1941 book "The Fall of the French Republic".

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The result of the ballots held at the end of

April and the beginning of May 1936 was a sweeping victory for the parties of the Popular Front. Out of some 618 seats, 378 fell to the Popular Front; of the remainder the Right Wing parties gained at the expense of the Center parties.

The actual figures are as follows:

	New Chamber	Old Chamber
Right: Conservatives U.R.D. (Marin Group) and Popular Democrats (Catholics) ....	122	105
Center: (Left Republicans and Independent Radicals) .....	116	164
Left: Radicals .....	116	158
Socialist Union (Paul-Boncour) and other small Left Parties .....	36	66
Socialists .....	146	101
Communists .....	72	10
Others .....	10	11
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	618	615

The table is taken from Alexander Werth's Destiny of France, and while the vagueness of political affiliation of some of the French Members of Parliament makes for a margin of error, it can be taken as fairly correct. (\*)

The total votes cast were as follows:

	1936	1932
Right Groups .....	2,254,000	2,262,000
Center Groups .....	1,938,000	2,225,000
Radicals .....	1,461,000	1,805,000
Small Left Groups .....	518,000	511,000
Socialists .....	1,922,000	1,931,000
Communists .....	1,503,000	794,000
Others .....	95,000	85,000

Of the separate parties—because the above seven groupings include a large number of parties—the Socialists were first, one of the Right parties was second, and the Communists were third. In the department of the Seine, Paris and its immediate neighborhood, the Communists with 300,000 votes were the strongest single party.

(\*) It should be mentioned that the Socialists, who are shown in this table as having 101 members in the old Chamber, had secured 129 seats at the elections of that Chamber in 1932; their numbers had been reduced by a subsequent split and the formation of the "Neo-Socialist" group, headed by Deat and Marquet, who have since turned to Fascism. <-

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### PROPOSALS FOR UNIFICATION BY THE PCF AND THE SFIO

The following is reproduced from The Communist, a journal of the CPUSA, July 1937, pp. 675-680, where it appeared under the title "For the United Party of the Proletariat of France/Two documents on Unity"

(At the initiative of the Communist Party of France discussions for unity were begun between it and the French Socialist Party. As the statement below explains, the Communist Party proposed a charter for unity. After repeated requests this was followed six months later by the Socialist Party submitting proposals, but without having answered the questions raised in the Communist draft. The Communist Party, insistent upon securing unity, has amplified its first proposals and submitted this new draft for unity to the Socialist Party for consideration and discussion. The text of the first proposals of the Communist Party was printed in The Communist, February, 1936 (p.171). The amplification of this, as well as the Socialist Party's proposals are printed below, preceded by an explanatory excerpt from a popular appeal for unity by the Communist Party of France. Discussions are continuing. — The Editors [of The Communist, writing in 1937].)

From one end of France to the other, the working people are waiting for the establishment of the unity of the working class; they are waiting for the establishment of a united party of the proletariat, to follow the establishment of the united General

Confederation of Labor. The French Communist Party, which is proud of having, by its perseverant efforts, brought the triumph of unity of action and the People's Front in France, is at the head of the struggle for the unity of the working class. As early as 1935 the Communist Party put forward a proposal for a conference to prepare a National Unity Congress, for joint meetings of Communists and Socialists and for the transmission of the texts, submitted to the Unification Commission, to the organizations of both parties, in order that the members of both parties could be able to discuss with each other the great problem of unity which they have to solve and which they will solve. The meetings of this sort which have been held have given the best results, and have greatly advanced the cause of unity.

Convinced that democratic discussion by the memberships will advance the creation of the united party of the working class, the Communist Party desires to present to the workers the documents which may serve as a basis for discussion on unity. **On May 29, 1935, the Communist Party presented a proposed Charter of Unity to the Unification Commission.** After repeated requests on the part of the Communist Party, and without having answered those questions raised in this draft, the Socialist Party, on November 21, 1935, submitted a draft for harmony and unification. Insistent on continuing its efforts for unity, the Communist Party in its turn drew up a new draft for harmony and unification, which was submitted to the Socialist Party on December 29, 1936.

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## Proposed Charter for Harmony and Unification Submitted by the Communist Party on December 29, 1936,

(Amplifying the proposed charter of unity of the Communist Party, submitted May 29, 1935.)

### I. Goal and Methods

The United Party of the Proletariat adopts as its goal the socialization of the essential means of production and exchange, that is, the transformation of capitalist society into collectivist or communist society.

The United Party of the Proletariat works toward the abolition of the dictatorship of capital and the establishment of a state assuring power to the working class in order to smash the efforts of counter-revolution and to prepare the march towards classless society.

The United Party of the Proletariat defends not only the immediate and future interests of the workers; it also defends the day-to-day interests of the toiling peasants, the small shopkeepers, the intellectuals and the office workers. It works to unite the whole of the toiling population in a single struggle against capitalism and for the advent of a society in which man will no longer be exploited by man.

