



Re-Create
the Fourth International

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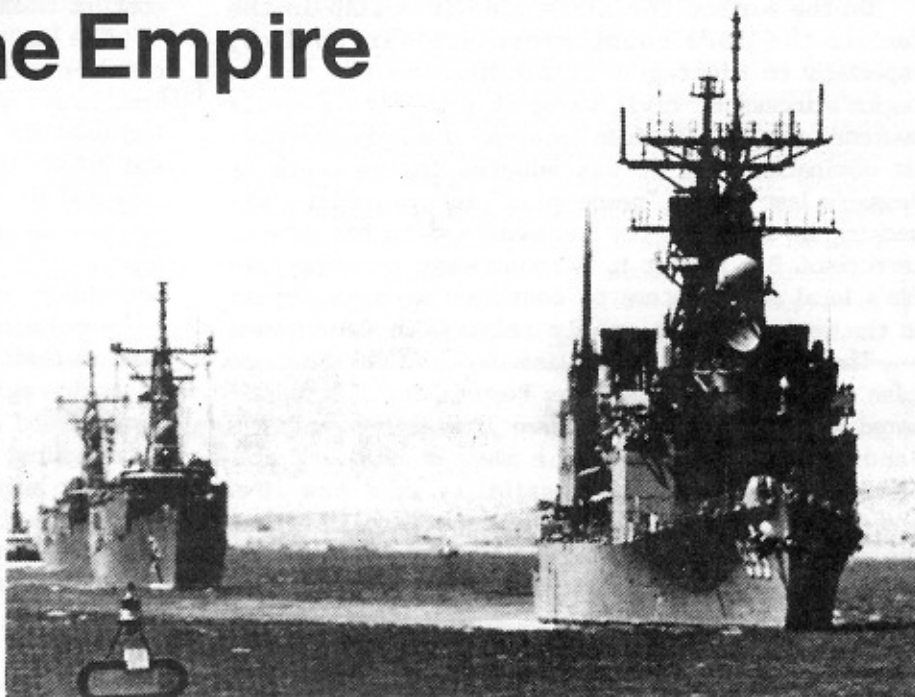
Reflagging the Empire

Ronald Reagan, Conqueror of Grenada and Scourge of Tripoli, has suffered the fastest loss of power and popularity since Herbert Hoover. As a result, American imperialism finds itself in a state of disarray and crisis.

Reagan's declining status is a welcome state of affairs for workers and oppressed throughout the world. But despite the damaged presidency, the confrontation in the Persian Gulf demonstrates that U.S. imperialism has hardly ceased to be dangerous. Unless the international proletariat intervenes decisively, militarism and the threat of a new world war will grow far beyond anything seen under Reagan.

When Republican Congressman Henry Hyde used the Iran-contragate hearings to defend Jimmy Carter's handling of the Iran hostage situation, he became a renegade in the conservative camp. Carter's failure over Iran in 1980 had given conservatives the opportunity to summon their White Knight, Ronald Reagan, to put an end to such humiliation. Now that the "strong" Reagan Administration has been hurt if not paralyzed by its inability to deal with Iran, it becomes apparent that Carter's "weakness" was not a character flaw.

Deep divisions within imperialism prevent it from unifying in the face of the growing worldwide threat



of proletarian revolution. The crisis of bourgeois leadership isn't a question of personalities as such. Imperialism is under attack from all sides in the face of rising mass struggles: in South Korea, Haiti, Panama and the Philippines, to name a few. These increased pressures exacerbate divisions within the system hampering a unified response to the tremors of revolution.

The hearings demonstrated such divisions in several forms: between the presidency and Congress; be-

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Korean Workers Explode!

In a magnificent display of its power, the South Korean working class put itself forward as the only force that can carry out the struggle for a democratic overturn. The tremendous strike wave that rocked Korea has threatened to upset the so-called "democratic" process and has thrown the Korean bourgeoisie and the imperialists into a panic. When on June 29, Roh Tae Woo, leader of South Korea's military-backed Democratic Justice Party, announced elections for next year, the ruling class expected to buy social peace with its concession. After all, the dictatorship of President Chun Doo Hwan had accepted all the major political demands of the main bourgeois opposition

party, the Democratic Reunification Party (DRP).

But the Korean masses did not stand up to the repression of the riot police and the army just to construct a more democratic facade for the bourgeois

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Central America Peace Fraud

When a diplomatic maneuver is greeted as a step toward peace by both the bloodstained imperialists of the Reagan administration and the so-called "left," somebody — probably everybody — is lying. That is precisely the case with the Arias peace plan signed at the Central American summit meeting in Guatemala this August.

On the surface the Arias plan is a slap in the face to the U.S.'s counterrevolutionary policy, especially on Nicaragua. It promises an end to the region's incessant civil wars; it proclaims a newly awakened Central American independence from imperialist domination; and it was adopted in the teeth of Reagan's last-minute "peace plan" introduced to win backing in Congress for renewed aid to his contra terrorists. But in fact it is an attempt by imperialism's local collaborators to contain the mass unrest in the region without openly relying on U.S. power.

The problem for imperialism is that the Nicaraguan revolution remains alive. Despite the U.S.-sponsored war, the revolution's own limitations and the Sandinistas' repression, the mass of workers and peasants have tasted the possibility of a new life. And (except for Reagan) all the actors realize that the contra war is going nowhere. So they are offering a new deal, hoping to induce the Sandinistas to make

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U.S. Out of the Gulf!

Each day imperialist aggression in the Persian Gulf continues to grow and to threaten the masses with death and destruction. The enormous U.S. military buildup, which currently involves at least 41 combat ships, has been joined by several European states. With the resumption of the tanker warfare by Iraq, the situation is in danger of escalating beyond the control of the imperialists. It appears to be only a matter of time before a U.S.-Iranian military conflict takes place.

The U.S. policy of reflagging Kuwaiti tankers has openly put the Reagan Administration on the side of Iraq in its war with Iran. Kuwait is an ally of Iraq and uses its revenue from oil to finance the Iraqi war effort. Despite the fact that Iraq is the initiator and prime beneficiary of the tanker war (Iran depends on tankers to deliver its oil, while Iraq can pipe out its oil overland), U.S. propaganda has been one-sidedly anti-Iranian.

Revolutionaries give no support to either Iran or Iraq in their reactionary war. We are for the defeat of both regimes by proletarian civil war, for the workers and oppressed in both countries to turn their guns against their own ruling classes. However, if imperialist aggression leads to open military intervention by the U.S., it is the obligation of revolutionary workers to stand for military defense of Iran and for the defeat of U.S. imperialism. It is a question

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PAMPHLETS FROM THE LRP AND WR

See pages 6 and 14 for information on pamphlets published by the LRP and Workers Revolution of Australia.

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Spartacist Thuggery in Australia

As we go to press we have just received news from Australia of yet another case of Stalinist-style thuggery perpetrated by the Spartacist tendency. At a Spartacist League forum in Melbourne on October 1st on the subject of Aboriginal rights, Comrade Paul White of Workers Revolution was thrown out of the room without provocation by SL goons. An Asian student, Mammad Panahe, verbally protested — and was thereupon assaulted by three SLers. He offered no resistance yet was repeatedly hit and kicked; bloodied all over, he had to be taken to a local hospital.

Comrade White had previously attended Spartacist forums, where he challenged their self-congratulatory claim to be the only leftists to have a program for the Australian Aborigines. Unable to respond politically, the SL could only abruptly end discussion. On October 1st they went further and answered his political criticisms with their familiar brand of slanderous lie; when he demanded time to reply, he was instead ejected, and the assault began.

The attack in fact proved Comrade White's point:

the SL's claim to be champions of anti-racism is only pretense. Australian chauvinism is notoriously steeped in anti-Asian race hatred. Whereas Comrade White, the logical target of the Spartacists' animosity, was manhandled, it was an Asian protester on whom they reacted with an absolutely frenzied barrage.

The underlying reason for this criminal attack is the same as for Spartacist attacks on socialists in the U.S., most recently on Bolshevik Tendency members in California. The growing corruption of the SL shows up not only in its ideological admiration for Stalinism but also in the hardening of its extensive internal bureaucracy. On top of this, James Robertson's little empire has fallen on hard times: losing trade union fractions, branches and layers of experienced members. This has induced a near hysteria and exacerbated personal rivalries and clique schisms. In time-honored fashion, the opportunist sect tries to hang together by painting a line of blood around itself.

Those on the left who defend the principle of democracy in the workers' movement must take heed. ■

Exchange on Trotskyism

We reprint below a letter from the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) to the League for the Revolutionary Party (U.S.) and Workers Revolution (Australia), together with our reply. The MRCI, an international pseudo-Trotskyist tendency led by the British Workers Power group, wrote in criticism of a letter sent by the LRP and WR to the centrist Italian Gruppo Operaio Rivoluzionario (GOR), which appeared in Proletarian Revolution No. 29.

The MRCI letter testifies to the truth of our analysis of the present sorry state of international "Trotskyism." In our last three issues we have shown how an already decadent milieu has managed to degenerate even further into a morass of petty maneuverism where diplomatic pacts (bargained for today and broken tomorrow) have replaced political principle in the relations between organizations professing to be communist.

These groups are among the remnants of the degeneration of Trotsky's revolutionary Fourth International. By 1952, with the betrayal of the Bolivian Revolution, the Fourth International had ceased to be a revolutionary organization. As a result of a 1953 split, two main currents, "Pabloite" (soft on Stalinism) and "orthodox" (superficially hard on Stalinism), emerged. The schism on the surface was over differing theories explaining how Stalinism could spawn new workers' states. Today, the rationalizations have become so numerous that their own natural limit seems to be the number of "Trotskyist" groups the political ecology can tolerate. Aside from the major Pabloite current, the United Secretariat for the Fourth International (USec) and the now near-defunct orthodox

International Committee (IC), there has been a menagerie of groups circling them.

For many years our tendency has regarded this whole milieu as centrist betrayers of Trotskyism. Its redefinition of counterrevolutionary Stalinism as capable of creating "deformed workers states" is only a reflection of its capitulation to counterrevolutionary reformism (of either the social democratic or Stalinist variety) at home and to petty-bourgeois nationalism everywhere.

Our own reexamination led us to the understanding of the Stalinist countries as statified capitalist. This theory remains loyal to Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary prop for imperialist capitalism. While Trotsky correctly opposed notions that the Soviet workers' state had been overthrown in the 1920s, he failed to see the bureaucracy's transformation into a capitalist class by 1939. Contrary to Trotsky's prediction, Stalinism did not collapse but instead defeated the proletariat. After World War II its triumph led to an imperialist resurgence. The disoriented Fourth International degenerated as a consequence into the sterile orthodoxy of today.

In the wake of the explosion of the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), the dominating force in the IC, authentic Trotskyists had good reason to hope that genuine revolutionary elements would emerge. The reason behind the break up of Gerry Healy's thug-ruled empire was not to be found in the scandals which titillated superficial observers. It was rather the powerful renewal of class struggle internationally and the British miners' strike in

particular, which showed working class masses moving ahead of their own leadership, demanding by their actions an alternative to capitalism.

After the split the WRP showed signs of engaging in a deep political reconsideration; it called for an international discussion and conference to reexamine fundamentals. Many of the "Trotskyist" groups were attracted to this process — including the MRCI and the GOR (and the GOR's ally, the Revolutionary Workers Party of Sri Lanka), who had previously considered themselves to the left of the Healyite milieu and outside its pseudo-Trotskyist "family."

Alas, the once-promising fermentation has produced thus far only vinegar. The WRP issued a ten-point statement of orthodoxy and proclaimed that agreement with the document was the price other groups had to pay to take part in its conference. But this maneuver was itself only a cover for turning the conference into a merger convention between the WRP and the Morenoite International Workers League (LIT), which had a history of commuting between the USec and the IC, to say nothing of its frequent journeys into the camps of Peronism, Castroism and Sandinism.

As a result of the maneuvering by the WRP and the LIT, several groups including MRCI and GOR have found themselves frozen out of the conference. However, their cries of foul have a hollow ring. In Proletarian Revolution No. 28 and the letters printed below, we have exposed MRCI's unprincipled maneuvers.

As for GOR, the agreement they reached in February with the WRP (and the GOCQI of Michel Varga) not only endorsed the WRP's ten-point statement but also agreed that the continuity of the authentic Fourth International rested with the International Committee. GOR has retrospectively admitted that it was a "political mistake" to have signed a statement including formulations on political continuity that it disagreed with. It is obvious that GOR's opportunist outlook led it to make a diplomatic bloc rather than any genuine attempt to arrive at a principled agreement.

Moreover, it was the WRP, not the GOR, that broke the agreement: it had found a bigger fish in the centrist pond, the LIT. The MRCI's attempt to forge an alternative bloc based upon even less political agreement with the GOR did not work out either, as the letters below indicate.

Our own intervention has had an entirely different character. We always have made clear the principled character of our differences with all of these groups. We have always insisted that any regroupment in the direction of re-creation of the Fourth International would have to be based upon a programmatic recognition of the capitalist and counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism, social democracy and nationalism. It would have to be based upon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and the understanding that only the proletariat and its vanguard party can make the socialist revolution.

However, we are not ultimatumists. We put forward a seven-point program (wildly misinterpreted by the

MRCI in its letter below) at the first sign of political motion to the left among the pseudo-Trotskyists. This program was a challenge from outside the entire milieu, designed to separate the revolutionary wheat from the centrist chaff. All seven points refer to concrete examples that pose the question of the independence of the proletariat and its vanguard party. We hoped to collaborate more closely with those who accepted these points; a genuine fight for proletarian independence would inevitably move them closer to the revolutionary program.

Finally, in its letter to us, MRCI refers to its "22 Theses in Defence of Trotskyism"; the GOR has also published a compilation of theses aimed at "revolutionary" regroupment. Both documents are models of how to cover capitulatory politics and deeds with revolutionary words. We will publish our analysis of these documents in a forthcoming issue.

MRCI LETTER TO LRP AND WR

June 26, 1987

Enclosed is a copy of "22 Theses in Defence of Trotskyism" that the MRCI is proposing as a starting point for a struggle against centrism at any International Conference, should one take place.

We will briefly take the opportunity to reply to your false accusations made against the MRCI in your letter to the GOR dated April 10th 1987. You attack the MRCI for proposing discussions leading to a revolutionary bloc against centrism at the proposed WRP-called International Conference. This you say is "counterposed to Trotsky's strategy in the 1930s." You imply that we are proposing "a diplomatic document whose signatories agree to a deliberately vague wording in order to hide their differences." This was a remarkable piece of foresight on your part since you had not seen the proposed basis for such a bloc!

You attack the MRCI statement of Jan. 1987 for not giving "the fundamental policies that characterize revolutionary politics in this period." For not outlining the "principled differences between revolutionaries and centrists." This should not be surprising in a short statement outlining our attitude to the conference. On the other hand you choose to ignore in a typically dishonest polemical style the basis of our proposal for a revolutionary bloc, that it should be built around "a principled common declaration against the distortion of Leninism and Trotskyism." We challenge you to show us where the 22 Theses are either "vague" or "diplomatic," on any question which separates revolutionaries from centrists.

We do however note that your own 7-Point basis for such a bloc manages to say nothing about what you yourself say is a "central question" (and we agree) — the Russian Question. You want to form a revolutionary bloc without dealing with the question of defense of the Soviet Union, etc. Now this would be a real diplomatic bloc designed to hide differences, and you are the proposers of it!

