

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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## Break with the Union of the Left!

# French Popular Front on the Rocks?

With French legislative elections only six months off, and the Union of the Left showing at least a 53-47 edge in the public opinion polls, the breakdown of summit discussions between leaders of the Communist Party (PCF), the Socialist Party (PS) and Left Radicals (MRG) came as a bolt out of the blue. The talks were first suspended on September 14 when Left Radical leader Robert Fabre stalked out of a meeting denouncing the PCF for attempting to lead France toward a "collectivist society," and for not giving enough weight to the minuscule MRG within the popular front. Thereupon leaders of each party rushed before the TV cameras insisting on their willingness to continue discussions and their "sincere desire" to reach an agreement, while blaming their partners for "intransigence" and supposed refusal to negotiate.

There followed ten days of political ballet, in which each of the three components of the popular front executed a series of pirouettes and pas de deux, trying to make the others look like clumsy oafs and themselves like the most serious, militant and statesman-



Leaders of the Union of the Left at post-election press conference last April. From left, Radical Fabre, Communist Marchais and Socialist Mitterrand

like opponents of the Giscard government (a combination rather difficult to achieve). Each posed as the best defender of an "up-dated" version of the 1972 Common Program. But to the great surprise of everyone—evidently including the main protagonists—the reconvened talks, which had been ex-

pected to undo Fabre's theatrical gesture and to lead to an agreement on how to "actualize" the Union of the Left platform, again broke down on September 24 and currently remain suspended.

Since then there has been wide speculation in the press on the meaning of these spectacular events. The leading Paris bourgeois dailies have questioned the "independence" of the PCF, speculating on pressures from the Kremlin, for the purpose of whipping up traditional anti-Communist fears. The *New York Times*, transparently reflecting the line of the U.S. State Department, has sought to use the same speculation to widen the breach between Moscow and its troublesome "Eurocommunist" allies. In Spain, where relations between Communists and Socialists are at an uncertain stage, the right gloated and the left worried about an apparent "Suicide of the French Left" (*Triunfo*, 24 September).

The most apocalyptic visions of a definitive break-up of the Union of the Left are clearly inspired by wishful thinking and political stratagems. The French political world is nearly unanimous in seeing the current blow-up as the product of complicated electoral maneuvers. But the purposes of the maneuvering, and the reactions to it by the self-proclaimed "far left," reveal much about the shape of the next crucial months and the upcoming elections, to be held under the sign of the popular front.

### Disunion of the Left

The seeming split in the Union of the Left comes at a time when it not only appeared to be in a position to win at the polls, but when the governing "presidential majority" is deeply divided as well. The venomous rivalry between President Giscard d'Estaing and former prime minister Jacques Chirac, combined with severe unemployment and economic stagnation, have profoundly discredited the regime. Thus it was in the first instance the prospect of a left victo-

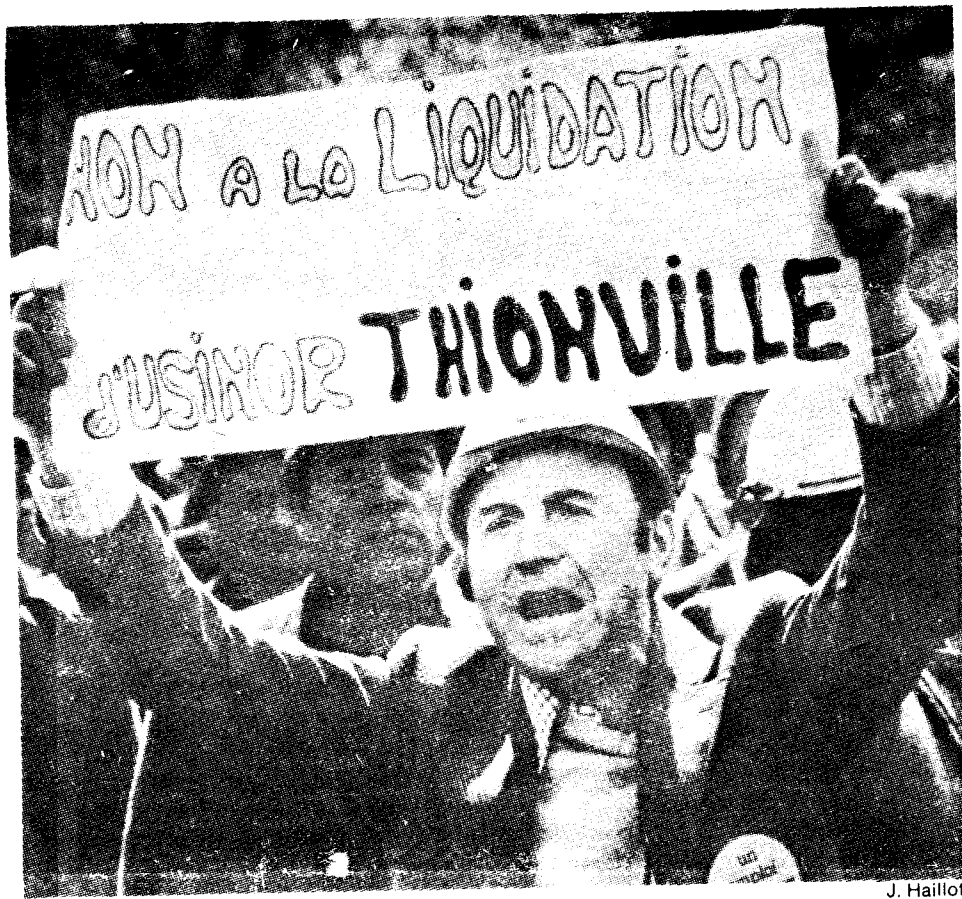
ry at the polls, turning the Common Program from an election platform into a government plan, that sparked the recent blow-up.

Added to this are the pressures on each of the parties of the Union of the Left to hold and expand its electorate. Since the alliance was formed five years ago, the PCF and MRG have essentially stagnated, while the electoral following of the Socialist Party has gone from about 5 percent in 1972 to an estimated 30 percent at present. Consequently, both the Communists and Left Radicals want to appear as playing a more active role in defending the interests of their respective audiences, while the PS is content with the status quo.

Fabre's Left Radicals must defend themselves against rightist accusations of being sucked into a "socialist-communist plot." This is particularly true since their 3 percent of the electorate is open to raiding both by parties of the "presidential majority" (notably the Radicals of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber) and the would-be "fourth component" of the Union of the Left, various dissident Gaullists. Without some attention-grabbing stunts, the MRG ran the risk of being squeezed between the considerable hostility toward them from the PCF/PS workers and the suspicions toward the popular front among middle-class voters. The Left Radicals are asserting their role as guarantor for the bourgeois character of the Union of the Left. It is not by accident, therefore, that Fabre has stressed his commitment to private enterprise in his attacks on the PCF.

As the main benefactors from the left electoral alliance, the Socialists are in no hurry to amend the Common Program or compromise with either the MRG or PCF. PS leader François Mitterrand's leverage is increased by the fact that he is now in a position to be kingpin either in a government of the Union of the Left or in a "center-left" coalition such as held sway during the last years of the Fourth Republic, before DeGaulle's 1958 sei-

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Steelworker demonstrating against plant shutdown earlier this year.

## The National Question in Sri Lanka.....6

by Edmund Samarakkody

## Chicano Raza Unida Party the Target

# Gas Company Turns Off Crystal City, Texas

At 9:26 a.m. on September 23 officials of the LoVaca Gathering Company, a subsidiary of the Coastal States Gas Corporation, ordered a valve closed, and the natural gas supply to 8,000 residents of impoverished Crystal City, Texas was shut off. The company is demanding \$744,000 in accumulated rate increases before fuel is restored to this overwhelmingly Chicano community, where the average per capita income is \$1,600 per year.

In 1972 Crystal City signed a 15-year contract with the gas company at \$0.36 per thousand cubic feet of gas. Two years later the Texas Railroad Commission approved the utility's request to pass rate increases on to its customers. Currently the charge is \$2.05—a 450 percent jump! The city council, which in 1975 was controlled by the Chicano nationalist Raza Unida Party (RUP), refused to pay the increase and a lengthy court battle ensued.

An injunction blocking the cutoff was issued September 2 by Zavala County judge José Angel Gutiérrez, founder and leader of RUP, but on September 21 a state appeals court overruled him, and two days later the gas stopped flowing. LoVaca president William Greehey stated: "The events of the past few weeks, and indeed the past two and one-half years, clearly indicate the futility of attempting to arrive at any kind of common-sense settlement" (*New York Times*, 24 September).

At the urging of Senator Edward Kennedy, half of a \$310,000 U.S. grant to the city was allotted for a down payment on a gas plant in San Antonio, indicated that they too would seek federal relief from the gas company's price gouging, the government announced that none of the grant could be used to pay the utility's ransom. It suggested instead that the money be used for the purchase of electrical appliances and conversion to other energy sources such as solar power!

The Crystal City government is currently controlled by the Barrio Club, which broke from the RUP in 1975 and has ties to the Democratic Party. This group attempted to appease the company by offering to pay the \$744,000 over a ten-year period. They assented to the rate increase and were willing to give the company mineral rights to natural gas deposits below a town park as well as control over the municipal gas pipeline system. All these concessions were rejected by the utility along with a proposal to pay \$50,000 now and an equal amount in six months.

The reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) blamed these concessions on the Barrio Club and bemoaned their "unfortunate" split from the RUP. The city council certainly has no program to fight this outrage by the gas monopoly. "We're just going to have to do without hot water, without hot food and without a lot of other things that we usually take for granted," a councilman told the *New York Times*. But neither do the would-be capitalist politicians in the RUP have a strategy to fight LoVaca. Gutiérrez claims he could turn the gas back on by declaring a state of emergency, but that his hands are tied because the city council refuses to request such a ruling!

The utter helplessness of the RUP in the face of the gas company's display of naked power underscores the bankruptcy of its bourgeois-nationalist politics, which offer no answer to the oppression of Mexican Americans or other racial-ethnic and national minorities under American capitalism. From the beginning the Raza Unida Party has stood for

"Chicano capitalism" and a national rather than a class struggle. This orientation has been fully supported by the SWP, which printed without comment an article by Gutiérrez in which he openly states:

"We sought to expose, confront, and eliminate the gringo. We felt that it was necessary to polarize the community over issues, into Chicanos versus gringos."

In the same article the RUP leader puts forward as the solution to the oppression of Mexican Americans the "transfer of existing businesses from gringo hands to Chicano hands" (*International Socialist Review*, June 1971).

Texas authorities, of course, treat the RUP as a dangerous red menace. At the beginning of this year, Raza Unida was locked in battle with Governor Dolph Briscoe over an attempt to establish a 1,000-acre community-owned farm which Briscoe called "a little Cuba in Texas." Gutiérrez responded: "The whole thrust of this program is to put capital into the hands of poor people. It is good old-fashioned capitalism. Except this time it's going to be the have-nots who get a chance at it" (*Militant*, 28 January 1977).

It is no wonder that the SWP can hail Crystal City's simple refusal to pay the gas price hike as "an example for others in Texas to follow," since these ex-Trotskyists likewise have no strategy to fight the utility company aside from pressuring the government. Following an August 30 session of the Southern Governors Conference SWP spokesman Peter Camejo declared that the president of Exxon, "should be discussing nationalization of the energy industry, opening up the books of the energy corporations and placing them under the control of the industry's workers." No doubt Camejo also thinks that the southern governors and the oil barons should carry out the socialist revolution while they're at it!

A consumer boycott, even if organized by a "radical" city council can be defeated simply by closing a valve. LoVaca, which earned a profit of \$3.9 million during the first six months of this year (more than double the profit during comparable periods of 1975 and 1976) can simply freeze Crystal City into submission. If the gas is not restored, this is exactly what will occur as migrant workers return from the November harvest to face a winter with neither stoves nor heat. Already many in the town must burn wood for cooking and hot water.

In fact, the Chicano residents of Crystal City are by no means the only victims of the oil, gas and power companies. By seeking to mobilize the Texas labor movement in defense of this just refusal to submit to robbery by some of the most hated monopolies in the country, a powerful movement could be sparked demanding that they be expropriated without compensation. With the energy trusts threatening to send fuel prices skyrocketing through deregulation of natural gas prices, this demand could win massive support from American working people. But this is not the task of the capitalist politicians, who from the Kennedys to the petty-bourgeois nationalist RUP will carefully respect the limits of bourgeois legality and sacrosanct "property rights." The irrational shortages and rapacious profit gouging by the fuel/power giants will be ended only by a workers government and the introduction of socialist economic planning on a world scale. ■



WV Photo

Ardella Lenard speaking at September 29 forum sponsored by the Spartacus Youth League.

## UAW Must Defend Bennie Lenard

CHICAGO—Bennie Lenard, the black United Auto Workers (UAW) member brutally beaten by racist cops in the suburb of Melrose Park last January, goes on trial October 11 at the Fourth District Court in Maywood, Illinois. Lenard's arrest and trial must be denounced as a blatant frame-up. In the atmosphere of racist mobilization which has gripped Chicago for the past two years, his case is a stark example of the vicious police terror against racial minorities which characterizes American society.

