

Behind the *Guardian*-OL Feud

The preponderant component of the U.S. Maoist milieu is the product of the intersection of the policies of the Chinese regime with the student-centered radical generation of the 1960s—the New Left. The earliest expression of doctrinal convergence between Peking Stalinism and American New Leftism was “Third World” nationalism, the view that the national liberation struggles of the colonial peoples were the main force for world revolution.

Yet the “Third Worldism” of the rulers in the Forbidden City and of the American SDS had significantly different contents. For the Maoist bureaucracy, the colonial and ex-colonial nationalist bourgeoisie (e.g., Sukarno, Nkrumah) was seen as a would-be ally of China against the U.S. and USSR, the original form of the “superpower” doctrine. Peking’s espousal of the “progressive” bourgeois nationalism of the “Third World” always had a strategic as well as a cynical character.

The New Left embracing of “Third World” nationalism was conditioned by the Kremlin’s commitment to the global status quo (“peaceful coexistence”) and the apparent conservatism of the working class in the imperialist centers. Yet a world view which coupled white, European Russia with the U.S. likewise contained the rudiments of the “superpower” doctrine, even before the Soviet Union was designated “social-imperialist” by Mao. Underlying the New Left notion that the struggle for socialism was essentially between the rich, white nations and the poor, dark-skinned ones was a large element of petty-bourgeois moralism, an outlook fundamentally hostile to a scientific analysis of society. Inherent in New Leftism is an inability to recognize the class line in society, particularly when confronted by working-class institutions under bureaucratic leadership.

Guardian’s New Left Reflexes

The *Guardian* milieu represents that element of American Maoism which has broken least with its New Left origins and attitudes. A major theme of editor Irwin Silber’s recent forums has been the call for a return to the “good old days” of the antiwar movement, when the left was “united” against American imperialism. The *Guardian*’s New Leftism is immediately obvious in its very lack of an organizational embodiment. When other Maoists were busily proclaiming themselves “democratic-centralist cadre-type parties,” the *Guardian*’s nods in the direction of Lenin and “party-building” were purely platonic. At a time when it had no substantial political differences with the October League (OL), the *Guardian* chose to remain an “independent radical weekly,” acting as a unity broker within the Maoist movement and mouthpiece for assorted nationalist groups, such as the Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

Since its break with Peking-loyal Maoism, the *Guardian* has tended toward reconstructing the old New Left. Thus it is now participating in the “People’s Bicentennial” (July 4th Coalition), even while admitting that it is the worst kind of liberal/populist constituency politics, and denouncing as “ultra-left” the OL, which is abstaining from the bicentennial hi-jinks, and the Revolutionary Communist Party, which is organizing its own separate demonstration.

However, the *Guardian*’s Menshevik and specifically polyvanguardist organizational attitudes did not lead to any real trouble with the more serious Maoist October League. It was, rather, the primacy of the *Guardian*’s commit-

ment to “Third World” nationalism which led it to dissociate itself from Peking’s alliance with U.S. imperialism, the conflict erupting over Angola. If the dispute between the *Guardian* and the OL were reduced to basic principles—which neither side is willing to do or even capable of doing—it could be stated as follows: for the OL’s Mike Klonsky the interests of “socialist” China, as expressed by its (none too stable) Stalinist leadership, are the



During World War II Communist Party called on American imperialism to open “second front” in Europe against Nazi Germany.

highest political value to which all other considerations will be sacrificed; for the *Guardian*’s Irwin Silber, the colonial people’s struggle for national liberation is the supreme political goal. For the latter, Maoist China is simply the most “advanced” of a series of progressive national liberation movements.

National Liberation and Workers States

The concrete and immediate counterrevolutionary politics of the Peking-loyal Maoists do not mean that the dissident *Guardian* is moving to the left. At the purely formal level, the *Guardian*’s national liberationism has, if anything, even less in common with genuine Leninism (Trotskyism) than do the doctrines of the Peking Stalinists.

For Leninists, the obligatory defense of a workers state stands higher than the principle of national self-determination, a bourgeois-democratic right. On a world-historic scale, to be sure, the equality of nations can be realized only through the victory of the communist movement—the creation of revolutionary workers states. In particular conjunctures, the military defense of a workers state may require violating the sovereignty of a smaller capitalist nation.

