

SOCIALIST VOICE



Reconstruct

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Voodoo Economics Meets Liberal Quackery

On the Road to Capitalist Crash

After a year and a half of Ronald Reagan's leadership, the dominant imperialist bloc led by the United States is undergoing a severe crisis of confidence and ideology — in addition to the very real crisis of capitalism that is plaguing the working people of the world. The seven-power Versailles summit conference in June could only paper over major disputes on financial policy, trade agreements and relations with the rival Soviet-led bloc. The theories of "Reaganomics," pioneered by the Thatcher government of Britain and ballyhooed as the key to prosperity in the U.S., have proved failures in both countries, and leading advocates are leaving the Reagan administration. They are getting out while they can, for the truth is that the capitalist ideologists and politicians have no answers to the crisis.

Bourgeois economic theory, with all its pretensions and computer technology, is no more a science than medieval alchemy. It has never been able to understand, much less

prevent, periodic crises resulting from the falling tendency of the rate of profit; and now a new great depression looms on the horizon. Few countries recovered from the 1974-75 recession; then the 1980 slump was no sooner officially ended when the next one began, without even a breath of a boom in between. Rates of unemployment are nearing 10 percent in the Western capitalist countries, inflation is rampant in both Western and Eastern blocs, and a dangerous credit crisis is sweeping the world, especially the semi-colonial dependent ("third world") countries and the Russian bloc. In U.S. cities like Detroit, in every black ghetto in the country and in many industrial areas of Europe, depression conditions are already a harsh reality.

Fear of Revolution

The capitalists' view of the crisis was strikingly portrayed in the May 12 column of the *New York Times'* economic correspondent, Leonard Silk:

"The shocks in recent years have included the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, the political upheaval in Poland and resulting financial strains there and in other Eastern European countries, then the clash between Argentina and Britain. In addition, there have been the financial threats in Turkey, Zaire and Nigeria, and the political shocks in Afghanistan and El Salvador."

Silk even omitted a few. But he quoted Rimmer de Vries, Morgan Guaranty's chief international economist: "The

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Israel's Pogrom

Israel launched its massive invasion of Lebanon in order to achieve the "final solution" of the Palestinian problem. Not to defend its northern border, not simply to drive the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) guerrillas out of Lebanon — but to crush forever all hope for an independent Palestinian state and, as its calculated terror demonstrates above all, to physically decimate and break the rebellious spirit of the Palestinian masses.

The "Palestinian problem" dates back to 1948, with the creation of the Zionist state of Israel on a territory then populated by a majority of Palestinian Arabs. Since then the Palestinians have been scattered throughout the Middle East, and their aspirations have been crystallized in the demand for self-determination — the right to establish their own nation-state. Palestinian self-determination has been the rock on which has shattered every capitalist solution to every Middle Eastern crisis. The truth is that the permanent crisis will fester and no solution will be found as long as imperialism, the system of world capitalism, continues to exist.

As the world economic crisis deepens, country after country faces revolt from exploited workers and peasants. Nowhere is this more true than in the tinder box of the Middle East. The list of countries facing not only international war but civil

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Editorial The Boston Busing Hoax

Eight years after U.S. District Judge W. Arthur Garrity first imposed his busing plan in the name of school desegregation, the Boston school system is a shambles. It has at last become apparent to many former supporters of mandatory busing that black students as well as others are worse off than before. It should now be clear that the liberal politicians and their left hangers-on used black children as sacrifices to the delusion of capitalist democracy.

Massive opposition to desegregation was led by the Boston School Committee that runs the schools, heightening the vicious climate of racist attacks on black pupils and adults. The busing "solution" was foisted on the movement to defend blacks and their democratic rights long denied under capitalism; it raised hopes that at long last the barriers created by segregated schools would be dismantled. But now it is evident that court-imposed busing has not provided decent education for anyone.

The busing plan precipitated a mass exodus by whites to the suburbs and private schools. In 1972, school enrollment was estimated at between 90,000 and 100,000 students, of which 70 percent were white, roughly reflecting the racial composition of Boston. This year's enrollment is 58,000, of which 66 percent are minority students. Even upper and middle-class blacks, who had been instrumental in selling the busing plan to the black community, have followed whites out of the Boston schools.

According to a *Boston Globe* poll taken in March, 79 percent of blacks now favor a "free choice" plan that would give all pupils equal access to all city schools; moreover, 42

percent indicate that they hadn't favored the busing plan at the beginning. In February, a group of black parents, including some of the plaintiffs in the original 1974 case that led to Garrity's order, asked that mandatory busing be replaced by the so-called free choice alternative.

The reasons behind such dissatisfaction are not hard to find. Larry Johnson, an attorney for the black parents, explains that computerized school assignments ("geocoding") have resulted in resegregation (*Newsweek*, April 5). Funding for schools has been cut back drastically under the cover of busing. Violence in the schools has increased, especially in white neighborhoods against black students who are bused in.

For Marxists the fraud of the busing program was clear from the start. We wrote seven years ago:

"The busing programs are not designed simply to end segregation. At point after point, integration of the schools via busing is explicitly counterposed to improved education. Busing has been thrust to the forefront by the NAACP and other liberals, in Boston and elsewhere, at the peak of the economic crisis that is bankrupting cities and slashing budgets for social services. It is a device for cutting spending on education and maintaining conditions of crisis and decay in the school system, all in the name of anti-racism and democratic rights" (*Torch*, September 15, 1975).

For example, when Judge Garrity issued Phase II of his desegregation plan in May, 1975, he noted that 55 school buildings in Boston were recommended for closing as "crowded, ill-heated, dark, odorous and located on cramped sites, as well as below today's standards of fire safety." Yet the judge ruled that only 20 of the hazardous buildings could be closed, and even these could be reopened if needed. Moreover, he forbade the city from beginning construction of any new school or expanding existing ones, all in the name of preserving racial balance.

The bourgeois liberals' motivation for busing was not better education. Judge Garrity stated in his report, "Minority students assigned to identifiable minority schools are cut off from the majority culture which is widely reflected in the standards, explicit and implicit, that determine success in our society." This amounts to the racist argument that blacks can't

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- No. 16: How Solidarity Snatched Defeat from the Jaws of Victory; Marxism vs. Reformism — A Test of Theory.

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Israel's Pogrom

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turmoil is endless, and includes Israel as well. Even the oil-rich rulers fear the masses. And the Palestinian workers throughout the region are the explosive spark which could ignite everything.

The Israeli rulers are not indifferent to the danger of social revolution by the Palestinians; they face it daily on the West Bank. However, Israel cannot even for a moment accept the idea of Palestinian self-determination, even the fraudulent "mini-state" on the West Bank. Any concession would encourage further struggles, and genuine self-determination for the over four million Palestinians dispersed throughout the Middle East and beyond would encompass the entire Palestinian territory, including what is now Israel and Jordan, and would mean the end of the Zionist state.

The Israeli rulers recognize this reality even though Arab leaders, including those of the PLO, pretend that compromise

under the Nazi heel. The Palestinians today are being betrayed by similar allies.

The various Arab rulers fear the Palestinians but hope that a Palestinian state would buy them off and dull the edge of their radicalism. The rulers have mixed feelings toward Israel, which conquered land that they want to dominate themselves and, worse, serves as a constant goad for the already restless masses and exacerbates every division among the rulers. But on the other hand, it appears as the most internally stable nation in the region; what self-respecting reactionary wouldn't like Israel's army (and its ties to Washington) on its side in these troublesome times? If it wasn't the kiss of death before the masses, they would all do what Sadat did.

Unlike Israel, the Arab states are exploited by imperialism, not subsidized. Their rulers would like to become junior partners themselves, but the volatile pressure of their own workers and peasants prevents open deals. Sadat was the exception that proves the rule; his assassination was mourned in Israel and the West but not in Egypt. The Arab rulers must convince the masses that they really are for Palestinian rights and so can never agree to Israeli policy. But just as King



Palestinians search for bodies in West Beirut rubble. Zionists claim they had to kill innocent civilians in order to kill the PLO — who Zionists say are nothing but dirty killers since they have killed innocent civilians.

is possible. Hence Israel's periodic wars of conquest, its settler policies on Arab lands, and now its drive to destroy the PLO as a political and military force. Genocide is the necessary conclusion from the attempt to establish a racially exclusive, sub-imperialist state in a region where the Jews are a small minority; Israel carries out the same logic as South African apartheid.

Menachem Begin's equation of the PLO and the Nazis as oppressors of Jews is outrageously cynical. The oppressed Palestinians have far more in common with the victims of Nazism than do the Zionists. Begin is the spawn of the most right-wing Zionism historically; the fact that Israel's ally in Lebanon is the Phalangist party, nurtured in explicit fascism and Hitlerism, is not merely symbolic. As we write, when heroic Palestinian guerrillas are still holding out in West Beirut under siege by the Israeli blitzkrieg, we are haunted by memories of the slaughter of equally heroic Jewish fighters of the Warsaw ghetto. In 1943, the Polish Jews were deserted by their supposed friends and imperialist "allies" and left to die

Hussein butchered the Palestinian fighters in Jordan in 1970 and the Syrian army did likewise in Lebanon in 1976, they were all obviously pleased with Israel's attack because it might solve the Palestinian problem for them. It is little wonder that the Palestinians have had so little help from their "friends."

The countries which the PLO leaders told the Palestinians they could count on to defend them have all abandoned the Palestinians to the Israeli war machine. The Palestinians are being massacred as a result of the PLO's strategy of allying the Palestinian masses with the Arab ruling classes and imperialism. One Palestinian militiaman bitterly summed up the lessons he had learned from the war in Lebanon. "The Syrians came here supposedly to protect us and they fled. We are mad because after 16 or 17 years we built the Palestine Liberation Organization with a hope of going home. It's destroyed, and from now on I trust nobody, especially the Arabs. If we had known of these betrayals earlier we could have saved lives. It's not Israel that broke us. It's the Arab world" (*New York Times*, June 30).

Similarly, *Middle East* magazine (July) states that the

Emirate newspaper *Al-Khaleej* "reflected widespread Arab sentiment" when it said that "Arab silence towards the occupation of Lebanon, and Arab contacts behind the scenes with the United States, make the Arab governments bear equal responsibility for liquidating Arab fighters in Lebanon. Those who condemn the Syrian military silence are themselves not initiating any action. The only hope now is in a popular movement in all Arab countries."

The Arab rulers remained silent in the hope that Israel's massacre would break the back of social revolution. But when the Israeli attack proved unable to smash the PLO quickly, the pressure on them intensified and now they plaintively urge Washington to crack down on its Zionist ally.

backed off in humiliation from any decisive action in the present war. Reliance on the Soviets is just as futile as expecting aid from the Arab regimes or the U.S. government.

The United Nations is no better. The General Assembly dominated by "third world" nations is a powerless talk shop; the Security Council, with the power to send force, will only do so when the imperialist thieves agree. The U.N. force that occupied part of southern Lebanon to separate the Israelis and the PLO was subject to U.S. policy: it kept the Palestinian fighters back but fired not one shot against the invading Israeli army.

The Palestinians have been betrayed on all sides. No revolutionist worthy of the name can refrain from military

1946: Jewish refugees from the Nazi holocaust were shipped into Palestine. Rejected by all their imperialist "friends," they were funnelled into the Middle East to be used by the Zionists as cannon fodder against the Arab masses in the interests of imperialism.
1982: Palestinian Arab refugees have again been doomed to wander from country to country. Once again they have been betrayed by the imperialists and their Arab capitalist tools in the face of Israeli terror. Oppressed masses everywhere must fight their oppressors, not each other.



For the masses, any expectation that the United States government is moving towards an accommodation with the Palestinians is an illusion, despite Reagan's signals that he is getting fed up with Begin. The U.S. has armed and financed Israel from the start and supported its conquests, ever since the Americans replaced the British and French as the dominant imperialists in the Middle East. Israel has received \$25 billion in aid since 1948, \$18 billion in military aid, half of it since 1975. The U.S. goal is to maintain stable exploitation of oil and the workers of the region by tying the Arab masses to their rulers; Israel plays a disciplinary role. Washington is sometimes annoyed at Israel's unwillingness to grant concessions to the Palestinians to help the oil sheiks, but it is not about to endanger the firmest subordinate it has.

Thus Reagan gave Begin the green light to wipe out the PLO. While he tries to pacify both sides, the "solutions" linked to the Camp David pact will founder inevitably on the rock of Palestinian self-determination. The "autonomy" envisaged in this agreement is a total fraud, every version of it representing subordination to Israel's rulers.

The USSR offers no alternative. It is a faltering imperialism: it collaborated with the U.S. in setting up the Zionist state in 1948; it arms the "radical" Arab states but

support to the guerrillas of the Beirut Ghetto. However, no revolutionist who wants to see the masses victorious can allow this support to obscure the lesson of how this tragedy was able to occur. The truth is that the disaster is the responsibility of the "realists," "practical leaders" and "statesmen" who teach reliance on nationalism, on bourgeois states and on the imperialist powers — and not on the revolution of the masses. The Zionist army marched to Beirut on a road paved by the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization and their false ideology of capitalism and nationalism.

There is a vital difference between the nationalism of the masses and that of the PLO leadership. The Palestinian masses seek an end to their dispersion, exploitation and oppression and a society of peace and abundance; they have been taught that a state of their own is the only practical and possible solution for their aspirations. That is why Leninists support their *right* to self-determination: the revolutionary proletariat must demonstrate to the oppressed that capitalism is their enemy, not us. At their side we strive to convince the Palestinian workers that nationalism and nationalist leaders are no way to liberation.

On the other hand, the PLO has nothing to offer except

hopes of better deals from the imperialist powers. Yasser Arafat backed last winter's "peace plan" of the Saudi monarchy; this year he has reportedly agreed to mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO, accepting the idea of equal guilt by the oppressed and the oppressors. But once again the futility of the PLO's compromising program has been proved at the cost of thousands of lives. The PLO sees no alternative to imperialism because it itself is capitalist. It runs in-



Left: Yasser Arafat and his bourgeois nationalist course can only hand the Palestinian masses over to the Israeli juggernaut. Top: The city of Tyre, Lebanon, after the Israeli assault. Enough is enough!



ternational businesses that operate dozens of factories in Arab countries and, according to the *Wall Street Journal* (November 20, 1981), is planning to open "several outposts in Africa, where Palestinian managers will supervise production by African workers." It wants its own homeland not to free Palestinian workers and peasants from exploitation but to share in the profits wrung out of them with the Israeli and Western capitalists. Thus for the bourgeois PLO the subordinate "mini-state" is an acceptable solution.

Ironically, nationalism has also betrayed the Jewish people. Zionism is Jewish nationalism, so dedicated to the ideal of a Jewish state that it has sold itself to imperialism as the overlords' "watchdog" (the Zionists' own term) in the Middle East. As a result Israel is totally dependent upon the imperialists' largesse — not only for military hardware but also for the European standard of living amid the "third world." But the deal doesn't work: Israel is coming apart at the seams. Inflation runs in three digits; the economy is under a staggering debt; the exodus of Jews to Europe and America exceeds immigration.

The hostility of the oppressed workers, mostly Sephardic Jews (from Arab countries, speaking Arabic), however, is channeled by the bourgeoisie against their "competitors" — the Palestinian workers. Without the Arab devil at hand, the Zionist myth and the Zionist nation would be torn apart by

social struggle. Significantly, for the first time this war brought protests during war time in Israel — in which even soldiers returning from battle in Lebanon participated. Israel cannot afford peace; both for internal reasons and because of the desperate need to suppress every manifestation of the Palestinian struggle, it must continually war against the enemy that it itself created.

If the class struggle rips the Israeli state apart, the whole Middle East would go with it; neither the Arab rulers nor the Western imperialists can afford to see Israel crumble. For this very reason, destruction of the colonial-settler state is so important to revolutionaries. Only the proletarian socialist revolution provides an alternative, for imperialism is tied to every existing oppressor and capitalism has betrayed every struggle of the masses. Nowhere else in the world has the impossibility of peace under capitalism been made so plain so often. In the Middle East the Palestinian working class is the key; its actions will spark the struggle pointing to the only real answer, workers' revolution throughout the Middle East and the formation of a socialist federation of the entire region. As well, only within this context can the Jewish working class in Palestine find peace, security, genuine economic well-being and full cultural rights along with its Arab brothers and sisters.

Israel Out of Lebanon! Military Support to the PLO!

U.S., U.N. Out of the Middle East! No Arms to Israel!

Smash the Zionist State! Self-Determination for the Entire Palestinian People!

**Build the Revolutionary Palestinian Workers Party!
Re-create the Fourth International!**

For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!

Malvinas War Tests Leftists

The repercussions set in motion by Argentina's seizure of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands from Britain on April 2 were far out of proportion to the importance of the islands themselves. Despite the fact that the Argentine military junta enjoyed excellent relations with all the imperialist powers, world imperialism was clearly shaken by the seizure and united against it. Britain's Western European partners quickly joined in economic sanctions against the "aggressor." The United States dropped its initial "honest broker" role and offered military aid to its British ally. Even Russia and China refused to veto Britain's anti-Argentine resolution in the United Nations. Any threat to the delicate fabric of world stability had to be squashed.

For Marxist revolutionaries, the united front of imperialism was the decisive issue in the war and meant that we stood for the defeat of Britain and the military defense of the Argentine forces. Our position of military support implies not the least political support for the Argentine dictatorship, a regime justly hated by the working class for its open butchery of militants and class repression. Indeed, Galtieri's regime was faltering and its attack on the Malvinas was a diversion intended to offset growing working-class unrest. From the junta's point of view, the move was a desperate gamble that resulted in high military and economic losses, whose burden fell most heavily on the masses. Given the line-up of forces, Galtieri's attack was adventurist and should be condemned,

breaks and rallied behind the military effort of a government that is so despised.

