

The Workers' Advocate

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May 20, 1987

Working class internationalism and the immigrants

The following speech was delivered at the MLP May Day meeting in Chicago on May 2. Our Party held demonstrations in Chicago and New York City and lively May Day meetings there and in Seattle and Oakland. The June 1 issue of the **Workers' Advocate** will report on these events and May Day activities around the world.

Tonight we are celebrating May Day, the international day of the working class. This is the day of proletarian internationalism, the day when we hold aloft the banner of international solidarity of all workers -- regardless of nationality, regardless of country of birth, regardless of what country they live in. On this day we say, workers of the world, unite!

Now, for the revolutionary working class, what is the meaning of worldwide solidarity?

We have heard the AFL-CIO leaders talk about international solidarity. Oh yes, they will cry out loud and wring their hands over the dirty exploitation of the workers in the Mexican maquiladoras [satellite plants set up just south of the border by U.S. corporations]. But then what do they say? Do they call for a fight against that exploitation? On no, they say, "Bring those jobs back to America, where they belong." Shutting down factories in Mexico -- is this what international solidarity means?

We have heard the union bureaucrats decry the discrimination against immigrant workers who are applying for legalization. But then what do they protest to the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service, known as la Migra]? Not that it stop its attacks on the immigrants -- oh no! Rather, only three weeks ago, the AFL-CIO leaders were again in a huff demanding that the INS stop the "flood of **foreigners** into the professional job market" in the U.S. Pushing the government to drive out for-

eign workers -- is this what international solidarity means?

No, the union bureaucrats do not stand for international solidarity. World, working class solidarity is not some nice, humanitarian sentimentality which can be thrown aside in the name of a fight for jobs.

International solidarity means concrete, daily struggle.

This is a struggle against our "own" capitalists and in support of the workers fighting against the capitalists in every country.

This is a struggle to defend the workers of the oppressed nationalities, to fight for their rights, to unite all workers in our common battle against capitalist wage-slavery and exploitation.

This is a struggle against blind flag-waving patriotism, against chauvinism. Whether it is voiced by Reagan and the monopolies, or by the liberal Democrats, or by the union bigshots, we must stand against it, we must fight it with all our strength.

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AQUINO'S LABOR REFORM RETAINS ANTI-STRIKE LAWS FROM THE MARCOS ERA

In the Philippines, every May Day militant workers stage a march and rally in downtown Manila. During the time of Marcos these were dangerous events leading to confrontation with the fascist armed forces. But last year May 1 was different. This time the new president, Corazon Aquino, was herself the featured speaker at the May Day rally.

Just a few months after the ouster of Marcos, Aquino was making a strenuous effort to get the Filipino population to support her new liberal bourgeois regime.

And Aquino did not hold back on her demagogy. Pretending to honor the workers and the traditions of May Day, she promised that her new government would do away with the anti-labor repression of the Marcos regime. In particular, she promised to do away with the fascist labor code which oppressed the workers under Marcos. And she pledged to work for prosperity for the laboring poor.

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One Year Later

But it is May Day again, and Aquino's promises of labor reform have been shown to be empty.

Forget about economic improvements for the workers. Aquino's main concern is a "stable investment climate" for foreign and local capital. Thus she continues austerity measures against the people, including a wage freeze.

And harsh repression of strikes has not ended under the Aquino regime. The most dramatic example of this came on January 31 of this year, when the military shot up a mass picket of striking workers in the Bataan Export Processing Zone. Two workers were killed and dozens injured. Aside from this, some two dozen workers on picket lines have been killed in the past year.

The Filipino workers have continued to press Aquino for scrapping the Marcos anti-labor laws. On February 13 Aquino finally issued her labor code reform. But this "reform" is quite far from "rescinding the laws that repress the rights of workers", as she had promised to do last May Day. In fact it maintains intact many of the worst features of the Marcos labor code, while throwing a few crumbs to the working class.

Aquino's Executive Order 111 contains certain provisions sought by the workers. In particular, it repeals the right of management to replace striking workers who defy return-to-work orders; it reduces some restrictive strike requirements; it liberalizes some of the rules of union organizing; and it expands the right to organize to state-owned corporations.

But the document does not even mention cost-of-living raises, which Aquino had previously promised. And, most importantly, the right to strike is still severely limited by Marcos-era laws untouched by this "reform". In fact Aquino has maintained intact the two most notorious anti-strike laws of the Marcos era, BP 130 and BP 227.

The Anti-Strike Law

BP 130, passed in 1982, is also known as the "Anti-Strike Law". It ostensibly recognizes the right to strike but in fact makes it almost impossible for strikes to occur.

Strikes are banned in any cases "adversely affecting national interest". The decision as to what

"affects national interest" rests with the president or labor minister; and since industrial peace is the pro-capitalist policy of the Aquino government, any strike might be declared "affecting national interest".

BP 130 contains a number of restrictive requirements on strikes. Before calling the workers out on strike, a union must first give notice of intent to strike and then go through a 15-30 day cooling-off period. If a union calls a strike that is declared illegal, BP 130 gives the government the right to dismiss the union officers. The law also gives the president and labor minister the right to intervene in any strike, to issue a return-to-work order, and to order compulsory arbitration. But while laying these stern restrictions on the workers' right to strike, the law gives employers the right to lock out workers.

The Pro-Scab and Anti-Picketing Law

BP 227 is also called the "Pro-Scab and Anti-Picketing Law". This law gives employers the right to free entrance and exit of materials and products at a struck work place. It allows a labor arbiter to prohibit a strike even before a hearing of the workers' demands has taken place. And it allows the use of police or military to crush picket lines in the case of any company belonging to a so-called "vital industry". As an example of what can be declared a "vital industry": this was once used to attack workers striking against a company manufacturing soy sauce.

Labor Minister Reassures Capitalists

To underscore the paltry nature of this "reform", Labor Secretary Drilon went before a meeting of the Employers' Confederation shortly after Aquino issued her executive order. Drilon told the capitalists at the meeting that her labor code "reform" was "fine for them" and promised there would be no wage increase policy. At the same time he promised to clamp down on strikes in the Bataan Export Processing Zone.

For Class Struggle Against the Capitalists

Aquino's labor code reform has helped to press home to the workers that her regime is a regime unfriendly to the interests of labor.

In last year's May Day rally, Aquino was invited to speak by the leaders of KMU, the May First Movement of the Philippines. This is the left trade union center to which the militant workers have flocked in recent years, disgusted at the treacherous policies of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines. The TUC is connected to the AFL-CIO, openly promotes class collaboration, and loyally supported the Marcos regime; today it slavishly props up Aquino.

Unfortunately the leadership of KMU has been plagued by the ideas of conciliation with liberalism that weaken the Filipino left. Reflecting their illusions in the promises of Aquino, the KMU leadership gave the new regime "critical support" and followed a declared policy of "maximum restraint" in its activities.

But a year's experience has shown that this policy is futile. The last KMU convention a few months ago rescinded the "maximum restraint" policy. And the KMU has denounced Aquino's labor code reform. (In fact, much of the information on the Aquino proposal in this article comes from the KMU journal.)

These are steps forward. But unfortunately it cannot be said that the KMU leadership has freed itself from the influence of class conciliation. They still hold out hope in progress for labor coming through coalition with a section of the liberal, national bourgeoisie. Instead of the banner of class struggle and socialism, they seek to put together a "nationalist opposition" and dream of a future that will bring "genuine nationalist industrialization".

It is in the KMU that the militant workers in the Philippines are gathered today. They are there because they want a fight against poverty and for a bright future for the toilers. But this will not be handed down by any liberal or reformist politician of the bourgeoisie. It requires struggle of the workers themselves. <>

PRISON CORRESPONDENCE

April 9, 1987

On the 29th anniversary of the heroic general strike of April 9, 1958, when students and workers in the city of Saqua la Grande, Cuba, took the town and held it against the armed forces of imperialism.

Dear friends/comrades:

Greetings to the American working class and to the Party of the working class on May Day 1987!

One hundred and one years ago, on May 1, 1886, a group of Chicago workers demonstrated to demand an eight-hour workday. The brutal, bloody and criminal repression of that march by the armed forces of the bourgeoisie, rather than ending the militant struggle of the workers, gave rise to a symbol for the workers of all lands: the International Workers' Day!

Comrades:

This year we face increased repression by the ruling classes and their paid servants: unabashed police murders of black citizens; a new anti-immigrant law; factory closedowns by the dozens; massive hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of proper medical care for the working classes; an all-out capitalist offensive and repression against the workers. And on April 25, a week before May Day, reformist forces stage a pet demonstration, no doubt in an attempt to dilute and hide a true showdown by militant workers on May Day.

We applaud the MLP,USA's decision to attend this April 25 diversion, but not only to make their presence there be known, but to call right then and there, on April 25, for all workers and progressive forces to rally again the week after, on May 2, 1987, and make May Day 1987 the mightiest May Day demonstration this country has ever seen.

The women at the Mountain View unit of the Texas Department of Corrections offer their unconditional support to and congratulate the Party of the working classes on that glorious day. Physical restraints prevent any one of us from being present there and demonstrate shoulder to shoulder with you, but we nevertheless answer "present" and endorse wholeheartedly the call of the Party of the working classes for that day.

NO TO REPUBLICANS, NO TO DEMOCRATS
AND YES TO REVOLUTION!

BUILD UP THE PARTY OF THE WORKERS!
LONG LIVE MAY DAY!

Ana Lucia Gelabert
Gatesville, Texas. <>

April 11, 1987

Dear Mr. Kuiper

In reference to your April 9, 1987 letter in response to my April 1, 1987 letter in response to my earlier request for an investigation and to place the Texas Department of Corrections' Mountain View Unit under federal receivership for their refusal to obey any court orders whatever:

If the Office of the Special Master, having the backing of the federal court, power of subpoena, etc., can't "initiate" an investigation with all the data I gave you, what can an indigent prisoner in a solitary cell (me) do? Therefore, after much thought, I came to the following decision:

I voluntarily wish to regret the errors of my sinful views and my vicious crimes against this great system of ours. I realize now that the warden of Mountain View, Catherine C. Craig, is a great lady and a great Amerikan; if she finds that she must do the exact opposite of what the Court writes down or tells publicly she should be doing, she must have a national security reason for it and, rather than complain, I should be grateful [for] living in Amerika, where those things don't and have never happened. Never mind if the Use of Force Plan says handcuffs are "major force" and require making a major force use report: if the T.D.C. don't, [it] must be in our national interest for them to do so. The incident about Lt. Moore videotaping us semi-naked on the floor on our knees truly never happened: I must have dreamt it, lied about it, or been confused about it (the unit psychologist will decide which one, while helping me to seek forgiveness for my wrongful views). Even if it did happen, no great harm done: let the poor guy enjoy himself a little on weekends, after all he works hard. Same goes for Ofr. (Mr.) Perez breaking the skin off my wrists with handcuffs, even if I offered no resistance: it truly never happened, I dreamt

it or lied about it.

