

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER

Published monthly by independent revolutionary socialists

Editors: Harry Turner, Hugh Fredricks

P. O. Box 67, Peck Slip Station, New York, N. Y. 10038

Vol. 3, No. 1 Price 10¢ (\$1.00 per year) Labor donated January 1971

Contents: The Workers League and the Negro Question	p. 1
The Labor Party - Part II --Circumstances and Purposes	6
New York City Police Strike --Yesterday's "Pigs", Today's Workers? ...	9
✓ State and Revolution - Part III --Bonapartism and Property Relations	10

THE WORKERS LEAGUE AND THE NEGRO QUESTION

In his "Open Letter to the YSA", "Bulletin", Dec. 28, 1970, the Workers League's (WL) Tim Wohlforth made clear that the recent change in attitude toward militant Black and Puerto Rican organizations, such as the Black Panthers and Young Lords, was not merely a tactical adjustment in order to reap immediate organizational advantages, but represented a pronounced change in its perspective, was a return--but only partially--to Trotsky's position on the Negro question.

The "Open Letter" is prefaced by a quote from Trotsky's remarks to JR Johnson on April 11, 1939, in which he stresses that the SWP will degenerate unless it is able to "find the road" to the "basic exploited masses of whom the Negroes are the most exploited", and that the "conscious elements of the Negroes...are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class."

The "Open Letter" is concerned to make the youth understand, on the one hand, the nature of the period, the objective conditions which set the tasks before the working class and its revolutionary party, and, on the other, the revisionist nature of the YSA and SWP, its departure from Trotskyism, its orientation toward petty-bourgeois layers and bourgeois nationalism, instead of the working class, as its documents and resolutions make clear.

In this context, it points out that, "The key to the situation in the US lies in the conscious rela-

tion of the youth particularly the minority working class youth, to the working class as a whole organized in the trade unions", that "the Black youth are, as Trotsky said, 'the most dynamic section of the working class'", and that, "a sharp and deep revolutionary development among minority working class youth including blacks" has taken place.

To be sure, Wohlforth insists that the WL has held the position all along that, "the blacks are not a nation but, in large part, the most oppressed section of the working class suffering from economic exploitation and racial oppression". True, but the emphasis in this very formulation is very different from that in the "New Nationalism and the Negro Question", now entitled "Black Nationalism and Marxist Theory". Then, Wohlforth's basic concern was to "define...the limits we go in our demands related to the Negro question..." He justified this minimal approach as the essence of Lenin's position toward "actual

national minorities". Not an inkling exists there of Trotsky's conception that the Black workers, as "the most oppressed section of the working class" could arrive at socialist consciousness in advance of whites, and that, in so doing, could provide revolutionary leadership for the class as a whole. But it is just this concept that Tim Wohlforth and the WL has now adopted.

The "Open Letter" states that these Black workers, "can and will play an important role...in the construction of a vanguard leadership for the class as a whole". The Jan. 11, 1971 "Bulletin" reports that at the Fourth Conference of the WL, Wohlforth referred to the Black Panthers as, "a vanguard section of the class...".

We have sharply and often criticized the WL for, what we consider to be, its passive adaptation to the prevailing chauvinism among white workers. As we have often stated, we believe that a party of the Leninist type cannot be constructed in a country whose working class is divided on racial lines, without a correct understanding of the Marxist, position on the Negro question in particular and the national question in general.

We had also attacked the WL for ignoring the "revolutionary implications of the increasingly militant Negro struggle". (VN, July '69)

Earlier, Harry Turner had criticized the WL program more diplomatically but along the same lines in a letter of Jan. 10, 1969, to Gerry Healy, national secretary of the Socialist Labour League (SLL) and secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International (IC). This criticism, printed in the "Bulletin" series, "What is Spartacist", stated that;

"...the program does not sufficiently orientate toward the increasingly militant Black workers; ...the WL does not sufficiently recognize their revolutionary potential in the struggle, and for the building of a Leninist party; that the same Black workers, who are today being increasingly mis-

directed by Black nationalists toward reactionary and sterile positions, can be won to a united working class struggle, provided that it prominently poses the question of their special oppression; that the conscious factor, the Leninist party, has a vital role to play in this respect."