You attack us especially for naming the Bolshevik Tendency among the organizations we approached along

with the GOR/RWP and the WRP itself. You "forget" to mention, perhaps you did not know, that there was a fusion process going on at that time between the BTs and a group of ex-Morenoites (LTT). The political outcome of that was unclear, as a struggle was going on inside the fusion discussion. The capitulation of the LTT leaders to the politics of the BTs clearly makes the likelihood of that organization being part of a revolutionary bloc against centrism highly unlikely. The same would apply today to the WRP as an organization.

Your fears of the GOR/RWP entering an unprincipled bloc with the MRCI were therefore unfounded for the reason that the MRCI does not make such blocs. However we believe the GOR/RWP on the other hand did enter into an unprincipled bloc with the WRP and the GOCQI (Varga), on the basis of the WRP's "Ten Points" and a joint declaration which no doubt they will send to you if you ask for it. We have no doubt that you will take up this actual example of unprincipled combinationism with the GOR/RWP with the same rigor which you applied because of your mistaken understanding of the MRCI's proposals.

LRP REPLY TO MRCI

July 13, 1987

Your June 26th letter to the League for the Revolutionary Party/U.S. and Workers Revolution/Australia charges us with making "false accusations" about your proposed "revolutionary bloc against centrism" at the International Conference called for by the WRP. We do not accept your criticism, for the facts confirm the truth of our accusations. Your own letter, moreover, exposes further the unprincipled nature of the bloc you proposed.

But first we would like to point out that your letter is a step forward on your part. The LRP has written a variety of political criticisms of Workers Power, dating back years before you founded MRCI; you have never before made any answer. This is the first time that you have even attempted to clarify the nature of our differences. It is not accidental that you choose to reply to our exposure of one of your organizational maneuvers instead of to our criticisms of your basic political approach. You certainly have your values straight — the wrong ones.

As well, we note that you still do not see fit to reply in print to criticisms which were published in our magazine. Your view seems to be that questions of Marxist principle should be debated privately and not before the working-class and radical public. This again reflects the unprincipled nature of the maneuver that we criticized.

Let us be perfectly clear: it is not unprincipled for Marxists to engage in maneuvers in order to present their ideas to the workers; but they must do so openly, in front of their class. Petty maneuvering behind the backs of the working class is impermissible for those who believe that class consciousness is the key element in communist politics.

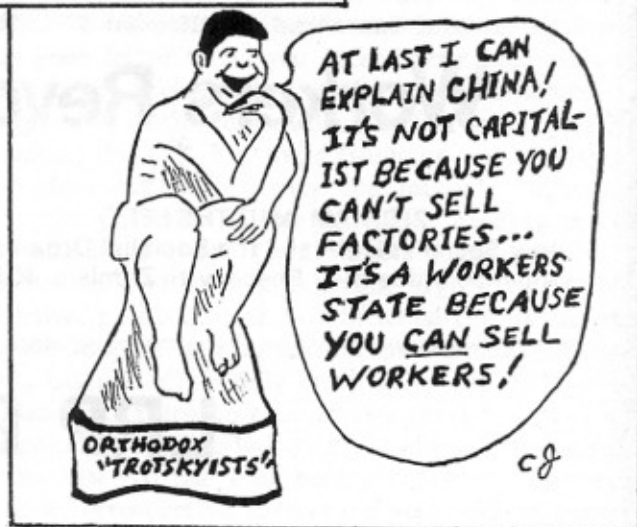
We now take up your specific criticisms of us in detail.

MRCI's 'Bloc Against Centrism' and '22 Theses'

In your letter you charge us with implying that your bloc proposal was "diplomatic" — designed to hide the differences among the signatory groups. You sarcastically call this a "remarkable piece of foresight" on our part since we had not seen the proposed basis for your bloc, the "22 Theses in Defence of Trotskyism." You claim that we based our accusation only on "a short statement outlining [MRCI's] attitude to the conference." Further, you charge that we

N.Y. Times 9/25/87

Chinese-American businessman Cheon Fung has a contract with the Chinese government to sell farm workers to U.S. agribusiness. He stated: "We are just meeting the needs of the market, like importing chemicals or slippers. It happens that the need of the market now is for labor."



"choose to ignore in a typically dishonest polemical style" the basis of your proposal as it was presented even in your short statement: that it should be built around "a principled common declaration against the distortion of Leninism and Trotskyism."

Your first charge is true: we not only implied that your bloc was diplomatic and unprincipled, we said so openly. But the rest of your catalogue is made up out of whole cloth, as a review of your original bloc proposal and our responses will demonstrate.

In the January MRCI Statement you wrote:

"... we will strive to build a bloc of all those willing to combat centrism, both in theory and in practice, in any such conference around a principled common declaration against the centrist distortions of Leninism and Trotskyism. We have already proposed such a perspective to the

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Number Two, June/July 1987

WORKERS REVOLUTION



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see middle pages

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GOR/RWP and the Bolshevik Tendency (USA). We invite the WRP and its fraternal organisations (as we have done before) to enter into such a political discussion process and struggle against centrism." (Workers Power, January 1987).

How was this statement to be interpreted? Anyone would read it as saying that you considered the GOR, RWP, and BT to be worthy partners in a bloc against centrism; that you believed a statement of Leninist and Trotskyist principles could be drafted in common with them. Your wording suggests that you were challenging the WRP to transform or at least clarify its politics in order to join in the fight against centrism; but as for the others, you expressed no doubts about where they stood. You may have changed your minds subsequently, but your January statement was plain. This was the basis of our criticism.

Moreover, we did not ignore, as you charge, your promise of a "principled common declaration." In our article on the conference we cited, word for word, your claim to be fighting for principles -- in order to explain to our readers how empty it was. (Proletarian Revolution, Spring 1987, page 16.) You might have read this before accusing us of being "typically dishonest" for not citing what we cited at length.

We quoted your promise to produce a common program against centrist distortions and we replied: "This reads like the pinnacle of Bolshevik candor, except that the 'centrist distortions' remain unspecified." We showed in some detail, in this article and in our letter to the GOR published in the following issue, that the groups you invited advocate vastly different political programs -- on the Fourth International, on the "anti-imperialist united front" tactic and on Stalinism. You all could not possibly agree on what was centrism and what was not. We concluded that "the MRCI's 'anti-centrist' bloc is itself a centrist dodge."

Now you say that your January document, billed as an official MRCI statement, didn't count and that we should have referred to the "22 Theses." That is all very well, but please remember that your bloc proposal was published in January, our first comment on the international conference maneuvers (quoted above) came out in March, our letter to the GOR (the document you chose to reply to) was written in April -- and your "22 Theses" were first published in late May and shown to us in June! It takes another bit of gall on your part to blame us for not referring to them.

You challenge us to comment on the politics of your theses. We will do so, in depth, as soon as we have a chance to digest them. For the moment, however, it suffices to point out that they are not what you say they are, "the proposed basis for [your] bloc" with the other groups. They are an outline of your full political program. You every right to produce such a document, but you cannot claim that this is the same thing as a "common declaration" of principles that you share with the GOR, the RWP and the BT. The 22 theses emphasize long-standing differences

that you have with these groups.

In fact your document proves our point: there is no way that groups with such differences could form a principled bloc against centrism. When you finally got around to a declaration of principles, you had to exclude the others. It seems clear now that the belated appearance of your theses was due less to MRCI's need for a programmatic statement than to your perception that you have been outmaneuvered by the WRP and the Morenoites and that all attempts to form your pseudo-revolutionary bloc have collapsed. Accordingly, you now come out with a hard statement of views that none of the groups you cited could come close to agreeing with. In context, your document might better be called "22 Theses in Defense of Sour Grapes."

MRCI and the Bolshevik Tendency

As you say, we attacked you especially for including the BT among your proposed bloc partners. This is because the BT's differences are over immediate life-and-death questions: they stood on the wrong side of the class line in the violent confrontation between the Polish workers and the Jaruzelski's Stalinist regime in December 1981. We wrote, "If MRCI's bloc has to embrace both sides of a civil war, no wonder the specifics of its political basis are left murky."

In your letter to us you defend your inclusion of the BT on the grounds that at the time you wrote, it was engaged in fusion discussions with a group of ex-Morenoites, the LTT. You write (without any political explanation) that it was only the latter's capitulation to the politics of the BT that "clearly makes the likelihood of that organisation being part of a revolutionary bloc against centrism highly unlikely."

We have no doubt that you included the BT in your statement as part of a maneuver toward the LTT and the BT. Instead of publicly criticizing the BT's pro-Stalinism and trying to counterpose correct working-class politics, you misled your readers about their position. Now you use your behind-the-scenes maneuvers as a retrospective excuse for your lack of honesty in public. And you snidely comment that "[we] 'forget' to mention, perhaps [we] did not know" that you were making overtures at the time which ostensibly would have changed the BT's line. No, we did not know. Neither we nor any workers reading your article could tell that you thought that the BT, as it stood, was anything but revolutionary.

As well, we must say that we doubt you really thought that you could win the BT as a group away from their pro-Jaruzelski position. Consider: the BTers came out of the Spartacist League; many of them spent long years in that organization. They now object to its bureaucratic degeneration, but they have remarkably few criticisms of its political program -- and they have always solidarized fully with the need to suppress the Polish workers. Now you tell us that you expected them to change their spots overnight, without any indication in advance, and adopt a revolutionary proletarian position on this question after

so many years of capitulation.

We cannot accept that you mean what you say. Moreover, if you really believe that the BT was only exposed as non-revolutionary after your January article, where was your follow-up article in your press correcting the distinct impression you gave that the BT was already revolutionary? Even if your belated excuse is true, your paper is still not telling its readers what you insist to us is the truth. A revolutionary propaganda organ is not a public relations handout but a medium for developing consciousness by saying what is.

Nor are you telling the whole story now. In its magazine the BT has reported what you omit to say in your letter: that you were working with a minority of the LTT sympathetic to your politics. That too is your right, but it is no excuse for diplomatic accounts in public. It now seems clear that the real reason for your overture to the BT was a maneuver to win over more LTTers by "exposing" the BT for not joining your bloc. Yet most of the people you were trying to win "capitulated." Perhaps they did so because the BT stuck to its principles, bad as they are, and turned the tables by exposing you. The BT does not hide what it thinks of you. If our guess is right, we offer you no condolences.

The LRP's Seven-Point Bloc

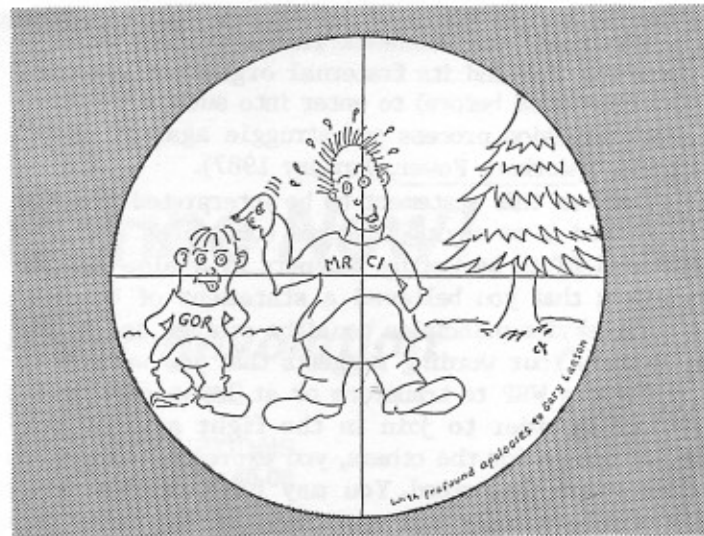
In your letter you accuse us of proposing "a real diplomatic bloc designed to hide differences" by trying to "form a revolutionary bloc" around seven points which did not include our position on the Russian Question. Again you are misrepresenting what we wrote, this time on a central question.

First of all, our seven points were designed and clearly expressed as a challenge to you and other "Trotskyist"-centrist groups to unite around genuine principles of Trotskyism — we were trying to demonstrate by example precisely what was omitted from the MRCI proposal. Since we openly and explicitly excluded ourselves from your defensist "family" by virtue of our positions on reformism, Stalinism and the class nature of the Fourth Internationalist parties, we did not include ourselves in this proposed bloc. Thus we wrote:

"As outsiders to the defensist milieu, we hold that those who see themselves as its left wing should fight over the decisive questions that stain their tradition's recent history, and therefore adopt the following points as the basis for their bloc." (Proletarian Revolution, Spring 1987, page 18.)

The seven points that followed were all linked to the question of the class independence of the proletariat and its revolutionary party, the principle so often violated by pseudo-Trotskyists in the past 40 years. We then summed up:

"We challenge the WRP, the MRCI, the GOR, the RWP and all comrades who see the need for fight for a revolutionary policy against the right-wing drift



MRCI to LRP: Why don't you attack GOR?

to adopt such a program. The above points are by no means the full program of a revolutionary international, but their adoption would be a major step towards a principled regroupment around the most fundamental questions of our time."

That is, we proposed a struggle by left-moving centrists over the party question and its many ramifications with the "orthodox" pseudo-Trotskyists. We proposed that they form a bloc on basic principles; but we also openly said that the groups we named were centrist and could not agree to these principles without transforming their politics. At the same time we acknowledged an objective desire for revolutionary politics within their membership. Our proposed bloc was designed to show the difference between their self-description as Trotskyists and their real actions on the question of the independence of the proletarian party.

Secondly, we did not call our proposed bloc "revolutionary" — since it would not be, if its members still held a defensist attitude toward the imperialist USSR. But we did say that the political logic of the seven points, along with international developments like the Gorbachev reforms — the "adoption of openly capitalist techniques to stimulate their crisis-ridden economies" — would sharply call Soviet-defensist views into question and push left-moving centrists towards our revolutionary program. We wrote:

"Defensist comrades today who carry their fight against party liquidation to the end will have no alternative but to jettison their position that socialist revolutions can be made by anyone other than the proletariat under vanguard leadership."

That is, we predicted that such a struggle, with our intervention, would lead to a reassessment on the Russian question. We further indicated that the formation of such a bloc would enable us to collaborate with its constituents in order to stimulate the process of transformation. We are not ultimatumists who demand full agreement as the price for united action.

But we do demand such agreement for "revolution-

ary blocs" — which are stepping-stones to the revolutionary party. In no way did we try to hide our central differences with the "Trotskyist"-centrist milieu. This tactic contrasts distinctly with your method of hiding from your readers your political differences with those you are maneuvering with or against.

We understand that the WRP's International Conference is now unlikely to offer anything like the open, wide-ranging and fundamental discussion that was indicated at one time. Most of the "Trotskyist family" will be excluded, it seems. So forming a left bloc around any program is not an immediate issue. Nevertheless, should elements at the Conference have the opportunity to fight the direction of the WRP and LIT leaderships, our seven-point platform would still be an excellent starting point.

If we may make an analogy, our seven point challenge shares the same method as Trotsky's Transitional Program. Like the Transitional Program, it aims at bringing other working-class organizations and individuals closer to the revolutionary program without presenting them the ultimatum of accepting revolutionary politics at one gulp. In our case, we meant the centrist groups such as your own. In the case of the Transitional Program, these organizations were the trade unions, the proposed labor party in the United States, etc. As Trotsky said,

"Yes, we propagandize this program in the trade unions, propose it as the basic program for the labor party. For us, it is the transitional program; but for them it is the program."

