

STRIKE!

A strike is on all shipyard workers' minds. The contract is about to run out and the proposals made by the companies are ridiculous. This brings to mind several questions: WHY DO STRIKES TAKE PLACE? HOW DO THEY SERVE THE WORKING CLASS? WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF STRIKES?

Strikes take place in capitalist society because of the relationship of the working class to the means of production -- the factories, shipyards, mines, etc. Under capitalism, workers own nothing but their labor power which they must sell in order to survive, while the capitalist class sits back and lives off the surplus value (profits) created by the labor of workers. During times of economic crises, such as now, the number and militancy of strikes increases, because the capitalists are trying to shift the effects of the crisis, tightening up on the workers to let them shoulder the brunt of the burden.

The shipyards are no different than any other major industry at contract time. The companies (AAA, Bethlehem, Service, West Winds, etc) are taking a hard line, saying they're not going to give the workers anything. In fact, they actually plan to take benefits away (cut in overtime pay, elimination of seniority rights and cost-of-living allowance). These tactics are used by the companies to protect their profits, to intimidate, divide and confuse the workers. HOW CAN THE COMPANIES DO THIS?

First, look at the role of the union bureaucrats! Campbell in the Boilmakers, Vegas of the Machinists, Evankovich of the Laborers, and all the rest are no longer in the ranks of the working class. They have been bribed and bought off by the companies for years, and in return they serve their company masters. It's clear by the way these misleaders respond to the rank and file that they are not serving us. Look at their tactics: intimidation, division, and confusion! They act in the same way as the companies. The bureaucrats, like the companies, know the power of the workers. That is why they try to eliminate rank and file participation in order to protect their own positions and to help the companies. These bureaucrats, these labor traitors, must be driven from office and replaced by class-conscious workers who will not only lead the immediate struggles against the companies for better conditions under capitalism, but also will fight to end the wage-slavery of capitalism altogether!

Second, the companies drive the workers down with the help of the capitalist state, or government. The laws, the courts, the police, etc. are no more than servants working for the rich owners. The capitalists have the right to exploit workers, and they are protected by their state apparatus. The workers, on the other hand, have no such "legal" tools to help them struggle for better working conditions and higher wages. The working class has only the right to withhold its labor, to strike! And when workers do strike, the state again operates for the capitalists to defeat the workers, using such methods as police violence and police protection of scabs (Rylock strikers in Union City have been facing brutal police attacks while trying to stop scab workers from entering the plant), court injunctions limiting picket line activities, court orders forcing strikers back to work (such as in

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miners' wildcat in the fall of '76, when federal courts ordered miners back to work, which the miners refused to do), and on and on.

SHIPYARD WORKERS: despite all these obstacles, let us stand firm and steadfast, remembering all along that we can improve our conditions only by our united efforts. Strikes are a weapon in the hands of the working class, but they are really only battles in a longer war for our emancipation. We must use strikes to educate and raise the consciousness of the workers. We must use them to show the need to build a genuine communist party which will lead these fights and the ultimate fight to end capitalism. The workers will never be free from exploitation and oppression until the capitalist system is destroyed!

NO CONTRACT, NO WORK!
REJECT ALL CUTBACKS!
BREAK THE CHAINS OF WAGE-SLAVERY!

LESSONS OF THE RYLOCK STRIKE

You are a worker in a small plant. Your employer tries to eliminate seniority and cut your wages in half. You go on strike, he hires scabs. Daily they increase in number. They attack you with guns, with their cars, and with stones. The police are no better: they use tear gas, clubs and arrests. Your picket line holds strong, and you turn to your union for support. And though you and every rank and file worker at the meeting know that the only way you can stop the scabs is by a massive show of support, your union 'leaders' won't help organize this and instead tell your union brothers and sisters from other factories in the area not to join you.

Does this sound farfetched? This is exactly what's happening in the East Bay town of Union City. Over 80 workers, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), have been on strike since April 1 at the Rylock Company, a plant which manufactures aluminum doors and windows. Shortly before the contract between the IAM and the California Metal Trades Association (CMTA) expired on March 31, Rylock dropped out of the CMTA so it wouldn't have to abide by a new contract. The bosses wanted to eliminate seniority and start new workers out at half the existing wages. Obviously, without seniority and with this new wage category for 'trainees', the Rylock workers could soon expect their walking papers. The workers rejected the proposal, and have since been embroiled in a militant strike against a varied and often violent enemy. In the process, they've learned first hand lessons on some fundamental questions: the role of the state, the divisions in the working class, and the role of the union bureaucrats.