Turner, who, together with Hugh Fredricks had been invited to several meetings of the WL, also informed Robert Sherwood in a letter of Feb. 9, 1969, of his remarks made at the last meeting which they attended, that the WL's incorrect method was the source of its errors on the Negro question, that its:

"...mechanical and static conception that the international and national perspectives were "one perspective", led to the subordination of the Negro question; that not only would a revolution in Europe accelerate the revolution in the US, but that, as a result of uneven and combined development, the revolution in the US, which had less of a Stalinist and revisionist hurdle to overcome, might reverse this relationship, and would certainly interact with it; that in throwing Trotsky's conceptions on the Negro question away, the WL had done so without attempting to explain the methodological roots of his 'error', and that the discarding of Trotsky explained the WL's gross accommodation to white chauvinism in the TULP /Trade Unionists For a Labor Party/ campaign, in which it refused to include a demand for a fight against racial discrimination in the unions; that its present position, while much improved, was still primarily directed toward whites, e.g., the campaign against Black nationalism was not aimed at influencing Black workers, but rather white radicals, and that this still represented a passive adaptation to white chauvinism, in our opinion.

"...that we considered the Negro question to be central to the American question, and to the

building of a Leninist party; that the winning of Black workers today, represented a vital link to the white workers tomorrow, as well as worker leadership for the class as a whole, that this accomplishment was of inestimable importance for the victory of the international revolution..."

Not only does the WL now recognize the revolutionary potential of Black workers, but, according to the Jan. 11th "Bulletin", it has also discarded its "mechanical and static conception". Wohlforth is reported as saying that:

"The development of the revolution in the US may take place more unevenly than in Europe, but it will in no sense be less explosive, probably more, nor will it necessarily follow Europe. At the very moment of revolutionary situation in Europe, the American working class will be itself involved in great class battles."

As our readers know, we have criticized the WL's abstentionism, e.g., its militant inaction slogan, "We will have nothing to do with Black nationalism", which had confused the Black nationalist form in which the struggle against special oppression often took place, with its essence; which refused to recognize that the Black and other especially oppressed minorities will conduct a struggle through independent organizations--and even in self-defeating ways--to the extent that the white working class is not involved in the fight against their special oppression; that the task of an organization which purports to be Leninist and Trotskyist is to unite the racially divided workers by convincing the white workers that this fight is required in their own immediate and fundamental class interest.

The "Bulletin" of Jan. 11th now also recognizes that,

"...the working class youth [is] now coming on the political arena, many times partially through a nationalist kind of program, but

already reaching beyond nationalist and reformist limitations."

But the WL has yet to accept the position that the Black and Spanish-speaking minorities, "face a 'special' oppression" or that Black workers are "a super-exploited grouping or caste". (Black Nationalism and Marxist Theory)

Wohlforth acknowledges that "the Negroes share of poverty conditions is way out of proportion to its percentage of the work force...", that "super-exploitation...does exist...and...is at least partly justified through racism", and that,

"the existence of race divisions within the working class has helped keep wages down for white workers as well, particularly in the South."

Then how can and why does Wohlforth avoid the recognition that these conditions are manifestations of special oppression, of generations of a pariah-like status for the Black people? Why does he accept the fact and reject the name?

Ostensibly arguing against the Progressive Labor Party conception of the term, Wohlforth can only conceive of "'special' oppression in an economic sense that white workers do not face". His reasoning, essentially, is that the Black people are also differentiated into classes, that, "a million or more Negro workers are in unionized basic industry and thus are not super-exploited", and that, "in every category of low pay and poverty at least 2/3rds of the workers...are white".

"The importance of raising this point", Wohlforth informs us, "is to make clear that, 'the workers' movement cannot raise separate economic demands for Negro workers only". He also believes that it is harmful for Black workers, "to organize separately from white workers in industry or to push for these special demands".

We believe that having said A and B, the WL will also have to recite the rest of the alphabet, that it will have to re-examine and discard

these positions as well, if it hopes to win more than an occasional and transitory Black or white worker to its banners.