In my sorrow I pledge allegiance to President Ronald Wilson Reagan and the system of freedom and justice for which he stands; I believe him 100 per cent in all he says; Nancy too. Thinking about it, he may well be the most truthful man ever to set foot in the White House. I support his efforts to kill communists of all ages and sexes in Central America and elsewhere in the world; we must teach them people democracy and give them a lesson; I wish he could go into Cuba also; even back to Vietnam, for real. I only beg forgiveness for my crimes. Nuke the Ayatollah and the Russians! I love George Bush. The Democrats too. I understand now the need for Simpson-Rodino and of protecting the purity of our race and institutions while stopping them foreigners from coming in to break our laws and steal our bread. I was wrong, wrong, wrong, but now I see the light. My request for federals invading Mountain View was wrong and untimely, because it would dilute forces which may well be needed, at some future point in time, to save Bermuda or keep the commies off Howard Beach. I deserve three lashes.

HEIL TO THE CHIEF!
LONG LIVE AMERIKA!

Sorrowfully yours,

Ana Lucia Gelabert

Post Scriptum:

As part of my examination of conscience, to the best of my recollection:

The incident in question must have happened on either March 29 or 30, 1986; it was the only SORT [Special Operations Response Team] visit to administrative segregation on or about those dates.

The so-called "riot" was caused more by the TDC guards eagerness to use their newly acquired toys, i.e. helmets, shields, fire hoses, chemical weapons, etc., than to any really serious disturbance. The disturbance consisted of a few prisoners in the front cells burning some rags: the vast majority did not participate; it happened about 8 AM and must have lasted for an hour or less. At any rate, by 10 AM things had calmed down and most of us went to sleep.

By noon that day, the "riot" had been over for a while and SORT had not come yet, but we were fed sandwiches because, I was told, we were on "lock down." The four of us who were in punitive segregation (from general population), Elizabeth Davis, Linda Lampkins, a Black girl nicknamed Popeye and myself, didn't even have matches officially, and even if we had had matches we wouldn't waste them in burning any rags. We did not participate in any "riot" at all. Nor did most of the administrative segregation prisoners, and much less women in protective custody from other wings.

At about 4 PM I was awakened (taking a nap) by Ofr. (Mrs.) Wacker, who told me to strip off my clothes and underwear and put on a gown. I was handcuffed in the back and taken to the dayroom, and there I was forced to kneel down (with the handcuffs on) and remain in that position, silent, facing the wall. Lt. Moore was having a ball videotaping all that. Next to me came Pat Molina, and then two more facing the same wall. Then came another three or four facing the northeast wall, with the windows. Then came (that I can remember) a protective custody woman named Rose Devine (who wasn't even living in that wing). Around were Major Greenwood. Also nurse Quiroz and "Dr." Kemp (he is not a graduate doctor, but practices medicine in Mt. View; he has even prescribed me antibiotics). Many other TDC staff around.

As I mentioned in my letter, I made a written report that same day and sent it to the Prisoners Defense Committee, of San Antonio ...

In my cell, what SORT did was to throw into the floor all my legal papers (the only property I was allowed while in punitive), break open a few envelopes, etc. - I filed a grievance on that same day about the needless scattering of my legal papers. But I was lucky: on information and belief, SORT usually picks up for destroying things like typewriters, radios, etc.

Now I must work with some psychologist to determine if I dreamt it, lied about all the above, or I am simply-confused about it.

Peace is war!
Truth is false!

(To add to their enjoyment, the furniture had been removed from the dayroom, to be sure we had to lie down on the floor and our knees. Would it be possible to ask Lt. Moore for a copy of that videotape, if he doesn't mind doing without it for a couple of weekends?) <>

**At FDR station in New York:
POSTAL WORKERS WIN PETITION CAMPAIGN FOR A NURSE**

From the April 29 leaflet of the MLP-New York:

During the first half of April, over 300 workers on FDR [one of New York City's airports] station's night tour (tour 1) signed a petition demanding that a nurse be hired for their tour. This was a solid majority of the workers at the station and included people from the three major crafts: clerks, carriers and mailhandlers.

As of last Friday, after more than 6 months without a nurse, workers at FDR found that a nurse had been hired for tour 1. She will be there 5 days a week, from Monday to Friday.

The hiring of a nurse was definitely a victory and a result of the active stand taken by the workers on the night tour.

Dismal health and safety conditions

Health and safety conditions at FDR station, like those at other postal facilities, have long been dismal. The place is filthy and full of dust. Toilets don't work. The elevators only work sometimes, and are dangerous too. Work takes place in extremely congested conditions, with people constantly having to step over bags and trays of mail. And the equipment, such as the trucks that carriers use, is often in poor condition.

Yet, for over six months, postal management thought there was no point to having a nurse on the night tour at FDR. The working conditions didn't bother management. An extra dose of safety talks would be enough.

Night workers in general are known to be more prone to get sick and more accident prone. And with close to 500 people, the night tour at FDR is easily the largest tour at the station. Moreover, it is the tour with most light-duty workers. Yet for 6 months, there was no nurse. Postal management couldn't have cared less.

What management cares about

But one or two weeks worth of workers getting organized to gather signatures, of taking matters into their own hands, even in this small way, **this**

was too much. For management **this** was a something to worry about, much more than any safety hazard or health problems.

Workers had raised this problem to management during safety talks and at other times. Over and over again, the workers heard excuses and saw no action. When it comes to such things as hiring, grievances, or processing "adjustments" in paychecks, postal management has been known to drag things on for months and even years with bureaucratic excuses.

But it took management little over a week, in this case, to hire a nurse: lightning speed by postal office standards! How quickly the red tape can disappear when management sees to it!

And elsewhere...

This problem is not unique to FDR. It wasn't until recently that a nurse was hired on tour 3 at Church St. station. Workers there were without a nurse for over a year. And the medical unit at GPO [General Post Office] is presently closed after midnight, so that workers there must use the nurse at Morgan Station.

Moreover, a trend has developed at GOP, where workers are told they may not see the nurse (on the tours that have a nurse) under a variety of excuses. Workers are told to see their own doctor, on their own time, unless it is a work-related accident or emergency, or if they are within 2 hours of the end of their tour.

Apparently management wants to save a few dollars from nurses' salaries by jeopardizing the health and safety of postal workers. But it seems to go beyond this. With its mind set on "productivity", management wants to cut out any time for visiting the medical units.

Workers at FDR station did the right thing, by taking this matter into their own hands. Not only did they win their demand in record time, but they got a small taste of their own strength. They have learned something which they can use to solve other problems in the future. Something which could prove very valuable in the very near future too, as the postal contract nears its deadline in July of this year. <>

J.H. WILLIAMS WORKERS CONTINUE TEN-MONTH STRIKE IN BUFFALO

From the April 20 issue of **Buffalo Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Buffalo:

The workers at J.H. Williams are continuing to picket. Their strike has lasted ten months. Back in June, the company demanded huge concessions -- wage cuts, extensive reductions in medical coverage, and changes in work rules. The workers rejected the concessions contract and went out on strike. In December, the owners announced the Buffalo plant would close. This meant that 225 workers would permanently lose their jobs. Today, the company still owes over one million dollars in back vacation and severance pay.

**The laws of the U.S. are set up
to serve the rich**

Soon after announcing the close of the plant, the J.H. Williams capitalists filed for bankruptcy. Under the U.S. bankruptcy laws, workers have to wait years to receive any money. And if they do get any, they are "lucky" to get 10 cents on the dollar. The capitalist bankruptcy laws work this way:

The rich file for bankruptcy of their corporation. They are personally not liable for any debts the corporation owes. So their luxuries, all acquired through the sweat and toil of the workers, cannot be touched. And what about the possessions of the workers? Many workers will be forced to sell their homes, cars, etc., just to make ends meet. In short, the rich go almost totally free of past debts due, while the workers fall deeper and deeper into debt.

**The state agencies are also
servants of the rich**

Back in 1984, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) arranged a \$6 million bond for J.H. Williams. The money in turn was used to purchase plant equipment. Recently, the

J.H. Williams capitalists sold one piece of equipment to pay part of the loan due the Mellon bank. The ECIDA, knowing full well that the workers at J.H. Williams were owed over one million dollars by these capitalists, gave their blessings to the sale.

To cover up their anti-worker activities, the ECIDA enlisted the help of Thomas Monaghan, the regional UAW director and George Wessel, head of the Buffalo AFL-CIO council. These traitors were part of a subcommittee that approved the sale of the equipment and allowed the money to be turned over to the bank.

The ECIDA is always obliging when it comes to doling out workers' taxes to corporations under the guise of "saving" or "creating" jobs, or to ensure that the billionaire bankers get their cash. But when it comes to the workers interests, the ECIDA turns a deaf ear. So much for the notion that the ECIDA was set up to aid the working class of Erie County.

**The workers must build an independent movement
to fight the rich**

The situation at J.H. Williams is not an isolated example. All across the U.S. corporations are demanding concessions, closing plants or filing for bankruptcy. When the state intervenes, it always is on the side of the rich. If it is not invalidating a union contract to help a corporation, it is agreeing in court to allow a corporation to stop pension payments. And when the workers fight back, the state issues injunctions or calls out the police.

The workers must build their struggle on their own. Free of the Democrats and Republicans who daily discover new ways to give hand outs to the rich. Free of the government agencies who encourage concessions and use the laws to fill the pockets of the rich. Free of the labor traitors who are too happy to serve their capitalist masters. The workers must build their struggle as a weapon against the capitalists and their servants.