For example, in 1921, Bolshevik Russia conquered and annexed

“The Soviet Union in 1921 forcefully sovietized Georgia which constituted an open gateway for imperialist assault in the Caucasus. From the standpoint of the principles of national self-determination, a good deal might have been said in objection to such sovietization. From the standpoint of extending the arena of the socialist revolution, military intervention in a peasant country was more than a dubious act. From the standpoint of the self-defense of the workers’ state surrounded by enemies, forceful sovietization was justified: the safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal democratic principles.”

—L.D. Trotsky, “Balance Sheet on the Finnish Events,” 25 April, 1940

Menshevik-governed Georgia in the Caucasus, although the majority of its largely peasant population undoubtedly opposed this action. This violation of

national independence was justified because Georgia had become a base for British incursions dangerous to the embryonic Soviet state. Anticipating Mao by half a century, liberals and social democrats in the West denounced the conquest of Georgia as “red imperialism,” as the expansion of the “new tsars.” The Bolshevik conquest of Georgia was an unfortunately necessary violation of national self-determination for the sake of higher principle, the

U.S. imperialism is the main enemy of the world’s peoples is essentially empirical: it is American capital which economically exploits the “Third World” and virtually all popular struggles in these countries are directed against U.S. imperialism and its client regimes.

To this empirical argument, the hard-line Maoists have a counter-argument based on orthodox Stalinist precedent. It is a fairly effective counter-argument, moreover, because the *Guardian* accepts the precedent: namely, Stalin’s alliance with Britain, France and the U.S. against Nazi Germany. Before World War II, argue the Peking loyalists, wasn’t Britain the global power exploiting millions of colonial slaves? But, they continue, wasn’t it Nazi Germany, the aggressive have-not imperialism, which was the more dangerous?

Analogies between Hitler’s Germany and its role in world politics and



U.S. hegemony led not to “international New Deal” as Stalinists hoped, but new imperialist atrocities as in Vietnam.



Cartoon in CAP’s newspaper, *Unity and Struggle*.

defense of a workers state.

The narrow nationalist policies of the Stalinist bureaucracies sometimes lead to unnecessary wars against smaller capitalist nations, however. Thus, in 1939-40 Stalin needlessly invaded Finland without adequate military preparation or any attempt to win over the Finnish working masses. Liberals, social democrats and erstwhile fellow travelers sympathized with “little, democratic” Finland (loosely tied at the time to Britain) and denounced Soviet “imperialism.” The Trotskyist movement did not. While condemning Stalin’s megalomaniacal adventurism and bureaucratic highhandedness, Trotsky unconditionally defended the military victory of the USSR, a bureaucratically ruled workers state, against Baron Mannerheim’s Finland.

Stalin’s Alliance with U.S. Imperialism

Since the *Guardian* adheres to the “superpower” doctrine, its position that

Brezhnev’s Russia now pervade Maoist literature. To quote Mike Klonsky:

“The Soviet Union can be compared to Hitler Germany during the period of the ‘30s. At that time, the British, French and U.S. imperialists were in the most dominant position in the capitalist world. But Germany’s imperialists were the most dangerous precisely because they were trying to seek hegemony and replace the other imperialist powers as top dog. This is the goal of Soviet social-imperialism today.”

—Call, 31 May 1976

The message is clear: if it was correct for Stalin’s Russia to ally with American imperialism against fascist Germany, then it is correct for Mao’s China to ally with American imperialism against “social-fascist” Russia.

At the level of ideology, the equation of the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, with fascist Germany, the most barbaric expression of capitalist rule, is the greatest crime Maoism has committed. However, the reactionary import of Klonsky/Mao’s position is not limited to the equation of the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany. To further his military bloc with the Allies against fascist Germany, Stalin endorsed the war aims of the “democratic” imperialists and forced the Communist Parties of the West into the most shameful betrayal of proletarian class interests, in direct subservience to the Roosevelts and Churchills. This was a counterrevolutionary act of monumental historic consequences.

The enormous moral revulsion at the atrocities committed by the Nazi psychopaths should not obscure which contending imperialism was the greater force for global counterrevolution. Nazi Germany was a local power whose demented dictators were capable of great destruction, but not of being the guardian of world capitalism for a

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significant period. The qualitatively greater material base of American capitalism, compared to its German and Japanese opponents, made U.S. imperialism the last secure bastion of the world capitalist order. In some ways, the very "liberalism" of U.S. imperialism contributed to its overwhelming military superiority. The U.S. development of the A-bomb was dependent on emigré, Jewish and leftist scientists.

