

TRUTH

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BUILD THE FIGHT IN AUTO!



CHRYSLER'S LYNCH ROAD ASSEMBLY, SHUT DOWN ALONG WITH NUMEROUS OTHERS

"There is a tremendous lack of faith in the economy."
(Leonard Woodcock, President of the UAW, explaining the decline in car sales.)

By JON MYERS

It may be hard for Leonard Woodcock to understand, but for the almost 300,000 auto workers who will be spending their Christmas holidays inside the unemployment offices there is good reason to have "bad faith" in the capitalist economy. For them, as well as the over six million currently unemployed in the US, it is also easy to understand that it is not just a question of "faith." It is a question of the capitalist system itself and it stands for both unemployment and high prices at the same time. Thus, when auto workers are laid-off because of lagging sales, the corporations raise prices on cars to new levels.

AUTO IN THE CENTER OF THE CRISIS

Because of the key role that the automobile industry plays in the US economy, the UAW is currently at the center of the capitalist attack on working-class living standards. There are many ways that the capitalists try to squeeze more and more profits out of a dying system. Today it is taking the most basic form of attack -- the denial of the right to work, the only right left to the working class under capitalism.

The recession in the US is mirrored in the decline of the auto industry. US auto production is down 29% from last December, which was a time of record lows as well. Chrysler Corporation's December production plans are down 88.4% from last year. Overall auto sales in the US are down 35% from last year.

It is estimated that over thirteen million jobs are connected with the auto industry in this country. The impact of the auto recession is felt throughout the country with layoffs in textiles, chemicals, rubber, steel and transportation as well. The US unemployment rate is already nearing 7% and some economists are now predicting an 8% unemployment rate by next summer, which will be the highest since World War II; in fact, since the Depression.

The UAW is the second largest union in this country and has always played a leading role in the fights of US working class. The current prostration on the union and the union leadership's complete abstention in the face of it poses crucial questions not only for the union's survival but for the fight of the entire US working class.

BETRAYAL BY THE BUREAUCRACY

The collaboration of the UAW bureaucracy with the

companies' attack on the union has been almost complete. The record of the Woodcock bureaucracy is a shameful betrayal of everything that the militant workers who built the UAW in the 1930's stood for and what the UAW workers of today stand for. The bureaucrats have offered no opposition to the layoffs and factory closures, have put forward no plan of action and have organized no fight against them.

Nor did the betrayals of the UAW leadership start today. The 1973 UAW contracts were signed with the FULL KNOWLEDGE of the UAW leadership that the industry was in trouble and that massive layoffs were in store. It was this contract, that laid the basis for the layoffs, which was shoved down the throats of the UAW membership. The layoffs did not just start THIS winter either. The 1973 contract gave the companies the green light for the over 200,000 layoffs LAST winter. As of November 1974 there still were over 40,000 UAW workers on indefinite layoff from LAST winter.

SUB

Part of the cynical betrayal by the UAW bureaucracy in the 1973 contract was the fraud of SUB (Supplemental Unemployment Benefits.) This was to be the "answer" to layoffs. On paper the SUB fund gives laid-off workers with a year or more seniority, benefits up to 95% straight-time pay for up to a year. Leaving aside the question of workers who have less than a year's seniority, the plan itself is a fraud in the face of massive layoffs. The present layoffs are using SUB funds at four times the rate that they were accumulated. GM has already paid out \$174 million in SUB this year-leaving only \$103 million in the fund. In fact SUB funds have run out for the workers who were laid-off last winter and now pay for only thirty-two weeks.

The union leadership clearly used the SUB plan as a way of "selling" to the ranks the layoffs that they had negotiated. They knew as well as anyone else that it would not meet the crisis. Now Irv Bluestone, head of the UAW's GM Division, has asked union leaders about the possibility of diverting annual wage and cost-of-living increases to the GM SUB fund. Bluestone is certainly earning his high salary -- the only crime is that the workers, not the bosses, are paying it.

WORKERS' SOLUTION

The same pressures that produced the recent strike wave in this country will produce the workers' response to unemployment. The crisis facing auto workers puts them at the center of that fight. The fight in the UAW must be over the very right to a job -- which the capitalist system cannot provide and the bureaucrats won't protect.

Not "faith" in capitalism, nor ads for GM, but FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT LIVING CONDITIONS FOR ALL must become the fight in the UAW. The concrete demand to end unemployment must be the demand for A SLIDING SCALE OF HOURS. The UAW should build organizations of both the employed and unemployed in order to keep the working class' solidarity intact despite the layoffs. These organizations can then lead a fight to divide up among all the workers the available work at the same weekly wage as before. 30 HOURS WORK FOR 40 HOURS PAY! is the only solution to unemployment that defends the right of the workers to live and work under decent conditions.

With all the auto corporations and especially with Chrysler, whose closing of the Jefferson Avenue plant in Detroit will push black unemployment to 28% in that city, UAW workers must demand that the companies open their books to the workers so that they can examine their financial records. Workers can run Chrysler better than the incompetents who run it today. While he berates these "incompetents," UAW Chrysler head, Doug Fraser, is the man who rammed the contract that prepared the layoffs down the throats of Chrysler workers in 1973.

Today, Fraser not only refuses to do anything but talk, but actually serves on the Detroit Police Commission -- where he will again help out the bosses in dealing with the product of the layoffs. Chrysler and the rest of the auto companies must be nationalized under workers' control and the jobs at Jefferson Avenue must be kept.

The situation today urgently requires that FACTORY COMMITTEES be created in every factory to prepare auto workers for the rapidly approaching time when they will have to run the industry that the capitalists have made such a mess of. The US working class must prepare itself to defend what is sure to come -- the second wave of sit-down strikes in this country.

VICTORY AHEAD

We are currently in the middle of a worldwide working-class offensive. The proletariat in every advanced country has refused to bow down to the same type of attacks that are occurring in this country. The layoffs in Detroit and elsewhere will strengthen the will of UAW workers to lead the fight of the American working class. The revolutionary fight for full employment and decent living conditions for all will make sure that UAW workers will have something to really celebrate next New Year.

EDITORIAL

THE YEAR PAST, THE YEAR TO COME

The message of 1974 was the message of the international working class and its revolutionary offensive. Across all the seemingly confusing and disturbing events of capitalist society, the working class brought home the message of the revolutionary epoch. From the coalfields of West Virginia to the docks of Lisbon the vitality of the class struggle has made clear to thousands of advanced workers the reality of the international socialist revolution. It is this objective living reality that is the confirmation of the Trotskyist program and of the struggle of the Fourth International, which will find its way to the most committed and dedicated fighters of the struggles of today and tomorrow.

CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

The reasons for this offensive lie in the sharpening of the expression within the working class of the worldwide crisis of imperialism. 1974 saw the intensification of the crisis of capitalism, expressed by soaring inflation, rising unemployment, decaying social conditions, and attacks on working-class rights. There is every indication that this crisis will continue well into 1975 at its present levels, posing further attacks and misery for the working class and the oppressed.

For the bourgeoisie, 1974 meant a deepening of its political crisis as well. One can hardly count the number of bourgeois leaders or regimes that fell in 1974 -- the Tories in Britain, Brandt in Germany, Caetano in Portugal, Gaullism in France, Tanaka in Japan, the nearly infinite number of governments in Italy, the fall of the Ethiopian and Greek dictatorships and of course -- Richard Nixon. No longer representing isolated incidents or "mistakes," the instability of the leadership of the bourgeoisie means the DEFINITIVE conclusion of the post-World War II period of relative capitalist stability. The crisis in the political arena is just one more open expression of the decay of bourgeois society. It is just one more example of the fact that capitalism is now unable to solve its crisis in a "rational" or "democratic" fashion.

UNITY OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT

In decisive contrast to the decay of the bourgeoisie has been the growing unity of the world proletariat -- expressed in its increased level of combativity and organization. No one should minimize the dangers that the bourgeoisie has in store for the working class -- WAR, FAMINE AND SOCIAL DECAY. But it is the menace and violence of a dying class which has outlived its historical usefulness. The possibilities lying open for the proletariat are just beginning.

The class struggles of 1974 began, for the first time in decades, to produce a working-class offensive on an international scale. A vanguard layer in the working class is being created through struggles in almost every country in the world -- most significantly in the advanced capitalist countries. This growing international unity gives far greater weight to every national struggle and is breaking down the national isolation of leading sections of the proletariat.

US WORKERS

In 1974 the American working class took its place in the international working-class upsurge. This is of great significance, not only for the revolutionary movement in this country but, because it attacked American imperialism on its home ground, the fight of the US workers is an important aid to the international proletariat in its fight against its chief enemy.

The massive layoffs and the so-called energy crisis early last year did not produce a weakening of the class struggle, as the bourgeoisie hoped, but produced the largest strike wave in recent history. Starting with the construction workers in Northern California and the independent truck driver stoppages in December, the working-class offensive spread to all sectors of the class, from the city workers in San Francisco to the Rheingold workers in New York who occupied their factory, to the US miners who are today burning pictures of their "leader," Miller, as well as the contract, in the coalfields. This outbreak was predicted on the basis of the objective conditions facing the class --



the same conditions which will impel the class to new outbreaks of struggle in 1975.

EUROPEAN OFFENSIVE

1974 also placed the British working class in the forefront of the international class offensive. Responding to the economic decay of British capitalism -- the most rapid in Europe -- the working class of Britain, through the leadership of the miners, broke the wage policy of the Tories and threw out the Heath government. The election of the Labour government has not meant the end of the offensive, but its continuation, as the British miners have rejected Labour's "social contract" as well. With the growing contradiction between the actions of the Labour government and the aspirations of the workers who voted for it, the possibility of a revolutionary situation developing in the coming year in Britain is very great.