Before the strike, many of the Rylock workers held the illusion that the police, the courts, and other forms of the state apparatus (the military, the national guard, the legislatures, etc.) were 'neutral' or 'above classes', but very few believe this now. Both the courts and the police have shown themselves to be completely on the side of the capitalists, the owners and bosses at Rylock. The courts stepped into the fray by handing out 'temporary' injunctions limiting the number of pickets at the gates. The police have made mass arrests of the strikers, clubbed them from behind, and tear-gassed them, even though it's the scabs who've actually fired on the pickets and run them down with cars.

Though the national division in the working class is nothing new to workers in the US, the Rylock workers have seen concretely how the capitalists use these divisions for their own benefit. Systematic discrimination by management meant that not a single Black worker worked at Rylock before the strike, yet now the large majority of scabs

are Black, not to mention all the security guards hired for the strike, save one. Most of the strikers see this ploy for what it is, and have correctly urged the multi-national unity of all workers against the capitalist class.

The workers looked to their union for support and leadership, but what they got instead was betrayal. At their April union meeting, the officials came out against a mass demonstration. They told the membership there'd be many arrests, that the union couldn't afford to bail everybody out, etc. "It's alright if a few of you go down", one said, "but don't go down by the truckload." When workers in other IAM locals around the Bay raised the Rylock demonstrations, some bureaucrats flat out said, "Don't go down there, the problem we have now is with outsiders".

The Rylock strikers have learned all these lessons, but they've probably missed the bigger ones, through no fault of their own. Not only do they have to see concretely that the police side with the bosses, that the capitalists pit worker against worker, and that the union misleaders have sold out, but they've got to see why. Workers don't spontaneously grasp that the state is an instrument of class rule (in a capitalist society, the capitalists use it to oppress the workers; in a socialist society the workers use it to suppress the overthrown bourgeoisie), that the division of the working class is inherent and essential to capitalism, or that the reason the bureaucrats sell us out is because they are bribed -- literally, bought off -- from the till of superprofits which US imperialism extracts from nations round the world. These lessons can only be provided by the introduction and systematic study of Marxism-Leninism, the science of revolution, and its application in practice. Yet even a scientific grasp of these particular questions is not enough. The US working class still lacks a communist party, and until it has one, its struggles are bound to be handcuffed. A recent demonstration at Rylock hammered home this point. Many groups who call themselves communists were there (the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the Communist Labor Party (CLP), the League for Proletarian Socialism, etc.) Yet these 'communists' provided no leadership. They sang songs and led cheers; in fact, along with a smooth talking union hack, they coopted the workers' leadership. Cheerleading and songs are fine, but what the strikers must have is a communist analysis of their situation, and this was not provided. While smaller communist organizations can and do provide leadership to given strikes, their ability to do so is very limited. Only a party can fuse these individual struggles into a great struggle: the overthrow of the capitalist class. This is the lesson of the Rylock strike!

(Join the picket line. Rylock is at 1285 Atlantic Avenue, off Central, off Whipple Road in Union City.)

SOUTHERN AFRICA-- FOCUS OF STRUGGLE

The thesis that 'revolution is the main trend in the world today' is strikingly apparent in the countries of southern Africa, (especially Angola, Mozambique, Azania, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zaire), where centuries of colonial and imperialist domination are giving way to the revolutionary movement of the African masses. But in the face of this revolutionary onslaught, the imperialist and social-imperialist pirates of the world are concocting all sorts of schemes in a desperate attempt to preserve and extend their grip on southern Africa. The situation between the US and the USSR, the two biggest bandits, is one of both collusion and contention, and is extremely complex, raising a number of questions that communists must examine in the interests of proletarian internationalism.

In its economic and political essence, US-Soviet contention is a struggle for the

redivision of the area. In particular, it is first a struggle for access to strategic raw materials. The US is heavily dependent on southern Africa for strategic non-fuel minerals like chromium, the platinum metals, cobalt, vanadium, and to a lesser extent manganese, columbium and copper. The USSR, on the other hand, is self-sufficient in most minerals. But Western Europe and Japan rely on the southern African countries for a large percentage of most of their mineral needs! Thus, access to the raw materials of the region means not only tremendous superprofits torn from the labor of African workers, but potential control over the economies of Western Europe and Japan. This is what the USSR is after, and what the US is desperate to hold on to!

Second, related to this is the struggle for control over trade routes. About 80% of western Europe's oil supplies and 70% of the strategic raw materials needed by the NATO countries pass by the southern Cape route (most supertankers are too large for the Suez Canal). The US and NATO are rapidly losing access to key ports and bases along the Cape route, as Luanda (Angola) and Maputo (Mozambique) have been closed to them. The struggle to control trade routes is reflected in the growing presence of the Soviet Navy around the coast of Africa.