Where the Transitional Program was designed to lead the workers' organizations to the point where the need for socialist revolution becomes overwhelming, our seven points similarly are meant to lead centrist organizations to the point where a break with centrism becomes a necessity for any further advance. Your misunderstanding of our proposal as a call for a "revolutionary" bloc is similar to the familiar pseudo-Trotskyist misrepresentation of the Transitional Program as the full program of the Fourth International. Trotsky again:

"The draft [transitional] program is not a complete program. ... the end of the program is not complete, because we don't speak here about the social revolution... ."

The fact that Trotsky proposed this program for other groups and did not include the full program for revolution did not make him duplicitous. He was merely honest about what he could expect from them.

The GOR-RWP Bloc with the WRP

Finally, you invite us to criticize the actual bloc (later aborted) agreed to by the GOR and RWP with the WRP and GOCQI in February "with the same rigor which you applied because of your mistaken understanding of the MRCI's proposals." Your irony is misplaced. Since you consider our method to be not one of rigor but of "a typically dishonest polemical style," it is disingenuous of you to wish it applied

to others.

Your ill wishes aside, we have no reason not to criticize this monstrously unprincipled bloc — which was made with the WRP, moreover, after that organization had abandoned its former interest in wide-ranging and probing international discussions in favor of Moreno-worship and an uncritical identification with the Morenoite LIT. The only reason we did not give it the same concrete treatment we gave yours is that we did not hear of it in time. We first saw mention of it in sketchy form in an IKL pamphlet just as our Summer issue was in preparation; and we did include it among the examples of unprincipled dervish-dancing around the WRP conference that we listed in our article (page 18) — along with your proposal.

We regret that organizations such as yourselves and the GOR do not see fit to keep us promptly informed of their political turns and organizational proposals. We understand that the fundamental reason, even more significant than our geographical distance, is our political distance — our non-membership in the "Trotskyist"-defensist family and our willingness to call things publicly by their right names.

But may we also note that Workers Power, despite your closer contact with the WRP and those dancing at its feet, has not yet commented on the GOR/WRP maneuver. You now would find it useful for us to criticize the GOR. Your own diplomacy, in helping to keep the various centrist machinations under wraps, is partly to blame for our past inability to do so.

You do not have to challenge us to take on the GOR or anyone else publicly; we have done so often. But take up the challenge yourselves. Now that your little maneuvers toward GOR, the WRP and the BT have fallen through, you should have no compunctions about trying to look as if you were principled people.

As we write, we have just received the July issue of Workers Power in which you at last imply what you long ago should have claimed from your point of view: that the GOR is centrist. But it is characteristic that you do so over the GOR's refusal to support the Communist Party of Italy in the recent elections. The PCI was running with openly bourgeois elements on its slate, the better to demand class-collaborationist representation in the bourgeois government if it polled well. A vote for it would have contributed to this strategy, whatever rhetoric its centrist backers might have attached. Your attitude in this case reflects your centrism, not the GOR's.

After all is said and done with the WRP's International Conference maneuvers, what we feared has largely come true. Around the world the proletariat is rising, struggling to create a new leadership. Just when the opportunity occurs for a fundamental discussion which could lay the basis for the renewal of such a principled leadership, the "Trotskyist"-centrists use the occasion to perform their familiar act of petty organizational aggrandizement. Once again the lot of you have succeeded in tarnishing the communist banner at the expense of the masses. ■

Down with the India-Sri Lanka Accord!

The following article was sent to us from Sri Lanka by "Revolutionary Marxists," who cannot be further identified because of the political repression in their country. (It has been slightly edited for production.)

The article is an important expression of proletarian opposition to bourgeois oppression under crisis conditions. We disagree with its call for a "workers' and peasants' government" instead of a workers' state as "the only alternative" to capitalism. See our article, "Myth and Reality of the Transitional Program," Socialist Voice No. 8, for the history of this much-abused slogan.

The Jayewardene-Gandhi Accord, purporting to inaugurate a settlement of the Tamil National problem, is the outcome of a conspiracy between the Jayewardene regime and the Rajiv Gandhi government to disrupt the struggle of the Tamil people [of Sri Lanka] for their liberation from the Sinhala bourgeois oppression they have suffered for decades now. In conspiracy with Jayewardene, Rajiv Gandhi has transported 3000 Indian troops to force the Tamil militants to end the armed struggle and to force them to surrender their arms to the Jayewardene regime.

The Jayewardene-Gandhi Accord is without the consent of the Tamils engaged in the Liberation Struggle. For Jayewardene, this accord with Gandhi is helping him to disarm and defeat the Tamil Liberation Struggle that has been heroically waged by Tamil militants with the sacrifice of the lives of thousands of their best fighters, and the killing of thousands of innocent Tamils by the Sinhala armed forces.

For Gandhi, the Accord has given India the image of a hegemonic role in the South Asian region, and has elevated the standing of the Gandhi regime in relation to U.S. imperialism. And, incidentally, Gandhi has got rid of the problem of the 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees presently in South India, regardless of their future fate in Sri Lanka.

Jayewardene's offer of a so-called regional autonomy through a Provincial Council to the Tamils of the North and East is a fraud. Although the Jayewardene-Gandhi Accord has been signed, and the militants are being forced to give up their arms, there is not even a draft document of the Provincial Council that will show the devolution of power. Tamils will not get any measure of autonomy for their region that could be called real. The anti-Tamil and discriminatory policies of Jayewardene and his Cabinet of Ministers, his UNP Parliamentary group and his party remain as anti-Tamil and Sinhala-chauvinist as ever before.

The most objectionable and dangerous aspect of the Accord is the provision for the stationing of Indian troops in Sri Lanka. These troops are stationed in the North not for the protection of the Tamils but

for the disruption of the Tamil Liberation Struggle and to prop up the hated Jayewardene regime, when the workers and toilers throughout the country sooner or later launch their struggle to overthrow it.

What is more, this Gandhi-Jayewardene alliance to keep the Indian armed forces in Sri Lanka as a "Peace Keeping Force" has opened the door for U.S. imperialism to send its armed forces to help militarily the Jayewardene regime, or any other bourgeois regime, in the coming anti-capitalist revolutionary struggles.

Recent events have shown that the Sinhala bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opposition forces that have embarked on a struggle against the government are virulently anti-Tamil in character. These forces are using the genuine class hatred of the working class and toilers among the Sinhala people against the oppressive Jayewardene regime, to strengthen their Sinhala chauvinist forces.

Anti-Tamil Sinhala chauvinism is no answer to the oppressive Jayewardene regime. The SLFP, MEP, anti-Tamil Buddhist monks, and the opportunist, conservative, chauvinist JVP cannot provide an alternative to the capitalist Jayewardene regime. The only alternative is an anti-capitalist Workers and Peasants Government.

Sections of the Tamil masses in the Northern and Eastern provinces could well be happy that the Sinhala armed forces have moved out of some of the army camps in the North. In any event, such a moving out can only be temporary. On the other hand, the Indian troops are not at all the friends of the Tamils in the North. They are in the North to help Jayewardene and to prop up his government.

Rajiv Gandhi is not only helping Jayewardene to break up the Tamil liberation struggle, but is even now helping him to suppress the workers and toilers in the South, by giving Jayewardene a chance of transferring Sri Lankan troops by stationing Indian troops in the North. It is clear, in terms of this Accord, that if the masses in the South and other parts of the country revolt against the oppressive Jayewardene capitalist rule, and if the Sri Lankan armed forces cannot suppress the masses, the door is open for the Indian troops to intervene to break up such a revolt.

**Down with the Gandhi-Jayewardene Accord!
No Disarming of Tamil Militants by Indian Troops!
Tamil Militants — Do Not Give Up Your Arms;
Resist the Indian Troops with All Your Might!
Indian Troops Out of Sri Lanka!
Sinhala Workers and Toilers — the Struggle We
Need is the Anti-Capitalist Struggle under the
Leadership of the Working Class to Throw Out
the Fascistic UNP Regime!**

continued from page 1

tween the president and his National Security Council staff, on the one hand, and the bureaucracies in the State and Defense Departments, on the other; between Israel which seeks to aid Iran to hold back Iraq and the Arab states and the U.S. which has tilted towards Iraq; between the U.S. and its allies in Europe and Japan who continued to ship arms and deal with Iran.

The renewed proletarian threat has given greater impulse to two parallel developments: the growing split in the Western camp and the tendency of the bourgeois state to move in a Bonapartist direction. For many years Proletarian Revolution has noted that the growing challenge of Japan and Germany threatens to undermine the Western alliance against the Stalinist regimes in the East. The East-West rivalry is giving way to a new alignment of forces. The ruling class struggles over how to respond to this changing reality.

Crisis in U.S. Foreign Policy

The U.S. defeat in Vietnam was a severe jolt. Forced into a defensive posture, Nixon and his chief henchman, Henry Kissinger, were forced to alter U.S. policy. Popular opposition to military intervention created the need to bolster regional subimperialisms — Israel, Iran under the shah, South Africa, Brazil — as bulwarks against mass upheavals. The opening to China and detente with Russia were meant to show the Stalinists the benefits to them of not giving aid to mass struggles.

Kissinger shocked conservatives by his efforts to prop up the Russian hold over Eastern Europe. In the 1976 presidential debates, Gerald Ford's "soft" line on Russian domination of Eastern Europe gave Jimmy Carter a big weapon against him. Detente depended in part on maintaining a strong alliance of Western Europe, Japan and Canada tied to the U.S. economically and politically; but Kissinger's policy couldn't manage the changes forced by the decline of U.S. hegemony. In Africa, for example, imperialism's collapse in Angola and Zimbabwe showed the weakness of Kissinger's Metternich-like system of alliances in the face of explosions from the struggle of oppressed masses.

Carter then tried to restabilize imperialism by giving token concessions to the masses in revolt. Essentially he relied on imperialism's economic power to buy off at least a layer of the middle class and even help create petty-bourgeois leaderships to derail struggles since the system could no longer afford to give wider concessions to the oppressed. Carter's "human rights" campaign even tried to force the Russians to make reforms and go along with the democratic charade.

Reagan revived Kissinger's Western-alliance approach to prevent revolution but with a less accommodating line towards Russia. Carter's Afghanistan poli-

cy and military build-up had already revved up Cold War politics. Now Reagan inflated the Russian threat through his "evil empire" rhetoric in order to align Japan and Western Europe behind U.S. interests. No more playing with revolutions, no more playing with the Russians except on grossly unequal terms.

But Reagan's anti-Soviet crusade has been a failure because, for one thing, the Russian bear has been too tame. In Afghanistan, for example, the USSR tries to reach an accommodation with the mullahs and looks to the U.S. to help resolve its mess.

The greatest enemy, of course is not the Soviet Union but mass struggles throughout the world. In Poland, the Western allies preferred Russian intervention to losing their investments and the danger of working class revolution. In El Salvador, Mexico and France supported the opposition over U.S. objections,

Col. Oliver North:
rogue imperialist.



Sec. Caspar Weinberger:
imperialist rogue.

in part responding to popular pressures at home, while Reagan was forced to support Duarte against the more extreme anti-communist military candidate, in order to maintain a democratic facade. In Haiti and the Philippines Reagan could not save his pals, Duvalier and Marcos, and was forced instead to follow Carter's approach of "controlled revolutions." His biggest failure is in the Middle East where he can't even sell his anti-Russian line to the Saudis and

other Arab rulers because the masses will not permit them to join a U.S.-Israel alliance.

Further undermining Reagan's policy is the relative success of his Russian counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev has effectively wooed sections of Western imperialism, and his reforms and public image have undercut Reagan's efforts to portray Russia as Evil. As a result, he has widened the divisions in the Western alliance and even within the U.S. ruling class. Underlying Gorbachev's efforts is the need to tie the Soviet economy closer to the world economy to attract investment and technology. In doing so, he has opened up the struggle in the West and Japan over who will exploit the openings.

Reagan has exploited the fact that U.S. economic stability is important to the allies. The U.S. serves as a market and as both a lucrative and safe area for investment. It is no secret that the disparity between the bullish stock market and the sluggish U.S. economy is due in large measure to the high influx of foreign investment (holdings of U.S. stocks by foreign investors increased by \$18 billion in 1986 and, based on the first quarter of 1987, the figure will double this year). Japan and West Germany have been willing to prop up the U.S. economy. However, as the sacrifices in their own economies threaten to lead to working-class upsurges, these countries are growing ever more frustrated, especially as the U.S. attempts to keep them from seeking a solution in the opening markets in China and Russia. The Soviet threat has helped keep them in line, but now it is faltering.

Iran Fiasco

Behind Reagan's Iranian disaster lies his attempt to revive the strategy of building an anti-Soviet alliance. By striking a deal with Iran, Reagan saw an opportunity to strike a blow at Russia while forcing Japan and Europe, dependent on oil from the Middle East, to subordinate their own interests to the U.S. With developing U.S.-China relations and the Russian quagmire in Afghanistan, a pro-Western Iran would be a big gain for his containment strategy.

However, Reagan's approach was opposed by other factions of the U.S. bourgeoisie. On one side, the liberal Eastern establishment wants to deal with Gorbachev. They fear that the escalating arms race threatens not only to exhaust the Soviets but the U.S. as well. Hostility to their imperialist rival is subordinate to their fear of mass upheavals, including those sparked by the spread of Iranian influence in the Gulf. New York Democratic Senator Pat Moynihan argued that Reagan's anti-communist obsession left him blind to the real question in Iran, "convulsive ethnic conflict."

On the other side, even those who support the harder approach to Russia, like Secretary of Defense Weinberger, opposed dealing with Iran. During the public hearings, Weinberger went further than Secretary of State Shultz and opposed the idea of even attempting to come to terms with the mullahs. Weinberger

snickered at the suggestion that any faction of the Iranian regime could be characterized as "moderate." For Weinberger, the policy of keeping Russia out of the Middle East could not come at the expense of increasing the destabilizing influence of Iran.

Judging by the hearings, Weinberger represents a minority viewpoint. Most conservatives and liberals agreed with trying to deal with the Iranians. But Reagan badly bungled the job. In Shultz's words, the U.S. was taken to the cleaners by the Iranians who got lots of arms while giving virtually nothing in return: new hostages replaced those released.

Scandal Grows

To make matters worse, as the scandal grew out of control, Reagan was forced to reverse gears in an anti-Iranian direction. U.S. ability to maneuver with the reactionary Khomeini regime was badly set back. The current bellicose attitude towards Iran has now created a no-win situation and reaffirms the incoherence of his Administration. In coming to the aid of Kuwait, Iraq's ally, the U.S. has exploded its own pretense of neutrality in the war. Japan and most of West Europe, who want to remain on good terms with both sides, give only grudging support to the U.S.

Even British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at first cold-shouldered Reagan's attempt to involve the allies. Initially refusing a U.S. request for mine-sweepers, a British diplomat voiced fears that the U.S. was risking destabilization of the region: "These Arab governments in the Gulf are quite fragile." When Britain and other European states reversed course and sent in warships and minesweepers, they did so reluctantly and with much fanfare about how they were acting independently of the Americans.

By threatening to turn the Iran-Iraq war into an Iran-U.S. confrontation, Reagan undermined the very Arab regimes he intervened to defend. The Kuwaitis and Saudis can ill afford to be seen as puppets of U.S. imperialism by their own people.

War in the Gulf

But while the U.S. role has been to escalate the conflict — promoting the ambivalence of Arab leaders — the U.S. doesn't really want war with Iran either. Despite its show of muscle, the Administration backed off from definitive actions that would lead to overt war. When the reflagged Kuwaiti tanker Bridgeton hit a mine, the U.S. didn't retaliate, saying it had no conclusive evidence that it was planted by Iran.