It would seem, first of all, that Wohlforth has confused and, therefore, uses interchangeably two terms whose contents are not identical, special oppression and super-exploitation, as for example, "it does not follow... that the Negro as a whole represents a super-exploited grouping or caste..." The Black and Spanish-speaking people "as a whole", i.e., all classes, suffer a special oppression, e.g., racial slurs, discrimination in jobs, housing, education, etc., in one or another degree. But exploitation and super-exploitation are terms which express specific class relationships. The latter take place in the productive process, in the creation and realization of surplus-value from the labor of workers and for the profit of capitalists.

In addition, we believe Wohlforth's refusal to recognize the special oppression of Black and Spanish-speaking people to be an example of metaphysical thinking, in the sense in which Engels used it. In their polemics against Robertson and Seymour in the Spartacist League faction fight, Turner and Fredricks discussed the question of the super-exploitation of the Black and Spanish-speaking workers, as an economic manifestation of the special oppression of the Black and Spanish-speaking peoples, as follows:

"The super-exploitation of Black and Spanish-speaking workers is a part of the process of exploitation as such. A struggle against super-exploitation leads directly to the conclusion of Marx, in Value, Price and Profit, that,

'Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair days wages for a fair days work!', they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wages system!"' (Marx's emphasis)

"Cde. Seymour's criticisms of the conception of super-exploitation ... corresponds to his and the majority's petty-bourgeois orientation. Marxist levers are not

needed if one is not serious about performing work. The majority wishes to discard a particularly useful conception because its interests are not in working among Black workers, but rather with student radicals. For the majority's purpose, a liberal approach to the Negro struggle will suffice. What knowledgeable liberal will not grant:

'a) that Black workers are the most economically exploited and radical section of the American working class and b) that opposition to de facto and formal racial discrimination and emphasis on raising the wages of the poorest paid (in many areas, largely Black) workers'

is necessary?

"The task, however, is to find the transitional approaches which will move the workers toward a socialist solution." (The Internal Struggle Continues, p. 29-30, Spartacist League Split)

This orientation sought, not to "define... the limits we go", but to utilize the struggle against super-exploitation from which the especially oppressed minorities suffer -- in largest measure but by no means alone -- to raise the socialist consciousness of all workers.

It is, furthermore, a fallacy to assume, as Wohlforth does, that a generalization made by others about a group carries with it the assumption that all its members are identical. We, of course, are aware that every scientific category in nature and society has components which exhibit a range of characteristics. Marxists must, of course, know how to differentiate and to develop correct tactics toward, not just social categories in general, but toward those aspects, in particular, which have the greatest revolutionary implications.

We, therefore, understand that in addressing ourselves to the working class, we must focus our attention on its "most exploited sectors", and not on its more aristocratic layers. We are also aware that the reality of "oppressed nations" also includes

privileged elements, who not only are not "super-exploited", but who exploit and help the imperialists super-exploit the colonial and semi-colonial masses.

The truth, Lenin and Trotsky often stated, is concrete. Marxists must always determine in the concrete situation how and when to raise or support "economic demands" or any demands for that matter, so as to advance the unity of the working class for the socialist revolution. In countries in which racial, ethnic and national oppression exists, in which the bulk of the workers from these oppressed sectors are treated as pariahs, in wages, in level and type of work, as well as in every other aspect of their lives, this unity can only be achieved by a struggle against all forms of discrimination. And this does require the raising of "separate economic demands for Negro workers only"--not everywhere and always, of course, but where and to the extent that discrimination exists, and as Marxist revolutionists, not as petty-bourgeois nationalists.

We do not, needless to say, ignore the struggle against exploitation as such, nor do we ignore the white workers who are also super-exploited, some of whom may--and with the economic downturn, probably will--work in greater numbers alongside Black workers in sub-standard jobs. At the same time, why should we, the Marxists, who are presumably able to understand reality, not empirically but historically, who are able to understand that racism, "has helped keep wages down for the white workers", be reluctant to fight for this understanding, in demanding an end to the particularly low-wages and abysmal working conditions in jobs which tend to be the particular province of the minorities, such as laundry, hospital, restaurant, garment manufacturing, sanitation in the South, etc., etc.?