Lenard, who is a repairman at the suburban International Harvester plant (UAW Local 6), was plunged into a nightmare of terror following a minor accident driving home from work. He asked that the police be called to the scene, but when they arrived and saw that the other driver was a white woman they beat him unconscious. Dumped unclothed into a freezing cell and drenched with buckets of cold water, Lenard found himself charged with assaulting the other driver, assaulting the police and illegal possession of a gun. As a result of the beating he has spent months in the hospital, undergoing several painful operations and completely losing the sight of his right eye. Yet on October 11 it is Bennie Lenard who goes on trial, not the racist cops who assaulted him.

In the nine months since Lenard was beaten and jailed, Chicago has seen a full-scale cop riot against Puerto Ricans in Humboldt Park which killed two and injured 147. Marquette Park, a Southside white enclave, has been the scene of more than one provocative rally by the KKK and Nazis. Segregationist forces are currently terrorizing black school children bused to schools on the Southwest side. Only a mobilization of the city's powerful, integrated union movement can reverse this racist upsurge. The demonstration called by UAW Local 6 committees outside the Maywood courthouse on the morning of Lenard's trial can and should be the beginning for such a mobilization of labor/black defense.

Lenard's union brothers and sisters have rallied to his defense, passing a motion in Local 6 demanding that the charges be dropped in this frame-up. They voted to set up a committee to defend him, and have contributed to the cost of his legal defense through plant gate collections. At one pre-trial hearing scores of his fellow workers from the plant showed up to demonstrate their solidarity. The membership also voted

for a motion presented by the Labor-Struggle Caucus, a class-struggle opposition group in the Local, demanding that the International officially take up Lenard's defense.

The UAW bureaucracy from top to bottom has done everything to frustrate this rank-and-file support. The Local 6 resolution was squelched at the union's Los Angeles convention and Mrs. Lenard was prevented from speaking to the delegates about her husband's plight. The Local 6 leadership has refused to allocate union funds to his defense and sought to bury the issue in a bureaucratically controlled committee. Unfortunately some of Lenard's supporters have too readily accepted the bureaucratic brush-off, and seek to go around the official union channels. Instead, they should be constantly putting Local 6 officials on the spot, demanding that the UAW wholeheartedly take up his case and gain the support of the rest of Chicago labor.

The Labor-Struggle Caucus, Partisan Defense Committee and Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL) have all been active in defense efforts for Lenard fighting for this perspective of a militant working-class defense. A recent SYL forum on "Revolutionary Integration and the Fight Against Racist Terror" featured an address by Ardella Lenard and a collection of money for the defense of her husband. She pointed out that what happened to Bennie Lenard was a horror

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## After Losing Out on Peking Franchise

# Avakian & Co. on PL's Road to Oblivion

### Set Up Workerist-Economist Front Group at Chicago Meeting

CHICAGO—Things have not been going very well of late for Bob Avakian's Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Its scandalous support to racist anti-busing mobilizations had made it something of a pariah on the American left. Then its Maoism brought further discredit when China lined up with the Pentagon and white-supremacist South Africa in Angola. To top it off, after years of shamefacedly apologizing for the sordid betrayals of Peking foreign policy, this August saw the official China franchise go to its arch-rival, Mike Klonsky's October League (now the Communist Party [Marxist-Leninist]).

It was in this context that the RCP decided to throw all its resources into building NUWO (National United Workers Organization), hoping that some flashy, phony "mass work" would bolster morale inside the party and make up for losses on the international scene. So it was with all the cheers, foot-stomping and "fightback" hoopla these Maoist workerists could muster that the new RCP front group was launched in Chicago over the Labor Day weekend.

Months of work went into the conference, and with over 1,000 people pulled into Chicago for the event it looked at first as if they might be able to pull it off. Held in the Great Hall (!) of the Pickwick Hotel, the conference kicked off with five solid minutes of chanting "The People United Will Never Be Defeated," while Chairman Avakian grinned down from the balcony in satisfaction. In a demonstration of hoary Stalinist manipulative techniques, politics were downplayed at first, and the participants were warmed up by front-loading the sessions with movies, solidarity telegrams, testimonials and so forth. The expectation was that in the final hours the RCP would be able to ram through its program with perfunctory "discussion," the hands would be raised and after a song or two the crowd could be safely packed back into the buses and sent home.

Things didn't turn out quite that simply, however, as the RCP's best-laid plans to avoid political discussion and debate kept going awry. For the better part of two days, through some two dozen workshops and plenaries, the organizers spent their time dodging sticky questions from both the left and right. By the end, only the chairman's heavy gavel and the RCP's majority voting bloc kept the conference from turning into a shambles.

Avakian & Co. had thrown their nets wide and drew in a disparate catch—opponents on the left, union militants who were shocked at the RCP's Jim Crow line on busing, liberal moralists with a plethora of quack proposals and backward workers who blamed unemployment on "illegal aliens." For the most part it went well enough—until these contacts were allowed to open their mouths. Even guest speaker Buddy Cochran, the mechanic who drove his sports car into a July Fourth KKK rally in Plains, Georgia, caused a moment of embarrassment for the "communist" organizers of the conference. Cochran, who is the RCP's big defense case at present, told the audience that what really got him riled up was when the

Grand Dragon "called Jimmy Carter a slang name."

### RCP Says No to Busing and Full Employment

The real trouble began in the workshops. A predictable stumbling block was the issue of busing, particularly since the conference took place only a few days before school opened in Chicago amid a full-blown racist mobilization against a sham "voluntary" busing plan. Discussion in the discrimination workshop was focused on "affirmative action" schemes while the RCP handed out a resolution calling for evaluating desegregation plans on "a case by case basis." The resolution, which opposed the Boston "forced busing" plan, was approved in the workshop without discussion.

The Pandora's box was opened at the Sunday plenary during discussion of plans for a "march and rally against attacks on minority nationalities and divide and conquer schemes" over lunch break. An RCP'er stated that, while the Chicago plan was presently supportable, it "will later be turned into forced busing." This didn't go down well, as one Latin woman rose to ask why *anyone* would oppose busing, and a West Coast auto worker remarked that "there should be no such thing as black schools and white schools. We ought to fight for that."

The RCP was not about to fight for desegregation, but it was feeling the pressure. The day before it had handed out a list of chants for the demonstration, including such slogans as "Divide and Rule, We Say No—Forced Busing Has to Go!" By the time the march snaked its way through the deserted Loop on Sunday afternoon, however, all the anti-busing chants had mysteriously disappeared.

If the Jim Crow Maoists had a hard time explaining to militant black workers why "forced busing" was bad, they fared no better with their opposition to demands for full employment. The discrimination-workshop chairman catered to all sorts of liberal schemes, such as the proposal by one politically raw contact for a "week of fasting" to really "hurt" merchants and another's call for laws to enforce early retirement in order to make more jobs. But when one participant proposed that NUWO endorse the

Bob Avakian

slogan "Jobs for All," all hell broke loose.

This was instantly ruled an "unfriendly amendment," and an RCP'er rushed to explain that "we don't have to promise everybody a job.... That's a bunch of bullshit. Everybody ain't gonna get a job." Similarly, RCP'ers in the auto workshop quickly quashed a discussion on a proposal to fight for 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay. There would be no such "Trotskyite" nonsense in NUWO—only the most sub-reformist demands which in no way challenge the capitalist system!

### The Cheering Stops

By the Sunday plenary the circus atmosphere had vanished, along with Chairman Avakian's smile. A revised agenda was handed out and the trade-union program quickly pushed through. But after lunch the fireworks began. Throughout the weekend the RCP hadn't breathed a word about China, not in a single document, presentation or floor intervention. Obviously it was afraid that someone might ask about the "Gang of Four" or Klonsky's prized handshake with Chairman Hua. Instead, the conference organizers figured they could demonstrate their Maoist loyalties by virulently denouncing the Soviet Union.

Thus in the final session a major resolution on "The Threat of War" was distributed, calling for struggle against the "ruling exploiters" in the USSR and railing against Russian "aggression and war preparations." The sharp contrast to the vacuous workshops the day before stunned the uninitiated. Moreover, halfway into the session a speaker moved to delete the anti-Soviet passages. "I think we can all agree," he said, "that the USSR is not the same as the United States and has in fact helped workers and progressive causes in Cuba and Africa." Cleverly playing on the apolitical atmosphere fostered by the RCP, he ended: "The NUWO is a domestic organization and it doesn't have to take a position on a question like this."

Whoops! In an instant the mask of apolitical economism dropped, and the roomful of "fellow workers" suddenly became a meeting of the Revolutionary Communist Party. Pounding for order, the chair announced that the hall had to be emptied in 45 minutes, explaining poker-faced that "I really don't want to cut the discussion off but we are pressed for time." For the rest of the session, one RCP'er after another crawled out of the closet. One wanted the anti-Soviet section to stand because his friend Eddie, a working-class youth killed in Vietnam, "would have wanted it that way." Another explained that anyone could tell Cuba was capitalist because a guy in his plant paddled 80 miles on a rubber raft to get to the U.S.!

After these appeals to the most despicable anti-Communist prejudices, the question was called, the proposed deletion defeated—and an extra hour's time found to continue the meeting. But

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## L.A. Killer Cops Rampage

LOS ANGELES—Kill-crazy L.A. cops have slaughtered 28 people so far this year. Many of their victims were unarmed; many black or Chicano. All of them are victims of the police gun-barrel "justice" which has increasingly replaced the facade of "due process" in the capitalist courts.

This rash of police killings has even disturbed the bourgeois press, and the LAPD has attempted to cleanse its image with a new set of cosmetic rules governing the use of police firearms. Though the preamble to the new code hypocritically claims that "a reverence for the value of human life" shall be the guide in the use of weapons, assistant police chief Daryl Gates brazenly admitted that "this isn't going to change [police] shootings in the city of Los Angeles" (*Los Angeles Times*, 11 September).

As it to underscore Gates' words, the "new centurions" shot four more on September 10, a day after the new code was announced. Three were allegedly involved in an armed robbery; the fourth was an innocent pedestrian stopped for questioning about a stolen car.

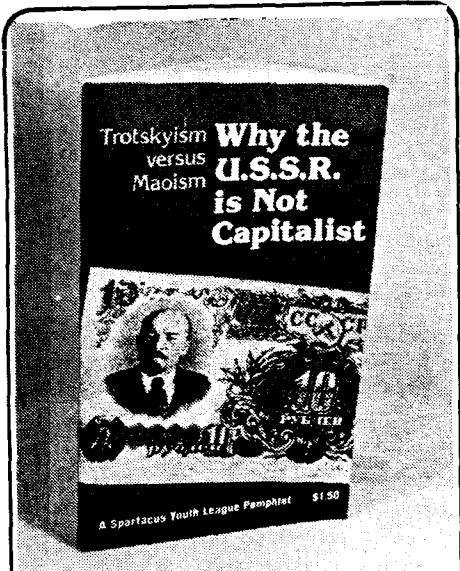
Last month Gates told reporters that he couldn't explain why the number of fatal shootings "was a little ahead this year" of its normal death quota. (The LAPD killed 30 people in all of 1976 and another 30 the previous year.) The head of the internal police unit that investigates police shootings reported that the cops weren't shooting more people, they were simply killing a higher percentage of those shot! The reasons are not hard to find—a police force whose heavy

country; whose bloody exploits are glorified in movies, TV shows and pulp fiction; which patrols the streets in squad cars and helicopter gunships, routinely accosting "suspects" with shotguns, and operating with the bravado and deadly efficiency of an occupation army.

Public attention was riveted on the pattern of street executions by the particularly atrocious slaying of Ronald Burkholder on August 4. A lone cop gunned down the 35-year-old pacifist and inventor outside his storefront studio. The killer-cop claimed he spotted Burkholder running down the street naked, attempted to arrest him and shot in self-defense when the man assumed a "martial arts stance" and lunged at him. The coroner's report revealed six bullet holes and a number of other wounds on the body, but the killer has gone scot-free.

Barely two weeks after the Burkholder shooting, a second unarmed man, 33-year-old Floyd Thomas, was killed by police after he was stopped for car theft. The police maintain that the shooting was "accidental" and occurred during an escape attempt, but numerous eyewitnesses report that the victim made no escape attempt and put up no struggle. Again, the trigger-happy cop has not been subjected to any disciplinary action.

These butchers in blue should be tried and jailed for their crimes. But instead, as mass unemployment ravages the ghettos, bourgeois politicians like L.A. mayor (and ex-cop) Thomas Bradley and police chief Ed Davis build their careers around racist "law and order" campaigns, and their minions murder innocent victims in the streets. The reformists peddle various hoaxes such as "review boards" and "community control" of the cops. The disbanding of the bosses' hired thugs will occur only after a victorious proletarian revolution. But all opponents of cop terror and defenders of democratic rights must demand: Disarm the police! Jail the killer cops!



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## Even with Lies

# CP Nails SWP

In their perpetual attempt to discredit Trotskyism, the Stalinists' favorite accusation has always been that Trotskyism serves as a cover for the imperialists' revanchist aims against the Soviet Union. To buttress this claim, they have resorted to the most despicable slanders. But now, the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has given the consummate reformists of the pro-Moscow Communist Party USA (CP) some real ammunition.

In August, the SWP fused with the

Revolutionary Marxist Committee (RMC), a decomposition product of the third-period Shachtmanite Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). Although the RMC stood significantly to the left of the SWP on most questions, it proved unable to break with its origins in Shachtmanism, an ideology which posits that the USSR (and by extension the other deformed workers states) is capitalist and that therefore the working class has no interest in the victory of either side in a conflict between the

USSR and U.S. imperialism. As *WV* has already noted, the fusion with the "third camp" RMC was significant as a signal that the SWP's orthodox Trotskyist stance on the "Russian question" is an empty formalism which will not be permitted to hamper the SWP's drive toward reformist rapprochement with its "own" bourgeoisie.