Stansfield Turner, CIA Director under Carter, attacked the Administration's half-way policy. He contended that the solution to the mine danger is to use the entire gulf for transporting oil tankers:

"So why aren't the reflagged tankers using the whole gulf? It is because the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has restricted international shipping to a narrow zone. At the point the Bridgeton was hit, the convoy had been within that two-mile

slice of the 60 mile wide channel. No wonder the Iranians knew so certainly where to plant the mines. ...

[This] contrasts starkly with the President's willingness twice to provoke Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya over his claims to exclusive control of the Gulf of Sidra. In both instances, we engaged Libyan forces in combat. Why will we not provoke Iran by challenging its exclusion zone?" (New York Times, August 11.)

Turner points out that using the whole gulf would risk an Iranian attack that could lead to a war. While he advocates taking the risks, the Administration prefers to let the Iraqis inflict damage. When it became apparent that Iran was actually benefiting from the ceasefire in the tanker war, the U.S. gave

been another revolution in Iran."

Ironically, the biggest winners in all this maneuvering appear to be the Russians. The Russians have been given an opening to play the role of peacemaker. While continuing its support to Iraq, Russia has used the U.S.-Iran confrontation to snuggle up to the Iranians. Attempting to keep out the Russians, the U.S. snatched away the Kuwaiti reflagging initiative only to win an exploding minefield as the prize.

In addition to the reported negotiation of an Iran-Soviet military-economic agreement, the Gorbachev regime has pushed its efforts to reach an arms pact with the U.S. Gorbachev's arms proposals were a real boost to a besieged Reagan Administration looking to turn attention away from the scandal. Gorbachev was willing to help Reagan because his own re-



Iranian women denounce U.S. and Saudi Arabia for massacre of pilgrims in Mecca. Reactionary Islamic regime hid its deals with U.S. because of mass anti-imperialism.

Iraq the green light to resume its air attacks -- while making formal protests. While the U.S. doesn't want war with Iran, it is playing an escalating game in which it must step up its own military adventures in the Gulf. It is inevitable that new incidents that could lead to war will occur.

One measure of this escalation was the destruction of an Iranian ship, allegedly for laying mines. The U.S. risked the consequences in return for enhancing its claim of Iran's guilt -- to increase the pressure on its European allies for support. At this writing the Iran's threats of retaliation fall short of open war, which Khomeini too would like to avoid.

Iran too has found it desirable to escalate tensions in order to bolster its anti-imperialist credentials. As we noted in Proletarian Revolution No. 28, the Khomeini regime was also embarrassed by the dealings with the U.S. and sought to hide as much as it could from the Iranian masses. Colonel Oliver North testified that the secrecy of the dealings was designed to protect the Iranian regime as well as the American. When Congressman Louis Stokes pointed out that the secrecy of the operation meant secret from the U.S. public but not from outsiders, North replied, "All Iranians didn't know or there would have

form program requires easing up on military spending.

The problems with Reagan's anti-Russian alliance were further highlighted by the confusion created by chief of staff Howard Baker. Baker's appointment was supposed to restore bourgeois confidence in the Administration, but his relative liberalism makes him an easy object of attack by Reagan's conservative base. When Kuwait invited both the U.S. and Russia to reflag its tankers, Baker welcomed the proposal for "both the United States and the Soviet Union to share the responsibility for assuring the passage of oil tankers in the Persian Gulf." He suggested that U.S. and Russian interests converged in the Middle East (and elsewhere), a view pushed by many liberals and at odds with the Administration's. While conservatives suggested that Baker was suckered in by the Russians, Administration officials were forced to rebuke him for linking the U.S. reflagging to the Soviets' -- even though that was the original rationale for plunging into the Gulf. Only when it became clear that Reagan couldn't sell the anti-Russian line did the Administration shift to the explanation that it was intervening to defend freedom of the seas.

In a letter responding to an article by George Ball in the New York Times, Weinberger indirectly

attacked Baker as he took swipes at the liberal idea of "convergence."

"Mr. Ball restates the shopworn criticism that United States policy in the Persian Gulf is driven by 'the bellicose idiom of the East-West struggle.' Mr. Ball contends that by not recognizing that Moscow and Washington 'share a common objective in the Persian Gulf,' the Reagan Administration is passing up the chance for a historic East-West agreement on that region's future. The popular academic theory of the 1970's, which went by the name 'convergence,' is given full rein in Mr. Ball's thinking. He sees a United States-Soviet deal on the Persian Gulf as the prelude to further agreements on Afghanistan and the Arab-Israeli struggle."

Having denied Ball's charge that Administration

policy revolves around "East-West struggle", Weinberger then launched into his own anti-Soviet tirade:

"Moreover, Mr. Ball argues that the Russians have been reassuring about their benign intentions in the region and are 'desperately' trying to 'extricate' themselves from the 'Afghan imbroglio.' Forgotten here is Russia's historic pursuit of influence in this region, the massing of Soviet military power on the Iranian border, Soviet arming of the warring factions in Ethiopia and Yemen, and Soviet attacks on American policy that can hardly be interpreted as reassuring."

Weinberger has to disguise his anti-Russian line around the fiction that the U.S. believes "that the future of the Persian Gulf lies in the hands of the Persian Gulf states, not in pronouncements from the

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From the Introduction

The article by Chris Bailey which we publish here is one of the most important documents to appear in the "Trotskyist" milieu which defends the Soviet Union as a "workers' state." We say this as Trotskyists who *fundamentally* disagree with the ideas Comrade Bailey advances, as can be seen from our reply. Our view is that the only way to maintain Trotsky's revolutionary intransigence against Stalinism is to understand that the Soviet Union is a statified capitalist society and has been so since the late 1930s.

Bailey is a 20-year veteran of Trotskyism. When he wrote the document he was the international representative of the Workers Revolutionary Party of Great Britain (WRP). In 1986 the WRP, having expelled its long-time leader Gerry Healy, drew the attention of many "Trotskyist" forces around the world who looked to it as a center for discussion and possible regroupment.

Bailey's document has been widely circulated in its original form from the internal bulletin of the WRP. To our knowledge no one in the entire milieu has even attempted to answer it, with good reason. It represents a devastating challenge that the milieu does not want to face, for Bailey systematically exposes the fact that present-day "orthodox Trotskyism" has no serious theoretical explanation of the post-war world in general nor of the so-called workers' states it defends in particular.

most powerful nations." Meanwhile he is orchestrating the most massive U.S. military buildup in the Persian Gulf in history.

That Weinberger has to disguise his real views betrays the weakness of the Reagan regime. Iran-contragate represented in part an effort by the ruling class to pull in the reins on Reagan; it is uneasy over the danger of war in the Gulf. The hearings were meant to punish Reagan for deceiving the bourgeoisie over Iran — while defending the presidency as an institution. A New York Times editorial in February (before the hearings began) posed the dilemma:

"Even before Congress and the special prosecutor have begun to assign blame, the President's men complain of micro-management from outside. True enough. Their excesses may have invited another round of legal rule making. That is yet another political crime that may result from the Iran-contra blunder. It will take ingenuity to contain this imperial Presidency without hobbling others."

Reagan has to be contained in order to prevent further damage to the "imperial Presidency." Congress had no intention of letting this become another Watergate, denying the "smoking gun" even as they gagged from the smoke. The hearings paralleled Watergate by reaffirming "democracy," that the "system works," without resorting to impeachment and the resulting political crisis. In the words of co-chairman Lee Hamilton, its purpose was to serve as a "self-cleansing process."

Watergate was a temporary check to the Bonapartist tendency. As Proletarian Revolution No. 28 said: "Classically, a Bonapartist balances between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, seeming to mirror the will of the popular classes while fulfilling the needs of the rulers. In situations of extreme capitalist breakdown, where the proletariat threatens but has failed to revolt successfully, fascism steps in. In the U.S. at this point we are facing a slow Bonapartist trend fraught with hesitations and contradictions."

Iran-contragate not only showed the strength of the Bonapartist tendency; the response to North and the open advocacy of pardons are signs of its greater general acceptance. In the epoch of capitalism's decay, the imperialist epoch, the continuation and deepening of this tendency is inevitable.

Political Infighting

To take some of the heat off Reagan it was necessary to discuss openly the conflicts within the Administration — the "battle royal," as Shultz put it. In fact, vicious political infighting has taken place throughout Reagan's regime, originally centering around his first Secretary of State, former Kissinger aide Alexander Haig. These conflicts continue.

In his testimony, deposed NSC head Admiral John Poindexter complained of the bureaucracy's inertia. In an exchange with congressman Thomas Foley, he

portrayed himself as a man of action in the face of bureaucratic resistance. Foley summed up:

Q. "...you felt frustrated by the lack of enthusiasm of some in the intelligence agencies to develop sufficient programs for action. Is that fair? You talk about bureaucratic tendencies to take no risks, for example.

A. That didn't apply just to intelligence communities.

Q. It applied to the Department of State, for example, and the Department of Defense?

A. As well.

Q. The entire bureaucracy would you feel was characterized from time to time by that sort of attitude?

A. I think that it's characteristic of all bureaucracies that they aren't willing to take high risks — as these hearings demonstrate. The cost of failure is too high for them".

Poindexter's remarks echoed North's, who had complained of the failure of other agencies to do enough for the hostages — a swipe at Shultz and Weinberger. North invoked memories of the defeat in Vietnam, voicing the frustration of those in the military who felt betrayed by the politicians. In fact, many of the leading characters — North, McFarlane, Secord, to name a few — are representatives of this group of ex-Vietnam military men.

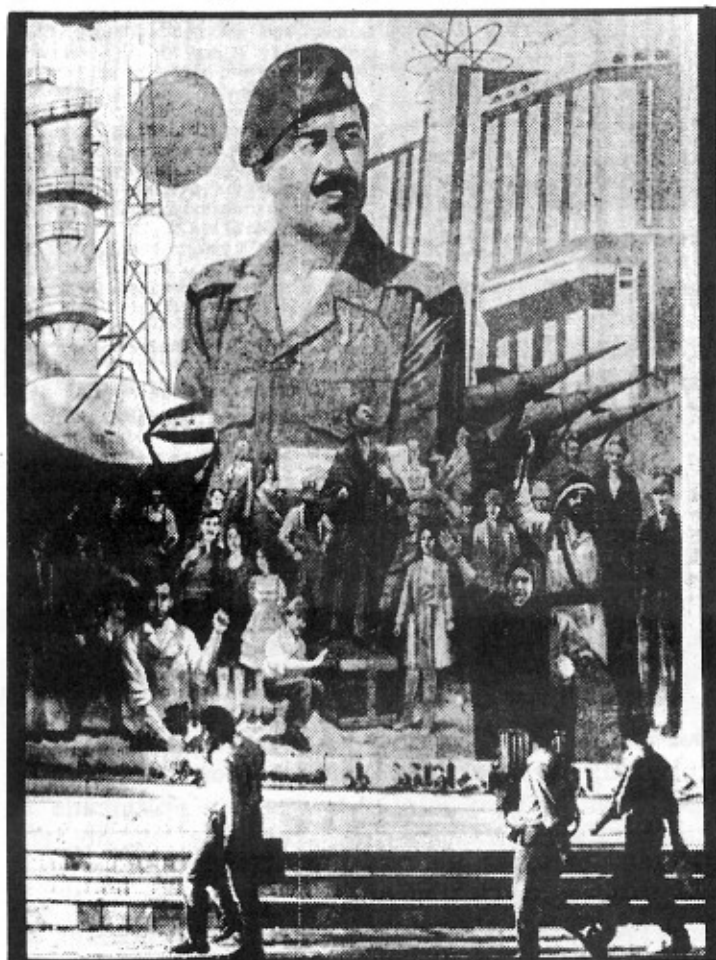
North, Poindexter and McFarlane saw their chance to show the bureaucrats how to really fight communism. The right-wing petty bourgeoisie is impatient with slow-moving diplomacy. Iran-contragate demonstrates that these elements are backed by a section of the bourgeoisie who want to reassert traditional U.S. power through a militarist course. Reagan instinctively went in their direction only to submit to a public flogging when the scandal erupted. Then he looked weak while North emerged a hero, which shows again the strengthening of the Bonapartist tendency and its base in the frustrated petty bourgeoisie.

Reagan threw North and Poindexter to the wolves; but when Congress was licking its chops, all set for the kill, North turned the tables on them. North played on his good-soldier image; the politicians in Congress were picking on the little guy and not the big shots in the White House. After all, he had been willing to do the Administration's dirty work and was attacked by lawyers and Congressional do-nothings as his reward. North's posturing, although fraudulent, had some basis in reality and struck a popular chord — contempt for all the politicians in Washington. As a sort of poetic justice, these included Reagan, who most people correctly saw to be lying.

As with Carter before him, Reagan had won the presidency by running against Washington. He appealed to the desire for a Man on a White Horse. While North himself may only be a flash-in-the-pan, his significance is that he points to conditions upon which a solid Bonapartist figure may emerge in the future. It is no accident that North is a military man, a prime

source for Bonapartist candidates. Some Congressmen expressed concern during the hearings about the growing role of military officers in government, particularly the NSC. Since 1980, the number of officer-NSCers has risen from 9 to 17, on a staff of only 50.

Perhaps the key figure in the bureaucratic infighting was CIA director William Casey, who conveniently died before having to testify. Casey was close to Reagan, and evidence (mainly from North) points to him as the chief architect of the Iran-contra operation. Casey wanted to free himself from the restraints of Congress and the opposition of the State and Defense Departments. He epitomized Bonapartism's tendency to rely on conspiracy, covert actions and violation of bourgeois law. His "mini-CIA" outside of the CIA was not a secret separate government but the heart of the government itself. The attempt to portray Reagan as a duped innocent was a convenient cover which Congress readily accepted. But when Con-



Baghdad mural hails Saddam Hussein, Iraq's unbiased leader: he kills Iranians, Kurds, Iraqi workers alike.

gress pressed Weinberger on whose policy was carried out, he credited Reagan. If the story of the NSC-CIA conspiracy to freeze out the rest of the bureaucracy is true then it is also true that Reagan was part of the conspiracy against his own Cabinet.

The Bonapartist tendency to free the president from the restraints of democracy also means more concentration and centralization of power in the executive branch. Casey, for example, was doing far more

than a typical CIA director. His office in the White House reflected his role in policy making. One source of controversy was over whether Casey fixed intelligence reports to overstate the potential for a deal with Iran in order to justify his policies. Casey even put forward the view, sharply denounced by Weinberger, that Iran was losing the war, with the conclusion that U.S. arms would only preserve the stalemate. Casey's role has led Congress to call for a separation of intelligence gathering and policy making — although it would be fair to say that many of Reagan's policies seem divorced from intelligence.

But the NSC also overstepped its boundaries in engaging in operational activities — covert actions which were supposed to be carried out by the CIA. Yet even while chastizing the NSC, Congress was put on the defensive by North's arguments in favor of covert action. The dirty dealings of the bourgeoisie were elevated to the status of high principles.

In fact, North proved to be such an effective liar on television that the hearings became an embarrassment to Congress and the media. Even the fall guy, Poindexter, the man with the photographic memory who in five days of testimony said "I can't recall" and "I don't remember" 184 times, was not in the least bit fazed. Congress impotently complained that at least the Watergate conspirators were apologetic! Conservatives embraced North and called for pardons while suggesting that Reagan overreacted in dumping his loyal NSC staffers. North's standing up to Congress seemed a stark contrast to Reagan's wimpish leadership. As North's popularity rose, Reagan's ratings in the polls declined.