<>

**Behind the "non-traditional type of negotiating process" at the Chevy engine plant
GM IS PREPARING ANOTHER CONCESSIONS CONTRACT AT TONAWANDA**

From the April 20 issue of **Buffalo Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Buffalo:

The autoworkers' contract with GM expires in September. At CPC Tonawanda, early negotiations for a local contract have already begun. The 1984 contract guaranteed GM's right to conduct wage and job-cutting drives against individual plants. Consequently, the stakes are up in the local negotiations. In addition, the new "non-traditional type of negotiation process", announced at a February 4th press conference, smells of more concessions. Now is the time to prepare for the September contract struggle.

The stakes are up at the local level

Provisions in the last contract stated that local and regional GM/union committees could "waive or change parts of the national contract" including making "wage-scale changes" at a local level. Over the past three years, GM has used these provisions to throw workers at different plants into competition with each other and with low-wage sweat shops over who will "save jobs" by taking the biggest concessions. Of course, instead of "saving jobs" GM has been able to lay off thousands and has plans to close 11 assembly and 20 parts plants over the next few years.

At CPC Tonawanda, one of the fruits of these provisions is the Joint Piston Venture. Plant #5 is being re-tooled for the production of all GM's piston production. The Union/Management Business Team established to oversee this project have already scrapped all seniority rights and job classifications from the existing contract. New shop rules will be established and workers can be sure that they will come out on the short end of the stick. As well, since the last contract, non-union truckers are being used in the Material Department, and both office cleaners and Plant #4 cafeteria workers have lost their jobs to outside contractors. The recent assurance that CPC Tonawanda workers received from F. James McDonald, GM's president, during his recent visit, that the future of their jobs is secure, is worthless. It was merely a pat on the back, "keep up the good work" -- the more jobs combined, the lower the wages, the better it is for GM's competitive position.

What "non-traditional" really means

The center of the new "non-traditional type of negotiating process" is said to be "people involvement". It comes equipped with Research and Resource Teams, with questionnaires for workers to fill out and with a glass negotiating room [so people can see in on the negotiations, but not of course hear them] built right on the production floor.

Is the aim of this "people involvement" to better the living and working conditions of the autoworkers? No! Instead of the autoworkers following the traditional path of fighting in their own interests, they should sacrifice to better "GM's competitive position in today's world market". The last three years at CPC Tonawanda show that bettering "GM's competitive position" means loss of seniority rights, speed-up, job combinations and loss of jobs to non-union, low-wage contractors. This new "non-traditional type of negotiations" is nothing but an elaborate attempt to enlist the cooperation of the workers in GM's vicious concessions drive.

Get organized to fight against concessions

The CPC Tonawanda workers face a stiff battle against concessions -- against the ongoing drive for more automation and speedup, job combinations and contracting out. The non-traditional approach is no answer because its aim is to get the workers to organize the takebacks, instead of organizing against them.

Nor can the top UAW leadership be relied on to lead this battle. These bureaucrats have refused to lift a finger to organize any mass struggle of the workers against GM's attacks. And at last week's UAW convention, Owen Bieber argued that provisions in the '84 contract which allow GM to pit plant against plant must be kept. At a time when GM has made it clear it is not satisfied with the billions in profits already earned at the cost of hundreds of thousands of jobs and enormous takebacks, Bieber argues that each local should have the "right" to fend for itself.

What is needed is a combined struggle of all the autoworkers under the banner NO MORE CONCESSIONS. The rank-and-file GM workers must get ready to fight, because the mass struggle is the only way to resist the GM billionaires' concessions drive. <>

Stop plant closings and layoffs!
MILITANT PICKET AT GM HEADQUARTERS

From the May 15 issue of the **Detroit Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Detroit:

The movement against plant closings and layoffs continues to build. On May 1, international working class day, 150 workers picketed at GM headquarters.

Many workers came from plants that are slated for closing this fall such as Detroit's Fleetwood Cadillac, Conner stamping, and GM's Norwood, Ohio plant. A Chevy worker came from as far away as Buffalo, New York. And Chrysler workers also showed their solidarity. For two and a half hours the workers kept up a barrage of militant slogans: "Millions in executive pay, don't let them take our jobs away!" "No more whipsaw!" "Auto workers unite, get ready for a strike!" Workers also showed their contempt for the sellout policy of the UAW leadership by carrying handmade picket signs that declared, "Concessions and trade war don't save jobs, strike the big three!" and "Bieber says, Orderly Job Elimination! We say, STRIKE FOR JOBS!"

Unfortunately, the leaders of the march were not so militant. The president of Local 15, Joe Wilson, tried to limit the action to begging GM chairman Roger Smith for a meeting to find an alternative to the closing of Fleetwood. But we all know that GM's only "alternative" is concessions and pitting workers at one plant against another. Wilson also knelt before Democratic Party liberal John Conyers. He promoted the illusion that the Democrats will get Congress to pass a temporary moratorium on plant closings. But the Democrats are more interested in helping the monopolies

through trade war than in saving workers' jobs.

No, the only way to save jobs is for the workers to fight for them. This was the sentiment of the rank and file on May 1 as they repeatedly shouted, "GM, SHUT IT DOWN!" This is the sentiment that's been reflected in the strikes for job security over the last year at Ford's Hapeville, Ga. plant, at the Warren Tech Center, at the Delco plant in Kokomo, Ind. and at the three GM plants in Pontiac. This is the sentiment that's been shown by the thousands of workers who've come out for jobs rallies in Detroit and Flint and at the mass protest at the UAW Bargaining Convention in Chicago in April.

The movement against plant closings and layoffs is growing. And the Marxist-Leninist Party is active in building it up. The MLP widely leafleted for the May 1 action and helped workers to spread the word at a series of plants that have been previously kept away from the movement. It encouraged organizing in the plants; it mobilized workers to take part in the action; and it helped to release the fighting mood of the picketing workers by leading militant slogans. Workers, join with the MLP to build up this movement. Organize it independently from the sellout union hacks and Democratic Party liberals. Unleash the power of the workers through mass demonstrations, job actions, and strikes!

Further mass protests have been called for the GM stockholders meeting on May 22 at GM headquarters, for the UAW Bargaining Council meeting on June 2, and for June 5 at GM headquarters. Join the protests, build the movement in every plant. <>

May Day speech
WORKING CLASS INTERNATIONALISM AND THE IMMIGRANT WORKER

Continued from the front page

Defend the immigrant workers!

This May Day, a particularly important part of the struggle for international solidarity, a particularly important part of the battle against the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie, is the fight to defend the immigrant workers.

The capitalists, and all their henchmen, are on a vicious crusade against the immigrants. This is a crusade to put the blame on immigrants for the layoffs, and the drug running, and all the other sins of the capitalists themselves. This is a crusade of firings, a crusade of job discrimination, of English-only language persecution, of deportation raids, of militarizing the border.

At the center of this crusade is the Simpson-Rodino anti-immigrant law. Its aim is to step up the terror against the undocumented immigrants, to drive them deeper into inhuman exploitation in the fields and sweatshops, to keep them down as a super-exploited section of the working class -- a section beaten down, unorganized, without rights.

This attack focuses on the undocumented; but its wider target is the entire working class movement. The persecution of one section of our class can and will be used to persecute and drive down other sections of the class towards the same super-exploitation. The instruments of terror forged against the undocumented -- whether it is the national ID card system or the internment camps -- can and will be used against the legal immigrants, against the oppressed nationalities born in the U.S., against any fighting workers.

We must fight this law. We must resist its terror. We must build up a movement of mass struggle. A movement of public protest and resistance. A movement that can help the undocumented stand up and come out of the dark, secret, underworld of fear and degradation. A movement of all workers and progressive people to confront this law, to resist it, and to fight for full rights for all the working people -- documented or undocumented, U.S.-born or foreign-born.

A movement is already beginning.

There are the striking Latino immigrants at the Urettek plant in New Haven and the Salvadoran immigrants at Erimco in San Francisco. They have defied la Migra. They have gone on strike against the terrible conditions and against the firings. They are struggling to win their right to organize.

Comrades, such struggle is essential.

There are the growing protests across the country against the firings of undocumented, demonstrations against the arrest of immigrants, marches against the deportations. Comrades, such struggle is essential.

And soon there will be joint demonstrations of activists from Mexico and the U.S. in El Paso/Jaurez and other border cities. There will also be a rally at la Migra headquarters right here in Chicago, a rally directed squarely against the Simpson-Rodino law. Comrades, such struggle is essential.

We must go all out to mobilize for these actions.

We must use them to encourage, organize and build up a movement of defiance, of resistance, of mass struggle against the infamous Simpson-Rodino law and la Migra.

We must work to inspire this movement to fight for the full rights for all the immigrants.

We must give our hearts to the effort to guide this movement onto the path of independent action, of organization that is separate from and opposed to not only Reagan and the Republicans, but also against the Democratic Party hypocrites and the bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO.

The reformists want to narrow down the fight to what is acceptable to the liberal chauvinists

Unfortunately, there are reformists within this movement who are trying to narrow down its focus and hold back the struggle. Some of these reformists -- like the pro-Soviet revisionists of the Communist Party, USA and of the "Line of March" group and the pro-Chinese revisionists of the League of Revolutionary Struggle -- claim to be radicals, to be communists, to be Marxist-Leninists. But, in fact, they have turned away from the revolutionary program of Marxism. They have turned away from the class struggle of communism. They have turned away even from militancy.

And what are these reformists promoting?

They are trying to narrow down the struggle to what is acceptable to the Democratic Party liberals and the union bureaucrats, to tie the movement to the coat tails of those very forces who were instrumental in passing the new anti-immigrant law in the first place.

They want to narrow down the fight to reforming Simpson-Rodino, instead of building up the

struggle against it. They are preaching the illusion that some immigrants can avoid "discrimination" and "abuse" while millions of other immigrants are excluded, terrorized, and forced into the dark underground economy of capitalist slave-driving.

They want to narrow down the struggle and replace mass actions with the three L's:

Lobbying congress for reforms in Simpson-Rodino;

Lawsuits against "discrimination";

Licking the ass of the INS to get money to become the advisors for legalization, to become amnesty processors. Let me give you some examples of the dangerous course that these reformists are advocating.

What are employer sanctions for?

Take the fight against the employer sanctions set up by the Simpson-Rodino law. What are these sanctions for?