We understand and must fight to win white workers to the understanding that the struggle against the special oppression and super-exploitation of the Black and other minorities is in their own behalf, in the

immediate situation as well as in the final analysis. Concretely, in shops where Blacks are confined, in whole or in large part, to the poorest paying, hardest and most dangerous work, we must raise and support demands for an immediate end to all aspects of this discrimination. It is hardly an answer to inform these Black workers, as Wohlforth does in Black Nationalism and Marxist Theory, that the WL intends to fight racism. They will want to know the specific content of this generalization. However, they will not find them in this pamphlet.

To talk about a "fighting program of transitional demands" in this connection, as does the WL, as a substitute for a concrete program of struggle against "every and all forms of racism", including the "super-exploitation...justified through racism", simply becomes another way of telling Black workers that they must wait for socialism to end their racial discrimination. This approach still represents, in our opinion, a "passive adaptation to white chauvinism".

Nor can one demand that Black workers wait patiently for bi-racial caucuses to be formed which fight against racial discrimination, or to disband the Black caucuses which they have formed simply because such bi-racial caucuses have been formed. We believe that the correct approach to Black caucuses for white revolutionists who can function in bi-racial caucuses, and for Black revolutionists who can function in both, is to fight to unite both caucuses by having the bi-racial caucus become the foremost champion of the struggle against all forms of discrimination.

We, however, share with the WL the understanding that attempts to split the unions along racial lines, plays directly into the hands of the capitalists, and must be resolutely opposed.

As we have often stated, and following Trotsky's thought, to the extent that the Black worker sees the white fighting for an end to discrimination, as the white worker proves in deed that he is a class

brother, the Black worker will no longer find it necessary to create separate organizations. But this level of consciousness can only be created in both Black and white workers, by the revolutionary party which carries on an uncompromising struggle against all manifestations of white chauvinism. It is this struggle which conditions the ability of the Marxists to fight against its mirror image, Black nationalism.

It is on this basis that we have said that we would support the demands of the majority of Blacks for a separate state. By taking this position, we undercut Black nationalist propaganda, and convince those Black militants who are susceptible to it, that we, who are white revolutionists, and the white workers whom we lead, really are their class brothers, who have nothing in common with their oppressors, that, therefore, they have no

need to separate. The WL has yet to understand that it is this position which is the essence of the Leninist position on the national question, and not the supra-historical law which Wohlforth foists upon him in order to rule out the right to self-determination in bourgeois-democratic multi-national states.

We believe that the WL's change in political line requires it, as an ostensibly Leninist organization, to undertake a thorough examination of the roots of its errors--and not only on the Negro question.

Only then will it be able to achieve a Marxist consistency in its politics, and not the eclectic patchwork which it now exhibits. Only to the extent that it begins to take its own politics seriously, can its claims to understand Marxist "METHOD" and to represent the continuity of Marxism, be given any serious consideration.

THE LABOR PARTY - Part II

Circumstances and Purposes

In contrast to the Utopian, Proudhonist and Lassalleian socialist schools, the outstanding and creative revolutionary Marxists have consistently opposed the imposition of ideal schemas on the working class movement.

As dialectical materialists, they have, instead, attempted to understand its dynamics in relation to its historical development, so as to function effectively within it, to enable them to provide the all-sided theoretical, political and economic leadership, which the working class requires to fulfill its historic mission, to achieve a world-wide socialist revolution.

The Communist Manifesto incorporates this understanding in the following tactical formulations, which are valid today, almost a century and a quarter later, and which revolutionists have ignored only at the cost of sectarian isolation or reformism:

"The communists...do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and mold the proletarian movement...In the national struggles of the prole-

tarians of different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality...In the various stages of development, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole...The communists have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement...

"The communists fight for the immediate aims...but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement."

That same document described the general measures which the proletariat would use in asserting its "political supremacy"--after the

Paris Commune, they recognized that the working class could not use the bourgeois state machinery "for its own purposes"--as appearing:

"economically insufficient and untenable, but...in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production."