A recent article in the SWP's *Militant* (30 September) heralded the RMC fusion as a step toward the SWP's aim of becoming the inclusive party of Ameri-

can social democracy (the SWP's new slogan, "Our party is your party," certainly rivals the CP's earlier "Communism is twentieth-century Americanism" in repulsive populism). At the same time, the *Militant* gently chided the RMC for the view that the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Eastern Europe, etc. are capitalist. And it quoted James Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism: "We are, in fact, the party of the Russian Revolution..."

For decades the Trotskyists have had to fight against the slander that our program meant capitulation (or worse) to the schemes, campaigns and ultimately wars of the imperialists against the Soviet Union. The Stalinists were forced to create out of the whole cloth slanders against Trotsky and the movement he led. Stalin and his henchmen claimed that Trotsky was an agent of the Mikado, that the Fourth International was in league with the fascists. The Trotskyists were ruthlessly persecuted in Russia and murderously pursued around the world. But the Trotskyists held firm. They knew that the October Revolution was their own. Even as they were hauled out of the prison camps to face the firing squads, they shouted their defense of the revolution and their opposition to its Stalinist gravediggers.

Now the ex-Trotskyist SWP is helping to facilitate the Stalinists' indictment of Trotskyism. Fusing with a "Third Camp" grouping while quoting Cannon's fine words about defensism, the SWP demonstrates that the Trotskyist program is indeed nothing but words for the SWP. The CP, of course, need merely accept the SWP's Trotskyist pretensions as good coin in order to "prove" that "Trotskyism" is simply a left cover for anti-Sovietism.

The *Militant* article, based on Larry Seigle's report to the SWP Convention, was made to order, for it shows the SWP to be not merely anti-Communist, but hypocritically so. While admitting that the RMC is defeatist toward the USSR, the article goes on at some length (including quotes from Trotsky and Cannon) about the orthodox Trotskyist position in defense of the Soviet Union—something of a rarity for the SWP these days.

So it is no wonder that the CP's *Daily World* (1 October) is helping the SWP publicize its "important accomplishment" with an article entitled "Trotskyism Embraces 'Carter's Escalation of Arms Race'." Drawing heavily on the *Militant's* own report, anti-Trotskyist hack Erik Bert does not need to work very hard to show that the fusion is a living repudiation of defense of the USSR. To the SWP's attempt to distance itself from the "Third Camp," he responds with the prurience of a Stalinist peeping Tom who has finally caught a couple of "Trotskyites" engaged in an unnatural anti-Soviet act:

"What shall we say, then, of the SWP which claims to oppose 'Carter's escalation of the arms race,' taking into its bed the RMC which, the SWP says, does not oppose 'Carter's escalation of the arms race'?"

"It means this: At the heart of Trotskyism, of the SWP line, is anti-Sovietism. It will stoop to anything to further that end. It has taken to its bosom every anti-Soviet renegade whom U.S. imperialism has promoted. It has, in the case of the RMC taken unto its bosom a revolutionary supporter of Carter's escalation of the arms race."

"After one finds RMC in the SWP's bed what credibility can one accord SWP's claim that it has a 'major difference' with 'fundamental political ramifications,' with RMC's lining up with imperialism, with 'NATO led by American

# Healyite Slander Mill Grinds On

The Healyite gang has struck again. As part of the latest installment in its disgusting two-year smear campaign against SWP chief and ex-Trotskyist Joseph Hansen, the British Healyite Workers Revolutionary Party has published (*News Line*, 30 July 1977) what it melodramatically terms "the most incriminating document in the history of the Trotskyist movement." The Healyites' latest exhibit is a two-sentence letter evidently written by Hansen to one George P. Shaw, the U.S. consul in Mexico City in 1940.

This letter is cited as unimpeachable "evidence" that Hansen secretly collaborated with the FBI to "shield known GPU agents" responsible for the assassination of Trotsky in 1940. It is backed by other "damning" corroborative testimony, such as the following quotation, dramatically blown up and set against a black background in *News Line*:

"Mr. Joseph Hansen, secretary to the late Leon Trotsky, called yesterday to ask for a picture of Trotsky's assassin. I told him I would be glad to see if we could give him one."  
—U.S. Embassy in Mexico City

Of Hansen's meeting with an embassy official, *News Line* howls:

"There is nothing to rival it in the annals of the world Trotskyist movement: a secretary of imperialism's most feared enemy is walking in and out of the American embassy and holding private discussions with the FBI's head men in Mexico City!"

*News Line* implicitly acknowledges that the entirety of its "case" for

Hansen's involvement as an "accomplice" in the Trotsky assassination rests on the alleged "secrecy" of Hansen's contact with the police agencies of U.S. imperialism. The article concedes that "It is true that other members of Trotsky's household also visited the U.S. Embassy—Albert Goldman and guard Charles Cornell among them." The article further admits that Trotsky himself met with Robert G. McGregor,

the same embassy official with whom Hansen supposedly met. The difference, claims *News Line*, is that "Trotsky made no secret of his meeting with McGregor."

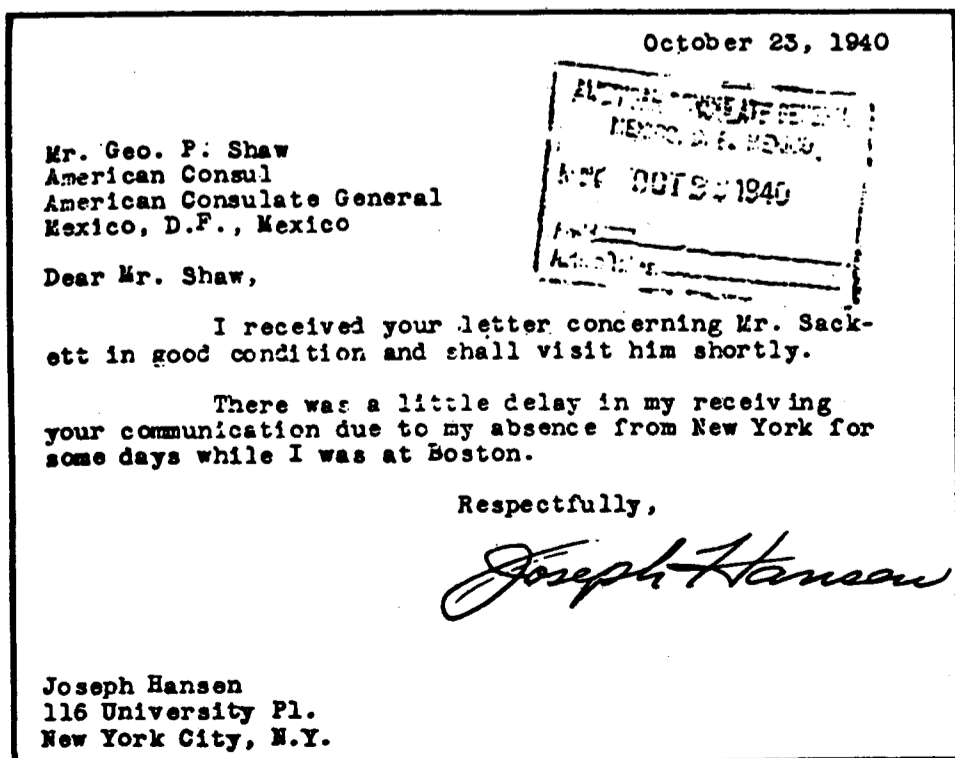
The Healyites' "exposé" of Hansen, they boast, will "certainly be news to every member of the SWP from the oldest veteran to the youngest rank-and-filer." We doubt it. The "most incriminating document in the history of the Trotskyist movement" has a return address on it. That address is 116 University Place, New York City. This is not a secret—or even a private—address for the correspondence which Hansen was supposedly trying to hide from the Trotskyist movement, but the *public headquarters of the SWP!* We would be surprised indeed if any correspondence routed through this mailing address could be "news" to the SWP.

Hansen has much to answer for before the working class: his role as a leader of a reformist organization which has become a roadblock to the construction of a Trotskyist party. But there is no evidence whatsoever of any unauthorized contact or "collusion" by Hansen with the FBI or GPU. Rather, it is perfectly clear that Trotsky and the SWP assigned Hansen to undertake such confidential contact on behalf of the movement and the Healyites are simply exploiting this fact, which for self-evident security reasons would hardly have been officially noted or banded about at the time. It is the Healyites who, with their cop-baiting smear campaign, have made themselves "accomplices" of the Stalinists' half century of slander against the Trotskyist movement. ■



Healyite yellow press is completely given over to lurid lies and paranoid ravings. Articles that do not slander Joseph Hansen as an FBI/GPU "accomplice" praise Libyan dictator Qaddafi.

"Incriminating," "secret" Hansen letter bears SWP return address:



This is the most incriminating letter in the history of the Trotskyist movement. Joseph Hansen, present-day leader of the Socialist Workers Party (USA), writes to U.S. Consul George P. Shaw in Mexico City, "respectfully" thanking him for arranging the contact with Mr. B.E. Sackett, head of FBI operations in New York.

imperialism' with 'Carter's escalation of the arms race,' etc. etc.?"

To be sure, there are plenty of distortions in these paragraphs. The RMC is not a "supporter" of Carter's escalation of the arms race. Its capitulation to imperialism is not so explicit. It "merely" refuses to defend the USSR against imperialism. The *Daily World* need not have recourse to slander to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the SWP's protestations of Soviet defensism, but of course old habits die hard. Even without the distortions, Erik Bert has made his "case"; this Stalinist peeping Tom has finally caught a couple of "Trotskyites" engaged in an unnatural anti-Soviet act.

Unlike the SWP, Trotskyists stand squarely for the unconditional defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states against imperialism and capitalist restoration. This has been the hallmark of our fight against the bureaucratic castes which politically appropriate the proletariat in these states, and which through their nationalism and class collaborationism threaten the property forms established by the Bolshevik revolution. It is the Trotskyists who are the best defenders of the gains of October through the struggle for international proletarian revolution.

And how does the CP "defend" the Soviet Union? It is the CP which most actively tails the liberals in the Democratic Party—the party of "Carter's escalation of the arms race"! When the anti-Soviet "human rights" bandwagon gets going, it is not only the SWP which rides, but the CP as well. In fact, the CP's record in supporting "progressive" imperialists—including direct electoral support to the dominant party of the American bourgeoisie, the Democrats—is a far greater crime against the USSR than anything the SWP has done, so far.

The Stalinists seek to create an amalgam between the Trotskyist program of political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucratic caste and the "anti-Stalinism" which abandons the defense of the deformed workers states and offers aid and comfort to imperialism. The ex-Trotskyist SWP is a godsend to the Stalin school of falsification, for the CP can demonstrate that despite Sunday speechifying, the SWP is the left tail of the bourgeoisie's anti-Soviet campaign. Witness the *Daily World's* facile denunciation of the SWP's pandering to "dissidents":

"The SWP's anti-Sovietism has been blatant for years. It has taken to its bosom every anti-socialist renegade from the Soviet Union. There is no renegade for whom the SWP has not beat the drums.

"In this it has provided a sounding board to the 'Left' for the anti-Soviet hysteria which the *New York Times* operates out of its Moscow Bureau. There is no renegade whom the *New York Times* has sponsored, that the SWP has not cheered."

While there is no conspiracy between the *New York Times'* Moscow Bureau and the SWP, none is necessary. The SWP does indeed regularly cheer every reactionary "dissident" that takes to the podium to rail against the "soft, democratic West" for "appeasement" of the totalitarian USSR. Most recently in New York City on October 2, the SWP claque out-clapped even the Ukrainian nationalists at the anti-Communist diatribes of Leonid Plyushch and Andre Amalrik.

The SWP and RMC are not such strange bedfellows. The *Militant* article boasts that the "RMC's fraternal delegation voted unanimously for the gener-

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## Teamster Dissidents Conference

# TDU: Putting Uncle Sam in the Driver's Seat

"Put yourself in the driver's seat" was the official theme of the second "rank and file convention" of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), held in Cleveland September 24 and 25. By the end of the second day, however, TDU leaders had called on everyone but the membership—from the cops and courts to Jimmy Carter—to take charge of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT). In fact, a TDU brochure depicted none other than Uncle Sam himself calling for union reform from the driver's seat of a truck cab.

The TDU wasted no time in demonstrating its confidence in bourgeois authority. Approximately 400



**TDU pamphlet pushes Uncle Sam unionism.**

supporters of IBT president Frank Fitzsimmons assembled in protest outside the conference at the orders of \$192,000-per-year Cleveland Teamster vice-president Jackie Presser. TDU organizers sought a court order to prevent the rally. The court order was refused, but a cop checked everyone's credentials at the door.