All the other major capitalist countries have seen strike waves of record proportions -- France, Italy and Japan may see revolutionary situations developing as well in the coming year. 1974 saw as well the fall of the dictatorship in Portugal. The course of the struggle in Portugal will contain decisive lessons for the world proletariat. As with Spain in the 1930's, Portugal will be a testing ground for all the strategies of bourgeois counter-revolution -- in particular its Stalinist allies. The victory of the Portuguese proletariat can also be the decisive proof for our time of the Trotskyist policy of PERMANENT REVOLUTION.

The class struggles in the advanced capitalist countries have also begun to indicate the "way out" for struggles of the backward areas of the world -- Latin America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa. The "boom" never reached these countries, and the rise of the class struggle in the West provides new hope for a qualitative change in the international class struggle. This will bring the aid of the Western proletariat to those areas of the world where the socialist revolution is today a question of avoiding starvation.

STALINIST COUNTRIES

The proletarian upsurge in the West will also provide aid to the struggles of the working class in the Stalinist countries. As the level of class combat grows in the capitalist countries, the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Communist Parties become more and more exposed in the eyes of the international working class for what they are -- the agents of world imperialism inside the workers' movement. Just as Stalinism based itself on the defeat of the proletarian revolution in the West, so the new upsurge will lay the basis for its elimination.

The recent struggles inside the degenerated and deformed workers states -- in Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union itself, are once again making the Bolshevik program of political revolution against the bureaucracy a living reality inside these states.

CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

It is only on the basis of this understanding of the nature of the present period and the reality of the current working-class upsurge that the question of the crisis of leadership of the working class and its most conscious element, the revolutionary party, can be understood. The living reality of the working-class struggle and the death agony of the world bourgeoisie has shaken to the foundation all those groups which claimed to lead the working class. To claim it is one thing, to be able to carry it out is another. The present upsurge is sweeping aside all those groups which, with a false program and a false class position, are disarmed in the face of the objective needs of the working class.

Today's struggles are preparing the revolutionary vanguard for the victory of tomorrow. We are a positive part of this process -- part of the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International against the petty-bourgeois agents of American and world imperialism. Thus, in 1974, we also helped the American proletariat to serve notice to the bourgeoisie and its lackeys in the workers' movement that their days were numbered and that the road ahead was one of victory. In 1975 our forces will be stronger and the American and world proletariat will carry that message across once again.

TRUTH

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EDITORIAL NOTES

A SIGNIFICANT VOTE

The final vote totals are in for the campaign of the Workers League (running as the Workers Party) in two congressional races in New York City. Helen Halyard received 372 votes in the 14th Congressional District and Teresa Delgado, running against liberal, black, woman Democrat Shirley Chisholm, received 309 votes in the 12th District.

This total of 681 votes indicates that the campaign of the WL which, as we pointed out in our first issue, raised the "watchwords of the proletarian revolution," evoked a response on the part of the most advanced workers in this area. For a socialist organization the purpose of a political campaign is not to "win" but to use it to reach out to the working class, to build the revolutionary party. In this sense the election is scarcely the beginning. The task now is to organize and expand on the gains already made, to bring closer and to recruit those with whom contact has been made.

Such work cannot be done by those whose politics offer nothing to the proletariat. By way of example, the candidate of the SWP, which is much larger and better known than the WL and which does practically nothing BUT run in elections, received only 125 votes in the 12th District, slightly more than a third of the WP vote. The best workers in that area saw no reason to vote for a pale shadow of Shirley Chisholm and the less advanced, having the real thing, saw no need to. Those who voted for the WL candidate agreed with us that voting for the SWP was "worse than useless."

GOOD-BYE, RSL

After repeated demands from us in regard to our "appeal" of our expulsions from the Revolutionary Socialist League, we have learned from its Political Committee that its convention has been postponed until Easter -- presumably in hopes that it will then rise from the dead.

This represents the THIRD date set for this convention and there is no more likelihood that it will prove true than the others. How can a leadership which has nothing to say and which wants to hear nothing organize and carry through a discussion?

The RSL is clearly on the skids. It has had to retreat to a monthly schedule for its paper and has filled it with scholastic "thinkpieces." It has lost in approximately one year fully a THIRD of its membership -- and not all those who walked out were the worst elements. The RSL has no industrial work and is forced to engage in foolish games with equally bankrupt sects.

Our tendency has prepared a counterresolution for the RSL convention. Since this gathering seems likely never to take place, we are willing to make it available (at \$1.25) to those interested in a thoroughgoing critique of the RSL on the most important questions of our movement.

We, at least, have things to say.

SOUTHERN LABOR STIRS

By DAVID MARKOS

"J.P. first, the textile industry second, and then the whole South." Such was the giddy response of Wilbur Hobby, President of the North Carolina State AFL-CIO, to the news of victory, August 28, at seven of J.P. Stevens' plants in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. The close 1,685 to 1,448 vote by Stevens' workers in favor of representation by the Textile Workers Union of America capped an ELEVEN-YEAR organizing drive by the TWUA, which relied almost entirely on the capitalist courts to enforce the victories that Stevens' workers had won. The wheels of "justice" move slowly for the working class. Idle boasts are the only contribution the bureaucracy makes to the much talked about project to "organize the South."

The unbridled enthusiasm of Hobby, proclaiming the Stevens victory to represent "a new day in Dixie," is matched only by the illusory dreams that the bureaucrats seek to peddle. Perhaps Mr. Hobby and his fellows can explain why this "breakthrough in the basic textile industry" was followed two months later by the voting down of the TWUA at fifteen Cannon Mills Co. plants in Kannapolis, North Carolina. No doubt the executives of the Cannon Mills consider this vote a "breakthrough" in their drive to destroy the TWUA's Southern organizing campaign.

While the bureaucrats might prefer to cast the blame for this defeat on the workers themselves, the recent history of militant struggles on the part of Southern workers testifies otherwise to their fighting spirit. The victory at J.P. Stevens was preceded by last November's success at Oneita Knitting Mills and the winning of the two-year long battle to organize Farah, which ended in May of the same year. And neither the labor aristocracy nor the capitalists themselves could have missed the fight that the miners and the miners' wives put up in Harlan County. If any consider this display of courage to be newfound it might benefit them to look into the 1934 general strike of the textile industry which mobilized upwards of three quarters of a million workers, mostly unorganized, in the single largest strike of CIO history. Recent and past history both show the Southern worker to be anything but docile.

No longer the "cheap" place to live that it was years ago, the South has not only experienced the same price spiral that the rest of the U.S. has but, in fact, has surpassed it. While prices rose 8.8% on a national basis, the South experienced an increase of 9.6%. The panhandlers of retirement meccas can no longer offer the South as low-cost living and the Southern worker finds himself in battle side by side with his Northern counterpart.

The struggle of miners and textile workers to organize themselves in the face of the mounting capitalist attack on their living standards is part of the general offensive of the working class in this period of deepening revolt against the capitalist system. There can be no doubt that the wage offensive of American workers this summer gave a tremendous impetus to the organizing drives of textile workers and the Harlan County miners. The victories in the South are part of this offensive and indicate that the movement of the workers, not the bureaucracy's schemes, is the key to victory.

This is what is behind not only the Southern organizing successes, but also the wave of strikes and organizing drives among government and service workers. Those on the bottom of the wage scale are the first to find their standard of living slashed to the bone by rising costs. It was precisely this section of the working class that stepped into the arena during the strike wave of U.S. workers.

The new resurgence of organizing drives in the textile mills and the South as a whole is also linked to the increasing number of blacks entering the working class in the industry. Mills which never hired blacks before the time of the civil rights movement now have workforces from 20% to 40% black. These workers have been the backbone of the TWUA's latest campaign in the South, just as they form as a whole the most militant section of the working class.

The conservative trade unions, going back as far as the early CIO drives in the thirties, never attempted to deal with the race problem in the South. Many an organizing drive was simply lost when companies threatened to throw white workers out on the streets and hire blacks instead. The trade unions proved

thoroughly incapable of fighting for the right of blacks to be employed and in so doing were unable to crack the race-baiting campaigns of the mill owners that led to the defeat of every major organizing drive into the South.

Overriding all the plans for successful organizing drives that the bureaucracy can conjure up is their complete subservience to capitalism. The trade union leaders' acceptance of laws to govern what is in reality class warfare means capitulation to the class that made the laws in the first place.

The reliance of the union bureaucrats on court decisions to slap the hands of wayward capitalists who think the laws were made for them (but the bureaucrats "know better") is the surest sign of the potentially explosive character of these organizing drives. It is precisely when possibilities of militant strikes present

MILLER'S "VICTORY"

By JON MYERS

After announcing the ratification of the United Mine Workers' contract on December 5, UMW President Arnold Miller checked into a Washington, D.C., hospital for "rest." Miller will need the rest because he knows as well as the 120,000 UMW miners do that his "victory" in the 1974 contract will be very short-lived.

ONLY 60% VOTE

Despite the setback that the contract represents, the voting returns as well as the sentiments expressed by miners throughout the four-week strike indicate that the class struggle is far from over in the coalfields. The contract was approved by a vote of 56% to 44%. But only 60% of the eligible miners voted. Only about 42,000 miners, which represents just a little over a third of the membership, actually voted FOR the contract. Thus, the 40% of the union who didn't vote out of either cynicism or apathy and the 28,000 who voted AGAINST the contract comprise the overwhelming majority of the UMW. The contract was rejected in the powerful Illinois District 12, District 23, and District 6.

During the strike there were also many public demonstrations of this hostility towards Miller and the contract. Miller barely got the contract passed by the Bargaining Council -- the leadership of the UMW. The contract had to be rammed through over a weekend instead of the "thorough discussion" previously promised by Miller. The Right to Strike Committee organized a caravan that went throughout western West Virginia opposing the contract. Copies of the contract and an effigy of Arnold Miller were burned and Miller himself was booed down and prevented from speaking at a regional meeting in Beckley, West Virginia.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENES

Miller proved that he had no intention of leading a fight to break Ford's economic policies. The 10%, 4%, and 3% yearly wage increases are well within the economic guidelines set by Ford. The cost-of-living clause will fail to keep up with inflation. The contract also denied the right to strike over safety, upheld forced overtime and furthered the attacks on seniority rights.