That the general interests of world imperialism was the key issue at stake is indicated by several additional facts. Britain had not really asserted an eternal claim to sovereignty over the islands; it had been negotiating with Argentina for years over a transfer and mineral rights, and had already allowed Argentina to take over many of the provisioning and servicing functions needed by the islanders. The claim that Britain was defending the Falklanders' "right of self-determination" is a smokescreen; on the one hand, colonial settlers have no rights to maintain imperialist rule; on the other, the Falklanders were not permitted self-government under Britain and were in many cases even denied British citizenship.

What compelled Britain to defend so avidly the territory it was previously willing to negotiate away was Argentina's act of seizure. If it allowed the islands to go then its colonial possession of Gibraltar, Northern Ireland, etc. would have been weakened, as would the possessions of all imperialist powers. The "anti-imperialist" rulers also had to declare themselves. Russia displayed a mild and carefully limited tilt toward the Argentine side after Britain launched its counterinvasion. "Non-aligned" Cuba backed "non-aligned" Argentina — and neither Russia (which imports lots of Argentine grain) nor Cuba had a word of criticism of the bloody anti-communist junta.



General Galtieri, head of Argentine junta, seized the Malvinas from British imperialism to divert masses from toppling his regime. "Victory" turned to defeat in the face of world imperialist opposition. Revolutionary defense of Argentina from Britain meant no political support to this rotten adventurer.

but once war broke out Marxists defended Argentina from British imperialism.

Great Britain's historical claim to the islands is clearly colonialist. Argentina's claims are more tenable but far from certain; tortuous historical claims alone are not the basis for Marxists to defend any country in a war. Britain has long had an exploitative relationship toward Argentina. While no longer the world's chief imperialist power, it has long played an important role in an Argentine economy dominated by foreign ownership. The Malvinas Islands symbolically represent this relationship, which is why the Argentine people have always included the question in anti-imperialist out-

Observe also the U.S.'s unhysterical opposition to the presence of Soviet ships tailing Britain's South Atlantic fleet (and imagine Reagan's reaction to a Soviet fleet off El Salvador!) All imperialists admired the junta and its willingness to torture in the name of liberty; it had none of the dubious (if fictitious) image of decency which troubles world leaders about more liberal forces of the semi-colonial world. This proves once again that the real conflict dominating world politics is not East versus West but the struggle of the masses against capitalism. The danger of the Malvinas seizure was that Argentina's example would be seen as a victory by neo-colonial peoples everywhere and would be followed by other

In early 1982 British youth facing only unemployment and squalor marched in London, demanding "Give Us a Future." Capitalism gave its truthful reply: "War."



struggles with social revolutionary possibilities. In sum, Britain's victory meant strengthening imperialism everywhere. Its defeat, no matter what the character of the Argentine junta, would have undermined capitalism's sway.

In addition to its impact on imperialism, the other key factor for Marxists is the war's effect on the proletariat, especially in Argentina and Britain. In Argentina, the illusions of the workers in their own nationalism were strengthened by Galtieri's war. It was essential for Argentine revolutionaries to point out that the bourgeois regime was betraying the anti-imperialist struggle (as the scandals about the military's cowardice and poor provisioning later revealed); the war could only have been won through a revolutionary struggle against imperialism — seizing British and U.S.-owned properties and rousing the masses of the entire continent. The point of the war was not empty islands but the need for imperialism united to crush the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world. Thus only an international struggle against imperialism (that is, capitalism) could answer the attack.

Such a social struggle was of course impossible for Galtieri, and the defeat has deepened the crisis of the military regime. Galtieri was already forced to withdraw his officers aiding the U.S.-backed junta in El Salvador. A renewed working-class offensive would create the opportunity to overturn not just the junta but Argentine capitalism and its imperialist yoke.

In Britain, both the war and the victory gave a jingoist boost to the ruling class, which the Thatcher government has been already using as a weapon in the domestic class struggle. The support for Thatcher's war by the Labour Party was especially disgraceful. Party leader Michael Foot denounced the Tory cabinet — for not doing enough to defend Britain's interests in the South Atlantic. The Labour left led by Tony Benn at first did nothing to oppose sending the British fleet or to stem the chauvinist tide of "national unity." Later the Bennites called for the fleet to be halted (not even recalled: timid pacifism indeed!) and urged handing the matter over to the imperialist-run United Nations. Their assumption throughout was that Britain's cause was just because of the "fascist" nature of the Argentine junta (armed all along by "democratic" Britain and its allies), but they preferred "peaceful" warfare like economic sanctions.

The far-left groups tailing Benn inside the Labour Party did no better than the outright Bennites. The Militant Tendency, which the witchhunting Labour leadership is attempting to

expel because of its supposed Trotskyism, did its best to earn its keep as a disguised defender of British imperialism. It stuck up for the "rights" of the Falklanders, it devoted column after column to denouncing the Argentine junta, and it even attacked Thatcher and the current Labour leaders as warmongers. But its solution was urging unions everywhere to boycott Argentine trade (certainly not British!) and "a Labour government pledged to socialist policies"; presumably once Labour was in power the war would then be supportable. *Militant* conveniently forgot the political fact known to Marxists for over half a century that a Labour government is just as imperialist as the Tories — in order, in effect, to argue that the labor movement could defend British interests better than the capitalists themselves. For Britain, *Militant* advocated general elections to achieve its socialist government; but it demanded that the Argentine workers launch a revolution. Parliamentary cretinism at home coupled with "revolutionary defeatism" in the rival country is time-honored Kautskyism.

Socialist Organizer stands only slightly to the left of *Militant* inside Labour and behaved accordingly. Its April 15 editorial demanded "Withdrawal of the Argentine troops from the Falklands," also backing the Falklanders' "right to decide their own future," which can only mean to remain part of the British empire. Although this position effectively supports Britain's war claims, *Socialist Organizer* held back from endorsing the war itself. But its solution is the same as *Militant's*: other people (like the Argentines) have to overthrow their ruling classes; British workers can bring down Thatcher through trade unionism and elections. This national chauvinism is given a proletarian veneer by hiding inside the Labour Party.

The main sponsor of *Socialist Organizer* is the Workers Socialist League, the pseudo-Trotskyist group recently cobbled together by Alan Thornett and Sean Matgamna. The paper itself opens its pages to the entire left Labour parliamentary swamp. Its "broadness" consists of its ability to dodge responsibility for a particular view. Thus the May 6 issue printed an interview on the war with Member of Parliament Reg Race that was highlighted on the front page; in it Race called for economic pressure against Argentina (by British capitalism!) and a "negotiated settlement," as if that would be any less imperialist than war. All this adds up to opposing Thatcher's militarism while endorsing the

"democratic" excuses she uses to justify it. (We note that the WSL has a U.S. affiliate, the Revolutionary Workers League, which correctly stood for Britain's defeat in the war. But the real test of a left-wing tendency in wartime is to oppose the imperialism of one's own ruling class, and in this the "Trotskyist International Liaison Committee," through its British section, abjectly failed.)

In contrast to the left groups that gave backhanded support to Britain's war aims, the Socialist Workers Party and Spartacist League of Britain both attempted to stand firmly against Britain without taking the Argentine side. The failure to recognize the one-sided imperialist character of the war is characteristic of both these tendencies. The SWP issued a powerful condemnation of the Labour left and their pseudo-Marxist tails in *Socialist Review* of May 20. But it could not account for the war; it saw national pride on both sides but did not see the imperialist cabal backing Thatcher nor the anti-imperialist mass sentiment that Galtieri had to divert. Instead it wrote: "There is no longer a rational, if predatory, cause of dispute. The Falklands are of no great significance. Pure prestige and internal politics are the driving force on both sides."

If there is no rational cause for the war (from the bourgeois point of view), it is remarkable that so many imperialist powers lined up behind Britain from the start. The SWP cannot see the threat to imperialism's world stability because it has always fundamentally considered events in the "third world" irrelevant; "the main enemy is at home," in the SWP's eyes, because the only struggles with real consequences are at home. It believes that imperialism "is no longer central to the survival of capitalism, nor is the export of capital from advanced to backward countries" (Introduction to the special theoretical issue of *International Socialism*, No. 61). With this view the SWP was able to avoid the not-so-hidden form of British chauvinism of *Militant* and *Socialist Organiser*, since colonial wars are supposedly unnecessary; but it expresses another. The "third world" peoples are purely objects, if victimized ones, condemned to be mere observers of the serious business of the advanced nations.

Argentina Imperialist?

The Spartacists also call the war absurd: "Indeed what British capitalism expects to gain out of this supposed war of 'imperialist aggrandisement' is a further loss of Argentine markets to the Japanese and a possible debt default" (*Spartacist Britain*, May 1982). But unable to openly surrender the Leninist analysis of imperialism as easily as does the SWP, they suggest that perhaps Argentina is imperialist too! "Argentina part of the 'Third World?'" asks *Workers Vanguard* (June 11), going on to salute its "European" standard of living and class structure, overlooking the statistical fact that Britain's per capita GNP is 2.8 times Argentina's, while the U.S.'s is 4.8 times as great. But then comes a second thought, "Argentina is not even a secondary imperialist country like Australia or Canada," which carefully suggests that it might be imperialist of a lower degree. Finally the Spartacists make up their mind: Argentina is one of the "intermediate capitalist states" like "East Europe between the wars, Portugal, Greece or Israel today." We note that Trotsky considered pre-World War II Poland and Czechoslovakia to be imperialist, while Israel and Portugal certainly are so today. (Portugal is not the colonial power it once was, but it still invests heavily in its ex-colonies.)

The Spartacists have always denied the crucial difference for Leninists between oppressed and oppressor countries (see our article "Spartacist Chauvinism" in *Socialist Voice* No. 8).

When they do make distinctions they tend to favor the advanced: thus they are concerned lest an avalanche of desperate immigrants from the neo-colonial world inundate the "national identity" of the imperialist heartlands (see *Workers Vanguard*, January 18, 1974). And now, if Argentina is imperialist (albeit third rate) then both sides can be equally damned. The only imperialism the Spartacists recognize nowadays is the West's struggle against the "workers" USSR. As with the SWP, the non-advanced world has no choice but to watch the big boys fight it out.

We note that the British Workers Power group has taken a position on the war that, judging by its press, is free of the national chauvinism so common on the left in the imperialist countries. It stands for Britain's defeat; but its call for the recall of the British fleet without specifying who is to do this could only raise illusions in the Labour Party.

The clearest statement of the Leninist position was made by Trotsky in 1938 in a parallel situation:

"I will take the most simple and obvious example. In Brazil there now reigns a semifascist regime that every

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revolutionary can only view with hatred. Let us assume, however, that on the morrow England enters into a military conflict with Brazil. I ask you on whose side of the conflict will the working class be? I will answer for myself personally — in this case I will be on the side of 'fascist' Brazil against 'democratic' Great Britain. Why? Because in the conflict between them it will not be a question of democracy or fascism. If England should be victorious, she will put another fascist in Rio de Janeiro and will place double chains on Brazil. If Brazil on the contrary should be victorious, it will give a mighty impulse to national and democratic consciousness of the country and will lead to the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship. The defeat of England will at the same time deliver a blow to British imperialism and will give an impulse to the revolutionary movement of the British proletariat. Truly, one must have an empty head to reduce world antagonisms and military conflicts to the struggle between fascism and democracy. Under all masks one must know how to distinguish exploiters, slave-owners and robbers!" (*Writings*, 1938-39, page 34.) ■

Democratic vs. Proletarian Dictatorship

The ever-deepening crisis of capitalism has had an extraordinary effect on the "far left" organizations that we have often called our readers' attention to: their steady drift to the right. In their own eyes, the shifting leftists undoubtedly justify their conduct by the need to "meet the masses half-way": if the disarray of capitalism makes people more willing to listen to socialist ideas, why not soften the hard edges and make these ideas more comfortable for them? Unfortunately the reality is quite different. Removing the cutting edge of revolutionary communism only converts it into another tool for the defense of capitalism.

This principle is especially important in the ex-colonial countries, for there the bourgeois regimes are weakest, revolutionary elements have won their greatest successes and socialistic leftists have their widest influence. And it is here that softening the communist program appears to have a genuine theoretical justification: since the broad industrial development necessary for socialism has not taken place, why confuse matters by calling for socialist revolution and thereby alienating the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois allies of the left? This argument has an ancient history in the annals of revolution, dating back to the formative years of the Russian socialist parties before the revolutions of 1917. It has been widely repeated today in Iran, Zimbabwe, Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador and many other countries where revolution is on the order of the day. As Trotskyists, we believe that the fundamental answer was provided in practice by the Bolshevik revolution itself and in theory by Trotsky's program of permanent revolution.

Stalinists Underestimate Masses

An alternative position that pretends to stand in the Leninist tradition is put forward by the Bolshevik League (BL) of the U.S. and its sister organizations in other countries. This Stalinist tendency devotes much of its propaganda to the exposure and denunciation of bourgeois and middle-class nationalism and the left-wing groups that tail it. For example, the Bolshevik Union of Canada writes of the Mugabe government in Zimbabwe that "the imperialists installed Mugabe in government, insured his election victory ... and are now getting him to crush the Left and the hopes of millions of workers and peasants of Zimbabwe" (*Proletarian Revolution*, September 1980). And on the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the Circle of Latin American Communists writes, "A resentful bourgeoisie, resentful because of the cleverness and power of the Somozas, resentful because they were not permitted a major cut from the riches derived jointly with the imperialists from the pillage of the Nicaraguan people, and ... the clever petty bourgeoisie aspiring eternally to 'elevate' itself to the 'heights' of power: hence we have the precise origin of the leadership of the successful Sandinista revolution" (*Workers Tribune*, June-July 1981).

These assessments are totally off the mark in that they credit the victories over oppressive regimes to the imperialists and the bourgeoisies instead of the mass struggles of the workers and peasants. But they are correct in identifying the class roots and the politics of the forces that gained power through the masses' victories. The BL is therefore part of a tiny minority of left tendencies that openly criticizes popular leaders of bourgeois



Trotsky and Lenin, major leaders of Russian revolution. Lenin said in 1917 that there was "no better Bolshevik" than Trotsky. Later, the dying Lenin urged Trotsky to fight menace of Stalin.

nationalist revolutions. In doing so it runs the risk of being denounced as "Trotskyist" by other Stalinists, because revolutionary opposition to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism is correctly identified with Trotsky. The BL twists and turns to avoid this identification but can only answer it in traditional Stalinist fashion, through lies and slanders. Here, for example, is its analysis of Trotskyism in connection with El Salvador:

"There are those who whisper under their breath or even aloud that the Bolshevik position on FDR-FMLN is 'Trotskyite.' Yet the largest Trotskyite groups in the U.S., such as the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers World Party (WWP), the only Trotskyite groups strong enough to run for president in the 1980 elections, both enthusiastically support FDR-FMLN and the proposed 'democratic revolutionary government' which will give power to the 'patriotic' section of the bourgeoisie. This is how these Trotskyites conspire to sabotage the struggle of the Salvadorean workers and peasants." (*Workers Tribune*, June-July 1981)

So far this is an accurate assessment of the groups named, except for the matter of insisting that they represent Trotskyism. The largest pseudo-Trotskyist organizations (the WWP hardly comes under this heading since it has dropped its claims to Trotskyism) are betraying the Salvadorean revolution by endorsing a bourgeois solution, and it is

ironically possible for a wholeheartedly Stalinist tendency to criticize them from the left. But this attack does not solve the Bolshevik League's problem, as it itself recognizes, since genuine Trotskyism does not politically support the FDR-FMLN nor any other bourgeois nationalist force. So the quoted paragraph continues:

"Smaller rival Trotskyite groups that criticize or oppose FDR-FMLN thoroughly liquidate the peasant question, calling for a 'workers' government' or even 'socialist revolution' today in El Salvador. They want to sabotage the revolution by depriving the Salvadorean workers of their real ally, the peasants. This is a replay of Trotsky's infamous slogan 'No Tsar, but a workers' government' for Russia, which Lenin mercilessly exposed (see *Letters on Tactics*, LCW 24:48). That rival Trotskyite groups have seemingly different or opposite positions on El Salvador should not be surprising since Trotskyism conceals its real platform of collaboration with imperialist in a veil of false slogans. Trotskyites have no principles whatsoever."

As Lenin once remarked, it may well take ten pages of analysis to clear up ten lines of confusion (and, we might add, lies). In this last passage at least we are on more familiar ground, for the Stalinists are attacking Trotskyism *from the right*, joining the bourgeoisie and the social-democrats in denouncing us for wanting a socialist revolution. (In passing, we point out that there are not very many "Trotskyite" groups calling for socialist revolution in El Salvador; we, the LRP, are the only one in the United States to our knowledge.) But if the BL denounces both the fake Trotskyists for favoring a capitalist solution and the real Trotskyists for our socialist one, what on earth does it want itself? That question gets to the nub of the confusion inherent in a Stalinist tendency playing with Trotskyism.

How Lenin's Strategy Changed

What the BL proposes for El Salvador (as well as for Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, etc.) is the old Bolshevik slogan of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," first raised by Lenin in connection with the Russian revolution of 1905 and then abandoned by him in the light of the events early in the revolution of 1917. Indeed, the reference to Lenin's "Letters on Tactics" of April 1917 in volume 24 of his *Collected Works* proves precisely the reverse of what the BL claims, for this is the document in which Lenin carefully explained the necessity for changing the Bolsheviks' line.

The "Letters on Tactics" are polemics against members of Lenin's party who insisted on keeping the old slogan of the democratic dictatorship. This slogan had originally been intended to overcome the following problem: capitalism in Russia was backward and blocked from full development by the autocratic rule of tsarism; yet the Russian capitalists were so intertwined with the tsarist officialdom that a bourgeois revolution carried out by the bourgeoisie itself was an impossibility. The classes favoring the revolution were the proletariat and the peasantry, and they would have to carry through the bourgeois, democratic and agrarian revolution that the bourgeoisie was incapable of.