Shultz, Weinberger to the Rescue

As Congress faltered, along came Shultz and Weinberger to save the hearings. Why did they help Congress and damage Reagan? Conservatives have persistently attacked Shultz for saving himself and not protecting the president. The Tower Commission report also blamed Shultz and Weinberger for not doing enough to keep Reagan out of trouble.

While saving their own political hides was a factor, it is more to the point that they represent two entrenched bureaucracies which felt the need to reassert themselves. Casey and Poindexter had won out, and now Shultz and Weinberger were getting revenge. While they are part of the same bourgeois right wing, they are not prepared to go so far outside the bounds of bourgeois democracy — that is, democracy for the bourgeoisie, not the workers. Their bureaucracies have strong ties to mainstream sections of the bourgeoisie and so must act as representatives of the ruling class as a whole.

In order to restore bourgeois unity, Shultz and Weinberger joined the effort to discipline their own Administration. They denounced the bungled deals and crazy plans, the swapping of arms for hostages. In doing so they gave Congress more weapons to use against Reagan — who after all was behind Casey and

Poindexter.

The conservatism and inertia of State and Defense reflect the cautious approach of a ruling class desperately seeking to stabilize the imperialist order. They have to deal with the big picture, all the competing interests of world capitalism. This militates

the ruling class for its own good.

But the bourgeoisie is not yet frightened enough to yield all power to the Norths and Caseys. Bonapartism would require an upsurge by the working class that threatens bourgeois rule. The imperialist crisis encourages the ruling class to make use of Bonapart-



French paratroopers in joint maneuvers with West Germans. The road to imperialist war is paved with illusory peace pacts.

against the bold strokes and "neat ideas" coming from the Oliver Norths.

Shultz, Weinberger and the bourgeoisie especially need to put the Reagan Administration under tighter control since they hope to salvage some of its policies, including supporting the contras. North's popularity threatened to encourage Reagan's cowboy mentality, so Shultz and Weinberger moved in to shoot it down — and the conservative Weinberger was embraced by liberal Democrats as a hero. The role of the bureaucracy as a control mechanism over the bourgeoisie's own leading representative in government, the president, was reinforced.

His bungling aside, Reagan's crime was that he bypassed the bourgeois institutions — Congress and the bureaucracy. All presidents do, and it is accepted up to a point. But Reagan went too far and too fast in a Bonapartist direction. The underlying logic of Bonapartism, partly revealed in the hearings, is that in order to defend the existence of the bourgeoisie and its property it is necessary to deprive it of political power: there is too much conflict within

ist elements but it tries at the same time to control them. To quote Poindexter, "They aren't willing to take high risks" because "the cost of failure is too high for them."

Imperialist Alliance Crumbles

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution recognized that the proletariat has become the only truly revolutionary class; that in this epoch of imperialist decay, bourgeois-democratic revolutions could only be achieved in the course of proletarian revolution. But the corollary to this was that all sections of the bourgeoisie had become counterrevolutionary. The debate in the U.S. ruling class on how to stop the growing threat of revolution revolves on whether to restore traditional U.S. power through militarism or to make use of counterrevolutionary petty-bourgeois leadership, be it Stalinist or reformist.

Liberal Democrats seized on Reagan's Iran blunders to push their own foreign policy interests. Reagan's anti-Russian rhetoric was effective in making them fear being tagged with the "soft on communism"

label. Witness Walter Mondale's hawkish positions during the 1984 elections. But now, with the Iran fiasco, it was their turn to accuse Reagan of being "soft on terrorism."

The liberals differ with Reagan's effort to hold together the Western alliance by stepping up conflict with the Soviets. Although they too are anti-communist, the Democrats want an accommodation in order to pursue the developing rivalry with Japan and West Germany. The Democrats are pushing protectionism and anti-Japanese sentiment (smashing Japanese electronic goods on the steps of the Capitol). Under the cover of "human rights", their policy promises to be as chauvinist as Reagan's.

The Democrats' policy welcomes the reforms in China and Russia in order to better make use of these Stalinist states to curb mass struggles. Reagan has less confidence in Stalinism's ability to contain struggles, so he presses for greater control over Soviet actions. This "convergence vs. containment" struggle is evident in the dispute over the Persian Gulf, where Democrats are more willing to allow a Russian role, whereas Reagan simply wants Russia to stay out.

The Democrats' policies run grave risks for capitalism. Trade wars, "democratic" revolutions and other changes mean that sections of the bourgeoisie must go under to preserve the system. In the liberal view it is necessary to beat back the growing challenge from Japan and Europe in order to get the U.S. economy back in shape. A healthier U.S. could again pursue the strategy of making concessions to mass struggles. In reality it is impossible to recover the kind of prosperity that makes a concessionary strategy feasible -- but a lot of humanity can get destroyed in the trying.

Reagan was trained by Sun Belt capitalists who aren't accustomed to making concessions. Indeed, in the Reagan years the very term denotes gains taken from the workers. Used to having their own way, these capitalists do not wish to be sacrificed for the good of the system. Further, they rely a great deal on the profits from the arms race and therefore have a stake in military escalation against Russia.

However, Reagan was forced to back off from his no-concessions line in the Philippines, Haiti and now in South Korea and Panama -- by mass struggles. The same is true in South Africa, where even he now has to accept sanctions in some form. As well, Russia's increasing softness toward the West has led Reagan grudgingly toward arms pacts, closer ties to Poland and added hope that U.S. capitalists can vie with West Europe in the East European market. In practice there is clearly more convergence than divergence between Democrats and Republicans. But Democrats want imperialism to offer more as working-class struggles move onto center stage internationally.

Differences over Nicaragua mirror these larger questions. Democrats want to use the contras to keep pressure on the Sandinistas to strengthen the rights

of capitalists. They also rely on the Russians to discipline their Sandinista allies. And Russia appears to be playing along; the New York Times quotes Gorbachev telling Mexican Foreign Minister Sepulveda that Russia is not interested in promoting "socialist revolutions" in Latin America. Gorbachev further signaled his moderate stance by scheduling his upcoming Latin American tour without stops in Cuba and Nicaragua. Likewise, Russia's delay in supplying Nicaragua with desperately needed oil helped push the Sandinistas to agree to the Arias "peace" plan.

Despite the boost given to the Administration's contra policy by North's television appearance, Reagan has been unable to capitalize on the situation. He is now too weak to bully Congress. His counter-peace proposal was such a fraud that even the Democrats treated it with skepticism, despite the fact that it was co-authored by Majority Leader Wright. In the past Reagan had successfully used the ploy of proposing "peace" in order to then ask for funds to carry out the contra war; not this time.

Bonapartism and Mass Struggle

As Reagan's game plan unravels, the Democrats may get a chance to try their own. But ultimately their policy must also lead in the direction of militarism and war. It too requires strong-man rule.

In Russia and China the so-called reforms represent attacks on the living standards of the proletariat. Working-class eruptions such as those that took place in Poland in 1980 are inevitable. Stalinism can only carry out its attempt to reintegrate itself more firmly to the world economy by ruthless assaults on the workers. Even military measures as in the case of Poland will prove insufficient.

Imperialism's crisis also means greater polarization at the center, the U.S. Once the working class breaks the demoralizing grip of the union bureaucracy, the ruling class will be forced to rely on Bonapartist and fascist elements waiting in the wings.

Even in Iran, where fascist counterrevolution defeated the valiant masses who overthrew the Shah, the bourgeoisie is mortified by the result. Imperialism does not welcome the coming period of convulsions, of revolution, counterrevolution and war. It vainly scrambles to build alliances and restraints to hold the system together and beat down each new threat from the proletariat.

The first shock waves are being felt inside the workers' movement as the masses renew the process of searching out and developing new leaderships who can lead their struggles forward. The sudden political awakening of workers in South Korea gives dramatic evidence that a new layer of revolutionary-minded workers is in creation. In this light, the struggle to build the international party of the proletariat is clearly the critical task of the day. Only a re-created Fourth International based on the revolutionary program of Trotskyism can save humanity from the ruin at the hands of crisis-ridden capitalism. ■

Korea

continued from page 1

rule. For a long time students have demanded the ouster of the 40,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea, reunification with North Korea, and a variety of social and economic changes. One popular student slogan is, "Defeat Dictatorship Through Revolution!" A week after President Chun's concession, the largest demonstrations yet took place in Seoul and Kwangju, on the occasion of the funeral of a student killed by a tear-gas cannister thrown at his head. The mood at the demonstration was one of mistrust of the government and the bourgeois opposition and readiness for further struggle.

The dictatorship's concessions to the student movement, rather than having a dampening effect, raised expectations inside the most powerful force in Korean society, the industrial proletariat. The work-

conclusion in the course of establishing its proletarian rule. Permanent revolution is counterposed to the bourgeois opposition's hopes for a Philippine-type "people's power" solution. Not only has the bourgeoisie's hopes for peaceful, democratic rule failed miserably in the Philippines, but the particular development of Korea makes such an alternative even less viable.

First, unlike the coalition of bourgeois parties led by President Aquino, the DRP is a bourgeois party without much of a bourgeois base. The Korean bourgeoisie, descended for the most part from the big landlord class of the North and South, had never ruled through its own political parties, as in the Philippines before the Marcos regime. They collaborated with the Japanese imperialists till the latter were driven out by Russian troops and the Stalinist-led uprising at the end of the war. By 1947, the peasant-based uprising overran the whole peninsula.

Only U.S. military intervention and the rapid

demobilization of the peasant movement by the Stalinists under Kim Il Sung saved the bourgeoisie. Eventually, the Stalinist forces were pushed back and Korea was partitioned. In the South, the U.S. set up a puppet army and government of the "Republic of Korea." Korean landlords and capitalists from the North abandoned their property and fled south.

In the North, the Soviet Union withdrew its troops as fast as it could, giving Kim Il Sung's Stalinist "Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea" weapons, some funds and its best wishes. Kim Il Sung led the Stalinization of the North, nationalizing industry and collectivizing agricul-

ture. The demobilization and subsequent regimentation of the masses in the DPRK in a crash-industrialization drive to build statified capitalism gave the rulers confidence that a war of reunification would not run the risk of the masses getting out of hand. As well, the victory of the Stalinist-led revolution in China secured the rear of the DPRK.

War broke out between North and South in the summer of 1950, and once again the Stalinist forces rapidly overran the whole country. In the ensuing war, genuine communists had to give military support to the Stalinist-led forces who were fighting imperialism and its puppets. But the course of events showed that nationalist capitalism, no matter how radical, will not struggle consistently against imperialism. The Stalinists seek only a better deal from the imperialists, and the regimentation and



Bus drivers stage militant sit-down strike in Seoul.

ing class has significant concentrations in modern heavy industry. Workers began taking a more active role in the mass demonstrations, raising demands for the right to strike (which remains illegal), freedom of union organization and an end to the government blacklist of fired militants. By mid-August the country was overrun by mass strikes, workers' demonstrations, and sit-down strikes for higher wages, better conditions and trade union freedom.

The floodgates had been opened. However, the dictatorship has not been dismantled and the armed forces remain intact and a threat to the masses. The key task facing the Korean workers is to win leadership of the political movement and prevent the bourgeois opposition from striking a deal with the military at the expense of the masses. Only the working class can carry out the democratic revolution to a successful

oppression of their own working class and peasantry are a necessary part of this accommodation.

That is why the newly-established Stalinist regime in China did not intervene in the war until the U.S.-led invaders (officially under the auspices of the United Nations) had not only pushed the DPRK forces back, but had gone right up to the Yalu River border and were preparing to invade China. The combined armies of China and the DPRK managed to push the U.S. and South Korean armies back to the previous line of partition, and a stalemate ensued.

Armed Truce

The only way to drive the imperialists out of all Korea would have been to mobilize the workers and peasants of Korea and China independently of the Stalinists. A revolutionary war to kick out the U.S. and its allies would have led to a fight against the statified capitalist regimes which blocked the masses' path to socialist revolution and the creation of workers' states. That is, to fight the imperialists may require military support to the Stalinist forces where the latter are fighting imperialism; but it always requires the organization of the workers in their own militias, behind their own Trotskyist party, to overthrow the Stalinist capitalists and replace them with a workers' state in each country.

Since the winding down of the Korean War, an armed truce has prevailed in the region; the governments of the ROK and DPRK have made threatening noises at each other and even carried out occasional terrorist attacks, though no one seriously expects a new war of reunification. What this history has meant, however, is that the Southern bourgeoisie came to depend on a strong state dominated by a military with strong ties to American imperialism. Since only the military-police dictatorship upholds their economic power, the Korean bourgeoisie have ceded political power; first to the corrupt civil politician and U.S.

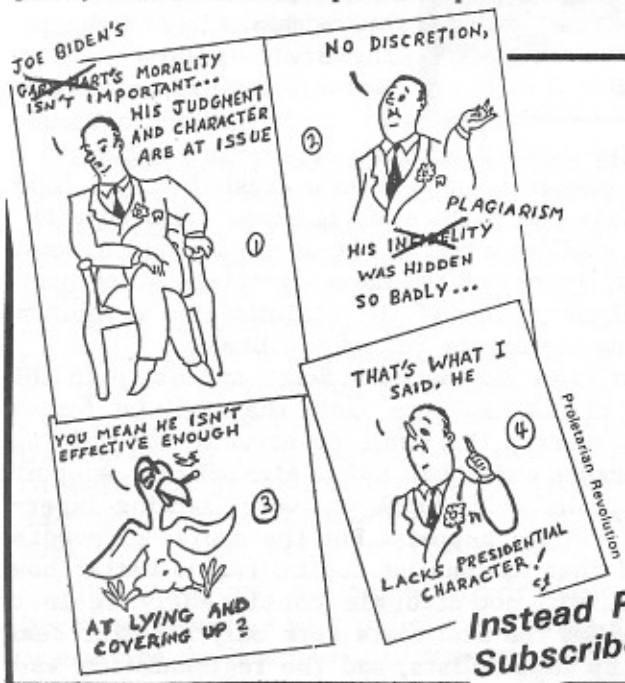
puppet Syngman Rhee, and, when the latter was overthrown by a mass student movement in 1960, to open military dictatorships.

A second significant difference from the Philippine bourgeoisie is that the major holdings of the Korean capitalists have been concentrated in industry rather than in land. In 1965, the government of General Park Chung Hee started an ambitious program of industrialization. Through the establishment of state-owned and joint state-private enterprises and a program of loans for industry from state banks, the country went from being two-thirds rural to two-thirds urban industrial in less than twenty years. This reversed the relative status of the DPRK and the ROK. Since the Japanese colonial period, the North had been more industrialized than the South. By the time of the assassination of General Park in 1979, the South had a more advanced, diversified and productive industrial base. Though most of the state's shares in joint state-private industries were sold off by the 1980s, South Korean capitalism represents "free enterprise" no more than does North Korean capitalism.

Workers and Students Restless

The changes wrought by the industrialization had created a new working class, wrenched from the land and thrown into the cities. As well, the student population, traditionally the mass base of anti-government movements, had grown. Both sectors had become increasingly restive under the Park dictatorship. Under pressure to make reforms by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (whose top-notch organization of spies and thugs put him in a position to gauge the dissatisfaction of the masses), Park refused and was assassinated on October 26, 1979.

The following period of disorder at the top led to the pivotal event of recent Korean history, the uprising in Kwangju city and the brief existence of



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what may be justly called the Kwangju Commune. General Chun Doo Hwan, till then an obscure figure, had through a series of coups taken over the army and had established himself as dictator by the end of 1979. But student and worker demonstrations and strikes continued to grow. The military responded with increased repression, finally declaring martial law on May 18, 1980.