All of this was accomplished through the direct collaboration of Miller with the Federal government. Miller was aided by Federal mediator William J. Usery in getting the contract through the Bargaining Council, where Federal intervention was threatened. Miller visited Ford several times during the negotiations and when the Bargaining Council finally approved the pact, Miller called Ford and told him he would, "do everything I can to get the coal flowing again for America."

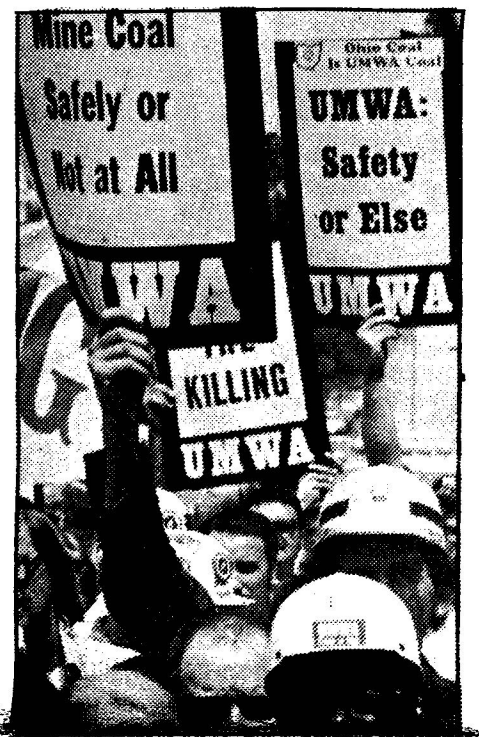
POLICEMAN

Upon announcing the vote on the contract Miller made even clearer his role as a policeman for the companies and the state. According to the WALL STREET JOURNAL, Miller "pledged that he will take stronger steps in the future than in the past to ensure that miners abide by the terms of their new contract."

Miller's collaboration with the state illustrates the necessity for a revolutionary leadership to insure the independence of the trade unions from the state. Under conditions of economic crisis and capitalist offensive, even the "liberal" wing of the bureaucracy, the Woodcocks and Millers, have very little room to maneuver short of outright collaboration with the corporations and the state.

themselves that the labor chiefs use the most cowardly and stupid tactics. That is why Arnold Miller refused to call a national strike to organize the miners of Eastern Kentucky. That is why the TWUA's organizing drive at Deering-Milken, THE staunchest of the anti-union mill owners, has been bogged down for the last EIGHTEEN YEARS in the courts! Cases like these -- and many, many more exist -- must be a popular topic of after-dinner conversation at the bosses' cocktail parties, but the working class can hardly be amused at the victories it has been cheated out of.

The organizing of trade unions is the working class' response to the erosion of its living standards by the crisis of the capitalist system. In spite of the constant double-dealing of the labor bureaucracy, grown fat on decades of relative labor peace, the trade unions remain the workers' most important weapon against the ruling class' onslaught. It will be in the midst of pitched battle with the ruling class that the upsurge of the unorganized and most oppressed workers will find both the forms of organization necessary to advance the workers' cause and, at the same moment, to trample underfoot the apologists for capitalist rule.



ROAD FORWARD

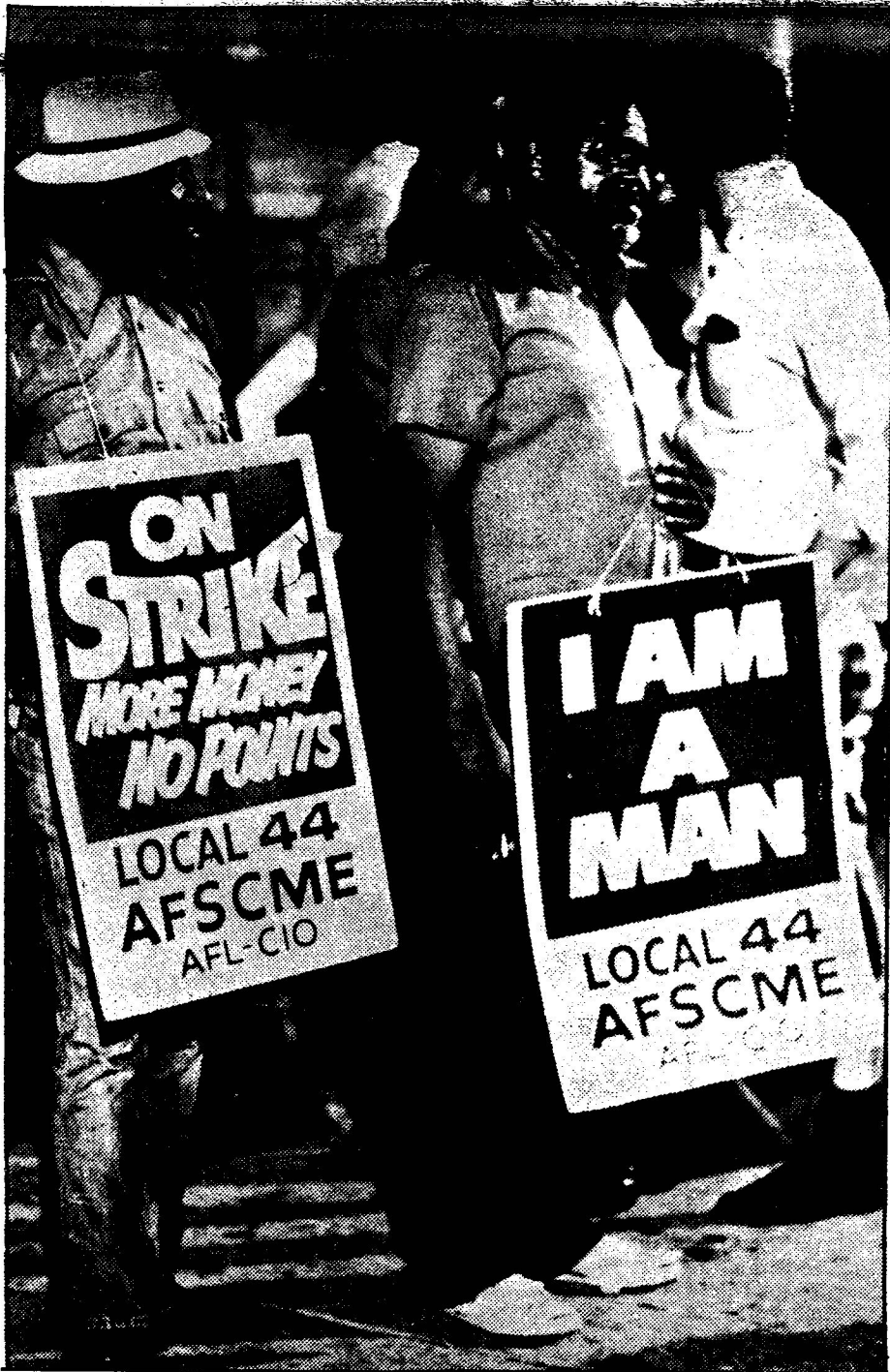
Everyone knows that Miller's pledge to police the mines is based on a very real threat. The militant opposition to the contract will increase the number of wildcats or even produce sections of the miners that will refuse to go back to work. The 1974 contract will produce a struggle that will be on a significantly higher level than in previous years.

Miller's election over Boyle proved to be an impetus to the struggle in the mines. Miller, who some of the best miners had illusions in, now stands thoroughly exposed among the most advanced workers. Through organizations like the Right to Strike Committee, the previously spontaneous struggles in the mines will develop some level of organization and consistency. The 1974 Miners' contract and the struggles centered around it will lay the foundation for the organization of the fight for a revolutionary leadership and program for the UMW.

The Miners' strike had an impact on the rest of the US working class as well. Although it did not represent a breakthrough in the working class' offensive, the militancy and the duration of the strike in the face of governmental pressure indicates that the capitalists did not inflict a decisive setback either. There is every indication that the basic tempo of the working-class response to the economic crisis that we have seen over this year will continue and that the miner's strike represents a continuation of the US working class' wage offensive.

Significant as well was the support on the part of the rest of the class for the miners. Bourgeois propaganda tried to pin the blame for the layoffs and rising prices on the Miners' strike. This attempt failed. Instead, the Miners' strike helped to raise the consciousness of the rest of the class as to the legitimacy of working-class struggles. Countless numbers of steelworkers, who were among the most immediately affected by the coal-strike layoffs, were interviewed by the press. The overwhelming majority indicated support for the Miners. The Miners' strike thus helps to confirm the change in consciousness on the part of the US working class that is providing the basis for the great class struggles ahead.

The Miners' strike of 1974 was only the beginning.



By KEVIN TRACEY

The Socialist Workers Party has passed definitively over to the side of the ruling class. This was not the result of an automatic process. It occurred only after a period of prolonged struggle on the part of oppositional currents which the development of the SWP itself produced. Understanding the way in which these currents proved inadequate is not an academic matter, but something which urgently concerns those struggling for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The development of the SWP in an increasingly right-wing direction provoked sporadic opposition within it, but this took the form only of personal or circle assertions of orthodoxy. This futile course was only able to be corrected when the fight against the more and more explicit revisionism of the SWP took on an international character.

The 1953 anti-Pablo split of the SWP, along with the organizations which were to become the Socialist Labour League and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, had opened up the possibility of a progressive development for the international Trotskyist movement in opposition to the destruction which had hung over it. This possibility had been betrayed by the SWP, which hardly began the fight before it abandoned it. On the other hand, the SLL and the OCI sought to deepen and widen the split with the Pabloites, the enemies within of the Trotskyist movement.

This implicit conflict broke into the open over the question of the Cuban Revolution, through which the SWP was seeking to arrive at a reconciliation with the Pabloites. In seeking to defend the heritage of Marxism as well as the correctness and necessity of the 1953 split, the SLL and OCI fought the SWP majority on a principled basis. As a consequence, a response was provoked within the SWP itself. In particular this response was given by those who had only recently joined the SWP from the Shachtmanite movement, precisely because they had come to Trotskyism as the result of a struggle against an earlier revisionism.