Less than 200 attended the lackluster affair, and TDU organizers were distressed that the turnout, considerably smaller than last year's, represented only half the early registration. In one session a lengthy review of local experiences was chiefly a recitation of the group's failures during the last 12 months. Supporters were constantly reminded that only the rank and file—not the TDU—can reform the Teamsters union. This workerist "modesty" actually represents the disorientation of TDU leadership, which has no conception of a class-struggle policy to oust the gangster-ridden bureaucracy of the IBT, and whose main orientation has been to haul the union into the capitalist courts. The TDU, which is heavily and

uncritically backed by the social-democratic International Socialists (I.S.), typically campaigns for minimal reformist challenges to undemocratic local bylaws and election rules. The convention approved a proposal to oppose the delegate election of national officers at conventions, instead favoring referendum voting by the entire membership. This is to be achieved through publicity, bumper stickers in truckstop bathroom stalls across the country and, most importantly, through the federal courts.

Revolutionaries support the election of union officers at conventions where leaders can be selected on the basis of counterposed programs debated before elected delegates. Referendum voting is a pseudo-democratic gimmick by which the dispersed votes of the membership are more easily manipulated (and falsified) by the bureaucrats in power. Even more serious is TDU's invitation to the U.S. government, on the basis of the notoriously anti-labor Landrum-Griffin Act, to rewrite the IBT constitution. Any self-respecting unionist militant must oppose this treacherous call for capitalist state control of the unions.

The big draw for the TDU meeting was the appearance of United Mine Workers (UMW) secretary-treasurer Harry Patrick, fresh from assisting UMW president Arnold Miller in breaking a two-month wildcat this summer. Describing himself as just a rank-and-file miner, Patrick had the audacity to declare that the right to strike was "most dear to his heart." Initially Patrick cautioned the Teamsters against unnecessarily replacing union leaders who can be made more responsive to the membership, "for if you cut off the head, surely the body will die." Under questioning, he modified this by saying that new leadership must be trained to replace corrupt officials. And like many a bureaucrat in a non-election year, Patrick was willing to distance himself from the Democratic Party. Admitting that he had campaigned for Carter last fall, Patrick added: "If we can get a labor party in this country at this time, I'm all for it because we're sure not getting anything out of the Democrats."

TDU's portrayal of Patrick as an exemplary militant (he was made an honorary TDU member) is a shameless lie. The I.S.' *Workers' Power* described his appearance as "one of the most important events of the labor movement in years." In reality, Patrick has been indistinguishable from Miller in opposing the waves of massive wildcats that have swept the coalfields during the past several years.

If Patrick has lost confidence in Carter, TDU leaders have plenty to spare. In the hope that ever more government supervision will end bureaucratic abuse of the huge Teamster pension fund, a pamphlet distributed at the conference announced: "TDU is organizing a letter writing campaign to President Carter and Labor Secretary Ray Marshall asking them to use their powers under the Pension Reform Act (ERISA) to remove the current Teamster trustees on the grounds that they have acted in an imprudent manner."

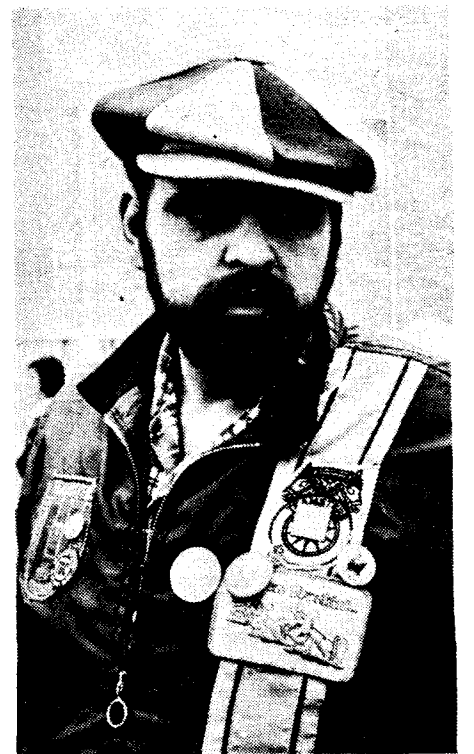
The Federal government has already gotten its hands deep into the Teamsters pension fund. On April 30, several trustees of the IBT's Central States Pension Fund, including Fitzsimmons, were forced to step down by a Labor and

Justice Department task force and the Internal Revenue Service. Thus total control of the assets and investments of the \$1.4 billion fund was handed over to outsiders. Yet for the TDU's junior G-men this is not enough! Militant Teamsters must not forget that government regulation of United Mine Workers health and retirement trusts enabled the coal bosses to block a needed transfer of money from a pension fund to a financially troubled medical fund, thereby provoking the recent 80,000-strong wildcat which the UMW's "rank-and-file" secretary-treasurer helped to crush.

Pete Camarata, a leading spokesman for TDU, admitted to a *WV* reporter that there is some controversy within the organization whether to continue the present "rank-and-file" orientation or to "identify ourselves with a leader," i.e., an aspiring bureaucrat. Camarata was particularly impressed with Patrick's "credibility." When the reporter pointed out that, as in the case of Miller and Patrick, a bureaucrat's credibility among militants ends with broken strikes, Camarata shrugged and said, "You're probably right."

TDU leaders hope they have found such a dissident bureaucrat in Jack Vlahovic, elected secretary-treasurer in January of IBT Local 213 in Vancouver—the largest Teamster local in the Canadian Conference. The fight by this labor raker on-the-make to move onto his office in defiance of the dictatorial fiat of International vice president Ed Lawson gives ample proof that TDU-style reformism and run-of-the-mill business unionism are utterly compatible.

In a kangaroo-court union hearing last month, Vlahovic was found guilty



**Pete Camarata**

of spending Teamster funds (to hire four staff members and open a new office). He was fined nearly \$11,000 and barred from union office for life. Vlahovic refused to step down and instead went to the government for help. In response, British Columbia labor minister Williams appointed a representative to investigate the IBT "trial" decision.

Unlike Vlahovic, the Local 213 membership has demonstrated sound class instincts in opposing the International's bureaucratic assault. Teamster

*continued on page 10*



## Behind the Anti-Tamil Terror

# The National Question in Sri Lanka

by Edmund Sammarakody

COLOMBO, 15 September—The outbreak in mid-August of the anti-Tamil pogrom (the third such outbreak in two decades) has brought out the reality that the Tamil minority problem in Sri Lanka has remained unresolved now for nearly half a century, leading to the emergence of a separatist movement among the Tamils.

As on previous occasions, what took place recently was not Sinhalese-Tamil riots, but an anti-Tamil pogrom. Although Sinhalese were among the casualties, the large majority of those killed, maimed and seriously wounded are Tamils. The victims of the widespread looting are largely Tamils. And among those whose shops and houses were destroyed, the Tamils are the worst sufferers. Of the nearly 75,000 refugees, the very large majority were Tamils, including Indian Tamil plantation workers.

The violence that broke out during the height of the language issue in 1956 and again in 1958 was of the same character. It was plainly a question of anti-Tamil pogroms. In 1961, it was anti-Tamil violence of the bourgeois government. This was the violence unleashed by the Sirima Bandaranaike regime, when it sent an army of occupation to the Northern Province for the suppression of the Tamils when the Tamil bourgeois Federal Party (FP) launched a satyagraha movement (civil disobedience) against the government on the issue of the oppressive Language of the Courts Act.

Among the factors leading to the increase of Sinhalese-Tamil antagonisms and the outbreak of the recent anti-Tamil pogrom were:

(a) The intransigence of the [recently defeated] coalition government in regard to the problems of the Tamil minority and the intensification of discriminatory practices against the Tamils in regard to employment, land colonisation, educational and medical facilities, aggravated by government repression of the Tamil people through police violence; an aspect of this repression being detention without trial of Tamil youth and launching irresponsible prosecutions against Tamil leaders.

(b) The formation, about two and a half years ago, of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF—an amalgam of the Federal Party, the Tamil Congress [TC], the Ceylon Workers Congress [Thondaman] and some Tamil petty-bourgeois groups), and the opting of this party for a separate Tamil state, "Tamil Eelam."

(c) The propaganda of Sinhalese bourgeois leaders and the impression created by the government that the just demands of the Tamils are inimical to the interests of the Sinhalese; and, on the other hand, the impression created by the Tamil bourgeois leaders that the Sinhalese are the enemies of the Tamils, and that Tamil rights have to be wrested in struggle against the Sinhalese people—this communalism on both sides being nothing new.

In any event, the aftermath of the anti-Tamil pogrom is widespread communalism. Undoubtedly, sections of the working class also have been affected by this virus of communalism.

Conditions are favourable for the further strengthening of the forces of Sinhalese communalism, as both the governing party, the United National Party (UNP) of J.R. Jayewardene, as

well as the other bourgeois mass party, Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), are communalist and will seek to further their political interests through Sinhalese communalism. And outside these parties leading Buddhist monks and their associations are even now calling for drastic legislation to suppress the Tamils, to illegalise the right to carry on propaganda or agitation on the issue of a separate Tamil state. They are also calling on the government to send more and more Sinhalese into Tamil-majority areas for land colonisation, and to keep the military in occupation of those areas.

### Legacy of Colonialist "Divide and Rule" Policies

Viewed historically, the Tamil minority problem has been conditioned by the reality that the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Sri Lanka remain uncompleted. This is indeed the case in regard to minority oppression in the backward countries. More generally, capitalism in decay has the need to utilise pre-capitalist forms of oppression and also to widen and perpetuate old divisions based on nationality, religion and caste, on the principle of "divide and rule."

The British conquerors commenced the superimposition of capitalism in Sri Lanka with the overthrow of the feudal Sinhalese kingdom in Kandy in 1815. Capitalist development called for, among other matters, the unification of the country. The Kandyan Sinhalese kingdom was only one part of the island, the region of the hill country. The peoples in the rest of the country were in two other distinct regions—the low-country Sinhalese, occupying the southern part of the country, formerly a separate kingdom; and the northern region of the Tamils, also a former separate kingdom. Within the three regions, there were further divisions through the operation of the caste system.

The unification of the peoples in those regions was possible only on the basis of mutual agreements in regard to their special cultural and other interests. But the British rulers had no need for forging national unity in that way. As the new foreign oppressors of the country, whose aim was the speedy consolidation of their rule for realising a colonialist economy, they were not to be guided by concepts of democracy and of the overall needs of an all-sided development of capitalism in Sri Lanka. Besides, such a unity of the peoples of the country could well lay the foundation for undermining British rule.

What the British did in the situation was to achieve unification on an administrative basis. It was the fiat of the ruler that the whole of Sri Lanka be administered as a single entity. This meant that the welding of the peoples of these three regions did not take place. It was thus that old antagonisms between the up-country Kandyan Sinhalese and the Sinhalese of the low country remained, and especially the antagonisms between the Sinhalese and the Tamils continued unresolved. So also the caste jealousies and antagonisms which persist up to this date in many parts of the country.

### Sinhalese Bourgeoisie Oppresses Tamil Nationality

It was thus that an unpostponable task before the Sri Lanka bourgeoisie

when they obtained political power from the British in 1947 was to carry out even belatedly this unification of the country, especially between the two main nationalities, the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

The story of how the Sinhalese bourgeoisie and vested interests accomplished this task is now all too well-known. The plain truth is that all bourgeois governments—UNP, SLFP and the SLFP/LSSP [Lanka Samasamaja Party]/CP [Communist Party] coalition—have hopelessly failed in this regard. Far from seeking to settle by mutual agreements with the Tamils the problems concerning their rights and interests, all Sinhalese bourgeois governments have rushed to increase their privileges over the Tamils, and in consequence have reduced the Tamils to the status of an oppressed minority.

This situation in Sri Lanka is by no means unique. As in the case of the bourgeoisie of all backward countries in this twentieth century, in the context of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it is inconceivable



Edmund Sammarakody

WV Photo



Sirima Bandaranaike

AP



J.R. Jayewardene

AP

able that the bourgeoisie in Sri Lanka could have given leadership to the struggle of the minorities against their state of oppression. Far from playing any such progressive role they have proved themselves reactionary in that regard. Both the UNP and the SLFP and other bourgeois groups have not concealed the fact that keeping the Tamils as an oppressed minority is an important aspect of their respective political programs.

For the same reasons, the Tamil bourgeoisie cannot lead the struggle of the oppressed Tamils for their liberation from national oppression. The history of the struggle of the Tamil minority for their just rights is the history of betrayal by the Tamil bourgeois parties, the Tamil Congress and the Federal Party. The recently formed TULF is only an amalgam of the TC, FP and other petty-bourgeois groups.

Incidentally, the reactionary role of both the UNP and also of the so-called national bourgeoisie (the SLFP) in regard to the minority problem, and especially the record of the SLFP/LSSP/CP coalition government, has exploded the myth of the Stalinists (supported by the LSSP) that the uncompleted democratic tasks can be accomplished in alliance with the "national bourgeoisie" in the first or "democratic" stage of the Sri Lanka revolution.

In this context the leadership of the struggle of the oppressed Tamil minority as well as of all sections of the op-

pressed falls to the Sri Lanka proletariat. In fact, it is a condition for the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie that the proletariat becomes champion and leader of all the oppressed sections of the people of Sri Lanka, seeking to mobilise and bring them into the mainstream of the class struggle. And it is precisely in this way that the Sri Lanka proletariat will overcome the problems arising from the reality that it forms only a minority of the population.