Their aim is to encourage firings, to carry out job discrimination against immigrants, to create better conditions for la Migra raids on the factories and other work places. This measure may discourage some immigration. But above all it is aimed at terrorizing the immigrants, at keeping them in constant fear of being caught, of being fired, of being deported. This is to drive them into even more terrible conditions of super-exploitation.

Look at the workers at the Uretek plant in New Haven. The capitalists there, in their production drive for the Pentagon, have been systematically poisoning the workers with highly toxic chemical solvents. Not only are the immigrants forced to work 12 hours a day with no lunch break, not only are they paid only \$4.50 an hour, not only are they left without health care, but now half of the Uretek workers have come down with hepatitis and other serious liver ailments from the abuse of the capitalists. How did the capitalists hope to get away with these murderous conditions? They counted on the terror of la Migra to keep the workers from protesting, to keep them from organizing, to keep them from fighting.

This is what Simpson-Rodino and its employer sanctions hopes to reenforce in work places across the country. Only by defying the law, by defying the terror, can the workers organize and fight back. Obviously we must fight against this law.

Can one persecute the immigrants without discrimination?

But the liberal Democrats and the union bureaucrats are saying that the issue with employer sanc-

tions is not to fight them, is not to eliminate them. Oh no, they say, the sole issue is to guard against the sanctions causing "discrimination" against those becoming legalized, or who are already legal immigrants, or who are "foreign"-looking citizens.

Now we should remember that it was the AFL-CIO bureaucrats who for years and years campaigned that there must be the most stringent employer sanctions to supposedly stop "foreign immigrants from stealing American jobs".

Remember also that, when a few capitalist politicians from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (these were bourgeois politicians who supported the overall intent of Simpson-Rodino) raised the concern that employer sanctions might lead to discrimination against Hispanic citizens, it was the Democratic Party liberal Barney Frank who worked out a compromise. He came up with the supposed anti-discrimination clause, which got the infamous Simpson-Rodino law passed.

The reformists parade the chauvinists as the champions of the immigrants

But now various reformist forces are praising these same AFL-CIO chauvinists and these same Democratic Party racists. They are dressing them up in new clothes and parading them as if they were the greatest champions of the rights of the immigrants.

Look at the pro-Soviet revisionists of the "Line of March" group. They hail the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (which they euphemistically call "immigrant rights forces") for its past "lobbying efforts" against "discrimination". And they jumped up and down with enthusiasm for Barney Frank when he came to town recently to campaign for Harold Washington.

Meanwhile, the official pro-Soviet revisionists of the Communist Party, USA are carrying articles promoting the AFL-CIO's lawsuits and legal maneuvers to "prevent job discrimination" and to monitor against "abuses" under employer sanctions. For their part, the Maoist revisionists of the League of Revolutionary Struggle carried an interview with the vice-president of the United Farmworkers union, Dolores Huerta, promoting the UFW's supposedly bold fight to beg the INS to "get money allocated to watch implementation of the regulations".

However, these liberal Democrats and union hacks aren't interested in fighting against employer sanctions. No, their talk of monitoring against discrimination is aimed at hoodwinking the immigrants, quieting protests, and ensuring the success of the employer sanctions, sanctions which they either openly support or quietly sympathize

with. And the reformists are trying to narrow down the opposition to employer sanctions to exactly what is acceptable to these capitalist politicians and union chiefs.

Listen to what the LRS, for example, says in their February 2 paper. They say, "We need to create a strong mechanism [referring to legal briefs and lobbying -- WAS] for flagging and documenting discrimination arising from employer sanctions." Now this is exactly what the AFI-CIO bureaucrats and the Democratic Party liberals are calling for in order to ward off militant mass actions, to stop the fight to combat and eliminate employer sanctions altogether. The LRS is just echoing them.

But then the LRS goes farther. They claim, "**This is the only basis for defeating sanctions**" -- for **defeating sanctions**, can you imagine that?! And why, because, they say, "the new law provides for formal review of the impact of sanctions and provides for their abolition if too much discrimination results." This is not just legalistic drivel. It is an outrage.

Discrimination is the heart of the Simpson-Rodino law

The Simpson-Rodino law -- including its employer sanctions provision -- is one giant case of discrimination. Its declared purpose is to deprive millions and millions of undocumented workers of the right to earn a living. Moreover, it is written right into the law that the immigrants legalized under the amnesty are to be discriminated against in every way. Even in hiring, the law says employers can discriminate against these immigrants in favor of citizens and other legal residents. Yet the LRS claims that not only can the law be used to fight discrimination, it can even be used to **defeat** employer sanctions. Such is the extreme nonsense that the reformists are resorting to in order to narrow down the struggle and subordinate the movement to the chauvinist union bureaucrats and liberal Democrats.

We believe that the firings and job discrimination against citizens and legal immigrants must be fought. But it is pure illusion to think that these outrages can be stopped and prevented by relying on lobbying or lawsuits and without the mass struggle. Moreover, it is absurd to think that the rights of the legalized can be protected as long as the undocumented are barred from having any rights. By narrowing down the fight to supposedly guarding against "discrimination" and "abuses" in the enforcement of employer sanctions, the reformists are giving up the fight to eliminate employer sanctions and to defend the undocumented workers. What's more they are also weakening the fight

against firings and job discrimination against the legal immigrants and citizens.

What is needed is to build up the mass struggle against the firings and the discrimination against the immigrants, no matter their legal status. And what is needed is to organize these mass actions as part of a movement against the Simpson-Rodino outrage and for full rights to all immigrants.

Amnesty is the sugarcoating

But let me go on to another example of how the reformists are trying to narrow down and hold back the fight in defense of the immigrants. Let us look at the question of amnesty.

Amnesty is the sugarcoating to try and make the workers accept the bitter pill of the vicious Simpson-Rodino attacks on the immigrant workers. It provides a humanitarian cover for the law's vicious repression. And this is how the liberal Democrats and union bureaucrats are trying to reconcile the masses to this racist law. The measures to increase the size and force of la Migra, to unleash greater deportations, to militarize the border, to step up firings and job discrimination against millions and millions of undocumented workers -- all of this, they say, is supposed to be okay because at least some will get amnesty.

But just take a look at the estimates of how few people the bourgeoisie intends to grant amnesty to. In Chicago it is estimated that there are from 250,000 to 500,000 undocumented workers. Reportedly the INS expects to grant amnesty to only a few thousand and **at most** 32,000 of these workers. That means that a minimum of from 87% to 94% of the undocumented will be **excluded** from amnesty. That means that **at most** only 6 to 13% will be allowed into the amnesty program.

Of course we would be in favor of winning full rights for even 6% of the undocumented, but amnesty does **not** grant full rights. Those few who get amnesty, won't even be granted permanent residency status for 18 months. And if they get through the traps to reach that level, they face at least another three and a half years of second-class status where they will be barred from unemployment insurance, food stamps, medical care and other social services. They will be legally discriminated against on the job and in hiring. They will be barred from bringing their undocumented husbands or wives and children to live with them. They will be hounded by la Migra and deported for even the most minor infraction of the strict amnesty regulations. In short, they will suffer as a specially oppressed section of workers deprived of their rights.

So what is amnesty? It is a justification for

terror against the immigrants; a justification for attacks on millions and millions of undocumented; a justification for creating a smaller strata of "amnestied" immigrants who are kept without rights and under the barbaric control of the INS.

Our Party believes that those immigrants who want to attempt to take advantage of the amnesty -- those who understand fully the restrictions, hassles, and dangers involved -- they should do so. For some, amnesty may provide a degree of relief from the hunted status of the undocumented. However, in no way should this fact be used to trim down and give up the fight against the thoroughly racist, thoroughly anti-immigrant, Simpson-Rodino law.

They're for a "broad interpretation"

But surrender to anti-immigrant chauvinism is exactly what the liberal Democrats and the union honchos are preaching. They are trying to paint up the "amnesty" in rosy colors. They are saying that the only issue is to work for "fair implementation" and a "broad interpretation" of the law. If that is done, they say, then this amnesty will be the "first step" to an "expanded amnesty," an amnesty that will bring "legalization with dignity".

Union bigshots, like the president of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, may complain that the law "falls short of the union's goals". But then he goes on to praise it as the "first step toward achieving a national immigration policy in the great tradition of providing a haven for refugees who face oppression and exploitation in their native countries". Ah yes, America the beautiful -- America of the deportation raids, the firings, the harassment, the super-exploitation. Here's what the union hacks promote.

We've also heard flunkies of the Democratic Party right here in Chicago, like leaders of the UNO [United Neighborhood Organizations], glorying about how they "have always believed this country was magnanimous to the wretched, the poor, the hungry..." And they declare that, "Still for others that dream will have real possibilities with the amnesty law..."

For the union hacks, for the liberal Democrats and their tail-waggers, the only issue is to ensure what they call "fair implementation" of the law, or "the broadest interpretation" of the law, or "legalization with dignity".

Which means getting the INS to fund the reformists

And how is "fairness" to be gotten out of this thoroughly discriminatory "amnesty"? How is "broadness" to be gotten out of this extremely

narrow "amnesty"? How is dignity to be obtained out of this viciously oppressive "amnesty"? The road to these grand promises is to beg the INS for money so that the reformist community groups, churches, and certain unions can become middlemen in the legalization process.

A typical example of the reformists' approach can be found in the latest issue of the paper of the League of Revolutionary Struggle. There they report the complaints of the liberal Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund -- complaints that the INS is refusing to pay "start-up costs" and is paying too little (only \$15) to reimburse these groups for processing an amnesty application. And what are we to do? LRS says go "lobby Congress", put in law suits -- in short, go beg the government to make the INS give out more money.

So, this is what the fight is being narrowed down to. Not a battle against Simpson-Rodino. Not a battle for full rights for all immigrants. But "struggling" to get the INS to cough up more money to let the reformists become social agencies, to become amnesty processors.

With this approach it is little wonder that there's a major drive under way among reformist groups to look respectable in the eyes of the INS. It is little wonder that they've become allergic to mass protests (angry demonstrations are not the way to curry business with the INS). It is little wonder that they are becoming allergic to the true communists, like those of the MLP, who are working for a militant mass struggle against Simpson-Rodino. (The Marxist-Leninists are not respectable either; association with them may hurt chances for more money from the INS). The fight against Simpson-Rodino, the fight for full rights for the immigrants, is being sold out for 30 pieces of silver.