The United Party of the Proletariat, which works to fight and destroy the capitalist system, the generator of poverty and wars, cannot allow within its ranks a policy of Sacred Union, which consists in abandoning the interests of the masses of the people for the greater profit of the capitalist oligarchies. None of its members may participate in a government of Sacred Union, and members elected to office are obligated to refuse to vote for military credits destined for the preparation of imperialist wars, as well as to refuse to vote for the budget as a whole requested by a government of this nature.

### II. International Cooperation and Action

The United Party of the Proletariat proclaims the indispensability of international cooperation and action of the workers. It is a member of an international organization whose goals and methods correspond to its own, and whose members everywhere wage a struggle conforming to these goals. It scrupulously applies the decisions adopted by international congresses.

The United Party of the Proletariat fights chauvinism and wages its struggles with the peoples of all countries, not only of the white race, but of all colors. It desires that the proletarians of various countries, united into the same international organization, practice the same policy of defense of the present and future interests of the working class.

The United Party of the Proletariat considers

itself a part of a single party of the working class.

### III. The Defense of Peace

The United Party of the Proletariat, an implacable defender of peace, proclaims that in case of imperialist war there is no national defense for the proletarians. In case imperialist war does break out, in spite of their efforts, they are duty-bound, in the spirit of the Stuttgart Resolution [referring to the resolution on "Militarism and International Conflicts" of the 7th Congress of the Second International, held August 18-24, 1907 in Stuttgart, Germany], to work to make it end in the defeat of the capitalist war-instigators and the advent of proletarian power.

The United Party of the Proletariat places the struggle for peace in the forefront of its political tasks; it wages a campaign against international fascism, the instigator of war, and proclaims that in the case of a war directed against a country in which there is a proletarian government or a democratic government, victim to a fascist aggression, the toilers must refuse to fight against their attacked brothers. They must fight against every attempt to deprive the armies of freedom of the means of self-defense, and they are duty-bound to join their efforts with the efforts of these armies.

### IV. The Defense of the Soviet Union and Republican Spain

The United Party of the Proletariat supports the whole of the conquests of the great October Revolution of 1917, the first victorious socialist revolution in the world. It fights against those who slander the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics wherever they are, and does not admit them into its ranks.

The United Party of the Proletariat supports with all its might every movement for the liberation of the peoples. It likewise supports the action of the peoples against fascism, and proclaims it to be the duty of the toilers to support with utmost energy the Spanish people in its defense against the attacks of international fascism, whose victory in Spain would imperil world peace.

### V. Genuine Democracy

The United Party of the Proletariat, taking into account the lessons of the history of the labor movement of the last twenty years, and of the example of Soviet power, considers the dictatorship of the proletariat to be the only means of wresting mankind from the horrors of capitalism and of preparing the movement forward to classless society. In contradistinction to the fascist dictatorships, which mean the subjugation of the masses of the people, the dictatorship of the proletariat means the establishment of genuine democracy for the toil-



ing masses. This democracy assures to all toilers of both sexes from the age of eighteen years on (workers, peasants, office employees, intellectuals, soldiers and sailors) the right to representation and to be elected to the organs of power, which must be the direct expression of the masses of the people of the city, the countryside, the factories, the yards, the shops, the farms, the schools and universities, the units of the army and navy.

The United Party of the Proletariat will call the toiling masses to the administration of public affairs, in order to prevent any offensive return of the money powers, and for the purpose of creating the conditions for the development of a true parliamentary democracy. Thus it works to prepare the progressive disappearance of the state with the goal of a communist society in which each, working according to his abilities, receives according to his needs.

## VI. Democratic Centralism

The United Party of the Proletariat, in order to be fitted to fulfill its historic mission, adopts a centralized structure. Discipline is the same for all. No case can be allowed of violation of Party law, neither by parliamentarians or prominent leaders, nor by rank-and-file members.

To be a member of the Party, it is not enough to declare one's agreement with the goals and methods of the Party, one must work for the application of all decisions of the Party; dues must be paid regularly, and one must not belong to any other political organization. Decisions, taken after absolutely free discussion, are obligatory for all.

The United Party of the Proletariat is founded on democratic centralism. Its policy is determined in congresses by the whole membership. The leading organs are elected by general assemblies and congresses. They are required to give periodic reports of their activity to their constituents.

The decisions of the higher organs of the Party are obligatory for lower organs.

The central Committee of the Party directs the whole of the Party, the parliamentary group, the press, and is duty-bound to require from all the fulfillment of decisions. Since ideological unity is indispensable, all Party members must defend the same policy.

The working class, to achieve and consolidate its unity, must liberate itself from the influences of the capitalist enemy.

Members of the United party of the Proletariat are those who have resolved to fight in the vanguard of the toiling population under the banner of the dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian internationalism.

The United Party of the Proletariat, desirous of organizing the defense of the toilers at their place of employment, adopts a form of organization corresponding to the needs of action of the masses of the people in the enterprises as well as locally.

The United Party of the Proletariat, respectful of the independence of the trade union movement, is duty-bound to defend trade union unity and to take the severest measures against those of its members who in their writings or actions harm this unity.