What forms is the struggle for the redivision of southern Africa taking? The US, overall, has been forced by objective conditions to adopt a more 'liberal' posture. Particularly since the Portuguese coup d'etat in April, 1974, which led to the liberation of Portugal's African colonies, the US has had to go to greater lengths to try and conceal its savage history of super-exploitation and support for the murderous apartheid regimes of Smith and Vorster. The US is clearly on the defensive as it tries to preserve and extend its control, and force a neo-colonial 'solution' on southern African countries. Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy', and now the 'outspokenness' of Carter's Ambassador Andrew Young in his recent jaunt through Africa -- are desperate moves meant to try and hide the utter degeneracy of US imperialism while wooing support from 'moderate leaders' and fascist sympathizers for a 'peaceful' (read: US-controlled) 'solution' to the southern African crisis.

The USSR, once the beloved first land of socialism, has a number of points in its favor, and these are prominent in its overall strategy to carve up Africa and take the lion's share. By posing as a socialist country giving 'aid' to the national liberation movements, the USSR seeks to develop neo-colonial relations with several strategic southern African countries (focusing on Angola and Mozambique at present), which will then give them a lever over the economies of land-locked countries like Zambia and Zaire, who have no other routes for their exports to the sea. The USSR's penetration in southern Africa is more political than economic at this point, and takes the form of lavishing military aid and ideological support on hand-picked liberation forces or factions (labeling all others 'reactionary'), and then creating dependence among them for Soviet weapons and Cuban troops. In 1976, for example, the USSR hosted visits by Sam Nujoma (South West African Peoples' Organization/SWAPO, Namibia), Secretary-General Nzo (African National Congress, Azania) and Samora Machel (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique/FRELIMO, Mozambique's head of state).

Let's look at some recent examples of superpower struggle in southern Africa.

1) ANGOLA -- The most open recent challenge to US domination in southern Africa came with the Soviet Union's incitement of civil war in Angola in 1975. The USSR had chosen the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) as their favored liberation force in the 1960s, but actual material support had fluctuated until it became clear in 1975 that conditions demanded an all-out push. The Soviets 'tested their wings' and in a despicable show of their revisionist brand of 'proletarian internationalism', they sent in Cuban puppet soldiers to prop up one section of the Angolan forces. They put into practice their revisionist theory that weapons decide everything (as opposed to the need for revolutionary self-reliance of the masses), and sent complicated Soviet military equipment. The US attempt to counteract this Soviet experiment with military aid funneled through Zaire was bound to fail, especially when South African troops invaded

Angola and set off an international cry of outrage.

At the same time, it is important to note the aspect of temporary collusion between the US and USSR over Angola. Many ignore the fact that both countries wanted to avoid expansion of the Angolan war into a revolutionary people's war -- that would throw them both out! So in January, 1976, some very important meetings were held between Kissinger and Soviet officials to work out a compromise aimed at preventing just that. The US agreed to stop aid; withdraw South African troops, and tacitly accept an MPLA government in Angola. (This was soon evident when US allies flocked to recognize the MPLA.) In return, US investments in Angola, especially Gulf Oil, were to receive protection. What is this if not collusion of the worst sort -- two bandits agreeing to share the loot, all at the expense of the masses of Angolan people! The USSR clearly got the better end of the deal; they have since signed a treaty of mutual cooperation and defense, Angola is the first African country to join COMECON (Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) and sells coffee to the USSR at below the world price. Cuban troops fronting for social-imperialism are firmly rooted in all sectors of society, and Angola is being used as a base area for Soviet aggression in Southern Africa.

2) MOZAMBIQUE -- This former Portuguese colony is, like Angola, strategically situated; on the eastern coast of Africa, it is in a position to exercise major influence over land-locked countries. The USSR's persistent efforts to woo FRELIMO President Samora Machel have resulted in a treaty of mutual cooperation (February '76) and a joint statement in which the USSR agreed to help Mozambique in 'consolidating its defense capability'. But a Soviet hold over Mozambique is not a foregone conclusion. Many contradictions remain: for example, the past example of true socialist 'no-strings-attached' aid from China and the history of self-reliance and struggle on the part of the people have resulted in a deep two-line struggle within the government over which road to follow. On the other hand, Mozambique is in desperate straits economically, having closed its border with Zimbabwe, and is in no position to reject aid from any quarters.

3) ZAIRE -- In March, 1977, the USSR supported the invasion of Shaba (formerly Katanga) Province by Katangese troops operating from a base in Angola. They were driven back by Zairean forces aided by Moroccan troops, in turn supported by US imperialism. Was this a victory over Soviet social-imperialism by the people of Zaire, in defense of their territorial sovereignty? Yes, in the sense that the temporarily principal contradiction between social-imperialism and the Zairean people was revolved through armed struggle. But the events in Zaire also underscore the danger of relying on one imperialism to defeat another: Zaire continues to be a puppet of the US, with the difference now that it knows Soviet social-imperialism is standing in the doorway ready to come in as internal contradictions intensify.