But this development also reflected the evolution of this current as one which still bore the marks of its origin. This meant that there were necessarily still strong elements of petty-bourgeois unseriousness, indiscipline, individualism and pragmatism in this left wing. A struggle against this was necessary for the struggle within the SWP to be successful.

A CLASS DIFFERENTIATION

The left wing, led by Wohlforth and Robertson, was faced with the necessity to develop itself through the intervention of the International Committee. A serious struggle necessitated a perspective on an international scale, because the fight IN the SWP acquired its significance from the fact that it was a major portion of the fight FOR THE INTERNATIONAL. Within the opposition a differentiation took place. Those who saw the necessity of sustaining the struggle within the SWP as part of an international struggle, of finding a road to the American proletariat through the most advanced elements, saw themselves as disciplined members of an international tendency and accepted the necessity of fighting under the discipline of the IC. This group was led by Wohlforth and would later develop into what is today the Workers League.

On the other hand, the other section of the opposition, sick with petty-bourgeois impatience, tired of struggling and eager to be "independent" (without any conception of the false character of such an independence, an independence from the actual struggle, would mean), refused to accept the discipline of an international center and broke with the IC. This split represented, fundamentally, NATIONALIST irresponsibility on a level sufficient to deserve the term DESERTION. Through the instrumentality of this unprincipled split (particularly since this group around Robertson, today the Spartacist League, still claimed to be in FULL POLITICAL AGREEMENT with the IC), the fight in the SWP was derailed. The right-wing leadership was handed an opportunity to exploit the differences and to use the disunity as a "bad example," to pose the sad fate in store for all those who might ever look to the IC. Robertson and his intimate circle had served to help the revisionists internationally, a role which they have continued to play to this day.

A NEW STAGE

Following the expulsions of the Robertson and Wohlforth groups, the SWP reached a new level. All the old opposition groups, right and left, political and personal, had been cleaned out. With this accomplished, "THE PARTY" was prepared to take new steps on the road to reformism. This was manifested above all in the involvement of the SWP in the "antiwar movement" on a thoroughly middle-class and pacifist basis.

At the same time that this turn represented an increasing rightward direction for the SWP, a partially contradictory development was taking place. The involvement of the SWP in student antiwar circles meant that a whole new layer of recruitment was opening up to it. But this recruitment, while consisting largely of moralistic and alienated middle-class elements, also meant that SOME of those who joined the SWP were joining it because it presented itself as a Trotskyist and proletarian opposition to the pacifists, liberals and Stalinists within the student milieu. This meant that a contradiction was reintroduced into the SWP, the contradiction between the program of Trotskyism, which these elements would increasingly try to understand and apply, and the revisionist practice of the SWP majority and its leadership. Thus, far from ending with the previous expulsions, the fight in the SWP took a new form.

But, precisely because of the role that Robertson had played previously, the new oppositionists were forced to proceed on an isolated development, one that started on a lower level than before. These oppositionists, because of what they perceived as a debacle in the earlier fight, simply excluded the IC as a rational possibility from their outlook. They were thus trapped in the framework of the leadership -- "THE PARTY" or nothing!

This was also reflected in the unattractiveness of the independent WL or SL to these oppositionists. The WL was extremely small and thus seemed ridiculously "sectarian" to those who had come from a "mass movement" to a "party." In addition, it was tainted with the

A Sad History: The Cas



"Healyite" brush, which the oppositionists simply ACCEPTED as being bad news. In this sense, the role that the SL had played inside the SWP continued to exercise a deleterious influence on new layers even after its departure. All this, of course, does not minimize the significance of TACTICAL errors on the part of the IC and WL, unavoidable in any REAL struggle, as well as that of real POLITICAL problems, such as the incorrect position on the Cuban state and the non-aggression pact between the SLL and the OCI within the IC; relations which made democratic centralism and, hence, real political development, impossible.

Nor could the SL prove attractive on its own, even giving SOME impetus to a leftward direction of the nascent left wing. The SL in that period was a ludicrous group which put out an academic and abstract propaganda sheet, SPARTACIST, on an extremely infrequent basis, supplementing that with limitless ranting tracts on student issues. Its claim to be more working-class oriented than the SWP was an empty boast and could not stand the slightest examination. In addition, its theoretical poverty was astounding, consisting of eclectic improvisations, sterile repetitions of orthodox formulas and an occasional crank innovation; e.g., "antiwar Friday," when the workers could follow the SL's advice and take a long weekend as a means of protesting the war in Vietnam. To those who were looking, nothing seemed attractive.

A SKEWED DEVELOPMENT

Thus, from the beginning, the new oppositionists were hamstrung. Uncertain of themselves, theoretically uneducated, isolated from the working class internationally and in the US, deprived of the essential ties to an international movement, their development was by no means automatically progressive, but was riddled by confusion, timidity and lack of leadership. From 1965 on there developed within the SWP, particularly in certain cities, around certain individuals, such as Ralph Lewis and others, a vague and formless grouping which regarded itself as a "left wing," but which was without a clear programmatic basis or the ability to conceive one. Fundamentally, the group functioned as a "loyal opposition," with the emphasis on the "loyal." Its policy, to the extent that it was conscious of having one, was to pose the official line in the most "left" fashion, to prove in practice that its interpretation of the line was the most fruitful and THEREFORE the most correct and, that consequently, the general line of development for "THE PARTY" should be along the lines indicated by it. This futile course was the only possible outcome of a rejection of the past, of the IC's fight.

Not surprisingly, such a perspective did not produce much success or much political development. However, the outside world began increasingly to intrude on this situation. The pressure of the growing decay of world capitalism did not permit the SWP to stand still at the point it had reached in 1965. The response of the SWP was to increasingly move rightward on all essential political questions. Thus, the oppositionists now found themselves in opposition to the reality of the line on the basis of which they had been recruited, but defending THAT line against the movement of the leadership to abandon even that much FORMAL Trotskyism.

On the one hand, these changes INTENSIFIED the backwardness of the left wing, increasingly putting it in the position of continually opposing a left-wing nuance of a right-wing line to an even more explicitly right-wing line. This meant that the left wing became increasingly embroiled in the futile struggle of "correcting THE PARTY'S course," when the real point was to remove that party from the tracks of history.

On the other hand, because of the influence of older "orthodox" cadre, such as Larry Turner, whose Boston base became a left-wing stronghold, as well as because of the increasing restiveness of the American proletariat in the late 1960's, there began to be raised within the SWP the need for a "proletarian orientation." This became a panacea for the left-wing. More workers! That was what was needed to solve the nagging problems of the SWP, to insure that the left-wing interpretation and development of the general line would triumph, and that "THE PARTY" could then really go forward again -- just like in the old days.



Leading SWP Demagogue

This partial and contradictory growth in political awareness never touched on a number of questions -- the black question, economics, feminism, the International, etc. Another major, even critical, problem which existed and was growing within the left wing was the fact that, because it sought to avoid sharply formulating political differences, sought to avoid drawing conclusions, sought to avoid fighting for positions out of both timidity and confusion, the opposition to a certain extent took the form of a personal circle, undifferentiated by program from the rest of the SWP. It functioned as a group of people who griped, complained, worried and sought comfort together. This development is endemic to isolated national tendencies. As this tendency grew and was not consciously fought by a struggle for PROGRAM, it increasingly took on a CLIQUIST character. This would result in the increasing impingement of personal questions into political ones. Differences were not raised that would disrupt the group, people were sought out and cultivated on the basis of their personal suitability. In fact, over time, people were FIRST sounded out personally and THEN "educated." This, to say the least, affected the quality of the "cadre" of the opposition and, increasingly, its ability to develop in a healthy direction. In addition "party-building" became an excuse for sheer post-grabbing on the part of some leftists.

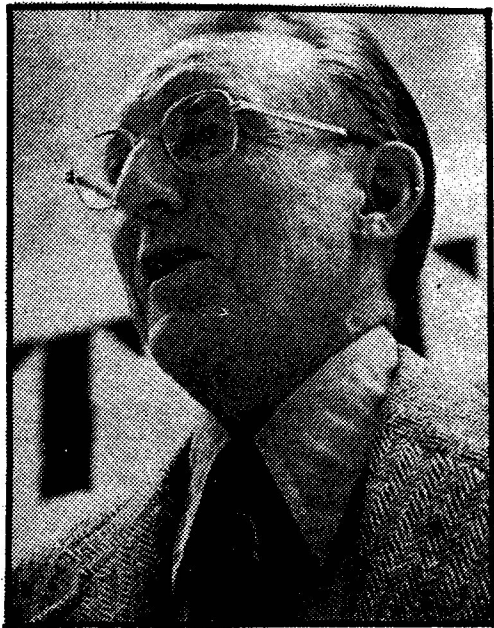
1967

The first open manifestations of the differences within the SWP surfaced in 1967. The way in which they did indicated a great deal about the future course of the left wing.

For the YSA convention in that year, four members of the Boston local prepared a resolution on the antiwar movement. The most significant thing was not so much the document as the fact that three of the four were also SWP members and that the fourth person, now a leader of the Internationalist Tendency -- the pro-Mandel wing of the SWP, recently expelled by the Barnes group -- was added to the signers of the document as being the only person who was not a party member; that is, a "real" YSA'er. Thus, from the first, the left wing revealed its unwillingness to wage the fight where it needed to be waged -- in the SWP itself. This timidity and confusion naturally played right into the hands of the majority, which demagogically exploited the unwillingness of the oppositionists to fight in "THE PARTY" to discredit the document politically and to isolate the left-wingers from those who might otherwise have given them a hearing. Not the content of the politics, but remote questions of party-youth relations, "disciplined functioning" and, of course "loyalty" became the focus of the dispute.

of the SWP's "Left wing"

"Its policy... was to pose the official line in the most "left" fashion. ... This futile course was the only possible outcome of a rejection of the past, of the IC's fight."