The United Party of the Proletariat carries on its activities in the sphere of legality, but if the furious onslaughts of fascist reaction should prevent normal activity, it adopts forms enabling it to continue its work of emancipation.

The United Party of the Proletariat, the inheritor of the traditions of struggle of the French people, places itself on the terrain of revolutionary Marxism, enriched by Lenin and Stalin. It proclaims openly its objective as the liberation of all mankind from capitalist slavery by the establishment of collectivist or communist society.

It inscribes on its banner of struggle for liberation the immortal watchword of the **Communist Manifesto**:

**"Workers of all lands, unite!"**

## The Text of the Proposal of the Socialist Party of France of November 21, 1935 for Harmanyand Unification

The United Party of the Proletariat is a class party whose aim is the conquest of power for the purpose of socialization of the means of production and exchange, that is, the transformation of capitalist society into a collectivist or communist society.

The United Party of the Proletariat, while working for the winning of immediate reforms demanded by the working class, is not a party of reform, but a party of class struggle and revolution.

The United Party of the Proletariat works to fight and destroy the capitalist system. It cannot admit a policy of permanent and organic collaboration with bourgeois parties. It cannot seek participation in the government in bourgeois society. It rejects every effort to mask the constantly growing class antagonisms for the purpose of facilitating an alliance with bourgeois parties.

Even when it utilizes secondary conflicts within the possessing class for the benefit of the toilers, or when it combines its action with that of another political party for the defense of the rights and interests of the proletariat, it always remains a party of fundamental and irreconcilable opposition to the whole of the bourgeois class and to the state which is its instrument.

It rejects methods which tend to maintain the ruling class in power and thus assure the rule of the bourgeoisie; consequently, it refuses to vote bourgeois governments military credits, credits for colonial conquest, secret funds and the budget as a whole.

The United Party of the Proletariat knows that its goal can be attained only through conquest of power by extreme struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Only in this way can the bourgeois state be

destroyed and replaced by the proletarian state, through which will be expressed the dictatorship of the working class for the entire period necessary to crush the counter-revolution.

The United Party of the Proletariat accepts the Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it figures in the Critique of the Gotha Program: between capitalist and communist society lies a period of revolutionary transformation of one to the other. There corresponds also to this a political transition period during which the state can be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, an indispensable stage towards the social revolution, towards classless society, assures to the revolutionary forces the totality of political power. It must mean a considerable extension of democracy for the people, and at the same time a limitation of the freedom of the exploiters and the oppressors of the people.

\* \* \*

The United Party of the Proletariat rejects all policies of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, during war-time as during peace-time. It was not take the path of national Union or Sacred Union, in any case or under any pretext.

Its action continues to be guided by the general principles included in the Stuttgart resolution [referring to the 7th Congress of the Second International of 1907, held at Stuttgart, Germany].

It will always be determined by the higher interests of the world proletariat.

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The United Party of the Proletariat is based on democratic centralism.

The policy of the United Party of the Proletariat is determined by the Party itself deliberating in its congresses.

These congresses are formed by delegates from the entire Party membership; their discussions are free, as are those of the members themselves in the local or regional groups.

Leadership is exercised within the framework of the policy determined in this manner, by the central organs elected by the congresses.

The organs of various ranks are elected by the corresponding assemblies.

The decisions of the central organs of the Party are binding for the regional and local organs.

The action of the parliamentary group, of all members elected to office, and of the press, must be in conformity with the policy determined by the Party. The central organ is instructed to assure this conformity.

Freedom of discussion is complete within the Party; for all forms of publication, there is only one policy: that deliberated and decided upon by the Party.

While utilizing all legal methods for its deliberated action, the Party will never let itself be halted in this action by the fetters of bourgeois legality. It must adapt itself to all the tasks which present themselves to it with the idea of raising to the maximum the revolutionary combativity of the working class.

(Translated [for The Communist] by Herbert Rosen) <-

LESSONS OF THE MAY DAY GENERAL STRIKE FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CONCESSIONS TODAY

The following speech was delivered at the MLP May Day meeting in Chicago on May 3.

Comrades and friends,

Tonight I want to talk about the May 1st 1886 general strike for the eight hour day and what lessons that strike holds for the fight today against concessions in the United States.

IMBUE THE MOVEMENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Why was the May 1st general strike so important that even today, 100 years later, workers in countries all over the world continue to celebrate it? Why is it that when the workers start to feel their potential strength, in any country—whether it be in racist South Africa or death squad El Salvador—when

the workers start to sense their power as a class, they choose May 1st to come out in strikes and protests, they choose May 1st to demonstrate their class solidarity?

One reason is that the general strike on May 1st 100 years ago brought out into stark relief the fact that modern-day capitalist society is split into two hostile, warring camps. It showed that the workers—no matter where they worked or where they lived, no matter what language they spoke or what color their skin, no matter if they were employed or walking the streets without work, no matter—they formed a single class of exploited wage slaves. And what is more, it showed that working class is not meant to forever suffer from torment to torment, but that the working class represents a power in its own right, a power if it stands in class struggle against the tyrants of capital.