Concretely this means that it is in the interests of the Sri Lanka proletariat to categorically support the struggle of the Tamil minority for their just rights, and against their state of oppression. This further means that the struggle of the Tamil minority for its rights cannot be a separate struggle apart from the class struggle of the proletariat. The democratic struggle will merge in the struggle of the proletariat for socialism. Thus there is no democratic stage for realising Tamil minority rights separated from the next, that is the "socialist stage" of the Sri Lanka revolution. We live in the age of Permanent Revolution. The Tamil minority struggle as well as the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie can be consummated only in the process of the Permanent Revolution.

### Demands of Tamil Minority

The adoption of the demand for a separate Tamil state by the TULF, and

the winning of 18 out of the 24 seats this party contested in the State Assembly, does not necessarily mean that the Tamils have irrevocably opted for a separate state. What indeed is a reality is that the Tamils have lost faith in the possibility of Tamil-Sinhalese harmony and achievement of the just rights of the Tamil people under a UNP-led or SLFP-led government or under any other Sinhalese bourgeois government.

In any event, this demand for a separate Tamil state has not suddenly fallen from the skies. It is the latest phase of the movement of the Tamil minority to end its state of oppression. And it is the case that for over three decades 2 million Tamils, including the Indian Tamil plantation workers, have suffered severe discrimination in regard to language rights, employment opportunities, land colonisation and educational facilities.

What the Tamil minority struggled for, and the response of the Sinhalese capitalist governments, may be summarised as follows:

(a) From 1948 on, it was the demand of the Indian Tamil plantation workers that their citizenship rights, which the then UNP government deprived them of, be restored. But what the Indian Tamil workers got in response to their representations was the notorious "Sirima-Shastri Pact," in terms of which sections of these workers were to be forcibly repatriated to India as Indian citizens. In return the Sri Lanka government undertook to grant a small section of these workers citizenship rights, but left as "stateless" a very large number of them.

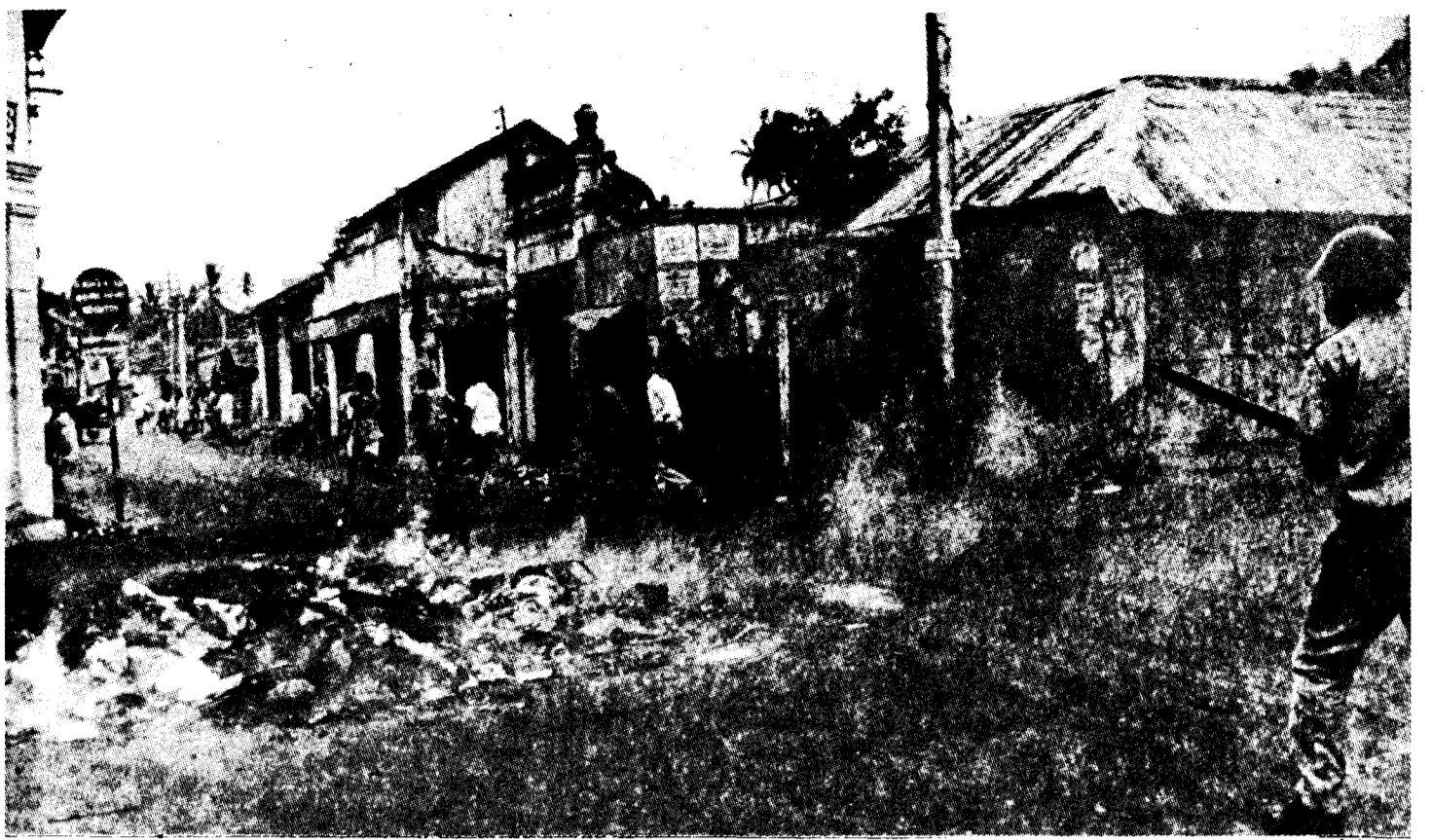
Incidentally, the problem of citizenship rights of the Tamil plantation workers was never a problem of the Indian government, but a problem of the Sri Lanka government.

(b) What the Ceylon Tamils demanded from the 1930's on was not a separate state, but a more just representation in the legislature, and ending discriminatory practices against them in regard to land colonisation and employment.

(c) Since 1956, the main demand of the Tamils was language rights—that Tamil also be declared a state language. Against attempts to organise a peaceful protest movement on this issue, the Sinhalese communalist forces backed by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and groups (SLFP, UNP, Philip [Gunawardena] group, Sinhalese Language Fronts, Bhikku Front), unleashed, in the same year, anti-Tamil violence leading to the killing of 150 persons, including Sinhalese in the Gal Oya Valley (east Ceylon).

(d) In 1957, in pursuit of the goal of blocking the road to any concessions to the Tamils on the language issue (breaking of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact) Sinhalese communalist forces led by UNP leader J.R. Jayewardene (the present prime minister), SLFP parliamentarians and others organised mass demonstrations, which very soon escalated into unprecedented anti-Tamil violence in May-June 1958, in which hundreds of Tamils and also Sinhalese were killed, atrocities perpetrated, and much property destroyed and looted.

The goal of the Tamil bourgeois Federal Party was to realise a federal state. However, this goal was never seriously pursued. The content of the movement led by the Federal Party was agitation around the language demand and the demand to end the many dis-



Police chase Tamil youth in the streets of Jaffna during post-election riots.

Asiaweek

criminary practices against the Tamil minority.

It was in this context, when all capitalist governments—the UNP, SLFP and SLFP/LSSP/CP—had over a period of three decades denied them their just rights, that all political organisations of the Tamil minority regrouped themselves as the Tamil United Liberation Front, which adopted a separate Tamil state as its goal.

A separate Tamil state is not at all a solution to the problems of the Tamil people. On the contrary, all their problems could well become more acute than before. Besides, a separate Tamil state could also be the beginning of another period of oppression of the Tamil minority by different oppressors.

#### The Duty of Revolutionary Marxists

But if, indeed, the Tamils have irrevocably opted for a separate Tamil state, the question is what is the correct

opposed and fought against by the proletariat.

However, the national oppression of the Tamil people by the Sinhalese bourgeoisie and their governments, invoking the principle of exclusiveness (that is, privileges for the Sinhalese people), severely obstructs the self-determination of the working class in their organisation as a separate class and the development of the common struggle of the Sinhalese and Tamil workers. This means that it is clearly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle to support the Tamil people's struggle against their oppression by the Sinhalese bourgeoisie. In Lenin's own words, "*Any bickerings on this national question obscures and retards the class struggle.*"

Concretely, revolutionary Marxists in Sri Lanka must support the struggle of the Tamils for language rights, i.e., that Tamil also be declared a state language; against discriminatory prac-

agitate for this demand.

Opposition or refusal to recognise the right of the Tamils to secession is inescapably the condoning of or support for Sinhalese bourgeois nationalism, and of the oppression of the Tamil minority. And in this regard, what the revolutionary George Plekhanov wrote as far back as 1903 becomes especially relevant: "If we are to forget it [the right of nations to self-determination] or hesitate to advance it for fear of offending the national prejudices of our fellow countrymen of great-Russian nationality, the call... Workers of All Countries Unite, would be a shameful lie on our lips."

To those who seek to object that recognition of the right of the Tamils to a separate state would surely encourage the Tamil separatists, there could be no better reply than that Lenin gave to those who raised the same objection from within the ranks of the Marxist movement itself. Answering no less a Marxist than Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin said:

"To accuse those who support freedom of self-determination, that is freedom to secede, of encouraging separatism is as foolish and hypocritical as accusing those who advocate freedom of divorce of encouraging the destruction of family ties."

#### Reformists Refuse to Defend Tamils' Right of Self-Determination

It is by no means a surprise that the LSSP and CP reformists reject the right of self-determination of the Tamils by resort to the familiar slogans of Sinhalese nationalism, "Division of the country cannot be permitted!" Both these parties have for a long time now been partners with the Sinhalese bourgeois party, the SLFP, the oppressors of the Tamils, in a common government, which during the last seven years was opposed to the slightest concession to the Tamils on their just demands. Instead, these two parties jointly with the SLFP intensified the oppression of the Tamils.

It is the deep-rooted Sinhalese chauvinism of these two parties that limited their intervention in the anti-Tamil pogrom situation to calling for "Peace Committees"! Of the smaller "left" parties and groups, the pro-Peking Stalinist CP (Shanmugathan) and the Left Samasamajists (Vasudeva Nanayakara) followed positions no different from those of the CP (Moscow) and the LSSP.

The Healyite Revolutionary Communist League, that claims to be Trotskyist, is shamelessly trailing behind the Stalinists and LSSP reformists on the issue of the right of self-determination of the Tamils. For these fake-Trotskyists, the reality that a Tamil

continued on page 10



Tamil plantation workers pick tea.

Far Eastern Economic Review

attitude of the workers and toilers on this issue. The question can be decided only on the basis of the needs of the struggle of the proletariat and all the toilers in the whole of Sri Lanka for socialism.

In terms of Leninism, "the development of nationality in general, the movement to establish a separate nation, is the principle of bourgeois nationalism." And this concept of nationalism connotes the idea of national solidarity of the people. This "community of interests" between the exploiting capitalist class and the exploited working class and toilers is a thoroughly deceptive and mystifying ideology to prevent or retard the independent class organisation and class struggle of all the workers and toilers (Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, etc.). Thus bourgeois nationalism, whether of the Sinhalese bourgeoisie or of the Tamil bourgeoisie (the nationalism of the oppressed Tamil minority), is reactionary, and must be

tises against them, for equality of the Tamil nationality with the Sinhalese nationality. This must necessarily mean support of the *right* of the Tamils to establish themselves as a nation, *if that is their desire.*

More specifically, the position of revolutionary Marxists in regard to the demand of the Tamils for a separate state is one of *recognition of the right* of the Tamils to secession. This means the proletariat is not committed to support this demand for a separate Tamil state or support such a struggle; revolutionary Marxists will reserve the right to carry out propaganda against such separation. However, revolutionary Marxists will *defend the right* of Tamils to demand and agitate for a separate state. This would mean that if the Sinhalese bourgeoisie or their state seek to prevent the Tamils from making this demand, revolutionary Marxists will give military support (not political support) in defence of the *right* to raise and



# French Popular Front...

(continued from page 1)

zure of power. It is noteworthy that in some localities, for example in Paris, in the preparations for the March parliamentary elections, the PS has formed blocs with the MRG for joint first-round candidates against the Communists. Mitterrand's main concern is to appear statesmanlike, as befits a future head of government, and to "hold the line" against the putative "Communist menace."

The Communist Party is certainly in the most uncomfortable position, caught between its electoralist/governmental ambitions and the pressures exerted by its working-class base. For once PCF leader Georges Marchais is being candid when he states that his party "has no alternative strategy. We have had only one strategy, have only one and will have only one" i.e., the popular front (*Le Monde*, 24 September). At the same time, Prime Minister Raymond Barre's austerity plan, which has held economic growth to 3 percent while inflation still exceeds 10 percent, is stirring up massive discontent in the ranks of French labor.

Faced with sharp attacks on its living standards by the Giscard/Barre government, the working class has responded with a series of militant strikes, so far successfully contained by the reformist union bureaucracies. Most notable have been the 28-month strike at *Parisien Libéré*, a dock workers strike last spring, and the resurgence of the Lip (watchmakers) strike in Besançon. More recently, important conflicts have broken out at Manufrance and the Montefibre textile company. By far the most important threat to the French proletariat, however, is the impending layoff of up to 16,000 steel workers, the first layoffs in that industry since World War II.