Full rights for all immigrant workers!

From the examples I've mentioned it should be clear that if we are to build up a movement of mass struggle against the infamous anti-immigrant law; if we are to build a movement that can resist the law, that can defy the terror, that can raise the struggle to win full rights for all immigrants; then we must work to expose and combat the traitorous role of the reformists.

We say NO! to tailing after the racist Democrats and the chauvinist union hacks. Build the independent movement of the workers!

We say NO! to replacing the mass struggle with reformist play acting at lobbying, lawsuits, and licking the ass of the INS. Organize militant mass actions to resist, protest, and beat back the attacks on the immigrants!

We say NO! to narrowing the struggle to piddling reforms in Simpson-Rodino. Down with Simpson-Rodino! Full rights to the immigrants!

Our Party, the Marxist-Leninist Party, has always stood by the immigrants and we will not leave their side today. This is because our Party is a revolutionary party, a party based in the working class, a party guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism. Our Marxist-Leninist theory teaches us proletarian internationalism; it teaches us to fight for the rights of the oppressed as an essential condition for uniting our class, for welding it into a powerful force that can not only win rights for nationalities and immigrants, but that

can liberate our entire class from the ravages of the capitalists and their whole racist, chauvinist, exploiting system.

Tonight we celebrate May Day. Tonight we celebrate the international solidarity of the workers of the world. Tonight let us rededicate ourselves to building up the revolutionary Party of the working class in the course of militant mass struggle. Let us raise our voices:

No to the firings!

No to the deportations!

No to the dirty Simpson-Rodino law!

Full rights to the immigrants!

Workers of the world, unite!

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**On "Bolshevik Tendency's" Polemic against our Party:
TROTSKYISM TRAILS IN THE WAKE OF REFORMISM**

The so-called "Bolshevik Tendency" (BT) originated as a split from another Trotskyist group, the notorious Spartacist League. The third issue of BT's paper 1917 (spring 1987) contains an article opposing the stand of our Party on united front tactics. The article claims to agree with our stand against reformist gravitation around the Democratic Party. And it claims to agree with our criticism of the rightist errors of the Seventh World Congress of the C.I. of 1935 on united front tactics.

However, the BT claims that our stands are flawed because we oppose Trotskyism. This error is supposed to "weigh like a nightmare" on our brain.

The truth is the exact opposite. It is impossible to take a consistent revolutionary stand, a consistent stand for class struggle, without staunchly opposing Trotskyism. It is impossible to carry through the struggle against reformism, liberalism and revisionism without opposing Trotskyism. (Even the BT has to spend much of its time attacking other Trotskyites for reformism.) And it is impossible to uphold Leninism without opposing Trotskyism.

Today the struggle to uphold revolution and Marxism-Leninism requires opposing liquidationism. The liquidators dress up liberal bourgeois and

reformist politics in "Marxist-Leninist" or "communist" or "anarchist" colors. (Their repudiation or "liquidation" of revolutionary work in favor of merging with the liberals, trade union bureaucrats, and social-democrats, their attempts to wipe out any tradition of revolutionary spirit and struggle, their denigration of party-building and the struggle to build up an independent working class movement, is why we call them liquidators.)

It turns out that the Trotskyites are part of this reformist and liquidationist swamp. Some of them, like the SWP, have been openly vying for liberal support for a long time. The BT, on the other hand, tries to look more leftist. It claims, in its article on us, that the BT too is disgusted at the bowing and scraping before the Democratic Party. But, in essence, the BT's version of united front tactics is just as servile before the liberals and the union bureaucrats as that of the other reformists.

Thus the BT has no heart for a real fight against the reformists, a fight conducted in the thick of the mass struggle. Its strategy is to win over various of the larger reformist or revisionist groupings; and it prides itself on the analysis that the reformists and union bureaucrats, despite their treacherous nature, will allegedly sooner or later

have to defend various class interests of the workers.

In these things, the BT is just repeating the fashionable liquidationist gospel, with the exception that the BT tries to make this flabby liquidationism appear leftist. BT's leftism consists in verbal turns of phrase and in denouncing various mass struggles. Thus BT thinks it is very revolutionary and very profound to denounce various struggles and mass movements because they are not able to bring the socialist revolution by themselves and at once. It thinks that it is very revolutionary and profound to denounce the MLP of Nicaragua for the protracted work of building up revolutionary organization instead of immediately, hocus-pocus, uniting large masses at once and establishing the revolutionary Soviets. It seems BT will be revolutionary on the day that the entire working class rises up and overthrows the capitalists, but until then it disdains the self-sacrificing work of revolutionary organizing and prefers to scheme of how to link up with the reformists and labor bureaucrats.

The BT's revolutionism is purely verbal. The gist of their politics is to denounce the hard work of building up independent revolutionary organization. The cryptic title of their polemic against us, "The MLP's Stalinist Pyrite/The Myth of the Third Period", refers to their opposition to the Communist International's stand prior to the Seventh World Congress of 1935, and our stand today, for building up independent revolutionary organization, which in their terminology is "Third Period" politics, one of the worst Trotskyite no-no's.

BT Banks on the Reformists and Revisionists

The BT tries to promote itself as the revolutionary critic of reformism and revisionism. It cries out again and again against "popular frontism", it talks in the name of the working class and of building a revolutionary party, it demands immediate revolution from others, etc.

But the real strategy of the BT in various struggles is to try to make links to the various reformists which it denounces. Whether it is the anti-apartheid solidarity movement on campus or the struggle against U.S. intervention in Central America, the BT judges events and mass actions on whether they are useful for attracting the revisionists of the pro-Soviet CPUSA, the reformist leadership of CISPES, etc.

For example, consider their stand in the Con-
 tragate Action Committee in the San Francisco Bay Area. The CAC was formed at a time when many activists were fed up with the stand of the reformists in opposing militant struggle. The activists wanted to do something real. So the situation was

ripe for the CAC to appeal to the activists to take part in some militant demonstrations. In particular, the CAC called actions against the presence of the CIA's Southern Air Transport at Oakland airport.

The first actions of the CAC were successful, and they attracted a number of activists. But this did not satisfy the BT or some other leaders of the CAC, which right from the start became skeptical of the demonstrations. They viewed the actions basically simply as something with which to have a bargaining chip with CISPES and the other reformist groups. They did not see any point in the hard work of building up a militant trend in the movement or judge the numbers and success of the actions on that basis; as we shall see, the BT, in its theoretical stands, denounces this type of thing as "gradualism". Instead the BT and "left" trotskyites worried about whether the numbers would appeal to the reformist leaders.

The main CAC leadership did not fight the boycott of the CAC actions by the reformists. Instead it promoted the very reformist organizations

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that opposed its militant actions. It allowed these organizations to take a place of honor on the speakers' lists, even though such reformist groups brought no one to the demonstrations but the speaker themselves. So instead of exposing the treachery of the reformist boycott, the BT helped the reformists cover this treachery up and even promote themselves at the very actions that they opposed. And the BT and some other CAC leaders made plans to further pursue the opportunist groups. These "outreach" plans were not aimed at contact with the rank-and-file members, but at wooing the reformist leadership.

This has led these CAC leaders into passivity and depression.

Even the Democratic Party liberals

This pursuit of the reformists can even lead BT to get enthusiastic about Democratic Party liberals. The BT claims in its article that it stands opposed to those are "oriented to the Democrats" or who "respond to the gravitational attraction of the Democrats". But the BT's practice is the opposite of its revolutionary pretensions.

For example, consider the BT's stand on the workers' boycott of South African cargo that took place in 1985 on the San Francisco waterfront. In writing about this, the "External Tendency" (the previous name of the BT) forgot all about the need to oppose the liberals. Instead it wrote that

"...Even the black congressional caucus got behind the boycott. Representative Charles Hayes of Illinois, who had been arrested at the South African embassy in Washington a few days earlier, gave a press conference at a noon-hour demonstration in front of the offices of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA--the employers' association) on 28 November in an effort to help break a partial media blackout. Black Democrat Ron Dellums, a congressman from Oakland, sent a statement of solidarity and donated the time of several of his staff to help publicize the action." ("11-Day Anti-Apartheid Struggle on San Francisco Docks", Bulletin of the External Tendency of the IST, No. 4, May, 1985, p. 22)

The article had no criticism of what the liberal Democrats of the Congressional Black Caucus stood for. It did not show what treacherous path the liberals advocated in the struggle. Indeed, as we see from the quote above, it even waxed enthusiastic about the "mink-coat" protests in Washington D.C., which were the focal point of the attempts of the liberals to parade themselves as the friends

of the masses. These were the pre-arranged symbolic arrests, carefully set up with the police and the press, and designed to be all show and no substance. As we shall show, the BT finds something futile in the militant struggles at Berkeley campus and elsewhere, but aren't the publicity stunts of Congressman Hayes and the other liberals just wonderful?

The labor bureaucrats too are supposed to play a role

The same thing goes for the labor bureaucrats. The BT can criticize them or write this or that theoretical formulation against them. It can even go on and on about this or that crime of the bureaucrats. But it is all play-acting. For BT's strategy is that, as the masses rise, the labor bureaucrats will play an important role on the side of the workers.

Here is an example of how the BT thinks working class struggle takes place. The BT gave this example in a passage explaining their views of work in the trade unions today and what they mean when they say "the trade-union bureaucracy ... has within it contradictory elements."

"John L. Lewis was a bureaucrat who, for decades, broke strikes and purged reds and other militants. In the 1930s however, he broke with the entrenched craft unionists of the AFL and spear-headed the creation of the CIO -- the greatest breakthrough to date in American labor history. The fact that he did so largely to contain the labor rebellion which communists were intersecting doesn't change the fact that he gave enormous impetus to industrial unionism on this continent." ("Reply to [the Spartacist League's article] Cream Puffs", Bulletin of the External Tendency, No. 3, May 1984, pp. 33-4)

As a matter of fact, the BT's assessment of John L. Lewis is absolutely wrong. Despite all the BT's cursing of the CPUSA's "popular frontism", this is precisely the same assessment as the CPUSA itself and its notorious revisionist leader Earl Browder gave. As a matter of fact, the role of John L. Lewis and other CIO bureaucrats was to ensure that the great labor revolt of the 1930's did not give rise to class struggle unions but was channelled into tame, pro-capitalist unions. The working class is still suffering from this today. (See, for example, **The CPUSA's work in auto and the change in line of the mid-1930's** in the March 20, 1987 issue of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement**.)