4) ZIMBABWE, AZANIA AND NAMIBIA -- The US is second only to Britain in investments in Azania, and clearly has a material stake in preserving the entire area for imperialist plunder. The USSR is making inroads in all three by attempting to split the liberation forces, favoring Nkomo of Zimbabwe African People's Union/ZAPU, South African Communist Party-African National Congress in Azania, Sam Nujoma's faction of SWAPO in Namibia. The contention between the US and USSR is accompanied by joint scheming for a negotiated settlement in Zimbabwe (similar to their collusion in the Middle East). Both are pushing reliance on the 'frontline presidents' and their 'Third Force' or 'joint Military Comman'y'. Though the US preaches moderation, and the USSR verbally supports armed struggle as a means of gaining emancipation, both seek to tie any 'solution' to their control.

Can class-conscious workers remain idle while the US and the USSR scheme, maneuver, and risk full-scale imperialist war in their feverish attempts to carve up southern Africa? We must expose the rotten plans of both superpowers, and at the same time fight all the harder to prepare the conditions for the overthrow of 'our own' bourgeoisie. This means first and foremost that the proletariat's leading representatives must focus

their efforts on the task of building a communist party that can guide our international work. True support for the struggle in southern Africa depends on the struggle for a vanguard party in the US. In the course of uniting the forces to build the party, in struggling for correct political line on the questions facing our movement, it is imperative that we seriously examine the situation in southern Africa from all sides. Our support for the various liberation movements does not depend on where they get aid, but on whether or not they are objectively fighting against imperialism and social-imperialism. In order to determine that, we need to pay more attention to a number of questions: what is the extent of US or Soviet influence over various nations and liberation forces? What is the significance of various agreements signed between the US or USSR and Southern African countries and liberation movements? At what point can we say that a nation has become a neo-colony of either the US or USSR?

BRIBED STRATA OF THE U.A.W.

During times of crisis in capitalist society, the brunt of the crisis is put onto the backs of the most oppressed and exploited in the working class. At General Motors (GM) the conditions are no different. During contract negotiations in '76, the workers were told by the company and union bureaucrats that there wasn't any money because of the crisis hitting the country. This was used by both to convince the workers to accept a contract which gave them only a 3% wage increase and basically maintain what they already had. It is clear in whose interest the labor bureaucrats are working. In February, this year, when GM stated (GM Today, Vol 3 #2) that it made a net profit of \$2.9 billion in 1976, there should be no doubt left in anyone's mind.

When Lenin spoke of the upper or labor aristocracy, he was speaking of the permanently bribed strata, which includes the trade union bureaucrats, skilled craft workers, and others who have a material interest in maintaining capitalism, who are not interested in or care about the working class, because in fact they don't even consider themselves part of the working class. Lenin pointed out: "Social-chauvinism and opportunism have the same class basis, namely the alliance of a small section of privileged workers with 'their' national bourgeoisie against the working class masses (Collected Works, V 22, 112)

Let's look at some of the facts, concentrating on skilled and unskilled workers at a GM plant. Working conditions: the production worker (unskilled) works continually for 8-9 hours on an assembly line, which produces about 46 cars an hour. They can only leave their jobs for breaks or lunch. If they get hurt they have to get a medical slip from their foreman to go to medical. The atmosphere around them is noisy, dirty and very dangerous. The skilled trade workers, on the other hand, are free to come and go as they please. Their work area is generally cleaner, quieter and alot safer. Their main job is repair. Wages: During the next three years, production workers wages will go to \$8.33/hr, an increase of \$1.81; those of skilled will go to \$10.33, an increase of \$2.22. In response to a movement of skilled workers to break away from the UAW, they have been given a veto power over the entire contract. These are just some of the ways that the company and the union bureaucrats perpetuate the divisions between skilled and unskilled workers. All the benefits of a worker are figured on base pay rates. The following figures reveal the differences:

	<u>Production Worker</u>	<u>Skilled Worker</u>
sickness/accident	\$130/week	\$220/week
life insurance	\$17,000	\$21,500
extended disability	\$710/mo. with 10 yrs. seniority	\$830/mo. with 10 yrs

We see that even in times of crisis companies can give substantial sops to the skilled workers, though these are slightly withdrawn as the crisis intensifies. But it is the mass of proletarians who suffer most from the crisis, through cutbacks in wages, deteriorating working conditions, the elimination of food stamps and welfare, and higher unemployment. We must expose the upper stratum and unite with the lower stratum, workers who have no material interest in preserving capitalism!

(For more information read: Proletarian Revolution & the Split in the Working Class, MLC