On the Labor Front

Make Unions 'Schools of Communism'

(With this article we begin a series on the question of trade unions and their role in the fight for socialism. We will analyze the role of Communists in the unions; union dictatorship of the proletariat, the difference (between) Communists and lackeys of the ruling class, among them are the syndicalists and reformists.

REVOLUTIONARIES LOOK AT UNIONS AS 'SCARRIST' SYSTEMS. This line is diametrically opposed to what unions are now in the U.S., under the leadership of George Meany, Woodcock, Jerry Wurf, Cesar Chavez and other ruling class servants.

The great Russian revolutionary, V. I. Lenin, had this to say about unions:

'The trade unions were a tremendous progressive step for the working class at the beginning of the struggle against capitalism, inasmuch as they represented a transition from the disunity and helplessness of the workers to the rudiments of class organization. When the highest form of proletarian organization begins, it arises as an indivisible party, the revolutionary party of the proletariat (which will not desire the dissolution of the trade unions) and marks the beginning of the sharpest fight against capitalism.

'That means that trade unions by themselves produce trade union consciousness, (the fight merely for reforms). Only Communists can give unions a revolutionary outlook. That is why Communists build fractions on the job or inside a union to win workers to fight for revolutionary politics. In addition, it prepares us for the fight to get rid of union sellouts and build a revolutionary leadership in the unions, because that is what has happened with the Texas Farmworkers Union. If this doesn’t happen, the sellouts can turn the unions into a weapon of the ruling class (as George Meany has done with the AFL-CIO)

' . . . and it is now past time for more than a century that a union doesn’t fight against the bourgeoisie as a class becomes a tool of the ruling class and sells the workers. So to turn unions into schools of Communism we must make them allies of the communist party. Our reform struggles must be changed into class struggles (struggles of workers as a class against the capitalists as the enemy class). The political struggle must be primary over the reform struggle. Then we will be able to win real victories for the working class (and lead the struggle for socialism. In this way strikes won’t end in defeat, like the auto “strikes” of last year, using the terms dictated by Lenin: “Strikes can only be successful when workers are sufficiently class-conscious, where they can see through the bosses’ demands, where they have connections with socialists and are able to call out labor leaflets and pamphlets through them. Only a socialist workers party can carry out a struggle capable by spreading among the workers a true conception of the government and the working class!” [Lenin, On Strikes]. (To be continued.)

Military News

Win Soldiers to the Revolution

The following is an excerpt from the new PLP pamphlet, Turn the Guns Around. It discusses among other things the current tendency to put Black Marines who are on trial for fighting the KKK at Camp Pendleton in the armed forces.

The armed forces is the key element in the organization of the State. Upon its stability and its general discipline depends the stability of the state as a whole. The proletariat’s (workers’) chance of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and smashing the bourgeois state in the event of an immediate revolutionary situation, depends in great measure upon the degree of dissatisfaction within the bosses’ armed forces.

That is why the case at Camp Pendleton is such a touchy issue of the U.S. ruling class. The whole of the armed forces is just now trying to “recover” from the widespread rebellion and disaffection with this system that started in the Vietnam era. The bosses’ scheme for a “volunteer” army was part of their plan to rekindle “normal.” It hasn’t been all smooth sailing for the bosses. First, minority youth, the most rebellious section of the population, have flooded the recruitment offices because of unbelievable opportunities in the form of 55 per cent unemployment among minority youth. Second, this militant section of the population has, because of the unusual degree of integration in the armed forces (for this society), been able to express its desire to work with a healthy disrespect for the system that screws us all.

The bosses are particularly sensitive about the marines. The marines are the shock troops of the U.S. imperialist military. They are under the direct control of the President, and therefore need no Congressional approval for their use. Whenever U.S. imperialism was threatened, the cry used to be “Send the Marines!” Without these reliable shock troops, the bosses can’t protect their racist friends in South Africa from the just rebellion that awaits them from the black workers there.

That is why the bosses are making a special effort to re-establish the marines as an elite fighting force with a Ku Klux Klan mentality. Immediately after Vietnam, when the army, navy and air force were talking about beer in the barracks, in the desperate attempt to recruit, the marines were advertising for “a few good men.” Clearly, they meant “quality.” Or to put it more succinctly, racist killers.

The marine brass tolerates and even encourages the KKK because it is that type of jingoistic, nationalistic racist video that they must inoculate into their troops if they are to put together the fighting force necessary to defend U.S. imperialist interest in the second, and in the courageous acts of these 14 black marines that threw a monkey wrench into all that, this is why the brass reacts so violently. Millionaire C. L. Sulzberger, foreign affairs analyst, in the New York Times thinks the situation is so “bad” that “… the point may some day be reached when there will be no use in having weapons because there won’t be enough people left who might be willing to employ them in self defense.” (By “self-defense,” he means defense of the capitalists’ investments).

We are in Progressive Labor Party don’t want the bosses armed forces to “recover” from its troubles. It is in the interest of workers in this country and around the world, and of their sons and daughters in the armed forces, themselves that the bosses’ armed forces be smashed. That is why we want to say, “Turn the Guns AROUND!” at your real enemies, the U.S. imperialist ruling class and its monstrous army. The U.S. bosses are trying to rebuild their armed forces to enable them to fight an imperialist war, they are necessary to the bosses’ possible “encroachment” by foreign imperialists, mainly the Soviet imperialists, and to suppress rebellions of workers like those in South Africa. Workers, whether in the U.S. or abroad, have a burning interest in defending U.S. imperialism. Their wars only mean the spoiling of workers’ blood and the enrichment of one boss or another.

In the event of an imperialist war, our class must turn THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR! We can gain nothing by fighting other workers, and everything by beating the capitalists.

We can not seriously talk of TURNING THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR unless a serious struggle on the revolutionary work done in the armed forces today will lay the basis for a socialist tomorrow, free of both capitalism and exploitation and fascism. Joining and building the revolutionary communist mass movement of the Progressive Labor Party, is a crucial step towards revolution for each soldier and workers.