HANSEN-SWP Theorist

To tell the truth, the document was no blinding revelation. This "Minority Antiwar Resolution" (by Eloise M., John B., Linda S., and Steve C.) accepted all the premises of the SWP's policy, while criticizing, in the fashion of the left wing, "the accommodation and tailoring which has marked our past intervention." The question was posed as a tactical one, at best; how to carry out the line without the "tailism" and "accommodation" which the oppositionists saw as being in contradiction to the line of "THE PARTY." It accepted the centrality of the immediate withdrawal demand as correct and principled. It accepted the building of the SMC on this basis.

But, worst of all, it was completely unable to expose the popular-front content of the SWP's antiwar "coalitions." Thus, in a section of the document entitled, "The United Front," its authors wrote: "It is correct and our responsibility to unite for action with anyone, no matter what his political position, against the policies of the government in Vietnam, as long as the joint action does not stifle our attacks against imperialism." It is clear that the left-wingers didn't quite get the point. This is emphasized by this confused formulation in the next paragraph: "There is nothing unprincipled in compromising when we are forced to, as long as the compromise for unity does not hamper our functioning in opposition to those with whom we compromise." Politically and programmatically the oppositionists had given away the whole ballgame. This immaturity, and low level of knowledge reflected the left's lack of connection with an experienced cadre. As bad as this was, the way in which even this minimal opposition was handled served to indicate that the opposition was not just POLITICALLY weak, which could be corrected, but was fundamentally flawed. Under the pressure of the leadership, the authors withdrew the resolution and did not even permit it to be brought to a vote. Even some of the leftists themselves thought that the document was adventurous, especially the older cadres who had been responsible for some political growth. The framework of "THE PARTY" was strangling the left wing.

SWP CONVENTION

The majority leadership now decided to turn the left-wing retreat into a rout. Under the old guise of "needing to inform the party membership on the subject about which there, of course, had been much discussion," the SWP leadership reprinted, against the will of its authors, the Boston resolution for the SWP convention later that year. The weakness in the refusal of the authors to defend it adequately before was now multiplied greatly. They would not even stand up for, in "THE PARTY," what they had previously written for the youth. They were totally defeated and dealt a blow from which they never recovered. For example, all three of the SWP members who signed the document would eventually go over to the majority. And the individual who actually inspired and motivated the resolution, but did not sign it, eventually would drop out of politics completely.

But at the same time, there was presented to the convention a document which sharply counterposed itself to the majority line, "Remarks on the Antiwar Movement" by David Fender, an SWP member working at that time in Paris. This document sought to fundamentally criticize the party majority and in so doing sharply exposed the inadequacies of the left wing. This document was originally presented as a counterresolution but, under the influence of the terrified left wing, was withdrawn from voting and entered only as a discussion document. Some

of the older cadre, while seeking to defend the authors of the Boston document from abuse, explicitly disassociated themselves from Fender. This, again, did not facilitate the tasks of an opposition in the SWP at that time. No real fight was waged by any significant forces. Fender returned to Paris, abandoning the real field of activity under the pretext of "international work" which, outside of the development of a conscious left wing in the SWP, could only mean dabbling and avoidance of the real issues. In addition, "international work" for Fender was not what it should have been, as we will see.

BEYOND 1967

After this convention fight, the differences did not abate, but grew sharper in completely subterranean fashion. Some even sought to defend the analysis of the Chinese Trotskyist, Peng Shu-tse, with whom Fender was working, for critical support to Liu Shao-chi against Mao, as a means of opposing Pabloism and playing more-left to the SWP. Besides getting out this position, Fender was able to midwife a document which in some sense became the banner of the left wing: Peng's "Return to the Road of Trotskyism." This document basically saw the problems in the International movement as being the outcome of a turn away from the working class and called for an orientation towards the proletariat. Peng, of course, accepted the 1963 reunification and this was all he COULD come up with. Thus, in the year 1969, the major position at the SWP convention which the left wing took up was the "proletarian orientation." But now it took even it up, as it did everything, in the most timid and weak-kneed fashion.

Thus, Philip Stein and Barbara Vukovich, presently leaders of the Class Struggle League, wrote a TWO-PAGE document called, "On Sending Young Comrades Into the Industrial Trade Unions." With much quoting from the formal assertions of the party majority on the fact that the working class existed, the left-wingers put forward their hardly drastic proposal: "The purpose of this document is to discuss the need for the party to encourage, in a CONSCIOUS, ORGANIZED WAY, young comrades who are not directly engaged in campus work to get jobs or learn trades which enable them to join industrial unions." Whew! The rest of the document then qualified this proposal: "In conclusion, we are NOT saying that the party should pull any of its student members off campus. We are NOT saying that the party should send all members into the industrial proletariat." And this modest proposal was the programmatic high point of the left wing's intervention. Fender, just returned from France, managed only to get himself involved in a petty dispute over party-youth relations and personal insults on his 1967 document. Not development, but stagnation, was occurring.



MANDEL- IT's Answer

1971 CONVENTION

All through 1970 and into 1971 the left wing girded up its loins for a major battle. Major promises were made, a real fight was talked about. But when it came down to it, the left wing could only manage to produce a new version, expanded by quotations from the leadership and assertions of loyalty, of the 1969 document. In fact, this document, "For A Proletarian Orientation," was retrogressive. It would have been one thing for a NEW tendency to BEGIN its fight on the question of proletarian orientation, but for a current which had existed in at least semi-open form for four years to do this was a conscious suppression of the objective needs of the situation. The situation in the early 1970's forced the left-wingers into action, but the form which that took reflected the accumulated weaknesses of years of retreat and prostration.

In the meanwhile, a contradictory development had taken place. A small section of the new layer which had joined the YSA/SWP in 1969-70 in Boston began to develop much more consciously the implicit contradiction between the line of the SWP and the program of Trotskyism. On a series of local and general issues, this current came into increasing conflict with the official party line and leadership. As a result, although the individuals in this current had been looked on favorably by the left-wing leadership, the new opponents began to increasingly come into conflict with the old left wing as well, especially over the fundamental political agreement which the left wing claimed with the majority and its passive and vacillating "opposition."

This new opposition reflected, on the only scale possible in the SWP at that time, the increasing motion of the working class internationally, motion under whose influence, unlike the earlier left wing, they had entered the socialist movement. This development, however, was expressed through individuals; that is, not directly or

in the clearest way. For instance, the new opponents increasingly took on a "Young Turk" character, highly disrespectful of their elders. And, in this case, their elders profoundly deserved it. This permitted the new opponents to reject all the moanings of the left wing about "party-building" and "loyalty," with which the left wing covered its capitulation to the majority. But at the same time, this independence reflected the extreme youth and inexperience of this current. Its lack of international ties, especially because it did contain revolutionary elements, would increasingly present difficulties for it.

Searching for a general explanation for the situation of the SWP, this new grouping came into contact with David Fender, then residing in Boston. The unity of this group with Fender essentially established the Communist Tendency. Precisely because of its inexperience and youth, and the resulting problem of its composition (Trotsky wrote of: "... intelligent elements of a bad character who were never disciplined, who always looked for a more radical or independent tendency and found our tendency"), this group was open to accepting Fender's premises. These, despite their more radical character, reflected exactly the same weaknesses as those of the left wing as a whole, of which Fender was an integral part. He, too, was a prisoner of the rejection of the struggle of the International Committee, but he sought to find a solution by denouncing EQUALLY the IC and the SWP/Pabloite bloc. This sterile rejection of the lessons of the past reflected the continued baneful influence of the SL's earlier role in the SWP, for Fender, too, had seen only a shambles in this previous fight. Naturally, this produced political conclusions in regard to the International and the fight for its reconstruction similar to those held by the SL, as well as by LUTTE OUVRIERE, a French tendency originating in a similarly nationalist split from the FI in 1939. And both these tendencies directly influenced Fender in his thinking. This was the major flaw in the perspectives of the Communist Tendency.

Nonetheless, the CT's role in the 1971 fight was correct. From the first, the CT (not then formally a tendency) sought to move the "PO" to the left, sought to open the tendency up for internal discussion in which new ideas could be proposed. Essentially it offered a united front to the left wing.

And at every turn, the left wing rejected these "anti-party cynics." Thus, on May 16, 1971, Barbara Vukovich, the "PO" leader, wrote to David Fender: "Based on my knowledge of your politics -- you think the SWP is a centrist party, you think the antiwar movement is a popular front -- I do not think 'we,' (you and I) will end up in the same tendency." Still seeking to penetrate the "PO" and to move at least part of it to the left, the CT sent a critique of the PO document to members of the left wing around the country. Vukovich and Philip Stein wrote to Boston on May 24, 1971: "We have no intention of carrying on a written internal discussion with your grouping." This illustrates a great deal about the "potential" of the "PO," and also exposes the idiot character of the SL's assertions that "unity" was necessary and possible. Not only would there not be any WRITTEN discussion, the ONLY internal discussion the PO would have would take place in one night at the Oberlin Convention. Everything else was settled by the inner circle.

However, the CT did not openly break with the "PO" until it exposed its political prostration before the leadership by issuing a declaration of tendency which stated that: "In declaring ourselves a tendency we want to make one thing very clear: our documents clearly support the positions taken by the SWP on the developing mass movements; that is, nationalism, feminism, pacenikism. The left wing thus renounced even the minimal criticisms it had raised years earlier at precisely the time when they needed to be deepened and generalized. The left wing had reached the end of its road."

At this time, the weaknesses of the past reacted on those of the present. The SL, as already mentioned, adapted to the backwardness of the "PO" leadership. The organizations of the IC, burdened with an abstract and too general assessment of the SWP and, therefore of the character of oppositions arising within it, were incapable of discerning the actual line of development and intervened with a "pedagogical" approach to the "PO" leadership which the realities of the situation completely contradicted.