The "democratic dictatorship" would have been, in Lenin's words, "bourgeois in its economic and social essence" but politically dominated by the proletariat and its peasant allies. (The description "democratic" for Lenin always meant bourgeois.) It could not have been a socialist revolution

because it would not have been able to undertake the expropriation of the big bourgeoisie except "at best" for the "radical redistribution of landed property in favor of the peasantry" — a step which would still leave property in the hands of the petty-bourgeois peasants, the vast majority of the country. (The quotations are from Lenin's 1905 pamphlet, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*.)

The 1905 formula contained within it a severe contradiction: the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat would inevitably intensify, with the bourgeoisie holding the economic reins and the proletariat the government. As Trotsky already pointed out in 1906, this contradiction would quickly have to be resolved one way or the other: either the workers would discipline and ultimately expropriate the bourgeoisie, or the workers' and peasants' government would have to concede to the bourgeoisie's demands and abandon its defense of the masses in the class struggle. The contradiction inherent in the abstract formula came to a head in practice in 1917.

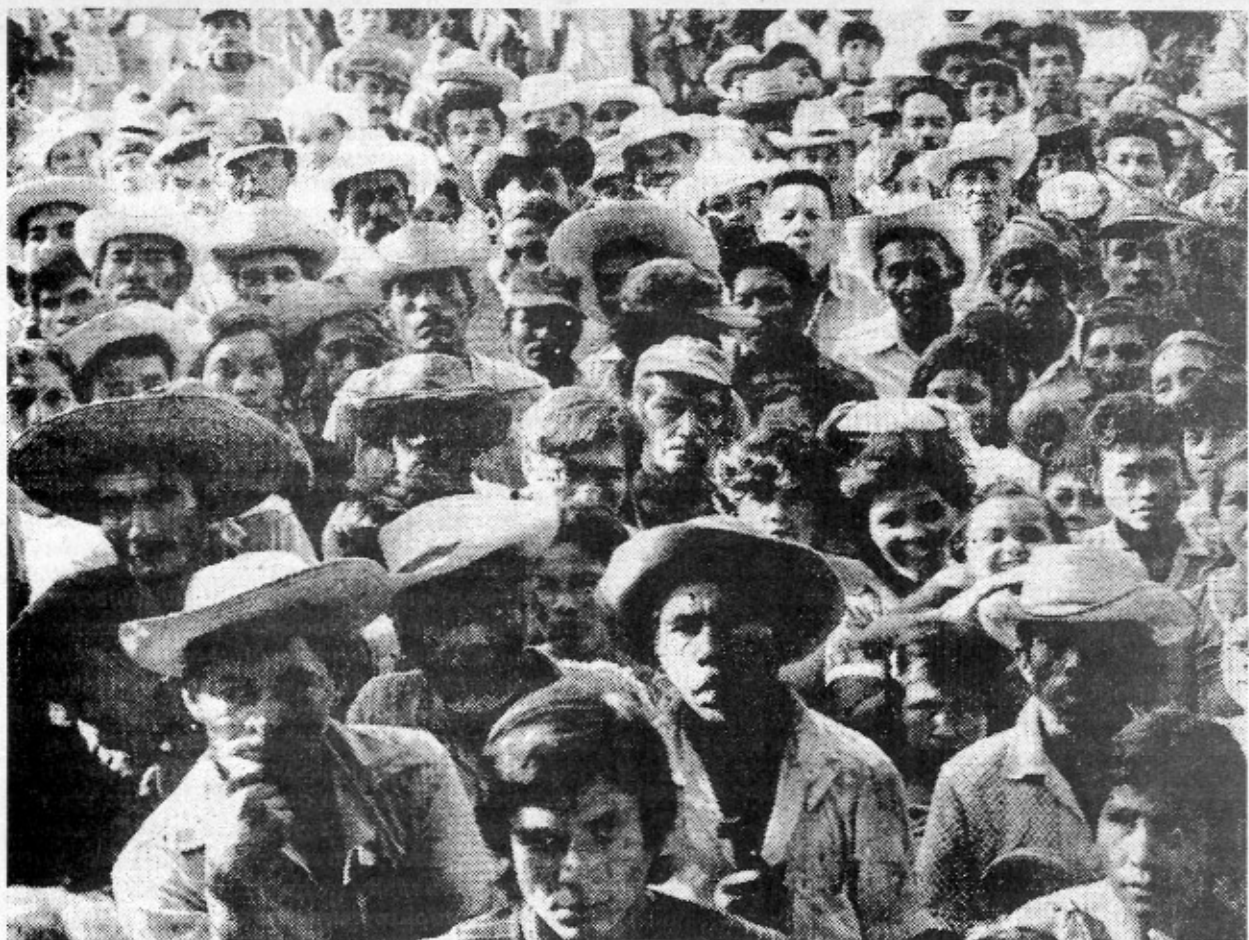
When the Tsar was overthrown in February 1917, the workers, peasants and soldiers had built soviets (councils), their mass representative institutions. The masses retained their illusions in the moderate left parties, the Mensheviks (based among the most privileged workers) and the Social-Revolutionaries (the peasant party); thus these compromisers became the leaders of the soviets and immediately commissioned the bourgeoisie to form a provisional government, which then coexisted with the soviets in a situation of dual power. (This class collaborationist policy was initially supported by leading Bolsheviks, including Stalin and Kamenev.) The bourgeois government, fighting to maintain the power of the bourgeoisie against the worker and peasant masses, abandoned the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution: it kept Russia in the imperialist war, it continually postponed distribution of land to the peasants and, while expanding the bourgeoisie's war profiteering, it did nothing to alleviate the economic crisis of the country.

Bolshevik Revolution Was Proletarian

Since, however, this situation of dual power had been created by the worker-peasant soviets, Lenin labelled it the partial fulfillment of the old Bolshevik slogan, the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." But this just proved that the old slogan was inadequate and outdated: the democratic tasks would have to be completed by the socialist revolution. Thus Lenin counterposed a new slogan "All power to the Soviets," the tactical form which the strategy for the ousting of the bourgeois government by the socialist revolution took at that conjuncture. That was the argument of Lenin's "Letters on Tactics." Lenin summarized:

"The person who *now* speaks only of a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' is behind the times, consequently he has in effect *gone over* to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; that person should be consigned to the archive of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary antiques ..."

The BL Stalinists delight in reproducing long passages from the writings of Lenin, frequently taken out of context or general enough so that they have no immediate relevance. But this time the article they cite is exactly the necessary one, and they would do themselves a great favor if they actually read it. For Lenin leaves absolutely no doubt that those who speak for



Salvadorean peasants listening to junta's fake land reform act in 1980. Real Trotskyists are the only tendency today favoring Bolshevik policy of letting peasant allies seize land themselves.

only the bourgeois-democratic dictatorship have crossed the class line and stand against the proletarian revolution.

This does not mean, of course, that Lenin was opposed to blocs with the peasantry and other petty-bourgeois elements. On the contrary, he rejected the slogan the BL refers to, "No Tsar, but a workers' government" in favor of the seizure of power by the soviets representing the vast majority of workers and peasants. Contrary to the BL, Lenin was not accusing anyone of using this slogan (much less "mercilessly exposing" Trotsky, who in fact never used it); he was defending himself against the accusation by his "old Bolshevik" opponents that he was skipping over the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution and abandoning the peasant movement. This accusation, taken up later by the Stalinists and dishonestly aimed no longer at Lenin but at Trotsky, stood in practice for going over to the bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle.

Lenin later summed up this question as it was solved by the October revolution:

"Beginning with April 1917, however, long before the October Revolution, that is, long before we assumed power, we publicly declared and explained to the people: the revolution cannot now stop at this stage, for the country has marched forward, capitalism has advanced, ruin has reached fantastic dimensions, which (whether one likes it or not) will demand steps forward, to socialism. For there is no other way of advancing, of saving the war-weary country and of alleviating the sufferings of the working and exploited people.

"Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. First, with the 'whole' of the peasants against the monarchy, against the land-owners, against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). Then, with the poor peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one." (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, 1918)

We draw from this summary the fundamental point of agreement between Lenin's practice and the permanent revolution theory of Trotsky: the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution were only carried out by the socialist revolution, the creation of the workers' state (or proletarian dictatorship) in October 1917 — and not by any purely "democratic" stage. Lenin's formula for the democratic dictatorship had held open the possibility that the peasants could create their own party, independent of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and capable of carrying out a revolutionary policy, if allied to the proletariat. By 1917 Lenin recognized that no such peasant party was possible. As Trotsky wrote,

"the peasantry, because of its intermediate position and the heterogeneity of its social composition, can have neither an independent policy nor an independent party; but is compelled, in the revolutionary epoch, to

choose between the policy of the bourgeoisie and the policy of the proletariat." (*Permanent Revolution*, Chapter 3.)

It is with this understanding that Lenin in his classic work *The State and Revolution* posed the alternatives of the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. And the Bolshevik revolution proved the point. The peasants who seized the land had to follow the proletarian lead. Their party, the Social Revolutionaries, proved utterly ephemeral and disintegrated between the two class poles in short order.

Of course Trotsky, contrary to the Stalinists' lies, did not "underestimate the peasantry." Both Lenin and Trotsky agreed in 1917 that the peasant seizure of the land — that is, the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the countryside — was crucial for the victory of the proletarian revolution. It was the Social Revolutionaries who urged the peasants to hold back until the bourgeoisie gave its assent. Had the Bolsheviks not defeated this policy of subordinating the peasants to the bourgeoisie, the workers' revolution would have been doomed.

In 1917 Lenin's struggle to rearm the party corrected and overcame the dangerous course of those Bolsheviks, including Stalin, who failed to see the error of the "democratic dictatorship" following the February revolution. Fortunately, Stalin's class collaborationist support to the bourgeois Provisional Government was overturned. But if the history of the victorious workers' revolution of 1917 demonstrated the correctness of the program of permanent revolution, the reactionary side of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" emerged fully with the 1925-27 Chinese revolution, with disastrous consequences.

Under the leadership of Stalin and Bukharin the Comintern imposed the "democratic dictatorship" line on the young Chinese Communist Party. The CCP was told not only to enter the bourgeois Kuomintang (KMT) but was forced to subordinate itself to the Chiang Kai-shek leadership under the so-called "bloc of four classes." The Kuomintang was labeled a "workers and peasants party" and the CCP was assigned to strengthen the KMT and not to break the masses from it. Moscow-trained Chiang and his KMT were brought by Stalin into the Comintern as a sympathizing party. In order not to frighten the "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie, the demands of the workers and peasants were held back by the communists.

Stalinism Betrayed Chinese Revolution

The error of Stalin's strategy was written in the blood of the Chinese workers and peasants. The CCP turned the other cheek as Chiang broke strikes, imprisoned revolutionary workers and repressed peasant rebellions. Trotsky's call for building soviets and arming the workers and peasants was rejected as an attempt to skip over the "bourgeois" stage of the revolution. Up until the day Chiang slaughtered the Shanghai proletariat the CCP continued to hail the "revolutionary" KMT and its leader.

After Chiang slaughtered thousands of workers he was "exposed" as a reactionary, and the Comintern turned to the so-called "left" Kuomintang in Wuhan. Once again the CCP told workers not to strike and peasants not to seize the land in the name of "revolutionary" unity. Even after the left Kuomintang joined Chiang in crushing the mass movement, the Comintern vowed that "we will not surrender the banner of the Kuomintang." Thus the CCP under orders from the Comintern carried out a Menshevik policy that went far beyond anything done by the Russian Mensheviks in 1917.

Stalin's policy of allegedly "relying on the peasantry" did the

opposite of what Lenin and Trotsky's policy had done in Russia. By preventing the peasants from seizing the land, the CCP demoralized its rural allies. By preventing the workers from seizing the means of production it ensured the common ruin of the two exploited classes.

What Is "Democratic Dictatorship" Today?

Given this history, what does the Bolshevik League mean *today* when it calls for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry as opposed to the socialist revolution and claims that the latter slogan means "sabotage"? Although the BL and its cothinkers call for the democratic dictatorship in most ex-colonial countries, they never trouble to explain it very much. The most extensive description we find comes from an article on Nigeria (*Workers Tribune*, June-July 1981) that summarizes the views of the BL's West African comrades:

"They have pointed out, in relation to the concrete conditions of their countries, 'It is this concrete situation in which the working class and peasantry find themselves and which imposes the bourgeois democratic character of the next revolutionary stage in our countries.' They go on to point out that this stage of the revolution must resolve the political demands of the workers for more democratic rights, as well as speak to their economic demands. This will enable the workers to see that 'The root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights.'

"This stage of the revolution will have to speak to the agrarian problem, and the demands of the peasants. 'National in form, this revolution will have an international content under the leadership of the working class, the Bolshevik party.' The basis of this revolution will be the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry under the political and ideological leadership of the Bolshevik party. 'Once the exploiting classes are overthrown, the state that must be established will be the state of the proletariat and peasantry under the hegemonic leadership of the proletariat. Only the consolidation of the hegemony of the proletariat will allow the passage of this democratic revolution to the higher stage, that of the proletarian revolution, of the sole dictatorship of the proletariat.' "

What confusion! At first we are told that the revolution will only be democratic — that is, bourgeois. By winning certain demands, the revolution will convince the workers that capitalism, which still remains, is the enemy. If the workers still need to learn that, obviously they cannot have overthrown capitalism yet. But then we are told that the revolution has overthrown "the exploiting classes," that is, the capitalists. If anything is to be made out of this, it can only be that this

El Salvador: Revolution or Betrayal?

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ambiguous "revolution" will overthrow the capitalists but not capitalism to establish the democratic dictatorship.

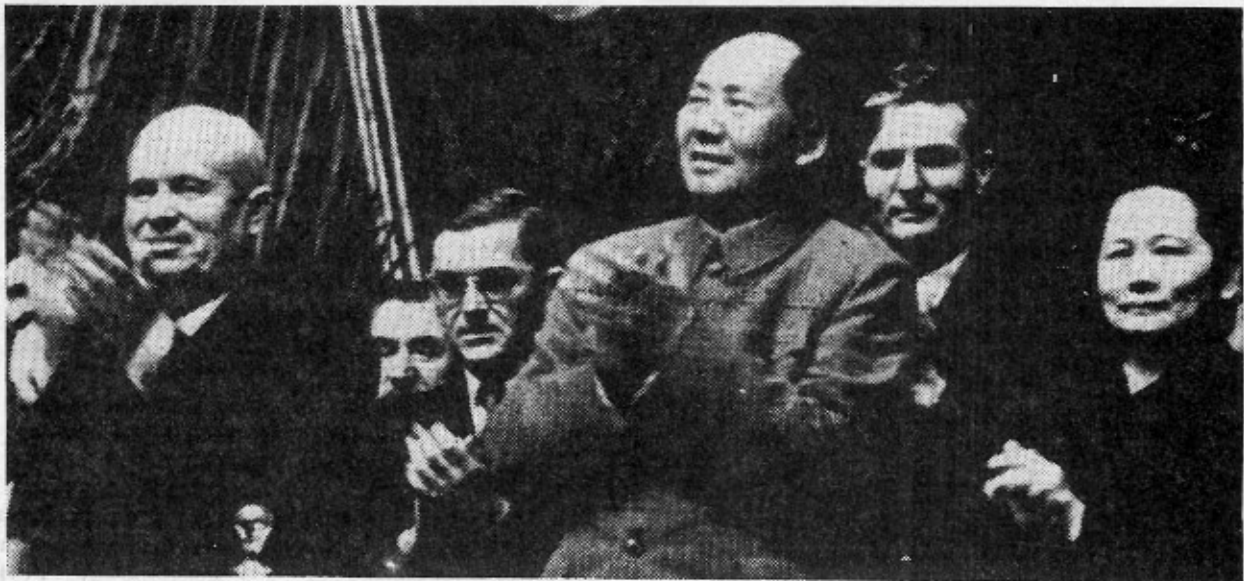
Perhaps the BL has in mind the early years of the Bolshevik revolution in the Soviet Union, where the peasants and other petty bourgeois were allowed to keep their holdings and function capitalistically under the New Economic Policy. However, the real Bolsheviks had no doubt as to what state they were ruling: it was a workers' state, a proletarian dictatorship, that permitted a measure of capitalism as a dangerous historical necessity but used the power of the state to defend the interests of the workers and poorest peasants against exploitation. And the Soviet workers well knew that "the root of evil is capitalism," since they had already overthrown capitalism in 1917.

So the BL must mean something else. Overthrowing the capitalists but not capitalism comes down to the establishment of state capitalism, the exploitation of the peasants and workers by the revolutionary state in the image of Russia after Stalin's counterrevolution. The state will be nominally under the "hegemony of the proletariat," but since the workers are so backward that they are not yet opponents of capitalism, this pious phrase is a patent lie. The BL is graciously volunteering itself to rule for the proletariat, in its name, until the benighted workers wake up out of their backward consciousness. Under this scheme, should the workers decide that they have had enough of capitalism in any form and move

Nicaragua. Unlike these nationalists, the BL wishes to use the masses as a battering ram to oust the bourgeoisie itself. But unlike genuine Bolsheviks, its contempt for the capacity of the working class leads it to opt for the re-establishment of capitalism in another form.

Although the Bolshevik League does not mention it, the real precedent for its "democratic dictatorship" is the example of Maoist China. The Maoists took power in 1949 under the banner of "new democracy," a regime which was supposed to mean a non-socialist, bourgeois state under the leadership of "the proletariat" (really the ruling party in the name of the proletariat) and backed by the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and even the "patriotic" section of the big bourgeoisie. Only in 1956 did Mao declare his regime a socialist proletarian dictatorship, having ousted his bourgeois partners from their holdings (while maintaining their generous stipends). But whatever the cover terminology, the Maoists' state was always Stalinist capitalism, a society based upon the exploitation of the workers by the state bureaucracy.