The strike movement that led to the May Day

general strike actually broke out the year before and grew increasingly more militant. The workers frequently resorted to a form of factory occupation called a "boycott" and there were frequent battles with the Pinkerton company goonsquads and the police. Through a series of defeats in their scattered and isolated strikes a feeling grew up among the workers that only a common strike could bring them victory.

### Class Unity

Thus by May 1st we see an amazing unity, where all the questions once thought to divide the worker—whether nationality and language or amount of skill or location—all these questions were set aside for the common goal. The general strike that began on May 1 spread through all the major industrial centers of the country. Great marches were held through the cities eventually bringing nearly 350,000 workers into motion, almost 200,000 of them striking. The strike was spread with roving pickets, at times reaching up to several thousand workers marching from plant to plant calling out their class brothers. Battles with company goons, city police, and state militias soon broke out. And it was only with scores of strikers killed, their leaders arrested, and their picket lines brutally crushed that the strike finally receded.

### Prophets of Doom Can't See the Struggle That Is Arising Under Their Very Noses

Now we have heard the complaint from various quarters—such as from the demoralized sects, like the OMLWP to the main stream trotskyite and revisionist liquidators—that, well, all of that was fine for 1886, but what about today? The workers movement is weak; it's suffering one set back after another; concessions are still being rammed down the workers throats in one industry after another; there is hardly anybody in the U.S. who even remembers the May 1st general strike; and the few who do are too small to amount to anything.

Such demoralized thinking fails to understand the ebbs and flows of the workers' movement and fails to see the struggle that is arising under their very noses.

Remember that it was only a few years before the 1886 general strike that the emerging workers movement had been crushed. There were almost no unions or other organizations of the workers. Those that did exist were small and weak, tended to only incorporate the most skilled workers, and they did not pursue a fighting policy. Remember that before 1886 the prevalent opinion that held sway in the U.S. was that America was just different, that it had avoided the division into classes, that it had escaped the class struggle, and that everyone could simply move forward in harmony, together into the American dream.

But the eight hour day movement burst out and

spread across the country like lightning and shattered the idle fantasies of the American money grubbers.

The mass movement of the workers at times advances and at times is set back. But with every setback the prophets of doom appear within the workers movement to proclaim its death and to call on the class conscious workers to put aside their silly notions of the class struggle, to become realistic, to reconcile with the sellouts and traitors, to make their peace with the living hell of capitalist exploitation. In the last number of years the workers' movement has suffered a terrible set back. But it will, sooner or later, burst forth again and, as it did in 1886, it will sweep away the prophets of despair and set before the workers again the fighting tasks of the revolutionary class.

### The Struggle Today

Even now we can begin to see the embryo of the class struggle that's developing in the still small and scattered struggles that are breaking out today.

Any one who has been down to the picket lines can see in the workers' grumbling the sense of common grievances that is today arising. Haven't you heard the workers recount how the concessions fever has spread to every industry, to the offices, and hospitals, and public sector? And haven't you heard the workers recount the history of the capitalists concessions drive from the 1979 sellout contract at Chrysler, to Reagan's crushing of the PATCO strike, to the National Guard being called out at Hormel?

And what about the growing impulse to unity? Didn't 17,000 workers from workplaces all over Chicago come out in solidarity with the Tribune strikers. And what about the longshoreman that refuse to load Hormel cargo, or the 30,000 West Coast meatpackers calling for the expulsion of the strike breaking head of the meatpackers union, or the 5,000 who traveled across the country to Austin Minnesota to show face-to-face their support for the Hormel strikers? These are the signs that the workers' movement is once again rearing its head.

Now it is true that the conscious force, the Marxist-Leninist force, in the movement is still small. But it has an essential role to play. It is up to us to bring revolutionary class consciousness to the movement. It is up to us to build up that organization which, when the movement breaks out in force, can lead the workers to beat back the concessions and to go forward to resolve in a revolutionary way all the demands of the workers against this rotten system of capitalist exploitation. It is up to us to imbue the movement with the spirit of May Day.

### AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

But to imbue the workers' movement with spirit of class struggle, to inspire it with the spirit of May Day, requires struggle.

### The Reaganite Version of May Day

The American bourgeoisie has tried to bury May Day all together. Through an agreement with the sellout leaders of the AFL-CIO the U.S. government switched labor day to September, and May Day, instead of a celebration of the International class struggle, became National Law Day, a celebration of the "law and order" tyranny of the capitalists over the workers.

Indeed this year, Reagan has gone so far as to declare May 1st to be National Prayer Day. And I expect he is praying right now that the workers won't defy his "law and order" and take to the streets in rebellion.

### The Reformist Version of May Day

But there is another section of the capitalist politicians who have decided to try to kill May Day with kindness. Some of the liberal Democrats--Harold Washington, Paul Simon and there ilk--have joined with some union bureaucrats and their opportunist fellow travelers to commemorate what they call the "Haymarket Centennial".

But is this a celebration of the class struggle? Not on your life. They want to turn May Day into something tame, into library lectures and picnics, into something devoid of the class struggle, devoid of the interests and aims of the working class. Instead of the class struggle against the capitalists, they want to make May Day a celebration of subordinating the workers to the lying Democratic Party politicians and to the the union bureaucrats who prop the Democrats up.