In a letter to Sorge in 1881, Marx comments on Henry George's single-tax panacea, and refers to the Communist Manifesto's measures as:

"transitional measures, which, as is likewise stated in the Manifesto, are and must be contradictory in themselves." (Marx's emphasis)

Inevitably, however, during and after Marx's time, ideologists have always appeared, who are either unable to understand the dialectical materialist method, or who abandon it under the pressure of the class struggle. Approaching phenomena in a one-sided and static manner, the metaphysically inclined elevate tactics into principle, in either an opportunist or sectarian direction.

Lenin was also required to discuss the question of a labor party for Russia, in his "Preface to the Russian Translation of Letters From JF Becker, J Dietzgen, F Engels, K Marx and Others to FA Sorge and Others written in 1907 and published as an appendix to Letters to Americans, Marx and Engels, International Publishers.

A tendency in Russian socialism had tried to use the analyses and criticisms of Engels of the American labor movement and American socialist practice in support of a Russian "'labor congress' or... 'broad labor party'".

As Lenin points out, the letters of Marx and Engels dealt "most frequently with the...British, American and German labor movements", which represented "different stages of capitalist development and different forms of domination by the bourgeois-

...". These letters constitute, said Lenin, "a sample of materialist dialectics", demonstrate the ability of the founders of scientific socialism to, "bring out...the different points and different sides of a question in accordance with the peculiarities of various political and economic conditions".

In the British and American type of labor movement, functioning in "firmly established democratic systems", the workers are completely tied to bourgeois politics, with the socialists in "sectarian isolation". In these circumstances, Marx and Engels laid a heavy "stress on the economic organizations of the workers" and called upon the socialists to rid themselves of sectarianism and to "join the labor movement". Here, they emphasized the importance of struggling for "an independent workers' party, even though with a bad program".

But in Germany, where, "'military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms'...prevails", where the workers had "long ago been drawn into politics" under Marxist leadership, Marx and Engels concentrated their fire on "parliamentary idiocy", fought against the "philistine compromising of the tasks and scope of the labor movement", i. e., against opportunism.

It was this fundamental understanding which also guided Trotsky in his examination of the question of an American "party of the working class"--and not only in his discussions in Mexico in 1938, but also in 1932, in his letter to the Communist League of America.

Trotsky was able to make outstanding contributions to Marxist theory and practice because he had so thoroughly understood its lessons. Always insistent on an examination of the changing content of static formulas, he refused in 1932, to repeat dogmatically, advice given to American socialists a half-century earlier. He, instead, recommended that his American co-thinkers examine this question in the light of concrete conditions. While he did "not exclude a labor party in the British sense", Trotsky did raise

the possibility that, instead of a step forward, it might become a "hindrance" to a mass revolutionary Marxist party.

It should be remembered that in 1932, the Stalinist Comintern's ruinous policies, which were preparing the debacle in Germany together with the Social-Democracy, the collapse without a struggle of the leading organizations of the working class before fascism, had not reached its culmination.

Quantity had still not been transformed into quality, and the Trotskyists still considered themselves to be temporarily expelled members of the Communist parties. They still hoped to win its cadres back to the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, and to uproot the Stalinist mis-leadership, as the theory of "socialism in one country" demonstrated its utter bankruptcy, and as new revolutionary opportunities developed.

Stalinism was still in its ultra-left period, and the Communist Party (CP) members and supporters, although saddled with hopelessly sectarian tactics, still possessed a revolutionary socialist outlook.

In the depths of the great depression, the American CP, even with its ultra-leftism, was able to not only retain the devoted support of its thousands of members, but to also influence many others. While its Trade Union Unity League was pursuing a disastrous dual union policy and withdrawing the bulk of the CP members from AFL unions with more than 3 million members, it could still claim that it had organized over 100,000 workers into its unions. The CP's National Unemployment Council could also claim that more than 150,000 unemployed had been won to its organization by its militancy and mass demonstrations in many large cities.