While Maoist history is the obvious model for the BL's two-stage theory of democratic dictatorship (or 'new democracy) followed later by a fake proletarian dictatorship, the BL rejects Maoism with a great deal of fanfare. But the basis for this rejection is not at all clear. The BL accuses Mao of all sorts of crimes, of which disagreeing with Stalin is not the least, but none of them fundamentally distinguishes Mao from



Birds of a feather: Stalin's spawn Khrushchev, Suslov and Mao in 1957, with Chinese vice president Soong Ching-ling, widow of Sun Yat-sen who founded capitalist Kuomintang. Sections of Chinese bourgeoisie favored Mao's "New Democracy" over Chiang Kai-shek.

toward their socialist revolution, they will be denounced as "Trotskyite saboteurs" and suppressed.

The BL's program is based on the assumption that the workers' consciousness is necessarily backward. Further, the BL disdains to fight among the workers to achieve advanced socialist consciousness and it condemns those who do struggle for socialism in the economically backward countries. This is a typically Stalinist posture, designed to justify stultified capitalism and the continuation of all kinds of bourgeois inequality and oppression in the name of historical necessity. It matches perfectly the BL's denial, already cited, that the masses had anything central to do with the revolutions that have been usurped by petty-bourgeois forces in Zimbabwe and

the BL's idol, Stalin. The BL prefers not to inform its readers of its own history so we cannot be certain, but it acts very much like a group led by former Maoists who can no longer stomach the pro-imperialist line of China which is now so painfully evident. The BL now rejects Mao and worships Stalin, a fundamentally contradictory position that is resolved only by adopting a theory of revolution indistinguishable from Mao's.

The Bolshevik League's fundamental contradiction is that it rejects bourgeois nationalism but upholds Stalinism. Stalinism, however, is the embodiment of the program of "socialism in one country" — a theoretical retreat from internationalism that led quickly to the betrayal of revolution in



Stalin depicted in typical adoration painting, "The Shining Light." In his lifetime his toadies had to accept self-degrading outlook to survive. What excuse does the Stalinist BL have today?

the 1920's (China) and then to outright counterrevolution in the 1930's (Spain and the USSR).

Stalin Defends Western Colonialism

Of course, Stalin's retreat was not really "theoretical." His first use of "socialism in one country" was to attribute the idea to Lenin in a rewritten version of *Foundations of Leninism*. The first edition had accurately noted that Lenin never believed socialism was possible in one country. But anything was permitted in the faction fight against Trotsky — first the murder of ideas and then of workers and revolutionaries.

Stalin's Russian nationalism pervaded his alliance with the U.S. and British imperialists in World War II and the establishment of Russia as an imperialist power immediately afterwards. In its article "On the Origins and Character of World War II: A Caricature of Leninism and Semi-Trotskyism" (*Bolshevik Revolution* No. 8, Summer 1981) the BL attacks Trotsky and defends the entire reactionary course taken by Stalin in World War II. The BL quotes Trotsky's position:

"The attempts to picture the next war as a war between democracies and fascism were shattered against the real march of events ...

I don't see the slightest reason for changing those principles in relation to the war which were elaborated between 1914 and 1917 by the best representatives of the workers movement under the leadership of Lenin. The present war has a reactionary character on both sides." ("Who is Guilty of Starting the 2nd World War?", in *Writings 1939-40*, pp. 84-85.)

This quote is used to prove that Trotsky was a counterrevolutionary who opposed the "anti-fascist war" against the Axis states.

Throughout the article the BL freely quotes Stalin's

reactionary garbage about the "anti-fascist coalition of the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and other freedom loving states." Having invented the "revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc" of Chiang's Kuomintang, Stalin now discovered an "anti-fascist coalition" that included "freedom loving states" among imperialists such as the U.S. and Great Britain. The BL cites Stalin's explanation of the different programs of the fascist and anti-fascist blocs:

"The program of action of the Italo-German coalition may be characterized by the following points: race hatred, domination of the 'chosen' nations; subjugation of the nations and seizure of their territories; economic enslavement of the subjugated nations and spoliation of their national wealth; destruction of democratic liberties; universal institution of the Hitler regime.

"The program of action of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition is: abolition of racial exclusiveness; equality of nations and integrity of their territories; liberation of the enslaved nations and the restoration of their sovereign rights; the right of every nation to manage its affairs in its own way; economic aid to nations that have suffered and assistance in establishing their material welfare; restoration of democratic liberties; destruction of the Hitler regime." ("The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union")

The Bolshevik League approvingly quotes Stalin's justification of a political bloc based on a program whose aim is to cover the imperialist crimes of World War II behind democratic platitudes and lies. The imperialist redivision of the world was dressed up as a war for democracy. In country after country the Communist parties stood for patriotism, opposed strikes and subordinated the interests of the proletariat to the imperialist war effort. Given the history of the decades since World War II it no doubt must come as a great surprise to the workers and oppressed throughout the world to discover that "freedom loving states" like the U.S., Great Britain and the Soviet Union fought to divide up the world only for the purpose of ending racism and national oppression.

Trotskyism Is Communism of Today

The masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America enslaved by the "democracies" rightfully sought to use the world war to free themselves from the yoke of prettified imperialism. Their failure was due to their collaborationist comprador capitalist leaders aided by petty-bourgeois nationalists, all of whom tried to get deals with both imperialist blocs. The local Stalinists, of course, once the Hitler-Stalin pact was over, kissed the feet of their own "democratic" overlords.

In place of Lenin and Trotsky's irreconcilable opposition to all sections of the bourgeoisie, Stalin searched for allies among the liberal bourgeoisie and justified this by dividing the capitalists into good, progressive, even "revolutionary" forces and bad, reactionary and fascist elements. Trotskyism represents the opposition to this capitulation to the bourgeoisie and bourgeois nationalism. The Bolshevik League's effort to oppose nationalism from the left is an impossibly contradictory position, so it is forced to confront the proletarian internationalism of Trotsky. But being Stalinist it can do so only through confusion, distortion and lies. It is no substitute for the genuine revolutionary communism of today, Trotskyism. ■

Reply to Slanders

...As an act of political sanitation we reprint the following Open Letter addressed to the International Communist Current (ICC), whose U.S. publication is the magazine Internationalism. The letter exposes a slander which is typical of today's left. Equally typical is the ICC's cowardice in refusing to publicly debate political differences.

Some months ago the LRP sent a challenge to the ICC in New York for a public debate over the significance of the momentous class struggle in Poland. The question is clearly critical for all working-class tendencies. In particular, the ICC's one-sided assertion that trade unions are necessarily "part of the capitalist state" has been demolished by Jaruzelski's military crackdown on Solidarity — despite the union leaders' utter willingness to discipline the workers in the interest of the Polish state. The ICC's line taken to its logical conclusion would have meant giving no defense to Solidarity members under attack.

The ICC has not troubled to answer our challenge directly, but it has replied indirectly. In *Internationalism* No. 33, page 14, it explains why it will not hold joint meetings with Trotskyists: "Trotskyists and other leftists who supported bourgeois democracy in World War II" are excluded from the "proletarian camp."

This description is applied specifically to us, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP). It is an outright lie. "Bourgeois democracy in World War II" means the Western imperialist allies fighting the fascist powers, and we have never supported and never will support any imperialist power in any imperialist war, no matter how "democratic" it may be. Our position on World War II is for revolutionary defeatism on both imperialist sides. It has never been different.

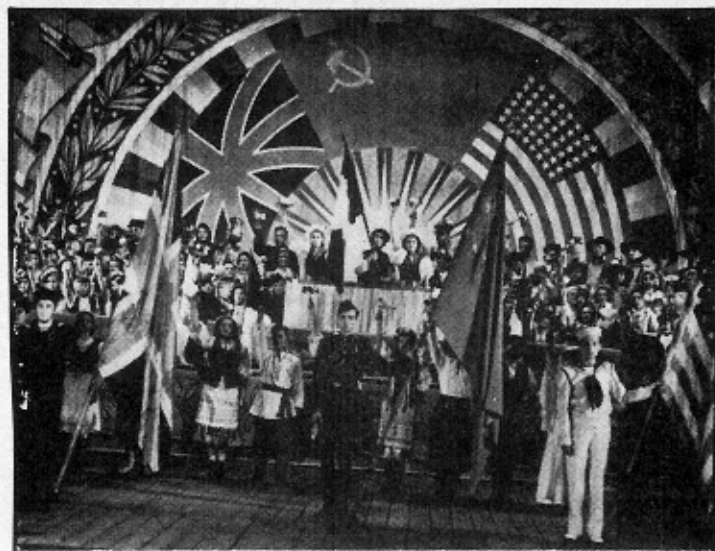
On the other hand, we are far from upset by the ICC's recognition that a class line, politically speaking, exists between us. We insist that it does, but we also insist that any description of our differences be based on truth and not falsification. The ICC knows perfectly well that we opposed the West in World War II. If it had any doubts, when it made this specific charge at an LRP forum last December it was sharply refuted. Having once been caught in the lie, the ICC now repeats it shamelessly in print. This behavior bespeaks a deep political corruption. No genuine communist falsifies the true opinion of opponents in the working-class movement. That tactic, spread wide by Stalinism, is thoroughly opposed to the revolutionary goal of advancing proletarian consciousness.

What Is a Working-Class Tendency?

Perhaps the ICC feels free to falsify our position because it does not consider the LRP to be part of the working class. That in itself is testimony to the linear, formalist and anti-dialectical character of ICC thought. The working class is interpenetrated with many petty-bourgeois layers (including the brokers of labor power, the union bureaucrats) who provide the material base for bourgeois ideology within the class. Leninists consider a political tendency to be working class if it rests upon independent class organization sociologically or if it has working-class historical roots. Within the workers' movement we struggle against every tendency that

capitulates to the bourgeoisie — reformist, Stalinist, centrist, etc. (In this sense we accept the ICC as a centrist, capitulatory part of the class.) Exclusion of all such elements from the working class is a task to be accomplished in practice by winning the workers to a revolutionary understanding, not by the fiat of a small group — especially one whose ties to the class are only historical.

Since the ICC's charge that we supported the Allies is obviously false, perhaps there is a different interpretation. The ICC's article offers none, but it leaves the impression that since



Moscow tableau hailing the Anglo-American-Russian alliance in World War II. The ICC falsely accuses the LRP of supporting these imperialists. LRP supported the mass colonial revolts against them; ICC did not. Who capitulates to imperialism?

we are Trotskyists we consider the USSR to be a workers' state and therefore defend it in World War II. The ICC, however, also knows that the LRP considers the USSR to have been capitalist and imperialist since the late 1930's and consequently that we oppose defending it during the war. We have polemicized against all varieties of the "deformed workers' state" theory over and over again.

At an LRP forum in June, the ICC came up with a new justification for its slander: our position of military support for national liberation struggles, like that of China against imperialist Japan before and during World War II. Since, according to the ICC, all such mass movements are necessarily subordinated to one or another imperialist power, even a temporary military bloc with bourgeois-led forces in the oppressed countries against imperialism is impermissible.

This excuse can only be regarded as a bad joke. To see why, look at whom the ICC embraces within its fraternal "proletarian camp." Among "those who would defend the revolutionary heritage of the proletariat" is the News and Letters group (*Internationalism* No. 27, page 14). If N&L didn't defend bourgeois democracy in World War II, it sure

does now: it is notorious for its virtually uncritical cheerleading for bourgeois nationalism, feminism and every other petty-bourgeois dead-end. Most recently, as we reported in *Socialist Voice* No. 16, page 14, N&L refused to oppose Reagan's imperialist sanctions over Poland on the grounds that the Polish workers welcomed them! This is defending proletarian backwardness, not any revolutionary heritage.

Who Calls for Arming Bourgeois Forces?

Another organization in the ICC's camp is the Libertarian Workers Group. The LWG also capitulates to bourgeois democracy: as the ICC itself noted (*Internationalism* No. 31, page 17), the LWG advocated collecting funds for the Salvadorean left (the FMLN) in the civil war against the U.S.-backed junta. This is a treacherous position. The FMLN, despite its mass base of workers and peasants, is no proletarian outfit. It consists of several petty-bourgeois groups and bourgeois elements committed to the defense of capitalism in Central America. It refuses to give arms to the workers to defend themselves against the bloody junta. The proletarian attitude must be not a penny, not a man to the bourgeoisie, even its left-most elements. The only revolutionary way to defend the masses is through proletarian independence and a technical-military bloc with the FMLN as long as the junta remains the immediate danger. To strengthen the FMLN itself, as the LWG's policy does, is to tighten the petty-bourgeois hold over the workers and prevent the mass struggle from growing over into a fight for workers' power against the entire bourgeoisie.

(The ICC's position on El Salvador is no better. On the grounds that the mass struggle is led by bourgeois elements, the ICC refuses to take sides. It equally blames the FMLN and the junta for "provoking" the massacres of thousands of Salvadoreans — unable to make the vital distinction between the junta carrying out the massacres and the FMLN which fights against them, however inadequately and even treacherously. And then the ICC doubly proves how unserious it is about life-and-death matters by welcoming the LWG's totally opposite position into the proletarian fold. We hope that no real worker ever has to be defended by the ICC! Fortunately, among the ICC's "principles" is the one that all of them remain firmly on paper and are never actually to be carried out in the practical struggle.)

Given that the ICC gives its "revolutionary" approval to groups who *politically* support national liberation struggles, we find it impossible to believe that our *military* support is the decisive criterion that justifies the charge that we supported bourgeois democracy in such a way as to make a 'debate unprincipled. When this contradiction was pointed out the ICC retreated to the position that the fact of World War II is decisive, since that was an inter-imperialist conflict. This is a possible argument — but not for the ICC, which believes that *every* national liberation struggle is subordinate to imperialism. So all of the ICC's excuses fall to the ground, and its accusation that we "supported bourgeois democracy in World War II" can only mean what it obviously tells its readers: the LRP backed the Western democracies against fascism. And it remains an outright lie.

Liars when caught often try to extricate themselves by piling on more lies. So at the June LRP forum the ICC charged that we advocated sending arms to the FMLN in El Salvador — whereas we have always fought for arms to the workers and not their betrayers (see *Socialist Voice* No. 13, page 5 and No. 14, page 20). This position was made explicit as well at an LRP forum in April at which the ICC was present. On top of that,

the ICC accused us of favoring arms for the Sandinistas which are now being prepared for use against the Nicaraguan workers. The facts are that we condemned those who advocated giving arms to the Sandinistas and repeatedly warned the workers not to surrender their guns! (See *Socialist Action* issues of July, October and November 1979.) The ICC's version of what we stand for is not only false but is the exact opposite of the truth.

It appears that the ICC is producing these incessant slanders against us because it "knows" that Trotskyism is counterrevolutionary and is desperate to "prove" this "fact" about the LRP. The flip side of this mendaciousness towards us and its sectarianism towards the working class is its opportunism in defining its "proletarian camp." The LRP, in contrast, does not regard centrism as part of the proletariat's revolutionary heritage. We work to drive all tendencies that defend pro-bourgeois views out of the workers' movement by relentless exposure and combat. We make no opportunist fudges. We have nothing in common with the "Trotskyist" family today, and we equally reject the family of "left communists" embraced by the ICC here and abroad. While the latter reject such bourgeois forms as nations and unions, their politics in substance are just as pro-bourgeois as the Pabloites', Shachtmanites', Maoists' and Stalinists' — and their opportunism is no smaller.

We are interested in debating the ICC not because we believe that its arguments are especially convincing (its resort to slander confirms this). Likewise, it is inconceivable that we would want to win anyone who is even faintly attracted to the ICC's line of physical neutrality when workers are under violent attack from Nazis or the capitalist state — just because the workers' leaders are rotten. We do, however, want to deepen our struggle with the "ultra-left" milieu in general because, as with the pseudo-Trotskyists, some potential communists might be momentarily attracted to their left posturings.

ICC Avoids Debate

At the June LRP forum, the ICC walked out in protest because only one of its supporters had been called on to speak. The LRP always offers every tendency the right to speak at our public meetings, and at times we have called on even one ICCer several times at the same meeting. At this particular occasion, with a number of opponent tendencies present, we chose not to. But the outraged ICC demanded as a right guaranteed by "workers' democracy" to have additional speakers — while at the same time refusing to answer our challenges for a public debate. On what grounds? That such a debate can only take place as part of workers' democracy within the workers' movement, for which the LRP does not qualify! Our challenge to debate remains open as a constant reminder to these muddleheads as to precisely who is avoiding discussion.

We are proud of our record as uncompromising fighters for working-class independence and revolutionary communist politics. We will not allow our record to be slandered. We fight for our program in every way possible, including debate with our opponents. Obviously the ICC prefers different methods. By avoiding a debate with us (it cannot even be said to have forthrightly rejected it), the ICC reveals once again that its positions are merely attitudes, that it will not defend even itself, much less workers in struggle. Its ultra-left self-image is only a facade for the centrist politics of opportunism towards its "friends," slander against its opponents — and political cowardice towards all. ■

Hospital Workers Need Revolutionary Strategy

The following leaflet was distributed by the LRP after a half-day semi-strike by New York City hospital workers and a contract "victory" negotiated by their union, District 1199, in July. It is slightly edited for publication.

The leaflet describes one betrayal engineered by one union bureaucracy in one city. But it sheds light on the entire labor misleadership and its current campaign of givebacks designed to satisfy the bosses' thirst for higher profits. The bureaucrats are trying to convince workers that contract capitulations are necessary to maintain capitalism and thereby to preserve their jobs and income. The strategy does help the capitalists, but it further undermines even the present level of employment and living standards of the workers. "Subcontracting," referred to below, allows management to replace union members with the non-union workers of outside companies.