Students in Kwangju held a protest rally the same day. Workers and others joined the demonstration. The army attacked and massacred hundreds of participants and onlookers. In response, hundreds of thousands of residents of Kwangju, mostly workers, rose up and fought the army and police. Soldiers and cops fled, and their weapons fell into the hands of the masses. By May 21, the armed workers, students, small shopkeepers and others had driven out the police and soldiers and taken control over the whole city. They set up an organization called the Citizens' Committee for Restoration and Planning, which functioned as a revolutionary government, maintaining better order than ever. A mass-based revolutionary government throughout Korea was possible. Although the workers who were the bulk of the fighters were not under an independent class banner, their actions pointed to the need for the workers to lead, not follow, the students.

But the potential was not realized. The army kept the uprising isolated from the rest of Korea, censoring all news. In five days they counter-attacked and massacred as many as two thousand people (the government admits to only 200). The massacre by two to four divisions of troops taught another lesson, a lesson about the role of U.S. imperialism.

Since the Korean War, almost the entire military of the ROK has been under the command of an American general, not just de facto, as in many other countries, but officially as well. The ROK can only transfer troops with his authorization. When General Chun asked U.S. Army General John Wickham to approve the movement of up to 40,000 troops to Kwangju to put down the uprising, he was most obliging.

This gives the lie to the official U.S. line that the U.S. military is occupying South Korea to protect its people from aggression by the DPRK. It demonstrated to the masses of South Korean workers once and for all that the U.S. military is in Korea to fight them, to keep them in line working 55 hours a week for two dollars an hour or less — for the prof-

it of U.S. suppliers, importers, investors and banks. In addition, the U.S. imperialists want a land base on the Asian mainland to be able to massacre the workers and peasants of other countries should the needs of the U.S. bourgeoisie require it. The true nature of the U.S. military role in Korea has not been much of a secret. General Meyer admitted in 1983 that "the U.S. would never withdraw its military forces from South Korea no matter how the relationship developed between the peoples of the South and the North."

Since the crushing of the Kwangju commune, the



Workers' demonstration at struck Taejon textile plant. The mass strike wave sweeping Korea shows the power of the working class.

mass movement has consistently raised demands against the presence of U.S. troops. One demand has been complete disclosure of the events in Kwangju; the government still refuses.

The most active students were previously anti-imperialist. Now so are many of the blue and white collar workers as well. But the DRP, the only bourgeois opposition, is pro-American. The best-known leader, Kim Dae Jung, a sort of liberal populist, has been in jail or under house arrest almost 60 times; at one time Korean secret agents kidnapped him from exile in Japan and brought him back to Korea, where he was condemned to death for treason. Strong pressure from Washington convinced the South Korean government to let him go to the U.S. Kim may run for president in the promised elections; at least one general has threatened a coup if he wins. Although some South Korean big bourgeois are making donations to Kim's party, this is only a political insurance policy in case he or the other opposition leader, Kim Young Sam becomes president.

The bourgeoisie still prefers its comfort under

the military wing. They fear what is actually happening: the rising of the working class. Workers who earn two dollars an hour are among the highly-paid! The prosperity of South Korean industry is recent and still fragile. Industry is heavily dependent on exporting automotive and electronic goods, textiles, apparel, and steel. On the other hand, much of their manufacturing depends on importing parts, usually from Japan, for final assembly. Korean industry is deeply in debt to foreign, mostly U.S. and Japanese banks. Maintaining their profits requires continued government subsidies, direction and repression — to keep wages low and hours long.

The big bourgeoisie has never come out for democratization. They may tolerate it uneasily for a while, perhaps till after the 1988 Seoul Olympic games. One of the pressures on the military to grant reforms was their desire to avoid huge protests and

North, as well as glaring contrasts of wealth and poverty in the South that don't appear in the North. But the DPRK, heavily saddled with debts to capitalist banks, is neither a revolutionary communist state nor even an anti-imperialist one. If the DPRK is a consistent fighter against imperialism, then why has it been perpetually willing to negotiate some kind of federation with the ROK's military dictatorship, leaving the masses of the South saddled with the latter? And further, why has the DPRK not lifted a finger to oppose the Southern dictatorship or aid the mass struggle in the present upsurge?

The strike movement in South Korea has already won more gains for the workers in a few months than the bourgeois opposition has achieved in twenty years. But the workers could lose everything if they do not build a revolutionary leadership that takes the struggle forward. While the workers battle the



Young demonstrators in Seoul battle police attacks. Only workers' socialist revolution can win genuine democratic rights.

violent repression that might cause Olympic teams to boycott the games. Any bourgeois-democratic interlude in South Korea is likely to be very short and thin. The only way the South Korean bourgeoisie and the U.S. and Japanese imperialists can rule is through military Bonapartism. This means that the building of a communist party based on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution is urgent. Only a bold policy of carrying out the democratic revolution through the seizure of power by the working class and the establishment of a workers' state can win over the students and soldiers and break the stranglehold of the imperialists and their military flunkies.

In their struggle, many workers and students have developed illusions in the reactionary North Korean regime of Kim Il Sung. They see that there are 40,000 U.S. troops in the South and no foreign troops in the

military dictatorship, the DRP prepares to betray the masses. The DRP has negotiated a draft of a new constitution with the ruling party that maintains a strong repressive bourgeois apparatus. Nobody elected these representatives of the bourgeoisie to draw up this rotten draft constitution.

The South Korean working class must take the lead in demanding elections for a Constituent Assembly, in which the democratically chosen delegates would themselves iron out a new constitution. The chasm between the demands of the workers, farmers, students and soldiers, and the cosmetic democracy of the profit-grubbing bourgeois parties would thereby be exposed.

In raising the democratic demand for a Constituent Assembly, revolutionaries counterpose the mobilization and organization of the struggle of the mass-

es, led by the working class, to the treacherous dealings of the bourgeois opposition. In the course of the democratic struggle revolutionaries seek to convince the masses that only the rule of the proletariat can carry through the struggle against imperialism and Korean capitalist exploitation.

In addition, extending the call for the Constituent Assembly to include North Korea addresses the question of national reunification. If the DPRK really wants a democratic reunification in the interests of the masses, it cannot object to this demand. But, of course, its rulers will not support such a demand, fearing the struggle of the workers as much as the rulers in the south.

The Constituent Assembly demand poses the need for the working class to directly challenge the leadership of the bourgeois opposition in the political struggle. Despite its tremendous militancy, the strike wave has been largely confined to a trade union basis. While demands for higher wages and the recognition of unions are essential in mobilizing the workers, the struggle cannot remain on an "economic" level, as evidenced by the crushing of Solidarity in Poland. Lech Walesa's reformist strategy -- of confining the working class explosion in Poland in a trade union straitjacket and not challenging the political rule of the Stalinists -- paved the way for the military counteroffensive. An independent working class movement, no matter how capitulationist and craven its leadership, will be tolerated by the state in South Korea no more than in Poland.

The working class must adopt a firm and irreconcilable attitude towards the regime and the sellout bourgeois opposition. No deals with the military dictatorship! The frightened bourgeoisie fears that the workers' explosion will sweep them aside. Should the bourgeois opposition fail to keep the revolutionary upsurge under control, they will prove themselves useless to the military and imperialism. In the face of the dictatorship's threatened repression against the striking workers, the treacherous bourgeois opposition has begun to attack the workers' movement for endangering the democratic process. Kim Dae Jung warned the workers not to go too far and to "refrain from using violence or any other radical means."

For the workers to cease their struggle and wait for the bourgeois opposition to carry out its revolution from above would be suicide. Concessions have only come about as a result of mass action. The government is carrying out a cunning and very dangerous attempt to disarm the working class (with the aid of the DRP) before counterattacking in force. As long as this government is in power and the military intact, the danger of a massacre is imminent. By faltering and hanging back, the working class will alienate other oppressed sectors of Korean society who will not benefit from sham democratic reforms. They will

look for audacious and resolute leadership to carry out genuine revolutionary changes. If the workers do not show the way forward to a new, socialist order, the military will show the way back to capitalist order so harsh as to make the current dictatorship look mild.

Rather than curtail their struggles, the working class must extend the strike wave into a powerful general strike to bring down the dictatorship. A



Kwangju rebels seized army vehicles in 1980. Armed workers' militia is vital to defend masses from inevitable bourgeois attacks.

general strike around the call for a Constituent Assembly would rally the whole population behind the working class. In the course of such a struggle the working class would need to build strike committees to arm the workers and unite all workers and oppressed people against the dictatorship. These strike committees would represent the embryo of workers' councils or soviets, elected from every workplace and from working-class and poor neighborhoods, organs of the future workers' state.

In many ways, the road forward is shown by the brief experience of the Kwangju Commune. This time, however, all Korea, not just one isolated city, is rising up. And the working class is moving massively forward in its own name. The Kwangju Citizens Committee for Restoration and Planning, despite its limitations, showed that the oppressed masses can rise up, arm themselves, defeat the armed forces, and govern themselves without the U.S. puppet troops to order them around. An All-Korean Workers' Council, led by a revolutionary Trotskyist party armed with the strategy of permanent revolution, would build on the Kwangju experience to smash the dictatorship and drive out the U.S. troops. It would take over industry and political power for the benefit of all toiling Koreans. ■

Gulf

continued from page 2

of defense of an oppressed society from an attack by an oppressor nation, regardless of the reactionary character of the Iranian regime under Khomeini.

Reagan's dangerous course in the Persian Gulf is not the irrational act of a madman, as many on the left would like to believe. While the bourgeoisie has lost confidence in Reagan as a result of Iran-contra-gate, he nevertheless is getting broad support for his policy of military aggression in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, his anti-Iranian policy is in part a response to goading by the Democrats, who made political hay out of the Administration's selling arms to Khomeini. It is likely that the 1988 Democratic presidential candidate will attack the Republicans for being "soft on Iran."

In opposing U.S. imperialist aggression in the Persian Gulf, revolutionaries have no use for pacifist and reformist claptrap that capitulates to the bourgeoisie under the guise of seeking a "democratic" foreign policy. Faced with the criminal slaughter of the masses in the endless Iran-Iraq war, all sorts of opportunists are ready to implore the imperialists to intervene in the interests of "peace." One example is the Guardian newspaper, which more and more becomes the organ for the leftist traitors who have deserted to the Democratic Party. An editorial in the September 9 issue shows the depths to which these opportun-

ists have sunk:

"We have no quarrel with calls for an arms embargo aimed at bringing about a ceasefire — provided it is applied equally to both sides. Iran's refusal to end the war unless Saddam Hussein's regime steps down is unsupportable. On the other hand, a fair settlement should somehow reflect Iraq's responsibility for starting the war.

"U.S. forces have no business joining Iraq's war against Iran. Instead, Washington should be part of efforts to bring about a just end to this senseless slaughter."

If Reagan is supposed to be a dangerous madman, what can we say of those who beg Washington to intervene on behalf of peace? Imperialism has armed both sides in the conflict. U.S. imperialism and its ally Israel have done everything possible to prolong the war. One must ask, what is a "fair settlement" in this war of two reactionary regimes responsible for the senseless killing of tens of thousands of workers and oppressed people? Rather than serve as advisors to the reactionaries on how to resolve their conflicts at the expense of the masses, revolutionaries call on the working class and all the oppressed to put forward their own solution — proletarian socialist revolution to overthrow both Khomeini and Saddam Hussein in the course of the struggle to smash imperialism in the entire Persian Gulf.

**Drive Imperialism Out of the Persian Gulf!
Proletarian Revolution to End the Iran-Iraq War!**

Peace

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lasting concessions to capital that would undermine the strength of the masses in Nicaragua and throughout the region.

The Arias plan reflects no fundamental change of heart on the part of the U.S.'s Central American allies, as some on the left are saying. It is the Democratic Party's alternative to Reagan's contras. According to the Guardian (August 28), "aides from prominent Democrats in the U.S. Congress" were actively lobbying Central American rulers for the Arias plan, letting them know that "Congressional support for the Reagan policy is fading." And even though House Speaker Wright initially backed Reagan's plan, he switched to the Arias alternative as soon as it was adopted.

Indeed, the Democrats think they have found a solution that will halt "the Sandinista threat" by non-military means. They hope to apply economic and diplomatic pressure to reincorporate Nicaragua into the American empire peacefully (and they can still build their anti-communist credentials by coming up with a formula for "humanitarian" aid to the contras). The combination shows that the real threat to peace in Central America is not the Sandinistas but imperialism, still holding its contra card.

The Arias plan requires the Sandinista government to lift its wartime state of emergency and offer full

rights to the "democratic opposition" — counterrevolutionary politicians, landowners and capitalists — with no guarantee that aid to the contras will be ended. Only the Central American governments are enjoined to stop helping rebels against each other — but this is nullified by the refusal of the Honduran regime, a U.S. puppet if there ever was one, to acknowledge the undeniable fact that the contras operate from its territory.

As well, in a few months the five Central American presidents are to evaluate the progress toward peace. Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua aside, they are all U.S. friends and mostly right-wing puppets. As the smugly pro-contra British magazine The Economist put it, "If one or more of them decides that Nicaragua is not abiding by its promises — and in any event until there is an agreed plan for disarming the contras and giving them amnesty — the contras should remain in a position to resume their operations." In sum, Nicaragua is still under the gun, and the Arias plan is only a toned-down version of Reagan's imperial assertion of the right to determine Nicaragua's fate.

Further proof of who gains by the peace plan is the fact that the contras, who have no mass legitimacy whatever, have announced their acceptance. The Salvadorean FMLN would be required to lay down their arms, and Nicaragua would be required to stop its already limited aid. As in the past, the FMLN is greeting this defeat as a great victory. In fact it

can help secure the rear of the Salvadorean butcher army and its front man, President Duarte, as they prepare new massacres against workers and mass struggles. In Guatemala, the equally barbarous army has proclaimed its lack of interest in peace talks.

The new imperialist strategy can work only if the working masses are forced to accept it. In Nicaragua, this means that a revolutionary people will have to accept Somoza's mercenaries on their streets, while capitalists whose favorite investments were drug imports to Miami will now not only be tolerated but welcomed. This "peace" gives the contras gains that everyone knows they could not win through war.

Support the Peace Plan?

It is of course a fundamental task of revolutionaries in the U.S. to stand up against the brutal war sponsored by "our" government against the Nicaraguan revolution. But it is also our duty to tell the truth about the class nature of the Sandinista regime and about the peace treaty it now stakes its hopes on.

The Sandinista state is neither the "totalitarian dungeon" portrayed by Reagan nor the bastion of anti-imperialism claimed by its enthusiasts. It remains a relatively open society because of the working-class revolution that overthrew the Somoza dynasty in 1979. But the Sandinistas, who won mass support because of their years-long guerrilla struggle, are petty-bourgeois radicals who rule in Bonpartist fashion, balancing between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the bourgeoisie and imperialism on the other.

The Sandinistas cannot allow peasants to expropriate landlords or workers to seize factories: that could mean an all-out socialist explosion and inspire revolts against exploitation throughout the region. The Sandinistas' radicalism is nationalist, not proletarian; they desperately seek to maintain capitalism and find a mode of accommodation with the United States. Their emergency laws have always restricted workers' struggles more than they hurt the bosses. There is a grave danger that to further placate the bourgeoisie they will turn more openly against the left as a step to discipline and disarm the workers.

Given the petty-bourgeois character of the U.S. left, it is no wonder that the movement they are pushing to stop renewed aid for the contras is based as well on support for the Arias plan. To stiffen Democratic opposition to the contras, leftists are already proclaiming the the plan's virtues and circulating petitions in its support -- despite its interference with Nicaraguan self-determination and its abandonment of the Salvadorean rebellion.