The military power of the Soviet Union combined with the mass resistance movements in Nazi-occupied Europe would have been fully adequate to overthrow fascism and shatter the capitalist order. When the most popular leader of the French Communist Party, André Marty, broke with Stalinism in

the early 1950's, he truthfully declared that the Communist-dominated resistance could have easily taken power in 1944, but Moscow ordered it to accept Gaullist/Allied rule.

A United Socialist States of Europe in 1944-45 would have isolated American imperialism in the Western hemisphere, enormously accelerating proletarian class struggle in the last bastion of capitalism. Instead the U.S. was permitted to strangle the West European proletariat and, from its newly acquired industrial bases in West Europe and Japan, to isolate the Soviet bloc and (except for China) to secure domination over Asia, Africa and Latin America. Thus the effect of Stalin's policy of "anti-fascist unity" with Wall Street was to prolong the capitalist system for a significant historical period. This was the reward for the Communist Party supporters who demonstrated throughout the early war years for Washington to open a "second front" in Europe,

appealing to U.S. imperialism to stop German imperialism.

The continuing sentiment that Roosevelt's America was the more humane, civilized imperialism in World War II expresses Euro-centric white prejudice. It is against the dark-skinned, colonial peoples that American imperialism has committed atrocities comparable to those of the Nazis. A Vietnamese villager who has survived the napalm and flame-throwers of the U.S. expeditionary force might well dissent from the view that American imperialism was the lesser evil compared to Japan. And to the direct crimes of U.S. armies must be added those of America's "Third World" bourgeois puppets, front-men and allies. The thousands of leftists and workers tortured to death in Pinochet's Chile—these too are the victims of the "American century."

The United States of America is the greatest military force upholding international capitalism—it is truly the most monstrous enemy of the world's working masses. The oppressed throughout the world must know that Stalin played a decisive role in creating the "American century." The second imperialist world conflagration should have been the convulsive death agony of capitalism. The exploited masses struggling to throw off the yoke of U.S. imperialism are fighting against division of the world carried out by the "democratic" bourgeoisie in and following World War II.

The Maoist sycophants who base their "strategy" on the precedent of Stalin's subordination of the revolution to U.S. imperialist war aims can offer the working people of the "Third World" nothing but defeats. Only the Trotskyist perspective of working-class independence under the banner of the permanent revolution shows the way to victory. ■

ILWU...

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its anti-union drive. All union militants must demand that these charges be dropped immediately.

Undoubtedly, the defeat will leave a section of the ILWU demoralized and discouraged. However, drawing a balance sheet of the events will enable class-struggle militants to prepare a successful struggle in the future. By no means was defeat foreordained. The weak defense of the picket lines, combined with impotent appeals to city governments to halt police scabberding, was an act of conscious bureaucratic sabotage. A militant union leadership would have countered scabbing with mass picketing.

Instead of leaving decisions in the hands of the treacherous labor fakers of the ILWU and the IBT, a joint strike committee elected by the membership of both unions should have been set up. And instead of minimizing the impact of the strike—even allowing some companies belonging to the Distributors' Association to continue operations—the struggle should have been broadened into a West Coast transport strike, encompassing longshoremen and truck drivers as well as warehousemen.

The warehouse strike has confirmed what has been clear in the ILWU for many years: the encrusted regime of Harry Bridges is rotten to the core. With the threat of deregistration on the docks clearly posed and the prospect of renewed employer attacks under the warehouse contract, the urgent necessity of a militant leadership is posed. Only the supporters of the Militant Caucus of Local 6 and of "Longshore Militant" in Local 10 presented a strategy of militant solidarity between longshore, warehouse and the Teamsters that was capable of leading to victory against the companies in this strike. ■

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the Hays case to make it "news," except that sex is involved. The Washington scandals have about as much to do with sex as the ancient Roman banquets had to do with hunger. But they do sell papers.

On the subjective level, there is something exquisite about watching Hays' career being ripped up in an orgy of self-righteousness. Hays, currently being dumped from his post as head of the House administration committee, led the crusade against Adam Clayton Powell for misuse of funds in 1967. A powerful and popular Harlem Democrat, Powell was barred from the House for having put his ex-wife on the government payroll. His ouster, preceded by a puritanical campaign of character assassination, was alleged to have nothing to do with the fact that he was the first black to head a House committee. No, it was simply a matter of the "dignity" of the House and the "ethics" that politicians prattle about. And Wayne Hays prattled the loudest.

Now Gerald Ford is taking the opportunity to register his moral outrage at Hays' pécadillos. He is not interested, he says, in Hays' private life; rather, he assures us, his concern is that public funds have been used for purposes not intended!