The pivotal issue of our new contract negotiated by President Doris Turner was subcontracting, a demand which the League of Voluntary Hospitals has been aiming at for some time but never made ground on. This time, despite Turner's bragging and lying to the contrary, the League got its foot in that door. The union has agreed to consider the issue further in a joint committee with management. We warn workers that the deal Turner made is a betrayal of the fight against subcontracting which will enable management to escalate the attacks on our jobs immediately. How this took place involves a series of cynical maneuvers by Turner and other bureaucrats that hopefully will not keep many workers fooled for much longer.

Many workers noted by June the absolute lack of strike preparation; it was clear that the fate of over 40,000 hospital workers was left in management's hands. The meetings on Tuesday, July 13 at the Felt Forum could have been a late beginning of some show of strength but turned into just another show of the union's bankruptcy. Phony leaders and politicians gave nothing but empty speeches of solidarity. Then on Thursday workers were left milling on the streets for hours and even the negotiating committee was left in the dark, as Turner & Co. set their deal with management. On Friday many workers noted the rapidity with which the contract vote was pushed through. The union refused to provide the exact wording of the agreement and referred to "contract language" that had yet to be worked out.

Give-Backs Not Defeated

And it still hasn't been! The *New York Post* (July 30) stated that the League "has decided to defer ratification of its contract" and a League spokesman expected "that the union representing its workers will soon issue a new 10-day strike notice." But Moe Foner, an 1199 official, stated that the union had "no plans to do anything right now." (A meeting with the negotiating committee is supposed to occur on August 5.) The bureaucracy has indeed left the union in a pitiful state.

The leaflet issued by District 1199 as they rammed the contract through stated proudly, "Union negotiators also held firm against subcontracting and other 'give-backs' proposed by management." Turner and others, bragging on radio and TV, made it seem that the union had indeed held firm on at least this one important issue. However, the leaflet later admitted "In addition, a joint union-management committee

will be established to look into the issue of subcontracting." The *Daily News* (July 16) stated, "The union appeared to have won the critical issue of work subcontracting, which now will be studied by a joint union-management committee during the life of the agreement." And a *Newsday* article (July 18) stated "The contract provides for discussion of the contracting issues, but Local 1199's president Doris Turner has said she was pleased there was no surrender of members' work."

No surrender? Whether or not it is technically in the contract, a deal has been made. And evidence points to a surrender even before July 15. Reports from several delegates attending negotiating committee meetings state that Turner indicated an "open mind" to "consider" management's viewpoint on subcontracting weeks before the contract was signed. The objections of some generally staunch Turner supporters prevented her from pursuing this with the negotiating committee, and she returned to a formal position of no subcontracting. The contract did then seem a mild success, if we had held off the hospitals' demand for this giveback and won an agreement that neither Turner or anybody else could concede to subcontracting for at least two years.

Bureaucrats' Record of Concessions

But we didn't win even that. As long as Turner has consented to set up committees to "discuss" subcontracting, workers have good reason to fear. The door is now wide open. When management and the union have met in the past it's always gone past "discussion." For example, although the contract allows unlimited layoffs already, the union and management generally get together to "discuss" layoffs when a particular hospital or home is being hit. And layoffs are the result of such "discussions." The union generally brags about winning a "reduced" number of layoffs through such meetings — instead of fighting the layoffs altogether. We believe, based on Turner's record, that she will use the subcontracting committees to do just that: concede subcontracting in the upcoming period in individual workplaces that are in financial straits. Particularly hard hit will be laundry, kitchen, and housekeeping workers. The army of unemployed who are willing to do these services for below minimum wage is growing.

How can we be so sure that Turner will make further concessions? Before the contract, supporters of the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) distributed a leaflet, "Revolutionary Strategy to Defend Hospital Workers," at the Felt Forum meetings and various hospitals. We detailed hospitals such as St. Clare's, North General and Jewish Memorial where workers under Turner's leadership have given back benefits and other contract gains in order to stall off layoffs. If a particular hospital cries to Turner that the place isn't making enough money and might have to close, she has had no response but concessions. She, like all other bureaucrats, supports the profit-making system which is capitalism.

Our previous leaflet explained in detail how 1199 leaders had allowed waves of hospital closings and layoffs that had weakened the union tremendously. Their "contracts" ap-

peared more and more irrelevant to workers because they didn't defend us against actual attacks coming from the hospital bosses. Further, with the collapse of the capitalist economy, no mere contract *could* defend us against all the attacks on working people. The fact that workers expected little from the 1982 contract showed not only tremendous distrust of the bureaucracy, valid enough in itself; it also reflected the depth of the crisis which exposed the unions as incapable of solving the problems facing workers: massive unemployment and increased racism today, depression, fascism and even World War III tomorrow. This is the reality if capitalism continues to exist. So the most to be hoped for was some small defense by union leaders who want desperately and above all to preserve their *own* positions of power and *occasionally* can be forced to defend the workers for this reason.

In general, however, the bureaucrats' claimed defense of the union is exactly the opposite. For example the bureaucrats talk more and more about the need for "political action"

coalition of bureaucrats, civil rights and religious leaders formed in New York to increase voter participation among minorities. They cry about the tiny number of workers, particularly black and Hispanic, who vote. Workers are disenchanted with this phony capitalist "democracy" which delivers for the rich, not the working person. Workers will erupt into action in the future in the form of strikes which spread out of hand, or perhaps in the form of riots (which, if they don't accomplish much anymore, do frighten the powers that be). This reality wreaks havoc with the bureaucrats' impossible goal of peace between the classes. They know even better than most workers realize that the current passive disgust of workers will change into active blowups. No one tells the truth that Reagan isn't the only one responsible for the current mess. The system failed under the Democrats before him. Now they are trying to sell us the old liberal crap that caused people to vote for Reagan in the first place. Thus even at the Felt Forum the night before our supposed strike, the main message from Turner was to vote Democrat. Not only



District 1199's "friend" Democrat state senator Joseph Galiber addresses union rally to save a health center. Bureaucrats' policy means saving politicians' jobs while workers lose theirs.

because they too admit that the contract itself doesn't answer the crisis. But the bureaucrats' "political action" is to tie hospital workers and all oppressed workers to a strategy of passive electoral support for capitalist politicians — despite every experience that these same capitalist politicians who promise help oppose the interests of workers at every turn.

An example was all the lobbying done in Albany by union officials in 1979 against the closing of Brooklyn Jewish Hospital. An article entitled "Brooklyn Jewish is Here to Stay" in *1199 News* (November 1979) claimed, "Political leaders at the local, state and federal level moved heaven and earth to keep Brooklyn Jewish alive." It heralded a joint federal and state "pilot project," also called the "Brooklyn plan," which dictated cost-cutting measures including closing some hospitals and homes and replacing them with out-patient centers. However, not only is Brooklyn Jewish *still* threatened with closing but Greenpoint is now being closed as well because 1199 officials and others accepted the trade-off of "cost-cutting," which *always* amounts to an attack on workers' livelihoods.

Capitalist attacks are now hitting all workers hard, and as usual minority workers are being made to suffer most. All over, the capitalists and the pro-capitalist bureaucrats and minority leaders are worried about explosions of angry

did the bureaucrats set up voting registration tables at the door but they made politician Frank Barbaro the guest speaker.

General Strike Needed

The supporters of the League for the Revolutionary Party presented the only opposition to this treachery. At both meetings at the Felt Forum on July 13 as well as the Joint Delegate Assembly of July 12, we spoke up and said that a true defense of hospital workers requires *not* collaboration with the anti-worker Democrats, but the exact opposite: the unity of the working class. In the face of subcontracting and other attacks, we argued this means a general strike of all workers fed up with givebacks. This goes way beyond the trade unionism of the bureaucrats. Inevitably such a mass strike turns into a political attack on the system.

We can't predict the *exact* rate at which disaster will hit. The hospital industry, for example, is still faring better than such sectors as auto and steel, where plant closings and layoffs are already a way of life. Whole cities like Detroit have already been devastated as a result. Across the country blacks and Hispanics are obviously at the receiving end of the attacks. It is crucial that advanced workers prepare the revolutionary leadership *now* to lead the general strikes and other struggles that will inevitably break out. ■

Capitalist Crash

continued from page 1

shocks have been coming quicker, and in some respects are getting bigger." And Harold van Cleveland, the senior international economist of Citicorp: "They are all occasioned or made more dangerous by a weakening of the two hegemonic powers, the Soviet Union and the United States."

There is no doubt that across the world the bourgeoisie is conscious of the threat not only of instability but of anarchy and revolution as well. If the bottom drops out of the banking system then the entire capitalist structure is endangered. Even in the U.S., the capitalists' fear of American workers was aptly expressed by the May 23 *Boston Globe*: "They see the possibility of revolution behind the glazed dumbfounded sandbagged looks of thousands of hungry people who need to be fed." Many workers still blind themselves to the fact that hunger, for example, has returned as a problem even in the American paradise, but the big bourgeoisie does not.

The overall U.S. aim in the world crisis is clear even if its execution is wobbly. Reagan is trying to contain and defeat mass unrest everywhere, hoping to restore the power of dominant Western imperialism (the U.S., West Europe and Japan). He seeks a tougher, more military approach toward both the neo-colonial world and the rival Soviet bloc, although in practice he may have to temporize on occasion out of fear of igniting revolutions or drawing complaints from his allies.

A reinvigorated imperialist bloc could deepen its exploitation of a docilized "third world" and thereby, it is hoped, overcome its economic crisis. The Western bourgeoisies are relentlessly squeezing their working classes, but they can't afford to push the undefeated and still powerful proletariat

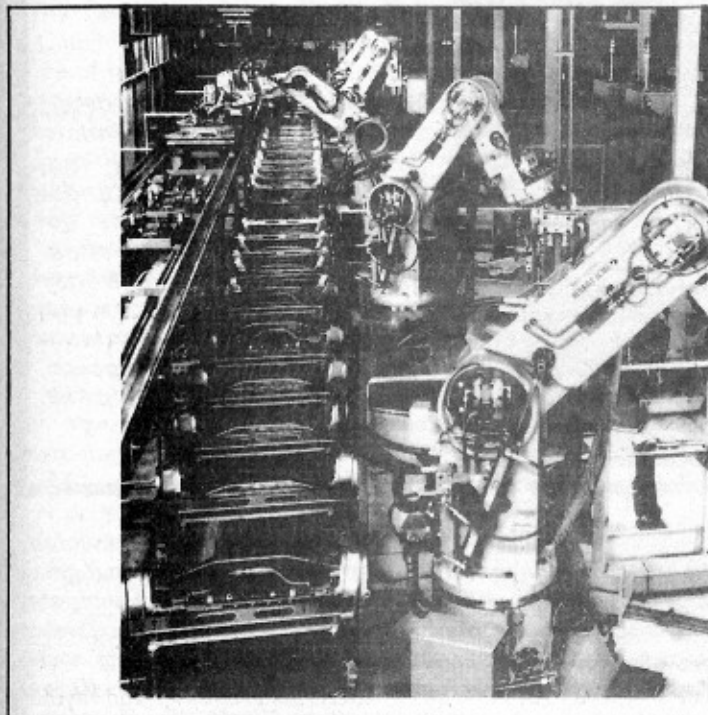
allies into a more militant stance towards the ex-colonies and, more critically, it is dusting off the Russian threat in an attempt to lock the allies together under U.S. guidance — and not accidentally, to prevent further West European economic influence in East Europe and the USSR which might easily outrun U.S. gains in China.

But Reagan's world strategy is faltering so badly that the capitalists are scared. The bourgeoisie's loss of confidence in its economic leadership is most clearly demonstrated in relation to the domestic aspect of its policies. This is a welcome change from the cynical blustering about the "magic of the market" that is really believed only by hired public relations hacks like Reagan himself. As we pointed out in "The Marxist Response to Reaganism" (*Socialist Voice* No. 13, published in the spring of 1981), Reagan's economic program was bound to fail and would only accelerate the crisis produced by conditions endemic to imperialist capitalism. A Marxist analysis of the underlying economic forces shows that there is no alternative to the crisis except for depression, fascism and war as long as capitalism is not overthrown.

It is not just the Reagan economists whose confidence in their own nostrums is waning. The formerly dominant bourgeois ideology of Keynesianism (government spending and intervention to stimulate the economy) has not been revived, but a variety of notions have replaced it among the liberals, ranging from semi-Reaganite neoliberalism to increased corporate statism to utopian radicalism. As well, the most prominent pseudo-Marxist theories are being discredited, including the advocacy of third-world nationalist revolutions and defense of the Soviet model of "socialism" as solutions to the world's ills. The time is overripe for a genuine proletarian Marxist understanding of the capitalist economic crisis.

Behind the Crisis

The current crisis is more than just one of the periodic downturns that have characterized capitalism for over 150 years. Its persistence — the fact that no serious upturn has intervened between recessions for almost a decade — is the result of the collapse of the post-war boom which created the illusion of permanent prosperity in the imperialist countries



Business Week of May 31 hailed Mitterrand's handling of the French state-owned auto company: "Renault's smooth labor relations allow it to deploy 254 robots. ..."

"Socialist" Mitterrand's smoothie tactics were aimed at tricking workers while modernizing French capitalism. Reformism failed again: workers are now promised only austerity.

against the wall. The U.S. capitalists are also trying to restore American hegemony over their allies. As the profit squeeze deepens the potential for cutthroat competition, trade war and ultimately real war between the major powers grows, despite their paper agreements. So the U.S. tries to kick its

from the 1940's through the late 1960's.

The post-war boom itself was made possible by the conjunction of several factors:

1) The defeat, in unprecedented proportions, of the world working class: this was the result of the victory of fascism in

several major countries and the overthrow of the Soviet workers' state in the 1930's, and the derailment of revolutions in both East and West Europe after the war by the internal betrayals and external armed forces of Stalinism.

2) The defeat, outright or relative, of all rivals to U.S. imperialism in World War II: Germany and Japan were subjugated to U.S. domination for many years, Britain and France saw their empires dissolved and their influence in the ex-colonial countries seized by the U.S. Except for the limited spheres still held by Britain and France and newly conquered by Russia, the U.S. held sway over the world and was thus able to concentrate economic resources under one state, again to an unprecedented degree.

3) The expanded role of the capitalist state, domestically and externally: the state, built up by the war and the war economy, played a new role in centralizing capital and dampening periodic crises.

Because of the weakness of the working classes, surplus-value was extracted at a high rate in the post-war years. Because of the U.S. hegemony (just after the war two-thirds of world industrial production took place in the U.S.) this massive surplus-value was concentrated and available for profitable investment, especially in countries devastated by the war. As a result, a 20-25 year boom started in the United States, spread to Western Europe and later the defeated countries of Germany and Japan, and even brought formerly agricultural nations of Eastern and Southern Europe into the industrial world.

A political factor was also important. The Cold War line embarked upon by Washington in the late 1940's served not only to reinforce U.S. hegemony over the Western powers but

national struggles over which it had influence, as in Vietnam. The Kremlin's fear that they might spark a war with the bellicose U.S. was enhanced by its increasing economic decline in the later post-war period.

The defeat of proletarian revolutions, the depoliticization of the metropolitan working classes and the Stalinization of radical forces everywhere ensured that "third world" upheavals were limited to petty-bourgeois anti-colonial programs that did not challenge imperialism, i.e. world capitalism, in itself. Thus the capitalist boom could last for a period longer than ever before.

But the conditions that engendered the boom were only temporary and soon turned around. The resilience of the working classes in the major industrial countries meant that even while shorn of radical leadership they were still strong enough to prevent the rate of exploitation from rising enough to offset the tendency for the rate of profit to fall as capital investment rose. The industrial growth of the U.S.'s imperialist rivals (including imperialist-owned industries in low-wage "developing" countries) undermined American hegemony and lowered capital concentration on a world scale; the resulting competition led to overproduction in specific industries such as steel, textiles and shipbuilding. The mass rebellions in many ex-colonial countries, while politically constrained within the imperialist system, made the extraction of surplus-value harder and more expensive. Imperialism's rivalries and loss of stability led to a tremendous arms build-up, and the vast military budgets of both the imperialist and non-imperialist countries formed the major part of state spending, a considerable drain on productive investment and thereby on economic expansion and renewal.



Workers packaging Ajax detergent in Jamaica, West Indies. World economy is now thoroughly international; under imperialism, this means inevitable growth of protectionism, i.e.: trade wars, currency wars, national wars, race wars, world wars. Under communism, it would mean peace, abundance and freedom for all.

also to isolate, disorient and at times defeat radicalism within the workers' movements. One effect of this was industrial speed-up and increased productivity gains won by the capitalists in return for wage increases forced by the workers' militant struggles, which were noticeably divorced from threatening political aims. A depoliticized labor aristocracy was thereby rebuilt in the advanced industrial countries.

For the USSR as well, the Cold War meant an opportunity to deepen its hold over its satellites and allies, a goal it pursued with only mixed results. It was able to contain the working class at home but was not so successful with its foreign tributaries. The Cold War did push the USSR to temper

These reversed conditions led to the economic situation of the past decade: insufficient profits for the thoroughgoing restructuring of capital that is necessary for a new boom, and no deep business depression to wipe out the most backward, obsolete firms. High state spending on arms, the social benefits won by workers and the subsidization of inefficient capitals led to large public debts from World War II on, and the tax drain on profits also meant that a growing portion of business investment had to come from borrowed funds as well. The steadily accelerating debt build-up has reached the point where in 1981 38 percent of capitalist income other than salaries was derived from interest payments, as compared to 33

percent from corporate profits (according to figures in the *Economic Report of the President*, February 1982) — the first time since the 1930's that interest income has exceeded profits.

The gigantic proportion of governmental deficit financing and bank-created corporate debt is what Marx called "fictitious capital," the capitalist claims on income that are not based on productive investment but on waste production or sheer speculation. During the classical business cycles, much of fictitious capital would have been eliminated during depressions, but in the post-war period it has expanded continually while being only slightly eroded by the high rates of inflation that it itself is largely responsible for.