THE OUTCOME

In this context, the CT (whose resolutions are collected in DOCUMENTS OF STRUGGLE) was, despite its fundamental weakness on the question of the International, as well as minor errors, as Fender's formalistic prescription of "revolutionary defeatism" for the problems of the European movement during World War II, the only principled programmatic opposition within the SWP. Precisely because its fight was "a fight for principle," it was able to defend and even to develop its program and to play a role in the formation of left wings in the IS and the RSL. Thus, through a complex and lengthy process, our tendency, TRUTH, represents a progressive development of the CT, not an organization which has emerged from nowhere, not an organization without continuity with the important developments in the SWP, the old party of American Trotskyism.

On the other hand, the old left wing was totally destroyed and is no longer even part of the SWP. After the shattering defeat of 1971, one section of the left wing, after having dissolved the "PO," under Vukovich and Stein, formed a Leninist Faction on the basis of an eclectic compilation of the views of the whole "anti-Pabloite" milieu. After walking out of the SWP in 1972, this group lost a large portion of its membership to the SL, due to the fact that the SL had, through its pioneering role in wrecking the earlier fight, staked a claim to the left wing in advance. The rest of the LF is now in the CSL, an organization which essentially is not a tendency but a bloc of personal groups, a home for castoff socialists.

Finally, the Internationalist Tendency has been forced out of the SWP. It is important to realize that, despite the SEEMING disparity between the old left wing and the IT's fervent and newly-adopted open Pabloism, its open rejection of the whole history of the SWP, it represents only another example of the policy of the left wing. It is the ultimate example of finding a more-left version of the SWP's line, the ultimate example of the left wing's organizational opportunism. This tendency's sad fate is to exist in limbo until that distant day when Mandel finally decides that it can come out and play. A suitable shadow existence for a current which was never more than a shadow on the stage of history, anyway.

French Workers -- The Road Forward

By AN OBSERVER

The recent strike wave in France represents the continuation of the rising tide of class struggle there. At the same time, it expresses the critical problem of this new upsurge, a problem which must be solved if the struggle is to go forward and not be dissipated in a series of unnecessary defeats.

The fundamental problem facing the French working class is to construct a revolutionary leadership, a leadership which can conduct the fight so that it leads to the victory of the socialist revolution -- the only answer to the situation facing the proletariat. In France, as in all other capitalist countries, the present leadership of the class is reformist to the core and seeks desperately to save and not to abolish capitalism.

This leadership is responsible for refusing to organize the strike wave, for leading it into illusory victories or open defeats. If the strike wave is to be successful, it must become a struggle for power. As long as the reformists are in control that will not happen.

ELECTIONS

A possibility of destroying the confidence which most French workers place in the reformists arose last May, during the Presidential elections in France. Francois Mitterand, the candidate of the Socialist Party (supported by the Communist Party and the small bourgeois Left Radicals, two parties with which the SP had previously engaged in a popular-front "Union of the Left"), was narrowly defeated by right-wing bourgeois candidate Valery Giscard D'Estaing, receiving 49.3% of the vote to Giscard D'Estaing's 50.7%. The election had a class-against-class character, with the workers voting overwhelmingly for Mitterand and the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie voting for Giscard.

Our tendency, at that time partially within the RSL, favored CRITICAL SUPPORT to Mitterand on both rounds (because of the lack of a Trotskyist candidate in the first, primary type, election) of the election. Precisely because the masses of the French proletariat had illusions in Mitterand and the CP and precisely because we saw that the tide of class struggle was rising and would soon place even greater questions on the agenda, we saw the need to place the reformists in power. When the upsurge came into conflict with the government, as it inevitably would, then the illusions of the leading elements, at least, of the working class would be dispelled and the road would be open for a revolutionary leadership.

The development of the struggle has proceeded just as we anticipated, as is shown by the strike wave. But, because of Mitterand's defeat last May, the illusions of the French workers remain great. This is demonstrated, along with the latent possibilities of blowing them up in conflict with the state, by a recent poll taken in France, which indicates that if the elections were held today, Mitterand would defeat Giscard by 53% to 47%. This uneven consciousness of the French proletariat indicates the tactics required from us. The reformists retain control of the workers' movement and thereby prepare defeat and ultimate demoralization for the workers. If, on the other hand, the reformists were in power and the strike wave was running up against THEM, instead of Giscard, then the real character of the reformists as the enemies of the workers would be clear. There would be no way for the reformists to pose as the "opponents" of the government, no way to direct the workers' anger away from them and toward the capitalist, Giscard.

The correctness of this analysis and the necessary tactical orientation that derives from it can be seen in the facts of the strike wave.

STRIKE WAVE

The strike wave has been led from the start by the postal workers -- their first major strike in twenty years. Beginning October 18 as a wildcat by Paris sorters, the strike got official recognition by the union federations after it quickly spread to a national shutdown.

The postal workers have gotten strong support from short strikes in other nationalized and "public monopoly" industries. Two-thirds of all French workers make less

than \$350 a month and the inflation rate is now 17%. As the postal strike reached its second week -- beginning to have a serious effect on mail order businesses, business payments and salaries and pensions paid by mail -- 22,000 miners in the nationalized Lorraine coalfields struck against layoffs and pit closures, threatening to make the strike general in state-run industry. A week later, railwaymen started two-day strikes around the country and workers in the state-run gas and electric industry also went out on short strikes.

There has also been a small wave of factory occupations in answer to the threat of bankruptcies and closures. Workers occupied, earlier this year, the luxury liner, FRANCE, as well as a number of plants.

As the strike wave started to deepen in the first week of November, Giscard made his first test of the movement by declaring that communist political agitation was the cause of the strikes. Force Ouvriere (Workers' Strength), a union controlled by the Social Democrats, capitulated to this

CP leader Georges Seguy.

BETRAYERS

In an open letter to the President of the public (Giscard), the Prime Minister and the head of the employers federation on November 4, Seguy signalled his refusal to lead the struggle by attacking, "the attempt to politicize the strikes." (Far be it from Seguy to do what is actually necessary!) "You cannot seriously believe," says Seguy, "that we pursue the aim of disrupting the nation and plunging it into disorder." No, no one could seriously believe that this sorry "communist" could have aims any higher than the backside of his bourgeois masters. But the workers believe that they need a leader who will point out to the arrogant rulers the simple truth: that the capitalist system needs no

strikers. Addressing his Cabinet, he said, "France is engaged in a decisive struggle against inflation . . . Priority must be given to this struggle." Events soon made it clear that by "inflation," Giscard meant the struggle of the working class to hold the line against inflation.

At the end of the second week in November, the strike wave was still spreading, though not with an explosiveness or depth anything like the May-June 1968 uprising. Thus, after other workers struck on the 13th, on the 14th, Interior Minister Michel Poniatowski used troops to break the sanitation workers' week-long strike. Although discontent in the army is running high, Giscard made a show of force by sending 3,000 draftees to clear accumulated garbage from the city's streets. At the same time, the government sent police to break up postal workers' picket lines. In response to this open provocation, the CGT and CFDT had no choice but to call for a general strike, which was set for November 19. Force Ouvriere continued to openly side with the government against the strikes' "political aims."

RETREAT

The Giscard government continued to press hard while the trade unions retreated. In a newspaper interview the day before the general strike, Finance Minister Jean-Pierre Fourcade said the workers had to make their choice: "Either they want to assure employment for years ahead and save France from a serious economic crisis, or they accept the demolition of the French economy." Meanwhile, Seguy pleaded for negotiations and offered to abandon some demands. The slogan for the strike was to be, "We want satisfaction." That same night, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac went on TV and made it clear that the government's position was "not negotiable." He declared that France was divided by the "old demons," and that the union leaders were a "demolition team."

The general strike was relatively small. From "public" and nationalized industries, the turnout was substantial. Support from privately-owned industries was not strong but workers in steel, electronics, glass manufacture, aircraft industry and newspaper printing struck. The strike was capped by a two-mile march of 100,000. The possibilities open to the workers were demonstrated by the fact that many small shopkeepers joined by closing their shops.

The balance of forces after the general strike is clear from the fact that the next day Giscard used more troops to break the sanitation workers' strike and Chirac warned that the "freedom to work" in the public sector must be respected. By the end of the month, sanitation workers had returned to their jobs and the postal workers announced that they were "suspending" their strike, although not giving up.

ROAD FORWARD

Further steps along this path, such as the one-day general strike on December 12, can only lead to the defeat of the whole offensive. The struggle must be made political, a struggle for power. The missed opportunities must be made up for. Given the character of the strikes as in large measure directed against the government and as being fundamentally political, the whole proletariat must be turned in the direction of direct struggle against the capitalist state. Not pointless gestures of one-day strikes for "satisfaction," but an all-out general strike to bring down the Giscard government must be demanded. The French workers must demand that the CP, SP and trade unions break their alliance with the bourgeoisie, abandon their goal of getting into the government and their squabbles over this and fight for a UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT, a government of the CP and SP. In this struggle, the road to power will open before the French proletariat.



STRIKING POSTAL WORKERS

outright and recommended that the railwaymen accept the 4% raise offered them. The Force Ouvriere capitulation was also instrumental in returning the miners to work after six days of striking. But striking postal workers, railwaymen and electricians answered by a demonstration in Paris November 8, against Giscard's "austerity" program. The demonstration was backed by the Stalinist-led CGT (General Federation of Labor), largest of the trade union federations, and the originally Catholic CFDT (French Democratic Federation of Labor). But the edge had already been taken off this answer by the miserable retreat of the CGT secretary,

help in "disrupting the nation and plunging it into disorder." Instead, Seguy uses the same classless fictions the capitalists always use when they want more blood from the workers. "The interests of the workers, inseparable from the general interest . . . Social justice and the national interest will be upheld without the economic and monetary balance of the country having to suffer." Only a few days later the government attacked the strikers, using these same phrases in justification.

After satisfying himself as far as the strike movement's response to his challenge to make it political, Giscard decided it was safe to increase his attacks on the

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Mandel's "Ten Theses": Old and New

DOWN WITH THE CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT!
FORWARD TO THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT!