But the important point is that this is BT's idea

of how struggle will take place today. With enough petitions, enough pressure, etc., some of the bureaucrats will jump in to champion working class interests. BT will, of course, say that the bureaucrats have their own reasons for doing this, but BT's idea is precisely to base itself on hoping for this event. BT's regards it as the height of wisdom to believe that the bureaucrats' own reasons will lead them to be of some use to the working class.

Thus, will the bureaucrats help out the anti-apartheid movement? BT writes that

"A larger active base of support in the local would have greatly increased pressure on both the local and the international bureaucrats to come out and officially sanction the boycott." ("11-Day Anti-Apartheid Struggle...", *Ibid.*, p. 23)

BT has the mechanical view that all it takes is a little more pressure to make the bureaucrats serve the interests of the working class. They suggest that "even a relatively small formation of a half-dozen or so class-conscious union members ... functioning as the left wing of the bloc which carried out the boycott" could have resulted in "the union" defeating the employers and the court injunction against the action. (*Ibid.*) "The bloc" which was to do this included the union bureaucrats and liberal politicians from the Congressional Black Caucus.

This is behind the BT's constant preoccupation with resolutions to the trade union bureaucrats. Naturally the proper use of resolutions in the trade unions can have value in encouraging discussion and action among the workers, provided such resolutions are simply an appendage to the real organizing of the working class. But BT, on the contrary, has real hopes that the bureaucrats will step in to save the day and spread the struggle.

Giving "military support" to revisionism

The BT not only looks to the reformists and revisionists in the U.S., but lays great stress on its defense of Russian revisionism as well. Oh yes, BT can go on and on against the crimes of revisionism. But the bottom line is the exact opposite: support for revisionism. For example, it defends the brutal military actions of the Russian revisionists in Afghanistan and it says it would defend Russian military action in Poland. It states:

"We side militarily with the Stalinists against both the capitalist-restorationists of Solidarnosc and the Islamic feudalists fighting to preserve female chattel slavery in Afghanistan." ("BL/BTT fusion document/For Trotskyism!", *1917*, No. 3, Spring 1917, p. 20)

Of course the BT insists that it gives no support to the revisionist bureaucracy. Never, never, never! But this is just typical Trotskyite hypocrisy. The BT even has codified such hypocrisy in various formulas. For example, it talks of offering "military, but not political, support" to various forces. For the BT, the use of fire and sword has nothing to do with politics, which only concerns phrasemongering and resolutions. The BT is very finicky about revisionism, until the talk turns to sticking a bayonet in the guts of Afghans and Poles. Marxist-Leninists may think that war and armed struggle are the continuation of politics by other, i.e. violent, means. But for the BT Trotskyites, guns and bayonets have nothing to do with politics and political support.

The BT regards these stands as among the crucial tests of real Trotskyism. It has an article entitled "Poland 1981: acid test for Trotskyists/Theses on Solidarnosc" in the third issue of *1917*. The BT is so eager to offer military support for the Russian army in Poland that it endorses the very thought of such action. It writes

"Had the USSR intervened (as was widely projected) in the fall of 1981, Trotskyists would have critically supported this for the same reason they critically supported the actions of the Polish Army in December of that year."

(From Point 8, p. 12)

And look at Afghanistan. The Afghani people are caught between a brutal Russian occupation and a savage CIA war which encompasses most of the resistance. Instead of demanding self-determination for the Afghani people, the BT jumps in to defend the occupation of Afghanistan by fire and sword.

Opposing party-building as "gradualism"

Although the BT talks a lot about building a "working class party", they have actually given up party-building in all but name. Their idea of building a party is uniting together factions from various reformist and revisionist groups. They are completely absorbed by speculations about the reformists and revisionists. They denounce the hard work of independent revolutionary organizing, the work of bringing forward revolutionary activists from among the masses, as "gradualism".

The BT replaces party-building by what they call "revolutionary regroupment". They state that "This perspective [revolutionary regroupment] is counterposed to the primitive, gradualist notion that a proletarian vanguard party can be created by simple linear recruitment of raw individuals. ..

"The regroupment strategy is predi-

cated on the fact that centrist and even reformist organizations are internally contradictory. ... Consequently, even thoroughly rotten pseudo-socialist formations periodically develop internal oppositions ... Political regroupment is the process of sorting out such contradictions by recomposing the preexisting formations ... and uniting the revolutionists in a single organization." ("Trotskyists Fuse!", 1917, #3, Spring 1917, p. 5)

The BT understands little about party-building other than the question of numbers. So it denounces the Leninist conception of party-building as "simple linear recruitment". Instead it puts its hope in big splits from the reformists and "pseudo-socialist formations". Naturally, here too its strategy is not aimed at protracted work from below, work with the individual activists under the influence of the reformists; presumably that too would be "simple linear recruitment". No, it hopes for ready-made "internal oppositions".

This, by the way, is what is behind the tactics it follows in the Contragate Action Committee of having the CAC leadership woo the leadership of the big reformist groups. It doesn't concentrate on developing a movement of the activists at the base. It is under the "gravitational attraction" of the reformist leaderships and the size and connections of the reformist groups.

Of course, should a revolutionary internal opposition develop in a reformist organization, this would be a good thing. But BT banks everything on this. Furthermore, if the true revolutionary despises the "gradualism" of having faith in the strength of independent revolutionary organization, the "gradualism" of building its ties among the masses and of carrying out actions, then such "revolutionaries" would be despised as useless-- and justly so -- by any sincere and honest elements that arise in a reformist organization or anywhere else.

BT versus the movement

Instead of fighting reformism in the mass struggle, the BT banks on the labor bureaucrats, the reformists, and the liberals. How then is the BT to look leftist? One of its methods is by attacking the movement itself.

Consider the movement against apartheid at the Berkeley campus. The BT put out a leaflet entitled "**Not the movement' but a revolutionary party!**" Instead of showing how reformism manifests itself in the movement and how to rally the activists against it, the BT denounced the whole movement as tainted and wrongheaded. And it

didn't stop at denouncing the anti-apartheid movement, but directed its rhetoric against mass movements in general. The leaflet stated that:

"Historically, movements are short-lived. Movements, any movement, recruiting to a single issue is by definition reformist, seeking piece-meal to change this or that aspect of society."

What marvelous revolutionaries the BT are! When it comes to dealing with the real liberals and reformists, such as the Black Congressional Caucus, it is pleased that they took part in the "mink-coat" demonstrations. But when it comes to the activist students who fight with determination and militancy, the students who risked getting kicked and beaten and slandered and expelled and imprisoned, then BT discovers that the movement as a whole is "reformist" by its very nature.

BT's disgraceful attitude to struggle and self-sacrifice

And look at the BT's attitude to the "aggressive, dramatic demonstrations" and "self-sacrificing and physically courageous individual militants in direct confrontation with armed cops". Oh yes, BT's leaflet says, this is "admirable", but really "except for satisfying the good feeling' that one gets having done something' this course is ultimately a dead end..."

(Emphasis as in the original)

It is disgraceful to hear self-proclaimed revolutionaries talk this way. This is similar to the language in which Reaganite college administrators mock the activist students. It chalks up the movement to the psychological needs of the protesters.

This denigration of struggle is not an accident. Another leaflet by the BT, this time on the campus anti-militarist struggle, put it this way:

"Militant actions, without a working class base, ... while often commendable and supportable are not enough by themselves. Too, frequently the brutal state apparatus simply crushes them and lives for another day. Participants in these movements for militant mass action are left beaten, arrested and sometimes jailed with no means of defense, and the movement is dispersed." ("R.O.T.C. OFF CAMPUS! SMASH U.S. IMPERIALISM!", March 11, 1987)

The BT apparently believes that dedication, courage and self-sacrifice are not needed for the revolution. Why, the leaflet goes on to add, all it takes is a "working class base", by which they presumably mean a few resolutions demanding that the trade union bureaucrats endorse an action, and

presumably there need be no worry about being beaten, arrested and jailed. Presumably the "brutal state apparatus" won't dare "live for another day".

And wait a moment. Take the strike struggle, a struggle which certainly has a "working class base". Don't the strikers face beatings and arrests and blacklists and extreme hardship? And take revolution itself. Is proletarian revolution possible without the spirit of courage and self-sacrifice gripping the masses? It is one thing to discuss what type of struggle should be waged at any moment. It is another to promise, as BT essentially does in these leaflets, that the struggle can be waged without militancy and courage. This is indeed the new type of revolution, the Trotskyist revolution, revolution the easy way, revolution on the cheap, made by phrases, without the need to confront the class enemy and suffer beatings, setbacks, or persecution of any type.

And the leaflet has the gall to counterpose to struggle and self-sacrifice the need for "a serious professional political combat party". Ah, the glorious Trotskyist "combat party" -- a "combat party" that is scared of the first sign of political combat.

And the more you look at the BT leaflets on the struggle at Berkeley, the worse they look. The anti-apartheid movement at Berkeley hadn't made the mistake of encouraging useless sacrifices. It had simply risen up against the reformist kowtowing to the powers-that-be. Its militancy and daring had been one of its strong points. By recoiling against the militancy of the anti-apartheid movement, the BT had joined its "revolutionary" phrases with the propaganda against the activists by the most soldout and reformist elements.

BT denounces the movement for not bringing immediate revolution

BT naturally paints up its denunciation of the movement in revolutionary colors. Why, the problem is that the anti-apartheid movement can't bring revolution. The BT thinks it is very profound to pontificate that

"The basically middle-class student movement cannot stop apartheid in South Africa, and it cannot overthrow capitalism here, because it has no power to do so." (Not the movement' but a revolutionary party!)

As a matter of fact, it is not a defect in the anti-apartheid movement that prevents it from overthrowing white-minority rule in South Africa. Only the revolution of the oppressed in South Africa can accomplish that. But the solidarity around the world can provide important support for the revolutionary masses of South Africa.