The workers have responded in huge one-day general strikes a year ago and again last May 24. Originally planned as semi-annual exercises in blowing off steam by the Communist Party-dominated CGT labor federation, the marches developed a strong "unitary dynamic," bringing together the main union bodies and turning into the biggest workers demonstrations since May 1968. Recently CGT leader Georges Séguy appealed to leaders of the Union of the Left to "tell the workers the truth" about exactly what it would do in power, while of course centering his attack on the Socialists. With an eye on his clamoring ranks, he demagogically proclaimed that for the CGT, "there can be no question for us, even with the left in power, of participating in the administration of the crisis and capitalist business" (*Le Monde*, 10 September).

## Bluster Over Nationalizations

This spring, when the government and steel industry announced plans for mass layoffs in steel, the PCF responded by calling for nationalizing the industry—with "indemnification" of the steel trusts, of course. The Socialists, whose electorate includes many who reject the Giscard government but are afraid to vote for the Communists, opposed the call for nationalizations, as they have consistently in the past. Thus the debate over the extent of nationalizations under the Common Program has come to symbolize the posture of the Union of the Left toward the demands of the French proletariat.

One of the major concerns of the PCF over the past six months has been to give the impression that it alone is really fighting for increased benefits for the workers: a higher minimum wage than is favored by the PS, higher social security, family and health benefits, etc. This demagoguery has not been without effect, as the PCF was instrumental in staging a large rally in Thionville, one of the

towns to be heavily hit by layoffs in the northern steel belt, long a Socialist Party stronghold. And in early September, a PS city council member at Thionville switched to the Communists, reversing the previous Socialist majority.

However, the uproar over nationalizations is in essence a phony debate. First because of the key French economic trusts which have been excluded by common agreement, but more importantly because both PCF and PS agree that the bourgeoisie must not be expropriated. Individual businesses will be purchased by the state and run as "nationalized" firms for the overall benefit of French capitalism. The Communists correctly point out that DeGaulle nationalized more firms at the end of World War II than is projected under the Common Program, and even if all the PCF suggestions were accepted, the total percentage of industry under state control would be far less than in present-day Italy.

The debate is not over nationalizations, but over which of the reformist traitors will put a better face on the Union of the Left's predictable attacks on the working class, and which party will have the whip hand in the administration of the "nationalized" industries. It is interesting that, true to its mission as left cover of the popular front, the pseudo-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) has entered the debate on the terms posed by the reformists. At a September 27 press conference, LCR leader Alain Krivine called for "a minimum threshold of nationalizations which will make it possible to change the logic of the capitalist system" (*Le Monde*, 29 September). One couldn't ask for a better statement of the utopian/reformist conception of a "peaceful road to socialism."

The Stalinists' new-found militancy is no doubt also aimed at warding off electoral losses due to the disgust of militant workers at their vigorous courtship of "left-wing" Gaullists such as ex-Admiral Sanguinetti to enter the Union of the Left. In the March municipal elections there was scattered local resistance by the PCF and PS activists and voters to the presence of such bourgeois personalities (as well as Left Radicals) on the Communist and Socialist tickets. And Marchais & Co. certainly have drawn some conclusions from the drubbing which the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) took in the June parliamentary elections as a result of its ultra-legalist, semi-oppositionist stance.

The PCF is engaged in a delicate balancing act, on the one hand projecting an image as *the* party of the French working class, while on the other reassuring the bourgeoisie that the Common Program is not "a communist or even a socialist program." Apparently Marchais believes he must wear his "militant" hat for a while, since the election period is fast approaching and the PCF spent the earlier part of the year wearing its "responsible" hat with its "Eurocommunist" verbiage and support for the French nuclear arsenal.

## "Eurocommunism": The "Up-Dated" Popular Front

As they increase their appeals for middle-class votes and step up the virulence of their national chauvinism, the Spanish, Italian and French Communist parties have coined the doctrine of "Eurocommunism" as the ideological expression of their "up-dated" popular-front politics. With all its talk of "parliamentary pluralism" and "socialist democracy," the content of this "theory" is an explicit commitment to maintenance of the bourgeois state. It is an affirmation of their determination to repeat the disastrous experience of the French and Spanish popular fronts of the 1930's, which by tying the workers to the "democratic" bourgeoisie blocked a revolutionary mobilization and thereby paved the road for a bloody victory by fascism and militarist bonapartism.

It is significant that the "Eurocom-

munists" feel compelled to frontally attack Leninism on the question of the state. At the PCF's 22nd Congress in February 1976, all references to "the dictatorship of the proletariat" were dropped, although ostensibly for linguistic reasons ("the word 'dictatorship' does not correspond to what we want," said Marchais). PCE leader Santiago Carrillo does so explicitly in his book *Eurocomunismo y estado* (Eurocommunism and the State), where he denies the contemporary validity of Lenin's "State and Revolution." And three French Stalinists did likewise in their book *Les communistes et l'état* (The Communists and the State).

The troika of PCF "theorists" defend their explicit revisionism by pointing out that "since Maurice Thorez and the years of the Popular Front, the *historic tendency* of the French Communist Party" is the series of positions known as "Eurocommunism." If the Communist Party did not enter the popular-front government in 1936, if it had not yet given up the "outmoded" notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, they claim, it was only due to Stalin's reluctance to do so.

There is, in fact, a connection between "Eurocommunism" and the popular front. In 1935, the PCF caused a sensation when for the first time it appeared at the July 14 demonstration with the French tricolor and singing the Marseillaise. At that time the Stalinists went to far as to join with the fascists in a demonstration at Rouen celebrating that city's patron saint, Joan of Arc; who had repulsed "foreign invaders."

And both during and after World War II, the PCF whipped up anti-German national chauvinism, running a banner headline in *L'Humanité* on the day U.S. and Gaullist forces entered Paris in 1944, "Everyone Get a Kraut" ("A Chacun son Boche"). It is a small step from this to "socialism under French colors," the watchword of the PCF's 22nd Congress.

Nowhere have the betrayals of the French Stalinists been more marked than on the question of national defense. Here, too, the continuity with the popular front is unmistakable. In May 1935, when French foreign minister Laval signed a mutual defense pact with the Soviet Union, the official communiqué stated:

"Mr. Stalin fully understands and approves the national defense policy carried out by France in order to maintain its armed forces commensurate with its security needs."

Shortly afterwards, PCF deputies voted for the defense budget in parliament—the first time such an infamous act was committed by a "Communist" party since the Third International was founded as a result of the bankruptcy of the Second, whose leading parties voted war credits for the "national defense" of their "own" bourgeoisies in 1914.

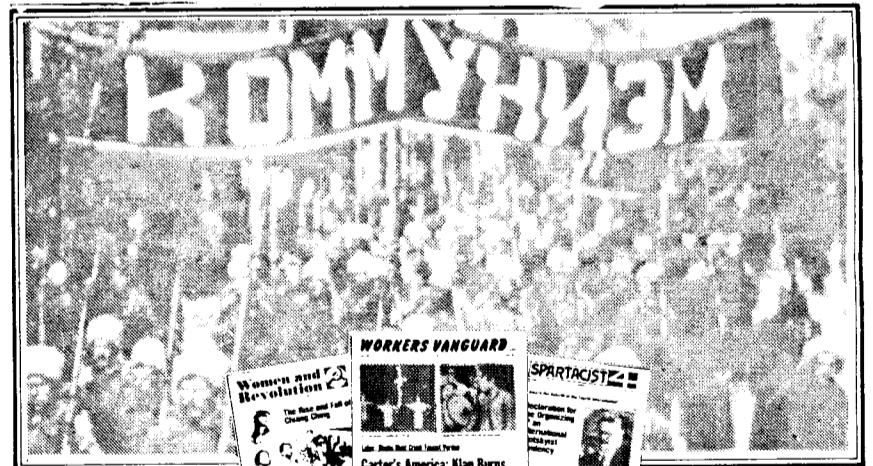
When the Common Program was signed in 1972, it implicitly supported NATO (calling for gradual and simultaneous disbanding of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact), but opposed the Gaullist "*force de frappe*" (atomic strike force). This spring a heated debate sprang up on the French left when the

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PCF reversed its longstanding opposition to the French bomb, and came out in favor of maintaining an arsenal of nuclear "dissuasion." The dispute inevitably widened to the question of whether the PCF would defend French soil against an invasion by Russian forces. Marchais answered: "If there were aggression against France by the Soviet Union, which is unthinkable, we would be the first to defend the national territory" (quoted in *New York Times*, 24 September).

This question is, of course, decisive, but Marchais' answer in the abstract is by no means definitive. The PCF has not finally broken all ties to the Kremlin, although it long since went over to the camp of committed defenders of bourgeois rule. As Trotsky pointed out, there is a basis for the social-democratization of Stalinist parties, which is the ultimate logic of "Eurocommunism," in the theory of "socialism in one country":

"The Communist Party of any capitalist country, which will have become imbued with the idea that its particular

country possesses the 'necessary and sufficient' prerequisites for the independent construction of a 'complete socialist society,' will not differ in any substantial manner from the revolutionary social democracy which also did not begin with a Noske but which stumbled decisively on August 4, 1914, over this very same question."

—"The Theory of Socialism in One Country," in *The Third International After Lenin* (1928)

While the PCF has gone a long way down this road, its evolution is still in process.

#### "Far Left" Tails Popular Front

With the seeming break-up of the Union of the Left, the so-called "far left" has been falling all over itself with programmatically empty calls for "unity" of the reformists. In the process there has been a noticeable coming together in line of the French section of the United Secretariat, the LCR, and the Lambertist Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI). In the past these two centrist pretenders to Trotskyism have had slightly different devices for capitulating to the popular front. The LCR would call in the abstract for a "government of the working people" while concretely calling for a vote for the bourgeois Union of the Left; the OCI, on the other hand, would call for a vote to the workers parties only (i.e., not the Left Radicals), then advocate formation of a PCF/PS government within a parliamentary framework. Now both tendencies are putting forward the line previously distinctive of the right-centrist OCI.

In virtually identical headlines, the LCR's *Rouge* (23-24 September) demanded "Unity Is Needed" while the OCI's *Informations Ouvrières* (28 September) proclaimed: "Enough of Divisiveness—Unity Is Needed." This same "unity"-mongering is evident in the LCR's call for "unitary committees open to all workers who agree to get rid of the Giscard/Barre government" (*Rouge*, 25 September). More than two years ago, the OCI was issuing nearly identical calls for "UNITARY COMMITTEES ... to fight for the workers united front, for the elimination of the Giscard/Chirac government" (*Informations Ouvrières*, 5 February 1975). Since the opposition to Giscard is the Union of the Left, in both cases what we have is a veiled call for the election of a popular-front government.

This is hardly a new political orientation in France. For a brief period in the mid-1930's it was taken up by the French Trotskyists under the slogan of a "Fighting Popular Front," later abandoned under Trotsky's sharp criticisms. Most characteristically this position was associated with the centrists around the PSOP of Marceau Pivert, and generally with those who would act as a left pressure group on the popular front rather than as a working-class opposition to the bourgeois alliance.

There are still differences of emphasis between the centrists. The LCR orients toward pressuring the Stalinists while the OCI leans on the social democrats. Thus *Informations Ouvrières* (7 September) initially took the position that the quarrel "shows the PS as the party of unity." Now the OCI is calling on PS and PCF leaders to "Get together! As for the Rest [i.e., polemics between Marchais and Mitterrand], Stop It!" (*Informations Ouvrières*, 28 September). Meanwhile, the OCI central committee recently approved a memorandum whose key element is a refusal to run or support independent workers candidates against the popular front:

"On the first round, vote for the PS or PC, according to your choice! On the second round, vote for the candidate of the workers party who came in first on the first round!"

The same central committee resolution makes clear that the OCI favors election of a Union of the Left government:

"While stressing that the OCI's battle remains, as before, the struggle to set up the republic of [workers'] councils, the

first step on this path is to aid the laboring masses and youth to realize the united front, to satisfy their demands and sweep away the Fifth Republic and its institutions."

—*Informations Ouvrières*, 28 September

This immediately recalls a famous line in the OCI's lead editorial on the 1974 presidential elections, when it supported Mitterrand (the candidate of the Union of the Left):

"In the current situation, Mitterrand's election is a necessary stage on the path of the fight against capitalism and the bourgeois state."

—*Informations Ouvrières*, 10 April 1974

Such a clear expression of the Menshevik-Stalinist theory of stages must have been too much for some of the OCI leadership, for the following week the OCI disingenuously "corrected" this "error" in the following laconic manner:

"Our editorial 'Our Position' last week ... should have read: '... In the current situation, Mitterrand's election is a stage on the path of the necessary fight against capitalism and the bourgeois state' instead of 'is a necessary stage on the path of the fight...'"

—*Informations Ouvrières*, 18 April 1974

Whether "first stage" or "first step," the

OCI is back with its old "error."

For the OCI and LCR, the independent struggle of the Trotskyist party against class collaboration is nothing. The popular front is the "first step" (stage) on the road to gaining positions in the trade unions rather than a road-block to revolution. The empty "unity" of the reformist apparatuses becomes the main goal of their "left" tails, just as Pivert was the most fervid supporter of "organic unity" between the Stalinists and social democrats in the 1930's. In contrast to the centrists, whose goal is to bring up the left flank of the Union of the Left by giving it "critical" support, the task of authentic Trotskyists is to present a clear proletarian opposition to class collaboration. Only by unswervingly holding to a policy of working-class independence can the basis be laid for the necessary split of the mass reformist parties into their counterposed class components.