REVIEWS

ESSAYS ON MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE, by I. I. Rubin; Black and Red, Box 9546, Detroit, MI 48202; 1972; \$3.00/\$2.00

This book is a republication, in its first English translation, of one of those Soviet works of the 1920's which marked that period as one of the most creative in the history of Marxism. Then the broadest questions were debated openly in the press and in the party. Trotsky, Bukharin, Preobrazhensky and lesser-known individuals made their contributions in an atmosphere of urgency which nonetheless facilitated and did not retard the expression of those views. The Russian Revolution made this possible, demonstrating in this field, as in all others, the liberating character it brought to society.

This period faded away with the encroachments of the Stalinist reaction, so that today "Soviet Marxism" reflects all the creativity of Brezhnev. The fate of the author of this work, Isaak Illich Rubin, paralleled the fate of the Russian Revolution. Rubin, politically a Menshevik, but a supporter of the Soviet regime, worked with the famous Marxist scholar, David Ryazanov, at the Marx-Engels Institute, where they strove to save and to develop the material and method of Marx and Engels. The Stalinist bureaucracy could not stand the existence of such an organization which, by its very existence as a place where unadulterated Marxism was studied, threatened the claims of the bureaucracy to theoretical orthodoxy. Stalin thus moved against Ryazanov, attempting to implicate him in the phony "Menshevik Centre" conspiracy. Rubin was selected as the means by which Ryazanov would be implicated. The tragic story of his moral and physical destruction, of his forced betrayal of his mentor, is related in LET HISTORY JUDGE, by the "reform" Stalinist, Roy Medvedev.

The reissuance of this work, despite our differences with the politics and conclusions of the author, marks another step in the revival of one of the positive aspects of early Soviet society, its intellectual freedom and ferment, which today goes hand-in-hand with the revival of the workers' movement internationally, especially in the very shadow of the Kremlin. Major breakthroughs, such as the appearance in 1965 of Preobrazhensky's NEW ECONOMICS, together with works like this one, do not satisfy our needs, but only emphasize all the more sharply the need for all the works of the past to be again available to the working-class movement, both in the land of their origin and internationally.

--KT

CITY LIGHTS ANTHOLOGY, edited by Lawrence Ferlinghetti; 1974, City Lights Books; San Francisco, California; 250pp; \$5.95.

City Lights Books has just issued a new anthology of poems, essays, short stories and illustrations edited by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The book contains writings by famous writers such as: Jack Kerouac, Huey Newton, Herbert Marcuse, Gary Snyder, Jean Genet and many others. Of particular interest is an interview by Allen Ginsburg with Ezra Pound, in which Pound denounces his own poetry as "stupidity and ignorance" and repudiates his antisemitism as his "worst mistake." Conclusions can be drawn from this as to the state of Modern literature, which Pound profoundly influenced.

Of special importance in the anthology is an entire section written, illustrated and separately compiled by members of the Surrealist Movement in the United States. The section includes collages, paintings, poetry and other texts, as well

as a manifesto entitled "Lighthouse of the Future." The manifesto faithfully continues the Surrealist tradition of expressing revolutionary opposition to bourgeois society and culture, remaining true to itself as a movement which has always stood "in the service of the Revolution."

The last part of the manifesto is subtitled "Treason is sweeter than honey":

We refuse to content ourselves with being merely the best-hated men and women of our time.

The language of birds has not been forgotten.

Anyone who accuses us of changing the subject deserves a punch in the nose.

We could say, in the spirit of Pythagoras, that it is never too early to learn to dream the undreamed.

The imagination is revolutionary or it is nothing.

The Revolution will be surrealist or will not be at all.

For those who have been awaiting future publications of the Surrealists in the United States, the new CITY LIGHTS ANTHOLOGY is very well worth getting.

-- A R

SLANDERER "PERPLEXED"

In his "letter" to us -- which we never received and which we will not answer -- published in WORKERS VANGUARD #58, SL leader James Robertson states he is "perplexed" by our reference to the SL's charge that Harold Robbins "got Trotsky killed."

For the benefit of Robertson's memory and the information of the working-class movement, we reprint below the relevant portions of the LF discussion transcripts, which the SL so kindly sent us. The discussion took place on October 28, 1972.

JIM (Robertson): ... Any revolutionary walking into the internal branch of the IS will see Hugh Fredericks, the old crochit (sic) who got Trotsky killed and all the rest of it. (p. 14)

(This confusing locution refers to TWO people, Fredericks and ROBINS. Thus, later, Vukovich of the LF confusedly objects, initiating this dialogue.)

BARB (Vukovich): Comrade Robertson says 'Hugh Fredericks, who got Trotsky murdered --'

JIM: No, Robbins. (sic)
BARB: That's not a slander -- I'm sorry. Oh, Okay. That's not a slander I suppose. I don't know the guy. I mean, to me, that's a slander.

REUBEN (Samuels): Except that you don't know the facts and its true.
BARB: Yeah.
REUBEN: Yeah. (p. 85)

We denounce again the character assassination engaged in by the SL leadership (Liz Gordon, who accepts these remarks, included) and demand its immediate public retraction. Robertson's perplexity is a cynical dodge, as is his attempt to pose the same point in a devious fashion -- that Robbins "failed." We challenge Robertson to produce one iota of historical evidence to back up either his first slander or the lie that ANY of the guards were derelict or responsible in any fashion for the success of the assassination attempt on Trotsky.

Our Program and Our Epoch In Memory of the German Revolution, January 1919

By KEVIN TRACEY

The revolutionary character of the epoch in which we live manifests itself not only in the continuous economic and social crisis of our time, but most clearly in the response which this provokes -- the unceasing movement of the workers of the world for the overthrow of capitalism. These attempts at social revolution, as victories and as defeats, form in their totality the agonizing content of the historic process of the world revolution, of the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism.

At the end of December, 1918, the foundation congress of the German Communist Party was being held. At this gathering Rosa Luxemburg would make her final public speech. In a week the most advanced elements of the German proletariat would stage an abortive insurrection, the "Spartakus" rebellion (so-called after the old name of the CP, the "Spartakusbund") which would culminate, on January 15, in the murders of Rosa and of Karl Liebknecht and end in the brutal suppression of the German Revolution. When we look back fifty-six years at this rising, we have more to do than to mourn, more to do than to express our hatred for the treason of the Social Democracy.

For the revolutionary proletariat the unity between victory and defeat is unbreakable. As Rosa would write in her last article, after the defeat was clear:

The whole path of socialism, as far as revolutionary struggles are concerned, is paved with sheer defeats.

And yet, this same history leads step by step, irresistibly to the final victory. Where would we be today WITHOUT those 'defeats' from which we have drawn historical experience, knowledge, power, idealism?

For us, the German Revolution is just such a "defeat." It has lessons for us, lessons which if learned thoroughly will prepare the final victory for which Liebknecht and Luxemburg, and many, many others have sacrificed their lives.

When Rosa Luxemburg spoke to the German Communists, this final speech concerned the new program of the party, a program on a new model. This program represented a conquest of the movement, a program based on an analysis of past experience, its victories and its defeats, and on the weaknesses of the present situation -- weaknesses which would be responsible for the coming defeat. Programs do not become "the conscious expression of the unconscious process" through some passive reflection of historical reality, above and outside of human beings. Only through the conscious incorporation of experience, of the lessons of defeat, do they become the living embodiment of the tasks of history and of the means to accomplish them.

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

The new program that Rosa was introducing was a TRANSITIONAL program, a program appropriate to the epoch which dawned in the 1905 Russian Revolution and which reached world fulfillment with the First World War. The speech which Rosa Luxemburg made is a conquest of the German Revolution, not lessened, but SHARPENED in its validity by the defeat that followed. For the program which the German workers needed had been DEVELOPED through the defeat of the 1905 revolution, through the defeat of 1914, when the Social Democracy capitulated to capitalism, so that in 1917 the Bolsheviks, on that basis, could make a fully conscious change to a new, explicitly different program, a program with which they conquered power. And, on the basis of the German defeat, among others in the postwar revolutionary wave, the Communist International would, in the Third and Fourth Congresses, further develop and refine the transitional program. And still later, on the basis of the defeats of the 1920's and 1930's, Trotsky would develop the transitional program, from the 1934 Action Program for France to the program which is the highest development yet of that demanded by the epoch, the Transitional Program of 1938. The lessons which we can learn from the speech of Luxemburg are valuable, represent a conquest, make the defeat worthwhile, insofar as they help us to understand and apply more and more sharply our Transitional Program today -- the only program which can lead the working class to victory today.

PROGRAM'S SIGNIFICANCE

The first point which Luxemburg made was that a program of this type was not new; that, in fact, Marx and Engels had put forward in the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO a transitional program for the period in which they lived, since they then believed that the 1848 revolutions signalled the end of capitalism. However, the subsequent entry of capitalism onto an epoch of development inevitably pushed the transitional program into the background. But this development in its turn had prepared the arrival of the situation which Marx and Engels had anticipated in 1848, the point at which socialist revolution became simultaneously possible and necessary. As our Rosa put it:

"... the course of historical evolution has led us back to the point at which Marx and Engels stood in 1848... The progress of large-scale capitalist development during seventy seven years has brought us so far that today we can seriously set about destroying capitalism once and for all."

She then pointed out that the objective reality of this program as A PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION meant the end of the sterile dichotomy of the Social Democracy, the minimal (reforms now) program and the maximum (socialism someday) program. She stated a truth that is as valid for us today as it was then: "Our program is deliberately opposed... to the separation of the immediate and so-called minimal demands... from the socialist goal regarded as a maximal program... we know nothing of minimal and maximal programs; we know only one thing, socialism; this is the minimum we are going to secure."