### The Mayor -- A "Friend of Labor" in May Day 1886?

You can get an idea of what these characters are up to by reading the way they relate the history of the 1886 general strike in their fancy brochures. Did you know that in Chicago in 1886 there was a mayor who was a friend of the workers? Well, that's what they say.

Why, according to them, Mayor Carter Harrison not only granted permission for the Haymarket protest on May 4th 1886, he even went to the protest himself to make sure there would be no trouble. If you wonder why he slipped off before the police arrived to attack the workers, we are told he had gone to tell the chief of police that there was no trouble at the rally and no need for police force. Why, if you listen to the Centennial historians, this man was a veritable saint. If only the workers had relied on him, their grievances would have easily been solved.

But what the "Centennial" historians don't mention is that this same mayor is the one who unleashed the reign of terror against the eight-hour day movement. Claiming that the Haymarket protest had proved "dangerous", he is the one that ordered the police to break up all crowds of workers, all demonstrations, and all rallies. He is the one in Chicago

who presided over the house-by-house searches, the arrests of the strike leaders and other militants, the attacks on the headquarters of the workers organizations, the suppression of the socialist newspapers.

Reagan was not the first to unleash the bogey man of "international terrorism" to attack the revolutionary movement. Oh no, in 1886 in Chicago the cry went out against fictitious "foreign terrorists" who were supposedly out to destroy America. And it was the so-called friend of labor, the Mayor of Chicago, who implemented the suppression of the workers movement under this hysteria.

### And What of the Reformist Mayor of Chicago Today?

And it is no different today. Harold Washington, Chicago's Democratic Party Mayor, is the friend of labor we are told. Why, he even supports the Haymarket Centennial this year. [But the day after this speech was given, when the official Haymarket Centennial was held, **Washington instead attended the annual anti-May Day rally of the Chicago police department**, thus following in the footsteps of Mayor Carter Harrison. -- WAS]

But it was Harold Washington who unleashed the police against the Chicago Tribune strikers once their protests went beyond tame handwringing and they, and other workers in solidarity with them, tried to defend their picket lines and shut down the Tribune operations. And, for another example of what can be expected from the liberals, once the Hormel strike had become a national rallying point for the fight against the capitalists' concessions drive, wasn't it the **Democratic Party's** governor of Minnesota who sent the National Guard to smash the Hormel strikers' picket line.

The fact is that, whenever the capitalists really feel threatened, not only the open reactionaries, but also the bourgeois "friends of labor", rally to the capitalists side. They unleash the police, the national guard, the courts, and all of their instruments of repression against the workers. This is a lesson of May Day. It means that to wage the class struggle we must fight not only the open Reaganites but also the Democrats; we must fight the bi-partisan offensive of the capitalists against the workers; we must organize the workers movement into an independent revolutionary force.

But the organizers of the Haymarket Centennial want to bury this lesson. And so do other so-called left leaders of the union movement. After the National Guard attacked the Hormel strikers there was a big solidarity rally in Austin. There Jim Guyette, the leader of the Local P-9 strikers, did not call for the development of the class struggle against the capitalists. No, instead he told the workers to fight to restore the traditions of that lying liberal Hubert Humphrey to the Democratic Party. Don't fight the Democratic Party that just sent the National Guard to crush you, but try to push them to the left. That's what Guyette and his

ilk think. We are up against such "leaders" when we fight to imbue the movement with the spirit of the class struggle, with the inspiration of May Day.

### **AGAINST THE UNION BUREAUCRATS**

The Centennial historians have also been out to spruce up the dirty history of the trade union bureaucrats. Why they never tire of repeating that it was the AFL that called the May Day strike, as if the AFL leaders were really the leaders and organizers of that great class battle.

#### **The AFL Leaders Betrayed the Original May Day**

But the AFL leaders played no such grand role. While it is true that an organization that directly preceded the AFL called for the May Day action, they had nothing to do with organizing it. Indeed, the vast majority of the leaders of the craft unions, which were all that then made up the AFL, refused to support the resolution for the May Day action. And later the AFL betrayed the movement altogether, splitting up the workers by renouncing the next general strike called for 1890 and limiting the strike to a single union. And then, the next year, they even refused to support the Bakers when they went on strike for the eight hour day.

The AFL leaders were no more the champions of the May Day general strike than they are the leaders of the workers today. No, they are class traitors and saboteurs out to systematically break up the workers unity and disorganize the workers struggle.

#### **May Day Succeeded Despite and Against the Reformist Union Bureaucrats**

The success of the May Day general strike was not because of the AFL leadership, but in spite of it. All across the country the rank-and-file workers simply by-passed the reformist leaders. When the head of the Knights of Labor declared against the May Day strike and even suspended all organizing of local branches of the Knights of Labor, the workers went on organizing branches anyway and went on preparing for the general strike.