In that period, as Trotsky pointed out in 1938, given the possibility that the strength of American capitalism could enable it to withstand the world capitalist crisis for a period of time "before its own decline", and given the possibility, which, at that time could still not

be ruled out, of the emergence of a mass revolutionary American CP, it would have been,

"absolutely pedantic, abstract, artificial to proclaim the necessity for a labor party...and this abstract slogan would be a handicap to our own party."

However, the speed of American capitalism's decline, "came at American speed", and with it the rise of the CIO which organized millions of the unorganized workers in basic industries into industrial unions, forcing the AFL to organize millions of others into its unions.

This enormous growth in the trade union movement, of the basic organizations of the working class, also increased the possibility as well as the objective necessity for an independent political party of the working class. But the Socialist Workers Party, "was too small, with too little authority", and was developing at an entirely insufficient speed in view of the tremendous strides which the working class was taking on the economic front, to enable it to become, immediately and directly, the political vehicle for the American working class. It had become necessary for the American Marxists to support a transitional organization, a broad-based labor party, which would enable the working class to enter the political arena as an independent force, in which revolutionists would work, and from which they could recruit to the revolutionary Marxist party.

But what program should the Marxists advocate for the labor party? Would it not, inevitably, become a reformist party and a brake on the revolutionary development of the working class? How should revolutionists function in a labor party -- as revolutionists?

(to be continued)

Part V of the series, "Trotskyism Today", which discusses Robertson's expulsion from the 1966 IC London Conference, and its aftermath, will be published in our February issue.

NEW YORK CITY POLICE STRIKE

Yesterday's "Pigs", Today's Workers?

An important social manifestation of the developing world crisis of capitalism is the increased tendency of the police of its largest cities, the guardians of capitalist "law and order", to become involved in "job actions"--Montreal, Youngstown, New York, Milwaukee--to refuse "duty", to strike for higher wages and improved working conditions.

In NYC, the police, also known familiarly as "cops", "pigs", "fuzz", engaged in a 6-day "wildcat" strike, when the Court of Appeals refused to grant them a parity pay ratio with police sergeants of 3 to 3.5, which would have meant retroactive pay, as of December, of \$2700 per man. Instead, the case was sent to the State Supreme Court for trial.

Edward Kiernan, the acting president of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA), succeeded in having the "job action" called off by a 2 to 1 majority, by promising the PBA members that State Supreme Court Justice Irving H. Saypol, the prosecuting attorney in the Rosenberg frame-up, would try the case immediately, and would be certain to rule in their favor. He, moreover, guaranteed them immunity from NY State's Taylor Law, which prohibits strikes by City and State employees under penalties which include a year's probation, the loss of 2 days pay for each day of strike, fines and the loss of dues check-off privileges for unions involved. Angered at the vote, dissidents accused Kiernan of a sell-out, and, at one point, seemed ready to commit mayhem upon him.

In addition to the Taylor Law, whose penalties still hang over the heads of the police, the City held in reserve the threat of the use of National Guard troops.

The "militancy" of the police is attributable, not only to the inroads which inflation has been making on real wages, which has required them to "moonlight", to hold 2 jobs to "make ends meet", but as well, to anger at the "permissiveness" of the "authorities" toward Black and student militants and the especially oppressed Black and Puerto Rican minorities, which they hold responsible for the "disrespect" shown to

NY's "finest".

The increasing readiness of the police to strike for economic gains is thus only in part related to the sharp increase in strikes and in militancy by the American working class in defense of its eroding living standards.

Some muddle-headed socialists and even so-called "Trotskyists" are now demonstrating an ambivalence toward the police. They are willing to embrace them as new recruits to the labor movement, but find it difficult to accept the functions of these "workers", who, not only uphold capitalist property relations and break strikes, but who also brutalize and murder Black and white worker and student militants, function as a Gestapo in the ghettos, and are silent partners of drug peddlers, gamblers, numbers racketeers and pimps.

While the police are municipal employees, and are even organized into a "union", it should be clear to Marxists that police are not workers in the Marxist sense. Some of them may function as workers in their second jobs, but as police, they function as guardians of the capitalist state. If these hirelings of the bourgeoisie occasionally spit on their boss' bald spot, to use Trotsky's simile about the fascist bureaucracy, it is because of their kinship to its plebian left-wing.