PROGRAM AND PARTY

And then Rosa proceeded to outline the weakness of the German situation as it had developed up to that time. The immaturity of the development of the vanguard meant that the vanguard was isolated from an important portion of the masses, that the masses as a result were disorganized. The isolation which she pointed out would be responsible for the defeat which would soon come. Thus, she analyzed the situation as one in which the revolutionary party should organize in preparation for a new upsurge of the masses, even though the present upsurge had been derailed: "... to the first act of the revolution, to the phase in which the political struggle has been the leading feature, there will succeed a phase predominantly characterized by an intensification of the economic struggle... we must begin by undermining the Ebert-Scheidemann government by destroying its foundations through a revolutionary mass struggle on the part of the proletariat." Thus, the transitional program is not something that one keeps in one's back pocket until the night of the barricades, as the centrists think, but is the means by which the party is built prior to the revolution, the party without which the program cannot be realized as a guide to revolutionary action.

REVOLUTION

These three lessons, brought home with stunning clarity in the practical events of the German Revolution, if we learn them well and integrate our understanding of them with the practical application of the Trotskyist Transitional Program in the complex reality of the present situation, will enable us to fulfill what Rosa Luxemburg prophesied for the bourgeoisie in her last article: "The revolution will 'raise itself up clashing,' and to your horror, it will proclaim to the sound of trumpets:

I WAS, I AM, I SHALL BE."

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The Bitter Fruits of Imperialism "FOOD CRISIS"

By MARGARET BRECHT

Nowhere is the thoroughly reactionary character of capitalist relations of production -- private property and national boundaries -- made clearer than in the "food crisis" facing the backward countries.

Thirty-two nations in Southeast Asia, on the Indian sub-continent, in Africa and in South America are reportedly close to starvation. While it would seem from accounts in the capitalist press that the situation has only recently reached extraordinary proportions, drought, famine and death in the six countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Upper Volta) have continued with little respite since early in 1973.

The World Food Conference was convened in Rome during the month of November in order to come to grips with this crisis. Essentially a gesture on the part of the advanced capitalist nations toward the "less fortunate" ones, the conference itself proved incapable of resolving anything. However, it did, despite itself, show the way forward for the international working class and the oppressed masses of the world.

Prior to the conference there had been talk of the creation of a "World Food Bank," a world grain reserve. This would be put at the disposal of an international commission for use by any nation in an "emergency." This proposal never did come before the conference and even the more modest version -- nationally held reserves governed by broad international guidelines but remaining under the control of the nations that hold them -- was dismissed.

Why? According to some wise old capitalist quoted in the WALL STREET JOURNAL: "The international community has no way to make such decisions. It won't happen at Rome or after. The main questions about a reserve system are: Who produces the grain? Who pays for it? Who stores it? And who has the KEY to the stockpile..." (10/8/74)

THE KEY

Can it really be that in the year 1975, nearly 5,000 years after the advent of "civilization," a KEY stands between the hungry masses of the world and the riches of the earth? As if precisely to emphasize this point -- the "rights" of property and the "rights" of nations -- when liberals at the World Food Conference cabled Ford to request from the US a pledge of a one million ton increase of emergency food aid, he refused. Not because the US didn't have it, but on the grounds that the US doesn't "owe" anyone anything.

Not only do private property and national boundaries prohibit the capitalists from ameliorating extreme crises when they do occur, these relations of production are the bases of these crises themselves. Capitalism has reached the point where technological innovation does not result in profitability sufficient to warrant its implementation. There has not been nor will there ever be a "second industrial revolution." Further, to the extent that new technology IS applied, it results not in the lessening of the burdens on the masses, but in the increase of the power of the capitalists over them.

A GREEN REVOLUTION?

The coming of the "Green Revolution" was proclaimed by the US State Department only five years ago. Under the aegis of the Rockefeller Foundation strains of various grains were developed which promised fantastic yields when utilized on a sufficient scale with the correct irrigation, fertilizer, etc. There is no question that Rockefeller and his later collaborator in the project, Ford, saw the "Green Revolution" as a means to stave off the Red one.

They haven't gotten results on either front. Despite increased productivity in India, West Pakistan, and Turkey for wheat and in India and the Philippines for rice, the overall impact on world production has not been significant. Only 17% of wheat and 8% of rice acreage in backward countries has been affected. Well under 10% of acreage in advanced countries is affected. (Monthly Review; June, 1973)

The "Green Revolution" has increased the class tensions in all these areas because it has strengthened the capitalist farmer and weakened the peasant. That strata which is capable of paying for the imperialists' "aid" becomes directly tied to them. The peasants are incapable of competing with such large-scale production and are driven off the land, not into the cities and productive employment as was the case in the progressive era of capitalist development, but into abject poverty, into the poverty of that great underclass, the consequence of imperialism, which lives on the edges of every great city in every backward country, from Rio de Janeiro to Calcutta. This is the significance of the "Green Revolution" for the masses.

PARASITES

The organic incapacity of capitalism, illustrated in the failure of the "Green Revolution," is exacerbated by the rapaciousness of the monopolists and speculators. It is no secret that the US government has long pursued a policy of paying farmers not to produce. While most had "Ma and Pa Down on the Farm" in mind when they heard of this policy, in fact it was implemented in deference to the large-scale producers responsible for driving "Ma and Pa" off the farms and into the factories of Detroit, Chicago and Cleveland, or at least the unemployment lines. Agriculture Secretary Butz has openly stated against liberal Democrat Humphrey that he opposes the



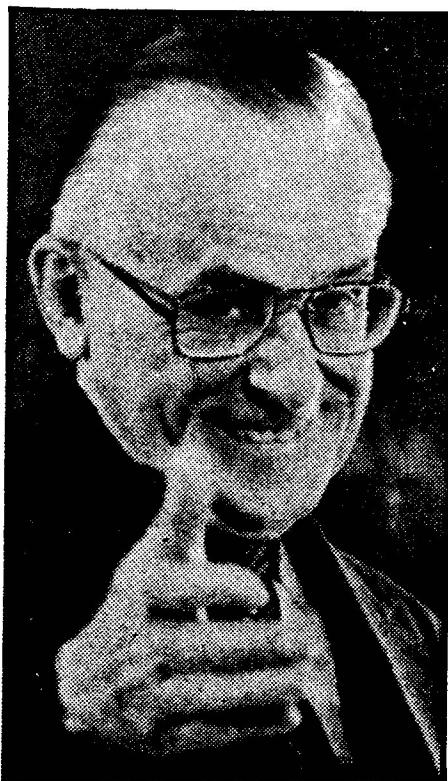
**The working class must know the truth...
the dimensions and reality of the food crisis.**

establishment of grain reserves both internationally and in the US because it would deprive the monopolists of their ability to take buyers for all they are worth.

There is little difference between this official government policy and the actual hoarding of and speculation on grain. The NEW YORK TIMES of October 20, 1974, reports that literally thousands of tons of grain are held and moved from port to port by hoarders and speculators evading the laws and seeking the highest prices for their contraband. The Ford administration has imposed food-export controls on the commodity traders, not because it opposes hoarding and speculation, but because it wants to have a say-so in it while being able to tell the American people that it is "doing something" about the high price of food in the US.

BOURGEOIS PROPAGANDA

The dimensions of the present crisis are not clear. Nor is it clear to what degree it is a consequence of the organic incapacity of capitalism and to what degree it is a consequence of an artificial restriction of production on the part of the monopolists, designed to drive down the living standards of the masses and drive up the profits of the imperialists. Clearly the two are interrelated.



Butz

But the capitalists have surrounded the "food crisis" in a web of lies, designed to cover themselves today and to prepare the minds of the workers of the advanced countries for the ultimate solution of the capitalists: war on the degenerated and deformed workers states, war on the peoples of the oppressed nations, and war on the workers of the advanced capitalist countries themselves.

The most widespread of these is, of course, the one which says there is no food crisis at all, only a population crisis. These Neo-Malthusians paint a picture of the "teeming masses," reproducing like rabbits, finally over-running the hard-working man and his family at the dinner table on Sunday afternoon. Every American politician accepts this argument to one extent or another. William C. Paddock (right-wing agricultural "expert," author of WE DON'T KNOW HOW) has taken it to its logical conclusion: "Cruel though the statement might sound, India would be a more viable nation today if in 1965 the United States had not shipped a fifth of its wheat crop to the subcontinent, thereby averting famine and saving perhaps 30 million or more Indian lives... The catastrophic shock of so many deaths in 1965-66 probably would have shaken India's political structure to the core and slowed down or stopped entirely its nationalist aspirations, such as needless expenditures on flag-waving... Its agriculture would surely be receiving a greater percentage of the national budget..." (DETROIT NEWS 6/24/73)

These theorists of the population glut and imminent disaster always seem to ignore the fact that population densities in Europe are three times larger than in China and half again as large as in India; that capitalism itself demands and develops a RELATIVE surplus population in the form of the great reserve army of the unemployed; that capitalism is the only obstacle to limitless food production.

Second only in popularity to the "theory" of POPULATION crisis, is the notion that the "food crisis" has been caused by the Arabs and/or the Russians. The price of food was driven out of reach of the backward nations because the Russians bought all the wheat. Or the backward nations ran out of money because they had to spend so much on oil. Or they couldn't afford to buy fertilizer because fertilizer is made with oil and the Arabs raised the price of oil so their crops died. These theorists all fail to mention that the US is the major exporter of grains. All the whining about the "international oil cartel," restricting production and driving up the price of oil, rings pretty false when one learns from Secretary Butz that the "international grain cartel" restricting production and driving up the price of grain is none other than Uncle Sam.

Finally, there is the mystical "bad harvest." One paper says there has been a "record" harvest, another says there has been a disastrous harvest. Bad harvest or not, Food for Peace always seems to come through on its shipments to South Vietnam, Cambodia and, since the overthrow of Allende, Chile.

The working class must learn the truth. It must learn the dimensions and the reality of the "food crisis." The struggle against "business secrets" can in this case pave the way for the unity of the working class and oppressed masses. As in the case of war, so in the case of famine: "Once and for all we must tear from the hands of the greedy and merciless imperialist clique, scheming behind the backs of the people, the disposition of the people's fate."