But it is not just Hays who deserves to be exposed and driven out! So do the hypocritical moralizers who repaid Hays for years of high-handed lording over junior Congressmen by stripping him of his powerful committee chairmanship. All their small-time embezzlements pale in comparison to their truly monstrous crimes against the working people of the world.

"Misuse of public funds?" It was Ford and his henchman Henry Kissinger who arranged for funds to be used for white mercenaries in Africa. The entire CIA budget is secret. But from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, there is no "misuse" involved in the CIA's spending money to install regimes of savage torture throughout the world, or in the FBI's using its budget to burgle the offices of left-wing organizations, harass labor militants and infiltrate provocateurs into militant black groups. Gerald Ford has vented his spleen about Hays' "misuse of public funds"; he has nothing to say about the use of those funds to murder Black Panthers in their beds.

Russell Baker caught the irony of the moralizing recently in his syndicated humor column. He noted that New York City politicians have passed an unconstitutional law to sweep the midtown streets of pimps and prostitutes so that the city will be morally "clean" for the week of the Democratic convention. He then made the modest proposal that the pimps and prostitutes might consider holding their own convention in Washington. But in an imaginary interview with a Times Square streetwalker, she refuses, saying: "The streets are crawling with Congressmen and predatory female clerks. The whole scene is sick." She will consider a convention in Washington only when they "sweep the streets of Congressmen."

The air of New York may indeed be unwholesome and the seedy exploitation of 42nd Street unappealing. But it is far too good for the Democratic convention! The corrupt servants of the twin parties of racism and imperialism pollute the world with their wars in Vietnam and their coups in Chile. The revolutionary proletariat, to which falls the task of "sweeping the streets of Congressmen," will not be sidetracked by the bedroom venality of Wayne Hays and his ilk from dealing with the real crimes of the imperialist rulers! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

PL Sectarianism Mars Guyton Campaign



WV Photo

SACRAMENTO—The Committee for Justice for Tyrone Guyton stands at a crossroads and must now take a clear stand against political censorship and exclusion. Recent sectarian incidents endanger the widespread public sympathy that has been developed through united-front action for the cause of Tyrone Guyton, the murdered black youth shot in the back by Emeryville cops in November 1973.

At a June 19 demonstration called by the Guyton Committee, 135 protesters marched to the California state capitol building demanding that the killer cops be indicted. However, a couple of weeks prior to the demonstration, a leaflet was issued over the signatures of the sponsoring organizations of the Committee for Justice for Tyrone Guyton (using their names without consultation) reflecting Progressive Labor Party (PL) positions that had never even been discussed in the Committee. Despite protests by the Spartacist League (SL), the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC) and several union caucuses, the leaflet was distributed before and at the Sacramento demonstration.

The worst episode of sectarianism occurred at the rally when PL "monitors" prevented Martha Phillips of the Partisan Defense Committee from addressing the crowd, even though the PDC had been assured beforehand that it could have a speaker. Further, PL tried to enforce its own chants, objecting to the SL contingent's chant which drew the class line: "Don't Trust the Democrats! For a Labor/Black Defense!" Such anti-democratic attempts to suppress class-struggle politics will only backfire against the Guyton Committee's cause, driving out all groups that disagree with PL's particular brand of reformist politics.

This is not the first time that a Stalinist group has attempted to capture the Committee and turn it into a bureaucratically manipulated front group. From May through August 1974 the SL participated in the Committee for Justice for Tyrone Guyton, until at a demonstration Spartacist supporters were excluded by Revolutionary Union (RU) goons for carrying signs demanding labor/black defense. Within a matter of weeks, all other groups participating either quit or were thrown out by the RU and the Committee was driven into the ground, eventually lapsing into inactivity.

The SL and PDC helped spark the revitalization of the Guyton Committee in recent months. In December the PDC organized a forum with speakers from the Guyton Committee, the Committee for Justice for the Calhoun Family and the Philip L. Allen Defense Committee. In February and again in April, the PDC and SL played an instrumental role in organizing demonstrations called by the Committee and publicizing the case. Moreover, the Committee for a Militant UAW and supporters of "Warehouse Militant" and "Longshore Militant" obtained support of their union locals for these united-front demonstrations, as well as financial contributions totaling several hundred dollars.

The Committee for Justice for Tyrone Guyton must now decide if it will build a broad campaign open to all those who support the cause of fighting cop terror, or whether it is to become a docile instrument for PL reformism, censorship and exclusion.