The inherent drive of capitalism to constantly create fictitious claims on surplus-value threatening to choke the system reflects its most fundamental internal contradiction. Marx pointed out that capitalism's compulsion to accumulate capital (value) was originally a necessary spur to the expansion of the productive forces. Today proliferation of the value forms is at variance with any qualitative growth of the productive forces. In the ascendant epoch of capitalism fictitious capital could be periodically destroyed; in the decadent imperialist epoch it becomes a brake on the system that can be overcome, revolution aside, only by cataclysmic purges in the form of great depressions and world wars.

The upshot today is that many corporations use their profits not for productive new investments but for buying up other companies and speculation on the financial markets. The interest paid out on government and bank accounts is increasingly not backed by actual surplus-value produced by productive workers. The profits are a fiction, nothing but paper — and the whirlpool of paper continues to wheel about until firms decide that they had better try to call in what they are owed and grab something tangible. At that point the whirlpool threatens to sink every capitalist trapped within it.

Why Reaganomics Is in Trouble

Caught up in the whirlpool of fictitious capital, Reagan's hope of halting inflation by cutting social spending will have only the feeblest effect. In theory, the Reaganomics program was intended to stimulate investment (and thereby create new jobs and output) by taking funds from the government (in reality, from workers) and giving them to businessmen. That is why every layer of the capitalist class loudly applauded the program at first, and even the "wisest" heads of the big bourgeoisie from vice president George Bush to the *New York Times* were urging that the formulas they once labeled "voodoo economics" be swallowed and "given a chance to work."

Aside from the theologians of supply-side economics who are now deserting Reagan's ship, none of the bourgeois spokesmen actually believed that Reaganomics would actually "work" in the sense that Reagan had promised during his presidential campaign: create prosperity and restore America's economic mastery over the world. No, they went along because Reagan's program was a weapon in the class struggle: it strengthened the bosses and weakened the workers. Precisely by *not* restoring prosperity — by increasing unemployment, inflation and the decay of public services — it forced workers to accept lower wages and living standards and thereby tried to push capitalist profits upward.

After almost two years of this it is clear that working people have suffered as planned but industry has not expanded. Capitalists have taken their tax breaks and handouts but have not reinvested them; they only add to the whirlpool. Despite all Reagan's victories in Congress, business investment remains stagnant because of fears of continued inflation, recession and



Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe teeters on the edge of civil war. Nationalism has betrayed heroic struggles of ex-colonial masses to free themselves from imperialism and ruin. International communism is the only way.

the reality of sky-high interest rates. The fears are perfectly justified: Reagan's combination of an expanded federal budget through military spending and lower tax revenues will only enlarge the federal deficit and thereby trigger more inflation. The high interest rates (despite the Democrats' protests) are a holdover from the last year of the Carter presidency; their real purpose was concisely stated by Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul Volcker when Carter appointed him (October 1979): "The standard of living of the average American has to decline. I don't think you can escape that."

So although Reagan won his election on the promise of prosperity as opposed to the reality of Carter's austerity program, the reality of Reaganomics is no better for working people. It too means austerity: it is making the rich richer and the poor poorer. This won Reagan the bourgeoisie's votes, but they are not surrendering their own capital to his ideological superstitions. The *Washington Post* quoted one Wall Street stockbroker who had been ecstatic about Reagan: "When I go on the floor of the exchange, I'm not voting Reagan's interests, I'm voting my company's."

For a year Reagan has regularly protested that criticisms of his program are unfair: it hasn't gotten off the ground yet. True, technically his tax and budget changes took effect only last October 1, and the second round of tax cuts waited until this past July 1. But in reality these programs were intended to motivate business "psychologically" to increase production by holding out the expectation of higher profits in the future. However, it is Wall Street's eye on the future that warns it to keep away from borrowing at current interest rates and from producing more goods when there are few customers who can afford to buy them. Accordingly, business plans for capital spending dropped rapidly from late 1981 to mid-1982.

One Reagan adviser who recently left the Treasury Department for greener pastures, Paul Craig Roberts, explained why the administration's program would have little impact on investment: "by the time it got here, we were in the recession, and in a recession you can't make investment decisions with a lot of confidence". (*New York Times*, June 30,

1982). So recession isn't the cure for recession! As the quack doctor told his patient, "Come back when you feel better."

Depression Ahead

Few bourgeois spokesmen are willing to say openly what they think is necessary. *Newsweek* magazine quoted the "highly respected" economist Henry Kaufman, vice president of the major Wall Street firm of Salomon Bros., who gave a hint: "We are in a very difficult position, from which we have limited chances to extricate ourselves unless we are willing to undertake draconian measures." The "we" he speaks of is the ruling bourgeoisie; the measures will be against the rest of us, as Reagan's present (and presumably non-draconian) program proves. But neither Kaufman nor others have spelled them out yet.

What the bourgeoisie is not saying is that the only cure for the capitalist crisis, if capitalism is not destroyed as a system, is a full-scale depression to smash workers' living standards in the industrialized world to half their present levels. As well, the

the most crisis-ridden imperialist countries, unable to "peacefully" redivide the shares of world exploitation, must play the fascist card. Depression accelerates the nationalist drives but doesn't solve them. Fascism, the peak of national chauvinism, can only keep its national cross-class unity intact through war. Depression and fascism pave the way for the real capitalist "solution" — world war. Only a consciously revolutionary working class can prevent this.

Liberalism to the Rescue?

In the United States few alternatives to Reaganism are actually being brought forward. The Democratic Party is still being put forward. Some "neoliberal" politicians are now advocating "reindustrialization" proposals along the lines of tax breaks for corporations that will invest in new computer and information technologies and attempt aggressively to export. Even if such schemes lead to much new investment they will mean profits for the capitalists, not jobs for workers, because their very purpose is to modernize by eliminating



Kwangju, South Korea in 1980 was taken over and controlled by rebels for days before the military could retake it. The world is becoming alive with revolt. Military repression is only a stopgap, and international capitalism grows ever more fearful of collapse.

bourgeoisie itself must be disciplined: financial speculators who use corporate profits to buy up other companies or artificially inflate real estate prices must be wiped out, inefficient factories and industries must be allowed to go under and then be replaced, and state intervention in the economy (even state ownership) must be increased to centralize credit and planning. Most capitalists, small ones especially, will not like this solution; nevertheless, it has been the only capitalist way out in the past. Reaganism, a program of de-statification and non-discipline by the government, is a utopian detour that the bourgeoisie will sooner or later get rid of to save itself.

And depression is only part of the story. Initially depressions make workers more conservative, but later their effect is to impel upheavals. Depressions eliminate inefficient capitals but do not sufficiently centralize capital, especially at the conclusive international level. The great depression of the 1930's proved that more was necessary. The state must be strengthened and must expand. The workers organizations must be crushed and their independent spirit broken. At least

workers to cut costs.

More important proposals for reindustrialization are being offered by labor flacks and reform socialists so in bed with the corporations that they cannot distinguish the workers' basic interests from the bosses'. Michael Harrington of the Democratic Socialists of America, for example, rejects the idea of a capital shortage and sees the problem as misallocation of funds. "Democratic planning" and participation by workers can better manage capitalism than can the capitalists, he thinks.

Harrington calls for tax breaks only for bosses who make "job-creating" investments at home (*Democratic Left*, September 1981). Such implicit nationalism is made explicit with his endorsement of the openly protectionist policies of Doug Fraser, UAW chief. However, labor-intensive capitalism will lose out against the competitive advantages of larger, more modern companies. Thus the protectionist program not only promotes chauvinism but defends industrial backwardness as well. It spurs trade and currency wars like those of

the 1930's that set the stage for World War II.

The drive for massive profits does not come from bad management; it is essential to capitalism. A "trickle-up" capitalist firm run by the workers would collapse; neither Harrington nor "participating workers" (read: labor bureaucrats) can possibly convince the capitalists otherwise. Harrington would get further kissing a frog than the bosses' butts.

Harrington's proposal is an upside-down version of one widely publicized by Felix Rohatyn, the investment banker who supervised the financial "rescue" of New York City at the expense of its workers. Rohatyn's would revive the Reconstruction Finance Corporation of the 1930's; his RFC would not specialize in the backward investments fantasized by Harrington but would reward responsibility to capitalism as a whole. In particular, it would demand wage and productivity concessions from workers and a governmental climate that restrains the demands of public employee unions. Even though Harrington repudiates Rohatyn, it is the latter who has accurately captured the logic of capitalism: investment at a time of crisis is not going to make concessions to labor unless it is forced to by a struggle that threatens to go beyond capitalism.

More radical-sounding alternatives will become much more widespread than they are now when the working class begins to fight back more consistently; these will inevitably be linked to the popular front political program that ties workers' institutions to the defense of capitalism in order to sidetrack mass upheavals that might otherwise move in a revolutionary direction. They too are attempts to rescue a corrupt and dying system, but in contrast to Reagan's "trickle-down" notions and the neoliberal variant on it, they have the advantage of more convincingly appearing to aid ordinary people.

French Socialists Also Turn to Austerity

One model for radical proposals to preserve capitalism was the program of the Mitterrand government of France, which included a reduced work week, higher minimum wages and social security benefits, decentralized planning, tax changes favoring the poor, and above all nationalization of major companies to ensure useful investment policies. For a year the French workers held back their struggles to allow the Socialist Party program (backed as well by the Communists) to work, but the reforms have been minimal and the benefits have gone mainly to the capitalists (including the generously compensated owners of the nationalized firms). Mitterrand's real purpose, as we observed in *Socialist Voice* No. 14, was to preempt the workers' struggle. And after a year of failing to stimulate growth by encouraging consumption, his regime in June announced a new austerity policy featuring a wage freeze and devaluation of the franc.

The capitalist aim of a nationalization policy is not simply to save profitless industries that are necessary for the well-being of capital in general, as with the nationalizations carried out by Britain's Labour Party after World War II. Mitterrand aimed to use the profits from the nationalized firms to expand investment, productivity and jobs — in theory, where private industry failed. The French Socialists believed that Keynesian government spending had failed to provide economic stimulation, and much more was necessary. The French bourgeoisie went along, by and large, hoping this strategy would make French capital more competitive internationally. It did not. The increasing role of the state led to higher taxes, a drain of capital by foreign owners, and thus a higher rate of inflation in France than in its rivals. So, as was inevitable, the "left" bourgeois government turned against the working class that had put it in office.

Even aside from their impractical utopianism, the fun-

damental flaw in all the liberal and radical strategies for saving capitalism is that they fail completely to come to grips with the real contradictions underlying the permanent crisis. They offer no cure for the overaccumulation of capital (especially fictitious) which demands shares of an insufficient amount of profits. It is worth noting that some radical theorists deny that there is a shortage of surplus-value, pointing to the plethora of profits that big corporations are using to buy each other up. But these profits, though large in absolute terms, are still too small for the investment at a higher technological level necessary to revitalize the capitalist economy. Thus, to the extent that any of the radical proposals to "humanize" capitalism actually succeed in winning sizeable benefits for the masses, they must reduce the rate of profit further and intensify the crisis. If the capitalist system itself is not overturned, deepening its crisis only brings closer its "solution" of depression, fascism and war.

Crisis Is Worldwide

In its foreign economic policy, the Reagan administration has been divided between the hitherto dominant pro-NATO wing that fears above all a breakdown of the world economy into sharply competitive trade and currency blocs, and the "isolationist" wing that fears the U.S. is really propping up its competitors by compromising with the other imperialist powers. The "internationalist" wing had seemed to be winning out: at the beginning of 1982 Reagan refused to impose a debt default on Poland that would have hurt European bankers; he had previously cancelled Carter's grain embargo to the USSR; and he had seemingly agreed at the June Versailles conference to lower U.S. interest rates in the hope of stimulating an inflationary recovery, as the majority of the Western European powers wanted.

Alexander Haig's replacement as Secretary of State in June by the more spineless "internationalist" George Shultz indicates that the "isolationists" still hold influence. Reagan moved quickly to restrict the sale of American technology to firms trading with the USSR, in order to block construction of a Soviet natural gas pipeline to Western Europe and a Japanese-Russian deal to exploit oil resources in the Northern Pacific Ocean — thereby shocking his European allies and threatening one of Russia's chief sources of hard currency. But he continued to encourage U.S. grain sales to the Soviets, an inconsistency that suggested to the European bourgeoisies that they are Reagan's real economic targets, not only Russia's far weaker economy. Only shortly after the apparent harmony at Versailles the capitalists' worst fears were on the rise again.

As *New York Times* economic correspondent Leonard Silk summed up, "Many conservative businessmen in France and throughout Europe share the fear of a financial breakdown of the world economic system. But the differences among business and government leaders on what can be done to dispel the risk are deep — as Versailles again demonstrated." The whole episode of Reagan's reversal shows again that the capitalists have no common answer to the crisis and that any of them, even their nominal leader, the U.S., will shove the others' heads under water to keep itself afloat.

With the rulers of the world's strongest power vacillating towards an antagonistic stance in relation to the other main centers (Western Europe, the Russian bloc and Japan), the precarious position of the world economy comes into sharper focus. A critical problem is the enormous funds that bankers have loaned to financially weak countries, notably Brazil (\$55 billion), Mexico (\$42 billion), Poland (\$25 billion), Turkey (\$15 billion) and Argentina (\$14 billion). It is claimed that the financiers could survive a default by any one of these

leading borrowers, but two defaults could bring the whole house of cards toppling. At present, in this regard, Mexico's oil revenues are undermined by the world recession, Argentina suffered vast losses in the war over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands — and Poland's well-known economic nightmare has avoided bankruptcy only through the continued generosity of the U.S. treasury. For the first half of 1982, industrial production under military rule was down 6 percent from the same period last year and 14 percent below 1979. Escalating interest rates and oil bills only worsen the problem for the non-oil producing borrowers. The recent military coups in Poland and Turkey amount to the only answer the capitalists have at the moment — and it is hardly a lasting one, as is proved by the continued outbreaks of organized class struggle in Poland and the Argentine dictatorship's disarray in the face of mass outrage over its military defeat.

Desperation in the Backward Countries

The Argentine junta's adventurist attempt to take over the Malvinas is characteristic of a period of heightened world tension. The slight economic margin on which so many of the world's nations live has been tightened by the long recession and is a leading cause of the increasingly frequent outbreak of wars. And along with the recession, the financial brinkmanship and the instability of the "third world" there is another great source of political instability — the breakdown of imperialist "detente" or cooperation between the U.S. and the USSR since the beginning of 1980.

What solution is there to the overwhelming problems faced by the poor countries? According to the leading "third world"

warn that if we do not peacefully and wisely solve and eliminate the present injustices and inequalities, the future will be apocalyptic." (*Intercontinental Press*, October 22, 1979).

The "cooperation" that Castro envisaged included "reducing and finally eliminating the unequal exchange" in international trade, control of inflation by the countries that have created and stimulated it through their policies, cancellation of international debts, access to the markets of "developed" countries for the products of the backward countries, and an annual \$25 billion contribution from the imperialist countries to alleviate the masses' burden. However, all the inequities are real, but they also result from real economic laws of the capitalist system; ending them means ending capitalism through socialist revolution. Cynically, Castro reminded his U.S. colleagues that he remembered some Marxism — "In any case, the prospect of a world without capitalism is not too frightening to us revolutionaries," a remark that was greeted by "laughter and applause" — but the thrust of his proposals (as cited above) was to plead with the imperialists to grant equality peacefully, as if the evils of capitalism are only unfortunate policies of greedy or evil men. Any genuine revolutionary communist would know that "peace and cooperation among the peoples," which really means among the existing imperialist and ex-colonial nations, is a lie as long as capitalism exists. Revolution, no laughing matter, is the only answer.

Two years later Castro said much the same thing at a congress of 1000 members of the Association of Third World Economists in Havana in April of last year. Citing the same



Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega with Cuba's Fidel Castro. Castro has backed Sandinistas' betrayal of Central American workers to placate U.S. capitalism. Reagan nevertheless spurns both.

spokesman, Cuba's Fidel Castro, addressing this question in his widely publicized speech of October, 1979, at the United Nations reporting on the latest summit conference of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, the answer is not socialism or revolution but collaboration between the oppressed and their oppressors:

"I have not come here as a prophet of the revolution. I have not come here to ask or wish that the world be violently convulsed. I have come here to speak of peace and cooperation among the peoples. And I have come to

problems as in his U.N. speech, he added:

"All these problems, of course, are now more serious, and a realistic approach to this staggering situation is not in sight. Moreover, international political and economic relations have seriously deteriorated. A cold war atmosphere is emerging; detente is vanishing; and U.S. threats against the countries that do not toe the line predict a further worsening of tensions and the danger of war."

All very true, if we understand the word "realistic" to mean

solutions within the boundaries of capitalism. But again Castro had no other solution in view: "Ours is an era of democratic struggle within the context of universal cooperation among nations. There is no other valid and rational choice." Thus he rules out the hopes of millions for revolution and socialism, even including the pseudo-socialism of Castro's own Cuba. And Castro's speeches are not just abstract propaganda; in his assistance and advice to the petty-bourgeois nationalist revolutionists of Nicaragua and El Salvador he has made clear that he means it, in effect warning them "don't do as I did" but try at whatever cost to cooperate with imperialism.

Castro's line symbolizes the great retreat from the hopes that third-world revolutionaries held in the 1960's. At that time it appeared that there was a bountiful imperialist prosperity to be shared. The Fidelistas' "internationalism" was only the most Marxistical formulation of the anti-imperialist demands of a wide variety of petty-bourgeois nationalists demanding to be cut in on the wealth. The attempts to construct independent national capitalist states (some of them, like Cuba's, with state-owned production) were all doomed in a world dominated by imperialism. Cuba itself survives because it is subsidized by the USSR at the rate of \$4 billion annually, a burden that Russia's rulers cannot afford to extend to additional clients.