No vote for the popular front—A break from the Union of the Left and the Common Program is the precondition to any electoral support to the PS and PCF!

For the construction of a Trotskyist party in France! Toward the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

## Bennie Lenard...

(continued from page 2)

that can happen to any black man in racist America:

"When a man leaves home in the morning he can land in jail, and he can almost rest assured that he will wind up in the hospital before too long. That is what happened to Bennie that day. He ended up in those two places... and he almost ended up in a third place, which is the morgue. I'm almost sure they did try to kill him."

It is because the defense of Lenard can become a focus for labor resistance to the racist attacks in Chicago that the reformists have been particularly insistent on relying on the state. At the SYL forum, a member of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), youth group of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), called upon the cops and troops, not the workers movement, to protect blacks. A spokesman for the SL, active in the Lenard defense, answered this dangerous call by pointing out the racist nature of the state to whom the SWP/YSA appeal:

"Tyrone Guyton was shot in the back by Emeryville, California police while laying face down on a sidewalk—shot in the back. Philip Allen was wrestled to the ground by four L.A. cops and when one of their guns went off they accused him of murder. Floyd Calhoun, another case—shot in the back by the Oakland police shotguns; Fred Hampton, shot down by an organized assassination squad here in Chicago; and now Bennie Lenard... He's in a car accident and he calls the police so they take him to jail and beat him nearly to death....

"So the point is, you cannot rely on the state to defend black people. That includes the courts, the police, the National Guard and federal troops. The state does not have to be exposed as racist—it stands as racist! And almost every black person knows that. They don't look upon the police as 'our friends.' That's what you people [of the SWP/YSA] don't understand. There is no alternative but to mobilize the organized labor movement....

"In this morning's *Sun Times*, I read an interesting article. The state AFL-CIO did go on record noting that there is racist violence in Chicago. And they said interesting things like 'if this was the '30's the trade unions would be in the streets arming themselves and protecting our black brothers and sisters.' So what we must do is call on Mayor Bilandic to defend them?! That's your line, brother, not ours! We say, as in the '30's, the labor movement must hit the streets—they did it before and they'll do it again!

"We need to build a revolutionary party to go into the working class, to tell, over and over again—as comrade Lenin said, to 'patiently explain'—to black and white workers that they have more in common with each other than with the boss, the bosses' politicians and the bosses' state...; and that the only solution is a united, integrated, proletarian struggle to overthrow that state and expropriate the bourgeois class." ■

## CP Nails SWP...

(continued from page 5)

al line of each of the reports to the Convention." And why not? Jack Barnes' "World Report" back-pedals on Soviet defensism "when it is not in the interest of the international proletariat" (Brezhnev should be the first to give up nuclear weapons). The main conference document, "Prospects for Socialism in America," never mentions the Russian question. And the fusion report states the two groups agree on "major political tasks and on substantial programmatic points" (just in case anyone wondered whether the difference on the USSR constituted a "substantial programmatic point").

The fusion makes the SWP more palatable to anti-Communist liberals and social-chauvinist out-bureaucrats in the trade unions. Through the fusion, the SWP says to liberals "Our party is your party." The CP embraces the SWP as legitimately "Trotskyist" in order to seal off from Trotskyism those who solidarize with the October Revolution. Thus, all these craven reformist tendencies get what they want from the fusion: the CP gets an evidence of "Trotskyist" anti-Sovietism, the SWP takes another long step toward social democracy, and the Shachtmanite RMC finds a home where it can build a base for State Department socialism. ■

## CORRECTIONS

The article "Plyushch Can't Duck Issue of Soviet Defensism" (*WV* No. 174, 23 September) reported that Ukrainian dissident Leonid Plyushch told an audience in Toronto that "The only hope now is Carter's victory at Belgrade." While the speaker praised Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade throughout his North American tour, the statement in question was made in Detroit.

The same article reports that SWP Detroit leader Mack Warren called at this forum for a campaign to enforce the Helsinki Accords. Actually, his ambitions were more modest. "We need something like the Helsinki Accords here in Detroit," he said, "because blacks, women and gays don't have human rights." But the SWP, like Plyushch, looks to Carter to provide such rights.

An error has also come to our attention in the article, "'La Pasionaria': Voice of Resistance or Echo of Betrayal?" (*WV* No. 161, 10 June 1977). The article states that the Spanish Communist Party suppressed news of Franco's uprising in July 1936 in its own press. Actually, the suppression was by the Popular Front government. Nevertheless, the Stalinists, although not at the time members of the government, were part of the treacherous popular-front coalition and thus must bear responsibility for this fateful act.

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# Franklin Teachers Strike...

(continued from page 12)

total \$165,000. Greaney has even ordered the battered union to pay the salaries of scabs and all other expenses incurred by the school committee during the strike. In addition, the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), to which the FEA is affiliated, was ordered to buy newspaper ads disavowing support for the strike.

While Greaney certainly succeeded in forcing a settlement, his high-handed treatment of the strikers increased their solidarity and won them much sympathy among Franklin residents. Seeing their children's longtime teachers put behind bars evidently shook parents and the townspeople generally. School custodians refused to cross picket lines while hundreds of local residents marched on the picket lines and attended rallies in support of the teachers. When it was announced on September 29 that all remaining strikers would be jailed, 200 high school students walked out of class in protest. Even the Franklin School Committee, whose moral posturing suffered with each arrest, appealed for "leniency," maintaining that financially crippling fines would be sufficient. But these were only crocodile tears, made possible by the fact that Greaney was doing their dirty work.

In fact, the school committee was eager to use every strikebreaking tactic at its disposal. Ads for scabs were placed in Boston newspapers every day. Gina Giuliano, a Boston University graduate student and daughter of Franklin's school superintendent, organized carloads of scabs from area colleges. In response to this despicable strikebreaking operation, members of the MTA threw up a picket line at BU on Tuesday, September 20. They were supported by the Boston Spartacus Youth League (SYL), which marched on the picket lines in Franklin and called a strike support rally at BU on September 29. Attended by 250 students, the rally was addressed by an SYL representative, an MTA official, an FEA member, the husband of a striking teacher, a former student union leader and three BU professors. More than \$100 was collected for the strike fund.

The strike was fought essentially on one issue: seniority. Instead of demanding no layoffs at all, the FEA accepted the inevitability of teacher dismissals, given the town's decline in school enrollment. The union demanded merely that layoffs and transfers between schools occur on the basis of seniority, something the school board opposed. The rest of the FEA demands were the essence of business-union timidity: a one-year contract with a 6 percent pay raise, a maximum class size of 25 students, reinstatement of the standard school calendar discarded by unilateral action of the school committee and one-half hour of preparation time for elementary school teachers. The FEA leadership repeatedly offered to return to work in exchange for binding arbitration.

The final settlement stipulates that layoffs take place according to seniority but allows transfers to occur on the basis of "seniority, competence and educational needs" (*Boston Globe*, October 1). The contract covers three years with 4 percent and 5 percent increases to be followed by a cost-of-living increase of 4 to 6 percent in the last year.

While the FEA membership managed to salvage seniority rights on layoffs (if not on transfers) and displayed remarkable mettle in the face of overwhelming odds, the success of the court in enforcing the state's reactionary labor laws represents a setback for all Massachusetts unions. And here there is no one to blame but the MTA leadership, which refused to call out other locals in sup-

port of the embattled FEA.

While the press has generally ascribed the harsh repression against Franklin teachers to the fury of Judge Greaney, such vicious anti-union tactics are not at all uncommon in small-town and suburban teachers' strikes. A similarly bitter strike by teachers in Crestwood, Michigan, in the winter of 1974-75 resulted in the firing of 184 teachers and numerous arrests. The mass firings were, however, eventually overturned due to the active backing of a number of key AFL-CIO unions. In the present case it is even more crucial that the power of the Massachusetts labor movement be mobilized to smash the strikebreaking state law and beat back the attempt to drive the FEA and its membership into financial ruin. Drop the charges—No reprisals! ■

## Avakian...

(continued from page 3)

the RCP wasn't out of the woods yet. Figuring they could pull things back together by a non-controversial resolution against deportations of foreign workers, the organizers were shocked to hear an auto worker declare that his entire shop was opposed to Mexican workers "taking jobs" from Americans. Amid hissing and booing against this chauvinist remark, the chairman ruled that further discussion would be deferred to local chapters and the session was ended.

### Son of WAM

A Stalinist outfit in the process of losing its "socialist fatherland," the RCP today looks a lot like Progressive Labor (PL) at the time of its break with China in the late 1960's. NUWO itself resembles nothing so much as the happily defunct Workers Action Movement (WAM) launched by PL at that time. Like PL/WAM, the RCP is banking on recruiting raw workers to its NUWO on the basis of militant economism and thereby warding off the dismal prospect of becoming a sect of apologists for "socialism in one country"—without a country.

But PL split from Maoism at the height of China's popularity with the New Left, which took a certain degree of backbone. Avakian & Co. have blundered into a corner where they find it impossible either to endorse the return of "capitalist roaders" to power in Peking or to support the ousted "Gang of Four." Moreover, it was Peking which dumped the RCP rather than vice versa. And if WAM offered workers little more than empty "fight the bosses" rhetoric, at least it limited itself to that instead of pushing rabid anti-Sovietism as its calling card.

Failing to generalize its critique of Maoism into a Leninist opposition to Stalinism, PL's red flags, May Day marches and substantial membership have nearly disappeared, leaving in their wake a nationally isolated, eclectic Stalinist sect. The RCP will fare no better, and it is doubtful that even a second "historic conference" of its NUWO will ever be held. ■

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## Sri Lanka...

(continued from page 7)

mini-state would from the outset be vulnerable to the aggressive designs of the imperialists has led them to conclude that the Tamil separatist movement has already come under the imperialist shadow, and therefore that the right to self-determination of the Tamils cannot be supported.

In regard to the United Secretariat (USec) group, the Revolutionary Marxist Party of Bala Tampoe, it has echoed the LSSP/CP call for "Peace Committees." But Tampoe knows well how to appear militant and revolutionary in words while taking a shamelessly reformist line. Tampoe's slogan is "Form Defence Committees" or "Combat Committees"! On the issue of Tamil minority rights and the question of self-determination of the Tamils, Tampoe has not made any comments. As for the JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna), it has confined its intervention to pointing out that no capitalist government could solve the communal problem. It has said nothing on the issue of a separate Tamil state.

The UNP government's hypocrisy in relation to the problem of the Tamil minority is manifest in that its only answer to this burning issue is a "Roundtable Conference." On the other hand, the government is seeking to profit by the calamitous situation for the Tamils by suggesting that anti-Tamil violence is a conspiracy against the government. What is more, Prime Minister Jayewardene has strengthened the anti-Tamil communalist forces among the Sinhalese by a mere negative attitude, expressing the determination of his government to prevent the division of the country, without telling the Sinhalese people the truth, that this issue of a separate Tamil state has arisen because the Tamils have been denied their just rights.

This despicable attitude of the UNP government and the strengthening of the Sinhalese communalist forces are taking place in conditions of the terrible oppression of the Tamil minority and the consequent determination of the Tamils to fight against this oppression. Thus the Tamil minority question will loom large in the politics of Sri Lanka, and will indeed be a burning question for all the people of this country, while remaining for a long time an especially explosive issue for the government.

For the working class and revolutionaries the Tamil national question is not at all an obstacle but a problem of the Sri Lanka socialist revolution. A militant mass movement of the oppressed Tamils, including a million plantation workers who form a section of the real proletariat of this country, is a factor of the utmost importance and significance for revolutionary Marxists. The Indian Tamil plantation workers constitute the sleeping giant of the Sri Lanka proletarian revolution.

Under a revolutionary leadership, this democratic movement of the oppressed Tamils would surely be an effec-

tive lever for the mobilisation of the working class and all oppressed sections for the anti-capitalist and anti-government struggle which is unpostponable in conditions of the growth of the counterrevolutionary forces and the speedy evolution of the present UNP regime into the "strong government" of the capitalist class.

In any event, the workers and toilers of Sri Lanka cannot take one step forward in furtherance of the struggle for socialism without taking an unequivocal position of support for Tamil minority rights and in defence of the right of the Tamils for self-determination. ■

## TDU...

(continued from page 5)

militants physically guarded the Local office against a takeover by the Lawson appointee, re-elected Vlahovic to the Local position and vowed to strike if another attempt is made to remove him as secretary-treasurer. Disregarding the militant solidarity offered by the ranks, Vlahovic told a meeting of his supporters in Vancouver that he would take the fight into the courts (*Vancouver Sun*, 22 September).

TDU spokesmen predicted that Fitzsimmons will be forced to step down from the union's top office. In addition to his ouster from the pension fund trusteeship, the IBT president was unexpectedly called to appear at a disciplinary hearing by his cronies on the International executive board. The board will no doubt exonerate Fitzsimmons of charges of squandering union funds, nepotism and ties to racketeers raised by the Professional Drivers Council (PROD), another "reform" outfit whose specialty is court suits against the union.

TDU leaders, of course, hail these government incursions against union sovereignty as blows in the fight for "rank-and-file power." The U.S. government has no interest in union democracy but does welcome any opportunity to undermine the independence of the 2.2-million-member union which has the social power to bring the economy to a halt.

The corrupt Teamster bureaucracy must be ousted, but not by the bosses' government. This is the task of a militant leadership which knows that the bourgeois state is the workers' mortal enemy. ■

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# ILA...