The working-class attitude must be different. The only way forward for the Central American revolution is to build genuine communist, i.e. Trotskyist, parties to win the masses for socialist revolution and internationalism. As for the peace plan, even if Nicaragua -- oppressed by imperialism, betrayed by impossible attempts to placate the capitalists, and therefore facing a collapsing economy -- is compelled to

accept a forced "peace," that is no reason for socialists inside the imperial power to do the same. When the Bolsheviks in 1918 had to accept a treaty imposed by German imperialism, they also bitterly criticized the German Social-Democrats for supporting it. But the Sandinistas are no Bolsheviks, and their supporters in the U.S. have far more in common with the capitalist Democrats than the working class.

In this social-democratic spirit, the Guardian endorsed the Arias plan's "steps to national reconciliation and peace." It also reports the views of various middle-class anti-intervention leaders, some of whom are "elated" over the Arias plan while others evade comment by labeling it a "complicated issue." In These Times (September 2) hailed the plan in an editorial as "a historic act of independence" on the part of Central America, adding gratuitously that "As for democracy, Nicaragua will be held to the same standards as other nations in the region." What an inspiring prospect!

Further left, the Marxist-Leninist Party (MLP) is an important voice in the U.S. on Nicaragua because of its affiliation with the small but militant Partido Marxista-Leninista de Nicaragua (MLPN). The MLP urges "no illusions" in the Arias plan (Workers Advocate, September) and reports that "the regional agreement ... has aroused opposition in Nicaragua from the class-conscious workers and perhaps even among the rank-and-file Sandinistas themselves." Further, the MLPN "has given the call that no agreement must be regarded as ratified until the Nicaraguan workers and peasants have their say."

Such a call, however, does not say explicitly that the Arias plan should be rejected. Nor does it point out that the Bonpartist Sandinistas are not in the habit of consulting the masses' in whose name they rule. As for the MLPN, it may have reason to hold back: it has already faced Sandinista repression for opposing government policies. But we suspect the real reason is its centrist politics, and in any case Sandinista pressure is no excuse for its U.S. allies. As well, the MLP and MLPN say little about the need for socialist revolution in Nicaragua -- par for the course for outfits that have broken incompletely with Stalinism. "Solidarity with the Nicaraguan workers and peasants" and "Long live the revolutionary struggle" are fine cheerleading chants, but they are not slogans that clearly point the way forward.

The Arias plan will win support both in Central America and the U.S. because of people's desperate hopes that it can end the rampant bloodshed and keep U.S. troops out. That is all the more reason why Marxists must unambiguously tell the truth about this hoax so that working people are not once again betrayed by nationalist and pacifist illusions.

**Stop the U.S. War Against Nicaragua!
Arms to the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean Workers!
Military Support to Sandinista and FMLN Fighters!
Reject the Arias-Democratic Party 'Peace' Fraud!**

South African Miners: What Next?

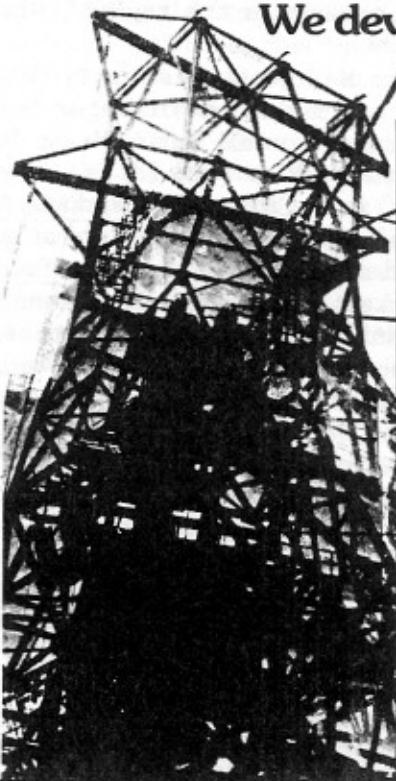
For three weeks in August the South African National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) fought a bitter strike that pitted 350,000 black workers against powerful mining interests and the apartheid state. At the center of South African industry, the gold and coal mines are a source of tremendous wealth. It is estimated that the South African gold mines control one half of the world's recoverable resources.

It should have come as no surprise, then, that despite the liberal policies of the leading mineowner, the giant Anglo-American Corporation, that repression against the workers was fast and deadly.

scope of the strike, Ramaphosa left the miners to struggle with one hand tied behind their backs.

In stark contrast to the capitalists' newfound admiration of Ramaphosa is the brutal treatment of Moses Mayekiso, the General Secretary of the Metalworkers union NUMSA. Mayekiso has fought to mobilize the power of the unions to defend the townships and resist Botha's repression. He was jailed and beaten, and he now faces trial and execution on treason charges, along with four others. Whereas Mayekiso has taken a step forward in seeing the need to consciously mobilize the unions for political leadership, Rama-

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Striking gold miner shows wounds from rubber bullets—the best South African bosses have to offer workers.

Union leaders were arrested and strikers killed and maimed as the mineowners relied on brutal government repression to protect private property. During any crisis involving millions of dollars (lost revenues were estimated at more than \$100 million), petty differences over how to treat the workers are resolved in a united front of all the capitalists.

Led by Cyril Ramaphosa, the NUM officials sought to portray the strike as simply an economic dispute. In a country where white miners earn nearly six times the salary of black miners and 700 black miners die every year from accidents, basic trade union demands for wages, benefits and better working class are crucial. However, the critical importance of the industry to the apartheid state and the immense power of the black miners meant that the strike could not help but be political. By his efforts to restrict the

phosa's narrow unionist approach means a retreat which can only lead to disaster for the workers.

Why did Ramaphosa call a strike which saw scores of miners killed and hundreds of militants jailed and injured, only to settle for the exact offer the company had proposed (15 to 23 percent wage increases, as opposed to the union's demand of 27 percent)? One reason was the pressure coming from militants within the union. According to *The Economist*, Anglo-American and other mineowners tried to cut a deal with the union leadership before the walkout.

"...When the union launched its first national strike, last month, the mine owners reached an honorable compromise with the clever lawyer at its head, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa. Mr. Ramaphosa's militant stewards threw it out. Anglo-American, which had lost much more production than its practically non-unionized rivals, dropped its kindly mask. It broke the strike by sacking strikers en masse (though they are now being rehired) and recruiting replacements from the bottomless reserve

of the unemployed."

Forced to call a strike he had no intention of winning, Ramaphosa let the workers blow off steam while exposing the best militants to repression. Militants face a permanent loss of their jobs as the mineowners "rehire" the 45,000 sacked miners. Those familiar with the way trade union bureaucrats operate will recognize this scenario.

In addition to undermining the militants, Ramaphosa aimed to reassure the ruling class that the NUM could discipline the workers and keep strikes from becoming political. Ramaphosa drew praise from the mineowners who recognized his "accomplishment." The liberal line on the trade unions was expressed by Anglo-American's former head, Harry Oppenheimer.

"We've taken the line that we want to see a strong trade-union movement. We know that such a movement may well take a Marxist line, but we still think, rightly or wrongly, that in the long run we will be able to work together. We weren't silly enough to think that this would make our lives easier. As long as black people are refused a share in political power, obviously they're going to use that industrial power to further political ends. And, of course, this is what happened." (*Newsweek*, September 14.)

Anglo-American represents the wing of the South African capital that hopes the unions can be used as a roadblock to proletarian socialist revolution. In

'Democracy'

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and compelled to sponsor limited reforms and grants to sections of the masses. The basis for reforms was the continued prosperity of the post-war economic boom which rested on the consolidation of international capitalism under U.S. hegemony. This was made possible by the crushing of working class movements in Germany, Spain and elsewhere in the 1930s, the triumph and spread of counterrevolutionary Stalinism in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the co-optation of proletarian upsurges after the war. Notable was the chaining of the powerful trade unions in the U.S. to the cold war politics of the Democratic Party.

By the end of the 1950s, the ruling class was under mass pressure for reforms. Social struggles were breaking out, above all the black movement featuring sit-ins and mass protests against segregation and other forms of oppression. Labor's ranks were contained but restive. "Alienation" of various strata was an acknowledged fact of life. The liberalism of the Kennedy years was aimed to check these trends from deepening into an anti-capitalist direction.

The conduit for these reforms would be the top echelons of the middle-class intelligentsia. This variegated social grouping expanded greatly in the post-war years, both in its base in the corporate and governmental apparatuses and in its "youth section,"

Ramaphosa they have found a workers' leader willing to play by the capitalists' rules.

Despite Ramaphosa's leadership, the strike showed signs of arousing the struggle against apartheid. Political awareness among the poor made it difficult to recruit scabs. Demonstrations and pitched battles with security police and the state drew support from all levels of black society.

What would have happened with a class-conscious leadership, one that sought to mobilize the power of the working class rather than hiding it? In order to win the strike it was necessary to call on black and other workers to join the struggle to turn the miners' strike into a powerful general strike. Instead, the heroic efforts of the miners were wasted.

The miners strike demonstrates that for the black proletariat to lead the struggle against apartheid capitalism to victory, it must overcome the obstacle of its current leadership. In the construction of a revolutionary communist party, a critical task will be to oust the capitulationist leaderships in the unions. With a revolutionary party leadership the powerful black working class will break the chains of apartheid through a proletarian socialist revolution that will open the road to the creation of the United Socialist States of Africa.

**Stop the Attacks Against the Black Miners!
General Strike to Stop Botha's Repression!
Smash Apartheid Through Proletarian Revolution!**

the rapidly proliferating colleges. Social and technical "experts" from these strata helped to develop a series of orderly, pragmatic and limited reforms to contain the boiling struggles. Kennedy himself outlined the platform of the liberal intelligentsia.

"The fact of the matter is that most of the problems, or at least many of them, that we now face are technical problems, are administrative problems. They are very sophisticated judgments which do not lend themselves to the great sort of 'passionate movements' which have stirred this country so often in the past..." (Richard Parker, *The Myth of the Middle Class*, p. 39)

A brooding but politically quiescent working class plus a brewing black struggle and an energized intelligentsia added up to a promising change of affairs from the '50s, but hardly an ideal culture for proletarian politics to be spread among students, even political students.

It is no accident that the early SDS activists were sociologically rooted in both the intelligentsia and the old left, but the extent of these roots is overwhelming. Almost all the early leaders — Al Haber, Sharon Jeffrey, Bob Ross, Dick Flacks — had parents with histories of left-wing activism or careers in the liberal bureaucracy. The major exception was Tom Hayden, a suburban kid who came to politics largely on the inspiration of the emerging civil rights movement. SDS itself was the new name for a decades old youth talk shop for social democrats and

liberals. Its parent group, the League for Industrial Democracy (LID), was a solidly social-democratic outfit with all the vices of cold war reformism.

But SDS itself was not a disciplined social-democratic grouping. Organizational looseness and intellectual excitement were its attractions. Despite pressure from the parent group and the presence within it of disciplined, hardened social democrats (mainly from the Young Peoples Socialist League), SDS began to diverge from the spirit and letter of the old Social Democracy. Off and on, battles, ruptures and compromises with the LID leadership would take place, leading up to the formal break in 1964.

This New Left began by rejecting the most conservative aspects of social democracy; its forthright support of American imperialism and chauvinist hostility to the Soviet Union, and hence its refusal to work alongside equally reformist militants of the U.S. Communist Party. This at times led SDS to excuse the worst aspects of Stalinism, but overall it was a definite step left from the LID leaders' passionate embrace of American imperialist aims. As well, the New Leftists proved more receptive to the activities of the civil rights movement and supportive of third-world struggles.

The young SDSers also objected to the LID elders' version of Marxism. In fact, social democracy's idea of the centrality of the working class really reflected their orientation not to the proletariat but to the conservative labor bureaucracy and its pro-capitalist interests. But in reaction to the LID's conservatism, SDS threw out the baby with the bathwater: Marxism had had its day, the working class was not the major agent for social change, and the class struggle was not the fulcrum of social conflict. Instead SDS placed the intelligentsia as the major component in a struggle for "democracy."

The SDS leaders were intellectually inspired by the radical sociologist C. Wright Mills. The best thing about Mills was his strident criticism of capitalism during the period of extreme conservatism of the late '40s and '50s. But to Mills the problem was how, in modern mass society, power becomes concentrated by "elites" against a passive public. His advocacy of democracy offered no concrete alternative to elitism. His ideal model of democracy was the agrarian society of pre-industrial America and its base in the yeoman farmer. A myopic, petty-bourgeois fancy, this had no relevance to the problems of the present. Mills had identified with labor in the 1940s and had called for workers' control of industry as a manifestation of democracy. But by the 1960s he turned away from the working class and towards the students as the hope for democracy.

Mill's view of the centrality of intellectuals meshed neatly with the students' vantage point as an elite even when they "identified" with the masses, they did so from the perspective of benevolent leadership. Hayden described this to Miller in terms that brought out the position's implicit arrogance:

"Mills was the first to see what was happening ... He saw that students, who hadn't played that much of a role in American history, were doing things. And that this opened a whole new period of history in which the left had to go from a belief in labor as the agency of change to students as an agency of change. Well, this just filled us with enormous confidence. It helped us make sense of what we were doing, and actually it made us feel as if we'd been anointed. (p. 87.)

The SDSers liked to counterpose their conception to the notion of bourgeois reforms "from the top," advocating a "grass roots" organizing of the masses for political change. For a period, SDS life was dominated by the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), which engaged in ghetto and welfare organizing in various cities. But the masses were thought of as an organizational tool for the intellectuals which was to serve as a pressure on the bourgeois liberals to carry out their program.

In effect, SDS's program was a minor-league version — albeit more enthusiastic, more leftist and more mass-oriented — of the Kennedy agenda. Raised from middle-class backgrounds, politicized in an environment favorable to middle-class notions, the SDSers solidified and codified their class nature through their adherence of New Left politics. This remained fundamentally true even with the left turn in the latter part of the decade.

It would be tempting to consider such an outcome inevitable. But SDS was not simply a collection of smartass snobs. Many were activists, people who were willing to fight "the system" and change the world for the better. Many could have been won to a revolutionary pole had one existed. The tragic reality was that some of the best elements among the students correctly saw the "old left" as conservative and status-quo oriented, identified that with Marxism and opted for a seemingly more radical petty-bourgeois solution.

New Left 'Democracy'

The SDS catchword was "participatory democracy," an attractive label for the type of politics it pushed. Miller gives a lot of attention to it and to SDS's attempt to put it into practice. If nothing else, he shows that any yearning for the glory days of participatory democracy is a misplaced nostalgia.

The very concept was ambiguous and abstract. It was identified with certain specific things — decentralized decision-making, the lack of hierarchy, consensus politics — but it still meant a thousand different things. There were practical problems with its implementation, like the endless, directionless, ERAP meetings, or the slow polling process of the membership that would often accompany tactical decisions. Infatuation with this democracy reached a high point at the 1965 convention, where the term was virtually equated with lack of structure and leadership. Workshops debated whether to have chairpersons. Members

were picked at random to supervise plenary sessions. The National Office was almost abolished, etc.

But this allegedly super-democratic set-up obscured the fact that power relations were a fact of life. Decisions were in fact made by bureaucratic fiat. Those with experience, connections and status were able to throw their weight around. In fact the ability to champion "anti-elitism" was a damn good way of assuming authority within the organization.