Nor is it a defect in the anti-apartheid struggle on campus that prevents it from overthrowing capitalism. Only a socialist revolution can overthrow capitalism. But there will be no socialist revolution if all the partial struggles, all the various currents of revolt and indignation by the masses, are given up because none of them by themselves can overthrow capitalism.

No single action by itself, no strike, no demonstration, no profound movement of the working masses, will bring down capitalism. But if the working class and the progressive activists sit on their hands waiting for the great days of revolution, they will never see them.

The BT is incapable of rallying the activists and masses against the reformist sabotage of the anti-apartheid movement, or student movement, or movement against intervention in Central America. So it replaces this with criticizing the mass struggles for not immediately bringing revolution. This is a sign of the BT's inability to deal with any serious question of mass struggle or of revolutionary strategy and tactics.

Does the class struggle create illusions in the capitalists?

But the BT has yet another charge against the anti-apartheid movement. It denounces the struggle for divestment. After all, it says,

"Those who attempt to pressure the banks, the corporations and the universities to divest their South African holdings appeal to the morality' of an immoral social stratum--the big capitalists--which enriches itself from the blood-money sweated out of the victims of apartheid."

"...The divestment demand reinforces the notion that those who seek to end apartheid can find friends in the corporate boardrooms and among Botha's imperialist allies." ("Smash Apartheid! Workers to Power!" 1917, No. 1, Winter, 1986, pp. 8, 8-9)

Now it is true that the liberals and reformists promote the idea of the morality of the capitalists. But BT instead denounces the divestment demand in itself as automatically liberal and reformist. This is typical of BT's method of denouncing the movement as a whole.

And BT's logic is simply wrong. Why should the demand that the corporations and the universities divest necessarily imply belief in the morality of the capitalists? Why can't the struggle for divestment be used to expose the big capitalists and their diehard efforts to maintain connections with the South African racists? Doesn't

it depend on the trial of strength between reformism and class struggle whether illusions are created?

After all, BT's argument that demands on the corporations create illusions in the morality of the capitalists could be used to denounce every single demand of the working masses:

Higher wages and better working conditions? But are the big capitalists concerned for the welfare of the workers?

Better schools? But is the capitalist government concerned with enlightening the workers or stupefying them?

Fight against the U.S. dirty war against Nicaragua? But is the U.S. government and the Pentagon concerned for the self-determination of the Nicaraguan people and will they give up their counterrevolutionary drive for world hegemony?

Here is an example of how arbitrary and illogical BT's stand is:

"Neither do we seek to pressure the imperialists to act morally' by divesting nor by imposing sanctions on South Africa. ... Our answer is to mobilize the power of international labor in effective class-struggle solidarity actions with South Africa's black workers." ("For Trotskyism!" 1917, no. 3, Spring 1987, p. 19)

So BT says it supports such things as boycotts of South African cargo. But such a boycott aims to force the shipping companies and dock authorities to refuse South African cargo. Are such big capitalists any more moral than the others? If BT wants to say something nice about a struggle, it calls it an "effective solidarity action". But if BT dislikes it, it is an attempt to make the imperialists act morally.

BT's liquidationism follows from its Trotskyism

BT's liquidationism is not an accident. It is based on its loyalty to Trotskyism. BT quotes Trotsky's writings and studies Trotskyite texts. Its views are not some arbitrary concoction, but are typical Trotskyism. BT is one variety of the Trotskyite trend that we characterized in the resolution "Against Trotskyism" of the Second Congress of our Party. (See the Jan. 1, 1984 issue of the **Workers' Advocate**, pp. 84-6.)

For example, in that resolution we pointed out that Trotskyism makes a mockery of the revolutionary teachings on the struggle for partial demands:

"On the one hand, Trotsky made use of radical-sounding phrases to belittle the importance to the revolutionary movement of the workers' struggles for par-

tial demands and to denounce these struggles as alleged manifestations of reformism. On the other hand, Trotsky took up all the reformist utopias advocated by the social-democrats for patching up capitalism. He painted up these run-of-the-mill reformist schemes as being allegedly incompatible with capitalist rule..."

And BT has this problem as well. We have seen it above with respect to the student movement, where the issue of partial demands also arises. BT denounces the student movement. Instead it demands a different struggle. Out of the blue, in an utterly non-serious fashion, it puts forward the utopia that

"On the campuses we must build a workers, student and faculty alliance to expose and oppose education' under a capitalist system. This alliance **would take control of the universities and run them in the interest of all working and oppressed people.**" ("R.O.T.C. off campus...", emphasis added).

Really? Furthermore, BT both wants to "oppose education' under a capitalist system" and to run the universities under capitalism. Or are we to believe that this alliance would bring about socialism by taking over the universities?

BT shares reformist errors with the Seventh World Congress of the C.I.

BT's article on our Party claims to deal with our analysis of the line of the world communist movement in the 1930's. But strangely enough, it does its best to leave aside the question of the Seventh World Congress of the C.I. of 1935. Yet this was the congress that changed the line of the communist movement. This was the congress that abandoned Leninist united front tactics. This is the congress that is probably most widely discussed today because the revisionists and reformists use it to justify spitting on Leninism and kowtowing to the social-democrats, the Democratic Party liberals, and the trade union bureaucrats.

Our Party has taken up the task of analyzing the views put forward by the Seventh Congress. These views concern not just historical controversies, but vital issues that come up in organizing today. And we have brought to the fore those aspects of the Seventh Congress that touch on the revolutionary controversies of today.

But the BT wants to stay as far away from our analysis of the Seventh Congress as a vampire from a cross. They denounce our concern with the Seventh Congress. Why, it allegedly had only "symbolic importance", the real issue was the in-

ternational maneuvering between the Soviet Union and the imperialist countries, and another real issue was the maneuvering between the various factions in the Soviet leadership, and anyhow "correct and incorrect ideas do not fall from the sky".

We, on the contrary, believe that the ideas that guide the working class movement are of vital importance. As Lenin said "Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." (**What Is To Be Done?**, Ch. I, Sec. D) And irrespective of what other issues arise in the study of the communist movement, it is clear that united front tactics is one of the basic issues of communist tactics and strategy.

We think BT has a good reason to avoid looking at the Seventh Congress. Many of BT's most cherished bits of wisdom and ways of arguing turn out to be essentially the same as those used by the Seventh World Congress to defend reformist errors. No matter how much BT cries about "popular frontism", it can't hide the reformist essence of its politics. It turns out that Trotskyism, far from being an alternative to the Seventh Congress, duplicates various of its worst errors.

The Seventh Congress abandoned the Leninist struggle against social-democracy and reformism. Closing its eyes to the bitter experience of what the social-democrats and reformists were really doing in the 30's, the Seventh Congress held that social-democracy and reformism would fight fascism. As we shall see, this is one of the fundamental cornerstones of BT's views as well.

The Seventh Congress denigrated the independent revolutionary work of the communists as leftism and sectarianism. As we have seen, the BT does also. It denounces Leninist party-building as "gradualism", and one of the cornerstones of its article on us is denouncing independent communist work as alleged "Third Period" sectarianism.

The Seventh Congress abandoned the emphasis on the building up of proletarian unity from below and subordinated everything to the united front from above. The BT has the same tendency. It banks on the winning over of large formations of reformists and revisionists; it theorizes that the trade union bureaucrats and reformists will be forced by circumstance to do something in the interests of the workers; it denigrates the importance of the work from below as "gradualism"; and it judges mass actions and political events by whether they attract the reformist leaderships.

(Naturally the BT, like other Trotskyites, does have some differences with the Seventh Congress. While it agrees with the Seventh Congress in parodying the history of the so-called "Third Period", it presents things in an even more distorted form -- for the purpose of Trotskyist factionalism, it has to denounce everything done by

the world communist movement after Trotsky was discredited. BT also has various typical anti-Leninist theories beloved by Trotskyites, such as utter confusion on partial demands, the denunciation of bourgeois-democratic revolutions, difficulty in dealing with the national liberation movement, etc. On these issues, the Trotskyites differed both with the revolutionary views of the C.I. before the Seventh Congress and the mistaken views of the C.I. afterwards. In our article "Against the Trotskyite Critique of the Seventh Congress" in the May 1, 1985 issue of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement** we presented a general outline of the overall relation of Trotskyism to the Seventh Congress.)

BT prettifies the social-democrats as anti-fascists

Let's take a closer look at one of the key points of agreement between BT and the Seventh Congress: the issue of how to fight fascism.

The BT has its prescription for how to fight fascism. To stop Hitlerite fascism, in BT's ideas, all it would have taken is making a deal with the social-democrats. This would mean, more generally, that the anti-fascist fight simply requires making a deal with the biggest reformist trend in one's own country.

The BT spends some time in its article elaborating on this. It leaps and dances about the alleged crimes of the German communists. They are said to have frivolously thrown away this golden key to the anti-fascist struggle. The BT is discreetly silent on how the social-democrats treated the communist united front proposals of 1932 and 1933.

This is the same analysis given by the Seventh Congress. There is no basic difference. True, BT tries to paint the German communists even blacker than the Seventh Congress did and is even less serious in analyzing the German social-democrats. But both BT and the Seventh Congress criticize the German social-democrats (BT hardly spends any time on this in their article) and then suggest that the social-democrats will fight fascism anyway.

BT quotes Trotsky to prove that the social-democrats will be forced by circumstances to fight fascism. This bit of Trotskyite wisdom basically boils down to that, since the fascists were going to persecute the social-democrats, the social-democrats were going to have to fight.

How German social-democracy acted in the face of the Hitler takeover

The problem is that Trotsky's mechanical reasoning had nothing to do with the actual his-

tory of German social-democracy. The German social-democratic leaders had their own idea of how to deal with the fascist threat. As social-democrats, they wished to avoid the revolutionary class struggle at all costs. Being in an alliance with the bourgeoisie, they simply sought to have Hitler brought into the same type of coalition politics as they were in.

Take the major social-democratic leader Severing, for example. In mid-1932, half a year before Hitler's takeover, he stated that

"The Social-Democratic Party, no less than the Catholic Party, is strongly inclined to see Herr Hitler's Nazis share the Government responsibility." (Cited in Dutt's Fascism and Social Revolution, p. 149)

His plan was that Hitler would be tamed by including him in a broader bourgeois coalition.