Indeed, Chicago became the center of the general strike precisely because the rank-and-file workers here broke away from the old union bosses. The revolutionary opponents of capitalism split the workers away from the old central labor council in Chicago and set up a new union central that actively organized the widest sections of the unskilled workers and became the stronghold of the eight-hour day fight.

This then is another lesson of the May Day general strike: for the workers movement to advance it must fight against the union bureaucrats and organize independently of them.

But the organizers of the Haymarket Centennial are out to bury this lesson too. They are prettying up the old union misleaders and putting their de-

scendents on the platforms as the noble heads of the working class today. And even those reformist leaders who claim to be against concessions, who have even been in strikes against concessions,—like Guyette and other heads of the organization which is wrongly named the "National Rank And File Against Concessions"—try to bury this lesson, try to appease the heads of the AFL-CIO, try to keep the workers from breaking completely with the whole union bureaucracy which is holding them down.

#### **The Opponents of Capitalism Were the Most Capable Leaders of the 8 Hour Movement**

There is another lesson here, as well. It was the revolutionary opponents of capitalism — those who saw farther, those who fought for the eight hour day as part of the all round struggle against the capitalist class, those who attempted to use the eight hour day fight as a lever to build up the revolutionary movement of the working class — it was them, the class-conscious activists, who were the most capable and successful leaders of the eight hour movement.

We must learn this lesson well. The fight against concessions must be fought or the workers will be smashed. But the perspective for the fight should not be limited to nickels and dimes. The anti-concessions battles will have the most success if they are imbued with the spirit of class struggle and if they are led by those with revolutionary class consciousness. The fight against concessions must be used to rally the workers to the class struggle; it must be a lever to build up the revolutionary workers movement.

#### **Today It is the Marxist-Leninists Who Champion the Workers' Cause**

It is 100 years since the 1886 general strike. And today it is the Marxist-Leninists who are the most far-sighted champions of the workers cause; it is the Marxist-Leninists who are fighting every day to inspire the workers' movement with the spirit of May Day.

We have heard the whining of the revisionist liquidators about how small and weak are the Marxist-Leninist forces today. But if we are no threat, why has the company and union spread leaflets all over the Great Lakes Steel mill complaining about workers reading aloud from "commie papers" at union meetings and about "commie sympathizers" organizing the anti-concessions ferment? If Marxism-Leninism is no threat to the bourgeoisie, why is the bourgeois student newspaper on the MIT campus complaining about the students taking up the same demands as the Marxist-Leninist Party? If Marxism-Leninism is no threat to the exploiters, why have New York bourgeois newspapers complained that MLP leaflets are agitating the transit workers hatred for the heads of the New York Transit System?

We will be the first to admit that we are still

relatively small. We will be the first to admit that there is much to be done. But in the small and scattered workers' struggles today, we are building up the force that can lead the workers not only to beat back the capitalists' concessions offensive, but that can also go forward to a revolutionary struggle to bring down the capitalists themselves.

So this is our call tonight: go deep into the factories, the mills, and the other work places; build up fighting organizations of the workers; and first and foremost build up the workers revolutionary vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist Party. This is the lesson of May Day. This is the way to rekindle the spirit of May Day in the U.S. workers movement.<-

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## WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

Below is one of the two main speeches given at the MLP May Day meeting in New York City on May 3.

minds with patriotism. ...

### The Liberals Demand a "Patriotic Majority"

The slogan of May Day has always been "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" This slogan bears special importance for us today when the Reaganites are feverishly trying to whip up mindless national chauvinism as part of their war drive. Today the Reaganites brand anyone and any nation that they do not like as the ringleaders of international terrorism. No proof is necessary. The bourgeois press will repeat the lie over and over again until someone believes it. ...

This patriotic crusade is not just the invention of the Reaganite fanatics. Even liberal kingpins among the Democrats have dropped their facade of opposition to Reagan's warmongering to applaud his bombing of Libya. And except for some minor disagreements on tactics, the liberals agree with Reagan's goal of crush the revolutions in Central America.

When one American businessman is killed in a hijacking, we are supposed to forget the tens of thousands of people who have been slaughtered by U.S. imperialism and its puppet Israeli zionism in their attempt to dominate and rob the people of the Middle East. No, instead we are supposed to hate the Arab workers and rally behind Exxon and Mobil in their quest for complete control of the Middle East and its oil. When Reagan screams about state-sponsored international terrorism, we are supposed to forget the reign of terror he has financed against the people of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, the Philippines, and the list goes on.

In fact, the left-wing of the Democratic Party is now trying to out-Reagan Reagan in a campaign for a strong America.

A "national patriotic political conference" is to be held in Chicago on July 4-6. This conference is called by the Committee to Activate a **Patriotic Majority**. The statement of purpose of this Committee to Activate a Patriotic Majority starts out "**We want a strong America, whose strength flows from moral righteousness.**"

And we are supposed to forget about how the American capitalists are employing force and terror against the black people in the U.S. and against any serious strike of the workers. On the same day that Leon Klinghoffer was killed on the Achille Lauro, James Taylor, a Baltimore dockworker was murdered by a cop who drove a squad car into a workers' picket line at 50 miles an hour. But the national news media did not sensationalize this incident of state-sponsored terrorism against this "American citizen" (you could never even imagine them worrying about terrorism against the workers of some other country). They did not even report on it. Reagan did not call for revenge. The cop was not put in jail. The murder of James Taylor was business as usual for U.S. imperialism.