(continued from page 12)

conventional freighters and passenger ships and have ordered so-called "perishable cargoes" to be exempted. Only in New Orleans have the longshoremen thus far shut down all shipping in the port. This is a clear demonstration of the power of black and white workers to stand together against the bosses, despite the racist policies of ILA officials, who maintain two segregated locals—one for blacks and one for whites—in New Orleans, as well as in some other southern ports.

The leaderships of both the ILA and the West Coast International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) have combined to quash any meaningful solidarity actions. A resolution put forward by the "Longshore

an excuse to avoid strike action against cutbacks on the West Coast. Under the Gleason-Herman pact, only picket lines sanctioned by the president of the striking union need be respected. In the past, Gulf Coast ILA members have on occasion dispatched roving picket squads, but under the agreement the ILWU is *not* required to recognize such pickets.

Further, picket lines that violate existing contracts or court injunctions (as Taft-Hartley) need not be respected. West Coast shippers have challenged ILWU observance of "outsiders" picket lines and were upheld by a "neutral" arbitrator. Consequently, any appearance by ILA pickets at Pacific Coast docks is likely to be a short-lived grandstand play intended primarily to let the bureaucrats of all the dockworkers' unions off the hook. The bureaucrats of both the ILA and ILWU are firmly opposed to any militant action even resembling 1971, when there were overlapping longshore strikes on all three coasts.

The maritime unions were built through joint actions against the bosses, notably during the San Francisco general strike of 1934. In recent years the degeneration of the labor movement has taken a particularly vicious turn on the waterfront; faced with a massive loss of jobs, the bureaucrats of the maritime unions have responded with mutual scabbing and raiding. We reprint below a leaflet issued by the Militant-Solidarity Caucus of the National Maritime Union (NMU), which calls for halting this suicidal warfare and underscores the crucial need for a joint strike of all maritime workers for jobs for all. ■



Teddy Gleason

Militant" grouping of ILWU Local 10, which demanded that all cargo diverted from East and Gulf Coast ports be hot-cargued and that all picket lines by ILA members be respected, was defeated in a Local 10 executive board meeting after it was ruled out of order at the September membership meeting.

The Local 10 leadership, backed up by the ILWU International, counterposed the recent "defense pact" agreed to by ILWU head Jimmy Herman and ILA chief Gleason. This agreement is a farce and underscores the duplicity of the ILWU leadership, which earlier promised "joint action with the ILA" as



WV Photo

New York ILA chief Scotto

7 OCTOBER 1977

## For Labor Solidarity!

# Longshoremen Under Attack

—from *Beacon* supplement, 26 September 1977

The contract for the East and Gulf Coast longshoremen (ILA) expires September 30, and there is a good chance there will be a strike. The key issue in the negotiations is jobs. Last spring the federal courts upheld a Labor Board (NLRB) decision striking down an ILA contract provision that guaranteed that all consolidated containers stuffed and stripped within 50 miles of the docks were to be handled by longshore labor. With this provision struck down, the ILA stands to lose thousands of container-handling jobs to lower paid and unorganized labor in inland warehouses. As a result, the union's Guaranteed Annual Income provision, which provides, in New York, 2,080 hours pay (a full 52 weeks) to all longshoremen, even if work is not available, is in danger.

In the event of an ILA strike, NMU seamen must, as an elementary act of solidarity, not work aboard ships that are being struck by the ILA. Defense of the longshoremen's jobs is crucial, and a defeat would be a blow to all maritime labor.

Last spring, when the court ruling was announced, ILA head Teddy Gleason called a brief strike. However, only a few shipping lines were struck, certain cargoes were exempted, and seamen aboard struck ships were even permitted to continue working—which amounts to sanctioning scabbing. This strike was called off on the flimsy promise that the Federal Maritime Commission—another arm of the same capitalist government that shafted the longshoremen in the first place—would investigate the situation. This half-strike accomplished nothing, and longshoremen are confronted with the same massive loss of job security that they faced last spring.

Despite all the rhetoric about "maritime unity" from union leaders like Shannon Wall, Gleason, and Paul Hall, none of them have lifted a finger to put real maritime labor unity *in action against the companies*. Instead, they call—at best—half-hearted strikes, while scabbing on each other, signing sweetheart contracts to grab a few more jobs, relying on capitalist politicians, etc. Under these policies the maritime unions have shrunk in size.

The maritime unions, including the NMU, grew out of joint struggles and powerful strikes of both seamen and longshoremen against the companies. Today, seamen and longshoremen face the same key problem—jobs. Instead of worrying about maintaining company profits, as the hack union officials do, the occasion of the company/government attack on the longshoremen demands in response an industrywide strike of all maritime workers, fought around crucial demands such as a shorter work period at no cut in pay to provide jobs for all (for seamen, the four-watch system and equal time off for equal time on at full pay); full cost-of-living protection; restore the 20-year, no-age pension with a substantial boost in pension pay; organize the unorganized, including runaway foreign-flag ships. Only in such a fashion can the defeats of the past be halted, and maritime workers go forward.

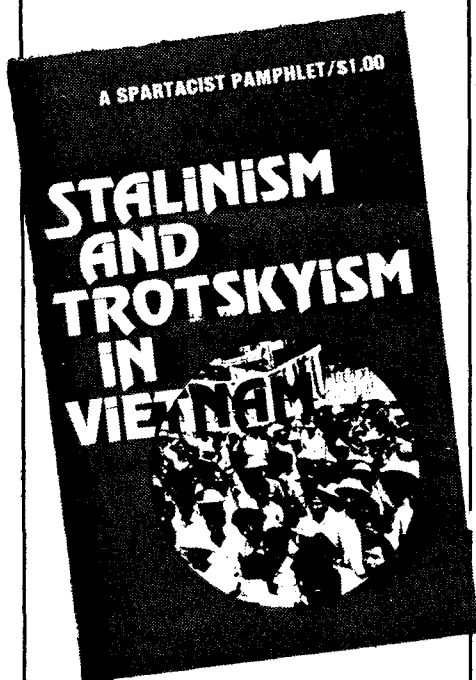
### No To Government Intervention!

In the middle of the longshore negotiations, the government has "suddenly" announced an investigation of the ILA. A front-page story of September 1 in the anti-labor *New York Times* was headlined "Dock Payoff Reported Found in Undercover Inquiry by F.B.I." Key target of the investigation is Fred Field, vice president and general organizer of the ILA, who is accused of accepting payoffs from United Brands in return for insuring that their ships were unloading during ILA strikes of 1968-69 and 1971.

The timing of this investigation is not accidental. It is clearly planned to intimidate the longshoremen in the contract fight, and it demonstrates once again that the capitalist government's so-called "investigations of corruption" in the unions are only a smokescreen for attacking and weakening the labor movement. The recent investigation of the ILA is only one more attack by the bosses' state on maritime workers, just like past Taft-Hartley injunctions, revoking of the 50-mile container-handling rule, illegalizing foreign-flag organizing, etc.

The NMU Militant-Solidarity Caucus has consistently opposed government intervention in the unions, and denounced the now defunct Morrissey opposition, which attempted to use court suits and Labor department investigations to get into office. The corrupt bureaucrats of the ILA, NMU and other unions can only be thrown out by the membership itself as part of the fight to build a class-struggle union leadership.

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## ILA Strike:

# Shut the Docks Down Tight!

OCTOBER 3—On October 1, 50,000 longshoremen, members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) struck Gulf and Atlantic Coast ports from Maine to Texas. At stake is the gutting of the union through the loss of thousands of jobs from containerization (automation) of the docks, which has made particular inroads in the North Atlantic ports. Unless the company/government attack is successfully answered, ILA members will soon find themselves in the same straits as West Coast longshoremen, who have lost so many jobs through automation that their benefit funds are near bankruptcy and forced deregistrations are imminent.

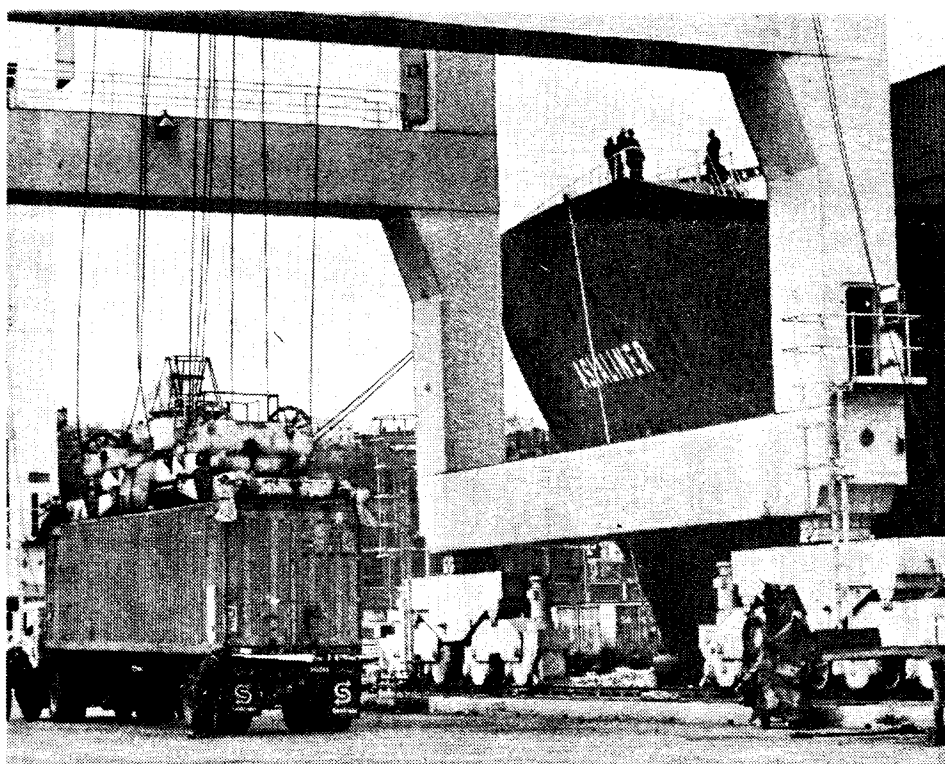
Despite many years of loyal service to the American bourgeoisie by the arch-reactionary Gleason bureaucracy of the ILA, which has been among the staunchest anti-communist forces in the labor movement and for years boycotted Soviet ships, the capitalist state has been in the forefront of the assault on the ILA. The current deadlock was precipitated by a decision of the National Labor

Relations Board, backed up by the federal courts, which struck down an ILA contract provision mandating that all stuffing and stripping of containers within 50 miles of the docks had to be done by ILA members.

The government has followed up this blow with another. On the eve of the strike, ILA general organizer Fred Field was convicted by a federal court of accepting bribes. His sentencing has been delayed until November, with the unmistakable warning that Field's fate—and that of other ILA officials—is contingent on the outcome of the strike. Finally, the bosses' state, as it has numerous times in the past, may attempt to strangle the strike through imposing a Taft-Hartley injunction against the ILA.

Despite the threat of decimation and bankrupting of the union's Guaranteed Annual Income provision, the Gleason bureaucracy is waging a half-hearted strike. Only the container lines have been struck; union officials have ordered the ranks to continue handling

*continued on page 11*



Containers being loaded at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey.

WV Photo



WV Photo

September 25 statewide teachers' strike support rally in Franklin.

BOSTON, October 1—A teachers strike in the small Massachusetts township of Franklin ended yesterday after two weeks. So vicious and unrelenting were the union-busting attempts of the local school committee and the courts that the strike drew national news coverage. Faced with Superior Court judge John M. Greaney's threat to jail every one of the 180 remaining strikers on September 30, the Franklin Education Association (FEA) voted at a dawn meeting to accept the school committee's latest offer.

From the moment that the 265 initial strikers hit the pavement (primarily in defense of seniority rights in the face of

impending layoffs), state and local authorities attacked with a vengeance. On Friday, September 16, the strike's first day, 112 picketers were arrested for trespassing, and Greaney ordered the union back to work. When the strikers refused to bow to this judicial ultimatum, the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission initiated criminal contempt proceedings against the union.

On Wednesday, September 21, Greaney jailed eight FEA officers and fined the union \$15,000 a day. On Thursday 27 more teachers were jailed, and the judge warned that "we have adequate jail space and adequate personnel" to

## 250 at SYL-led Support Demo

# 80 Teachers Jailed in Franklin, Mass. Strike

imprison the entire union (*Boston Globe*, 24 September). To drive the point home, he jailed nine more teachers the following Monday. A total of 79 strikers spent time in jail.

More threatening than a few days behind bars, however, were the punitive fines that the court levied. These were escalated daily and were scheduled to reach \$100 per teacher per day yesterday! Eighty-five teachers owe \$1,550 each, and Greaney says that the fines will not be "abated one penny." To ensure payment he issued an order allowing the court to attach the assets of teachers not paying the fines. Thus FEA members are threatened with the loss of

cars and homes despite the strike settlement. The union is appealing the fines.

There is no mystery as to the intent of these reprisals. Greaney was seeking through the escalating fines and unlimited jail terms to break the spirit of the strikers. Teachers were also given the opportunity of "purging" themselves by agreeing to scab, and a number did so in the strike's closing days. This union-busting onslaught served notice to the rest of Massachusetts labor that there are teeth to the 1973 state law forbidding public employees to strike or support any strikes.

Fines against the 270-member FEA

*continued on page 10*