Anti-war demonstration in San Francisco, 1971, one of many that rocked the U.S. Despite its size, the radical reform movement couldn't stop imperialism.

Hayden for one had this down to a science. For example, once in a debate he refused to sit on stage, preferring to sit among the masses. (His opponent remarked, "You're such a grass root, Tom, that I don't know whether to debate you or water you.")

By the late '60s much of the emphasis on participatory democracy had given way to a harder left orientation. In part this was due to the entry of the left-Stalinist Progressive Labor party (PL). But more fundamentally it was due to the Vietnam War and the growth of opposition to it, as well as the massive ghetto rebellions and the 1968 French general strike. To Miller, this was a truly distasteful period. The evolution of former nice liberals into flagburners and spouters of revolutionary rhetoric seemed a cor-

ruption and degeneration of their ideals. As for the "Marxist-Leninist" groups which sprouted up in SDS, he apparently considers them as devoid of ideals, existing only to take advantage of a bad situation.

This was in fact a time of excitement and revolutionary potential (although it should not be overstated or idealized). For the seeds of cynicism and demoralization of the '70s and 80s had already been sown. The rapid turn to "revolution" by virtually all sections of SDS at the end of the 1960s was in large measure not an act of political confidence or an underlying pull toward working class politics; rather, it reflected desperation, a need to find a quick solution to the failure of the middle-class-led movements to challenge ruling-class power.

While SDS contained many young subjective revolutionists, it was also home to some of the worst petty-bourgeois prejudices and methods of struggle: from open hostility to workers by those who became the Weatherman faction to the stultifying workerism of PL's Worker Student Alliance faction, which said being proletarian meant getting your hair cut, drinking beer and bowling. SDS split in 1969, spinning off a variety of "Marxist" sects plus the Weathermen, who distinguished themselves with a few impotent clashes with the cops and minor-league versions of terrorism before disappearing underground. Dominated by PL, what remained was a virtual shell that eventually shriveled and died.

Limits of Petty-Bourgeois Wrath

It is illuminating to follow Hayden's career, since it so clearly reflects the nature and limitations of petty-bourgeois radicalism. Hayden's early support for and participation in the civil rights movement (where he faced considerable personal danger) and his later stay as an organizer in the Newark slums show his motivation for a free, more humane world. Yet even in this early period Hayden exhibited great capacities for egoism, demagoguery, and manipulation which would grow with his rise in stature.

He moved further to the left and became one of the best known radicals in the '60s. But he never broke from the liberal program, although he increasingly urged militant means to achieve it: as he once said, "it will take extremism to create gradualism." Arrested as a conspirator in the Chicago police riot at the Democratic Convention in 1968, Hayden was also an admirer and supporter of Robert Kennedy, maintaining an extensive list of contacts with bourgeois politicians. His trips to Vietnam and Czechoslovakia, his liaison role with politicians during the Newark ghetto riots and other actions made him not simply a movement representative but a bourgeois media star.

During the Chicago Seven conspiracy trial and afterwards, Hayden was most alienated from bourgeois society. Having left SDS, he joined a commune in Berkeley and began ranting about "counter-institutions," fights with the cops, and "cultural experiments." He didn't actually do much except for flashy

bits like organizing target practice for hippies. This was a very "radical" but impotent Hayden, eschewing mass mobilizations in favor of elite fantasies of revolution. The bubble burst: in 1971, he was chastized by his commune for male chauvinism, power-mongering and other offenses. Humiliated, he left, changed his name, and put aside politics in order to trace his Irish ancestry. Later, he returned to political life as a "mature" and reformed Democratic Party politician.

In 1983 He was elected to the California Assembly as a Democrat. Always good with words, Hayden's current views are illuminating, but only if we do what should be done in listening to any bourgeois politician: read between the lines. Here for example is Hayden on liberalism, as reported by Miller:

"... Hayden stresses the need to shore up 'a very feeble center' within the Democratic Party -- which may be one reason the political views he expresses often seem so ambiguous. 'Is it co-optation to work with the corporate liberals?' he



Petty-bourgeois Weathermen tried to storm capitalism but were blown away.

asked rhetorically shortly after being reelected to his State Assembly seat in 1984. 'Or do you have virtually to define and defend a centrist position that would allow a more progressive future to evolve'".

Translation: Hayden is playing the time-honored bourgeois political game of orienting to the center. Part of the "ambiguity" in his position lies in trying to determine what the "center" thinks. Even the mild left-liberal program of yesteryear gets jettisoned in practice in favor of maneuvers.

Likewise Hayden's "regrets":

"... In a widely publicized speech delivered at Hofstra University in 1986, ... Hayden did express a number of 'regrets' -- that he was not

more critical 'of the cynical motives of the Soviet Union'; that he was 'infected with a hostility' that alienated him from his own country; that 'I compounded the pain of many Americans who lost sons and loved ones in Vietnam.'"

Translation: Hayden once was an apologist for Stalinism as he moved left from social democracy. Now it's the reverse -- a "realistic" appraisal of Stalinism on the way to embracing national chauvinism.

Hayden on "ideology": "Ideology is an intellectual weapon you create to get your own way."

Translation: He can speak for himself. It's a projection of the cynicism and manipulation he employed as a New Leftist. Not that he's any less cynical now--it's just that "ideology" (a more leftist activism) no longer serves his career.

Limits of Democracy

For Miller, the failure of the New Left was not the result of its class program but the failure of the democratic vision. Much of this failure he blames on the lack of theory about democracy.

"Because the vision was never codified and clarified and passed on as a formal doctrine of democracy, no shared approach to grappling with objections and difficulties was handed down. The final goal was left obscure. There was no emerging theoretical tradition to orient thinking and keep young activists from wandering up the same blind alleys over and over again, no clearly defined principles to forestall fundamental disagreements about what democracy ideally meant."

But the concept of democracy was not vague because of any lack of theoretical detail. The concept is necessarily abstract in bourgeois society because it

serves to mask antagonistic social relations, reflecting at best only limited and distorted truths. In fact, Miller doesn't take his own explanation very seriously, arguing that the real failure lies on a more inevitable, historical level:

"...The main drift in modern industrial life has been toward expanding scale and complexity, the centralization of power and the growth of hierarchical bureaucracies. Popular revolts against these overwhelming realities have been only sporadically successful, in part because the demand for individual autonomy and active participation in public life must sooner or later run up against the desire for stability, privacy and the material comforts promised by the modern

industrial nation-state. Like virtually every other American mass movement for democratic renewal since the Civil War -- socialist or populist, progressive or right-wing, plebian or middle-class--the New Left flourished in situations of relative moral simplicity and floundered when faced with the almost hopeless difficulties and immense strategic quandaries posed by the economic, social and political forces it wished to counteract. Its experiments in democracy perhaps most usefully demonstrated the incompatibility of rule-by-consensus with accountable, responsible government in a large organization -- or even in a small group of people with divergent interests and a limited patience for endless meetings".

Miller is right in one sense. There is no way that a revolt on a democratic basis is going to beat the resources and power of the capitalist state. But that is why Marxists insist on using the power of "modern industrial life" -- the workers organized by modern production -- to conquer and change society, and not to mount an end run around its development. That is why a workers' state necessarily entails at the most basic level workers' control as a collective (through soviets and other forms) over a centralized apparatus, as opposed to decentralized schemes of self-management. Even the task of organizing the socialist revolution demands a centralized, disciplined form of organization: democratic centralism, combining firm leadership with a rigorous party democracy.

Not surprisingly, Miller makes the opposite conclusion: in complex, modern society, any attempts by the masses to control their own destiny is inherently futile, and counter-productive.

All's Well that Ends Well

In his book Miller conducts a survey of the leading figures of the early glory days of SDS and where they are now. Like Hayden, many wound up in or around the Democratic Party. Miller presents this in the spirit of a human success story, a "Big Chill" sober-but-happy type ending, except here the New Leftovers maintain an interest in politics. For most of the world it's not so cheery. Racism, sexism, poverty, jingoism, exploitation -- all the ills of capitalism -- are still with us and if anything are worse. It is a tragedy that the New Left not only failed to find a genuine way to fight the capitalist monster, but gave

up even trying.

Miller sums up the careers of the early SDS leaders with the observation that "many veterans of the Movement have continued to apply the precepts of Port Huron [a defining New Left document named for the site of the 1962 SDS convention] in the light of their mature experience, evincing modesty in their immediate goals, pragmatism in their tactics and a hard-earned realism in their evaluation of the prospects for social change." But this is similar to the processes which produced the stodgy bureaucrats of the "old left." Many if not most of them were once militants, even "revolutionists," in the unions, thus even more directly involved in class struggles than the campus radicals. Many of these bureaucrats still consider themselves socialists. But they too were "pragmatic," "evincing modesty in their immediate goals," with "a hard-earned realism." In short, they capitulated to capitalism and sold out the workers.

Our criticism of the New Left is borne out not simply by the fact that it failed. Genuine revolutionary movements can fail and have failed. What is decisive is that given the politics of SDS and the New Left, it was doomed to fail. And whereas revolutionists draw lessons even in defeat, the "lessons" drawn by the New Left leaders were instrumental in forging them as a new stratum of bourgeois politicians and apparatchiks.

A New Student Movement?

Those who are waiting for the coming of a second SDS will have a long wait. The relative economic prosperity of the 1960s will not reappear. The international proletariat is once again asserting itself as a revolutionary factor. This is not to say that a new mass student movement is impossible, but any upsurge on the campuses must take on a more definite class basis if it is to get off the ground. As the situation in South Korea demonstrates, the volatile state of class antagonisms forces students to choose: with imperialism or with the revolutionary proletariat.

Students can play a real role in the revolutionary transformation of society. Scheduled to become the bureaucrats, scientists, technicians and myth-makers for capitalism, they can instead put their knowledge and skill to work for the working class. To do this they have to recognize that students as such lack the power to stop capitalism or even fundamentally to reform it. They must give up every trace of class arrogance and align themselves with the working class which is situated at the heart of production and profit-making and is capable of halting the system in its tracks.

What the working class needs is truth. Students can and do bring valuable knowledge to the working class when they join the communist struggle to build the revolutionary party. This is the struggle waged by the LRP, to build an international proletarian party based on revolutionary Trotskyism, a re-created Fourth International. ■

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

welcomes letters from its readers on articles in the magazine and all political subjects. Write to:

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PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

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'Democracy Is in the Streets'

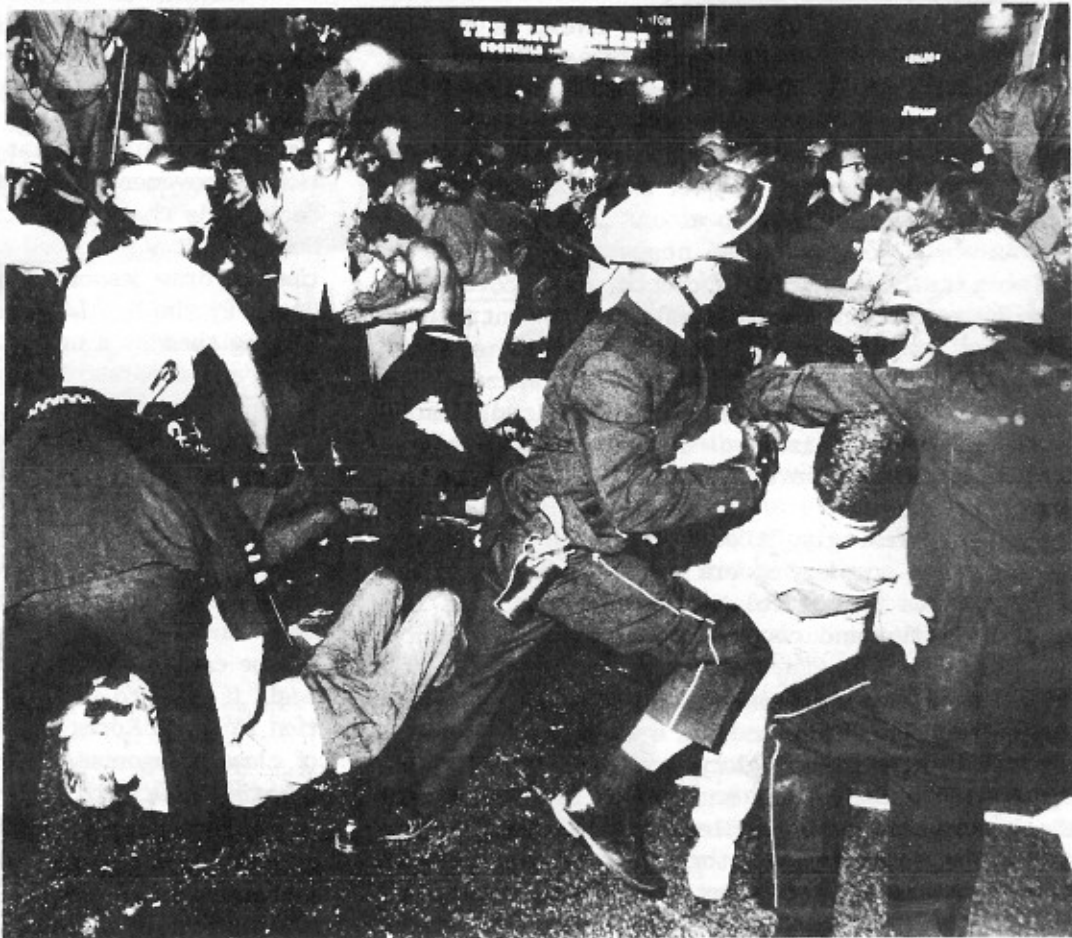
Recent years have seen a resurgence of political activity on college campuses, fueled largely by the protest movement against apartheid in South Africa. As students begin to raise the larger questions about the nature of capitalist society, many on the left envision a rebirth of the student struggles of the 1960s. True, the end of the deadening quiet on campus is a welcome sign. But for those dedicated to building a proletarian revolutionary movement, the task is to overcome the failed legacy of the 1960s, not to repeat it. With this in mind it is instructive to examine the recent book, *Democracy Is in the Streets* by James Miller, dealing with the development of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the major organization of the "New Left."

In the early 1960s, SDS was a small group of left-liberal students; by 1965 it was at the core of a growing movement against the Vietnam War; by the end of the decade it claimed a membership of tens of thousands, had become the leader of campus sit-ins and ROTC bashings, and was a general symbol of student militancy.

Miller's work has definite limitations. Focusing on the development of the individual leaders of the early SDS, Miller avoids giving any overall political context to development of the organization; his book reads more like a string of personal moral sagas than a political history. Worse still are the political conclusions he does draw. He sees the early liberal activism as sweet but naive, the radicalization of the late '60s as idealism corrupted and unchecked, and its abandonment for status-quo bourgeois politics as political maturity. This is not only a conservative view but also very unexciting and unoriginal. It is so predictable one expects it to be the basis of a script

for yet another baby-boomers-growing-up movie.

Nevertheless, *Democracy is in the Streets* is rich in detail on the internal workings of SDS, particularly in its early phase, and the roles and perspectives of its leading figures. The question, as in any social analysis, is how these insights will be used.



Infamous Chicago police riot, 1968. Cops brutalized New Leftists protesting outside Democrats' convention. Now many New Leftovers join cops inside Democratic Party.

Contrary to Miller, the problem with SDS is not that it went too far but that it didn't go far enough; it failed to break fundamentally with the middle-class politics it was born with.

Early SDS

While Miller does not find it appropriate to provide a social context for SDS, this is critical. The take-off of SDS coincided with the heyday of modern American liberalism during the Kennedy presidency. At that time the ruling class felt both able

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