### Social-Democrats Wave the Stars and Stripes

Now one might think that this is just another front group for Jerry Falwell and the extreme right-wing. But no, this is a conference called by the leading lights of social-democracy teamed up with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Among its sponsors are James Weinstein, editor of **In These Times**; Congressman Ron Dellums, co-chairman of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA); Noam Chomsky, a leader of the left-posturing wing of social-democracy; and several members of Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH.

With their hysteria about terrorism the Reaganites are trying to overcome what they call the Viet Nam syndrome where the American people learned to hate and distrust the imperialist U.S. government and its wars. The Reaganites are trying to dope our

The formation of this patriotic committee represents another big push by the social-democrats to weaken and corrupt the mass movements against Reaganism and imperialist war with patriotic flag-waving. Recently at a college protest against South African apartheid a DSA candidate for Congress told student activists that they should explain their struggle against U.S. ties with South Africa by saying that they are fighting for a stronger America; that America will be stronger in Africa by distancing itself from the hated white racist minor-

ity that will be overthrown anyhow.

And so we are supposed to forget about the rights of the black masses; the important thing is what will make America strong. And the U.S. corporations that are backing apartheid and reaping huge profits off black slave labor? They're not greedy imperialists -- why, they just don't know what's good for America and how to keep her number one.

The social-democrats are trying to get the movement to take a loyalty oath to U.S. imperialism. Their patriotism is even more dangerous to the mass movement than Reagan's because it is promoted right within the oppositional movements.

### **The Red Banner of Proletarian Internationalism, Not the Red-White and Blue Flagwaving of the Bourgeoisie and Its Hangers-On**

On this May Day we respond to the flag-waving chauvinism of the bourgeoisie and its hangers-on by redoubling our efforts to educate, train, and organize the American working class in the spirit of the slogan "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" Upholding this slogan requires first of all that we take a revolutionary stand toward "our own" capitalists and their government, that is, that we work to build the revolutionary movement against them.

### **The Result of Reformism and Social-Democracy In the Mass Movement**

Presently in the U.S. there is quite a large sentiment and potential for large movements against the Reaganite war drive and in solidarity with the peoples of South Africa and Central America. But for these movements to reach their revolutionary potential, a strenuous fight must be waged against the influence of reformism and social-democracy, for today these movements are still dominated by reformist and social-democratic leaders who are trying to limit them to what is acceptable to the left-wing of the Democratic Party. This policy causes great harm to the movements and threatens to liquidate them altogether.

### **The Reformists Defend the Right of U.S. Imperialism and Pro-U.S. Regimes to Negotiate the Nicaraguan People's Future**

Take, for example, the movement against Reagan's war on Nicaragua. Today millions of workers and youth in this country are fed up with Reagan's dirty contra war and threats of invasion. They want him to get out and leave Nicaragua alone.

But the reformists, pacifists and liberal imperialists try to divert this sentiment into support for the Contadora process. They give such slogans as "Contras, no; Contadora, yes" and "Stop the bombs, negotiate."

But comrades and friends, what right does U.S. imperialism or the bloodstained, capitalist, pro-U.S. regimes in Latin America have to negotiate the

future of the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador? The reformists will not even defend Nicaragua's right to self-determination, let alone the revolution. ... Real support for the Nicaraguan people demands a fight against the liberal influence in the movement; it means raising the demand that U.S. imperialism must get out of Nicaragua immediately and unconditionally, and not supporting the brutal conditions that the Nicaraguan people bow down to the ultimatums of the Contadora group, reinstate the privileges and powers of the murderous Somoza dregs who form the contra bands, etc.

### **Reformists Undermine the Mass Actions**

The fight against the liberal, reformist and pacifist influence is taking place not just on the question of slogans and demands, but on whether there will be militant mass actions at all.

This spring has seen the large scale escalation of Reagan's war drive in Central America. This, and the simultaneous growth of the anti-apartheid movement on campuses, have fueled anti-imperialist sentiments among the masses. Reagan's demand to triple contra aid brought forward a wave of protests in over 300 cities.

But these actions came mostly from below, from the sentiment of the masses, while the reformist leaders tried to hold back the movement both in terms of militancy and in terms of size.

### **What Happened in the Spring Actions**

For example, it is reported in *The Workers' Advocate* that in Boston students and activists shouted down contra speakers on a number of campuses. But it should be noted that this was done against the will of the Pledge of Resistance and CASA organizers who wanted to have a polite debate with the fascists.

Again, the demonstration of 1,500 in Boston on April 14 was a reflection of the burning sentiment of the masses overcoming the sabotage of the reformist leaders. The organizers did minimum publicity for the demonstration and repeatedly changed the time and location of the rally right up to a few days before the action.