Not only do the Marxists not accept the police as class brothers, but they pose the question of abolishing the police function in the demand for workers defense guards, as part of a program of transitional demands and in the process of creating a dual power against the bourgeois state, and all of its executive, legislative and judicial

apparatus, in the process of preparing the socialist revolution.

The revolutionary Marxists must, however, not be content with merely understanding phenomena, but must determine in every situation how the interests of the working class can best be defended and advanced.

Sanitation men and firemen are workers in the Marxist sense. Their labor power is bought by the City and used for functions necessary not only under the capitalist mode of production, but which will also continue--at least in its first stages--under socialism. The police, as municipal employees, are negotiating a contract with the City, at the same time as these other "uniformed services".

The use of the Taylor Law or the National Guard to break the police strike, should they go out again, or to punish them for the past strike, would not only be a promise of things to come for other City and

State workers, but would also act to strengthen the ruling class' rising offensive against the wages and living standards of all workers.

Without the slightest illusion that the police are workers, the labor movement must oppose the use of both of these ruling class weapons against them, as a direct attack on itself. The rank and file of the entire labor movement must demand that their leaderships enter into a united front and a binding commitment for a general strike in the event that either strike-breaking weapon is resorted to by the City.

The use of the capitalist state's repressive machinery against a section of its own repressive forces, should also help make clear that an independent political party of the working class, a labor party, is a necessary instrument at this point, in order to defend the interests of workers from the increasing attacks of the ruling class.

STATE AND REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA - Part III

Bonapartism and Property Relations

In Latin America, as in other under-developed sectors of the world, the developing crisis of world capitalism has resulted in a sharp increase in struggle against both domestic exploiters and foreign imperialists whose super-profits are acquired by draining and distorting the economy, thereby assuring its continued backwardness.

In Chile, the "socialist"-reformist and liberal-bourgeois bloc in the Unidad Popular, has been called upon to save the bourgeois state, by sowing the illusions that additional reforms and a more extensive nationalization program--the bankrupt Christian Democratic party had also been committed to nationalizations--will produce "socialism".

In other Latin American military-police states such as Peru, or in the as yet unconsolidated Bolivian variety, the Bonapartist leaderships have announced not only reforms, but that they are also "revolutionists". In so doing, the Latin American Bonapartists join a growing number of military regimes in the Middle East, Asia and Africa who had earlier proclaimed themselves to be "revolutionists" and "socialists".

Prodded by the rising struggles of the masses for a better life, and taking advantage of US-Soviet antagonisms, and of inter-imperialist rivalries, these ruling circles are adopting "anti-imperialist" postures, are demanding a greater share of the profits which imperialism syphons off and are even nationalizing--with compensation--imperialist holdings.

Even the Shah of Iran, the very model of an imperialist lackey, who had tried to prevent the nationalization of the oil industry by his premier Mossadegh in 1953, and who was returned to power by a CIA-organized "revolt", now, in the name of a bloc of 10 oil producing countries which includes Venezuela, threatens the western imperialists with an oil embargo unless a substantial price increase is forth-

coming. Gen Levingston has now also announced the military junta's plans for the "Argentinization" of the economy.

[The social-reformists and Bonapartists hope to resolve the growing crises of their respective countries by using the state to accumulate the necessary investment capital to achieve modern industrial capitalist societies.]

They have been able, in this period, to more confidently assert their national rights against a weakened and conflict-ridden imperialism.

As in the Russian folk-tale, in which the family sleigh escapes the wolf-pack by throwing it its own offspring, the bourgeoisie in Latin America as elsewhere, through its Bonapartist regimes, also attempts to safeguard capitalist property relations by redistributing to the peasants the latifundia which they had often already seized, and by nationalizing the properties of wealthy individuals, usually with generous compensation.

Both the social-reformists and Bonapartists hope to "discipline" the workers, by placing their organizations under state control; the first, by "voluntary" means, with the "democratic consent" of the workers; the second, by police-state measures. In either case, the higher rate of exploitation is expected to fuel the development of "socialism", i.e., a capitalist development of the productive forces with the help of the state.