But the aspirations and theories that motivated the Cubans and other revolutionaries have not survived. Despite the occasional achievements in health and education won by the mass struggles, the third-world nationalists' dreams of industrialization are shattered: capitalism in its epoch of decay must loot the dependent countries, not develop them, and the Soviet model has failed to provide a successful alternative. The masses' anti-imperialist sentiments are still raging, however, and can break out just as easily against the "anti-imperialist" third-world regimes as they once did against the obvious compradors. Thus Castro speaks for the whole stratum of dependent nationalist bourgeoisies when he warns of apocalyptic revolutions as a danger to imperialists and "anti-imperialists" alike. And now that Mao's China and Sekou Toure's Guinea have openly turned to the West for capital, even Russian-backed Cuba and Vietnam have made placating noises in the same direction, to no avail.

Soviet Bloc Faces Crisis

The Soviet system has failed not only to assist its would-be imitators in the third world; it is also decaying at home. And so it undermines as well the ideology that presents Russia and its allies as a "post-capitalist" society whose supposed triumphs offer a solution to the crisis of Western capitalism. Leaving aside the pro-Moscow apologists who maintain that the USSR remains the workers' paradise of yore, the most prominent spokesman for this viewpoint is Ernest Mandel of the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International. He states (*Inprecor*, May 29, 1980):

"The countries with planned and socialized economies have not been hit by the same phenomena that have marked all the industrialized capitalist countries without exception: the periodic absolute fall in industrial production during the phases of recession; massive unemployment; the closing of numerous enterprises; the collapse of entire branches of industry; the accumulation of huge quantities of unsaleable commodities."

Mandel could write such a passage, one of many, only before the Polish workers exploded in the summer of 1980 in

response to the sharp intensification of the economic crisis in their country. Since that time things have looked considerably different. As noted above, Polish industrial production has been falling absolutely; the collapse had begun before 1980. Under the pressure of the workers' struggle Warsaw's economic planning institutions collapsed and the fictional, purely administrative, character of Stalinist "scientific planning" was plainly revealed. As for the "socialized" economy, the military crackdown continued to expose the capitalist laws that fundamentally control it: the legal size of private farms (long dominant in Poland) has been increased, and non-self-financing enterprises have been threatened with closure.

Poland Proves Eastern Bloc Not Progressive

Poland is only the most extreme case of the crisis facing all the Stalinist states. And the crisis is not really new: Stalinism has all along lagged badly in the advancement of labor productivity, the key factor in determining whether a society represents a genuine step forward for humanity. In the past, we have refuted Mandel's theoretical claim that Stalinism escapes the economic laws of capitalism (see *Socialist Voice* No. 2); now events have proven our case for us. Whereas the "post-capitalist" theory has proved inadequate to foresee the character of the crisis of Stalinism, our analysis of Stalinism as a particular form of capitalism enabled us to apply Marxism to the Eastern bloc as well as the West.

Mandel is correct on one point: the crisis takes a different form in the Stalinist economies. In traditional capitalist countries the falling rate of profit induces periodic recessions and depressions. Under Stalinism it compels investment cutbacks due to shortages of materials; the result is the underproduction, not overproduction, of consumer commodities. Mandel blames the Stalinist crises not on economic laws as understood by Marxists but on "the more and more ineffective functioning of the bureaucratic system of management, aggravated by the indirect effects of the capitalist crisis" (*Intercontinental Press*, June 28, 1982). Such a conception logically allows for the possibility of solving the problem by changing management — a necessarily reformist political program. It is perfectly analogous to the Western liberals' and social democrats' notions of reforming the crisis out of traditional capitalism.

Years ago Mandel offered similar "structural reforms" as the solution for workers in the West (see our polemic in *Socialist Voice* No. 2), although now his reformism is coated with more revolutionary rhetoric. But even when he calls for the destruction of private property, he means only the elimination of individually held property titles; when he says destroy the bourgeois state, he is coy about what can replace it. In fact, the Stalinist societies satisfy both ends of his prescription, even though Stalinism is not his preference. Given that he cannot distinguish between Stalinism and genuine socialism on the fundamental level of class relations, his rhetoric amounts to an advocacy of the Eastern bloc over the crisis-ridden West.

After the Polish upheaval such a position cannot be taken seriously by revolutionary workers. Poland shows, like Portugal in 1974-75, that capitalism will remain alive whenever the proletariat itself has not seized state power and made itself the ruling class. The exploitative relation between "employers" (as the Polish workers themselves label their rulers) and workers must assert itself once again, and from this all the laws of capitalist development and crisis follow inevitably.

Unlike the social democratic reformists, Mandel declares himself a revolutionary dedicated to the overthrow of

capitalism in every form. Their alternatives to Reaganomics obviously do not challenge the limits of capitalism; his does, on the surface. But these are days when social democrats and even Ronald Reagan can quote Marx in pointing to the economic, political and moral decay of the Soviet states; in contrast, Mandel's criticism that Stalinism lacks workers' democracy is not wrong but superficial. The social democrats are blind to the depth of the crisis in the West; Mandel is equally blind when facing East. So it is no accident that Mandel's "post-capitalist" solution is similar to the Eurocommunists; and in turn his followers and the Eurocommunists find themselves in bed with the not-so-left "left social democrats" and their solutions for Western capitalism.

The crisis is undermining two of the crucial supports for capitalism within the working class: the labor aristocracy and belief in the Stalinist alternative. Stalinism today is far from being a stable prop of world capitalism; its appeal to workers has ebbed to the breaking point and can hardly hold the masses in check. When the USSR was still a degenerated workers' state in the 1930's its centralized economy remained relatively impervious to the great depression. Today underneath its formal centralization is real anarchy which could bring the whole shaky system down with it. As in the West, the once-heralded accumulation of the East has produced vast waste and fictitious values rather than production for human use. By defending such "planning" and "socialization," Mandel and similar apologists are purveyors of what in reality is merely neo-woodoo economics.

Increasing numbers of working class people are searching for answers and guides to action as the crisis of capitalism grows more and more intense. Our premise is that the true solutions must be based firmly on the proletariat's in-

dependent class interests. That means rejecting every pro-capitalist nostrum no matter how cleverly disguised: protectionism, community control, profit-sharing and co-determination, warmed over "structural reforms," nationally limited "socialism," Stalinist capitalism. In the coming struggles each of these false ideologies will be tested and defeated, more decisively than they have been already, and in the eyes of vaster numbers of people. Through such struggles will the theories and program of genuine Marxism be able to win out.

A workers' state is the only practical alternative. By "practical" we mean that it is the only alternative that can work, not what the soothsayers mean: the only alternative which masses are willing to swallow at the moment. Even this palm-reading is a lie; masses continue to rise and fight for a society of abundance and peace. It is their misleaders who have tried to convince them in the name of socialism and communism that socialism and communism are impractical for now, meaning forever.

The world is now technologically capable of producing more than enough to feed, clothe and shelter its billions. The only barrier to prosperity for all is capitalism, which can only produce to amass profit, maintain class ownership of property and defend the values of existing capital — all of which in this epoch is directly counterposed to the satisfaction of human needs. A world of workers' states would have no interest in higher profits or preserving the form of value. The huge energies of mankind functioning on the highest levels of technique would reduce labor time and raise production to the point where the search for security would end and the real work of civilization would begin.

Poverty and war are unhuman, idiotic and impractical in today's world. Communism is the only alternative. ■

Busing Hoax

continued from page 2

learn unless they rub shoulders with whites. The standards that determine "success," according to the judge, are transmitted not by good teachers using top quality facilities but by the fact of white majorities in the student body. No wonder Garrity felt free to lop off teachers and facilities in the interest of spreading "majority culture" among blacks.

A similar point of view was implied by Thomas Atkins, counsel for the NAACP in Boston. In 1975 he opposed the demand to extend the busing plan to Boston's suburbs, some of which have public schools that are among the best in the country: "There are enough white folks in Boston to integrate the schools."

Defenders of busing can still be blind to the busing fraud when it is right in front of their eyes. The July 2 *Militant*, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, quotes "a prominent Black educator, Dr. Charles Willie of Harvard University" as stating that desegregation has improved Boston schools. "There is greater parent involvement, more programs, and more Black and Hispanic teachers," the paper claims. But a few lines later the same article reports that the Boston School Committee "has laid off over 1,000 teachers in the last year and a half, slashed programs, and closed schools." Pseudo-Marxists, just like Reaganites, can believe two opposite things at once.

The busing plan has not only produced a segregated system of a poorer quality but has failed miserably to reduce the inequality between all-black schools and those still attended by whites. An example of this is described in the *Boston Globe*

(June 24). Concerning guidance facilities: in South Boston High School, a formerly white school now integrated, there is a ratio of one guidance counselor per 150 students. In still all-black Dorchester High School there is one counselor per 450 students. The citywide average is 1 to 400, far above the recommended maximum of 1 to 250.

South Boston High has long symbolized racist resistance to school desegregation. It was given a higher budget including more security guards, and a police escort for the buses bringing in black students. Its headmaster, Jerome Winegar, believes that it is "probably the most effectively integrated school in the city, despite the loss of all but 200 white students" (*New York Times*, June 5). Yet even with all the police, Winegar admits that the buses are still frequently stoned. In addition, "We figured that in the last 15 months we've had 15 or 20 of our kids killed or seriously injured, or who have killed someone else" (*Times*, March 31).

Black parents are clearly fed up with a mandatory busing plan that makes their kids into targets. They've called Garrity's computerized plan "geociding" for the murder of their communities. They want the right to choose their children's schools and not follow some liberal's order into the arms of a lynch mob. They have painfully learned the "justice" of the police who not only let white mobs beat up blacks but frequently join and lead them.

The truth is that capitalism in decay cannot desegregate, much less provide a good interracial school system. And now the deepening economic crisis has eroded the basis of implementing even such miserable liberal programs such as busing. The liberals are rapidly abandoning their reforms, real ones as well as the busing disaster, and setting the stage for more direct attacks against blacks and working people.



Boston's black students were bused under police "protection" to conform with court-ordered integrationism. Busing's inevitable failure was an annoyance to liberals, a disaster for blacks.

What alternative is there? Blacks and others have the right to decent schools in their own neighborhood or specialized schools elsewhere, as they prefer. "Free choice" is preferable to forced busing in the sense that black students should have the right not to be thrust into dangerous situations for no good purpose. However, it amounts to another reasonable democratic-sounding demand which is just a liberal delusion under this system — and a deadly one for its black victims if they treat it as a solution.

The Boston situation is not isolated, nor is it part of an objective determination of the merits and demerits of alternative educational policies. There is a right-wing attack on busing in Boston and across the country. It is part of a broad reactionary assault against every change won by blacks in recent decades, even the most nominal and illusory. In this climate, "free choice" presents obvious pitfalls. In pulling away themselves from the misbegotten busing tragedy, the middle-class black leaders are using a slogan dangerously close to those used as a facade by the racists. "Free choice," under the present surge of racism and the liberals' "tiring" over "the race question," could easily become just a cover for a policy of de facto segregation and de facto degeneration of the public schools.

"Free choice" is seen as analogous to the "open admissions" program won at the New York City colleges in the early 1970's. But that victory was temporary: then the afterglow of prosperity nurtured the illusion that capitalism could tolerate so broad a concession. Those days are over. Rising unemployment is hitting hardest at black youth, who face a lifetime of joblessness; rewards for striving at education seem non-existent. Government is increasingly subsidizing the private schools for middle and upper-class youth at the expense of public education, a gain workers won in the past but are now losing. Capitalism is rapidly expanding the population of lumpenized black hoodlum elements, which threatens to engulf young black working-class students in cynicism and worse, in the schools and on the streets.

The crisis is hitting white working class youth as well, even though not as sharply. Growing racist terror against blacks

signifies the increase not only of lumpen elements among whites but also racism's penetration into the working class: witness the recent murder of a black transit worker in New York City. The threat of job competition and the hideous social pecking order is taking its toll.

Free choice to attend miserable schools to get non-existent jobs in a collapsing society is meaningless. The present liberal course can lead only to fratricidal warfare between blacks and whites for shares of a diminishing pie. It is little comfort to know that under "free choice" lynchings will take place on the street and not on the buses. Just as the liberals let the police "defend" black kids under busing, those black students wishing to go to predominantly white schools will receive equal protection — none. Armed self-defense for schools and neighborhoods is essential.

Black workers are generally far more aware of the nature of the capitalist attack than are white workers. This consciousness stems from their history of struggles as well as the fact that they have borne a disproportionate share of the burden. Now, however, capitalism must deepen its attack against the entire working class. No worker, white or black, can afford not to fight back against the ruling class.

Not the least thing that working people want is quality public schools for their children, with more well-trained teachers and better facilities. Like decent living conditions, jobs, food and shelter, these are their rights. While liberals claim that fundamental reform is possible under capitalism, Marxists know that even minimal reforms can now be won only by the threat of mass upheavals and that basic changes are possible only through socialist revolution. This the masses will learn in struggle.

A fighting working class demands unity. Class struggle is the most potent weapon against racism and prejudice. Interracialism born out of common struggle is the most potent weapon against segregation and phony capitalist integration. It is a foretaste of a socialist world in which previously oppressed minorities will really have free choice as to how and with whom they wish to spend their lives. They are already learning that "free choice" under capitalism is just another disguise for a forced ride to unemployment, illiteracy and racism. ■

Peace Movement

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I and the Trotskyists of World War II. Here is what the Manifesto of the Fourth International had to say, written in 1940 when utopian isolationist sentiments were still widespread in the U.S.:

"On November 1, 1914, at the beginning of the last imperialist war, Lenin wrote: 'Imperialism has placed the fate of European culture at stake. After this war, if a series of successful revolutions do not occur, more wars will follow — the fairy tale of a "war to end all wars" is a hollow and pernicious fabrication. ...' Workers, call this prediction to mind! The present war — the second imperialist war — is not an accident; it does not result from the will of this or that dictator. It was predicted long ago. It derived its origin inexorably from the contradictions of international capitalist interests. Contrary to the official fables designed to drug the people, the chief cause of war as of all other social evils — unemployment, the high cost of living, fascism, colonial oppression — is the private ownership of the means of production together with the bourgeois state which rests on this foundation. ...

"Our struggle against United States intervention has nothing in common with isolationism and pacifism. We tell the workers openly that the imperialist government cannot fail to drag this country into war. ... To count upon holding the United States to neutrality by means of newspaper articles and pacifist resolutions is like trying to hold back the tide with a broom. The real struggle against war means the class struggle against imperialism and a merciless exposure of petty-bourgeois pacifism. Only revolution could prevent the American bourgeoisie from intervening in the second imperialist war or beginning the third imperialist war. All other methods are either charlatanism or stupidity or a combination of both."

Just as Lenin at the beginning of World War I predicted further imperialist wars, Trotsky at the eve of World War II predicted a third — unless the proletarian socialist revolution intervenes. In the present anti-war campaign it is urgent to repeat these warnings and demonstrate the treacherous bourgeois interests behind the movement for pacifism. But as before, the most prominent "socialist" tendencies are repeating the pacifist nostrums of the past or openly fronting for either their own imperialism or its rivals.

The problem is not with the pressure of multitudes to prevent war. Nor is it simply the fact that the peace establishment leaders are liars and demagogues, although they are. The problem is their loyalty to the capitalist system, their insistence that peace is possible through peaceful reforms or mass pressure on the capitalists. This is what deludes and disarms masses of people so that the selfsame "anti-war" leaders can emerge as endorsers of imperialist war as the only road to peace.

The truth is that capitalism itself is the cause of war, and that the leaders who find capitalism inescapable inevitably find its wars unavoidable. Capitalism feeds on the profits squeezed out of working people at home and abroad. When the workers resist exploitation, as they must, the ruling classes turn to armed repression, and the pressure for war builds up. When the system is in economic crisis as it has now been for over a decade, the struggle to pry more profits out of workers' labor intensifies and so does the battle for the spoils among the

corporations and between capitalist nations. In its epoch of decay war is as vital to capitalism as oxygen to a human being.

The Nuclear Freeze Fraud

If capitalism needs war, why then are so many capitalist politicians marching these days in the "peace movement"? The key reason lies in their fears over the fragility of imperialist economic and political stability cited in the article on the capitalist crisis elsewhere in this issue. On top of the deepening social crisis, the costs of modern war — including "conventional" arms, let alone nuclear — are staggering. The bourgeoisie does not in fact object to the immense stockpile of nuclear weapons, enough to destroy civilization several times over. But it does see that producing more at an accelerated pace, as the new arms race promises to do, threatens to drain the blood out of an already tottering economy. Suddenly the bourgeoisie recognizes its traditional nuclear policy as "madness." This is not a sudden attack of sanity but of parsimony.

In an effort to cope with the growing unrest, Jimmy Carter had revived the Cold War in an effort to weld together the dissolving Western bloc and enlist its working classes behind a program of patriotism and self-sacrifice. Carter bumbled so badly that Reagan's staunch cold warriorism appeared as a necessary and stabilizing alternative. But the menace of Russia just wouldn't hold up as a credible threat, given its floundering descent into economic and political weakness. So Reagan's foreign policy has been equally bumbling, and the world is more unsettled and the European allies more hostile than ever before. Moreover, Reagan has betrayed his promise to cut the costs of government, having only shifted them from social spending to the military. Reducing the social budget any further could spark rebellions by every layer of the working class; the previously stable middle class is already uneasy, as June 12 showed. In sum, the American strategy of boosting the arms race in order to undermine the straitened Soviet economy has proved to be a two-edged sword, wreaking havoc with American capitalism as well.

Hence the "nuclear freeze" strategy. On the one hand, it appeals to bourgeois elements who want to reduce absurd arms costs; on the other, it preserves the U.S.'s military overkill advantage while allowing a build-up of conventional arms. After all, while the immediate threat of nuclear war with the USSR is hard to sell as the Soviets retreat more and more from direct confrontation, the ruling class does see a very real need for a stronger arsenal to equip "rapid deployment forces" against the spreading upheavals. This is the aim of both the Kennedy-Hatfield freeze bill in Congress and the "no first strike" proposal of Vietnam war criminals Bundy, McNamara & Co. Conventional weaponry is designed to repress mass struggles, its kill power is approaching nuclear dimensions and it can be used with far less political risk.