Similarly, with all the sentiment to fight Reagan's war drive, wouldn't one think that the leaders of the Mobilization for Survival and of CISPES, who pride themselves on their ability to call sizeable national demonstrations, could have called one this spring? But they did not!

Why? Why are these leaders holding back the masses from action? Why? Because they know the liberal Democrats are lining up to vote for Reagan's war drive against Nicaraguan. And they certainly don't want the mass actions to expose the imperialist nature of their good friends. ... The policy of reinforcing the liberals, the policy of reformism, means liquidating the movement just when it needs to be escalated to fight the imperialist war plans. ...

### **Support the Marxist-Leninist Forces of the Working Class Around the World**

Fighting our own bourgeoisie is a most basic part of proletarian internationalism; without this everything else is just talk. But it is not all there is to internationalism. There are many forces in the world that come into contradiction with U.S. imperialism... But our concern is first and foremost the interests of the workers and toilers of the various countries. It is our duty to support in every country with moral, political, and, where necessary and possible, material aid, the trend of the revolutionary workers and their parties. It is on this basis that we have carried out repeated campaigns of support for the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua (formerly MAP-ML) and raised money to help build the workers' press.

### **Support the Nicaraguan Marxist-Leninists!**

Comrades and friends, on this May Day, when Reagan is going all out to crush the workers and peasants in Nicaragua, we would like to announce that our party will be carrying out a major campaign of agitation in support of the Nicaraguan revolution and especially in support of the party of the Nicaraguan workers, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua. This campaign will take place this summer around the celebration of the seventh anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution.

A very difficult and dangerous situation for the working class is developing in Nicaragua. The masses are under daily assault from Reagan's contra terrorists, and this assault is escalating. The Nicaraguan capitalists are more and more openly sympathizing with and supporting the contras, and they are carrying out massive economic sabotage of the economy. Meanwhile the Sandinistas are trying to appease the bourgeois opposition by making all kinds of economic and political concessions to them at the expense of the toilers. The rich are given economic incentives and tax breaks while the workers and peasants are forced to bear the expense of defending the country against the contra terrorists that these same capitalists sympathize with. ...

In this situation the MLP of Nicaragua is boldly standing up in defense of the working masses and in defense of carrying forward the revolution against the exploiters. It is organizing the struggle against the concessions policy of the Sandinistas, and it is fighting to ensure that the growing discontent among the working masses with the Sandinista policy is channeled in a revolutionary, and not a backward, direction. It is fighting against the Sandinista policy of concessions to imperialism. It is fighting against the Sandinista policy of bureaucracy by working to organize their masses and arouse their revolutionary initiative. As a result of its bold stand, the influence of the MLPN is, after years of repression, once again, growing rapidly among the Nicaraguan workers. Even non-sympathetic

observers who have visited Nicaragua have admitted the prestige of the MLP of Nicaragua and its trade union organization Frente Obrero among the Nicaraguan workers.

### **A Solidarity Tour of Nicaragua**

Solidarity with the Nicaraguan workers must mean solidarity with and support for the work of MLP of Nicaragua. Our party has for several years had close fraternal relations with the MLP of Nicaragua. We have worked out the plans for our solidarity campaign this summer in close consultation and agreement with the Nicaraguan comrades. This campaign will include demonstrations, rallies and wide-scale agitation in the U.S.A. It will also include, at the invitation of the MLP of Nicaragua, a solidarity tour in July to be organized by our Party.

The reformists in the U.S. movement say that it is divisive and sectarian to support the MLP of Nicaragua. They say we should support the Sandinistas because they are still the dominant trend in Nicaragua and Nicaragua is still under attack.

It is nonsense to argue that way. Libya too is under attack. Qadhafi heads the dominant trend there. Does defending Libya mean we have to go around promoting Qadhafi as the great revolutionary leader? To do so would be a great disservice to the Libyan toilers.

And besides, what about the fact that it is the workers and peasants who suffer the worse under these attacks and who bear the burden of repulsing them. Why shouldn't we support the force that is the backbone of the resistance to these attacks?

No, with their charges of sectarianism our reformists don't have the movement against U.S. imperialism at heart. Instead they are trying to impose their own reformist politics, which welcomes the reformism of the Sandinistas, on the movement.

The class struggle is international. The American bourgeoisie is supporting the Nicaraguan capitalists and vice versa. The petty bourgeois reformists, social-democrats and revisionists in this country are uniting with the Sandinistas and sending tour after tour to Nicaragua to give the Sandinistas international support. At the same time, the reformists are using the Sandinista support of Contadora to justify their own conciliation with U.S. imperialism and their own ties with the Democrats.

If the capitalists of the world can support each other, if the petty bourgeois reformists can support each other, then shouldn't we workers and Marxist-Leninists also unite? Indeed we must and we will.

**Down with U.S. Imperialism!**  
**Apartheid No, Revolution Yes!**  
**Down with Reagan's Dirty War on Nicaragua!**  
**Victory to the Workers and Peasants of Nicaragua!**  
**Long live the Marxist-Leninist Party of Nicaragua!**  
**Workers of the World, Unite!**