Engels, in his letter to Bernstein in 1881, had the following to say about "socialism" of this kind:

"To describe every interference of the state in free competition--...tobacco monopoly, nationalization of branches of industry... the royal porcelain factory--as "socialism" is a sheer falsification by the Manchester bourgeoisie in their own interests...this alleged socialism is nothing but, on the one hand, feudal reaction and, on the other, a pretext for squeezing out money, with the subordinate intention of converting as many proletarians as possible

into officials and pensioners dependent on the state, of organizing alongside of the disciplined army of soldiers and civil officials a similar army of workers. Pressure on voters exercised by superiors in the state apparatus instead of by factory overseers --a fine sort of socialism! But that's what you get if you believe the bourgeoisie what they don't believe themselves but only pretend to believe: that the state means socialism..."

[The more free competition is transformed into monopoly, states Engels in Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, the greater need is there for the state to become involved in production. But their conversion into state property does not do away with the capitalist nature of the productive forces. The state remains as before:

"the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments, as well of the workers as of individual capitalists..."

"The more...does it...become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers--proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head."

In The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Engels also defines the phenomenon of Bonapartism, which appears in advanced as well as in under-developed countries as a concomitant of capitalist crises:

"...periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both."

But the state, the public authority which has at its disposal armed forces, police and prisons, remains

nevertheless, a bourgeois state.

Trotsky points out (Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1938-39) that the Bonapartist rulers of a backward country such as Mexico, balance in a more complicated way, must veer, not only between a weak national bourgeoisie and a "relatively powerful proletariat", but also between foreign and domestic capitalists.

Such a government functions either as an instrument of imperialism, in the form of a police-state, or has to maneuver with the proletariat against imperialism in order to win concessions from it, in circumstances in which its hands are tied by internal and external difficulties.

The nationalization measures which are taken by the government, said Trotsky, "are entirely within the domain of state capitalism."

Where the bourgeois government, "without letting the real power escape from its hands", asks the workers to participate in the management of nationalized industry, the revolutionary Marxists have a two-fold task--to take advantage of the new situation and support the participation of the workers, while also clearly demonstrating that the government remains a government of the exploiters, that they must then go on to the "conquest of power", to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

However, without the leadership of the revolutionary Marxist party, the bourgeois regime, "through the intermediary of controlled trade unions...can hold the workers in check, exploit them cruelly and paralyze their resistance."

Whereas the Soviet Union went through a process of degeneration, in which a new type of Bonapartist regime was able to usurp the power from the working class, Cuba was able to arrive at this degeneration product of the first workers' state directly, without having achieved a workers' revolution.

Lenin, in State and Revolution, a work which the October Revolution in Russia caused him to end abruptly, resurrected the revolutionary teaching of Marx and Engels on the state from the accumulated reformism under which it had been buried by the

leaders of the Second International.

In the lower phase of communism, usually called socialism, the means of production become the property of the whole of society. For an equal amount of labor, the producers in the "cooperative commonwealth", receive an equal amount of the articles of consumption. Equality seems to reign supreme.

But these producers are unequal in their requirements and capabilities. For real equality in consumption to exist, the distribution would also have to be unequal. This "equality", therefore, in a society which has just emerged from capitalism, and which still bears its birth marks, must still be measured by the standard of bourgeois right.

Lenin quotes from Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program:

"Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."

Socialism is not yet at a point whereby it can achieve the communist equality embodied in the phrase, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Bourgeois right cannot exist, however, without a source of compulsion, a bourgeois state, to enforce it. The "dictatorship of the proletariat", the workers' state in the first phase of communism, therefore, said Lenin, is a "bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!"

But the October Revolution occurred in a backward and isolated country, in which a Bonapartist caste subsequently developed, which usurped the power from the working class. The Soviet state is not "socialist", but a transitional state between capitalism and socialism, which can still move in either direction. Recent developments point to the growing danger of the latter road.

However, the Soviet bloc, China, Yugoslavia and Cuba are all still "bourgeois states, without the bourgeoisie", in which Bonapartist formations and not the workers, exercise political power.

(to be continued)