Nuclear freeze is the ideal issue for the Kennedy wing of the Democratic Party, traditionally connected with federal aid to social programs. At a time of cutbacks it seems to promise a visible source of funds, the nuclear arms budget, when no other is available. The bourgeois nuclear freezers are promising to restore some of the minimal welfare state programs that have already proved failures, in the hope that rising mass anger will flow through safe channels. But even these feeble "human needs" promises are lies, since conventional arms costs are also stupendous and the economic crisis is unabating.

The freeze is also a golden opportunity to head off more radical or utopian political movements. Reagan's casual public attitude towards nuclear war has scared millions. And

while no one in the bourgeois camp even pretends to have solutions to complex issues like the economic crisis and environmental destruction, the nuclear freeze is a starkly simple demand. It has attracted frustrated citizens who feel that here at least they can take a clear stand against one of the world's menaces. Moreover, there is no question that the freeze issue has taken some of the steam out of campaigns against specific wars, especially the U.S.-backed butchery in El Salvador.

The mass base of the freeze campaign, as distinct from the bourgeois interests who lead it, is mainly among the petty bourgeoisie and middle classes. Reagan's failure to cure the economy as promised may hurt the big capitalist but it wipes out the small one; those who survive are revealed to be totally dependent on the big banks and credit institutions. All over the country "pillars of the community" are seeing their fellow middle-classmates destroyed and are joining the respectable nuclear freeze army. It is no accident that such middle class professional organizations as Physicians for Social Responsibility are burgeoning, and the reason is not that doctors have suddenly discovered that nuclear war is dangerous to your health. If Wall Street is frightened, Main Street is nearly apoplectic. "Freeze" is the top of an iceberg of discontent.

On the other hand, the working class as a whole has not been drawn into the campaign. Workers want peace just as much as do the middle-class "concerned citizens," yet they do not turn out for marches, referenda and town meetings in proportionate numbers; blue-collar workers and the more oppressed minorities and unemployed do so even less. Workers may regard the nuclear freeze issue as a practical one because powerful politicians like Kennedy are behind it. But they have been trained by years of capitulation by union bureaucrats to regard the working class as powerless, and therefore see little purpose in marching for peace. As well, working people understand the reality of the social system better than the illusion-ridden middle classes. Even without advanced class consciousness, workers know that capitalism cannot reduce its armament in a world constantly at war. Freeze may be "practical" politics but it won't bring peace.

The Disarmament Fantasy

The needs of the working class and the oppressed are reflected, weakly, by a section of the traditional peace militants, the radical and socialistic left, who would like to incorporate the masses' struggles into the middle-class peace campaign. The pacifists and pseudo-socialists have a program different from the bourgeois freezers: unilateral disarmament by U.S. imperialism.

Some say that a nuclear freeze would be a first step towards disarmament. Others point out that the freeze is a fraud and call for unilateral disarmament as an alternative. Either way, the idea that a world-straddling imperialist power could surrender or seriously weaken its armed strength is a fantasy, and the overwhelming majority of people recognize this. The bizarre truth is that the "socialist" disarmament advocates are suffering from greater illusions in capitalism's reformability than are the "cynical" masses. Those who support such dreams are making the nuclear freeze, in comparison, look like the only realistic policy.

Whatever their specific program the radicals' inability to criticize the fundamental assumptions of the nuclear freeze liberals serves only to assist the liberals' real goal, mass support for the Kennedy presidential campaign in 1984. For example, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) defend the freeze as an aid, not a detriment, to U.S. military needs. Its head, Michael Harrington, writes: "If this campaign is seen as indifferent to the legitimate national security interests of the

United States, it will fail. Its genius, its broad support, has resided precisely in its insistence on a *bilateral* freeze, that demands be made of both Washington and Moscow, and that to do so promotes, rather than ignores, the national security of the United States." (*Democratic Left*, May 1982.) Harrington prefers to ignore the idea that the "national security of the United States" means the imperialist interests of U.S. capitalism — in particular, war wherever in the world it is deemed necessary.

Of course, Harrington is a committed supporter of Edward Kennedy in socialist disguise, so the coincidence of their views is not an accident. Other groups pretend to disdain the Kennedy campaign and counterpose a "grassroots" approach. But their grass is rooted in the same electoralism, only on a local level: chapters of the National Freeze Campaign Clearinghouse are deliberately set up according to congressional districts, although the Clearinghouse claims to be non-partisan. Still, these local campaigns and initiatives can only lead to Kennedy. Vermont disarming by itself means little; the Maryland town that declared itself a nuclear-free zone has not exactly thwarted the great powers. Come Election Day even the most utopian localists will realize that control of the military lies on the national level, and Kennedy will be their man.



In June 1982 pacifists blocked various United Nations missions in protest against nuclear arms race. Demonstrators and cops bizarrely acted out pre-arranged protest-arrest roles. Above, pacifists play dead at Israeli mission. The real victims stayed dead in Lebanon.

The Workers World Party takes a different evasive tack by endorsing what it refers to as the "Freeze Now aspect of the anti-war movement." Despite the overwhelmingly bourgeois and middle-class character of the campaign, the WWP credits this "aspect" to the working class and the oppressed and insists that it really represents a desire for an all-out struggle against Reagan and the ruling class. WWP leader Sam Marcy admits the "glaring contradiction" between the masses' hopes and their treacherous leadership, but that, he argues, "is for tomorrow's battle in the struggle against the war. Today's battle ... is to bring out the broadest and the widest sections of the mass of the workers and the oppressed against the danger

of imperialist nuclear war." (*Workers World*, April 30.)

This attitude is endemic among much of the left, which always finds "building the movement" on the order of the day and putting off the question of what leadership (that is, what program) the movement needs to a tomorrow that never comes. By building a middle-class movement rather than a working-class alternative, by endorsing its "nuclear freeze" slogan that means imperialist rearmament, by explicitly not challenging its leadership, and by specifically aiming the movement against Reagan without even mentioning the equal danger of Kennedy — Marcy is objectively leading his readers onto the Kennedy bandwagon, even though he will refrain at least for now from leaping aboard himself. The WWP is most practiced at this sort of duplicity, as we demonstrated in analyzing its "All Peoples Congress" last year ("Anti-Reaganism vs. Anti-Capitalism," *Socialist Voice* No. 14).

The Socialist Workers Party has adopted a seemingly more left-wing stance. It condemns the bilateral freeze as a "double trap" because it not only retains a lot of nuclear and conventional weaponry but also because "Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union is not an imperialist or an expansionist power" (*Militant*, May 14). Try convincing the workers of East Europe that the USSR confines its police repression and its exploitation within its own borders! No matter, the SWP reassures itself, "It is not necessary to agree on the class character of the Soviet Union in order to build an effective anti-war movement in this country. ... what is essential ... is that it clearly focus its fire on the big-business government in Washington."

This point is half correct and therefore very wrong. The problem is not different opinions about the Soviet Union but different opinions about U.S. imperialism. The crucial fact is that the leadership and program of the present campaign are defending the interests of Washington's capitalist government even though they object to the current governors. Underlying this difference is the even more fundamental one of the class character of the anti-war movement. Its middle-class nature means that it cannot be a reliable opponent of U.S. imperialism and must ultimately back its government in war — unless a working-class movement, whose interests inevitably clash with those of capitalism, takes the lead. This requires exposing the class nature of the bourgeois leaders and their allies in the upper strata of the middle classes who lead the peace "movement" ranks. Posing the question as it does, the SWP can only offer a utopian solution: "clear and forceful demands for unconditional and unilateral disarmament by Washington." One can clearly and forcefully ask a hungry tiger to be a vegetarian, too.

The "Movement" Divided

This disarmament demand, along with opposition to U.S. foreign interventions and "redirect resources from the military to meet human needs, especially to minority communities" was the program of the Third World and Progressive People's Coalition (TWPPC) that cosponsored the June 12 rally. In the infighting that led up to June 12 the TWPPC won some compromises on the slogans and was also granted a number of speakers, most of whom were placed at the end of the rally program and thereby given time for only a few sentences. This is typical behavior from liberals whose main concern is to attract additional pro-war forces on their right to the freeze fraud and are therefore hesitant to give even lip-service to "divisive" demands. Overdone but symbolic of what they want — although it got little applause — was the keynote speech by Orson Welles: "Not only our praise but also our gratitude goes

out to a president who listened. ... He is a part of us." As a result of the vast turnout on June 12 the liberals probably feel that their few concessions to the radicals were too much: the radical contingents were tiny in comparison and thoroughly lost in the crowd and the proportion of blacks and Latins was equally small.

The "movement" that the liberal and radical peace leaders cohabit within can fight only an abstract war. It cannot and did not condemn the real wars actually occurring and supported by Washington on the date of such a massive demonstration: Britain's bloody defense of its dying imperialism in the Malvinas (Falkland Islands), Israel's invasion of Lebanon and the junta's slaughter in El Salvador. True, some of the radical speakers on June 12 spoke out against one or another of these. But none condemned the rally's leadership for avoiding a stand against them. Nothing was said to embitter the harmony among pro-war and anti-war activists joined together against war in the abstract.

Pro-war activists? Yes, they were there too. Despite the pretenses of the rally sponsors that only "non-campaigning" politicians would be allowed to speak from its platform (as if such a politician exists), several did speak and many others were present and amply publicized by the bourgeois news media. Among the latter was New York Mayor Koch, a prominent backer of Israel's war; other pols present in general were supporters of both Israel and Britain in the South Atlantic. An anti-war movement that cannot condemn actual wars, especially one like Israel's which embodies the danger of triggering a nuclear war as much as any crisis does today, is a slimy fraud.

The Real Solution

The Democratic Party campaign that the present peace movement is leading to would be a preventive popular front, a bloc between sectors of the bourgeoisie and the working class for the preservation of capitalism. It would seek to prevent outbreaks of the class struggle or to contain them when they occur. Some of the leftist peace groups are nominally opposed to any popular front campaign, but in practice they are building for it by not challenging the thesis that peace and disarmament are possible without overturning capitalism. They aid the Kennedys who claim that the road to peace passes through the victorious "stabilization" of world imperialism. In contrast, revolutionaries understand that only by supporting mass struggles and winning victories over oppression can world war be prevented. Reformist socialists (some even call themselves revolutionary) believe that under mass pressure capitalism can be compelled by stages to surrender its arms and cease war. On the contrary, genuine Marxists understand that armed power is the very essence of the capitalist state; it could not disarm even if it wanted to. The only way to end war is for the workers to overthrow capitalism; in doing so they must defeat and disarm the capitalists. That is how the Russian workers succeeded in winning their revolution in 1917; likewise, the movement of American soldiers in Vietnam to refuse to fight and their "fragging" of officers helped end U.S. involvement there. There are many examples of soldiers turning against the imperialist state; there are *no* examples of *any* capitalist regime *ever* getting rid of up-to-date weapons.

There are those on the left who claim to know that capitalism will only be disarmed by force yet who still support the bourgeois "disarmament" slogans. Take the Revolutionary Socialist League: "The sponsors of the June 12 rally are urging that our movement put its faith — once again — in the

promises of liberal politicians that they will end the nuclear arms race and bring about world peace." To prevent such an error, the RSL tells its movement, "It is right to support limited demands for 'no first strike' and a nuclear freeze. But if we are fooled by the capitalists' empty promises of disarmament, we will only be setting ourselves up for World War III. Since the capitalists, both East and West, cannot and will not seriously disarm, they must be disarmed ..." and so on, all the way to the socialist revolution (*Torch*, June 15).



Peace campaigns have swept Western Europe, misdirecting mass anti-war sentiment. Organizers underplayed their own imperialisms while criticizing U.S. and Soviet warmakers.

perfectly all right as a first step; it is proper to call on the capitalist rulers to tell (read: lie to and fool) people that they will disarm. But the liberals' peace promises are *not* a step towards disarmament. Precisely by fooling people with their "freeze" the liberals will gain the elbow room to prepare for the next major war. The RSL glosses over the *contradiction* between the bourgeoisie's self-disarmament, which is really non-nuclear rearming, and its disarmament by the socialist revolution. The RSL's revolutionary rhetoric only serves to cover the fraud.

Revolution Only Answer to War

In contrast to the leftist tricksters who deem it practical to "win workers" by jumping on the freeze bandwagon even though they believe it to be a fraud, the revolutionary program based on deepening workers' consciousness is both realistic and truthful. It requires building a revolutionary party of the politically most advanced layer of the working class and a revolutionary movement, not one for peace under capitalism. It means winning the presently small numbers of workers, black and white, who are willing to fight the capitulations of union and minority misleaders and who have no faith in capitalist reform. It means encouraging the wider

numbers of workers who are searching for ways to resist the capitalist attack when it hits them. It means ceaselessly propagandizing to unify the widest numbers of workers in action through the general strike to show them their enormous strength. The only thing "impractical" about our program is the workers' unawareness of their power to change the world. The capitalist crisis itself is forcing masses to fight back and learn this lesson.

The program of the LRP for ending the threat of World War III is the international socialist revolution. Inevitably workers' uprisings start in one country, but they easily spread across borders, as Central America proves. The Polish events of 1980 illustrate how workers can wield their own power. They began with a general strike and workplace occupations. As in Gdansk and the Baltic coast, the workers' leaders in each enterprise were linked in a centralized council. In addition, a permanent nationwide central council is needed. To protect the workers from police and army attacks, the workers' councils would have to organize the arming and training of defense guards; the armed workers would then offer a fighting alternative to the working class rank and file of the army. Then the central workers' councils could prepare to replace the existing state and become the sole government. What the reformist leaders temporarily derailed in Poland, thus enabling the rulers to counterattack, will be taken up again by conscious revolutionary workers in the future.

"NO DRAFT" IS NO ANSWER!

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As Leninists, we know that the only answer to imperialist war is class war; we are not pacifists. We also know, however, that an armed, uncompromising workers' struggle will be far less bloody than an imperialist war because it depends on mass enthusiasm and support, winning over the rulers' troops.

The LRP will march with any and all who wish to fight against war in any action that is not restricted to support of capitalist frauds and is not restricted to the leaderships' political ideas. Indeed, we were at the June 12 parade with our banners reading "'Peace' under Capitalism Means War; Socialist Revolution Is the Only Alternative!" Other signs denouncing the "movement" for not condemning Israel's war often got an unexpectedly friendly response — along with the anticipated cries of "Don't be divisive!" from establishment peaceniks. The Communist Party contingent, interestingly enough, was the most upset. When it came past, its marshals shifted position to block out our sign and tried to drown our megaphone with choruses of "Peace Now!" endlessly repeated. Funny how fake pacifists are invariably ready to go to war against the ideas of real communists.

Our real work, however, lies in reaching our fellow workers with the message that peace and plenty can be achieved only through revolution. In the current peace demonstrations there are many middle-class people and individual workers who can be won to the cause of the proletarian revolution and socialism. We will continue to oppose the contrary goal, that workers should be won to middle-class illusions of capitalism beating its swords into plowshares. ■

Peace Movement Sets Stage for War

In this century there have already been two world wars that slaughtered tens of millions. No wonder ordinary people everywhere want peace; no wonder nearly a million people marched in New York City on June 12 against the danger of nuclear war. But every major war has also been preceded by anti-war campaigns such as today's. They are not only a harbinger of war in that people sense that international crises are leading towards explosions; the peace movements are also a necessary preparation for war on the part of the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of pro-capitalist "socialists." Only if

Socialist International, after having passed periodic resolutions opposing inter-imperialist wars, collapsed when the war broke out in 1914, most national parties supporting the military efforts of "their own" bourgeoisies.

After the first world war anti-war efforts resumed. The League of Nations was founded as the institution whose debates would replace war. The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1925 renounced wars and set limits on armaments. In 1933 Britain, France, Germany and Italy issued a declaration promising never to use force. President Roosevelt pledged neutrality in a



The stage was set at June 12 anti-nuke rally by Democrat politicians, celebrities, union bureaucrats. Playing the role of peace-keepers today, these luminaries will join the war chorus tomorrow.

the working class understands this can it build a movement totally different from the death-end anti-war movements of the past and end war once and for all.

In the years before World War I, the Hague Conference of 1899 called by peace-loving Tsar Nicholas II (who considerably took time off from his daily routine of pogroms and oppression) established a voluntary Permanent Court of International Arbitration approved by the U.S. Senate. A second conference in 1907 rallied more people in support of its goals. Woodrow Wilson was re-elected president on the slogan "he kept us out of war" in 1916, at the very time when preparations for U.S. entry were already being made. Indeed, the year 1917 saw more peace conferences than any other — until the U.S. finally joined the war in April, and then most peace advocates went right along. It is well known that the

1935 speech, the day before he reviewed the greatest naval demonstration in U.S. history. The Communist Party and numerous pacifists formed the American League against War and Fascism as well as the Keep America Out of War Committee. But again when war came they all signed up, although this time the Communist International, in contrast to the pre-World War I socialists, had the foresight to announce its pro-war betrayal in advance.

Since World War II the pattern has continued. The United Nations took up where the League of Nations left off; it not only did not prevent the Korean War but provided a cover for U.S. intervention. John Kennedy signed the 1963 nuclear test ban treaty only to escalate the arms race. Lyndon Johnson, in the tradition of Wilson and Roosevelt, won election in 1964 as the anti-war candidate — and the Vietnam war was the result. The leaders who preach the virtues of arms limitation, disarmament, peace talks or weapons freezes are following the road of the eminent pacifist liars of the past, paving the way for the war to come.

Throughout this sordid history only one political current has told the truth, the Marxists: the Bolsheviks of World War

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**Warning: History Has Determined That
Pacifism Is Dangerous to Your Survival.**