And when Hitler came to power on Jan. 30, 1933, the social-democratic leaders had another brilliant idea. They didn't want to wage a fight side-by-side with the communists. That might have led to revolution. So they consoled themselves that, since Hitler had come to power "constitutionally", he would have to rule constitutionally. So, no sweat, just wait Hitler out.

As things turned ugly, the social-democratic leaders still refused to turn to struggle. Consider Leipart, head of the German social-democratic trade unions. According to BT's reasoning, Leipart would have to turn to struggle, because the existence of Leipart's unions was threatened by the fascist regime. But Leipart preferred to beg. Just prior to the dissolution of these unions, Leipart wrote to Hitler, stating that

"The social tasks facing the trade unions must be carried out, no matter what the government regime may be ... they are prepared to collaborate with the employer's organizations ... recognize government control ... They offer help to the [Nazi] government and parliament." (Cited in 1933 in Fritz Heckert's article "Why Hitler in Germany?" in the C.I. Journal, vol. 10, #10.)

And what about Wels, political leader of the German social-democrats? According to BT's reasoning, he too would have to fight. But well after the Hitler terror had begun, and just before the dissolution of the Social-Democratic Party, Wels spoke in the German parliament, or Reichstag, stating

"The social-democrats are those who helped to promote Hitler to his present position. ... The social-democrats fully subscribe to the program of foreign policy outlined by Hitler in his declara-

tions." (Ibid.)

Wels also resigned from the executive of the social-democratic Second International in protest against "atrocious stories" against Hitler. One can see that the failure of the German social-democrats to agree to a united front with the communists was not due to being insulted by the communists. Wels, and that section of the German social-democratic leadership who thought like him, were insulted even by the statements of their own international organization.

Not all social-democrats had the same views as Wels. After the German social-democrats were forced underground, other leaders came to the fore who advocated a reformist sort of opposition to fascism; this too obstructed the development of a vigorous anti-fascist fight, but it wasn't the same as Wels' outright capitulation to fascism. And the gulf between the social-democratic leaders and the rank-and-file became wider than ever. But the presence of Wels, Leipart, Severing and others in leading positions shows why the German social-democrats did not, at the crucial moment, agree to a united front strike or other struggle against Hitler.

Similar accounts can be given concerning the role of the Italian social-democratic leadership during Mussolini's rise to power (and their infamous "Conciliation Pact" with him), or the role of the French social-democratic leadership after the fall of France to the Nazis in World War II (where many actually joined the fascist Vichy government). We have discussed this history elsewhere, and shown why it took place and what lessons it teaches about reformism. The point here is that BT's Trotskyism forces them to close their eyes to the actual history of the working class movement. BT abandons the actual class struggle in favor of liberal dreams about the reformists, the labor bureaucrats, the revisionists, etc. taking up struggle on behalf of the working class.

BT's Trotskyite hypocrisy concerning "popular frontism"

But BT would have one believe that it is immune to the errors of the Seventh Congress. All one has to do is denounce "popular frontism" over and over.

The Trotskyite fetish on the term "popular front" is absurd. It is another example of their replacing serious issues with empty phrases. The term "popular front" can be, and has been, used to mean a number of things at different times. The Seventh Congress, using a somewhat different terminology than other C.I. congresses, called the work to unite the working class "united front" work, and the work to unite with non-proletarian

toilers "popular front" work. It is indeed important for the working class to unite all the toilers around it; this had been stressed at other C.I. congress; and perhaps there might be some reason for using this particular terminology. The problem was not the term "popular front" but that the Seventh Congress then proceeded to pervert the meaning of "united front" to mean deals at the top with the social-democrats and the meaning of "popular front" to mean deals at the top with the bourgeois liberals as well.

But the BT is utterly hypocritical about this. It beats its breast hypocritically that "popular frontism" is "enter(ing) into coalitions with their own bourgeoisies to counter the danger of fascism." However, BT itself allows such coalitions under the term "united front". It states that

"It is possible to enter into united-front agreements with petty-bourgeois or bourgeois formations where there is an episodic agreement on a particular issue and where it is in the interests of the working class to do so ..." (1917, No. 3, Spring 1987, p. 18, underlining added)

So what BT gives with one hand, it takes back with the other.

Depending on the country and the situation, there are workers and other toilers under the influence of liberalism as well as reformism. This gives rise to the need for special tactics, including united front tactics, to help lead these masses into struggle and to break their illusions in the liberals and other bourgeois politicians.

But BT regards united front tactics as based on the idea that the social-democratic leaders, reformists, etc. will fight for various working class interests. Hence when they say that the "petty-bourgeois or bourgeois formations" are in the united front, it means that they intend to prettify them as they prettify the social-democrats, labor bureaucrats, etc.

Thus BT claimed that various liberal politicians from the Congressional Black Caucus were part of "the united front" at the boycott of South African cargo of 1985. ("11-Day Anti-Apartheid Struggle on San Francisco Docks", Bulletin of the External Tendency of the IST, No. 4, May, 1985, p. 22) We quoted above a passage from this article where they discuss the role of these liberals. BT was lauding the alleged good things the liberals were doing for the struggle, rather than being concerned with separating the masses from such "bourgeois formations".

It is clear that all BT's fuss about "popular frontism" is worthless. It pretends with great self-righteousness that it is even purer than Leninism in its stand towards the bourgeoisie. In fact, it is only unprincipled and hypocritical.

More Trotskyite hypocrisy on "popular frontism"

Indeed, while shouting about "popular frontism", the BT basically accepts the Seventh Congress' distortion of united front tactics with respect to the social-democrats. BT, as we have seen, banks on alliances with the reformists and social-democrats. But, in turn, these labor bureaucrats, social-democrats, and reformists are in alliance with the bourgeoisie. One cannot stay out of the sphere of bourgeois politics while pursuing the reformists and labor bureaucrats for dear life. A coalition with the bourgeoisie does not have to be a formal document, with whereas's and wherefore's and plenty of signatures.

BT likes to reduce the denunciation of the Seventh Congress to opposing "popular frontism" with the bourgeoisie. But the Seventh Congress laid its stress on deals with the social-democrats. It invented theories to promote what good things the social-democrats could be expected to do. But with respect to the liberals and bourgeois parties, it pretended that it wanted to mobilize the working masses under such influence "despite their bourgeois leadership". (See the discussion of Dimitrov's Report and its attitude to the liberals in the May 1, 1985 issue of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement**, p. 26)

So when BT prettifies the social-democrats and labor bureaucrats while pretending that it opposes class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, it is actually duplicating rhetoric from the Seventh Congress. It turns out to be quite convenient for the BT to denigrate the importance of looking at the Seventh Congress. A serious comparison of the analysis of the Seventh Congress and the views of the BT shows that the Trotskyist rhetoric is utterly corrupt and useless.

BT's directs its ire at independent communist work

Another feature of BT's agreement with the mistakes of the Seventh Congress is opposition to independent communist work. One of the key themes of BT's article is that "the MLP's leftism is partial, confused and contradictory" because we stand for such painstaking revolutionary work. And to refute us, instead of dealing with our views and stands, the BT launches an attack on the 6th Congress of the C.I. and subsequent work of the CI, which it calls "Third Period policies".

For example, the BT condemns all trade union work of the CPUSA that was outside the reformist unions. This is not based on any real examination of this work. The BT does not make the pretence of analyzing each particular red union, but as a matter of principle denounces all of them as dual-

unionism. BT gets out on its high horse and declares, grandiloquently, that

"It got the reds out of the unions and thereby abandoned the masses of workers to the reactionary business unionists of the American Federation of Labor."

(1917, no. 3, p. 30)

So, while BT makes a bow to the reactionary nature of the AFL leadership, it also denounces any work that goes beyond the scope of the AFL unions. The CPUSA, at that time a revolutionary party, did work in the AFL, but in this period it did not restrict its work to the AFL. It paid attention to organizing those industries (including key sections of the industrial workers) who the AFL was ignoring and leaving unorganized. It also organized the activists who had been expelled en masse from the AFL unions.

Contrary to the BT, which has a way of ending up denouncing the activists and communists for the crimes of the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucrats, the CPUSA did not abandon the masses of workers in the AFL. But large numbers of workers had been expelled from the AFL unions when progressive slates and resolutions won majorities in their locals. The BT, with its Trotskyite blinders, presents the impression that things will simply get better and better in the pro-capitalist unions as left-wing resolutions get more and more votes. It can't take serious account of the fact that the AFL bureaucrats often expelled whole locals at one stroke when left-wing slates won election.

As a matter of fact, the CPUSA's work during this period was closely linked to the masses. It laid the basis for the later upsurge among the industrial workers in the mid-1930s. We have examined one example of this in the article "The CPUSA's work in auto and the change in line of the mid-1930's" in the March 20, 1987 issue of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement**.

BT has to close its eyes to the actual history of the American working class movement. It has

to cast mud at the heroic work of the communists who, among other things, laid the basis for the unionization of the industrial workers. (They find it so much more convenient to give all the credit to the labor bureaucrat John L. Lewis.) All this is necessary for them to renounce independent communist work and hold up the reformist and liquidationist dogmas of Trotskyism.

Our Party has made a careful assessment of the period between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses. We believe that there is much that is of value. We also think that there are certain weaknesses, which we have outlined in our article "Between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses" (See the July 15, 1986 issue of the **Workers' Advocate Supplement**.) The BT, on the contrary, just raves at this period. Just as the Seventh Congress did, the BT makes the period between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses into the whipping boy, maligns the struggle of the German Communist Party, etc. BT does this to eliminate faith in the revolutionary capacity of the working class, faith in independent communist work. True dedication to revolution is to be replaced by faith that the labor bureaucrats and reformists will someday do something good for the workers.

The BT makes the pretense that it upholds the first four congresses of the CI, but not the sixth congress. But, in fact, the Sixth Congress was in line with the earlier congresses of the CI. They all went against BT's liquidationist schemes. In 1983 we made a particularly detailed study of the lessons of the Third Congress on united front tactics. (This is contained in the series of articles in the **Workers' Advocate** entitled "United front tactics are an essential tool of the proletarian party".) What it taught about the nature of social-democracy, the role of independent communist work as the basis of united front tactics, the building up of communist organization, etc. refute BT's subservience to the reformists and labor bureaucrats. <>